



STATEMENT

BY

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ON

**PARLIAMENTARY LEADERSHIP FOR MORE EFFECTIVE
MULTILATERALISM THAT DELIVERS PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PEOPLE AND PLANET**

AT

**FIFTH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT
*VIRTUAL MEETING, 19 – 20 AUGUST 2020***

Madam President and Colleagues,

We, the Speakers of Parliaments are enjoined to stand collaboratively with our fellow Parliamentarians and the citizenry at this epochal moment in humankind global history. The year 2020 is an extraordinary year characterized by an unprecedented economic and a health crisis of epic proportions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Parliaments, during such times of trans-boundary emergencies, have a role to facilitate multilateral

collaboration in order to respond to disasters that disrupt international peace and stability. Without addressing these threats to international peace and security, the realization of sustainable development will remain elusive and ephemeral for the ordinary citizens who are quite often the primary victims of societal disharmony. Fundamentally, the United Nations was established to promote and maintain international peace and security in the context of multilateralism in pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Without peace there cannot be any development among nations.

Madam President and Colleagues,

Threats to international peace and sustainable development are no longer in the context of East-West geo-political polarization. Extreme poverty and economic development, the negative impact of climate change, the violation of human rights and freedoms, the breakdown of the rule of law, terrorism and outbreaks of pandemics such as COVID-9 constitute some of the main impediments to peace, security and sustainable development. It is contended that concerted multilateralism can ameliorate the negative socio-economic impact of some of the impediments to peace and security.

In March 2019 Tropical Cyclone Idai struck southern Malawi, the southeast coast of Mozambique and Zimbabwe's provinces of Manicaland and Masvingo, affecting approximately 3 million people's lives¹. The intensity and gravity of Tropical Cyclone Idai emphasizes the need for

¹ <https://www.sadc.int/files/7415>

regional collaborative efforts and support to improve disaster preparedness and management capacity to respond to such negative effects of climate change. Equally, there is need for multilateralism in containing the unprecedented health and economic crisis impact of COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the search for robust economic recovery measures and the discovery of an effective vaccine to cure the pandemic.

Madam President and Colleagues,

In the same vein, Parliaments have an onerous responsibility to facilitate at national and regional levels the implementation of the emergency health measures such as the International Health Regulations recommended by the World Health Organization in order to curtail the negative effects of COVID-19. The IPU '*Parliaments in time of pandemic*' campaign is a plausible platform for Parliaments to coordinate their efforts by promulgating legislative measures that promote democracy and accountability despite the marauding impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in our States. To that end, Parliaments should also facilitate the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015 – 2030) to enable countries to coordinate their efforts in mitigating catastrophic climate change disasters that may bedevil humankind from time to time.

Madam President, there cannot be comprehensive international peace and security where women and the youth are excluded in the multilateralism equation in our search for lasting peace and security. The marginalization

of women and youth as well as other vulnerable groups in the peace and security matrix search leaves them the most disadvantaged. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the IPU Member Parliaments to act in accordance with the United Nations Security Resolution 1325 which affirms that peace and security efforts are more sustainable when women and youth are equal partners in the prevention of violent conflicts. Our Parliaments should not abrogate this noble responsibility as the people's representative institutions.

I conclude by bringing to your attention the need for Parliaments to defend multilateralism which is increasingly under pressure from myopic populist and nationalist voices. Let us not allow arbitrary actions by some leading powers who undermine efforts to tackle various global challenges from nuclear disarmament to climate change in the spirit of multilateralism. In this regard, Parliaments should save the rules-based multilateral order for the benefit of ordinary humankind citizenry.

I THANK YOU.