

OVERCOMING THE PANDEMIC TODAY AND BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS

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142ND ASSEMBLY OF THE IPU

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- Dear colleagues,
- It is an honour and a privilege to speak to you today.
- As parliamentarians, we have witnessed the havoc the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked in our communities, our countries and, indeed, the world over.
- Our citizens – the women, children and men we represent – have suffered immeasurably, with over 167 million people having been infected and nearly 3.5 million having died.
- These are not just numbers. These are faces and livelihoods.
- They are also a sharp reminder that we have pushed this planet to its carrying capacity limit and that now is the time for our collective action.
- The pandemic has underscored the world’s interdependence and shown us that equality is key to ensuring a sustainable future.
- On this point, it is essential that we as parliamentarians demand that the principle of equality regarding vaccination access be respected.
- It must inform not just our deliberations about a global recovery plan from the pandemic but also how that plan is to be implemented.
- Such a plan based on equality must include more efficient economies, an efficiency that is defined in terms of sustainability and the restoration – even renewal – of the earth’s natural capital.
- It also means an end, at last, to the unequal treatment of women: the political, economic and social recovery from the pandemic will be suboptimal and have lasting consequences unless 50% of the global population take their rightful place as full partners and decision-makers.
- Colleagues, as parliamentarians our role domestically and internationally, in fora such as the IPU, is unique. I encourage us to seize the challenge before us and together shape a post-pandemic world that respects the planet’s finite resources and advances our human capital as never before.
- Because that is what is needed. If not now, when.
- Thank you, honourable colleagues, for your attention.

(Substantive text: 280 words)