

## **6th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament**

**Tuesday, 29 July 2025 - Thursday, 31 July 2025**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

Contribution to the General Debate, on behalf of the Senate of The Netherlands

By Hendrik-Jan Talsma, Deputy Speaker of the Senate

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Your Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

It is a privilege to address this conference today on behalf of the Netherlands Senate.

We meet at a time of profound uncertainty. The global landscape is marked by armed conflict, starvation, democratic regression, climate disruption, growing inequality and an erosion of the rules-based international order. In this context, the theme of this meeting resonates deeply and urgently.

In the Netherlands, we have experienced over time that peace, justice, and respect for human rights are not self-evident or self-sustaining. They are the result of continued commitment, of principled leadership, and of cooperation. Walking along the so called 'Reformation wall' in the old centre of Geneva, two sculptures of our Dutch Parliament voting for independence and of Prince William of Orange, the founder of our monarchy and well-known fighter for freedom of religion, reminded me of that once more.

As a small country, our nation's history and identity are firmly rooted in international cooperation, international law, open dialogue and respect for shared norms. We have always held that sustainable peace, economic resilience and the protection of human rights cannot be achieved in isolation. They demand collaboration between states and between parliaments.

In these turbulent times, our parliamentary institutions carry a particular responsibility. In a world where multilateralism is under pressure, we — as parliamentarians — must step forward. Not only to strengthen public trust in international cooperation, but to ensure that multilateral institutions remain transparent, inclusive, and anchored in democratic legitimacy.

As politicians, we know that trust in institutions cannot be taken for granted. It must be earned and renewed through consistent action and through commitment, especially when the political winds are unfavourable. The history of the League of Nations, once convening on these grounds, serves not only as a testimony, but also as a warning.

In our Senate we believe in dialogue among parliaments as one of the ways to secure a peaceful and just international order. Our voices carry the democratic weight of our citizens, and our engagement fosters the kind of trust and continuity that multilateralism depends upon.

Parliamentary diplomacy cannot solve every crisis — but it can build trust, open channels of dialogue, and uphold common principles.

Let us use this conference here in Geneva - the epicentre of international diplomacy - not only to share our concerns, and exchange our views but first and foremost to reaffirm our collective responsibility. For peace. For justice. And for prosperity. Not just for some, but for all.

Thank you.