

**Address to the General Debate on “Parliamentarians in Dialogue with Religion and Belief”,
Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue: *Strengthening Trust and
Embracing Hope for Our Common Future*, 19 June 2025, Rome, Italy**

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As a representative of the international non-governmental organization Globethics Foundation in Geneva which is focused on advancing ethical leadership and promoting responsible governance globally by providing ethical knowledge and skills I would like to bring three major points to the attention of this esteemed body, followed by a short concluding reflection:

The world cries out for responsible religious leaders articulating common ethical values for peace, justice and integrity across all dividing national, religious and cultural lines. Religious leaders always present both their local and regional communities, but also the universal ethical message of their respective religions which stand for mercy, justice, peace and solidarity. Therefore the, despite the deep divides that can exist between communities for political reasons, religious leaders are expected, while being in solidarity with their communities and their needs and longings, to speak up and defend the universal values of human dignity, fraternity, justice and peace. These values constitute the important common ground for humanity to preserve dialogue and possibilities for collaboration and reconciliation even in situations of grave tensions.

Secondly, current global circumstances and changes see an unprecedented increase of the number and intensity of conflicts, of horrific atrocities leading to enormous sufferings among civilians and an erosion of the respect for international law and multilateral cooperation. The very functioning of the international order of peace which as established after the Second World War is put into question. In this global emergency an urgent common action for peace is needed with fresh ideas and methods to prevent a further escalation and to put an end to grave sufferings. One of the elements of this new type of engagement is the need for multistakeholder collaboration (as stated in Action 55 in the UN “Pact for the Future” and especially between faith and civil society leaders and law- and policymakers. Hence, we recommend the IPU leadership role in this field, with the Marrakesh conference and this conference in Rome as solid base. We encourage IPU to further develop this process, that Globethics is ready to support and to partner with.

Thirdly, within this gloomy period, we need a trajectory of hope to offer a better perspective for the young and for future generations and revitalize the sense of our human unity. More than 40 Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious leaders with peace experts recently met at the invitation of Wilton Park, Globethics, and the UK embassy to the Holy See, in collaboration with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The outcome of their discussion is a statement with 19 commitments under the title “The Role and Responsibility of Religious Leaders in Times of War, Atrocities and Polarization”, which

represents an important milestone on this trajectory of hope. Globethics is committed to support this process and invites the participants of this conference to join us on 8u-10 October 1925 at the Global Ethics Forum in Geneva, to continue the conversation and transform these commitments into actions.

To conclude with a few reflections on what this might entail in practice:

This can imply that as religious leaders in partnership with sincere politicians we stay together and say publicly *"not in our name"*, wherever hate speech, languages of dehumanization and annexation, of polarization and brutal violence are spreading like bushfires;

This can imply that as religious leaders and in partnership with serious and concerned politicians we stay together and affirm *"not in our name"*, wherever the sanctity of life for all is trampled upon and the dignity of any human person is violated against;

This can imply that as religious leaders we have to stand together with others and plea fervently *"give peace a chance"* and do create space again for political dialogues before and beyond military conflicts, spaces for dialogue to discuss concepts of common security with adversaries, to develop and rediscover the art of real diplomacy of back stage diplomacy and of a sensitive mutual listening concerning the vested interests and ideological concepts of both sides as well as the urgency of humanitarian work, may this be in Gaza strip, in occupied Palestine or in other zones of intense sufferings today;

This can finally imply that we decide to stay together as religious and political leaders with others and say: *"Give bread a chance"*! Let us try and do not give up to share bread around a common table, to reconstruct the broken covenant which God has given to the whole of humanity, and to give enemies the chance to become friends again after intense and certainly painful processes of listening and healing. Let us restore our world to a shape which does not shame us once we have to give and pass it on to our children and grandchildren.