

# **GENERAL DEBATE: A WORLD IN TURMOIL: PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION AND MULTILATERALISM FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL**

**Ms Thoko Didiza, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of South Africa**

Honourable President of the IPU, Dr Tulia Ackson  
Honourable Presiding Officers,  
Honourable Members,  
Distinguished Guests,

We live in turbulent times. History teaches us that global challenges require global solutions. No nation can confront these crises alone.

Multilateralism is not merely an option, but it is the only means through which we can address global challenges. The rules-based international system, anchored by the United Nations and supported by global institutions and regional blocks, remains our best hope for peace and prosperity.

The UN system has delivered remarkable achievements. It has contributed to peace through conflict resolution and by deploying peacekeeping missions, it has championed vital freedoms for people across the globe, particularly women and children. It has provided critical aid to millions affected by disasters and conflict. Most importantly, it has given the oppressed and marginalised a voice.

For South Africa, the UN was instrumental in our liberation struggle. It declared apartheid a crime against humanity, triggering the isolation of the apartheid regime and solidarity with the liberation movement .

Honourable President

Today, the multilateral system faces serious threats. Unilateral actions are reversing decades of progress, while protectionism is undermining the multilateral trading system under the WTO. . Some nations disregard agreed rules when it suits their interests.

Every time we deviate from agreed rules, we undermine the entire system. This hurts everyone, especially developing countries that depend on multilateral forums for fair representation. The socio-economic consequences are dire. Weakened cooperation leads to slower global growth, reduced access to essential services, and deepening inequality, leaving the most vulnerable further behind.

As parliamentarians, we are the guardians of accountability. We bridge the gap between international commitments and domestic action. We must:

- Ratify treaties that advance global cooperation.
- Pass laws that implement these international treaties.

- Monitor compliance with binding UN resolutions.
- Ensure our countries pay their UN contributions on time.
- Ensure alignment between global priorities like the SDGs with national development plans.

Honourable President

Reform of the UN system is not just necessary, but it is urgent. The UN Security Council must reflect the geopolitical realities of today, not those of the post-World War II era. Likewise, global financial and trading systems require modernisation to ensure they serve all nations equally. But reform does not mean dismantling. It is a call to strengthen the multilateral institutions that underpin global cooperation.

South Africa's 2025 G20 presidency is committed to revitalising multilateralism under the theme 'Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability'. This vision drives our efforts to promote inclusive development, fair access to global resources, and meaningful representation for developing countries in global governance. We are championing the reform of the global financial systems to make them more just and responsive. Through our presidency, we aim to demonstrate that multilateralism is the effective path to achieve more than any of us could alone.

Honourable President

The 2030 Agenda remains our roadmap. It is multilateralism's ambitious, universal and transformative crown. As parliamentarians, we must advance this agenda. We must hold our governments accountable for its delivery. We must ensure that it is adequately funded and effectively implemented for the sake of our vulnerable populations.

In conclusion

The choice is clear. We must embrace multilateral cooperation as a foundation of a peaceful and prosperous world for all. Let us choose solidarity over division and build a future that leaves no one behind.

Thank you.