

147TH INTER-PARLIAMNTARY UNION ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS: SPEAKER BAGBIN'S PRESENTATION AT THE GENERAL DEBATE ON THE THEME- PARLIAMENTARY ACTION FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS (SDG 16)

H. E. Carolina Cerqueira, Chairperson of the 147th IPU Assembly and host of the Conference, Speaker of the National Assembly of Angola.

I extend the warm gratitude of the delegation from Ghana to you and through you to the President of the Republic of Angola and my brothers and sisters of Angola, for accepting to host this conference and for putting at the disposal of all delegates the blessings of the country. We are extremely grateful and may the good Lord continue to you and your country.

Colleagues Speakers, Presiding Officers, Presidents and Chairs and members of Parliament. All other protocols observed

Conflict has become prevalent in the world today. It has become so pervasive that it is gaining notoriety for becoming the first rather than the last resort in diplomacy. According to the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Report (GSDR) 2023, about two billion people were residing in conflict-affected nations as at 2020. The same report indicates that, in 2021, a record 89 million people were refugees or internally displaced while the global military spending surpassed \$2 trillion for the first time. These troubling statistics, primarily linked to enduring regional conflicts, political instability, and economic difficulties, highlight the continued influence of conflict-related factors on worldwide displacement and expenditure.

The danger posed by existing conflict around the world is its tendency to degenerate rather than abating, with countries fast aligning to the East – West divide of the global geopolitics and setting the stage for what could be the much dreaded Third World War with far more catastrophic consequences given the state of technological advancement since the last World War. The current raging wars in the Korean Peninsula, Russia-Ukraine, the Middle East and the Sahel are evidence of the degeneration of the world towards a third World War. This is happening because the voices of peace and justice are quite or captured in verbosity and no action. The theme of this conference is therefore a call to action for all peace-loving people around the world to work to abate this looming danger and I am glad that the IPU is leading this charge.

Madam Chair, the theme for this conference- is therefore a call to action by the global Parliamentary Community. This call could not have come at a better time, particularly, as the world is agreed to work towards the realization of the SDGs with a special emphasis on Goal 16 which seeks to promote “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.”

Recognizing the need for the world to work together to promote justice, Martin Luther King Jr. was spot on when he observed that “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” explaining further that, “we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny, whatever affects one directly, affect all indirectly.” The direct cost to countries experiencing conflicts in the form of decimating the active population, reducing their earning power, among many others, easily extends to other countries within the region by way of

exacerbating the refugee situation and endangering the food security situation around the world.

Parliamentarians have a responsibility not only to pass laws that promote equal access to state resources including equal access to basic necessities such as healthcare, education and infrastructure, but also to guarantee fair income distribution among the citizenry of our respective countries. This is to ensure the achievement of the SDGs, particularly target 16 b, which is, to promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

In conclusion, Madam President, I call on this meeting to work together more closely than ever to change the post world war global governance institutions. To achieve the SDGs we need to create strong institutions led by Parliament to broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the global South in all key global governance institutions including the Security Council and the apex echelons of such other bodies as the World Bank and the IMF, among many others. This will help to promote real inclusiveness and reduce the voice of dissent within the architecture of global governance institutions. It will further create the needed balance that is currently lacking within these institutions. Peace is our goal. Without peace, there can be no development. To that extent, I call for cool heads, calm hearts, and dialogue to solve the current disagreements. Action now or never.

I thank you for the audience.