



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Remarks

By

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Theme: "Strengthening International Law: Parliamentary Roles and Mechanisms. And the contribution of Regional Cooperation"

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Ms Gabriela Cuevas Barron, President of IPU,

Ms Maja Gojkovic, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia,

Mr Martin Chugong, the IPU Secretary-General,

Hon. Speakers and Parliamentarians,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Namibian Parliamentary delegation is delighted to be here with you today for the 141st Assembly of the IPU, meeting under the theme: *“Strengthening international law: Parliamentary roles and mechanisms, and the contribution of regional cooperation”*.

The current international legal order is primarily premised on the United Nations Charter that was crafted shortly after the Second World War. And it is specifically anchored on Article 1, paragraph 1 of that Charter which, inter alia, reads as follows: *“...To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of or other breaches of the peace...”*.

Namibia obtained her independence in 1990, after many years of a bloody conflict, thanks to the will of our people and the intervention of the United Nations (UN), through Resolution 435 of the UN Security Council– which paved the way for our independence.

Therefore, we in Namibia know very well what war can do to a people and we also know very well the importance of international intervention to resolve conflicts. As a result of this undertaking, Namibia is today regarded as one of the success stories of the United Nations.

Therefore, in an effort to strengthen International Law and Order and to promote peace and security, the Namibian Parliament has, over the years, ratified the following important international instruments as you will see when you get a copy of my presentation, among others:

- The African Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (which entered into force on 15th July 2009);
- Chemical Weapons Convention (which entered into effect on 29th April 1997);

- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10th September 1996);
- Genocide Convention (which came into effect on 12th January 1951);
- Hague Hijacking Convention (which came into effect on 14th October 1970);
- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (which came into effect on 5th March 1970);
- Nuclear Terrorism Convention (which became effective on 07th July 2007);
- Both the Convention and the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (which became effective on 28th July 1951 and 04th October 1967 respectively);
- Terrorism Financing and Terrorism Bombing Conventions (which became effective on 10th April 2002);
- Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (which became effective 04th January 1969); and
- The Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court (which became effective in September 2002).

Furthermore, the Namibian Parliament exercises oversight over the Executive, as one of its core functions. The Namibian Parliament like all other IPU Member Parliaments has an obligation to monitor and evaluate the country's progress on attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Namibian Parliament is a member of regional, continental and international parliamentary bodies e.g. Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), Pan African Parliament (PAP), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Namibian Parliamentarians, upon return from such meetings, normally render reports for action.

The Namibian Parliament attaches great importance to working with the Civil Society, in order to strengthen democracy in the country as per international norms.

SDG 16 clearly stipulates that “...we cannot hope for sustainable development without peace, justice, human rights and effective governance based on the rule of law.” Therefore Parliaments have an obligation to advocate for a peaceful resolution to domestic and regional conflicts.

The Namibian Parliament provides a platform for citizens to engage in peaceful demonstrations while submitting petitions on issues of importance to them. Furthermore, the public is at liberty to visit individual MPs to discuss pertinent issues as well as familiarize themselves with the functioning of Parliament. In addition, the Namibian Parliament has social medial platforms where the public is at liberty to inform Parliament of challenges within the society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namibia is one of the few countries in the world hosting the Children Parliament. This is a youth Parliament purposely meant to inculcate a democratic culture among young people in the country.

It is my considered view that only when all the member states of the international community decide to adhere to the letter and spirit of international instruments, especially those dealing with conflict resolution, will the international legal order be strengthened and preserved. This, of course, requires taking into account the sovereignty and equality of states, irrespective of their size or geopolitical setting. In the same vein, I believe that parliaments can help build greater coherence in regional and inter-parliamentary cooperation by being active in regional and international parliamentary bodies – as citizens of the global village, we should learn to listen to each other. In this context, I would like to make a special plea to all of us in this hall to listen to the people of Western Sahara and Palestine. This in terms of implementing key UN resolutions on the question of self-determination for both of these people. They deserve our support.

I thank you!