

**6th World Conference Speakers of Parliament general debate:**

**A world in turmoil: Parliamentary cooperation and multilateralism for peace, justice and prosperity for all**

Dear President of the IPU, fellow Speakers & Presidents of Parliament, parliamentarians, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address this 6th World Conference Speakers of Parliament for the general debate on A world in turmoil: Parliamentary cooperation and multilateralism for peace, justice and prosperity for all.

We gather at a time when the world is at a profound and unsettling juncture, fractured by war, by distrust, and the erosion of principles that bind us together. Effective international cooperation is more important than ever before but is harder to achieve. Increasingly countries are turning away from diplomacy and towards violence to achieve political objectives. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the devastation in Sudan, the horrors of Gaza and the volatility across the Middle East and the Sahel, are testament to this.

It is alarming to see that the proportion of the world engulfed by conflict has grown by 65% since 2021. At the same time, the international order that provided us with a means, albeit imperfect, to peacefully resolve conflict is eroding.

As Europe turns to strengthening its defence, we cannot overlook the importance of conflict prevention and diplomacy as core to a sustainable peace and security strategy.

When we choose dialogue and diplomacy, not only can we bring an end to fighting, but we can also lay the groundwork for lasting peace for generations to come. We here in Ireland know this better than many. Our own experience tells us that peace is a process, not an event. The Good Friday Agreement, signed in 1998, brought to an end 30 years of violence and conflict on the island of Ireland, but we keenly understand the constant challenge of protecting a hard-won peace.

Ireland is committed to a multilateral approach to promote global peace and stability. We call for, and invest in, a more effective UN system to enable political solutions to conflict and strengthen conflict prevention. Peace is not an ideal, it is a duty. It is a duty we bear not just when times are easy, but also when they are hard.

It's staggering to hear that civilian deaths in conflict surged by 40% in 2024. Women and children are disproportionately affected, with violence directed towards them in armed conflicts doubling from 2023 to 2024. Conflict-related sexual violence directed towards women and girls rose by 50% in 2023.

International law is clear: civilians must be protected. They are not targets. And when violations occur, they must be met with accountability, not impunity. We must all stand up for the protection of civilians.

In these challenging times, the rules-based international order, underpinned by international law, remains our greatest hope for a more peaceful, stable world.

Supporting and sustaining peacebuilding efforts is a signature element of Ireland's foreign policy. Ireland believes that the international community needs to invest more in methods to prevent conflict. We recognise the importance of regional actors and approaches to dealing with instability, conflict, and crises with cross-border implications. It is vital that we support and build the capacity of regional actors to support peace and security in their regions and support greater coordination between regional bodies and the UN on peace and security.

Ireland remains committed to multilateralism. 67 years of continuous participation in UN peacekeeping is a source of pride to Irish people. Through our diplomacy, humanitarian and development assistance and our peacekeepers, Ireland will be a consistent and principled advocate for peace.

Despite the challenges we must remain strong in our belief that diplomacy, dialogue and multilateralism can prevail. It is time to renew our commitment to these principles – not just in words but with actions.

Let's ensure that our parliaments and members of parliament play a key role by promoting a future with for peace, justice, and prosperity for all. Parliaments must promote democracy and accountability in global affairs and ensure that decisions take on the international stage are translated into concrete actions at the national level.

Thank you