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Dear excellencies,
Dear fellow parliamentarians,
Dear distinguished guests,

It is an honor for me to address you today on behalf of more than 300 parliamentarians from 56 nations in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. I want to sincerely thank the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations for organizing this conference to consider the role of parliaments in supporting and realizing the new Sustainable Development Goals.

Millennium Development Goals were meant to brighten our future -- much the same way as the OSCE's founding principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act 40 years ago. In essence, we are talking about committing ourselves to adhere to common rules and objectives. In short, to keep our word.

However, today's world is as complex as ever and dramatic events are shaping our political and physical environment -- quite often in a negative way. There are powers that operate in order to disrupt the international system by carrying out their cruel operations: Geopolitics is taking over.

One could say that the means of governments and parliaments are local, and at the same time, international organizations are unable to reform themselves. In parallel, values and norms such as human rights and democracy are called into question by some.

Now, the people are asking us: Why are we adrift? Where are we heading to? The role of the parliaments -- of us -- is twofold:

- First, to influence our governments and to exercise the highest decision-making in our respective countries.
- Second, to explore efficient ways of parliamentary dialogue and co-operation in order to influence global and regional crises.

It is my proposition that a project towards more efficient and comprehensive co-operation between international parliamentary organizations should be launched as soon as possible.

The people are expecting adequate answers from us. We need to see where we are going and navigate accordingly, no matter how hard it seems to be at times.

Are we moving towards more a secure world, with SDGs taken seriously, or are we moving towards more confrontation or even war?

The answer to that question depends on us and on our ability to deepen our co-operation and to tolerate each other in order to secure peaceful and humane international development.

Thank you.