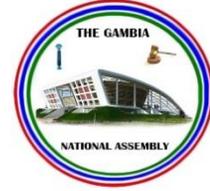




## REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Reg. Pye Lane  
Banjul, The Gambia



**The Speech Text of Momodou Lamin LK. Sanneh, Honorable Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of the Gambia at the 143<sup>rd</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Madrid [ FEMA Palacio Municipal] Spain.**

**Your Excellency President of the IPU.**

**Honorable Speaker of the Spanish Parliament.**

**Honorable Speakers of Parliaments here present.**

**Representatives of Observatory Bodies.**

**Distinguished delegates.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**All protocols respectfully observed.**

I am indeed delighted to be given the opportunity to address this august gathering marking the **143<sup>rd</sup> IPU Assembly** taking place here in Madrid, Spain.

- At the outset, I wish to express my appreciation on behalf of the National Assembly of the Republic of the Gambia for the efforts of

the Honourable Speaker of the Spanish Parliament, in organizing this very important meeting.

- I would also like to extend profound gratitude to His Excellency **Mr. Duarte Pacheco**, the IPU President as well as Mr. Martin Chungong, the IPU Secretary General and colleagues, for the decent planning and well-coordinated event, which is the first in-person IPU Assembly since the outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

- Mr. President, the theme for the 143<sup>rd</sup> IPU Assembly dubbed:

**“Parliamentary Action to Uphold and Galvanize Democracy around the World”** is apt and well chosen, as it comes at a time when democratic governments have not necessarily created sustainable change within societies or provide the greatest benefits for the people.

- It is, therefore, important for parliaments and parliamentarians around the world to come to terms with the reality that, democracy is not perfect and there is always work in progress, recognizing the fact that, the ability to capture the diverse interest of society is indeed a tall order.

Mr. President, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

- I have the belief that, it is up to parliaments to wield their legislative powers to reform the electoral process, apply quota representation for women and young people in parliaments to bringing about structured democracy as opposed to restricted democracy. I want to thank the IPU for championing this course by challenging parliaments around the world.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates.

- It may interest you to note that the Parliament of the Gambia is fully committed to upholding the cardinal principles of democracy, and it is our fervent belief that, it should be practiced using the ideals of the rights-based approach, which puts people at the center of the development process and that, the people's need is no longer a mere responsibility of people themselves, but it involves an obligation for states.
- Therefore, governments are duty-bound to respect, protect and fulfill all human rights including the economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights set out in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.
- You will bear me witness that 2017 marked a new beginning for the Gambia, and the New Government of His Excellency Adama Barrow,

the third president in Gambian history, has inherited a poorly functioning state apparatus when he took over, and the challenges facing the Gambia at the time were thus manifold and significant.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen.

- Our parliament, in its shared responsibility between government as implementers of policies and Parliament as law making and oversight, stood by the government to guarantee our citizens an all-inclusive and representative government characterized by equal opportunity for all, irrespective of political, religious, or ethnolinguistic background.
- To this end, the Parliament of the Gambia, at its own level, has made some structural and legislative reforms, by passing into law, the National Assembly Service Autonomy Bill, The Women Enterprise Fund Bill, National Health Insurance Bill, Disability Bill and the tentative formation of a women caucus which is envisaged to be fully operational in the Sixth Legislature.
- It is also gratifying to note that the current political and legal developments under President Barrow are arguably more promising.

- The current government had not only ended or reverted some of the most egregious practices of the former government, but also overseen the adoption of a sweeping transitional justice programs.
- The programs undertaken to this effect by the government, include the Constitutional Review Commission [CRC], the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission [TRRC] and the National Human Rights Commission [NHRC], thanks to the commitment of our Parliament and support from donor partners.
- Moreover, the opening up of the political climate has also led to the emergence of 18 registered political parties, implying that Gambians feel considerably freer now than before under the former administration.
- In conclusion, I am pleased to inform this august Assembly that elections are looming large in the Gambia, with the presidential elections slated for **December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021** and the Parliamentary elections in **April 2022** respectively. Both elections are expected to be closely and hotly contested given the current level of political freedom and awareness of the electorates, and the multitude of political parties vying for the presidency, against the incumbent.

On that note, I thank you all for your kind attention.