

Dear Mr. President, dear colleagues,

The Corona pandemic, about which we still know too little in many areas, has for more than a year been a significant challenge not only for policymakers, but for our entire society as a whole. We all have to be honest; COVID-19 has hit us on a scale we could never have imagined before. To put it bluntly, we were not prepared for it, neither globally nor regionally.

As co-rapporteur, I remember well that at the last conference in Belgrade in October 2019, we adopted a resolution that called for strengthening universal health coverage. It addressed, among other things, the need to improve International Cooperation in response to pandemics. So the IPU was able to look into the future at that time. For the future, however, the achievements of our

organisation must not remain mere words. We have to take our resolutions even more seriously and use them as guidelines in our daily parliamentary work.

Even our small country, Switzerland, has sometimes reached its limits during this difficult time. In order to fight Corona, it was not primarily money that was needed, but also other values like solidarity and respect in addition to medical expertise.

The decisions that had to be taken very quickly affected all people and their rights. The principle of treating everyone equally and leaving no one behind has always been at the forefront. This is and remains the most important commitment that we have to implement in the IPU community. And we do so every day.

I wish you good health.