



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



CYPRVS AETERNA

**4<sup>TH</sup> WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York, 31 August to 2 September 2015**

*(Convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in cooperation with the United Nations)*

**Placing Democracy at the Service of Peace and Sustainable Development:  
Building the World the People Want**

Speech by H.E. Mr. Yiannakis L. Omirou,  
President of the House of Representatives  
of the Republic of Cyprus

Mr. President,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our debate here, at the General Assembly Hall of the UN Headquarters in New York, reflects how different our world is today compared to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were launched.

In the last fifteen years, the world has witnessed major political and social changes, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. Europe is undergoing an unprecedented in modern times financial crisis and other structural changes, while at the same time many developing countries are still experiencing poverty in all its forms. Increasing challenges, which call for careful and responsible conduct, still remain: vulnerable democracies, climate change, sustainable management of natural resources, terrorism and other universal issues. Challenges, which call for concerted action and renewed involvement.

At the same time, we are also considering new ways to support development. More actors are involved in the process of creating sustainable development, while other international stakeholders involved in climate change and environment issues are pursuing similar agendas and initiatives.

This, in a nutshell, constitutes the world picture we have before us today. Based on this picture, we are called to design an ambitious post-2015 development agenda, which will be universal and have poverty eradication and sustainable development at its core. Towards this end, every country and every region around the globe must engage in the common efforts underway, to achieve an agreed Declaration on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), at the upcoming UN Summit.

The IPU can significantly and decisively contribute in this course of action. Our organization should remain focused on poverty, inequality and migration issues, while continuing to address other common challenges which affect the lives of all countries and peoples. In this context, we fully support the text of the Draft Declaration, to be adopted and presented to the UN Summit later this month.

The new agenda should tackle key global challenges in the years to come while at the same time bring together the three dimensions of sustainable development<sup>1</sup>. The new goals should be global in nature and collectively applicable to all countries, limited in number, action oriented, easy to communicate and linked to concrete targets and indicators. In this context, the goals should embrace the multidimensional nature of well-being, go beyond GDP figures and take into account the wider perception of assessing quality of life.

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<sup>1</sup> 1. Eradication of poverty, 2. Respect for human rights, equality and justice, 3. Environment and sustainability of natural resources.

A truly transformative post-2015 development agenda cannot be realized without full enjoyment of human rights, adherence to the rule of law and good governance. These fundamental principles constitute the backbone of peace and stability within and among countries and they are preconditions for achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Regrettably, the failure of the international community to uphold international law and respect of human rights has proven detrimental to mankind on many occasions. The case of my own country, Cyprus, is revealing of the shortages in international cooperation and global accountability, as 41 years after the invasion of Cyprus by Turkish troops, my country's people are still suffering the consequences of the violation of their basic human rights. Despite numerous UN Resolutions and other international and European decisions, Turkey has not been held accountable to this date for its crimes in Cyprus and its continuing occupation of over a third of the island.

Coming back to the main focus of our debate, I must stress that it is time to translate rhetoric into action. We need to demonstrate our strong political will, as our people expect and request us to. Significant advances have already been achieved, but we have also witnessed important setbacks. However, we have all faced challenges in the past. What we must do, is to remain determined to pursue and achieve our goals.

The IPU has a pivotal role to play in global efforts towards our new development agenda. Efforts, which will be best facilitated by conditions of world peace, democracy, respect for human rights and international law, supplemented by a solid commitment to eradicate poverty and foster development in the most vulnerable regions of our world.

Thank you for your attention.