

**SPEECH BY MR. FERNANDO CORDERO CUEVA, SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY OF ECUADOR, AT THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF THE 128<sup>TH</sup> IPU  
ASSEMBLY**

Fellow citizens,

In my capacity as Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Ecuador, I am very pleased to welcome the distinguished representatives of the Member Parliaments and Associate Members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which will hold its 128<sup>th</sup> Assembly from today until Wednesday, 27 March, in our capital and yours – Quito - a world heritage site.

The honour I have been bestowed on this occasion attests to the unflinching work of the National Assembly to turn into concrete actions the strategic directions, mission and goals which our parliaments have set themselves for the next five-year period through their struggle for peace, for consolidating and strengthening formal and genuine democracy, for defending the rule of law and justice and for guaranteeing respect for human rights, ever ready to challenge our daily actions with radically inclusive policies that promote integration, **but above all, with transformational policies.**

As parliamentarians, we have witnessed and continue to witness in the most varied and different spheres of social co-existence the problems and negative consequences of the current global economic and political system, which has deepened poverty and increased inequalities, environmental disasters, insecurity, exclusion and, on more than one occasion, has purported to and still purports to justify armed interventions that have sown terror and caused bloodshed in the name of world peace.

Yet in spite of those who defend the status quo and their orthodox economists, who continue to justify these realities as mere “lags” or “side effects” of a world order they have been presenting for some decades now as the only reasonable and indisputable argument to build the best of worlds, it is a useful exercise to compare these expressions with those of persons who consider that injustice, inequality and exclusion are based on the unequal distribution that today characterizes the global economy.

Ziegler defines it as “murderous” and “absurd”.

Eduardo Galeano says that this unjust world order "has become a madhouse and a slaughterhouse".

Octavio Paz said "History has the cruel reality of a nightmare and the grandeur of humans consists of their making beautiful lasting works out of the real substance of that nightmare. Or in other words, it consists of transforming the nightmare into vision, in freeing ourselves from the shapeless horror of reality -- if only for an instant -- by means of creation." Galeano hits the nail on the head when he says "But the real author of the planetary panic is called the Market. This gentleman does not have anything to do with that intimate place in the barrio where one goes in search of fruits and vegetables. He is an omnipotent faceless terrorist who is everywhere, like God, and, like God, he is believed to be eternal. His numerous exponents announce: 'The Market is nervous,' and they warn: 'The Market cannot be annoyed.' His thick criminal file renders him fearsome. He has spent his lifetime stealing food, assassinating jobs, holding countries hostage and manufacturing wars".

Make no mistake about the possibility of creating a new global model. We all have the **opportunity** and indeed the **obligation** to properly identify the causes of the crisis and to take collective action to eliminate them and give rise to purposeful growth, coherent growth, growth that aims to eliminate poverty, that proposes new forms of creating and distributing social wealth, growth that attributes to the market its own role, but which explores new forms of the economy that today underlie our societies. We can only hope that such growth will also give the State new roles so that it may make better use of strategic resources and regulate this "power of the market" that often confuses its role as the Hungarian philosopher Karl Polanyi pointed out over 50 years ago: **"the market is a good servant but a bad master"**.

It is time to seek, as Ecuador and other Latin American countries have been doing, an alternative model that focuses on "buen vivir" (well-being); this is purposeful growth that respects four basic and intrinsic balances:

1. The balance between man and his inner self, inescapable today insofar as ways of becoming alienated such as drug addiction and alcoholism among others are expanding at break-neck speed and are already affecting large portions of the population at the global level.
2. The balance among men, which requires democratizing law-making and assisting the neediest sectors in order to reduce economic and social inequalities, while at the

same time fostering integration in economic and social life of the most destitute sectors of our countries.

3. The balance between the communities of men that promote solidarity and complementarity leading to peace; it is a demand which today is imperative in the light of ever increasing economic, political, social, even armed inter-State and international conflicts.
4. The balance between man and nature, establishing rights of nature as enshrined in the Constitution of Ecuador, the first in the world to do so. This is an unavoidable duty given the grave and growing incidence of environmental disturbances at the global level, such as alternating flooding and drought, global warming as manifested in melting glaciers, and pollution, to name but a few of the major effects of this approach that considers nature as a mere economic resource rather than "the only home in which human life is possible".

Therefore, as part of the broader responsibility that is incumbent to all of you, we have decided to meet in the middle of the world to debate over the coming days the real possibilities of moving from **"Unrelenting growth to purposeful development (buen vivir)"** and to find **"new approaches, new solutions"**. This thought-provoking theme invites us to reflect not only on alternative models of development, but also on the role parliaments must play in these and other circumstances that our times impose on us.

The crises of political representation affecting all of the world's parliaments to varying degrees must be overcome with new paradigms that bring into question the very foundations of those democracies that are sustained by supposed balances based on competing struggles and powers for increasingly coherent democracies founded on the trust of the electorate, who demand government teams at all times. These are teams that, without failing to capitalize on the separation of powers of the State in order to be more efficient and effective, hope that the democratically elected authorities will be able to resolve difficulties and problems within a reasonable time, without betraying the trust of the electorate or undermining sustainable solutions through demagoguery.

Seen from another perspective, it is worth mentioning that the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as the premier permanent, global forum, has maintained close ties with the mission, objectives, system and action of the United Nations. But we should not assume that that is the only

formula possible for debating and settling conflicts. Indeed, the time has come for all of us to recognize the importance and significance of regional mechanisms in order to guarantee peace, security and human rights. Our geopolitical groups require not only greater visibility within the Inter-Parliamentary Union, but, above all, greater support in order to realize their aspirations of integration and collective action.

The time has come for the parliaments of the world to mobilize in order to help create new political and economic conditions globally so as to do away with this unequal economic growth and give rise to new relationships nurtured in justice, equity, solidarity and respect for the self-determination of peoples.

Based on this understanding, which is a prerequisite for rendering parliamentary action meaningful at the international level, and which by its very nature should seek the interests of peoples, I appeal to all those present to commit to this debate and above all, to commit to the search for new approaches and solutions to the major problems facing nations individually and the world at large.

I vouch for the success of this 128<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union since Ecuador and Latin America organized it. I say this not so much as a mechanical promise that is part of an institutional process, but rather **as an ethical possibility to grow as sovereign States, to become stronger as an Organization and, at the same time, to become greater human beings in the service of our societies.**

Fellow citizens,

Thank you very much.