



**SOLIDARITY MESSAGE**

**DELIVERED BY**

**THE RT. HONORABLE SPEAKER OF THE ECOWAS PARLIAMENT**

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**AT THE 148<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE**

**INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

**Honourable Speakers, Distinguished Parliamentarians,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my greatest pleasure to address the 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Since my election as Speaker of the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States, our two institutions have collaborated and built deep solidarity around universal values such as human rights, democracy, the rule of law, gender equality, peace and sustainable development, as well as free and fair elections.

1. It is very important to note that our participation in this Assembly signifies the growing warmth and cordial relations that exist between the ECOWAS Parliament and the IPU. In so doing, I must seize this platform to thank the IPU leadership for the successful record and proven ability in steering the affairs of this august body to attain success and be more effective in addressing the challenges confronting our world.

**Honorable Presiding, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

2. The selected theme for the general debate, "**Parliamentary Diplomacy: Building Bridges for Peace and Understanding**", fits perfectly with the objectives for which our Parliament, the ECOWAS Parliament, was founded. Amongst other things, the ECOWAS Parliament was established to contribute to the

promotion of peace, security and stability of West Africa. By strengthening representative democracy, cooperation and solidarity with likeminded institutions, the Parliament would have achieved the goals of building a sense of common destiny for the promotion of democracy.

3. To achieve these goals, the ECOWAS Parliament has found parliamentary diplomacy to be a viable tool that could be used to increase mutual understanding and valuable means of dialogue in advocating for solutions to diverse issues.
4. As elected representatives of the people, parliaments constitute uniquely legitimate democratic institutions, with a central role to play in all governance processes. Today, parliaments around the world find themselves to be very integral in governance and instrumental in securing successful implementation of protocols and agreements, aimed at securing global peace. Parliaments play several key roles in peace building, including, overseeing the implementation of peace agreements, and becoming sites of national dialogue. Therefore, the ECOWAS Parliament finds parliamentary diplomacy to be an important aspect of the regional conflict prevention and peacebuilding mechanism.
5. Since its establishment, the ECOWAS Parliament has actively engaged in parliamentary diplomacy, particularly in conflict areas within the sub-region. Notably, it played a pivotal role in fostering peace within the Mano River Union (MRU), which includes Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, during a period of fragile stability.

Additionally, the Parliament provided valuable recommendations for resolving a political crisis in Guinea Bissau following the dissolution of the National Assembly. These efforts complement numerous fact-finding and mediation missions I've had the privilege to lead across various Member States.

6. Leveraging on legislative bodies as instruments for fostering international harmony and cooperation, through parliamentary diplomacy, is fundamental to building bridges for peace and understanding. Through legislative initiatives, policy advocacy, and oversight functions, parliamentarians can contribute to the implementation frameworks that enhance, peace, economic growth and development in around the world.

**Mr. President, Honourable Parliamentarians, Ladies and Gentlemen**

7. Notwithstanding the benefits that can be derived from parliamentary diplomacy, escalating geopolitical tensions, regional conflicts, and power rivalries pose significant challenges to parliamentary diplomacy, hindering cooperation, dialogue, and consensus-building among nations. The rise of authoritarianism, populism, and democratic backsliding in various parts of the world threaten the principles and practices of parliamentary democracy, thus undermining its legitimacy and effectiveness.
8. Moreover, limited resources, funding constraints, and capacity gaps within parliamentary institutions may impede the ability of

lawmakers to effectively engage in diplomatic initiatives and address complex global issues, necessitating innovative approaches and resource mobilization.

9. To mitigate these, it is quite relevant that Parliaments leverage on collaboration with civil society organizations, NGOs, and grassroots movements to augment parliamentary diplomacy efforts and foster greater citizens engagement, accountability, and responsiveness to societal needs and aspirations. In addition, advocating for a rules-based international order and reinforcing multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations, can bolster the effectiveness of parliamentary diplomacy in addressing complex global issues, from climate change to pandemics, through coordinated and concerted action.
10. The ECOWAS Parliament is open to sharing experiences on such partnerships, as well as promoting ideas that would enhance parliamentary diplomacy and the benefits that can <sup>be</sup> derived therefrom, in building peaceful and prosperous societies.
11. As I conclude, it is my hope that this Assembly will advance our collective goal of an integrated, developed and prosperous world, where Parliaments play an increasingly important role in peace initiatives and conflict prevention efforts.
12. Once again, it has been my pleasure to address this Assembly and I thank you for your kind attention.