

# 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.*

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#### **General Debate**

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

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#### **Presentation by: Hon. (Prof.) Jacqueline Oduol, MP (KENYA)**

I want to thank the Government of Spain and the IPU as I make these remarks, considering the topic of proposals on how political systems and parliamentarians can promote a culture of cooperation, broad and meaningful public engagement, inclusive decision-making and safeguarding the space, especially of those who are otherwise excluded.

I recall that in 1995 as I was in Beijing, China, women of Africa raised the question, “With what difference are women coming into political leadership? How are we going to ensure that we include those groups that would otherwise not be represented?”

To date, limited responsiveness to the needs and concerns of Persons living with Disabilities (PWDs), women, youth, the elderly and children has led to loss of faith in representation. Representation MUST be socially and politically representative of diversity, ensuring equal opportunities and protection of all citizenry and the right and responsibility to provide political leadership.

I want to emphasize that we should socially and politically ensure and include equal opportunities for and protection of all. In Kenya, in Parliament, political parties and all other hierarchies of decision-making, the women continue to appear like they are looking in from the outside and not

represented within. I thank the IPU for this topic since as we look at the manner in which we will make democracy work, we will be able to address the following challenges:-

- Negative ethnicity that permeates institutions, becoming a norm that undermines democracy;
- Corruption – system corruption that undermines justice as women are asked for “*other*” currency (GBV);
- Fake news/cybercrime – for women in politics, burdening with propaganda, guilt and shame; and
- Weak institutions where interference and absence of accountability and oversight structures make it difficult to actualize democracy and effective oversight.

Corruption emasculates fundamental democratic values and governance. Structures like the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission have to be enabled to function without interference from any quarter.

It is time to repair, rebuild and restore democracy, in particular, the women in politics and in parliament must demonstrate the difference that they bring to leadership. Through organized cross-party organization and negotiation, the women must hold political parties accountable and ensure that the Constitutional requirement of the  $\frac{2}{3}$  gender rule is met.

Presented by: **Hon. (Prof.) Jacqueline Oduol, MP**

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

IFEMA, Madrid, Spain