

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**REMARKS TO THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION 125th ASSEMBLY
Bern, 16 October 2011**

Your Excellency Micheline Calmy-Rey, President of the Swiss Confederation,
Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, President of the IPU,
Distinguished Parliamentarians,

Thank you for your leadership and warm welcome.

I understand that this is your 125th Assembly. That is a milestone, by any standard. Please accept my congratulations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations Charter begins with the words, “We the Peoples.” That is why, wherever I go, I seek out Parliamentarians.

You represent the peoples’ voice ... the peoples’ hopes ... the peoples’ will.

Today, too many of our citizens live in fear. Too many are paralyzed by uncertainty, angry at their diminished prospects.

Here in Europe, governments are grappling with a deep financial crisis.

Around kitchen tables and in public squares, people are asking:

Who will deliver for my family and my community?

Governments everywhere are confronting huge budget pressures.

But the biggest challenge is not a deficit of resources; it is a deficit of trust.

People are losing faith in governments and institutions to do the right thing.

Today, I would like to talk about how we can reduce that trust deficit.

We can do so only through concerted and united action — action that shows real understanding of the challenges before us.

In September at the UN General Assembly, I set forth my vision for the way ahead. I identified a set of generational opportunities to shape the world of tomorrow by the decisions we make today. All are opportunities to restore the peoples’ trust

Let me briefly touch on three of the most immediately pertinent.

First, sustainable development — the United Nation's top priority for the coming years.

Before the month is out, we will welcome the 7 billionth member of our global family.

That underscores what I call the 50-50-50 challenge.

In the first 50 years of this century, the earth's population will increase by 50 percent. At the same time, we need to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent to avert a climate change disaster.

As we look to next year's United Nations' Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio, I count on you — Parliamentarians everywhere — to help drive progress.

In an era of fiscal austerity, we must be sure our solutions are real solutions — that they make a measurable difference in the daily lives of real people. And we must do that with the most efficient and effective use of our scarce resources.

That means connecting the dots. We must work at the inter-connections between climate change, water scarcity and the food and energy crises. Solutions to one problem must be solutions to many.

The world's developing economies are a vital source of global dynamism. With a new emphasis on sustainable development, we can lock-in that dynamism for future generations.

A second way we can reduce the trust deficit — by standing together for democracy, human rights and peace.

This was a year of remarkable advances. We heard the peoples' call — in Côte d'Ivoire, South Sudan, North Africa and beyond.

Now, we must do our utmost to help these nations in transition.

And we must put new emphasis on preventive diplomacy to preserve peace and build healthy democracies elsewhere.

Third, women make up half the world's population. They represent even more of its unrealized potential. In many ways, women are the world's next emerging economy.

We must expand the women's role in every sphere. And that means in parliament, too.

Here's the good news: 28 countries now have at least 30 percent women's representation in parliament.

But that also means we have more than 160 countries to go.

And we cannot neglect our youth. Earlier today, I met with an extraordinary group of young people from North Africa and the Middle East. It is no exaggeration to say that they helped change the world.

Since the dawn of the Arab Spring, young people around the world have taken to the streets, demanding greater opportunities to participate in economic and political life.

Their future is our future. Let us listen to them, lest the coming decades be marked by an instability and alienation that undermine our prospects for peace, security and prosperity for all.

Ladies and gentlemen,

These challenges, and more, should be on the agenda when leaders of the world's 20 largest economies gather in Cannes next month.

I will be there – and my message will be clear: the world needs the G20 to live up to its full potential.

Above all, this means taking the long view ... looking beyond national borders and interests ... uniting to do everything necessary to resolve the financial crisis.

We cannot afford to fail. The time for haggling over incremental steps is over. Now is the moment for bold and decisive action.

The 2008 G20 summit in London showed the way. Then, leaders agreed to a creative and ambitious plan to stabilize the global financial system.

Today, the G20 must be no less ambitious. It must be imaginative in considering innovative new means of financing development and renewable energy for all.

The world's new economic powers must shoulder their full share of responsibility for the health of the global financial system. In our new world of constant change and transformation, everyone has something to give — everyone has something to gain.

The G20 put development on its agenda last year in Seoul. Now is the moment to advance that pro-poor agenda across the Millennium Development Goals.

Again and again, we have proved that investing in women's and children's health yields outsized returns. Our march to eliminate deaths from malaria by 2015 is on track. Now is not the moment to give up or slide backwards.

And ultimately, we also know this: there can be no sustainable development ... no sustainable prosperity for anyone ... unless we confront the realities of climate change.

The leaders of the largest economies – all of them – must re-dedicate themselves to securing a comprehensive, ambitious climate change agreement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Seven billion people look to us.

They look to us for solutions to the world's great challenges. They want action on the bread-and-butter issues that matter to them and their children.

Around the world, I hear people say: yes, economic adjustment will be necessary.

But do not adjust our hopes. Do not adjust our children's dreams.
Too often in our public debates, we seem to give the least heed to the people and problems that need us most — the young, the poor and the planet.

The decisions we make today must lay the foundations for a healthy, inclusive economic prosperity for all the world.

Let's start building that future today.

Now is the moment.