



ADDRESS

BY

HON ADV. J.F.N. MUDENDA
(Speaker of Parliament - Zimbabwe)

ON

ON THE GENERAL THEME:
Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI)
for a more peaceful and sustainable future

149TH IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, Switzerland

13-17 October 2024

Madam President Your Excellency Dr. Tulia Ackson;

Secretary General, His Excellency Martin Chungong;

Distinguished fellow delegates;

The IPU theme of the Assembly, namely, "***Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future***" is of profound and of enduring significance in addressing naked inequalities between developed and developing countries of the Global North and the Global South respectively. Accordingly, IPU Parliaments are enjoined to robustly deploy science, technology and innovation anchored on the application of Artificial Intelligence in its multifaceted architecture.

Madam President

Currently, science, technology and innovation are connected fields that drive progress and development in society through the Fourth Industrial Revolution driven

by Artificial Intelligence (AI). Science seeks to understand the natural world, technology applies that understanding by humanity for humanistic practical benefits and innovation uses both to create value in our socio-economic development.

Last year Zimbabwe, under the auspices of our President, Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa, launched the Information Communication Technology Policy and the National Digital Technologies Strategy in response to harnessing science, technology and innovation for more peaceful and sustainable future for Zimbabwe. These efforts have been bolstered by the transformational educational curricular review in the past five years dubbed "EDUCATION 5.0" underpinned by science, technology and innovation deployment resulting in the creation of industrial and innovation hubs for the accelerated modernisation and industrialisation of Zimbabwe. Accordingly, the Zimbabwe Parliament has enacted a law enabling all our tertiary institutions to be centres of industrial and innovation hubs of excellence driven by the application of Artificial Intelligence.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe established the Zimbabwe National Geospatial and Space Agency (ZNGSA) whose mandate is to develop digital infrastructure for precision agriculture, weather forecasting and climate adaptation in order to secure national food sovereignty. Additionally, the Agricultural Research Council and the National Biotechnology Authority have successfully driven innovations in areas like drought-resistant crop varieties, livestock disease diagnostics and renewable energy technologies for a sustainable future of Zimbabwe.

Madam President;

While the application of STI as driven by Artificial Intelligence has the boundless potential to propel humanity into unparalleled development, it may have negative consequences. Notably, the potential misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for malicious misinformation, disinformation and character assassination through deepfake and pornography as well as in warfare purposes is a concern that cannot be

ignored¹. That is why the Parliament of Zimbabwe has resolved to establish the COMMITTEE OF THE FUTURE to map out strategies for the next 50 years on how the harnessing of science, technology and innovation as anchored on Artificial Intelligence can best be deployed for the maximum benefit of Zimbabwe. In this context, the IPU should be commended for authoring the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology to ensure that the development and deployment of science, technology and innovation is undertaken responsibly, ethically and sustainably in the spirit of peaceful human co-existence. Thus, in the spirit of this IPU laudable Charter and Article 1 of the IPU Statutes which enjoin peremptorily that the "IPU shall work for peace and cooperation among peoples...". I, therefore, plead for the immediate cessation of hostilities in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and some parts of Africa, especially in Sudan and the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Lessons from the devastating ravages of the World War 1 and 2 vividly must remind us that **WAR CAN NEVER END WAR**

¹ [Artificial intelligence: Development, risks and regulation - House of Lords Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

**BUT DIALOGUE AROUND A ROUND TABLE
CONFERENCE !** Madam President Ackson and our Task
Force continue with your peace efforts without fear or
favour.

Thank you for your attention.