

Statement of Ms. Mónika BARTOS, head of the Hungarian delegation
General debate of the 138th IPU Assembly

Distinguished Madame President,
Distinguished Mr. Secretary General,
My esteemed fellow representatives,

It is said that you cannot step into the same river twice. It is said that history is a linear system, it moves forward, showing development, that events in history do not repeat themselves. It is said that we learn from mistakes of the past. It is not up to me to decide the veracity of these statements. Let the philosophers ponder over this. What I do see however is that apart from wonderful and awe-inspiring moments, the history of humanity is full of long periods of crisis, which have tested both the physical and the spiritual perseverance of the societies of the time.

Crisis situations always passed and were followed by a period of calm when we were able to catch our breaths for a shorter or longer time.

However, this is not the question. The question at hand is the price that our forefathers paid to resolve the crises which threatened them. Was it war, famines, epidemics and destruction? Did peoples, nations, countries and cultures survive the storms of history or did they fall apart and sank into oblivion.

This is the question today as well. This is the question we have to ask ourselves. Do we want to survive this? Our nations, our countries, the people.

We have to know that one does not exist without the other. Nation, country community, faith and culture all represent a force for the survival of mankind.

At the same time the individuals have to serve the community to which they belong. One could contest this, but it would be useless.

There is no question about it, humanity is experiencing one of the major crises of its history.

The theme of our General Assembly is the management of the migration and refugee crisis with the help of evidence-based policy solutions. However, we have to see that migration is only a symptom and not the cause itself. Therefore, first and foremost we have to manage the phenomena causing migration.

Hungary has been emphasizing the importance of this from the outset and has been actively contributing to a rational solution within the framework of international development and humanitarian assistance. We consider it important to create conditions that allow people to stay in their land of birth and not be forced to leave their country.

We are lending assistance and effective support in the format of multi- and bilateral cooperation in numerous domains using the tools available under the auspices of the “Hungary helps” program. Just a few highlights:

- Hungary has been supporting the work of the UN’s World Food Programme.
- We have supported the European Union Trust Fund for Africa, the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis and the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey.
- We have contributed to a partial reconstruction of housing destroyed in Telskuf in Iraq. This provided assistance to more than 1,300 Iraqi Christians and thanks to it, some 200 Christian families could return to their homes. In addition, we are supporting the Saint Joseph Hospital in Erbil, covering the cost of pharmaceutical supplies for a period of six months.
- A Catholic school will be constructed in Erbil, thanks to support

from Hungary, where 600 Catholic and Muslim pupils will study together. Hungarian Interchurch Aid opened a local office in Erbil, Iraq with a view to coordinating the swift and efficient delivery of assistance.

- The Hungarian Government has appropriated funds for the realisation of numerous projects in Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan.
- We are assisting refugees returning to the Nineveh Plains.
- The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta launched a healthcare and psycho-social program in Lebanon and the Hungarian Government is funding the reconstruction of churches there.
- We donated medical equipment to the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem.
- The Hungarian Government facilitated the rehabilitation of victims of the terrorist attack on 11th December 2016 in Cairo. Let me take this opportunity to express my sympathy to families of the casualties and to the injured victims.
- We were pleased to contribute to the realisation of the Visibility-Water/Sanitation water development program in Kinshasa. The development project has resulted in a direct improvement in conditions for 750 people and an indirect improvement for a further 15,000 residents.
- Beyond all the above, we are participating in international military missions with a view to securing the stability of crisis zones.
- We have created the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship program. 45% of the young students are arriving from countries of regions affected by the migration crisis. In addition, we launched the „Scholarship for Christian Young People” in September 2017. Students coming from Nigeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan and Israel have already begun their studies. Both scholarship programs enable students from developing countries or crisis areas to return home after their studies and actively contribute to the development of their countries

My esteemed fellow representatives,

We, Members of Parliament have come to Geneva to consider the available evidence and offer suggestions for the management of the migration and refugee crisis. Unfortunately, the facts and the conclusions in the Global Compact for Migration do not reflect the Hungarian experience, therefore we do not agree with them.

At the same time Hungary is an active player of the international community, showing solidarity and responsibility in efficiently managing global challenges.

Esteemed fellow representatives,

A few minutes ago, I started by raising the question, whether we could learn from mistakes of the past or if humanity was always going to step into the same river.

We also have to respond to the question about our resolve to protect our nations, cultures and everything that has been entrusted to our care.

Hungary's response to this is: yes. And we will do our utmost to also help others in this.

I thank you for listening to me.