

137th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
(Saint Petersburg, 14-18 October 2017)

Honourable chairperson,

Distinguished Colleagues,

I am particularly honoured to speak today and I would like to express my sincere gratitude for having had the opportunity to bring the contribution of the Republic of San Marino to this important debate, which places our country at the heart of an open debate on inter-religious dialogue among different cultures and faiths for the promotion of peace.

It is not possible that people are enemies only because they are different. Politicians have the responsibility to promote knowledge of the essential aspects of political, humanistic and religious culture, to build bridges of love, justice and forgiveness. We must not be afraid of dialogue. When the desire for dialogue among religions prevails, it can bring an exceptional contribution towards settling disputes, working for peaceful purposes, achieving a stable peace among States and peoples, even in areas with a history of wars and conflicts. Pope Francis rightly said: *“We desire that men and women of different religions may everywhere gather and promote harmony, especially where there is conflict. Our future consists in living together”*.

We must therefore dialogue with people different from us, and consider them not as a "*threat*" to our identity, but rather as a value and a source that can only enrich us. A true dialogue among religions, without prejudice, does not lead to the loss of their core features but helps rediscover and enhance what unites them, while preserving their diversities and peculiarities.

By its nature, San Marino has always opened its doors to dialogue with strong determination, rejecting war and violence, thanks to the action carried out within the United Nations and the Council of Europe, of which it is an active member.

The Republic firmly believes that the only way to react to the building of walls is to build bridges of dialogue; this will unite and will also contribute to the international debate, in order to be mediators among different religions and cultures. Our country must continue to play this role together with schools and education, by accepting different cultures, in order to spread respect for one another, to offer young generations strategies for an inclusive life and recognising others as chances for growth. For this reason, it is very important that politicians promote moments of dialogue aimed at spreading love for diversity and respect for other people, in all their uniqueness and richness.

Thank you

