

**Draft Speech**

**By**

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**Speaker of the House of Federation of the FDRE**

**At**

**The 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)**

**Under the theme of "Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace  
and understanding."**

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**Honorable President**

**Distinguished Speakers,**

**Distinguished Delegates and Fellow Parliamentarians,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the people and government of Switzerland for the warm hospitality accorded to me and my delegation. It is a distinct honor for me to address you at the 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union that is taking place for the first time in 5 years in Geneva, Switzerland. This august assembly is uniquely important for parliamentarians from around the world to collectively deliberate on the role of parliaments to address the pressing issue of peace and stability around the world.

The theme of our gathering is a fitting reminder of the troubling state of global peace. This crucial meeting is taking place at a dangerous time when the average level of global peacefulness has been deteriorating for the ninth consecutive year. The expansion of violence in a larger scale around the world is not just a humanitarian tragedy. With old and new technologies, greater risks of miscalculation and misperception could easily result in failure to deter escalation with high likelihood catastrophic consequences.

The theme of the year, "Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding" comes at a very decisive time when the global landscape of peace is facing an existential challenge. The ongoing domestic-international conflict linkages have further complicated the nature of conflicts and the prospects for peace. Today's multiple crises in Africa, the Middle East, Ukraine and other critical flashpoints have devastating consequences. Maintaining





peace and security in today's world. requires political commitment and compromise at all levels. Parliaments and parliamentarians have indispensable responsibilities and possess unique characteristics that can be leveraged for broader peace in the world.

**Mr. President,**

Parliamentarians have huge responsibilities with the capacity to support peace. Parliaments are also central in some of the institutional frameworks used to promote peace and stability. The Inter-Parliamentary Union originated on the notion that dialogue is fundamental to the pacific settlement of disputes. The global parliamentary community has consistently subscribed to this view and confirmed its dedication to working towards these goals.

For the maintenance of global peace and security, reforming international order based on the principles of fairness, justice and equality is a must. The reform of the current global governance is a matter of absolute imperative. In the backdrop of a 'huge risk' of great fracture happening in global system, fundamentally reforming international peace architecture is not a matter of choice. Any meaningful pursuit of global peace should underscore that the current system of global governance should be inclusive and balanced to reflect the current reality. As parliamentarians, we need to advocate for a new, inclusive, and balanced multilateral system that is effective and efficient to promote peace and stability, prevent conflicts and find peaceful solutions.

**Mr. President,**

The other crucial area of concern is the role of parliaments in responding to the growing challenges of political polarization in a new era. Parliaments have critical role to play in both preventing and addressing political polarization in our societies. Parliaments can tackle societal issues that contribute to polarization, such as economic inequality or social injustice, strengthening independent of institutions like the judiciary and media is also crucial.



The promotion of a dialogue aimed at mutual understanding, and deliberative democracy need to be among the pillars to create a shared vision for a better future.

**Mr. President,**

The Horn of Africa is one of the most volatile regions in the world. The region has been subject to conflicts at both the state and societal levels due to both internal and external factors.

Lingering conflicts, external militarization and increased fragility is fueling instability and insecurity in an already fractious environment in the Horn of Africa. In this broader regional context, the role of parliamentarians in promoting peace and building bridges in the wider region remains largely crucial. Only through dialogue can we find a sustainable path to peace, build bridges for peace and promote a common understanding among societies across the region.

Parliaments need to have stronger presence and engagements in supporting inter-governmental efforts towards regional peace and security. Beyond ratifying treaties and agreements, the promotion of parliamentary diplomacy to foster dialogue, understanding, and collaboration on regional and global security issues is essential.

The mutual linkage between regional peace and integration is particularly evident in the Horn of Africa. The potential for sustainable peace cannot be seen in separation from the growing drivers for economic integration in the region. That is why Ethiopia's flagship economic projects including the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) will be a catalyst for regional economic integration. Within this framework, a strong and meaningful parliamentary cooperation and coordination is crucial to promote public participation, friendship, economic integration and the maintenance of peace in the region. Ethiopia remains committed to promote win-win partnership in our region.





**Mr. President,**

In Ethiopia, the two-year long conflict in northern Ethiopia ended in the signing of a permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) in November 2022. The Pretoria Peace Agreement has effectively silenced the guns opening a new chapter of peace consolidation. The agreement enabled us to intensify humanitarian aid and resume basic services. The peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and compromise is a practical embodiment of the notion of "African Solutions to African Problems". It is a growing indication that conflicts in Africa can be resolved by applying African wisdoms and approaches.

We have also made significant progresses in our nationally owned political initiative of fostering national dialogue, making substantial advances in laying the groundwork for a meaningful dialogue process. The formation of Ethiopia's first-ever National Dialogue Commission to address the major concerns could be a watershed moment. In late December 2021, Ethiopia's parliament passed a historic proclamation to establish a "Commission for National Dialogue to pave the way for national consensus and maintain the integrity of the country". In this regard, the role of parliaments in supporting the political processes is essential to reverse the negative conflict trends and put best interests of our citizens front and center.

The Ethiopia National Dialogue Commission has been finalizing the preparatory stages of inclusive and participatory consultations to identify dialogue participants and key national level agenda issues, including convening wider consultations.

The other crucial path to a sustainable peace in Ethiopia is the ongoing process of transitional justice policy. The flagship transitional justice policy is a pioneering approach in modern Ethiopian history and potentially a major milestone for lasting prospects for peace, justice, reconciliation and



accountability. In the backdrop of a strong linkage between transitional justice and broader peace processes in Ethiopia, the government of Ethiopia has shown a firm political commitment. Crucially, the focus on human rights, victim centered and gender sensitive approaches will create a conducive environment towards a democratic governance and political inclusion.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to the pressing importance of parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy at the global, regional and bilateral levels to galvanize parliamentary action to promote peace and security.

I THANK YOU

