



## PARLIAMENT OF SAINT LUCIA

Old Government Building  
Laborie Street, Castries  
Saint Lucia, West Indies

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Friends, colleagues, fellow global citizens,

We face a world in undeniable turmoil. From escalating conflicts and economic volatility to rising populism and the existential threat of climate change, we are in a "polycrisis" where challenges are deeply interconnected. This era demands not fragmented responses, but a unified, collaborative path forward.

At the heart of this path lies multilateralism. This is the recognition that no single nation can solve global problems alone. It has driven humanity's greatest achievements, from establishing the United Nations to eradicating smallpox and addressing the ozone hole. While multilateralism faces a profound crisis today—criticized for being slow, outdated, and perceived as dominated by certain powers—it remains "irrefutable" and "essential". The challenge is not the concept itself, but our collective commitment to its principles and our willingness to adapt its structures to reflect today's diverse world, especially the voices of the Global South.

This is where parliamentary cooperation becomes indispensable. Parliaments are the legitimate voice of the people, uniquely positioned to bridge national concerns with international policy. They provide the democratic foundation and public buy-in that executive-led diplomacy sometimes lacks. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, or IPU, founded in 1889, was the world's first permanent forum for political multilateral negotiations, instrumental in laying the groundwork for institutions like the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the United Nations.

Today, parliaments actively contribute to peace, justice, and prosperity. They oversee the implementation of peace agreements, provide platforms for dialogue in divided societies, and hold governments accountable for international commitments. The IPU's recent successes include facilitating dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and safeguarding the human rights of parliamentarians globally, ensuring elected representatives can speak without fear. Parliaments translate international human rights norms into national realities through legislation and oversight, making global commitments tangible for citizens.

To forge a resilient future, we must synergize these two pillars. We need to reinvigorate multilateralism by fostering trust, embracing inclusivity, and ensuring institutions are adaptable to 21st-century challenges. Simultaneously, we must strengthen parliamentary diplomacy, empowering parliamentarians to act as positive role models, bridge divides, and ensure that international agreements are genuinely owned and implemented at the national level. The interconnectedness of our challenges demands

coordinated, multi-stakeholder responses. Unilateral actions are simply insufficient. By combining robust multilateral institutions with dynamic, democratically legitimate parliamentary bodies, we can build a global governance system capable of preventing conflicts, upholding human rights, fostering economic opportunity, and securing a sustainable future for all. This is not merely an aspiration; it is the only viable path forward.

Thank you.