



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

**STATEMENT BY
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UGANDA**

**AT
THE 147TH INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) ASSEMBLY AND
RELATED MEETINGS**

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***Theme: Parliamentary Action for Peace, Justice and Strong
Institutions***

President of the IPU and distinguished Honorable Members and Delegates, ladies and gentlemen! It is a privilege to address you on this occasion.

I appreciate, in a special way, the host government and His Excellency João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço for guiding this great nation in admirable ways. Join me also to appreciate the Rt. Hon. President Carolina Cerqueira, the first woman presiding officer of the National Assembly of Angola, for hosting us here in Luanda.

Nobel Prize winner, Douglass North asserts that Institutions are "the rules of the game in a society; the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction". The IPU has been such an institution for Parliament across the divide, providing a platform for determining, practicing and measuring best practices in Parliamentary democracy – and for this Uganda is proudly associated with the Inter-Parliamentary Union

When world leaders set Agenda 2030, they set targets for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (or SDGs) that required governments and institutions to stimulate action that would address urgent global challenges. SDG 16 particularly serves as a reminder that peace, justice, and strong institutions are foundational pillars for achieving sustainable development in any

society; it involves the will and efforts of different stakeholders at global, regional and national levels. Indeed, as Parliaments, we are duty-bound to facilitate the process of domesticating, implementing, monitoring and translating the global agenda into practice.

Fellow Parliamentarians, we have an exclusive responsibility to enact laws that protect and promote justice; ensuring there is a strong legal framework that upholds human rights, fosters equal access to justice; guaranteeing the rule of law; and peace for every citizen. We take charge of the policy formulation and implementation process through our legislative, representative, resource appropriation and oversight roles. Therefore, Parliaments hold the torch to foster the tenets of peace, justice and strong institutions, which we can choose to light or dim at liberty. We must choose to light the torch brightest!

My country Uganda, which most of you must know as the Pearl of Africa, faces institutional challenges, admittedly, knowing this is not a day's job; we however have registered noteworthy progress in implementing SDG 16, especially in relation to peace and stability. For the past few decades, we have registered relative peace which has allowed for the establishment of a parliamentary system that encourages a multiparty democratic process. We hold regular elections and citizens have the opportunity for

representation of their interests and participation in the legislative process.

Uganda's peace building initiatives in the East African region are well documented providing a home for many refugees; mobilizing for peace and conflict resolution initiatives in Somalia, South Sudan, the DRC and availing resources for these peace processes.

We have taken steps to strengthen our legal framework and promote access to justice for our citizens. Our legal reforms including establishment of specialized courts like the Anti-Corruption Court and the Land Division of the High Court have paved way for access to appropriate justice at all levels. Our legal aid services to ensure equal access to justice for vulnerable and marginalized people have been notably strengthened.

The Parliament of Uganda has enacted laws to strengthen justice systems and promote accountability. We have strengthened our oversight functions, ensuring that government ministries, departments and agencies are accountable, transparent, and efficient. Renown scholar Jeffrey Sachs argues that *"If an economy is malfunctioning, the reasoning goes, something must be wrong with its institutions"*

Thus, when we enacted the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2021, we paved way for better funding of the Judiciary, recruitment

of more judicial officers and launching more courts of law to improve access to justice around the country. And when we amended the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, it was in a bid to improve the appeals process and provide for inclusive access to government contracts. Our mandatory Certificate of Gender and Equity is to ensure inclusivity of institutional budgets before they are approved and implemented.

Uganda has a dedicated Forum of Members of Parliament on SDGs whose objective is to advocate for implementation of Agenda 2030 and another on Ethics and Integrity among others.

We recognize systemic governance challenges that still bedevil our efforts to achieve full compliance to the SDGs, yet we have never wavered in our commitment to making systems and institutions that work for the peace and justice of every citizen. We still battle with questions that I hope shall be addressed in the course of this noble assembly: As former South African President, Nelson Mandela, rightly put it, *overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity but rather an act of justice!* Therefore:

1. Beyond elections, can Parliaments champion the cause of justice, giving the marginalized (*the poor*) opportunity to contribute to the development of their countries?

2. Can Parliaments strengthen conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict recovery efforts to achieve sustainable peace?
3. Can Parliaments facilitate strong partnerships between governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector to implement SDG 16 effectively?

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention.