



**GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARY CONGRESS
THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD
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OPENING SESSION

Speech by H.E. Ms Viktorija ČMILYTĖ-NIELSEN

Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

Distinguished guests, colleagues, and friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this conference on the Future of the World. As we gather here today, we are faced with unprecedented challenges and opportunities that will shape the world in the years to come. From the pandemic to climate change, Russia's war against Ukraine, geopolitical tensions, energy security and technological disruption, the future of the world is at a critical juncture.

At this conference, we have brought together politicians, experts and thinkers to discuss and debate these challenges, and to explore the pathways and solutions that can help us navigate this complex and uncertain terrain.

And although I do not expect that this conference will offer a silver bullet for every problem, as a politician I can say with confidence that if we are to overcome numerous challenges of the future and create a better future for all, we must ensure a world order based on international law, respect to each other and cooperation. When states respect international law, they create a stable and predictable environment in which cooperation and collaboration can thrive. This is the only way to meet the global challenges of the future.

Yet, the international law is under threat today. We see how international norms and rules are being flouted, how an engagement in aggressive behavior and violation the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states becomes a new norm. This threatens the stability and security of the global system and undermines our ability to solve the challenges we face.

It is no exaggeration to say that much of the world's political future is being decided in Ukraine. The aggression against Ukraine is not just about territorial integrity or geopolitical interests. It is about the fundamental values that underpin our societies. It is about the right of people to choose their own future and to live in a free and democratic society. It is about the rule of law, human rights, and the dignity of every individual.

Therefore, we must take action to support freedom in Ukraine and around the world. We must stand up for the rule of law and human rights, and we must hold ourselves accountable for our actions -- or inactions.

The promotion and protection of democracy and international law is primarily the responsibility of states and international institutions that have prioritized these objectives. By default, it is also responsibility of democratic parliaments, and not only for the future of democracy and international law, but also for other emerging challenges.

As the representatives of the people, parliaments can provide a forum for dialogue and debate on the key global challenges facing our world today. In collaboration with other state institutions, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector, the parliaments can help to build consensus and develop policies that address these challenges in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

With this in mind, I invite parliaments take an active role in this effort, to engage in dialogue and debate, and to work to develop policies that address these challenges of our times and the future.

One example of how to involve parliaments in political processes would be my initiative to convene a High-Level Meeting of NATO parliamentary speakers on 1-3 June ahead of the NATO Vilnius summit.

Parliaments cannot stand aside from political events. In an increasingly unpredictable security environment, this task becomes even more important. After all, it is our parliaments who are called upon to make choices about the allocation of public funds, and explain them to citizens.

Therefore my hope is that this High-Level meeting will help the speakers of the parliaments and other MPs be better equipped for national debates on issues relevant to NATO as well as to contribute to the development of the consensus among member countries that must underpin Alliance policies, and help make the workings and policies of the Alliance more transparent and comprehensible to parliaments and their publics.

Using this opportunity, I would like to ask the representatives of the NATO countries present here to urge the leaders of their parliaments to come to this High-Level Meeting of the speakers of NATO parliaments in Vilnius.

With this, I would like to conclude my welcoming remarks. And let's remember that although the future of the world is uncertain and complex, but it is up to us to shape it.

By defending our values and harnessing the power of democracy alongside of technology, innovation, and collaboration, we can create a future that is not only sustainable but also just. Thank you.

A video of the speech:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ejh1Lm6GRI&list=PLafTseM15bmGXfMyNS2B41zIF24U8cX6h&index=1>