

**REMARKS AT THE IPU IN UZBEKISTAN WITH THE THEME:
PARLIAMENTARY ACTION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND
JUSTICE – 7TH APRIL 2025**

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring warm greetings from President Bola Tinubu and the Nigerian National Assembly, led by Senator Godswill Akpabio.

For us in Nigeria, the theme for this session is quite apt, considering the legislative priorities of our National Assembly. Furthermore, in the current global economic and social climate, it is even more imperative that we take progressive steps towards using parliamentary instruments to provide safety nets for the less privileged and to build a more just and inclusive society. We view social development and justice as a guarantee that every citizen, regardless of gender, income, or physical ability, should have equal access to education, healthcare, housing, jobs, and human rights.

Despite challenges, we have recorded considerable progress in this regard.

With legislative backing from the National Assembly, Nigeria established the Consumer Credit Corporation, which provides Nigerians access to structured, low-interest credit that enables the acquisition of homes, vehicles, and other productive assets through fair and transparent financing, ultimately unlocking the potential of the Nigerian middle class.

Other achievements include the enactment of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) Act and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act—two pillars of our commitment to social development. The NHIA Act builds on decades of effort to make healthcare accessible and affordable for all Nigerians, expanding coverage to millions and moving us closer to achieving universal healthcare. Similarly, the UBE Act has established the legal foundation for free, compulsory, and quality education across Nigeria. Through consistent budget allocation and legislative oversight, these laws continue to evolve as instruments of equity and inclusion.

We have also responded to the urgent needs of our youth. The establishment of the Nigeria Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) through an Act of the National Assembly represents a landmark legislative achievement aimed at expanding access to higher education by providing interest-free loans to eligible students.

Furthermore, the Nigerian Government has doubled the allowances for corps members under the National Youth Service Corps, a compulsory one-year scheme for graduates of tertiary institutions

Personally, I have sponsored motions and bills that speak directly to the theme of this session. In the senate, I moved a motion acknowledging digital access as a

fundamental pillar of economic opportunity and inclusion and that it should thus be protected from indiscriminate price increases by service providers. I also sponsored the Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Bill, which recently passed First Reading and aims to decriminalise attempted suicide and provide mental health support.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. Nigeria, like many other nations, continues to grapple with issues of poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. But we are not alone in these struggles. Across the world, we see that the quest for justice and social development requires constant vigilance.

(In the global west, we see countries where the judiciary has had to step in to uphold the rights of individuals to a fair hearing before deportation, reinforcing the importance of due process and the protection of fundamental human rights, even in the face of stringent immigration enforcement.)

As we look to the future, I remain hopeful. Through practical, responsive, and compassionate parliamentary action, Nigeria can — and will — make progress toward achieving social justice, inclusive development, and lasting peace for all citizens.

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(Let me conclude by thanking the Inter-Parliamentary Union for its invaluable work in nurturing synergy among national parliaments. In a world facing shared challenges, your commitment to multilateral dialogue and democratic values is more important than ever.

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