



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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Statement by the Hon. Ms. Patricia Ann Torsney, Permanent Observer,

Annual high-level meeting of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Group of Friends

Shaping a Better World: Building Cohesive and Inclusive Societies in a Challenging COVID-19 Environment

29 September 2020

Dear Friends,

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a real test of unity for the world. The crisis has revealed the cracks in alliances at the local, national and international levels, highlighting need for deeper inter-community dialogue.

Like you, the IPU believes interfaith and inter-cultural dialogue are fundamental to inclusive and cohesive societies. In partnership with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, UNESCO, and the Parliament of the Russian Federation, we are organizing the Leaders' Conference on Interfaith and Intercultural dialogue for peace and humanity in St. Petersburg in 2022. This Conference will allow political and religious leaders to celebrate diversity, combat intolerance, and reaffirm their common values and principles of peace, humanism, solidarity, and cooperation between religions and nations.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is building a strong relationship with the Alliance of Civilizations, helping parliaments support its principles and institutionalize them through legislation.

Parliamentarians will be crucial in shaping of a cohesive and inclusive post-COVID-19 world by focusing their work on justice and sustainability. Parliamentary institutions are extremely important to securing inclusive and cohesive societies, which form the bedrock of democracy.

The IPU congratulates the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations for this meeting, and for its 15 years of important work. As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations in this particularly difficult year, we recall the fundamental principles of peace and democracy which guide its work and reaffirm our commitment to continue our joint efforts build more inclusive societies everywhere.

Thank you.