

# REPUBLIC OF KENYA



## THE SENATE

### **143<sup>RD</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER- PARLIAMENTARY UNION(IPU) AND RELATED MEETINGS**

*26<sup>th</sup>– 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021, Madrid, Spain.*

---

#### **General Debate**

#### **Contemporary challenges to democracy: Overcoming division and building community**

---

**Presentation by: Rt. Hon. Sen. Kenneth Makelo Lusaka, MP (Speaker of the Senate of the Parliament of KENYA)**

Thank you very much, President of the session!

Allow me to adopt the protocols as observed. I'll share my time with my colleague from Kenya on this conceptual framework of democracy.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be characterized as a painful paradox. On one hand, democracy, both as an ideal and as a set of political institutions and practices triumphed in most countries of the world, even in the countries where it has not; democracy forms the aspiration of many of its citizens. On the other hand, during this time the world has witnessed widespread disillusionment creeping in as a result of democracy in practice, one that is shared by citizens of the 'old' democracies as much as by those of the 'new and emerging' ones.
2. Parliaments especially in Africa today have a key role in addressing this paradox. As an embodiment of the democratic ideals, they epitomize the will of the people in government, and carry all their expectations and that will be characterized by true response to emerging needs and societal challenges as they arise. Representing society in all its diversity, parliaments have a unique responsibility for reconciling the conflicting interests and expectations of different groups and communities through the democratic means of dialogue, participatory governance and compromise.

3. As the key legislative organ, parliaments have an obligation to respond to societal expectations while at the same time providing the requisite oversight mechanism to ensure an accountable Executive. In the process parliaments are themselves under immense pressure to adapt to the emergent need, more knowledgeable electorates and diverse **local**, national, regional and global issues that require redress. In the last decade numerous efforts have been documented of efforts by parliaments: to engage more effectively with the public and to improve the way they work; to become more genuinely representative of their electorates; more accessible and accountable to them, more open and transparent in their procedures, and more effective in their key tasks of legislation and scrutiny of government.
4. In the 21st century, there has been a growing interest more than ever before on values related to democracy and good governance around the world. This is a reflection of the increasing acceptance of the fact that democracy and good governance are not dispensable, but a fundamental requirement to achieve sustainable development.
5. Therefore, for a functional democracy, it is essential that governments respect the people and take them seriously, not only those who elected them but all the people. We must keep on defending democracy.

## CONCLUSION

6. The institutionalization of democratic ideals in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century requires deliberate effort by Parliaments and their leaderships to be both passengers as well as drivers. This may entail building institutions (*enacting requisite legislation*); continually developing internal capacity and capabilities of the very institutions to effectively discharge their mandate (*appropriating resources*); allowing the institutions to undertake their mandate without interference (*independence*); and ensuring there exists accountability and oversight structures (to actualize *representative democracy and effective oversight*).

Presented by: **Rt. Hon. Sen. Kenneth Lusaka, MP**

**SPEAKER OF THE SENATE OF KENYA**

28<sup>th</sup> November, 2021

IFEMA, Madrid, Spain