

## **THE COURAGE TO CARE: A CALL TO HUMANITARIAN DUTY**

**Address by His Excellency, Distinguished Senator Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON,** President of the Senate, Federal Republic of Nigeria, At the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Humanitarian Session, Geneva. Delivered on his behalf by Distinguished Senator Osita Ngwu.

Protocol,

We meet in a world that is weary and wounded. A world that bleeds in silence. From the deserts of Africa to the steppes of Europe, from the valleys of the Middle East to the floodplains of Asia — humanity cries out. Three hundred and ten million people in need. These are not figures. They are faces. Mothers clutching starving children. Fathers searching for sons lost in the smoke of war. The aged, the maimed, the forgotten. They look to us — the lawmakers of the earth — and ask, “Is there still mercy in the councils of men?”

The world is not tested in times of comfort but in seasons of crisis. Nigeria is not an exception. Conflict in the Northeast. Floods in our valleys. Displacement across our borders. These have tested us. But like our national symbol the eagle, we rise in every storm.

We know that the strength of a nation is not measured by its wealth or armies, but by how it protects its weakest and uplifts its wounded. We know that the greatness of a nation lies not in the height of its skyscrapers, but in the depth of its compassion. We are, therefore, committed to making laws that carry a pulse — laws that defend the widow, feed the orphan, and give the refugee a name and a nation.

We are committed to upholding humanitarian principles as the solemn duty of civilization. This is not an international obligation — it is a covenant of our Constitution and the command of our conscience.

We have built strong institutions to bear this duty. The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, NEMA, and the National Commission for Refugees and Displaced Persons. Together they ensure that when disaster strikes, help is not delayed, and hope is not denied.

The National Assembly has written protection into law — for women through the Violence Against Persons Act, for children through the Child Rights Act, for the oppressed through the Trafficking in Persons Act, and for the disabled through the Disability Act.

We have stood with our partners — ECOWAS, the Red Crescent, the World Food Programme, and the United Nations. We have carried our message to the global stage: that climate change drives displacement, that corruption deepens suffering, and that only collective courage can heal our world.

We do not walk alone. We stand with those who serve, those who volunteer, those who risk their lives to rescue others. They are the silent heroes of our time.

We have set up agencies and initiatives to respond to challenges. This is how we must build resilience: from the ground up, from the people outward, from faith to action.

We must stop wars before wars stop us. There are no battlefields — only fields of mourning. There are no war gains — only the world's pains. Each gun shot silences a dream; each “victory” buries a generation.

Soldiers are not numbers — they are sons and daughters, fathers and mothers. When a soldier falls, a home collapses. A mother weeps into the silence of her kitchen. A child grows up without the sound of his father's voice. A wife stares forever at an empty chair. How long will we spend billions to save lives, and trillions on the instruments designed to

destroy lives? The arithmetic of war has become a global absurdity. We are the conscience of the world, lets act.

So I say to all parliaments and peoples: bend the policies toward the people. Let policy bow before the human heart. Let us build, stone by stone, law by law, a world where mercy is mightier than war.

For when laws serve life and policies serve people, humanity shall rise again in splendor and hope.

Thank you.