



Speech

**IPU General Assembly, The Netherlands,
Kim Putters**

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Mister President, dear colleagues,

The delegation of The Netherlands would like to thank the people of Ecuador for their warm welcome and hospitality. Their friendliness and openness show that the most important things in life can be said with just a few words...!

Let me start by stating the recognition of our delegation that we need to change our thinking on economic growth, sustainable development and bringing human rights into practice. The paradigm of unlimited growth does not last. We have known that for decades now. We agreed on change in Treaties on development goals, human rights and sustainability. Yet, action lacks too much, worldwide. We see its consequences for our environment, our health status and the accessibility of vital social services and natural resources. So, the question is how do we effectively redirect the growth paradigm into a sustainable perspective on wellbeing?

We will not succeed by denying what economic growth has brought us in terms of welfare, innovation and new chances for a better life. Overall we have reached a higher level of life



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expectancy and quality of life all around the World. Although some people profit more, the growth paradigm has brought us gains and higher standards. And also today, creating jobs is essential, especially for women and young people. Too many of them, in Europe increasingly, are jobless or lose their jobs at this moment. Work is essential for participation and wellbeing. Economic growth is a crucial condition for that.

Yet, we need new principles to guide this growth towards economies that support participation of all, that lead to sustainable development, and that support human rights and Democracy instead of excluding groups of people. Especially in times of financial and economic crisis, as we face in Europe at the moment.

According to the Dutch delegation this change should be guided by the following **5 principles:**

1. Each individual citizen holds his or her own responsibility for what can be influenced in terms of wellbeing. We feel that everyone also holds responsibility for their social relationships in terms of families, friends and communities. This is essential because we cannot only expect efforts of our governments or markets to change the perspectives of growth into a perspective of wellbeing. It starts small, with each and everyone ourselves.
2. The principle of shared responsibility holds on an international level as well. The developed



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and developing countries should cooperate, but not only by funding or investments of the developed countries. Equal partnership in trade and development is the way for open dialogue and respectful cooperation between governments and with businesses. The WTO meeting in Indonesia in the end of this year must, in this respect, be decisive on fair trade, clean production of goods and proper use of energy.

3. Sustainable development and wellbeing should be the goal of public-private partnerships and can be reached by developing and promoting innovations, especially in trade. The development of new and clean technologies and sustainable food production is essential. All international treaties and development goals on these issues should therefore finally be implemented by all.
4. Combining trade and development is not about promoting an unrealistic responsibility for governments providing all social services and fully securing peoples' wellbeing. It is not about an unlimited or uncontrolled role for markets and commercial interests either. It is about sharing social responsibility in the context of regulated markets.
5. Wellbeing needs respecting all human rights and democracy everywhere. Without freedom of expression and association, without press freedom, without access to social media, without equal rights for sexual minorities



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without equal rights for man and women and without the protection of young children being abused, peoples' wellbeing is way out of reach. In this respect we would like to ask your attention for the good work of the UN independent review group (**iERG**), with important statements on strengthening the voices and position of women and children. The way to strengthen the commodities for a better life for women and children asks for reflection and action of the IPU and support from all our parliaments.

Mr President! What is our conclusion, after having listened well to you, fellow Parliamentarians and other speakers, during this IPU conference?

Yes, capitalism aimed at unlimited growth has had its negative consequences for our environment and the allocation of wellbeing around the World. But, this conclusion has to be drawn for socialism in its extremes as well. It makes no sense what so ever to accuse countries or parts of the World suggesting or revenging their capitalist hostility or socialist suppression. It is of no use at all to offend fellow Parliamentarians and their countries while our common interest is an open dialogue and looking for cooperation, preventing the misuse of old doctrines.

The Netherlands urges for this **open dialogue** and will intend to proceed it with respect for each other's values and cultures, but at the same time standing for what we believe in. In our perspective



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the time has come to increasingly create public private partnerships in trade and development, helping and holding each other to millennium development goals and strengthening Democracy by assuring human rights, guarding the rights of minorities and full freedom of expression and press. This will benefit all in transforming the paradigm of unlimited growth to responsible citizenship and wellbeing of all.

It is our public responsibility, as Parliamentarians, to urge our governments to make these changes happen. Change starts with acknowledging our role in this process. We represent the people, not by taking over citizens' responsibility for their own wellbeing, but supporting them in sharing responsibility for a sustainable society with involved and empowered people.

Thank you very much for your attention.