

**PARLIAMENTS AS PLATFORMS TO ENHANCE EDUCATION
FOR PEACE, SECURITY AND THE RULE OF LAW**

delivered by the

**Honourable Dr Angelo Farrugia,
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Excellency Gabriela Cuevas Barron, President of the IPU

Colleagues,

Honourable Members,

We need to take lessons from its past in order to build a new and better tomorrow. One lesson learned is that, to prevent our violence-ridden history repeating itself, the values of peace, non-violence, tolerance, human rights and democracy will have to be inculcated in every person. Global efforts towards peace and reconciliation can only succeed with a collective approach built on trust, dialogue and collaboration.

The flourishing of a culture of peace will generate the mindset in us that is a prerequisite for the transition from force to reason, from conflict and violence to dialogue and peace. Culture of peace will provide the bedrock of support to a stable, progressing and prospering world for all. The need for a culture of peace is evident as we reflect on how civilization has succumbed from time to time to

the frailties of greed, egotism and xenophobia. Heinous acts have been committed under the veil of public mandates when in fact they were carried out on behalf of the few in power, be they economic, political, military or even religious. Members of radical groups adopt increasingly extreme political, economic, social, cultural, and religious ideologies and use undemocratic and violent means to achieve their objectives.

The most significant way of promoting a culture of peace is through peace education. Peace education needs to be accepted in all parts of the world, in all societies and countries as an essential element in creating a culture of peace. This role is well articulated in Sustainable Development Goal 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. To meet effectively the challenges posed by the present complexity of our time, the young of today deserves a radically different education, one that does not glorify war but educates for peace, nonviolence and international cooperation. They need all the skills and

knowledge to create and nurture peace for the individual selves as well as for the world they belong to. Quoting Nelson Mandela, “Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world”.

Education in general also helps to combat disinformation and mitigate hostile propaganda. This type of propaganda comes in many different forms and uses various tools, often tailored to match the target country’s profiles with the goal of distorting the truths, provoking doubt, dividing the country across socio-economic, cultural and religious lines and paralysing the decision-making process. These effects are also augmented through the misuse of social media. In order to contest such conflict-fuelled narratives, it is therefore crucial to raise awareness through public campaigns and educational systems to support research and documentation activities in favour of peace education.

Never has it been more important for the younger generation to learn about the world and understand its diversity. Teaching the value of tolerance, understanding and respect for diversity among students could be introduced through exposing them to various countries of the world, their geography, history and cultures. Less than a month ago, New Zealand suffered the worst terrorist attack in their history, which was solely motivated by Islamophobia. Fifty men, women and children, murdered at prayer and dozens more injured. But this is not an isolated incident. Within the same week of the Christchurch attack, two Catholic priests have been murdered in Nigeria and Cameroon respectively. The persistence and spread of extremist violence in the world, and the ambiguous connections with religion, are causes of increasing alarm and concern today. These incidents reflect continuing anti-religious and racist hate crimes that must be countered with public outcries, acts of inter-faith solidarity and ongoing education.

Students can better understand the importance of the rule of law in a democracy by investigating how it is valued and challenged in different countries around the world. Reforms to improve access to justice take many forms and are complex and fraught with challenges because the rule of law is about justice, but it is also about politics.

Parliamentary democracies should ensure that education is inclusive, affordable, and accessible. It should address inequality and exclusion and provide opportunities for previously marginalised communities. Education can help develop identities and deal with the legacies and grievances of previous conflict, improving social cohesion and moving societies towards reconciliation.

The provision of education may reduce the risk of conflict, as it can help reduce the risk of people turning to or returning to conflict and can support economic regeneration. The inclusion and education of former combatants back into society can reduce grievances and support reintegration by giving them skills needed for work,

especially by addressing social, political and cultural issues. Schools must be peaceful environments.

Poverty, lack of economic growth, corruption and bad governance are all related to a lack of education. Education is an investment in economic prosperity, the empowerment of women, and a solution to many of the world's most pressing problems.