

## Opening address (video) by the United Nations Secretary-General at the opening of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

September 6, 2021, Vienna

As a former parliamentarian, it's a privilege to take part in this 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and Summit of Women Speakers.

Parliaments connect people to power.

Without this connection, governing is untenable —

Democracy unthinkable —

And for a world reeling from COVID-19, climate change, inequality and conflicts, recovery is impossible.

The common solution to all of these challenges is solidarity.

People acting in the common interest.

That's what the multilateral system does on the global stage.

And it's what parliaments seek to do at the national level.

Parliaments bridge the global and local.

You ratify treaties, execute international commitments, and ensure critical support through national budgets.

You are central to advancing human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals.

We're counting on you to secure ambitious climate action.

The recent IPCC report is a reminder that there is no time for delay and no room for excuses.

The solutions are clear.

A commitment to net-zero emissions by mid-century.

More ambitious 2030 climate plans.

No new coal plants after 2021.

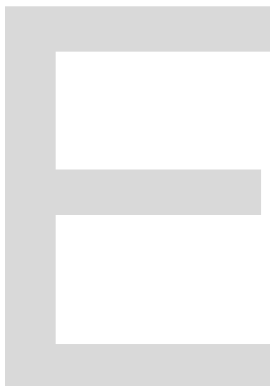
Phasing out fossil fuel subsidies.

And delivering credible adaptation support to developing countries backed by adequate climate finance.

That is the pathway to inclusive and green economies, prosperity, cleaner air and better health.

We also support your efforts to put people first.

With stronger social protections and safety nets. .



Universal health coverage and basic income

Education for all

And increased support for girls and women, who have suffered disproportionately from the pandemic.

They face increased violence — online, in the streets and at home.

They're at heightened risk of child marriage and early pregnancy.

And with job losses and increased poverty, we risk losing a generation's worth of hard-won gains for women.

We need to put women at the centre of the recovery.

And at the centre of parliaments.

Only three countries have 50 per cent or more women in parliament.

Many have no women at all.

We urge countries and political parties to achieve true gender parity in the halls of power — including through gender quotas.

When women are equally represented — when women lead — we see greater outcomes for everyone.

And we build greater trust in the institutions upon which we all rely.

Parliaments must reflect the will of the people.

All people.

And support their needs as they struggle through this perilous moment in history.

The United Nations stands with parliamentarians everywhere in this great effort.

Thank you.

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