

Mister Speaker,

Honorable Members of the Presidium,

Honorable Members of Parliament,

In return, I would like to thank you Mister Speaker for the kind New Year wishes you have expressed to the members of the Diplomatic corps. In their name, and in my own, it is my pleasure, to wish you, the members of the Presidium, the honorable members of Parliament, the staff of the Parliament as well as the members of your respective families, our wishes of happiness, joy, health and prosperity for 2020.

I would also like to thank you, on behalf of my colleagues, for the perpetuation of this joyful tradition of the Danish Parliament which consist in receiving each year the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Denmark for the exchange of greetings.

Beyond the symbolism, this tradition is very well appreciated by my colleagues as it is a unique Danish specificity but also because it gives the opportunity to the Diplomatic Corps to get better acquainted with the Members of the Parliament and creates friendship and cooperation relations.

This afternoon's ceremony, as well as the regular contacts that Folketing members have with the ambassadors accredited to Denmark, which I strongly encourage, are important in many respects. They allow Members of Parliament to collect information necessary for their analysis of international relations but also for the control of the governmental action. This is all the more normal as it belongs to the Parliament to determine the fundamental principles for Danish foreign Policy, and also because most foreign policy decisions regarding agreements with our countries must be approved by the Parliament.

I know that 2020 will be a year of several significant challenges for the Danish Parliament and Danish Government. Amongst others, I can mention the fight against climate changes, the growing of political tensions and the deterioration of security in different regions of the World which call for actions.

Mister Speaker, these contacts also enable the ambassadors we are to receive extensive information on the functioning of the Danish political system and to lobby for our countries, if necessary, given the influence of parliamentarians on the Danish socio-economic life.

At a time when the parliaments of most states have become important players in diplomacy, these contacts are beneficial to all parties and contribute to the strengthening of Denmark's relations with the countries we represent.

Mister Speaker,

The ceremony of this year intervenes just a few months after the general elections which took place in June 2019.

The result of these elections gave place to a change of a majority which testifies the vitality of Danish democracy. I know that for the Danes, and possibly for all the western populations the elections are no longer an issue. But for certain countries like in Africa of which I am a citizen and certainly for numerous other countries worldwide, the elections represent moments of uncertainty. This is why, I would like to express to you my own admiration of the Danish democracy. I would also like to express to all of you the congratulations of all the members of the Diplomatic Corps for being elected or re-elected in June 2019.

Long life to the parliamentary diplomacy, long life to the cooperation between Denmark and our countries, may 2020 be a year of peace for the world.

Thank you.

Copenhagen, 7th January 2020

H. E. Amadou TCHEKO

Ambassador of the Republic of Niger

Dean of the diplomatic Corps