

**Honourable Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Dear colleagues,**

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to our hosts here in Arusha for their warm welcome and generous hospitality. It is a true pleasure and an honour to be with you today.

As we begin our work, we should bring our attention back to the very heart of our responsibility.

There is a crisis that no parliament can afford to ignore.

It is a crisis of trust.

People are asking:

**Does my voice still matter?
Does my institution still see me?
Does the law work for me?**

We should not fear these questions.

We should fear a society in which people no longer believe that asking them can make a difference.

Because trust is not demanded.

Trust is earned.

**Through decisions.
Through responsibility.
Through fairness.
And, above all, through results.**

This is where parliaments have a special duty.

We are not here only to pass laws.

We are here to represent people.

That means listening, especially to those whose voices are easiest to overlook.

The young person looking for their first opportunity.

The family struggling with the rising cost of living.

The community far from the centres of power.

The citizen who feels that institutions have become distant.

No citizen should be invisible.

And the right to be heard does not stop at our national borders.

The Republic of Serbia stands firmly for a world in which national independence, international law, and the Charter of the United Nations remain the foundations of a stable and legitimate international order.

Global cooperation must treat smaller states as equal partners.

The strength of the international order should never be measured by how effectively the powerful can control the less powerful.

It should be measured by how many countries and how many people it enables to move forward.

Dear colleagues,

We cannot discuss good governance as if we were living in a peaceful and predictable world.

We are not.

Wars continue.

Geopolitical tensions are growing.

Resources are limited.

Governments are under pressure from every direction.

And yet people still need jobs.

They need healthcare.

They need education.

They need security.

And they need to believe that tomorrow can be better than today.

All of these priorities compete for the same public resources.

That is the reality of governing.

And good governance means facing that reality honestly.

It means making difficult choices.

It means using public resources responsibly.

It means applying the law fairly.

And it means being accountable for the consequences.

Because in the end, those consequences are borne by the people we represent.

Distinguished delegates,

We often speak about restoring trust.

But trust cannot be restored by asking people to trust us.

We must give them reasons to do so.

Institutions must listen.

Institutions must deliver.

And when something does not work, institutions must have the courage to say so, and correct it.

Opportunity must never be reserved for the few.

A young person should not need connections to have a fair chance.

A family should not need influence to be heard.

A community should not need political power to receive equal treatment.

Equal opportunity must be more than a principle.

It is a test of whether our institutions are truly working.

People do not expect perfection from their parliaments.

They expect integrity.

They expect fairness.

They expect accountability.

And they expect us to listen.

Above all, they expect us to remember why they placed their trust in us in the first place.

Because strong institutions cannot exist without trust.

And trust cannot exist without responsibility.

That responsibility belongs to all of us.

So when people ask:

“Does my voice still matter?”

Let our institutions answer not merely with words, but with action:

Yes.

Your voice matters.

Your rights matter.

Your future matters.

Thank you.

Edin Đerlek

Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia