



**PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA**

**STATEMENT BY UGANDA FOR THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 146<sup>TH</sup> IPU  
ASSEMBLY 11<sup>TH</sup> – 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2023  
MANAMA, KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN**

*On the Theme:*

**PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES:  
FIGHTING INTOLERANCE**

**By**

**Rt. Hon. Thomas Tayebwa  
Deputy Speaker,  
Parliament of the Republic of Uganda**

March, 2023

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

It is not in any doubt that societies that are inclusive and where rights are upheld are more likely to be cohesive, peaceful and democratic. Uganda returned to democratic rule in 1986 after a long period of dictatorship and we have never looked back.

Failure to involve minorities in leadership was a key factor in causing tension and intolerance in the pre-1986 era. When the country returned to democratic rule in 1986, we introduced quotas for women, youth, persons with disabilities, workers, the elderly and the army in Parliament alongside the directly elected members of Parliament. As we speak, Women in Uganda's parliament are 33.8% against a global average of 26.6%. We have one of the youngest parliaments in the world. This was one way of ensuring inclusivity in Parliament where laws are made for the order, good governance and ensuring democratic rule in Uganda.

Religious differences were a source of tension and conflict in Uganda. However, the 1995 Constitution prohibited all forms of discrimination based on religion, gender, sex, age and ethnicity.

Uganda is a culturally diverse country, with over 50 ethnic groups and this can be a source of conflict. To ensure fair representation of all tribes, bodies like Uganda Human Rights Commission and Equal Opportunities Commission have been established to make no one is left behind.

Multiparty democracy has been hailed as the best form of governance and as IPU it is at the core of our system. As we promote the multi-party system of democracy, we need to ensure as Parliaments that our societies are mature and understand tolerance of different opinions. We should ensure that we build institutions that

are respected and above all, our electoral bodies should be beyond reproach.

Poverty has remained a key driver for intolerance and exclusion in our society. The gap between the poor and the rich is increasing in most of our societies. We call upon the developed world to remove non tariff barriers that are blocking entry of goods especially from developing countries. Sometimes your supermarket shelves are empty when we have fruits, vegetables and other agricultural products rotting in our countries. We need you to work with us to add value to our products. For example in the coffee industry with revenues of \$460bn, coffee producing countries earn only \$25bn with Africa earning \$2.8bn while Uganda which is Africa's largest coffee exporter earns \$820M. This hemorrhage of our resources have kept us in poverty, at the mercy of western world giving us aid and loans. We need more of partnerships and fair trade than loans and aid. As parliaments, we can and should ensure this stops.

As I conclude, it is important that Parliaments review and strengthen laws and policies to protect minority rights and prevent discrimination; establish institutions to protect the rights of minorities like Equal Opportunities Commission, Human Rights Commission; carry out our oversight function over the executive and make laws for order, good governance and development of our country. Through this, we shall be able to promote peaceful coexistence and inclusiveness and fight intolerance.

However in doing all this, we must remember we are representatives of our electorates. We should therefore make laws that fit in our societies, not societies to fit in our laws. We must not let global pressures and trends usurp our cultures and beliefs. That is why for us in Uganda we are wary of western trends that are in total conflict with our communities. We strongly condemn the promotion of LGBTQ activities targeting our children who are not able at a young age to discern what is good from bad. They are not able to understand that all that glitters is not gold. That is why we are in the process of making

a law that protects our children and families from such promoted vices.

Thank you for listening to me

**For God and my Country**