



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Chemin du Pommier 5
Case postale 330
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland
www.ipu.org

IPU Statement

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

**General Assembly consultations on
“Enhancing international
cooperation”**

New York, 10 March 2022

President,

As the winds of war are raging again, multilateralism and the United Nations have entered a new crisis.

We have been served a powerful reminder.

International relations cannot be managed by world leaders alone.

“*Might is right*” cannot be the operating principle of global governance.

Multilateralism cannot be exercised in just one direction, from the *top-down*.

Do people *want* war?

Or is this horrible conflict in Ukraine the concoction of some leaders playing power games, and not just recently, but over decades of useless confrontations.

The planet is literally dying, billions are living in real poverty, inequality has never been so pronounced.

The people of this world have urgent concerns. They have no quarrels with their neighbors. No great desire to hurt one another.

The disconnect between the people and their governments is widening.

It confirms what the IPU has long been saying: the UN needs to be robust in its engagement with the outside world, where the real problems are.

For us, this means including the voices of parliamentarians who, collectively, speak for more than their governments but directly for the people.

The people who live in the villages, the towns, the cities of this world.

Those who must work every day for a living.

Those who struggle to care for their families and their communities.

Over the last couple of decades, we have made important strides toward the inclusion of parliaments and parliamentarians in UN processes and in the implementation of international agreements.

But more needs to be done to make multilateralism work in the other direction as well, *from the bottom up*.

We need systematic inclusion of members of parliament from all leading parties in national delegations to UN meetings.

We need more women MPs, young MPs, as well as MPs representing vulnerable groups, at the UN table.

We need dedicated hearings with parliamentarians in the lead up to major UN summits.

We need to include parliamentarians in UN political missions.

We need to engage parliaments more closely with the UN field operation in their countries.

We need stronger parliamentary oversight of what governments say or do at the UN directly in capitals around the world, not just at the UN proper.

With such things in mind, we very much welcome the interest that the Secretary-General has expressed in exploring further options to include the input of parliaments at the UN

We look forward to his proposals in the forthcoming report on “interaction between the UN, national parliaments and the IPU”, and to the resolution of the General Assembly, on the same topic, this spring.

The time has come for bold decisions to democratize the UN and the entire multilateral regime so everyone counts.

We are not looking for perfection in an imperfect world. The best is the enemy of the good.

Yet we can do much better to ensure that the peoples of this world can look to their governments at home and here at the UN trusting that their best interests are represented and their commitments maintained.

Thank you.