

Arab Republic of Egypt
House of Representatives
The Speaker

Speech of
Counsellor Dr. Hanafy Gebaly
Speaker of the Egyptian House of Representatives
Before
The 142nd IPU Assembly
On
“Overcoming Today's Pandemic and Building a Better
Tomorrow: The Role of Parliaments”

Excellency, Mr. Duarte Pacheco, IPU President

Excellency, Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Ladies and Gentlemen, Speakers of parliaments and Heads of participating delegations

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset of my speech, let me express my utmost pleasure for attending such prestigious parliamentary event and speaking to you in exceptional circumstances and at a critical time that humanity is going through, which requires us as parliamentarians - representatives of peoples and their free voice - to deal positively and resolutely with these circumstances. Our discussions should address these urgent challenges, so as to be up to the great responsibility entrusted to us by our peoples.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We all witnessed the sudden and global outbreak of the Covid-19 virus at the beginning of last year, and its drastic consequences and severe repercussions that inflicted the world, as a whole, on all levels. **On the economic level**, the pandemic caused a complete closure to contain the spread of the virus, and imposed large-scale travel restrictions, and a cutoff of supply chains, which caused a painful blow to the global trade. Further, the emerging markets and developing countries have suffered economic and financial turmoil and the severe recessions in the aftermath of the pandemic cast their shadow over investment rates, as well as causing severe financial crises in many countries of the world.

On the social level, the Corona pandemic led to wide-ranging social disturbances as a result of the preventive measures taken by countries to contain the outbreak of the Coronavirus, which greatly affected the behavior and shape of the daily life of citizens around the world as well as Corona's far-reaching repercussions. In addition, the Corona pandemic deepened the global social crises related to inequality, social disparities, widespread poverty and unemployment, which brought back several urgent questions about public policies and the role of the nation state, a matter that makes it incumbent upon us as parliamentarians to

quickly and seriously address these effects and repercussions in order to find proactive solutions to those prospective social crises as a result of this pandemic.

Dear colleagues

The intertwined and complex challenges that our world is encountering for the time being as a result of this pandemic push us, as parliamentarians, to courageously confront these challenges, and perhaps the most prominent challenge that we have been encountering so far is how parliaments could continue their work under these exceptional circumstances. This situation compels us to strike an appropriate balance between the precautionary measures taken to contain the outbreak of the virus and the continuation of parliaments and parliamentarians' work to deal with the effects and repercussions of this pandemic.

In this honorable event, allow me to present the Egyptian parliamentary experience in dealing with this pandemic, as the Egyptian parliament, since the beginning of the crisis, dealt with it according to a comprehensive strategy that takes into account the application of strict precautionary measures to ensure the safety of parliament staff and members along with the continuity of parliamentary work necessary to support the Egyptian State in confronting this pandemic. The Egyptian parliament responded to that crisis by issuing a package of legislations, as well as providing necessary financial allocations to urgently confront the repercussions of this pandemic and contain its negative effects, so that the Egyptian State, with its executive and legislative institutions, can achieve the difficult equation in striking a delicate balance between the application of precautionary measures to protect its citizens and the continued efforts of construction and development.

Ladies and Gentlemen

No sooner had the hope of reaching anti-Coronavirus vaccines loomed on the horizon than the world woke up to a bitter reality and a challenge of another kind, namely, the unfair distribution of vaccines among all countries of the world without any regard to the principles of human justice and the rules of global coexistence. Such process showed a great disparity among the quantities obtained by countries, which resulted in a shocking imbalance in the distribution of vaccines between rich and poor countries. This will pose a serious threat to the global

security as no one will enjoy the same degree of protection unless the vaccines become a common public property to which the poorest countries could easily access and not to be only monopolized by richer countries. So, allow me to call upon you - as representatives of the world's parliaments - from this prestigious global parliamentary platform to rally and support the fair distribution of vaccines, and to set objective criteria for determining the priorities and preferences for the distribution of these vaccines so that the world can overcome such ordeal as quickly as possible.

Honourable Colleagues

The crises facing our world have always demonstrated the vital role of parliaments in encountering them and their repercussions on the local, regional and global levels. The Covid-19 pandemic was a recent evidence of the courage displayed by parliamentarians at all levels. Our parliamentary responsibilities should not stop at the borders of our countries, but they must go beyond and involve global issues, foremost of which is the realization of international peace and security, the fair distribution of the benefits of development through comprehensive sustainable development and upholding the values of dialogue among cultures and peoples. Here, the important role of our prestigious international parliamentary forum is manifested in adopting the parliamentarians' points of view and expressing their peoples' concerns, in a manner that ensures the participation of our peoples in global decision-making processes on various global issues and challenges.

In conclusion, we wish that this 142nd IPU Assembly would be a great success and come up with resolutions expressing the pulse of our peoples, and addressing their concerns, driven by our responsibilities towards the peoples who gave us the right to speak on their behalves.

Thank you for your kind attention