

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL JENČA

--

**DRAFT REMARKS FOR THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE
FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY
& THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY**

Bratislava, 3 September 2016

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to address this Interparliamentary Conference. Let me begin by emphasizing the crucial role of parliamentarians to foster an environment conducive to addressing foreign policy and security challenges in Europe and globally. The United Nations and the international community face an unprecedented number of global conflicts and transnational challenges. The United Nations counts on Europe and we count on you, as parliamentarians, to continue your commitment to accountability and fundamental universal values.

Wars between states have become rare. Unfortunately, after decades of decline, intra-state conflict is, again, on the rise. Conflicts in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan and elsewhere continue to cause widespread instability, displacement, suffering and destruction. Many countries face repeated cycles of turmoil and civil wars are no longer contained by national borders.

Conflicts breed where there is poor governance, human rights abuses and grievances over the unequal distribution of resources, wealth and power. Tensions simmer where people are excluded, marginalised and denied meaningful participation in the political and social life of their countries.

One of the core priorities of the United Nations has been improving its ability to act early and to act preventively. Central to the UN Charter is the belief that cooperation and partnerships are essential for preventing and resolving conflict, protecting human rights and achieving a better world for all.

The United Nations and the European Union share common values and strive tirelessly for the peaceful collective management of security challenges to avoid conflict. The EU has long been a champion for preventing conflict – integrating peace, security and development. And firmly recognising that neither peace nor sustainable development can be achieved without respect for human rights.

The strategic partnership between the European Union and the United Nations runs deep.

In Cyprus, for example, the UN and EU work very closely together. Under the auspices of the Secretary-General's good offices mission to Cyprus and in close coordination with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, the European Union is bringing its expertise and knowledge to the table to support the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides to address issues that are key for the implementation of a settlement.

We benefit from Europe taking a prominent global role – outward looking to address challenges to peace and security.

I am heartened by the EU Global Strategy's identification of the UN as a core partner, as well as its commitment to a "rules-based global order with...the United Nations at its core".

Excellencies,

Last year, the United Nations reviewed its efforts to achieve the very goals the Organization was founded upon: the maintenance of international peace and security.

The reviews of UN peace operations, of the Peacebuilding Architecture and of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security unanimously called for more emphasis on conflict prevention, closer cooperation with regional organizations and a stronger role of women in peace processes.

In all three aspects, the European Union is an important partner of the United Nations.

I am pleased to note that the United Nations and the European Union continue to jointly advance gender mainstreaming and to integrate the issue of women, peace and security in all aspects of our work on peace and security.

Excellencies,

Today's conference takes place at an important moment, when the world is striving to get a strong start in implementing the landmark agreements reached last year by Member States of the United Nations: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development; the Paris Agreement on climate change; and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our shared challenge is to translate these promises into tangible gains that benefit all people. This requires robust political leadership. The new framework is universal; it applies to all countries so as to leave no one behind. Even the most developed countries have yet to fully empower women, to safeguard the environment and to conquer inequality.

Parliamentarians have a particular role to play in delivering on the goals. You pass the legislation that will implement the sustainable development goals and that will combat climate change. And you are also an important voice to see that delivery remains on track.

At the end of September, leaders will gather in New York at the United Nations for the annual High-Level Debate of the General Assembly. This year, leaders will agree on the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, to strengthen our global efforts to address large movements on refugees and migrants.

War, systematic human rights violations, poverty, climate change and natural disasters are leading more people to leave their homes than at any other time in history.

Large movements can be managed sustainably with compassion and commitment. But as long as only few countries and communities are required to shoulder this global responsibility, suffering will continue and polarization will increase.

The efforts in Europe to forge a common European and global response to large movements of refugees and migrants are commendable - as are all efforts to ensure greater responsibility sharing among European States and globally. However, they have not yet led to a truly common approach.

And even as we strive together to respond to the symptoms and consequences, we must also, together, address the root causes of conflict and persecution that are forcing so many hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes in the first place. The strong cooperation between the UN and EU on conflict prevention that I described earlier is critical to address the root causes that underpin displacement.

We must also continue to work together to support communities and countries to be able to host the large number of arrivals. And we all need to be steadfast in opposing xenophobia, discrimination and violence.

Excellencies

In outlining global security challenges, we must address more comprehensively the growing threat of terrorism around the world. We are firm in our belief that the UN and Europe's common commitment to human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence will be the true and lasting response to hatred and violence.

The United Nations has been stepping up its counter-terrorism efforts, in particular the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT). The United Nations has also further increased its cooperation with the European Union in key areas of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The Secretary-General recently presented a United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. This Plan of Action calls on Member States to address more systematically the underlying conditions conducive to terrorism, particularly in regard to preventing the spread of violent extremism which is fuelling terrorism around the world. Relevant United Nations and the European Union bodies will be meeting later this year to review how they can further strengthen their collaboration in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

Excellencies,

Europe is experiencing an array of historic challenges and opportunities. Parliamentarians have a rare opportunity to lead an open, honest debate and build consensus on the way forward that best serves the long-term interests of your countries and the Continent.

Parliaments embody a diversity of opinions, checks and balances, critical thinking, innovative ideas and self-reflection, which Europe needs more than ever.

It is time for a new era of stronger collaboration. When combined actions come too late, the consequences can be measured in terrible loss of life, grave human suffering and tremendous loss of credibility to global and regional institutions.

The UN counts on Parliaments in Europe to keep the issue of international peace and security high on the agenda.

Thank you.