

**STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER IVICA DACIC
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 142ND ASSEMBLY OF THE
INTERPARLAMENTARY UNION**

May 26, 2021

General Debate theme:

**Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of
parliaments**

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address you on behalf of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia.

Unfortunately, since we last had the opportunity to meet physically, during the 141st IPU Assembly in Belgrade, the world has changed dramatically. At that time, we could not have guessed that today we would be facing one of the most serious pandemics in history, but also the crisis that it brought to health systems and economies around the world.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 virus pandemic testifies to the full justification and practical significance of the resolution adopted at the session in Belgrade - "Achieving universal health coverage by 2030: the role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health." With this resolution, we visionarily called for accelerating the process of progress in order to achieve universal health care and strengthen the health systems, emphasizing the role that such systems play in ensuring global health security.

Dear colleagues,

Serbia has faced the crisis prepared, not only when it comes to the readiness of our health system to preserve the health of citizens, but also in terms of economy, social protection and preservation of living standard, as well as in terms of the smooth functioning of all democratic political processes.

By having a good immunization strategy, we are among not only European, but also global leaders in the successful fight against the pandemic, setting a good example of humanity and solidarity by enabling vaccination not only to our citizens, but also to foreign citizens through the donations of vaccines to other countries.

However, the challenges we face during the pandemic are not within national borders only, therefore the answers within our states only are not possible.

That is why this is also a time for solidarity. During the crisis, we tried to help everyone as much as we could and show solidarity in these difficult times - solidarity in donating vaccines to neighboring countries, but also in vaccinating foreigners, migrants and all interested citizens in our country.

Parliamentary solidarity is another important response to the challenges of the present. Only through joint action can we counter threats to all of humanity, such as a pandemic.

The corona virus is the common enemy of all people around the world, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, political affiliation or religion. This struggle requires global unity and cooperation, and I am pleased to note that the commitment to multilateralism and inter-parliamentary cooperation has not been lacking even in these challenging times.

Dear colleagues,

We can further encourage support and coordination between our countries through parliamentary diplomacy. That is why we must continue to strengthen cooperation within our Organization, because for decades it has been proving to be a good and solid support to the parliaments of the whole world in facing the altering challenges, including today's challenges we face.

The National Assembly will continue to provide full contribution to the work of the IPU, as it has done in the last 130 years, especially bearing in mind that this year we mark the 130th anniversary of our country's membership in the IPU.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank the Inter-Parliamentary Union for all the efforts it has made over the past year to support parliaments around the world during the pandemic, reaffirming once again its unique and irreplaceable role in today's world.