



**Remarks by Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi, MP**  
**SPEAKER: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

## **139<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly**

**General Debate on the theme:**

*Parliamentary leadership in promoting peace and development in the age of innovation and technological change*

**Geneva**  
**Switzerland**



**Honourable President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Secretary General of the IPU,**

**Speakers and Presiding Officers of various Parliaments present,**

**Members of Parliament,**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps,**

**Distinguished Invited Guests,**

**Members of the Media,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to thank the IPU for the visionary leadership of this institution and for once again, bringing us together, to share on very important matters affecting our world today.

As legislators, we have a key role to ensure good governance in our respective countries and collectively, around the world. Therefore, when we converge together, it is a very opportune moment for benchmarking our various experiences.

The theme titled “Parliamentary leadership in promoting peace and development in the age of innovation and technological change” for the general debate of this 139<sup>th</sup> assembly is very important for the improvement of legislative work of Parliaments.

We welcome the emphasis being placed on the need to promote the teaching of Science, Technology, Engineering and mathematics (STEM) right from basic education into advanced applied research and innovation, so as to enable us to achieve the objectives of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Innovation and technological change have been proven to contribute significantly to the development and growth of countries. There are many innovations that play a crucial role in shaping the world and promoting peace and development and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one such intervention.

ICT have become essential in both supporting and promoting the work of the legislature throughout the world. It is therefore imperative that Parliaments exploit this opportunity not only to ease legislative work but also to promote a culture of engagement with the electorate, who we are accountable to. In this regard, the Namibian Parliament is making great strides in embracing ICT as tools of trade.

We are also making effort to promote a paperless parliament through pathways that could enhance e-library as well as e-governance. We recently cemented our ties with the Finnish Parliament and they have agreed to help in the transformation of the Namibian Parliament into a paperless institution or e- parliament.

ICT therefore, supports the work of the legislature through the following ways among others:

- *Improved information access and dissemination*
- *Increased administrative efficiency and effectiveness and*
- *Enhanced interaction with citizens.*

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

Furthermore, econometric models are increasingly being used by parliaments within their Parliamentary Budget Offices and Fiscal Councils, to assess national economies and thereby guide parliamentarians on how to critically analyze the national budget during debates relating to appropriation bills.

In this way, legislatures are ensuring that sufficient funds are allocated to sectors where they are needed most in our various countries. In this regard, Namibia is joining this worthy initiative, to strengthen our Parliamentary Budget Office.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On the subject of abusive use of technology for harmful purposes, we recently adopted a policy on crafting a policy on social media use and communication. The framework of this policy seeks to guide information dissemination and social media use within government and the public at large. It is meant to foster a culture of participation and interaction with the public on crucial issues of development in our country.

The Namibian Legislature is keen, like other sister Parliaments within the IPU family, to craft suitable legislation and policies within the country. These should aim at enhancing scientific research, innovation and technology that will enable the country to join the rest of the African continent in achieving the AU Agenda 2063. Furthermore, to join the rest of the world to realize Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development as well as the objectives and targets of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Namibia is a country well-endowed with natural resources. Innovation and technological advancement are very important to enable the country to add value to its natural resources so as to create jobs and better the welfare of our citizens.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the President for the message of condolence sent to the Namibian Parliament on the passing of Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, our former Speaker. I also thank the Assembly for the respect shown today by observing a minute of silence today in honour of Dr. Gurirab and the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

As we are talking about using technology for speedy communication of our decisions and actions, I would like to share with the Assembly that we have already informed Mrs. Joan Guriras that her late husband was remembered and honoured here today. She has requested me to thank you all.

**I thank you!**