



# **ECOWAS Parliament**

(5Th Legislature)

## **Remarks By Hon. IDRIS AHMED WASE**

*1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament*

147th IPU Assembly

23 to 27 October 2023, Luanda-Angola

- ***Honourable Members***
- ***Distinguished guests***

1. On behalf of the delegation from the ECOWAS Parliament and on my own behalf, I would like to thank you for extending this invitation and for the warm reception you have given us since our arrival in this beautiful city of Luanda. The occasion is the 147th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a global gathering of world Parliamentarians, with a sole focus on bettering the lives of the people we represent.
  
2. Permit me Mr. President to commend the conveners for the choice of an appropriate theme, "Parliamentary action for peace, justice and effective institutions (MDG 16)". I cannot think of a better theme than this, as it is of high relevance to the world and for Africa in particular, given the deteriorating state of peace and security in recent years.

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3. Since the end of the Second World War, legal provisions, and actions in conflict regions, at international and regional levels, by various institutions and the UN, have prevented threats towards armed conflicts. As part of its mandate, the IPU has considered and adopted several resolutions aimed at preventing war or restoring peace. The most recent of which is the resolution of the war in Ukraine, in accordance with international law, the United Nations Charter and territorial integrity, adopted by the 144th IPU Assembly in Nusa Dua-Indonesia on 23 March 2022. Furthermore, the IPU has adopted a Strategic Plan 2022-2026 comprising 5 major objectives aimed at giving parliaments and

parliamentarians the means to promote peace, democracy, and sustainable development in the world for the benefit of citizens.

4. In this vein, we observe with great concern the recent developments in the fratricidal war between Israel and Palestine. As parliamentarians we cannot remain indifferent to this tragedy that is causing massive destruction and numerous losses to human life. Therefore, the ECOWAS parliament launches a vibrant appeal to this august Assembly to support any effort aimed at peace keeping in that part of the World.
5. On the African continent, and mainly in the West African region, many legal measures have been initiated and several community actions have been implemented to safeguard peace and justice. Principally, the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, adopted in Lomé on 10 December 1999, and its Supplementary Protocol A/SPI/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance, adopted in Dakar on 21 December 2001.
6. Under these provisions, ECOWAS was able to deploy the Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia in August 1990; in Sierra Leone in May 1997; in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002; in Guinea Bissau in 1999, 2012 and 2022; in Mali in January 2013 and in The Gambia in January 2017. The deployment of this force was intended to restore peace in some of these countries and re-establish the constitutional order that was broken in others.
7. It is also gratifying to note that ECOWAS has adopted two visions, the current one being Vision 2020-2050, to perpetuate the achievements of democracy, preserve peace and consolidate good governance. The

Vision comprises 5 pillars, the first of which is geared towards the quest for peace, security and stability. The objective is to make ECOWAS a secure, stable and peaceful region, an absolute condition for development in an area that is particularly exposed to multidimensional security threats.

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8. It is sad to report that despite the measures taken at the international and regional level, peace and security are under serious threat from armed conflicts and the scourge of terrorism. Meanwhile, military coups have suddenly resurfaced in Africa in recent years. From 1998 to date, Africa has seen a total of 76 coups d'état and attempted coups d'état, half of which (38) have occurred in West Africa alone. In just three years, a series of democratically elected governments in ECOWAS have been overthrown in Mali (2020 and 2021), Guinea (2021), Burkina Faso (2022) and Niger (2023) Several coup attempts have also been reported in other countries. This is an opportunity for us to reaffirm our firm condemnation of coups d'état as a means of gaining power, because this regional militarisation leads to increased insecurity.
  
9. In response to the resurgence, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government decided to overhaul the mandate of the Community Standby Force by updating their 2020-2024 action plan for the fight against terrorism. The ECOWAS stakeholders intend to strengthen the mandate of the Standby Force by deploying a brigade of 5,000 men to member countries that request it.

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10. Having given a brief overview of prevailing circumstances, especially in our region, I wish to reiterate that the choice of the main theme of this Assembly is a welcome development. As Members of Parliament, we all must acknowledge that democracy cannot prosper without peace and security, which should never be taken for granted.
11. Consequently, Parliaments must support other public institutions and play a crucial role in peacebuilding and conflict prevention through the promotion of a democratic and representative political system. This would not only help to prevent unrest but is also essential in restoring post-conflict peace for sustainable development.
12. Our hope is that this Assembly will enable us to exchange good parliamentary practice in relation to the theme, with the aim of building parliaments that are democratically strong, representative, inclusive, resilient, endowed with the capacity for innovation and capable of resolving national and international disputes.
13. Let me conclude by sharing with you the words of Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu, where he stated that "Peace necessarily implies virtue, justice, wholesomeness, fullness, participation in decision-making, kindness, laughter, joy, compassion, sharing and reconciliation".
14. On this note of hope, thank you for your kind attention.