



PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI



**SPEECH BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SPEAKER DURING
GENERAL DEBATE AT THE 147TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) IN LUANDA,
ANGOLA: 23RD -27TH OCTOBER, 2023**

- **The Speaker of the National Assembly of Angola, Right Honourable Carolina Cerqueira, MP,**
- **Fellow Honourable Speakers, Presidents and Leaders of delegations from all Member Parliaments here assembled,**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament in various delegations,**
- **International observers and all distinguished representatives of various Non-Governmental Organisations attending this General Assembly,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

1. I feel greatly honoured to stand before this Honourable Assembly which is meeting here in this beautiful city of Luanda, to contribute, from a Malawi perspective, to the topic *“Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16)”*.
2. As stated in our theme during this 147th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly, Goal number 16 is about promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
3. **Madam President**, as parliamentarians, we need to ask ourselves what and how we can contribute to the attainment of this Goal. My speech will therefore focus on actions which parliaments can do to build democratic, inclusive and accountable institutions.
4. **Madam President**, strengthening the bond of trust between people and their public institutions is very important for the effective delivery of public services. In order to ensure transparency in decision-making processes and make information about government actions and policies, there is need for parliaments to develop strong accountability mechanisms to hold public officials and institutions responsible for their actions.

5. Governments can establish independent oversight bodies such as the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Office of the Ombudsman, Office of the Auditor General, Human Rights Commissions but also coming up with whistle-blower protection mechanisms. I have honour to report that in Malawi, we have these bodies in place and drafting of a Bill on whistle-blower protection is underway.
6. **Madam President**, effective communication is also an important component of accountability in institutions. Communication between institutions and the public can be improved through regular updates, clear and accessible information, and the use of multiple channels such as websites, social media, and public meetings. It is imperative to engage in open dialogue with citizens to seek their input and address their concerns.
7. In its efforts to promote communication and the public access to information, the Parliament of Malawi passed the Access to information Bill in December, 2016 and became operational in 2020. **Madam President**, I have the honour to report to this Assembly that institutions in Malawi are now transparent and accountable with their work and Parliament through the Media and Communications Committee has and continues to take to task all public institutions to abide by the Access to Information Act.
8. **Madam President**, Malawians are now able to access information which previously was privy to a few sections of

the society and was the cause for intolerance. In addition, the consultative meetings by the Ministry of Finance on budgetary Framework, before budget consideration by Parliament, also make the work of Parliament today more inclusive and transparent.

9. **Madam President**, to achieve inclusive and strong institutions, parliamentarians should establish and maintain a comprehensive legal framework that clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of individuals and institutions. They should ensure that laws are just, non-discriminatory, and in compliance with international human rights standards. Parliamentarians should strengthen law enforcement agencies and ensure that citizens access a fair and impartial justice system where they can seek redress for grievances and receive a timely and just resolution.
10. Parliaments, as institutions responsible for passing national budgets, should also ensure that they allocate adequate resources to programs that focus on conflict resolution skills and programs that ensure peaceful co-existence, human rights, tolerance, and respect for diversity.
11. **Madam President**, Again, I have the honour to report that as one way of promoting peaceful co-existence, the Parliament of Malawi passed the Peace and Unity Bill in 2022 which provides the legal basis for the establishment of institutions mandated to promote and protect peace and conflict prevention in Malawi.

(Conclusion)

12. In conclusion, **Madam President**, building trust in public institutions is a long-term endeavor that requires consistent effort, collaboration, and commitment to democratic values. It involves both structural reforms and a change in institutional culture to prioritize the needs and aspirations of the people we serve.

13. Preventing violence and maintaining social peace requires collaboration among governments, civil society, communities, and international partners. Parliamentarians are therefore key in ensuring that institutions are geared towards attaining SDG 16 by ensuring that there is good enabling legislation, budget and strong monitoring mechanisms in place. I am happy therefore to report that as Malawi we are moving in the right direction towards attainment of SDG16.

I thank you, Madam President and all delegates for your kind attention.