

Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding
Chua Kheng Wee Louis, MP (Singapore)

Madam President, fellow Parliamentarians, thank you for giving young MPs like myself an opportunity to address the General Assembly.

As legislators, Members of Parliament in Singapore or any Parliaments around the world play a critical role in promoting peace, stability, and the overall well-being of our nations. Through scrutinising draft laws and taking up a critical and inquisitorial role in Parliament, Parliamentarians empower and give a voice to our citizens, ensuring that there will always be a healthy national dialogue on issues that matter to our people.

Internationally, the IPU was founded on the notion that dialogue is central to the peaceful resolution of conflict. Recognising this, over the years, Parliamentarians from Singapore have worked hard to contribute to peace and better understanding by establishing regional parliamentary groups, engaging in regular parliamentary dialogue, and participating at inter-parliamentary conferences, forums, and general assemblies.

Members of Parliament in Singapore are organised into seven Regional Parliamentary Groups or RPGs.

They are (i) Singapore-Americas RPG (ii) Singapore-Australia, New Zealand & the Pacific Region RPG (iii) Singapore-Europe RPG (iv) Singapore-Northeast Asia RPG (v) Singapore-South Asia & Sub-Saharan Africa RPG (vi) Singapore-Southeast Asia RPG and (vii) Singapore-Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia RPG.

Members volunteer and indicate their interests to join such RPGs.

RPG Members host incoming visits to Parliament House from their counterparts in countries and jurisdictions within the regions. The RPGs provide a fora for Members to forge closer and more regular relations with Parliamentarians from each respective region.

Members also regularly attend inter-parliamentary conferences and meetings organised by multilateral institutions such as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF), and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Such platforms provide the opportunity for Members to have dialogues to promote deeper understanding and to forge warm ties among Parliamentarians of various jurisdictions, and ultimately to bring all our nations closer together and not further apart.