



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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

Speech by the IPU President, Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, on the occasion of the International High-Level Conference "Countering terrorism through innovative approaches and the use of new and emerging technologies"

Minsk, Belarus, 3 September 2019

Alexander Lukashenko, President of the Republic of Belarus,

Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office,

Thomas Greminger, Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe,

Sergey Lebedev, Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Fellow parliamentarians, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a huge honour to be here at the International High-level Conference on the theme "Countering terrorism through innovative approaches and the use of new and emerging technologies".

The theme that brings us together here is a fundamental issue today. Terrorism is no longer a topic of regional interest, it is already a phenomenon of global relevance that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. Terrorism is very different from any other manifestation of violence, since it has a background of discrimination and intolerance towards people with different religions, beliefs, political affinities or skin colours. Terrorism uses people to send a message of cruelty and intolerance.

But terrorism is not a matter of faith, is not about praying to a different god, because no god would express himself through hate and death. Terrorism is an expression of supremacy, an expression of the most shameful moments of humanity, whereby a group of people decide that they are better than others. Terrorism has only one ideology: violence as a means, demoralization of society as its objective. Terrorism not only attacks its victims, it wants to destroy every country's heart.

This phenomenon attacks one of the most important virtues of humanity: diversity. Whether linguistic, ideological or ethnic, plurality nourishes unique and unrepeatably human experiences. Intolerance and the speech of supremacy have taken diversity as their main enemy. The history of the human race is full of moments that invite us to remember the importance of taking tolerance, dialogue and love as standards that guide our institutions and policies.

The world we inhabit today has become smaller and smaller. The emergence of technologies and networks has allowed the world to connect in seconds. The world is changing fast, it is not going to wait for us. Technological and scientific progress can

be either a tool that facilitates conflict resolution or an instrument that allows the dissemination of hate messages and promotes the radicalization of positions.

We live in the era of the internet, nanotechnology, robotization, artificial intelligence and biotechnology. The development of these sciences has allowed humanity to conquer new spaces, to know the human body better, to communicate faster. Without denying the relevance of these advances, it is necessary to propose a space for self-criticism in which we question the scope and negative implications that these advances may have.

Dear friends, I am here because I am sure that we can prevent, stop and end terrorism.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is the global organization of national parliaments. We are about 46,000 parliamentarians around the world. We have in our hands the enormous responsibility of translating international responsibilities into local realities. Why? Because we ratify international agreements, we make those commitments an important part of our national laws, we assign budget to important public policies and, of course, we oversee the government and ask for results.

If all parliamentarians – again, 46,000 MPs – are working in the same direction, with a common goal, I am absolutely sure that we can change the world. That is why we are here.

Even better, what if we worked in the same way as this conference? What if we facilitate dialogue and cooperation among local, regional and international actors and organizations, the private sector and NGOs? We are here because we care. We are here because we know we have a responsibility.

And the right solutions are possible:

- a well-functioning government
- equitable distribution of resources
- free flow of information
- good relations with neighbours
- high levels of human capital
- acceptance of the rights of others
- low levels of corruption
- a sound business environment
- real opportunities for youth.

If we leave no room for exclusion, if we understand the new challenges of our era, if we work together for a more tolerant planet, I am sure there will be no room for terrorism.

A world in peace is possible. An inclusive economy is possible. Full respect of human rights is possible.