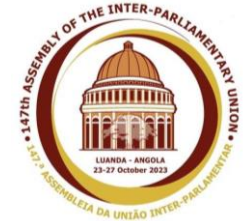




Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Dr. Prisca Maharavo
Co-founder of T4NA

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with a heart full of joy and hope that I have the honour of addressing you. I would like to thank the Angolan Parliament for welcoming us to this beautiful city of Luanda. I would also like to thank the organisers of this Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for giving me the opportunity to deliver my message today, to tell you how we, young Africans, are doing our best to contribute to peace and justice through an initiative called Together for a New Africa.

My name is Dr Prisca Maharavo and I come from Madagascar. You know, in Africa we have a saying: "it takes a village to raise a child". Well, I'm one of them. From an early age, I was raised and prepared by my family and community to help make my family, my village and my country a better place to live. Sponsored by a religious community, I joined a master's programme at university in Madagascar with the aim of helping to promote the education of young people in my village, in the north-west of our great island. This sponsorship also enabled me to continue my studies in Italy at the Sophia University Institute, with the commitment to return after my studies to continue promoting peace and justice through education, as a university lecturer in Madagascar.

During my studies in Italy, I found a highly motivated team of African students from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Tanzania, Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda and the Ivory Coast. Based on African challenges, they were trying to understand what contributions they could make once they returned home. They had been working since 2014 in an initiative they called Come back to Africa. Come back to Africa with minds, hearts, energies and skills. They said that: "We are responsible for defining the Africa we want for the future. We want to meet other young people who are committed to change and prepare ourselves for a new responsible leadership for our countries and the whole of Africa". I started working with these students in 2016 because I was and still am in agreement with this mission. It was the reason I was there to study. Together, we realised that it was essential to share this initiative with our brothers and sisters back home in Africa. And that's why, in 2017, we organised a meeting in Nairobi to which we invited young African leaders, lectures and practitioners with a single objective: to present to them our dream of supporting Africa through education, of supporting young people in promoting peace and justice through a holistic training programme. That's when the "Come back to Africa" initiative became "Together for a New Africa". And Together for a New Africa has helped me to develop activities to promote peace and justice through education, mentoring and networking, not only among young people in my country, but for Africa as a whole.

In fact, we young people make up the majority of Africa's population. We should be the prosperous force in the region. But violence, unemployment, lack of freedom, corruption, ethnic conflict and injustice, among other things, prevent us from participating as active citizens. We also lack experience and positive models of democratic participatory methods in our regions. That's why we have gradually involved a growing number of relevant organisations in our initiative. With their help, we have succeeded in implementing a pilot project from 2018 to 2022. The first "Together for a New Africa" (T4NA) training cycle trained 100 young leaders from seven East African countries over four years. In turn, they involved around 21,000 young people in their own communities, through awareness-raising activities and practical social and ecological actions. The COVID-19 pandemic has not been able to stop us, but it has extended the range of our interventions into the digital space.

Many of us are already working in the field, like Tezra, who is a regional youth representative on her party's National Youth Council in Tanzania; or Melchior, who works with the United Nations in South Sudan. I am a lecturer at the Catholic University of Madagascar. It's a wonderful opportunity for me to offer my vision of a new Africa to other young people and to prepare them seriously to take their future into their own hands.

Last September, we began the second cycle of Together for a New Africa, with 140 young leaders from 14 African countries and 42 tutors bringing the young people together, country by country. In total, at least 14,000 other young people will be involved over the coming years. We are aware of the responsibility of each and every one of us, in a world where it is impossible to confine ourselves to our own territory or our own reality. In this globalised world, where peoples and nations are interdependent, we are united by a common destiny and no one can save himself or herself alone. We experienced this with the pandemic and we continue to experience it with wars around the world.

We also share a common global experience, such as the collapse of democracies, which is even more evident at a time of serious international crisis. Those who have tried to understand why all this is happening have pointed out that the deepest causes lie in the "fall of the sense of belonging" and the rise of an "individualistic dimension". This is having a major impact in Africa, since our culture is exactly the opposite: it's Ubuntu, i.e. "I am because we are" and the way decisions are taken by "consensus". It is clear that throughout the world, the absence of this feeling has dramatic consequences, such as the financial crises, "the third world war fought in pieces" as some eminent researchers put it, climate change, the spread of populist authoritarianism, popular violence, the loss of confidence in institutions and mass migrations, the consequences of the lack of peace and justice that drive people to leave their countries to find a new Eldorado or to stay and organise coups d'état.

However, something new is also progressing: there are cities that have been able to take decisions and implement them with co-responsibility between institutions, citizens and economic and social organisations. These are the first steps in an era of collaboration that is transforming the very concept of government. It is not just a question of seeking good governance, which is desirable from a good leader who serves his people well. What is new is the move to "good governance as a whole", to collective leadership. In other words, an entire political community acquires the capacity to have a common vision and to implement shared actions. This is what we young people have been calling for: "We want to be protagonists. It's not enough for us to go and vote, we want to be able to make a real contribution to our future". This is why we are very interested in co-responsibility between those who act in the governing institutions, like the parliament, and those who act from the vital places in society, such as civil society.

In Together for a New Africa, with our partners, including the Sophia University Institute and the Politic for Unity Movement (MPPU), we are studying and experimenting with this new governance, which we could describe in a few words: "co-creation", "collaboration", "cooperation", "co-responsible", capable of "connections".... That's why we've called it CO-governance. And we are starting to talk to other initiatives around the world that are pursuing these same ideas. It is clear that this governance requires new leadership in two directions: widespread leadership in which every citizen acts collaboratively, wherever they are and whatever their task; and a new type of leader of organisations and political representatives capable of implementing collaborative governance, opening the doors of institutions, and preparing their own organisations and public institutions to act in this way. It's not easy, but we have to learn how to implement it. We call the combination of widespread leadership and a new type of collaborative leadership CO-Leadership. And that's what we're training for with Together for a new Africa. From Africa, whose deep-rooted values are so much in tune with co-governance and co-leadership, we want to offer the world a contribution to the regeneration of democracy, both internationally and locally, with a new appreciation of the values of each people...

I am aware of the importance of rereading Sustainable Development Goal 16 before this assembly: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, ensure access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". This is precisely collaborative governance: building effective, accountable and transparent institutions; ensuring

accountable, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels; participation of all countries in global governance; strengthening national institutions; sustainable development.... But for this to happen, we need to put an end to violence, arms trafficking, corruption and the abuse of power These are all scourges that prevent us from having good governance. We young people understand very well that not even a whole parliament can overcome these challenges on its own. That's why we believe that today we need collective leadership that will enable us to act responsibly together.

You are here to work together and deliver a final declaration, and we hope that you will be inspired to work with the young people in your constituencies and your nation to make our countries better places for humanity. We hope that our projects and our commitment to T4NA will give you the inspiration, courage and determination to continue your efforts. Rest assured that we, the young people, are at your side and ready to take a new direction, convinced that together we can lead our peoples in the right direction. We, the young leaders, pledge to work with you to promote good leadership, to support your efforts to build strong and effective institutions, established by laws or customs that truly represent the people, to have a parliament capable of legislating for justice, peace and the protection of human rights and freedoms. Believe in us young people, together we will be more effective in achieving the goals of sustainable development. Let's work together for a better world.

Thank you for your attention.