



PARLIAMENT OF BOTSWANA

**STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA,**

HONOURABLE PHANDU T.C. SKELEMANI, MP

ON

***Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong
institutions (SDG 16)***

147TH IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

23rd – 27TH OCTOBER 2023

LUANDA, ANGOLA

President of the Inter Parliamentary Union

President of the 147th IPU Assembly

Secretary General of the IPU

Distinguished Honourable Speakers

Presiding Officers

Leaders of Delegation

Honourable Members of Parliament

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Botswana is honoured to join world Parliaments for the 147th Assembly of the Inter Parliamentary Union in the beautiful city of Luanda. Thank you to our hosts for the kind reception and hospitality.
2. Ladies and gentlemen, as Parliaments, are we delivering on peace, justice and good governance that our people required?
3. As a young democracy whose foundations are deeply rooted in the promotion and protection of human rights, Botswana believes that the SDGs provide a set of international standards and norms to attain sustainable development, including peaceful co-existence amongst nations.
4. These standards require that elected representatives should be accountable to the people. This accountability should be defined explicitly in terms of the law and must also provide remedial action in cases of clear breach.

5. The rule of law therefore, places obligations on both the state and the citizens, including civil society to observe, respect and most importantly, take ownership of the legal order.
6. Botswana's journey towards peace, justice, and strong governance institutions is characterised by a commitment to democracy, rule of law, and sustainable inclusive development.
7. Central to this progress is the role of Parliament of Botswana, which has consistently demonstrated its dedication to achieving these goals.
8. Parliament of Botswana has historically used legislation as a powerful tool to promote peace and justice. Examples here include amongst others, the Chieftainship Act, which established a formal framework for the recognition and selection of traditional leaders.
9. By creating a structured and transparent process for chieftaincy succession, the Act helped prevent disputes and conflicts that could arise from ambiguous leadership transitions.
10. Additionally, the Land Tribunal Act aimed to address land disputes through a specialized tribunal, contributing to the equitable distribution of resources and reducing potential sources of conflict.

11. Parliament also passed the Revised National Land Policy in 2019, thereby granting land rights to married women who were historically left out on land ownership. The Revised Land Policy gives everyone an equal opportunity and eligibility to a residential plot ownership in a place of their choice, on both state and tribal land.
12. In reaffirming the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as other instruments relating to human rights and international law, we believe it is the responsibility of all States to respect, protect and promote human rights for all.
13. As a consequence and to further demonstrate our commitment to the protection of human rights, Parliament of Botswana has recently passed a new Ombudsman Act, to provide for the protection and promotion of human rights and the investigation of human rights violations.
14. Ladies and gentlemen, Parliamentary oversight has been crucial in maintaining accountable governance and justice. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in that regard has been critical in ensuring transparency and accountability in public expenditure. Through the scrutiny of Government actions and finances, these oversight mechanisms help prevent corruption, enhance transparency and maintain public trust.

15. Parliament has also been a platform for advocating justice and peace, especially concerning marginalized groups. The Parliamentary Women's Caucus has been instrumental in championing gender equality and women's rights.
16. Their efforts led to the formulation of gender-sensitive policies and the enactment of laws that promote women's participation and protection.
17. Furthermore, Parliament's engagement with civil society organizations has facilitated dialogue on key issues and provided a channel for citizen voices to be heard. We are now leveraging on new innovative technologies to further enhance Parliament's linkages with the public.
18. Botswana Parliament's commitment to strong institutions is exemplified by its role in upholding the rule of law and protecting democratic principles and liberties.
19. The country's judicial system, known for its independence, has been supported by the Parliament's enactment of laws that safeguard judicial integrity.
20. The establishment of the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime, the Independent Electoral Commission, Financial Intelligence Agency and the Office of the Auditor General, amongst others, underscore Parliament's determination to build institutions that can

withstand both the internal and external pressures and ensure good governance.

21. Ladies and gentlemen, our case emphasises the significance of political will and dedication to the principles of peace, justice and strong institutions. Parliament's proactive regard for societal issues, its ability to adapt to changing world trends and its commitment to accountability, have all contributed to Botswana's success, peace and stability.
22. We therefore, once again have an opportunity at this meeting, not only to share experiences as a global community, but to also break down barriers to world peace and justice. We believe that for sustainable development to be realised, our nations must build inclusive, effective and accountable institutions predicated on good governance and the rule of law.
23. Let our discussions here, contribute in galvanising and catalysing action towards restoring trust and strengthening the capacity of institutions to secure justice for all and further facilitate transitions to drive the sustainable development agenda.

Thank you.