



REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

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

**The Speech Text of Seedy SK, Njie Honorable
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the
Republic of the Gambia at the 145th Inter-
Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Kigali
Rwanda**

- **Your Excellency President of the IPU.**
- **Honorable Speaker of the Parliament of Rwanda.**
- **Honorable Speakers of Parliaments here present.**
- **Representatives of Regional and International Bodies**
- **Distinguished delegates.**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**
- **All protocols respectfully observed.**

I am deeply honoured and privileged to be given the opportunity to address this august gathering marking the **145th IPU Assembly** taking place here in the beautiful city of Kigali, Rwanda.

- At the outset, I wish to register my heart-felt thanks and appreciation on behalf of the National Assembly of the Republic of the Gambia for the laudable efforts of the Honourable Speaker of the Parliament of Rwanda for hosting this important statutory function of the IPU.
- 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 team, for the decent planning and well-coordinated organization of this global parliamentary event.

- In the same vein, my delegation is also conveying warm greetings from His Excellency, the President of the Republic of The Gambia, **Adama Barrow** to the Head of State, Parliament, and friendly people of Rwanda through the Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly of The Gambia.
- Mr. President, the theme for the **145th IPU Assembly** described as:

“Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world” has indeed been a simmering topic of discussion in recent years by actors and stakeholders in the democratic decision-making processes, and it is coming at a time when the world is grappling with protracted political upheavals and insecurity as a result of prevalent policies of intolerance

and discrimination across the globe. It is, therefore, very topical and could not be more relevant.

- While acknowledging that gender-sensitive parliament is in effect a recipe for gender equality, it is essentially in the best interest of both men and women, and by extension a precondition for genuine democracy.

Mr. President, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

- Over the years, the responsibility of defending women's right and gender equality rested entirely on the shoulders of Women MPs. However, the focus of that responsibility has now been shifted to parliaments, as an institution representing the interests of all citizens.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates.

- It is my humble opinion that there is a glimmer of hope in the drive to promoting gender-sensitive parliaments as many parliamentary institutions around the world are working to move away from their traditional male-dominated membership towards advocating for more gender equality.
- However, implementing that change would involve looking at the institution itself with a critical eye, acknowledging unseen barriers that deter the presence of women, limit their participation or hinder progress towards gender equality, and then taking strong action to address them.
- Therefore, this august Assembly is envisaged to provide an excellent opportunity for our community of National Parliaments to come together to strengthen parliamentary efforts to drive change and address global issues by reaching agreements and consensus on legal frameworks, policies and actions

encompassing the theme of “**Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliament for a more resilient and peaceful world**”.

- Moreover, it may interest you to note that the government of the Gambia under the exemplary stewardship of **His Excellency President Adama Barrow** is a staunch advocate and champion of gender equality and women empowerment as evident in the signature, ratification and domestication of some regional and international conventions relating to women.
- At the national front, the government has also adopted a framework such as “The Gender and Women’s Empowerment Policy 2010-2020’ and the “Women’s Act 2010” both of which demonstrate the ironclad commitment of the government to realizing equality between men and women.

- Further to the aforesaid, the government has also established a new Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Welfare as an additional testimony to its commitment to gender mainstreaming.
- As we speak, the said Ministry has formulated a new National Gender Mainstreaming Strategy Bill to be tabled before the National Assembly for enactment.
- At the level of our national parliament, we are an advocate for equal representation and opportunity and will continue to support the government to ensuring that our efforts to work towards a fairer society will include a gender dimension.
- It is also gratifying to note that the National Assembly have recently passed into law the National Women Enterprise Fund Bill as part of efforts to promote the equal opportunity agenda.

- However, despite these advances, there is still room for improvement, more specifically on the participation and representation of women in governance.
- Notwithstanding, we would not rest on our laurels, and we will continue to champion the course at the level of parliament together with actors and stakeholders to ensure that gender sensitivity prevails across institutions and societies.
- I, therefore, urge the IPU being the sole global parliamentary network to provide the necessary tools to support parliaments in assessing and Monitoring gender-sensitivity in terms of their organization and working procedures.
- It is also worth noting that Gender-sensitive parliaments are not a simple and “static” phenomenon but display a high level of complexity and change across countries and across time.

- There is not a single path that leads to gender-sensitivity: one country may start from increasing the number of women MPs, while another may focus on creating more gender-sensitive political parties.
- What is common for all is that gender-sensitive parliamentary institutions are more efficient and able to better respond to the needs of women and men.
- In conclusion, I would like to encourage all Member Parliaments of the IPU to make the most of the 145th Assembly by joining voices and efforts to make significant global impacts in the promotion of peace, gender equality, and sustainable development for the benefit of our people and the world at large.
- I thank you all for your kind attention.

