

**Address of Mr Gundars Daudze,
Head of the Latvian National Group to IPU,
MP of the Saeima (Parliament of the Republic of Latvia)
at the General Debate on
*“Parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security
and the rule of law”***

Mr. President,
Dear Colleagues!

It is my pleasure to take part in this Debate.

Peace, security and rule of law are things of utmost importance for our societies, but we - Parliamentarians are sensors that can transform and deliver society's concerns into relevant legislative acts, which are part of sustainable solutions.

Going through the concept note we got familiar with the **failing** of global measurements of peace and rule of law.

There are several reasons for the downslide of global indexes. But unavoidable is a fact that military spending has reached its **all-time highest** since the cold war.

And continue growing at a time of peace, when security and the rule of law should diminish the necessity of global military muscle stockpiling.

Dear colleagues!

It is a clear, that there is lacking of emphasis on the key element of **reducing** the decline of our three pillars of humanity.

Education is the only build-up that has the power greater than a sword or shield. As the UN Secretary General said “we must teach our children love before others teach them hate” and only **education** can achieve that.

At the same time, it is true that **education** and **violence** are two sides of the same coin - the increase of one, likely results in the decrease of the other.

Latvia believes that education stretches further than just a diploma, but journeys into the dimensions of **culture, nonviolence** and a sense of **national** and **global awareness**.

Therefore, Latvia developed and incorporated **Joint Comprehensive National Defence System**, whose top priorities are to synergise the **institutional cooperation** and raise the **educational awareness** about concepts such as **peace, security** and **good governance** into our educational system.

In Latvia education is a right within a right.

Our legislation provides a quality **mandatory educational standard** leaving no one behind, incorporating **security** and **peace** awareness elements as early as possible, such as:

- * **politics, rights** and **human security**,
- * **media literacy** and **critical thinking of social networks systems**.

Out of school activities includes themed camps covering the subjects of national and global **history, culture, foreign policy, safety** and **lifelong learning**.

Latvian MPs have developed good practice of educational awareness due to **open parliamentary sessions, live-time nationwide broadcasting**, opportunity to engage in discussions with the MPs.

To cope with the growing demand on educational accessibility, Latvian MPs are participating in **remote district visits** to raise awareness of the **educational development** in rural areas.

Latvia is proud to share its experience on democracy enhancing initiatives, such as:

- * Educative programme in schools **“Get to know the Parliament”**,
- * **“Youth parliament”**
- * **“Shadows days”** in parliament,
- * **Educational workshops** for teenagers.

We are doing the best to prepare the next generation
**MPs to empower education in order to create a more peaceful
and more secure future.**

Dear Colleagues!

I truly believe that **democracy and freedom cannot
survive in isolation.** Therefore, we can not be indifferent to the
events occurring throughout the world.

Now more than ever we have **to pay attention to education**
– both regarding children who attend a school and those who
already have a university degree. We have to use every
opportunity for improving our skills, education and
professionalism **in order to see new opportunities where nobody
else sees them.**

Latvia has faced many tests during its existence -
but always preserved its values and confidence in the
future.

Our wealth is our people, especially young people, who are
ready to overcome difficulties and to work for the good of their
country.

I am sure that we owe to our children to teach them that
education is essential to give them the tools to succeed.

And to help them inherit their culture, history and
country - based on sound principles - **peace and democracy!**

I thank you for your attention!