



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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Statement by Ms. Paddy Torsney Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Group of Friends Annual High-
Level Meeting
8 February 2022

Good afternoon
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to represent the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the UNAOC Group of Friends Annual High-Level Meeting. At the Inter-Parliamentary Union we have been increasing our engagement with intercultural and interfaith dialogue over the past few years, and enjoy a fruitful cooperation with UNAOC.

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As you know, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, or “IPU”, is the oldest international political body in the world. Founded in 1889 it is the hub of worldwide parliamentary dialogue, with 178 member parliaments. The IPU facilitates parliamentary diplomacy and empowers parliaments and parliamentarians to promote peace, democracy and sustainable development.¹

In 2017, at its 137th IPU Assembly, the IPU adopted the [St. Petersburg Declaration](#) which focused on *Promoting cultural pluralism and peace through inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogue*. The Declaration called for the organization of a World Conference in 2022, bringing together Heads of State, Speakers of Parliament and leaders of world religions. United Nations General Assembly Resolutions [72/278](#) of 2018 and [74/304](#) of 2020 subsequently endorsed this recommendation.

The IPU subsequently began planning, together with the United Nations, the [World Conference](#) on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue: *Working together for Peace and Humanity*. While the Conference is postponed due to the pandemic, t we look forward to resuming preparations soon. The UNAOC has been an important partner in this planning process.

At the Madrid Assembly last November, the IPU adopted its [2022-2026 strategy](#) which focuses on developing parliamentary ecosystems for democracy. This approach encourages parliaments to engage more with actors and dynamics that influence

¹ See <https://www.ipu.org/our-impact> (statement directly copied from here)

parliamentary work. This offers many new avenues for cooperation with the United Nations and issues relating to faith and culture.

The IPU is putting together a Handbook on *The role of parliaments in intercultural and interfaith dialogue for tolerant and inclusive societies*, and looks forward to consulting with UNAOC and benefiting from its expertise.

Finally, the IPU was pleased to participate in the opening ceremony of the new UNAOC office in Geneva, where IPU has its headquarters. We look forward to even closer cooperation and mutual learning going forward.