

- Excellence Duarte Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union;
- Excellence Carolina Cerqueira, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola;
- Excellencies, Mr. Presidents and Representatives of the Parliaments of the Member States of the UIP;
- Dignified Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union;
- Madam Deputies and Gentlemen Deputies; Distinguished Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

First, I would like to express my personal satisfaction and the joy of all Angolans at the fact that this 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is taking place in Luanda, capital of the Republic of Angola, a country that has the honor and privilege of warmly welcoming all delegates and participants of this important event of international parliamentary diplomacy, to whom I express my welcome.

Angola is a country of peace and reconciliation, which is today in full development and has a wide religious diversity, a vast cultural mosaic and natural resources, an open country to modernism and engaged in the diversification of its economy.

We are investing in a national strategy for sustainable and inclusive development, for the construction of a society that values and enhances its human capital, committed to building a national network of modern infrastructure that accelerates regional integration with the aim of boosting the free trade zone, the expeditious circulation of goods, create a favorable business environment and promote a resilient and sustainable ecosystem.

We welcome this event as a way to contribute to the resolution of global problems of peace, social justice and promotion of exchange between peoples and nations.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is an important mechanism for intervention and advocacy on the main issues of global interest, through the exercise of parliamentary diplomacy with the United Nations system and Member States.

Its secular institutional memory has transformed it into a world authority in the promotion of democratic institutions, global security, the defense of human rights and gender equality, sustainable development, environmental protection and youth empowerment.

The status of permanent observer member in the United Nations system is recognition of the mission and contribution of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the stability, fraternity and solidarity between the peoples of the world.

The Republic of Angola, as a member of the UIP, has made multiple efforts to ensure and preserve regional stability, to promote the well-being of peoples and sustainable development based on equity and social justice.

The foreign policy of the Republic of Angola reserves a broad space for parliamentary diplomacy.

The National Assembly is the main guarantor of the consolidation of our Democratic State of Law, the promotion of freedoms, rights and guarantees of citizens and the approval of economic development and social inclusion policies, where the voice of women, youth and minorities represent the wealth of the diversity of national culture.

We believe that the organization of this 147th UIP Assembly in Angola is a tribute to the dynamism of Angolan parliamentary diplomacy with international organizations and countries of the world interparliamentary network, whose merit is due to the excellent ladies and gentlemen Deputies of the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola.

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Democracy in Angola has been a process of constant evolution and overcoming, developed through the different institutions of the State democratically elected and instituted, being the cooperation and institutional articulation healthy and decisive for our affirmation as a country that stands out in the concert of nations.

National reconciliation and political stability are the greatest achievements of our people, which allows us to transmit and share these principles and values with other countries, especially in the Great Lakes Region and the Southern Region of the Continent, where there are some foci of instability, violation of constitutional normality and the weakening of the social and economic fabric of the countries in conflict.

As President pro tempore of SADC and also President of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, we have intensified efforts to find joint definitive solutions for the normalization of some of the conflicts on the African continent, through intense diplomatic actions.

In the global context, we are also witnessing other worrying and unfavorable situations for global security, namely the war in Europe and the proliferation of conflicts in other latitudes, the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, international terrorism and transnational organized crime, climate change, the humanitarian crisis, the growing food and energy crisis.

The situation of the economic crisis that is shaking the States and the peoples of the world, aggravated by the negative effects of Covid-19, is also worrying, which requires our countries to find political and economic solutions based on dialogue, solidarity and greater equity in the distribution of global wealth.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This great meeting takes place at a time when the peoples of the world in general are crying out for more peace, more justice, and for institutions that are increasingly inclusive and decisive, institutions that are increasingly active in building the global goals of the international community.

We therefore welcome the motto chosen for this assembly, hoping that the parliamentary action developed here, in addition to generating profound reflections, can contribute to the construction and consolidation of the mechanisms for promoting peace and social justice.

