

Speech by Danish MP Mr. Kris Jensen Skriver at the general debate
IPU's 147th session 23-27 October 2023 Luanda, Angola

Dear President, fellow parliamentarians

It is an honour for me to address all of you at this IPU-session.

Before being elected to the Danish Parliament I was a school teacher teaching 13-15 year old kids. These kids were full of optimism and confidence in the future.

It is of great importance that we don't lose the trust and confidence of the new generations.

On the one hand I am full of optimism when I am looking at the strong engagement and involvement of young people in the fight against climate change and for human rights and freedom of expression.

On the other hand I am a bit concerned that many of our political parties are not able to attract the young people.

In my home country Denmark we usually have a very high voter turnout at parliamentary elections. Around 85 percent of the population take part in the elections.

But only about 3 per cent of the population are member of a political party. That tells me we have to strengthen our effort to make politics more relevant for the young generation.

We also must strengthen our cooperation within international organisations like the IPU and the United Nations.

As a parliamentarian from a small country, I understand the value of international order, where all countries – large and small – have an equal voice based on the principle of sovereign equality.

Denmark is running for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the period of 2025-2026. We are committed to inclusive multilateralism and international rule of law. We believe in a UN that promotes shared solutions to joint problems.

Let me round off by pointing out one of the basic challenges for representative democracy. Around the world hundreds of parliamentarians and human rights defenders are prisoned or in other ways being obstructed for doing their work.

These include the Danish-Bahraini citizen Mr. Al-Khawaja. He has been prisoned now for more than 12 years in Bahrain based on arbitrary accusations according to a UN Committee. He is now seriously ill.

The Danish IPU-delegation appeal for his immediate release.

Dear colleagues, let's start listening to the young generation, let us inspire them to take part in our democracies – not only in words but also in action.

Thank you for your attention.