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Senato della
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Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue: *Strengthening trust and embracing hope for our common future* Rome, 19–21 June 2025

Concept Note

In June 2023, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), together with the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco, convened the first-ever global Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, which brought together parliamentarians, representatives of governments, religions, beliefs, faith-based and civil society organizations, international organizations and academia. The Conference concluded with the [Marrakesh Communiqué](#) in which parliamentarians acknowledged that interfaith dialogue that is “grounded in support of fundamental rights and freedoms, is an essential tool for promoting inclusivity and peaceful coexistence, upholding the rule of law and encouraging collective efforts to achieve a better society”. At the Marrakesh Conference it was announced that the Italian Parliament would host the second edition of the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in 2025, on the occasion of the Vatican Jubilee Year. The 2025 Conference will take stock of developments since the Marrakesh Conference, examine good practices and challenges in the promotion of interfaith dialogue, and explore avenues for further cooperation.

In these troubled times, anxiety about the future is growing. The world is gripped by conflicts and political crises which impact social cohesion, human rights and development. Influential voices prey on fears and wield disinformation to fan demagoguery, bigotry, scapegoating and divisiveness. Challenges such as socioeconomic disparities, gender inequality, displacement, climate change and low levels of confidence in governance institutions, nationally and internationally, are growing more intractable.

With so much at stake, now more than ever, humanity is called upon to come together to safeguard our future and to work to realize the equal and inalienable rights of all, which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reminds us are the “foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”.

Parliamentarians, together with representatives of religions, beliefs, faith-based organizations, international organizations, civil society and academia, will come together again in 2025 for the Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, under the overall theme *Strengthening trust and embracing hope for our common future*. The Conference will underscore that our common future, anchored in human rights, human dignity and the rule of law, stands or falls with our ability to transcend our differences and to work together cooperatively towards effective solutions, concurring with Pope Francis’ call for all people to unite, as “pilgrims of hope”, in solidarity and fraternity during the Year of Jubilee.

Indeed, parliamentarians play a crucial role in the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies. They are tasked with upholding the rule of law, human rights and justice through their functions of representation, oversight, budget approval and legislation. As public figures, they also provide a window into society at large: they are both barometers and influencers of social cohesion. Furthermore, parliamentary diplomacy can support multilateral efforts for the common good.

Representatives of religions and beliefs are important dialogue partners for parliamentarians. The overwhelming majority of global citizens are affiliated with a religion or a belief and this is often reflected in countries’ legal apparatus and governance structures: over 100 States refer to God in their constitutional texts, while others explicitly separate religion or belief from the State. Overcoming tensions between religious or secular legal systems, and the upholding of the rule of law and human rights standards are important points of discussion.

One such tension is around the right to freedom of religion or belief, a right regarding which no society is free from violations. This freedom applies to a person's right to hold and manifest a religion or belief, as well as to change it if they so wish. In some countries, people are targeted by the government on the basis of their religion or belief, and underrepresented groups, such as minorities, women and youth, are particularly at risk. Parliaments are called upon to address legislative gaps and promote values of inclusion, equality and non-discrimination.

For many people, religion and belief play an important role in their values and identity, in some cases influencing their voting habits and participation in society. Opportunities for promoting peace and inclusion, including through the law, often have a religious or belief dimension. It is important for parliamentarians to understand the different ways in which religion or belief impact constituents to help them remain aware and engaged.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union and interfaith dialogue

For many years, the IPU has been engaging in parliamentary dialogue and cooperation across religions, beliefs and cultures to promote peace, coexistence and the rule of law. Most important in this regard are the outcome documents of IPU Assemblies, such as the [Quebec City Declaration](#) (2012) on *Citizenship, identity and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world*, the [St Petersburg Declaration](#) (2017) on *Promoting cultural pluralism and peace through interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue*, and the [Manama Declaration](#) (2023) on *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*.

The IPU's work on parliamentary engagement with religion and belief is part of an "ecosystem" approach outlined in its [2022-2026 Strategy](#), which acknowledges that parliaments and parliamentarians can better deliver for the people when they take note of and work together with the actors and dynamics that influence them, as well as with other relevant stakeholders.

To better understand the relationship between parliaments, parliamentarians and religion and belief, the IPU produced a first-of-its-kind [Parliamentary report on religion and belief: Working towards more peaceful and inclusive societies](#), which investigated how parliaments, as institutions, engage with religion and belief. It is currently preparing Part 2 of this report, mapping current trends and good practices in parliamentary work on issues intersecting with religion and belief to support peace, inclusion and dialogue, and the upholding of human rights and the rule of law.

Main objectives of the Conference

Advancing the commitments made in the [Marrakesh Communiqué](#) and other IPU outcomes, the Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue will aim to:

- Strengthen trust between politicians and representatives of religions and beliefs.
- Build awareness of the important roles of religious, belief and political representatives and faith-based organizations and of how, despite having different mandates, dialogue can be mutually beneficial to inform national policies and legislation and foster social cohesion, for the achievement of common goals.
- Promote the inherent dignity and human rights of all individuals, without distinction, regardless of culture, religion or belief, including freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression, gender equality and youth empowerment, as well as the protection of national minorities and other marginalized or vulnerable groups.
- Reaffirm and consolidate, in line with the motto of the 2025 Vatican Jubilee, common values such as peace, respect, equality, humanity, fraternity, sorority, accountability and compassion.
- Help combat all forms of discrimination or hostility related to intolerance, hatred, extremism and acts of violence perpetrated by or committed against people on the basis of religion or belief.
- Encourage more ethical and responsible leadership from those with political, religious or belief influence and authority.
- Promote peace education as an important foundation for coexistence and a means to combat different forms of intolerance.