

**PARLIAMENT OF KENYA**



**THE SENATE**

.....

**THE 146<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

*11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2023*

*Manama, Bahrain*

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**Remarks by**

**Sen. Kathuri Murungi, MGH, MP**

**Deputy Speaker of the Senate**

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**On:**

**Promoting Peaceful Coexistence and Inclusive Societies:**

**Fighting Intolerance**

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**Honourable President of IPU,**

**Honourable Speakers of Member Parliaments & Heads of Delegations,**

**Honourable Delegates,**

**Invited Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the King, the Speakers and the people of Bahrain for the gracious hospitality that has been extended to the delegates and the excellent preparations that have been made to make this event a success.

**Honourable Delegates,**

2. I wish to state that promoting peace and inclusive societies is essential to fight intolerance because intolerance can lead to discrimination, exclusion and even violence. When people are intolerant, they often view others who are different from them as inferior, which can lead to conflict and a lack of social cohesion.

3. By promoting peace, we encourage people to respect each other's differences and work together to find common ground. Inclusive societies are also important because they ensure that everyone has a voice and is included in decision-making processes. This helps to promote a sense of belonging and reduces feelings of exclusion and marginalization, which can contribute to intolerance.

**Honourable Delegates,**

4. Kenya is a diverse multi-ethnic country, with various cultures, languages and religions. Thus, Kenya still experiences social, economic and political differences which in turn have in the past led to conflicts and marginalization of certain communities and groups of people, despite the constitutional and statutory provisions which seek to promote equality, peace and inclusive development in the country.

**Honourable Delegates,**

5. One significant way through which Kenya has sought to promote peaceful existence and inclusion is by overhauling its governance system through a devolved system of government. This has ensured decentralization of power and resources, equitable distribution of national revenue and increased public participation in decision-making thus reducing the causes of conflict which have historically given rise to inequalities and discrimination of some communities.

**Honourable Delegates,**

6. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) has clear provisions on inclusivity which provide for equality, non-discrimination, promotion of human rights and respect for the rule of law, democracy and fundamental freedoms.

**Honourable Delegates,**

7. Additionally, various peace-building efforts have been implemented to address the root causes of conflict and promote reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. These interventions include-

- a) establishment of the National Gender and Equality Commission: whose functions include, promoting equality and freedom from discrimination and mainstreaming issues of gender, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups in national development including development of affirmative action policies;
- b) establishment of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC): whose main purpose is to facilitate and promote equality of opportunity, good relations, harmony and peaceful co-existence between persons of the different ethnic and racial communities of Kenya, and to advise the Government on all aspects;
- c) formulation of a National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (2015); and
- d) establishment of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) to address historical injustices.

**Honourable Delegates,**

**8.** The challenges that have hindered the promotion of peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies in Kenya are basically those that lead to conflict and violence. These are mainly-

- a) poverty, political exclusion, economic marginalization and social inequality;
- b) fight for access to power, land and resources, lack of equitable delivery of services, and responsive justice and security also influence peaceful coexistence.
- c) inadequate financial resources allocated for the execution of the objectives of these programs meant to promote peace and resolve conflicts; and
- d) the lack of adequate political will to support the execution of these objectives is also a major obstacle.

**Honourable Delegates,**

9. The current representation in the Parliament of Kenya manifests that there is no discrimination. All spheres in the country are represented through the 290 Constituencies, 47 Counties, 47 Special seats for women and nominated seats for youth, women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. In this Parliament, we have 21 women Senators (31.3%) and 82 women Members in the National Assembly (23.5%). In addition, we have 11 young Senators and 45 young Members in the National Assembly.

**Honourable Delegates,**

10. Parliaments can address the drivers of intolerance or promote inclusion and peaceful coexistence in the following ways-

- a) **Addressing socio-economic factors that lead to inequality and discrimination-** Inclusion and peaceful coexistence can be achieved by governments if underlying factors such as poverty, marginalization, environmental degradation and corruption, among others are addressed. Parliaments should ensure that equitable distribution of resources and that programmes geared towards reducing socio-economic inequalities are allocated adequate funds.
- b) **Promoting and protecting all forms of diversity-** Creating a peaceful and inclusive society requires that we accept and embrace all forms of diversity. Parliament through their oversight role, should ensure governments put in place policies that promote diversity, for example intercultural exchange programs, education and awareness campaigns to help break down stereotypes, reduce prejudice, and promote empathy. Also empowering the marginalized groups will be a way of addressing discrimination and promoting equal participation in the society.
- c) **Promoting better community relationships** – Through their role of representation, Parliamentarians are well placed to foster better community relationships between different ethnic

groups. This will encourage greater levels of peace, by discouraging the formation of tensions and reducing chances of tensions devolving into conflict.

**Honourable Delegates,**

**11.** In conclusion, promoting peace and inclusive societies is essential in curbing intolerance. We must appreciate diversity amongst us as a good thing that adds variety to the flavour of life and existence and we must promote the positive elements of our diversity even as we seek to foster unity by looking favorably and humanely at our neighbours and fellow global citizens; while appreciating the humanness of each person or group of persons regardless of their stature, background, culture or religion as is espoused in our respective divine beliefs. By working together to promote understanding, respect, and inclusion, we can create a more peaceful and just society where everyone is valued and respected.

I thank you.

**SEN. KATHURI MURUNGI, MGH, MP,  
DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE SENATE/LEADER OF KENYA  
DELEGATION.**