



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Building Trust, Building Peace

How can Parliamentarians bridge divides?

Webinar organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in cooperation with the World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS)

Online – 5 December 2024

Session 1: Timed for the Asia/Pacific region – 7:00 – 8:30 CET

Session 2: Timed for Africa, Europe and the Americas – 17:00 – 18:30 CET

Background:

Unaddressed divisions within and between societies pose significant challenges to peace and stability. Political unrest, social inequalities, and cultural misunderstandings exacerbate conflicts and erode trust among communities. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) recognizes parliamentarians as peacebuilders and have encouraged legislative involvement in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Such initiatives view parliaments as platforms capable of addressing the social and political grievances often underlying conflicts, helping reduce the likelihood of violence through legal and institutional responses.

Parliamentarians, as elected representatives, play a key role in bridging divides—domestically through representation and internationally through diplomacy. Parliaments have a unique responsibility to work towards trust-building and tension reduction initiatives, assessing the needs and claims of all parties in any given conflict, giving a voice to all stakeholders, and reinforcing promising international exchanges and collaboration. Mediation emerges as a vital tool in this context. It is a process that facilitates constructive communication and negotiation between conflicting parties, aiming to reach a mutually acceptable solution. By incorporating mediation techniques, parliamentarians can more adeptly navigate disputes, both within legislative bodies and in their interactions with the public, strengthening trust in democratic institutions and contributing to conflict resolution and prevention.

This webinar seeks to familiarize parliamentarians with some practical mediation skills. By collaborating with seasoned mediation experts, the event will present MPs with tools and methodologies to address conflicts proactively. It will also discuss how Parliamentarians can contribute to the need for a comprehensive vision towards conflict de-escalation and peacebuilding, locally, nationally and globally.

Objectives:

- Explore how parliamentarians can leverage their legislative, oversight, representative and parliamentary diplomacy functions to contribute actively to peacebuilding and trust-building at both the community and international levels.
- Provide a platform for parliamentarians to share successful strategies, programmes, and initiatives that have effectively bridged divides, fostered inclusion, and promoted understanding in various regions.
- Encourage open discussions among parliamentarians from diverse cultural, political, and regional backgrounds to understand each other's perspectives, common challenges, and the opportunities that mediation presents for peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Expected Outcomes:

- Enhanced understanding of the complexities of societal divides and the importance of trust-building.
- Highlight steps parliamentarians can take to incorporate mediation methods through their parliamentary functions.
- Establish of a network of parliamentarians committed to mediation and collaborative peace efforts.

The webinar will take place online. Session 1 will take place in English only and Session 2 in English, French, Arabic and Spanish via simultaneous interpretation. You may register via the following links:

Session 1: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYlfuCqrzwwHtSGTLLbnt2Ux-AHkd8jMBDP>

Session 2: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZctc-yoqTwjHtWoLaU5XlqBck-bsvIkAMXr>