

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to address you on this important topic.

Six months ago, the world was put on hold. How long that pause will be is still very uncertain, but sooner or later this pandemic will be behind us. I am convinced that parliaments, as safeguards for democracy, can play a vital role in facilitating a recovery which brings better societies.

Let me give you two examples on how parliaments can make a difference:

Number one: During the crisis and in hindsight it is essential that all national parliaments scrutinize and evaluate the decisions and policies of their respective government. This will deter abuse of executive power and enable us to benefit from lessons learned. This way we can protect human rights, be better prepared for new crisis and continually adjust policies to fight the virus and handle its effects.

Number two: By promoting inclusivity. Since parliaments represent the whole country and all its citizens, they can ensure that all parts of the country and all sectors of society are heard, when measures are taken to restart the economy.

Going forward, international cooperation and international solidarity will of course be key and it is important that parliaments do their part in promoting those values. Cooperation and solidarity come in many

forms. The commitment in the UN General Assembly to contribute at least 0.7 percent of GDI to official development assistance is one. Enabling free and fair trade is another. Scientific exchange – regarding the development of an effective and reliable vaccine against COVID 19 and many other matters – is a third. Taking joint action to prevent the transfer of new viruses from animals to humans is yet another.

We live in a formative era. The decisions we take now regarding the pandemic and its aftermath will in many ways shape the 2020's and the years beyond. Let us rise to the occasion as parliamentarians around the world and do our part to protect democracy, prevent depression and promote development.

Thank you.