



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Address

By

**Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi, MP
Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of
Namibia**

***General Debate on Parliaments as Platforms to enhance
Education for Peace, Security and the Rule of Law***

**140th INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION ASSEMBLY
Doha, Qatar 6 – 10th April 2019**

Madame President of the IPU,

Monsieur Secretary-General of the IPU,

Speakers & Presiding Officers of National Parliaments,

Members of Parliaments,

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations came into being with the noble objective of promoting peace, security and the rule of law, and to foster and enhance a democratic culture for all citizens of the global village. Yet despite the many efforts carried out by international organisations, many communities, countries and regions around the world continue to experience various forms of violence.

The 2018 Global Peace Index reveals that there is an escalation in violence against women and children, and an increase in acts of violent extremism in different parts of the world. The attack on people at prayer in mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, is a terrible recent example of this. On behalf of the Parliament of Namibia, I would like to hereby express our condolences and sympathy towards the families and communities of those killed and wounded in Christchurch.

Fellow Parliamentarians,

Parliaments worldwide have a fundamental obligation to craft legislation that is aimed at enhancing peace, security, good governance and the rule of law, for the citizens of our countries. Furthermore, Parliaments in a multi-party democracy are the platform for different opinions and are well-placed to find solutions

to challenges in the societies they represent. However, for Parliaments to be able to do this, they need to be truly representative.

Peace, security and the rule of law are the pre-conditions for addressing the immense challenges faced by humanity today. Without these in place, our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals will remain elusive. Therefore, this debate on Parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law could not have come at a better time.

The causes of conflicts might include inequality between groups, competition for the control of natural resources, unemployment, lack of education, and population pressure. If these issues are not dealt with adequately, the conflict may worsen and ultimately it may affect the stability of the state. Therefore, if education is to play a role in addressing the root causes of conflict, it needs to facilitate the development of social and economic justice.

Africa is blessed with a lot of natural resources and yet there is much poverty. So, when we talk of education, our emphasis should be on education that enhances innovation, technology, and economic development. This kind of education should promote value addition to our natural resources. Industrialisation of our economies will create jobs for our youth and better our household incomes.

In Namibia, we are committed to the growth at home strategy and the nation has deliberately implemented free primary and secondary school education. Even at the University level, the Government helps to support students from low-income families. Article 20 of Chapter 3 of our Constitution enshrines education as a fundamental human right to which every citizen is entitled.

The Namibian Parliament recognizes that peace, stability, human rights and effective governance based on the rule of law, are

important conduits for sustainable development. We therefore conducted a workshop, in conjunction with UNESCO, on the management of cultural diversity and political tolerance, in order to integrate a culture of peace in our legislative processes, and in the implementation of SDG 16 and other SDGs in Namibia.

Fellow Parliamentarians,

Namibia also observes and promotes press freedom, which is guaranteed under Article 21 (1) (a) of our Constitution as one of the *fundamental freedoms*. According to the Reporters without Borders World Press Freedom Index, Namibia has occupied the first position on the African continent when it comes to press freedom, for many years.

The Namibian Parliament, with the support of UNICEF, also runs a Children's Parliament and a Youth Council, whose main aims are to promote the rights of children to participate in decision-making processes and to inculcate democratic values and practices in them at a young age.

Furthermore, Namibia has vibrant civil society organisations that are active in support of human rights, and against gender-based violence. They also engage Parliament on these issues, either through petitions or public hearings organised by the various Parliamentary Standing Committees.

Namibia has also, over the years, ratified important international conventions relating to the theme of this Assembly.

I thank you for your attention.