



## PARLIAMENT OF MALAYSIA

### FIFTH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT

***"PARLIAMENTARY LEADERSHIP FOR MORE EFFECTIVE  
MULTILATERALISM THAT DELIVERS PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PEOPLE AND PLANET"***

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**SPEECH BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY DATUK AZHAR AZIZAN HARUN  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
PARLIAMENT OF MALAYSIA**

**19 – 20 AUGUST 2020  
KUALA LUMPUR**

*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*

*Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh & Good Afternoon*

**Her Excellency Ms Gabriela Cuevas Barron**  
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU);

**Mr Martin Chungong**  
Secretary-General of the IPU

Honourable Speakers and Parliamentarians;

1. Rebecca Solnit, in her book entitled *A Paradise Built in Hell* states:

*"The history of disaster," "demonstrates that most of us are social animals, hungry for connection, as well as for purpose and meaning." A truly dire situation, as tragic as it is, "drags us into emergencies that require we act, and act altruistically, bravely, and with initiative in order to survive or save our neighbours, no matter how we vote or what we do for a living."*

2. The worst of times indeed brings out the best in people.
3. In a world of complex and continuing problems, in a world full of frustrations and irritations, the Covid-19 pandemic has jolted leaders and governments across the globe. Amid the extraordinarily aversed effects of the pandemic, some nations, through executive and legislative cooperation, are able to weather the storm.
4. Today, while the world is grappling with the pandemic and attempting to find solutions to the multi-layered and multi-dimensional social and economic, and even political, after-effects that the pandemic has and may cause, a new "normal" that includes economic hardship, loss of jobs, failed businesses and abject poverty is surfacing its ugly head. That new "normal" should not, at any rate, be a normalcy. Apart from providing necessaries, aids and supports to the people, Parliamentarians are naturally there to give hope and assurance, by among others, discoursing the issues and birthing solutions in the form of policies and laws that would catalyse social and economic development that lessen the aversed impact of the pandemic, if not obliterate it altogether.

5. Parliamentarians and the Parliament, are thus, in the position to immensely contribute towards the solutions to this great adversity.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. Nelson Mandela, in his letter to his wife seven years into his incarceration, spoke of the power of hope. He articulated:

*"The man who says: I will conquer this illness and live a happy life, is already halfway through to victory. **Remember that hope is a powerful weapon even when all else is lost.**"*

7. Hope is indeed a powerful weapon. Hope is what made Mandela cling to his sanity throughout 27 years of captivity, absorbing the mental and physical torture that he was subjected to. Hope is what drives our brave frontliners to sacrifice their time and put their life on the line in the fight against the pandemic. Hope is what motivated people on the street to go out of their way to give assistance to the poor and hungry. Indeed, Parliamentarians and the Parliament should not only hope for the best but also crystalise such hope into actions that alleviate the extreme difficulties brought upon the society by the pandemic.
8. Hope, therefore is nothing without action. In terms of the functionaries of Parliamentarians and Parliament, hope must be translated into political will that drives policies that will counter the adverse effects of the pandemic and implementation of such policies in a proper and timely fashion.

Excellencies,

9. The doctrine of separation of powers postulates a triumvirate that consists of the Executive, Judiciary and last but certainly not the least, the Legislature or Parliament as part of a democratic country's administration and governance. Parliament has been described by Edmund Burke as:

*"deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole."*

10. It is the exercise of the function of the Parliament as the aforementioned "deliberative assembly" that the Parliament could contribute towards and facilitate the recovery process from the impact of the pandemic. Parliament would be the best place to deliberate on the true impact of the pandemic and on all proposals, whether in terms of policies, legislations or otherwise, designed to counter the after-effects of the same. Apart from that, Parliament could also play its role as part of a check and balance mechanism, where scrutiny of the Executive's actions in its efforts to counter the pandemic and its impact could be had.
11. Speaking of multilateralism, ASEAN, as a regional organisation, is one of the best examples of multilateral in practice. For over 50 years, ASEAN has put into practice a rule-based multilateral system. Through dialogue and consensus, it has established a framework to manage differences and has helped to build peace and mutual trust in the region. Its success is a testament to the fact that more multilateralism is needed to overcome the challenges of today.

12. Multilateralism as political consensus requires patience since the process is complicated and at times, excruciating. The process may spark discomfort among those who are involved. Nevertheless, in aiming for inclusivity that will bring us to effective multilateralism fueled by Parliamentary Leadership, this is a small price to pay.
13. In his address to the General Assembly, HE António Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General has said: *"In the face of massive, existential threats to people and planet -- but equally at a time of compelling opportunities for shared prosperity -- there is no way forward but collective, common-sense action for the common good"*.
14. Collective and common-sense action is the prevailing ethos of multilateralism. It *"is an inclusive process, where every voice is heard and no voice has more weight than the others; and, because they carry the support of all participants, decisions reached through consensus usually have more chances of being implemented"*.
15. Let us lead and be living examples by carrying the hope and faith entrusted by the people.

For democracy. For everyone.

Wabillahitaufig Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Thank You.