

145th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, Remarks by President Kagame Kigali, 11 October 2022

I am very happy to join you, for the opening of the 145th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly. I welcome you all and thank the organizers for choosing our country as the host of this meeting.

All over the world, parliaments exist to protect the interest of citizens. This objective cannot be met, without the full and active participation of women in our parliaments, especially in leadership positions.

Despite steady gains, inequality between women and men continues to be widespread. Setting quotas takes us a step closer to equal representation but does not address the full spectrum of inequalities in parliaments, and in our society at large. Gender equality is better achieved, when we acknowledge that it is a right for everyone, everywhere.

Women are the backbone of resilient and peaceful societies. We need strong legal and policy frameworks in place, with an emphasis on implementation and results. In Rwanda, women played a critical role in the liberation struggle. Women remain a fundamental part of Rwanda's transformation journey, with many participating in peacekeeping operations across the African continent.

Context matters and there are no quick-fix solutions, to build inclusive communities. One thing, however, is certain. The fight against gender inequality is a shared responsibility, and men have a duty to speak up, and not just be bystanders. This is particularly important, to combat the negative perceptions of some men, who sustain the status quo.

Allow me to conclude, by reiterating the role of parliaments, in the fight against genocide ideology. Genocide denial and revisionism are fast becoming a growing threat to peace and security, globally. Social media is partly responsible, but the truth is that hate speech and misinformation have existed for a long time.

Collaboration between parliaments is needed, to work on all these challenges to criminalize all forms of dehumanization and racism, worldwide. I have to say to you that the topical issues you selected, peace, democracy, and cooperation, are very important.

There is no individual country, there is no region, there is no part of this world, that can claim to have it all. It starts with working on democracy, working for peace. If we don't do it through cooperation, I don't think we can achieve anything.

We see problems, as stated earlier, in some parts of Africa. While one is thinking that this is confined to Africa, you immediately realize that other parts of the world are going through similar challenges that affect peace, that affect democracy. What better way, then, can we think of to find solutions than through cooperation.

I think we need to work together more and more, and not have people who assume that they have it all, and they can tell others what they should be doing. It doesn't work like that. It's not the reality of this world we live in, all of us.

Solidarity in the fight against genocide ideology, however, is much more than enacting laws. It is about recognition of our shared humanity, for the betterment of our societies, and the protection of future generations.

I hope you will take this message with you, in your discussions in the coming days, and in your daily work as we strive to work together, all the time. Once again, I thank you for honouring us with choosing our country to host this meeting. You are most welcome. I urge you to feel at home, and I hope you will enjoy your stay with us.

I thank you for your kind attention.