



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Executive education parliamentary leadership seminar

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It is a great pleasure for me to be here with you today and welcome you not only to my country, Mexico, but also to this first Executive Education parliamentary leadership course which the IPU has the pleasure of organizing with the School of Social Sciences and Government of Tecnológico de Monterrey.

Allow me to sincerely thank the School of Social Sciences and Government of Tecnológico de Monterrey for its support and engagement. This is a first and unique partnership that we have developed and we look forward to this leadership seminar and to the fruits we hope it will bear.

Colleagues, I would like to thank *you* as well for having taken the time in what I know are busy agendas. Thank you for the effort made to come all the way to Mexico to learn and develop.

Unlike other professions, we members of parliament receive no or little training, and have access to very limited on-going professional development opportunities. Let us be frank as well, many members of parliament resist the idea of the need for development and learning. So your presence here today is for me a strong signal and example of your dedication to best serve the people you represent. Because this is what this all about – self-development for better performance and service to citizens.

We are all here because we believe that democracy, and parliaments, stand as *the* reference governance model around the world. But while this seems a given, the reality is that the practice of democracy is being challenged on a daily basis.

Recent years have witnessed a growing loss of faith and defiance towards governance institutions, including parliaments, which seem to face growing challenges in responding to the concerns of citizens. Coupled with rising inequalities within societies and growing tensions between countries faced with expanding demands on limited global resources, the system of governance of countries has been further pushed to deliver. Democracy in its practice, and parliament as one of its embodiment, is being challenged and called on to better respond to the needs and interests of citizens with the explicit call to leave no one behind.

Expectations placed on parliaments, and on us, parliamentarians, have also greatly evolved over the years. We are challenged in our work and powers from multiple directions. In all parts of the world, we face low levels of public trust and increasing pressure from executives. The development of alternative or parallel decision-making and public debate spaces, often facilitated by social media and IT, often side-lines, corners or limits our capacity to act. Lack of clear understanding of

citizens of our role adds another level of challenge let's be honest - we are first and foremost seen as service providers.

In addition, today's world, which is highly complex and volatile, places high requirements on leaders everywhere.

Needless to say, being a member of parliament today is not an easy job. And it requires very specific skills. It requires us to be knowledgeable, attentive, open and critical, and sensitive to people and situations, while making good use of all available information to deliver, under time pressure, practical and clearly understood solutions.

I have painted a rather grim vision of our world today and of the challenges I believe we all face as political leaders. But I truly believe in the power of leadership and in its power to trigger change for the better. I also truly believe in the importance of continuous learning and learning from one another.

The parliamentary leadership course which you will be attending this week is a golden opportunity for you to take the time to learn and share. You will have the possibility to interact with high level professors, doctors and academics who will challenge you and encourage you to enhance your skills and ways of working. You will be touching on a variety of topics - international politics, democracy, economics, human rights. I invite you to take an active part in these sessions and to share your thoughts and vision with each other.

The objective is to build skills, create knowledge and determine strategies in response to the most pressing global as well as national problems. The course should enable you to develop new ways of handling politics and citizenship, with a view to transforming society through social innovation and new collaboration models.

My hope is that you will leave Mexico with renewed commitment, engagement and motivation and with new skills, ideas and strategies to better respond to the needs of your citizens. As Heraclitus put it: "The only thing that is constant is change". We cannot escape it. I hope that this learning experience will enable you all to better respond to change, accompany it and make the best of it for the good of all.