

Motions in the interactive General Debate

The Preparatory Committee has decided that the general debate of the in-person segment of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament will be held in an interactive format, following the model of the [Doha Debates](#).

As these motions will run in parallel with the five panel discussions, each motion will be linked thematically to the topic of the panels, developing a specific aspect of the topic in question. The motions will be introduced by two Speakers of Parliament who are in general agreement with the motion and two Speakers of Parliament who hold views that differ in some way from the motion (2 minutes each). The floor will then be opened to other Speakers of Parliament, who will each have 3 minutes to express their views on the motion under discussion.

Speakers of Parliament will be asked in advance to indicate by order of preference the motion debates they wish to attend and contribute to. Time permitting, additional interventions from the floor will be allowed, in addition to the list of those that have previously expressed an interest in taking part. These additional interventions may be limited to less than 3 minutes each depending on the time remaining.

First motion

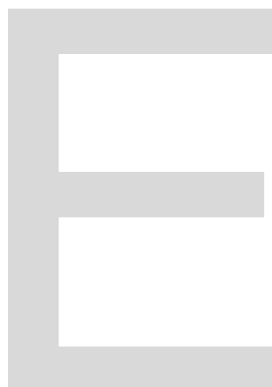
Achieving sustainable development requires more attention on human well-being and environmental preservation than on economic growth

Sustained and inclusive economic growth is a prerequisite for sustainable development, which can contribute to improved livelihoods for people around the world. In recent years, however, there have been increased observations that the negative environmental and well-being effects of economic growth often override its positive impacts. As a result, there is a strong call for countries and societies to expand the vision of development by paying attention to economic growth, environmental sustainability and human well-being. How should countries prioritize to achieve sustainable development?

Second motion

The global response to the COVID-19 pandemic challenges multilateralism's ability to deliver for the people

While the global community of governments and international organizations has come together around COVID-19 with strong expressions of solidarity and some concrete initiatives to address the dual health and economic emergency, many people feel that it has also fallen short of the mark. By some accounts: the WHO did not do all it could to stop the pandemic in its tracks; multilateral trade agreements such as the TRIPS (trade related intellectual property rights) were not applied to the full extent; international facilities to share vaccine technology and supply developing countries with vaccine doses, such as COVAX, remain severely under-resourced; international financial institutions such as the IMF provided only partial support to economies in crisis; and the G20 debt relief initiative did not go far enough. Are these instances of failure of the multilateral system or a matter of optics? Is the multilateral system as currently constituted fully equipped to respond to future pandemics?



Third motion

Countering misinformation and hate speech on and offline requires stronger regulations.

Hate speech is a serious human rights concern and can create environments conducive to violence and other abuses against vulnerable groups. Misinformation can diminish trust in democracy and pit groups against each other. Efforts to tackle hate speech and misinformation are therefore crucial, including on social media, but may undermine the right to freedom of expression and the free flow of ideas that underpin a flourishing democracy. The motion raises serious questions, such as: When is misinformation detrimental to society? Who is responsible for tackling misinformation? Should a criminal law approach prevail over a focus on raising awareness and self-regulation? Where do parliamentarians fit in as potential spreaders and victims of misinformation and hate speech? How can and should they use their powers in support of regulation and implementation?

Fourth motion

Repealing laws that discriminate against women and girls is the only path towards achieving gender equality

Discriminatory laws affect more than 2.5 billion women and girls around the world. On average, women enjoy three-quarters of the legal rights afforded to men (World Bank, Women, Business and the Law 2020). Unequal legal status between men and women prevents women and girls from reaching their full potential in society, alongside men. It constitutes a major limit to women's empowerment and to the target of gender equality.

To what extent does gender equality in society depend on equality between men and women in the law? Is equality between men and women in the law the first priority that decision-makers should target?

What are other priorities that impact on a society's efforts to achieve gender equality? What should we start with and why?

Fifth motion

Emergency measures imposed by the government must always be subject to parliamentary approval and regular review

In a time of crisis, it is accepted that a government may need to take emergency measures in order to act quickly to safeguard its people. Constitutions typically set out the procedures for the declaration of a formal state of emergency, which usually requires parliamentary review and/or approval within a certain time frame. But the processes surrounding other emergency measures are often less clearly-defined. What role does parliament play – or should it play – in ensuring that emergency measures at a time of crisis are proportional and time-limited, and do not unduly interfere with democratic norms and fundamental rights? How effectively have parliaments played this role during the COVID-19 pandemic?