

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, DEJAN ŽIDAN, AT THE 141ST ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU), 13-15 October 2019

General debate: Strengthening international law: Parliamentary roles and mechanisms, and the contribution of regional cooperation

Distinguished Chair,
dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by congratulating the Presidency for all the good work so far and by thanking my esteemed colleague, Ms Maja Gojković, for her hospitality and important contribution to stronger parliamentary cooperation. We came here to engage in an open dialogue and, in mutual respect, seek new solutions to regional and global challenges against the backdrop of technological and geopolitical changes on an unprecedented scale.

The IPU is celebrating its 130th anniversary. In parallel, the Republic of Slovenia in this period is marking the anniversaries of several crucial events that thirty years ago significantly impacted our future as an independent country. To this day Slovenia has continued to be a steadfast advocate of the rule of law, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Our commitment to multilateralism stems from our firm believe in the principle of sovereign equality of states and progressive development of international law. We unflinchingly support this principle in this ever-changing reality which entails the value transformations of the multilateral world order based on international rules

Regional cooperation and the coordination of regional mechanisms have both proven to be an important parallel, especially in terms of security, predictability and organisation of relations. The region where we are meeting today may be a good example of the added value created by links and connections that lead to new and positive momentum in inter-state relations. This brought about a greater macroeconomic stability, faster structural reforms and the creation of a favourable investment environment. At the same time, it consolidated our joint efforts in the fight against organised crime and human trafficking, illegal migrations and corruption. Cross-border and inter-regional cooperation can potentially solve even the most difficult political issues and that is why we should actively work on strengthening such cooperation.

Our future activities have to be targeted and purposeful. Let me underline that the strengthening of the rule of law is the most relevant activity which includes the honouring of international commitments and full implementation of international court awards and decisions. We encourage the work of the International Criminal Court and we support close cooperation with the United Nations Organisation as the guardians of democratic standards. This goes beyond the fact that on the international stage the compliance with international law defends smaller nations against the bigger ones and weaker nations against the stronger ones. Upholding the rule of law is a civilisational standard that underpins the entire international order. As such, the rule of law does not have and should not have any alternative. We parliamentarians have to be fully aware of this.

The primary role of parliaments continues to be the control of how national governments transfer international commitments in their national frameworks. Democratic and transparent procedures within national political institutions boost the legitimacy and effectiveness of multilateralism that is not unrelenting. Therefore, we have to continue developing our legislative force. We have to enhance the ability of the state and state institutions so that we fulfil the expectations of people, which are ever greater and justly so. It is of fundamental importance to honour mutual commitments and cooperate with all partners on equal footing, if we want to create new trust in society – trust between nations and peoples, trust between generations, trust between men and women.

I cannot accept a reality in which the burden of environmental, economic, political and security instability is put on the shoulders of the youngest generation. The biggest global youth movement in history gives a clear warning and demands us to take urgent action to mitigate climate change and achieve the Sustainable Millennial Goals. Slovenia readily accepts its co-responsibility because we sincerely believe that only with combined efforts can we effectively manage the current global challenges.

It is up to us to respond to their demands for greater transparency and to involve the public in the parliamentary proceedings more intensely. As a consequence, this will make the work of national parliaments more open and increase the legitimacy of this work for the benefit of our peoples, societies and individuals.

Debates in various parliamentary fora clearly show that we are fully aware our share of responsibility. A clear vision of parliamentary cooperation has to be defined for this new reality – the reality which is increasingly structured and complex. The Interparliamentary Union (IPU) as the greatest organisation of parliamentarians certainly plays one of the leading roles in this process.

Dear fellow parliamentarians, I am looking forward to our further debates, ladies and gentlemen thank you for your attention.