

Distinguished colleagues,

It is a profound honor to address you today, in a country known for its beautiful tales of love—Alpomish and Barchin, Farhod and Shirin, Munis and Yusuf, Otabeg and Kumush. These stories speak to the enduring power of love in human history.

In Montenegro, our heritage also speaks of love—but a different kind. Our national epics are usually filled not with happily-ever-afters, but with struggles for freedom, honor, and faith. The love that runs through our verses is love for our homeland, for justice, and for dignity. For generations, Montenegrins fought for the dream of freedom. Many of our ancestors gave their lives in pursuit of a future in which every individual could live in liberty.

Long before our nations were organized as they are today, my people would gather in a circle known as the *gumno*—a space of dialogue and collective decision-making, not unlike the very spirit of this Inter-Parliamentary Union. It was there that my ancestors envisioned a future where someone like me could speak freely and shape their own destiny.

Today, that same responsibility lies with us. We must come together to imagine and build a world where our great-grandchildren will not only survive—but thrive.

We are living in politically turbulent times—marked by uncertainty, conflict, and a growing disconnect between people and nations. In such times, dialogue is not a luxury—it is a necessity. Forums like the IPU give us a rare and vital opportunity: to listen to one another, to build understanding, and to recognize our shared humanity.

No matter our culture or origin, we all carry the same essential hopes: to be heard, to be valued, to be safe, and to be loved. When we engage with one another in that spirit—with openness and respect—we create the foundation for real and lasting progress.

I firmly believe that it is love that will ultimately guide us forward. Love, and knowledge. Both are needed to overcome the challenges of our time, from conflict to climate change.

As representatives of our people, and stewards of this planet, let us act with courage and vision. Let us ensure that the lives we lead today become a legacy future generations will be proud of. A legacy not just of struggle and sacrifice—but of care, connection, and commitment to a better world.

Let us give them something to write poems about.