



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

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ON

ON THE GENERAL THEME:

***PARLIAMENTARY ACTION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
AND JUSTICE***

150TH IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

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Madam President;

Allow me to address this distinguished 150th Assembly on its quintessential theme on Parliamentary action for social development and justice. As elected representatives of the people, we shoulder the sacrosanct obligation to ensure that development permeates every stratum of society in order to honour our commitment of ***Leaving No One and No Place Behind*** as always opined by our President, Dr E.D. Mnangagwa, by our National Constitution and our National Development Strategy¹. That is why the 1995 World Summit for Social Development (the Copenhagen Summit) resolved to embrace social development as an inalienable human right, one of the conditions precedent for sustainable socio-economic development. The summit acknowledged the imperative for social justice and the need to confront the fundamental catalysts of poverty and inequality by embracing justice for social development. In this regard, parliamentary action for social development and justice, as anchored on the tripartite roles of Parliaments being law making, oversight and representation, must improve

the well-being of every individual in society so that they can actualise their full potential to the best of their abilities. That means Parliamentary action ought to advocate for equitable development where everyone has equal access to opportunities, fundamental human rights and resources regardless of who they are among the citizenry. This is the equilibrium of social justice. Hence in Zimbabwe the government has established two banks one each for youth and women entrepreneurship empowerment in order to close the inequality gap.

Madam President;

Despite the remarkable global technological advancements, the inequality gap continues to widen. For instance, the richest 1% of the world's population now owns 45.6% of global wealth¹, while nearly 700 million people remain ensnared in the tenacious grip of extreme poverty². This immoral inequality disparity undermines our parliamentary collective aspirations for sustainable social development and justice. To that an extent, the

¹ Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report 2023.

² World Bank. "Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2023: Tackling the Deepest Roots of Inequality."

African Union's visionary Agenda 2063 is laudable as it articulates an audacious blueprint for ***"an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena."***³ However, the average continental GDP of 3.4% between 2018 and 2023⁴, has not translated into commensurate poverty reduction in Africa. Approximately 490 million Africans still live below the poverty datum line⁵ while youth unemployment in Africa remains alarmingly high at 19.8% across the continent⁶, more than twice the global average. This conundrum must be diligently addressed by African Parliaments, if not by all IPU Parliaments, in order to disabuse the irony of the resource richest continent and yet the poorest. That must change in the next twenty-five years if not much earlier through accelerated digital technological industrialisation and the brutal implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

³ African Union. "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want." 2015.

⁴ African Development Bank. "African Economic Outlook 2023."

⁵ World Bank. "Poverty in Africa: Revisiting the Facts." 2023.

⁶ International Labour Organization. "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2023."

Madam President;

As we anticipate the Second World Summit for Social Development to be held in Qatar in November 2025, its focus must be the justiceable socio-economic development whose aim should be to close the development inequality index between the global north and the global south. That Summit must carve out a novel and dynamic global socio-economic ecosystem that takes into account the current challenges of wars and political conflicts as well as the negative vagaries of climate change. Parliamentary action for social development and justice is untenable where there is no global peace, security, weak multilateralism and the emerging global tariff war which is beginning to threaten the world economic order.

I thank you.