

Speech on the occasion of the opening of the 147th
Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, delivered
by the President of the National Assembly of Angola,
Dr. Carolina Cerqueira

(Luanda, October 23, 2023)

Excellency Mr. President of the Republic of Angola,
João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço;

Excellency Mrs. Ana Dias Lourenço, First Lady of the
Republic; Excellency Mrs. Vice-President of the
Republic, Dr. Esperança Costa;

Excellencies Madams and Gentlemen Deputies,

Senators and Members of the Inter-Parliamentary
Union;

Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen!

Today, on this historic day for the Angolan Parliament
and for our Angolan homeland, it is time to begin the
147th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

It is with great satisfaction, on behalf of the Angolan people, and on behalf of the 220 Deputies of the National Assembly of Angola, who have the honor and privilege of welcoming you with open arms here in Luanda, that we welcome each and every one of the Deputies and Senators present at this meeting, which brings together parliamentarians from all over the world.

More than twelve months of preparation have gone into this session, which brings together over 1,700 delegates from all over the world, which leads us to affirm that we are committed to building bridges of dialogue and fraternity, universal human values that we must cultivate and preserve!

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the first time that the UIP Assembly has been held in a Portuguese-speaking African country. The last one was held six decades ago, in Brazil.

Another noteworthy aspect is that we have, for the first time, four female candidates running for the position of UIP President, which will be an unquestionable milestone in the fight for gender equality, thus doing justice to the memory of those who fought for the right to vote for women, although there is still a way to go, but we are more certain that it is by walking that we reach the goal.

This is also the first time that an African speaker, the President of the National Assembly of Angola, is presiding over the work of this Great Assembly.

Finally, but no less significant, I would like to mention the fact that, for the first time, the anthem of the Inter-Parliamentary Union was performed by the Kapossoka orchestra, which was created to promote and support disadvantaged children, who today are masters of violin and percussion instruments, who with their talent portray one of the greatest living examples of social inclusion through Culture and the Arts.

We are living through a difficult period on a global scale, a period in which we, as parliamentarians, are called upon to speak out about the conflicts that are taking place all

over the world to guarantee peace, commitment to justice, and the need to strengthen institutions that should be the compass that should guide our actions as parliamentarians, whose ties with our voters, whom we represent in their struggles and aspirations, make us faithful trustees of a legacy that we must honor and keep in mind in each of our actions and decisions, because what is asked of us is the common good.

A wise African saying goes that, "in times of crisis, wise men build bridges of friendship, solidarity, cohesion, and inclusion that must prevail over the walls of indifference, pride, and silence in relation to the human suffering caused by war."

But what can we hope for tomorrow without justice and without peace?

Only by observing and enforcing this principle will justice be done, and only justice leads to peace!

We cannot ignore the fact that we live in a context of war with harmful effects that cause the breakdown and weakening of democratic institutions and justice.

The escalation of conflicts that the world is experiencing today in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, in several African countries, and in other parts of the world, has affected millions of people and destroyed the dream of humanity without precedent, seriously compromising the

success of international diplomacy mechanisms and parliamentary diplomacy initiatives.

That is why strong institutions are needed, forged by strong women and men, capable of bringing to the fore the reasons and foundations underlying the differences in the development of countries, economic interests, financial interests, social interests of groups whose realization continues to persist beyond the images that shock us every day, when we see young people drowning in the oceans in search of better dreams of life or children whose fundamental rights are denied and infrastructure is being destroyed.

Looking at the military conflicts and the armed actions currently taking place in various parts of the world, I think I would faithfully interpret the thoughts of most of those present if I said that the world must act to ensure the maximum preservation of human life and dignity and join forces to fight for world peace.

The guarantee of peace, the sense of justice, and the need to strengthen the role of institutions must be the compass that will guide our actions as parliamentarians. We should spare no effort to pressure our governments and judicial bodies to assume a dignified posture, of respect for human life and compliance with the laws, with just and impartial judicial action. The rule of law must prevail, through the guarantee of strong institutions,

which act according to the principles of morality, ethics, and good customs.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must invert the war discourse in our agendas because the world faces other challenging problems that also require immediate solutions.

Our struggle should be for a better life, in a **world more free** and less prone to asymmetries such as those that still exist today. This means guaranteeing fundamental freedoms, such as the freedom to think, the freedom to express one's voice, and the freedom to demonstrate in favor of citizenship, gender equality, and social inclusion.

Climate change remains on the agenda, and for that reason I welcome the **"My Planet My Parliament"** program.

Other concerns at the level of our countries will also be discussed, such as gender equality, youth inclusion, digital transformation, food security, a culture of transparency, combating corruption, and citizen engagement to restore trust in national institutions, among others.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Each and every one of us is breathing the sea breeze characteristic of Luanda Bay. We are in an African country that experienced an armed conflict that for more than 30 years tore the lives and hopes of Angolans apart, but we have known how to firmly tread the paths of peace, the challenges of reconciliation and national reconstruction, and we intend to preserve the hard-won peace of 2002 forever, as the main factor of economic development and stability and social cohesion.

We need to ensure that our citizens live in peace and can thus contribute to the development of our countries in which youth, the main wealth of African countries, contributes to the progress and prosperity of our nations.

War should not be necessary to have peace! It is by cultivating peace that war is avoided,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Angola, João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, for the unconditional support he has given us at various stages of the preparation process for this Assembly, so that we can achieve the desired objectives and that the Luanda Conference will remain in the memory of all Deputies and Senators present here for the impact of the decisions that will be taken and the commitment of

Parliamentarians from all over the world to parliamentary action, for justice, peace and strong institutions.

Enjoy your stay to the fullest in this land of Luanda, land of Kianda, a deity of our ancestral culture, who inhabits the seas of Luanda and who presides over the empire of the seas, rivers, forests and mountains. It is Kianda who greets us with open arms to all and gives us the blessing that will lead us to the success of this Assembly.

I wish you all good work.

Thank you very much.