

Mdm President, Mdm Secretary & colleagues,

I am Vikram Nair, a Member of Parliament from Singapore, and Chair of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Defence and Foreign Affairs.

Building bridges is more important than ever before. The United Nations was formed in the aftermath of World War II to create an institution and a framework of rules to protect humankind from the enormity of war.

Now, some 8 decades later, is this order under threat? Every time a major power appears to disregard international law, the order itself is threatened. The victims of such conduct may feel the temptation to respond in kind, also with disregard for international law. Some of the countries that

have been mentioned as violating international law in the course of these debates have also themselves been victims of such violations.

While there may be a temptation to disregard international law, especially where one has been a victim of violations, each of us should recognize that if this order breaks down, every country would be worse off. Singapore is unwavering in its commitment to international law and the multi-lateral, rules based order.

Related to this, a number of speakers have lamented the failure of international organizations to act in the face of violations of international law, and some have even mentioned the failure of IPU to pass a resolution on the

Middle East as a failure of this institution. I understand this sentiment, but have a little more optimism in the institutions.

In yesterday evening's debate over the Emergency Motions, two motions, the one by South Africa and the one by Denmark, each with a different group of nations behind them, garnered significant support, but each missing out on adoption by, relatively small number of votes.

The tone of the debate was impassioned, and while both motions had very significant points of agreement, the points of disagreement were felt strongly enough that those that advocated strongly for one motion voted against the other.

Does this mean that IPU as an institution has failed?

I do not think so. Ultimately, international institutions can only work through a broad consensus, and if there is no consensus then it means that the relevant resolutions would not go through. As politicians, many of us are advocates and good at arguing for positions. Sometimes though, our passion and advocacy makes compromise difficult. We have to recognise this, and support those who make compromises to build consensus.

Even if we fail to get consensus, the process of getting there is just as important. Both the resolutions by South Africa and Denmark called for the upholding of international law and recognized the need for urgent action to protect civilians in the Gaza. If individual parliamentarians carry this same conviction to their home countries and make the same case

as passionately at home as they did in the IPU, I think this effort is not wasted.

My thanks to everyone who put in the time, effort and energy to try and reach a consensus. If possible, we should exchange friendly words with those who disagreed with us in the debate, and re-affirm our common ground rather than our differences. I hope we can all be advocates for these common principles of humanity and respect for international law in our respective homes.

Thank you.