



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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*The Role of Parliaments in increasing the efficiency of the system of international relations and
ensuring its democratization.
BRICS Parliamentary Forum*

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Excellencies Speakers of the Parliaments of the BRICS,
Honourable parliamentarians and colleagues,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here with you in this beautiful and historic city of Saint Petersburg. First, I would like to thank you for inviting me to contribute to this discussion on the role of Parliaments in increasing the efficiency of the system of international relations and ensuring its democratization. This topic is at the very heart of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's mission and vision.

In the twenty-first century, international relations have evolved into a complex, multipolar, and multi-actor system. Various stakeholders, including parliaments, play crucial roles in shaping the system's outcomes through their intricate interactions. This system of international relations is currently under unparalleled stress and faces challenges of an existential magnitude – challenges that no individual could have imagined just a century ago: human-made climate change, the exponential growth of AI, the risk of thermonuclear warfare, pandemics of a global scale, etc.

The issues I just cited are not isolated and have little regard for borders, so their global nature demands a collective response. Indeed, as representatives of the people, lawmakers, budget holders, and overseers of governmental action, parliamentarians are not only part of this system; they are increasingly called upon to spearhead efforts to address its most demanding stressors.

As the global organization of national parliaments founded 135 years ago, the IPU is tirelessly contributing to securing a strong parliamentary dimension to a reinvigorated multilateral system. Two significant upcoming occasions highlight this commitment. The first occasion will be the United Nations Summit of the Future in September 2024. The Pact for the Future, which will be adopted at this meeting, represents a critical chance for global governance. It is expected to establish a new international consensus on how we provide a better present and secure a brighter future for generations to come. The IPU and its Members are actively lobbying to ensure that parliament's role in global governance is properly acknowledged, supported, and strengthened in this document. Thus, I highly encourage you to rally your national parliaments and foreign ministries to support our efforts.

The second occasion is the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, scheduled to take place in Geneva in July 2025. This major global event is held only once every five years, so I hope that all my fellow Speakers of Parliament will be able to participate. Over the past 25 years, Speakers' conferences have had a *leitmotif* that resonates deeply with the theme of this BRICS Parliamentary Forum: to advance strong, effective, and democratic multilateralism. In our view, parliamentarians have considerable room to exercise a constructive influence over the international system:

1. MPs and parliaments must promote accountability and democracy, ensuring that international processes are inclusive.
2. MPs can and *should* serve the noble cause of global peace and coexistence by carrying out parliamentary diplomacy. Parliamentarians must extend their hands, listen to differing perspectives, and build more peaceful, human-rights-driven, democratic societies.
3. MPs and parliaments must act as a bridge between the global and the local. They can bring the people's voice to the UN and other international forums and then help translate commitments made there into realities that benefit their constituents.

The upcoming Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament aims to renew this crucial discussion and produce an action-oriented outcome promoting democracy and multilateralism in global governance. This summit will also draw on the work of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, which seeks to close the “democracy gap” between citizens’ voices and global policymaking. The Committee has, for example, provided specific recommendations on UN Security Council Reform and the issue of bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly.

Indeed, we must never overlook the importance of gender equality. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by many of the world’s crises, from climate change to conflicts. Yes, ensuring their full participation in the international system is a matter of justice and correcting the past. But it is also a prerequisite for the international system’s democratization, effectiveness, and efficiency. The IPU has consistently championed gender equality, and I urge all of you to continue to push for greater representation of women in your legislative bodies, foreign ministries, and delegations to all international organizations – the BRICS included.

Dear friends,

I would not be able to leave this podium without elaborating a bit on the issue of parliamentary diplomacy for peace. A couple of months ago, the IPU met in Geneva for its 148th IPU Assembly and adopted the Geneva Declaration on Parliamentary Diplomacy. Our Members’ message was loud and clear: strong parliamentary diplomacy is essential for increasing peace in international affairs. Parliamentarians must accompany and complement traditional diplomacy, ensuring that efforts to negotiate peace processes, treaties, and other international agreements are rooted in the needs of the people they represent. Parliaments are also responsible for holding their governments accountable and ensuring that they follow international law at all times. Furthermore, as community and national leaders, MPs have an active role to play in de-escalating discourses that can lead to violence and hatred amongst peoples, in favour of promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

By doing so, parliamentarians can greatly contribute to abandoning outdated security concepts based on zero-sum games and bloc confrontations, which are reminiscent of an obsolete Cold War mentality. Indeed, as recognized by the entire membership of the IPU, a democratic, inclusive, and peaceful international system in the 21st century must be grounded on two very simple yet powerful concepts: **common security** – or the idea that one nation’s security cannot be achieved at the expense of another – and **human security** – or the idea that peace needs to be ingrained in absolute compassion for the human condition that speaks to the roots of conflict and leaves no one behind.

I encourage you all to utilize the opportunity of this BRICS Parliamentary Forum to exchange good practices, learn from one another, and focus on what parliaments and parliamentarians can do to bolster democracy in multilateralism and create a more tolerant, peaceful, and effective international system.

I would like once again to express my heartfelt gratitude to my friends in the Russian Federal Assembly for the invitation and the opportunity to speak before this distinguished audience. I wish you all a meeting full of positive outcomes.

Thank you.