

Mr President,  
Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Speakers,  
Honourable Delegates,

It is an honour for me, on behalf of the House of Representatives of Malta, to address this Assembly in Istanbul under a theme that speaks directly to the conscience of our time: nurturing hope, securing peace and ensuring justice for future generations.

This is not merely a theme for reflection. It is a call to responsibility.

For decades, the international community has spoken the language of peace, justice and human dignity. Yet too often, those suffering on the ground still wait for the protection we promise, the justice we proclaim, and the peace we repeatedly endorse.

And so, our task today is clear: to move from words of decades into action.

Malta comes to this Assembly as a small state, but with a strong sense of principle and responsibility. Our history and our geography have taught us that peace is never distant, instability is never abstract, and justice can never be selective.

As a Mediterranean country, Malta believes firmly in multilateralism, in dialogue over violence, in international law, and in the dignity of every human person. We remain convinced that peace cannot rest on indifference, that security cannot be separated from justice, and that diplomacy must always remain anchored in conscience.

This is why Malta continues to support a rules-based international order, stronger multilateral cooperation, and a just peace in conflict areas, including through continued support for the Two-State Solution, and for a permanent solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and for peace founded on sovereignty, security, legality and human dignity.

But if we are serious about future generations, we must understand peace in its fullest meaning.

Peace is not only the absence of war.  
Peace is the presence of justice.  
Peace is the protection of civilians.  
Peace is the strength of institutions.  
Peace is the confidence that law still matters.

This is where parliaments have a decisive role.

Parliaments do not exist merely to observe history. We help shape it. We legislate, scrutinise, approve resources, demand accountability, and give democratic legitimacy to national and international action. If peace is to be durable, then parliamentary responsibility must be real.

In my own work within the Inter-Parliamentary Union, including through efforts connected to the promotion of respect for international humanitarian law, I have consistently upheld one essential principle: law must not remain declaratory; it must be implemented, and it must

always be subject to checks and balances. The real value of international norms is measured not by how often they are quoted, but by how faithfully they are enforced, especially when circumstances become difficult. Oversight must always be present.

Important progress has been made.

Parliaments have strengthened their voice in defending humanitarian principles. Greater attention has been given to the protection of civilians, to accountability, to post-conflict recovery, and to the need for parliamentary diplomacy as an instrument of peace.

Yet we must also say with honesty: it is not enough. Much more needs to be done!

The gap between commitment and implementation remains too wide. International humanitarian law is too often defended in principle and neglected in practice — or worse, ignored altogether. Too many civilians continue to suffer because institutions speak with urgency only after tragedy has already struck.

So what must now be done?

First, parliaments must exercise serious and continuous scrutiny in matters related to peace, conflict, security and humanitarian responsibility.

Second, international commitments must be translated more effectively into national legislation, public policy and institutional practice.

Third, we must invest more in prevention — through dialogue, education, inclusion, parliamentary diplomacy and early engagement — rather than waiting for crisis to become catastrophe.

Fourth, justice must be understood broadly. Future generations will not inherit peace if they inherit lawlessness, exclusion, poverty, environmental decline and institutional mistrust.

And fifth, we must act with consistency. We cannot defend international law selectively and expect future generations to believe in it universally.

How is this to be done?

By courage in public life.

By discipline in governance.

By aligning policy with principle.

By ensuring that resolutions lead to implementation.

By making accountability a habit, not an exception.

And by placing the human person at the centre of every decision we take.

Malta will continue to do its part, as it always has.

We will continue to support peace through dialogue.

We will continue to defend the rule of law.

We will continue to speak for multilateral cooperation.

And we will continue to insist that the work of parliaments does not end when declarations are adopted; it begins when those declarations are honoured in practice.

As the UNESCO Constitution wisely reminds us: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.” And, in words that resonate deeply across cultures and faiths, the Quran says: “stand firm for justice.”

That is the duty before us.

Not simply to praise peace, but to build it.

Not simply to invoke justice, but to uphold it.

Not simply to speak for future generations, but to act in ways worthy of them.

Let this Assembly show that parliaments are still capable not only of expressing the hopes of humanity, but of advancing them.

Thank you.