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Netherlands, general debate

Chair, dear colleagues,

As this is my first time of being here with the IPU, It is really a great privilege and honour to speak at this IPU meeting in Tanzania. Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to be here in person.

Trust in democratic institutions cannot be taken for granted. It must be earned every day through transparency, accountability and meaningful participation.

Parliaments play a crucial role in this regard. We are not only lawmakers and representatives of people; we are also platforms where citizens can make their voices heard and see their concerns reflected in public decision-making. Personally, that's my goal as a member of the Dutch Parlement: to represent the people living in the regions, even in a small country as The Netherlands. But as always, we need to cooperate and have trust in all the politic parties involved. But, Building trust is not only the responsibility of citizens. It also requires politicians to leave the familiarity of the political bubble, listen to voices that are different from their own, and engage in a real dialogue with people they do not naturally encounter in their daily work.

In the Netherlands, we have learned that people are more likely to trust democratic institutions when they feel included in the process. This requires a strong dialogue between parliament, civil society organizations, local communities, educational institutions and social partners. And of course, with people.

Digital technologies offer new opportunities, but they are not a substitute for direct engagement. Face-to-face dialogue remains essential to understanding the concerns, expectations and experiences of different communities.

Furthermore, as Members of Parliament, we are responsible for ensuring that our citizens are not dependent on others for essential needs such as food, water, energy, and housing. Therefore, despite all the other challenges we face, we must remain focused on securing these fundamental and sustainable necessities. Strengthening our resilience should be a key priority.

The choices we make today will determine the resilience of future generations. Let us show the courage and leadership needed to put people's basic needs at the heart of our policies, and in doing so, strengthen both trust in our institutions and confidence in our common future.

Thank you, Chair.