This motto reminds us that the identified factors of instability will only be overcome if we bet on multilateral diplomacy in all dimensions and on the strengthening of the institutions that have the responsibility to prevent conflicts and guarantee universal peace and security.

Topics such as international security, the engagement of deputies in dialogue, legislation, oversight, the role of parliaments in promoting a culture of transparency, against corruption, and the engagement of citizens to restore trust in national and international institutions will be debated.

This assembly will also feature reflections on sustainable development, where topics such as partnerships for climate action, promotion of access to affordable green energy, ensuring innovation, global food security, and the contribution of parliamentarians to the UN climate change conference COP 28, which will take place at the end of this year.

The central themes of this conference, such as democracy, human rights, the trafficking of minors, and the role of parliaments in reducing harm, are of great importance in supporting the growth of developing countries.

We need to find consensus on the need to preserve international peace and security, sustainable development, and the promotion of human rights. We therefore welcome the special engagement of women and youth, through the holding of parallel forums dedicated to this social segment.

The cycle of parallel meetings that will take place on gender equality and the necessary reforms in the United Nations Security Council and the main international financial institutions is also highlighted.

We believe that this event is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the ideals of peace, justice, and democracy. We are confident that the parliamentary action developed here will contribute to the construction of a better world for all.

Distinguished Parliamentarians,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Parliamentary diplomacy is, in today's world, an undeniable force in international relations, and the most pressing issues that affect humanity have also been addressed by parliamentarians, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

In this sense, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has established itself as the privileged stage for parliamentary diplomacy, and for this reason, it is our desire that, at this event and in the specialized meetings, you can deepen the debate, identifying the weaknesses, the progress and the main challenges, thus overcoming the mechanisms of inter-parliamentary cooperation and the bases for multilateral exchange that unite the efforts for the prosperity of the peoples of the world.

From this city of Luanda, the voice of the parliamentarians of the world will be heard calling for an end to the conflict in Sudan, Ukraine and the Middle East. It is urgent that the guns be silenced and that diplomacy be given way, so that the lives of civilians, children, women and the elderly can be saved and a humanitarian catastrophe can be avoided in these conflicts.

In the specific case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, world leaders have been making diplomatic efforts to ensure that humanitarian law is respected, that hospitals, refugee camps, residential areas are spared, and that the most basic rights of citizens are not denied to the populations, even in a war situation, such as access to water, food and medical care.

Even if this immediate objective is achieved to minimize the pain and suffering of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, there is a need to look for the underlying causes of the conflict that has lasted for more than seventy-five years and that has left millions of Palestinians without land, without homeland and without the possibility of returning to the land that has always belonged to them.

As the international community has recognized through a set of resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, the Palestinian people have the inalienable right to live in the State of Palestine, side by side with the State of Israel, respecting each other's principle of peaceful coexistence, good neighborliness, friendship and cooperation.

Only the effective creation of the State of Palestine will put an end to this cycle of hatred and violence that the world has watched helplessly for decades and that has already shed much blood of Palestinian and Israeli citizens.

It will not be the cannons that will bring lasting peace to the Middle East, it will be diplomacy, but above all the will and capacity of the world, in particular the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, to comply with their own resolutions, to create the State of Palestine.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The high level of representation of parliamentarians from all over the world that I have the privilege of welcoming today, in addition to a particular joy in the quality of host country, represents the firm commitment and engagement of all Member States to concert and build common values that promote human rights and sustainable and inclusive development.

On behalf of the Angolan people, I reiterate, with great satisfaction, our thanks for the choice of the Republic of Angola to host the 147th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary

Union, a challenge accepted in the expectation that the results of this forum will contribute objectively and concretely to the solution of the various problems that afflict the world.

I wish all Deputies, Senators, Parliamentarians, Congressmen and Delegates a great and fruitful working day, as well as a good stay in the city of Luanda, whose experience I hope will remain in your memories.