



SPEECH

By

**Hon. Advocate J. F. N. Mudenda
Zimbabwean Speaker of Parliament**

During

the General Debate On The Theme:

***Nurturing Hope, Securing Peace and Ensuring Justice for
Future Generations***

**152nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
and Related Meetings**

**15th to 19th April 2026
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Mr. President;

Thanks to Türkiye for its gracious hospitality as I bring you warmest greetings from the Republic of Zimbabwe through our President, Dr E.D. Mnangagwa.

Our theme on **“Nurturing Hope, Securing Peace and Ensuring Justice for Future Generations,”** affirms the 1945 United Nations Charter on the imperative for global peace and security after two cataclysmic world wars. That is why the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 16, advocates for inclusive peaceful societies, access to social justice for all and accountable institutions at every level of governance. However, as the Sustainable Development Report of 2024 confirms, SDG 16 remains among the most severely off-track of all seventeen sustainable goals.¹

¹ Sachs, J. et al., Sustainable Development Report 2024: Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals. Paris: SDSN & Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2024. SDG 16 — Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions — is rated among the least on-track goals globally.

Mr. President;

According to the 2023 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Report, over 117 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes and communities.² Furthermore, no fewer than 2 billion people currently live in fragile, conflict-affected or violent settings.³ Equally, Africa has experienced 44 million⁴ people who are internally displaced and are cross-border refugees. These realities imperil the very promise of the African Union's **Silencing the Guns** initiative and the broader ambitions of Agenda 2063.⁵ Alarming, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reports that global military expenditure topped US\$2.4 trillion in 2023 alone.⁶ Let the world, therefore, heed the exhortation by Pope Leo XIV that ***"Let those who have weapons lay them down! Let those***

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2023. Geneva: UNHCR, 2024. The 117 million figure surpasses any previously recorded displacement crisis since the establishment of UNHCR in 1950.

³ UN OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview 2024, corroborated by the World Bank Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Overview 2024.

⁴ African Union/UNHCR Joint Report on Forced Displacement in Africa 2024

⁵ African Union, Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development — Revised Master Roadmap of Practical Steps (2020–2030). Addis Ababa: African Union Commission, 2020. The initiative forms a cornerstone of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

⁶ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), SIPRI Yearbook 2024: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024. The US\$2.44 trillion figure represents a 6.8 per cent real-terms increase over 2022.

***who have the power to unleash wars choose peace!
Not a peace imposed by force but through dialogue!
Not with the desire to dominate others but to
encounter them!"***⁷ The IPU cannot and should not
escape this exhortation as it is a call to compelling
Parliamentary diplomacy.

Mr. President;

Zimbabwe approaches this theme as a nation that has paid a heavy price for peace and independence. Its hard-fought Liberation Struggle that exacted immeasurable suffering and sacrifice upon our people, yet Zimbabwe emerged with a resolute commitment to global peace and security. At independence in 1980, our Founding President, Robert Mugabe, crystallised that determination when he declared that ***"Surely this is now the time to beat our swords into ploughshares, so we can attend to the problems***

⁷ "URBI ET ORBI" MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV, EASTER 2026 Central Loggia of St Peter's Basilica, Sunday, 5 April 2026

of developing our economy and our society.⁸ To reinforce that spirit, Zimbabwe embraced reconciliation as a national ethic of renewal. The Unity Accord of 1987 ended a painful chapter of internal division and set our country on a path of national reconstruction and healing. Our 2013 Constitution has solidified that national spirit of reconciliation through a robust Bill of Rights.

Nurturing hope in the middle of the current global war conflicts and in the future demands that we should religiously believe that HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT. That justice is the ethical, philosophical and legal principle of fairness, equity and moral rightness which guarantees peace for the present and future generations globally. Meanwhile, the peace dividend must be premised on total respect for international law and multilateralism, and not on unipolar hegemony.

⁸ Mugabe, R. N., Independence Speech as Prime Minister-Designate of Zimbabwe, Harare, 18 April 1980. Reprinted in Banana, C. S. (ed.), *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890–1990*. Harare: College Press, 1989.

I Thank You!!