



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Ms. Gabriela Morawska-Stanecka IPU Vice-President

Official Opening of the P20 Speakers' Summit

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Mr. President,
Honourable Speakers of Parliament,
Distinguished parliamentarians,
Dear colleagues,

It is my pleasure to address you today on behalf of Dr. Tulia Ackson, the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, who is unable to be with us due to forthcoming elections in her country, Tanzania.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Parliament of South Africa for hosting this important Summit, bringing together Speakers of the Parliaments of the G20 member countries and other invited nations. We are all grateful for your warm hospitality and the excellent conditions you have put in place for this meeting.

Allow me to highlight the powerful symbolism of our meeting here in South Africa. This country reminds us that, after the pain of injustice, it is possible to build reconciliation; after exclusion, it is possible to build equality. Africa as a whole is a young, creative continent, full of potential. But it is also among the most exposed to climate, health and economic shocks.

As an organization which has long championed gender equality and youth participation, the IPU is particularly pleased that this Summit was preceded by a meeting for women parliamentarians, building on the success of the first such meeting in Brazil last year, and a meeting for young parliamentarians, a new initiative introduced by South Africa for this eleventh P20 Summit.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are gathered at a critical moment in our shared history. A moment when crises are multiplying and intertwining: climate change, persistent conflicts, growing inequalities, technological upheavals. These challenges know no borders or passports. And in the face of them, one thing is certain: no country can act alone. Together we are stronger.

The theme of this Summit, *Harnessing parliamentary diplomacy for the realization of global solidarity, equality and sustainability*, is highly topical and relevant, and it chimes very much with the IPU's values, goals and strategy. Just last year, our Member Parliaments adopted the landmark Geneva Declaration on *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding*, in which they reaffirmed their commitment to parliamentary diplomacy as a means to address growing challenges to peace and international security. I believe our discussions today can take this a step further, as we consider the deployment of parliamentary diplomacy not just to prevent and resolve conflict, but to build bridges of solidarity, to support one another and work together in creating a more equal world, and to advance solutions and good practices for truly sustainable development.

We face global challenges that require a spirit of collective responsibility. The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us that no one is safe until everyone is safe. Parliaments must translate this solidarity into concrete action:

- through legislation that guarantees equitable access to vaccines, health care and education;
- through budgets that support international cooperation;
- through platforms that defend peace and reject hatred.

Solidarity is not a slogan. It is a moral and political obligation.

In too many places, divisions are widening between rich and poor, between men and women, between generations, between and within countries.

Parliamentary diplomacy must be a lever for reducing these inequalities. This means:

- promoting gender equality in our laws and institutions,
- guaranteeing equal opportunities for our young people,
- ensuring that every country, regardless of its economic weight, has a say in global governance.

For there can be no lasting peace without social justice.

We can no longer delay the tough choices that are needed to save our planet. The climate crisis is already hitting our societies hard, especially the most vulnerable. Parliamentary diplomacy must be a catalyst for climate and environmental action. This means:

- adopting ambitious laws to accelerate the energy transition,
- supporting economic models that respect nature,
- and ensuring that the digital transformation is carried out in an ethical and sustainable manner.

Our duty is clear: legislate today to protect future generations.

Parliamentarians are increasingly recognizing that their role is not simply about serving their own constituents and countries, but about being key players in global governance.

In July this year, Speakers of Parliament from around the world – many of them also in this room today – adopted a wide-ranging Declaration on *Parliamentary cooperation and multilateralism for peace, justice and prosperity for all*. The Declaration recognized that the world is in turmoil, and that only parliamentary cooperation and a reinvigorated multilateral system can address the multiple overlapping crises we face. Collective action, strong institutions and new ways of thinking are needed to achieve this goal. We need a stronger and more effective multilateral system, with a revitalized United Nations at its core, supported by multilateral engagement across a whole ecosystem of actors: civil society, business, academia, faith-based and minority groups, to name but a few. Intergovernmental forums such as the G20 also have their place in this inclusive approach. The world's largest economies have a responsibility to drive multilateralism forward, and only they hold the keys to tackling structural issues such as poverty, inequality and the climate emergency. At the same time, they must always act in solidarity with those outside the group, ensuring that all countries, no matter their size or economic might, have access to the necessary resources to develop and prosper.

Parliamentary diplomacy has many unique strengths: it allows the legitimately and democratically elected representatives of the people to engage in frank and direct dialogue with their counterparts around the world. Therefore, putting parliamentary diplomacy at the service of global solidarity, equality and sustainability is the mission we must pursue together.

The words – and the good intentions – are there, particularly among the global parliamentary community. But how do we turn these promises into action? How do we ensure that our resolutions, our declarations and our communiqués are translated into meaningful policy and legislation? And how do we measure whether our efforts have succeeded? This is the other side of parliamentary diplomacy. It is not just a question of finding common ground and formulating collective commitments, but of monitoring their implementation and evaluating the end result. We need to invest more in such efforts to ensure we are accountable – to our constituents and to one another.

The Speakers of the Parliaments of the G20 have been meeting for 15 years now and have worked to cement the importance of the P20 as a leading engagement group in the main G20 process. The IPU is pleased to have been a part of this development and stands ready to continue to support and help strengthen the P20 in the years ahead.

Thank you.