



REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC

***“Contemporary Challenges to Democracy: Overcoming Division
and Building Community”***

**Speech by His Excellency Eduardo Mulémbwè, Head of
Delegation, on the occasion of the 143rd General Assembly of the
Inter-Parliamentary Union**

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His Excellency Mr. President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

All Protocol observed

Excellencies,

It is with great satisfaction that we are present at the 143rd IPU Assembly, whose theme, *"Contemporary Challenges to Democracy: Overcoming Division and Building Community"*, leads us to an introspection because today we do not understand democracy in the same way as the ancient Athenians.

Contemporary democracy provides, at the same time, for both individual freedom and equality of conditions. By equal conditions, we are thinking not only of economic equality among citizens, but also of cultural and political equality. Therefore, the contemporary idea of democracy is a twin sister to citizenship: a full citizen is one who enjoys all his or her democratic rights. **In short, democracy means government for all, in other words, Government of the People.**

Excellencies,

Democracy is crucial to the running of societies, since it is considered to be not only the foundation of popular legitimation and limitation on the exercise of power, but also a method that concerns itself with the organisation of administrative procedures carried out by legitimised political powers.

Notwithstanding the milestones of democracy at its inception, it appears today as the antithesis of any form of absolutism. This peculiar transgression of human rights is closely linked to the idea of a state of exception based on serious natural or human phenomena such as:

- climate change
- terrorism;
- the pandemic of COVID-19.

In this respect, an enquiry is required into the understanding of the exception in such circumstances, not only in its formal, legally positive sense, but, above all, in the material aspect of its foundation.

In this understanding, it can be said that "democracy in the state of exception is, on one hand, the necessary instrument for the maintenance of order, exactly in the patriotic context invoked by Cicero, for whom, in the first century b.c.," unfortunate is the fate of those who administer and preserve the Republic.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Regarding climate change and looking at its undeniable and harmful consequences on our planet earth, impacting negatively on the lives of many thousands of people around the world, I can only wonder whether **Glasgow "21"**, which recently hosted the **COP26**, will be the true historical landmark in the new way human being and behaving in their relationship with the environment!

Excellencies,

Terrorism and violent extremism the world is currently grappling with, as a violent immoral tactic for political deterrence, is also, something negative for democracy.

In face of the above mentioned problem, one can ask the following question: will modern democracy be able to provide answers to terrorism?

In my country, the terrorist actions in Cabo Delgado province, which have already created more than eight hundred thousand displaced persons, around two thousand deaths and the destruction of countless public and private infrastructures, prevent tens of thousands of citizens from exercising their civic rights, and

undermine compliance with the electoral manifestos of the local and central governments.

However, we wish to share with you that the situation in Cabo Delgado is getting better thanks to the combined efforts of the Mozambique Defence and Security Forces and their SADC and Rwandan counterparts.

In this regard, may I address a word of appreciation to the SADC countries, the Government of Rwanda, the African Union, the European Union, the UN Secretary General, the President of the IPU and all the partners and friends of Mozambique for the support they have given us in the fight against terrorism in Cabo Delgado and the prompt humanitarian assistance provided.

Excellencies,

COVID-19, declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a Pandemic in March 2020, of complex origin and nature, in reality constitutes a fact that has implications for the different dimensions of life in society, namely political, economic, social and religious. Several countries have postponed elections and other events because of the health crisis caused by this pandemic, and many people have been prevented from exercising their civic and citizenship rights due to the resulting confinement. Likewise, our economies have experienced significant "regression or stagnation, affecting the income of countless families".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Democracy, in our humble opinion, should provide a capacity and opportunity for social, political and economic coexistence, in the diversity of ideas, opinions and cultures, for the achievement of real development, in every time and place, referring us to the issue of decentralisation of power as a way of creating space for

participative, transparent, inclusive and increasingly dialogue-based governance.

The general elections (presidential and legislative) and local elections (Provincial and Municipal Assemblies), that have been multiparty in Mozambique since 1994, are an indicator of the democratisation process and an important instrument for popular participation in the political process.

These are significant steps towards overcoming division and building community.

In this chapter, my country, Mozambique, celebrated in 2020 the 30th anniversary of multiparty democracy, as a gain for the people of Mozambique.

The 1990 Constitution introduced the Rule of Law and Democracy, based on the separation and interdependence of powers and pluralism, setting the structural parameters for modernisation, such as deepening the already existing democracy with the adoption of a proportional electoral system, which allowed newly formed parties access to the decision-making forums and the establishment of a climate of harmony.

Excellencies,

Finally, I avail myself of this singular occasion to once again renew our request to support the candidacy of Mozambique, my country, as a Non-Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council for the term of office 2023/2024, to contribute through this Body with its experience in the promotion of International Peace and Security, as well as in burning issues of global interest.

Thank you very much for your kind attention!