

Madam President,
Mr Secretary-General,
Honourable Members of Parliament, dear colleagues,

At a time when the world is gripped by senseless violence and diplomacy seems to fade away, it may seem naïve to speak of hope, peace and justice. And yet, not to do so would already be a form of surrender.

Now more than ever, we must nurture hope, secure peace and ensure justice for future generations. In our moments of doubt, we must be guided by a compass: that of the rule of law and human rights.

All of us here today have one thing in common: we are parliamentarians. And our shared role is to hold our governments accountable. It is crucial that the laws we pass respect the human rights enshrined by the UN. It is on this condition that our states will be fully governed by the rule of law.

And it is also our responsibility to ensure that the IPU resolutions do not remain merely symbolic: they must be translated into laws and concrete actions.

Our parliaments also act as vital bridges between citizens and political decision-making.

Allow me to say a few words about ‘future generations’, the theme of our 152nd Assembly. I worked closely with young people for ten years as president of a major university, a role I held before being elected president of the Senate.

That experience convinced me of one thing: our political responsibility is immense. It is often said that young people are the future, but in reality they are already the present.

The decisions we take today directly shape their future. Our choices must be guided by intergenerational responsibility and not dictated by short-term electoral objectives.

Article 29 of the UN Declaration on Future Generations clearly calls on us to “enhance cooperation with stakeholders, including civil society, academia, the scientific and technological community and the private sector, and

encouraging intergenerational partnerships, by promoting a whole-of-society approach”.

We must reach out to our fellow citizens. Listen to them. Work with them. Open up our parliaments.

At the Palace of the Nation, which houses both chambers in Belgium, 30,000 visitors pass through its doors every year. They familiarise themselves with the heart of our institutions.

These concrete actions — visits, meetings, answering questions, expert hearings — can be genuine drivers of trust in institutions and, through this, strengthen cooperation and democracy.

I look forward to taking advantage of this IPU Assembly to exchange best practices and innovative ideas, in order to nurture hope, secure peace and ensure justice — not only for future generations, but starting today, through our decisions.