

**151<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly: General Debate**

**Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis**

*Speech by:* Valerie Lee, Member of Parliament (Singapore)

*Title:* Principles in Action - Singapore's Commitment to Humanitarian Response

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**Mdm President, Fellow Parliamentarians,**

In today's turbulent world—marked by protracted conflicts, climate-induced disasters, and mass displacement—the imperative to uphold humanitarian norms and support principled humanitarian action has never been more pressing.

Singapore remains firmly committed to upholding a rules-based multilateral system and advancing international humanitarian law. Because as a small but globally connected nation, we understand firsthand how deeply our collective security and shared humanity are intertwined. While we may not face large-scale crises on our shores, we believe deeply in doing our part—through diplomacy, capacity building, taking part in conversations and consistent voluntary contributions to UN agencies and humanitarian organisations.

As fellow parliamentarians, we bear the responsibility of translating values into action. In a time when multilateralism is fraying and humanitarian space is increasingly under threat, our role becomes even more critical. In Singapore, we strive to create an enabling environment where humanitarian actors—whether governments, civil

society, or international agencies—can operate safely, effectively, and without prejudice.

But beyond policy and funding, we must not forget the essence of humanitarianism: being *human* in the face of suffering. When crises strike, we must respond not only with aid, but with empathy.

Singapore's humanitarian responses are guided by this principle—whether it's deploying our aid workers and armed forces to areas which needs it most, supporting affected communities in the region, or standing in solidarity with victims of violence and displacement.

We also recognise that no single actor can do this alone. Our efforts must be inclusive and collaborative—drawing on the strengths of youth, the private sector, technology innovators, and local communities. As we have seen during regional disasters in Southeast Asia, timely coordination and partnership are often what save lives.

In closing, Singapore reaffirms our commitment to working closely with fellow parliamentarians and the international community—not just to protect laws or norms, but to protect people, especially our most vulnerable. Let us ensure that in the face of any humanitarian crisis, we never lose our most powerful response: our shared humanity. This is the one thing that binds us all.

Thank you.