



Republic of Botswana

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**Statement by the Leader of Delegation for the 151<sup>st</sup> IPU  
Assembly, Hon. Helen P. Manyeneng, MP**

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**19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2025, Geneva, Switzerland**

**THEME: 'Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting  
humanitarian action in times of crisis'**

- President of the IPU
- President of the IPU Assembly
- Secretary General of the IPU
- Distinguished Honourable Speakers
- Presiding Officers
- Leaders of Delegation
- Honourable Members of Parliament
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

## **Introduction**

1. I am privileged and honoured to address this August Assembly, on a matter of great human and moral importance.
2. The 151<sup>st</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly's theme, "***Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis***," resonates deeply with the global imperative to protect vulnerable populations and ensure the delivery of essential aid in the midst of escalating conflicts and natural disasters.

In today's world of complex humanitarian crises, following international humanitarian law and supporting humanitarian organizations are essential steps in protecting human dignity and promoting global stability.

3. The current global environment presents formidable challenges to upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action. This statement, from the perspective of the Republic of Botswana, seeks to engage with this vital theme, reflecting on our national experiences, identifying persistent challenges, and articulating our expectations for collective action.
4. This topic, Mr President, speaks directly to the values upon which our Republic was founded — compassion, solidarity, and respect for human dignity. Botswana has long been a beacon of peace, stability, and democracy in Africa. Botswana's voice carries weight and moral authority in defending humanitarian principles both at home and abroad.
5. Mr President, I am happy to report that the Republic of Botswana held peaceful Elections in October 2024. This is because our country holds the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in high regard.
6. Peaceful elections are a preventative measure to crisis and anarchy. They are also crucial for democratic stability, as they foster a culture of peaceful co-existence among citizens. Despite instances of disputed electoral outcomes, elections when conducted in a credible and transparent

manner, reduce conflicts and ensure legitimacy. They also stimulate economic growth and the promotion of human rights.

7. Mr President, humanitarian challenges transcend borders, as such, every crisis is therefore a test for our shared humanity. Botswana is one country that has become home to many, who have experienced political and socio-economic challenges and push factors from their countries of origin. As a country, we have delivered food aid, other supplies and support to other countries in our region. Our security forces and peacekeepers continue to support and participate in peace and humanitarian missions across the region. Our laws, including the Refugees (Recognition and Control) Act, ensure that Botswana remains a haven for those fleeing persecution. Botswana espouses the values of compassion, justice and caring for the plight of others, as was enshrined in our National Vision 2016 pillars.

### **Global Humanitarian Challenges**

8. In many conflict zones, humanitarian access is obstructed, or aid is weaponized, becoming a tool of political leverage rather than a life-saving intervention. This directly contravenes the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence that guide humanitarian action.

9. The safety and security of humanitarian personnel are paramount, and their protection must be actively upheld by all parties to a conflict and the international community.

### **Opportunities for supporting humanitarian action**

10. We strongly believe that the IPU Assembly provides a crucial platform for Parliamentarians to translate global humanitarian norms into national policies and legislative frameworks.
11. We see an opportunity to deepen Parliamentary engagement in advocating for humanitarian causes. Parliamentarians have a unique role in oversight, resource allocation, and public advocacy.
12. By raising awareness within their own constituencies and holding governments accountable, Parliamentarians can amplify the impact of humanitarian efforts. This involves understanding the nuances of humanitarian action and ensuring that national policies align with international humanitarian principles.
13. Moreover, this Assembly presents an opportunity to foster greater inter-parliamentary cooperation on humanitarian issues. Sharing best practices, coordinating advocacy

efforts, and developing common strategies for addressing cross-border humanitarian challenges are vital for a more effective global response.

14. Botswana, for instance, believes in the power of regional collaboration to address shared humanitarian concerns, from disaster preparedness to refugee management.
15. Mr. President, Botswana remains steadfast in condemning attacks on aid workers and obstructions to humanitarian access. Further, we applaud the courage of humanitarian workers, who continue to help, operating in risky and perilous environments.
16. Botswana, though stable, faces its own vulnerabilities — droughts, floods, and health emergencies that test our resilience. Our National Disaster Management Office and the 2021 National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy provide strong frameworks, but continuous investment in preparedness, early warning systems, and coordination is vital. Through the Southern Africa Development Community and the African Union, Botswana continues to promote regional solidarity and disaster cooperation.

## **Possible Solutions and Way Forward**

- **Increasing and Diversifying Humanitarian Funding:** Parliaments play a crucial role in national budget allocations. We must advocate for increased, predictable, and flexible funding for humanitarian response. Furthermore, exploring innovative financing mechanisms, including public-private partnerships and humanitarian bonds, can help bridge the funding gap (UNHCR, 2023).
- **Promoting Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction:** Recognizing the growing impact of climate change on humanitarian crises, Parliamentarians should champion policies that strengthen resilience, promote sustainable development, and invest in disaster preparedness and response mechanisms. Botswana understands that proactive measures in these areas can significantly mitigate future humanitarian needs.
- **Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight and Advocacy:** Parliaments should establish dedicated committees or focal points for humanitarian affairs to ensure consistent oversight of government policies and engagement with humanitarian actors. This includes fostering dialogue

between parliamentarians and humanitarian organizations to better understand emerging needs and challenges.

**The case of Botswana: a commitment to ‘humanitarian norms and actions.’**

17. Mr. President, Botswana, a nation long committed to regional stability and a safe haven for those displaced by conflict, approaches this discussion with a deep sense of humanitarian duty. Our commitment to the rule of law, human rights, and international humanitarian principles guides our actions. We understand that humanitarian work is not just charity, but a vital investment in global peace and security. Botswana firmly believes that all states have a responsibility to uphold international humanitarian law, irrespective of the circumstances. Our own experiences, though relatively peaceful, have impressed upon us the fragility of stability and the profound impact of crises on individuals and communities.

18. We have long advocated for multilateral solutions to global challenges, and this theme is a testament to the enduring relevance of international cooperation in addressing the complex humanitarian needs of our time.

19. Our Parliament actively participates in fostering national

dialogue on these issues, ensuring that our domestic policies align with our international commitments and that our citizens understand the importance of humanitarian solidarity.

## **Conclusion**

20. In conclusion Mr President, the theme for the 151st IPU Assembly is a call to collective responsibility. From Botswana's standpoint, we believe that parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, have a profound duty to champion these principles.
  
21. By strengthening legal frameworks, ensuring access, protecting aid workers, diversifying funding, and fostering greater cooperation, we can collectively build a world where humanitarian norms are not just ideals, but lived realities, and where humanitarian action can effectively reach those most in need, regardless of the complexities of the crisis.
  
22. Parliaments play a central role in integrating humanitarian priorities into national policy, legislation, and oversight. To this end, we must strengthen accountability, secure adequate funding, and partner with NGOs and faith-based organizations. Together, we can build a whole-of-society response that makes aid more effective, transparent, and

sustainable. The IPU Assembly is our chance to turn these commitments into concrete action for a more humane and secure world.

23. I thank you.