Interpreters straddle cultures and facilitate communication between peoples. Given the nature of their work, they are sensitive to the plight of messengers too often punished simply for passing on information or expressing an opinion, unfortunately an occurrence on the rise in recent years.

At the start of the first working session of AIIC’s Assembly on 15 January 2015, the moderator of the meeting, President Linda Fitchett, read out the following statement before a moment of silence was observed by all:

Ladies and gentlemen, please stand for a minutes’ silence in memory of all of our colleagues who have passed away since our last Assembly. I shall not read out a list, I am sure you each hold many friends in your hearts and memory.

I would also ask you, as interpreters whose profession brings together all peoples and cultures, to remember those who have died in the recent wave of targeted acts of violence perpetrated throughout the world because of intolerance and hatred. Symbolised by the marches in Paris attended by world leaders and ordinary people, we too stand against all such attacks. Some have been recently perpetrated on this African continent where we are meeting. We offer our sympathy to victims and their families everywhere.