



PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI



SPEECH BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE RICHARD MSOWOYA, MP

SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI

DURING

THE 139TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE I.P.U IN GENEVA.

Speech By

The Right Honourable Speaker During the 139 IPU Assembly

On Agenda Item 3:

"Parliamentary Leadership in promoting peace and development in the age of innovation and technological change"

Madam President of the IPU and distinguished Honourable Members and Delegates, Let me start by quoting one of the best scientists, Brian Schmidt, a professor at the Australian National University, who in 2011, won the Nobel Prize in Physics.

"Science is humanity's way of understanding the universe, which allows us to predict the consequences of our actions, and ultimately allows us to enhance our lives..... In the short term, science helps make our lives better; but in the long term, it will be crucial to our continued affluent survival."

Madam President, the Eminent Professor was responding to the question *"Why is science so important for society?"* from a Journalist. That question, in short, is the hallmark of the theme of our debate today and in particular what role should we as legislators play in providing the necessary leadership in our societies in order to enhance peace and development, in a world which is continuously and rapidly changing.

Madam President, I believe that there is a very strong correlation between development and peace. Quite often, underdevelopment breeds societal discontentment. In turn, discontentment becomes fertile ground for

misunderstanding and ultimately results into societal conflicts if not managed properly. Needless to say, there can be no peace in such situations.

Madam President, the world is changing rapidly on a daily basis and will continue to do so. It can therefore be argued that our societies will face some challenges in future and therefore we need to strategically prepare ourselves if we are to avoid problems that will disturb peace as well as threaten what Professor Schimdt calls our "*.. affluent survival*".

I would like to submit here that scientific development and technological advancement will be key and crucial to whatever strategies we as leaders put in place today for the continued peaceful existence of the human race.

Madam President, most of our countries have subscribed to the 2030 SDGs which aim to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want, and to heal and secure our planet. Madam President the UN in its preamble to the SDGs and in particular on peace, has stressed that, "*There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development*"

This, Madam President is where science and technology can play a critical role. For instance Madam President, SDG Numbers 9 and 13 which talk about industry, innovation and Climate action respectively, can not be achieved outside a concerted effort of ensuring that

science and technology are harnessed to play a pivotal role in developmental policies.

The world today, Madam President, has numerous examples of countries that have developed tremendously and are existing peacefully courtesy of their deliberate policies in ensuring that science and technology take centre stage in the peace and development agendas of those nations. What is important to note, is that in such countries the legislative arms of government have been in the forefront in ensuring that sound policies and adequate budgetary allocations are directed towards science and technology.

UNCTAD, notes and acknowledges that Science , Technology and innovation that are integrated into national development policies provide a conducive atmosphere for peace and development and consequently policies need to address the specific features of innovation particularly in developing countries.

Madam President, it is a fact that Developing Countries like Malawi, have a long way to go when it comes to science despite visible efforts to improve the situation. This is where as legislators we need to come in.

As Parliamentarians, we need to seize every opportunity that avails itself , be it through legislation, representation or oversight, to ensure that Government development

policies and agenda are influenced by scientific research and facts. The question is how do we do this?

Madam President, as parliamentarians we are mandated in our various countries to scrutinise and pass national budgets. In addition, we are the representatives of the people in so many different fora that formulate, implement and oversee government policies. It is high time we seized these opportunities and fully utilize them to make sure that science takes centre stage in the development agenda, and ultimately peace.

Madam President, gone are the days when parliaments were considered to be decision making bodies only on issues that have been presented before them by the executive arms of government. It is high time that parliaments began to review their oversight mandate, with a view to encouraging parliamentary committees to have special focus on government policies on science and technology.

Madam President, Malawi's economy, just like so many countries, is agro based. In such economies, it is important that such countries must innovate or perish, especially now with the challenges of climate change. Innovation can only be achieved through science and it is our role as parliamentarians to ensure that appropriate legislation is adopted, implemented and results closely monitored to ensure that science plays a crucial role.

Madam President, in conclusion, let me quote what the former President of the United States of America, once said, "*The main objective of all science is the freedom and happiness of man*".

Madam President, it is our duty to make sure that science is harnessed for the freedom and happiness of the human race.

I thank you so much for your attention.

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