



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA**

**Parliament Buildings**

**P.O. Box 31299**

**Lusaka**

**[www.parliament.gov.zm](http://www.parliament.gov.zm)**

**STATEMENT BY**

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MS NELLY B K MUTTI, SC, MP, FAPRA,  
SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA AT THE 151<sup>ST</sup> IPU  
ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE ON  
THE TOPIC: **UPHOLDING HUMANITARIAN NORMS AND  
SUPPORTING HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN TIMES OF CRISIS**

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

**OCTOBER, 2025**

- The Vice-President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Distinguished Honourable Speakers
- Hon Members of Parliament
- The Secretary General of the IPU
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is both a great honour and a privilege to address this esteemed Assembly on behalf of the National Assembly of Zambia. I extend our gratitude to the IPU and the Government of Switzerland for convening this Assembly at a time when humanitarian norms are under increasing strain.

The theme of this General Debate, "***Upholding Humanitarian Norms and Supporting Humanitarian Action in Times of Crisis,***" could not have come at a better time than this. From armed conflicts and climate-induced disasters to health emergencies and forced displacement, our collective response must be guided by the principles of humanity, solidarity, and international law.

## **Madam President**

Zambia has a long-standing commitment to humanitarian principles, anchored on our values of peace and respect for human dignity. As a host country to refugees from neighbouring countries and beyond for decades, Zambia remains committed to her obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

Our Parliament plays a critical role in advancing humanitarian action. Allow me to highlight five key areas in which we advance humanitarian action:

### **1. Strengthening the Legal Framework**

The National Assembly of Zambia has enacted and reviewed laws to enhance Zambia's humanitarian response, including:

- (a) The Disaster Management Act;
- (b) The Refugees Act; and
- (c) The Human Rights Commission Act.

The National Assembly of Zambia, in 2024, established the Committee on Disaster and Risk Reduction which oversees the operations of the Disaster Management Unit under the Office of

the Vice-President, and the departments and agencies responsible for disasters.

These frameworks support state accountability and enable effective action during crises.

## **2. Parliamentary Oversight**

Through Parliaments' oversight function, Parliamentary committees play a pivotal role in ensuring that humanitarian response is properly accounted for. Through Parliamentary Committees such as the **Committee on Health, Community Development and Social Services** and the **Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs**, the National Assembly of Zambia, ensures that humanitarian responses such as the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the response to the devastating drought that Zambia experienced in 2024 and the influx of refugees from warring neighbouring countries are timely, effective, and reach the intended targets.

## **3. Budgetary Support**

Recognising that humanitarian action requires resources, the National Assembly of Zambia has advocated for increased

allocations to social protection, healthcare, and disaster preparedness. For example, the Ministry of Health budget has been increased by over 130% from K9.7 million in 2021 to K23.1 million in 2025.

#### **4. Inclusivity and Rights-Based Approaches**

As a Parliament, we put vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and the displaced, at the centre, in our policies. The Parliamentary Caucus on Children (PCC) and Zambia Women Parliamentarians' Caucus (ZWPC) have championed child protection, gender-responsive laws, and psycho-social support in times emergencies and disasters.

#### **5. Regional and International Cooperation**

Zambia strongly supports multilateralism. The National Assembly of Zambia has, and continues to ratify relevant international instruments. Zambia is party to the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** and its optional protocol, the **Convention Against Torture**, the **Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees**, and has acceded to the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, among others. Further, Zambia collaborates with organisations such as the Southern African Development

Community (SADC) to harmonise disaster response and early warning systems across borders.

## **Madam President**

Parliaments have the unique power to legislate, allocate resources, and amplify the voices of the vulnerable. Zambia reaffirms its commitment to not only uphold humanitarian principles but also ensure that humanitarian action becomes a central pillar of governance and not just an afterthought.

Let us stand together for humanity, for dignity, and for peace.

**I thank you for your kind attention**

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