

**PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY; BUILDING
BRIDGES FOR PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING.**

YOUR EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OF THE IPU,
GENERAL SECRETARY, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,
HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY.

INTRODUCTION

MAY I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND OUR
APPRECIATION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE IPU AND
CONGRADULATE HER FOR BEING ELECTED TO
UNDERTAKE THIS MAMMOTH TASK.

WE ARE DEEPLY HONOURED TO ADDRESS THIS
ESTEEMED GATHERING OF THE 148TH IPU ASSEMBLY
UNDER THE THEME; PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY,
BUILDING BRIDGES FOR PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING

THEME

THIS THEME RESONATES PROFOUNDLY WITH THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES WE FACE IN OUR WORLD TODAY.

THESE ARE MARKED BY THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF ISSUES SUCH AS THE LINGERING EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, CLIMATE-RELATED DISASTERS, ESCALATING COMPETITIONS, TENSIONS, AND CONFLICTS IN VARIOUS CORNERS OF THE GLOBE.

IRONICALLY, AT THE PRECISE TIME THAT THE WORLD NEEDS BROAD CONSENSUS, SOLIDARITY AND SINGULARITY OF FOCUS, THE OPPOSITE HAS SEEMED TO BE THE CASE: DISCORD, MISTRUST, WARS, AND INWARD-LOOKING NATIONALISM.

THERE IS NO BETTER TIME THAN THIS TO ADVANCE AND DEEPEN DIPLOMACY FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY AND THE PLANET.

BUILDING BRIDGES

ENGAGEMENT, RESOLUTION OF DIFFERENCES, AND DIALOGUE ARE THE PILLARS OF OUR SOCIETIES, AND INDEED OF OUR HUMANITY – THUS, DIPLOMACY, BE IT AT GLOBAL, REGIONAL, OR LOCAL LEVELS, MUST BE GROUNDED IN THESE.

OUR GLOBAL AND REGIONAL STRUCTURES MUST BE REVITALIZED, MOVING AWAY FROM CYNICAL DOUBLE STANDARDS TO PROVIDING GENUINE SUPPORT FOR COUNTRIES IN NEED, RESPECTING SOVEREIGNTY, AND ACKNOWLEDGING THE FIRST LINES OF ACTION THAT EACH NATION OFFERS.

THE ESWATINI EXPERIENCE

THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI, MAY SEEM NOT A BIG COUNTRY, BUT WE BRING TO THIS ASSEMBLY OUR UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES ABOUT DIALOGUE, THE MAIN TOOL IN DIPLOMACY.

WITH A RELATIVELY HOMOGENOUS POPULATION AND A HISTORY CHARACTERIZED BY PEACE, WE HAVE NAVIGATED THROUGH CHANGING TIMES USING PEACEFUL MEANS OF RESOLVING OUR DIFFERENCES.

OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE, WHICH WE CALL 'TINKHUNDLA', IS BASED ON A DUAL STRUCTURE OF

TRADITIONAL AND PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNANCE WITH THE MONARCH AS HEAD OF STATE. IT REFLECTS OUR COMMITMENT TO PRESERVING OUR TRADITIONS WHILE EMBRACING PROGRESS.

IT ENTRENCHES THE CULTURE OF CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION, NOT ON THE BASIS OF WEALTH, BUT ON THE BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL MERIT AS SEEN AND DEFINED BY THE PEOPLE AT THE LOWEST ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS, ALL THE WAY TO THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY.

OUR ANNUAL AND CONSTITUTIONALLY-MANDATED DIALOGUE FORUM, CALLED THE SIBAYA, OR THE PEOPLES' PARLIAMENT, PROVIDES A PLATFORM FOR THE PUBLIC TO EXPRESS FREELY THEIR CHALLENGES, NEEDS, AND HOPES, DIRECTLY TO THE MONARCH.

THIS TRADITION UNDERSCORES OUR COMMITMENT TO LISTENING TO THE VOICES OF OUR PEOPLE AND INCORPORATING THEIR PERSPECTIVES INTO OUR DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.

PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING

IN OUR WORLD TODAY, WE NEED LESS OF THE DIPLOMACY THAT IS DRIVEN BY POWER AND MORE FOCUSED ON THE QUEST FOR MUTUAL SOLUTIONS.

IN THIS REGARD, WE MUST TAKE SERIOUSLY THE VOICE OF AFRICA AND OTHER REGIONS OF THE WORLD THAT HAVE CALLED FOR THE REFORM OF THE UNITED NATIONS, ESPECIALLY THE CRITICAL SECURITY COUNCIL, TO MAKE IT MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF OUR WORLD TODAY AND EXPAND PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING.

INDEED, THE UN REMAINS OUR ONLY TRULY MULTILATERAL PLATFORM AND OUR MAIN HOPE FOR DEEPENING DIPLOMACY ON THE CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT US. IT MUST THEREFORE BE BASED IN THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL PARTICIPATION.

MANY OF THE COMMITMENTS WE MAKE AT WORLD FORUMS, INCLUDING THE UN, REMAIN LARGELY UNIMPLEMENTED, THUS UNDERMINING THE WORLD'S COLLECTIVE DIPLOMACY.

WE WOULD DO WELL TO HEED THE CALLS TO SAVE THE PLANET BY IMPLEMENTING ALL THE OUTCOMES ON WORLD PEACE AND SECURITY.

THEY ARE INDEED ROOTED IN OUR VARIOUS TRADITIONS ALIGN WITH THE CORE INTERNATIONAL VALUES OF PARTICIPATION, RIGHTS, SOLIDARITY, SECURITY AND PEACE THAT UNDERPIN THE UN CHARTER AND OUR REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND LOCAL FRAMEWORKS FOR MAINTAINING HARMONY.

WARS AND CONFLICTS ARE NEVER AN ANSWER TO OUR CHALLENGES BUT ONLY CREATE MORE PROBLEMS. I URGE THAT WE MAKE DIPLOMACY OUR FIRST AND ONLY INSTINCT AND TOOL, AND SHARPEN OUR CAPACITIES IN THIS AREA.

CONCLUSION

IN CONCLUSION, LET US COMMIT OURSELVES TO ADVANCING DIPLOMACY AS A FORCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE, GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF DIALOGUE, COOPERATION, AND MUTUAL RESPECT.

I THANK YOU – MAY THE ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS US ALL.