



SPEECH

BY

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**ON THE THEME OF THE 138TH IPU GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

**“Strengthening the Global Regime for Migrants and
Refugees: the Need for Evidence-based Policy Solutions”**

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Madam President, Distinguished Delegates,

We address ourselves today on this seminal and topical theme, **“Strengthening the Global Regime for Migrants and Refugees: the Need for Evidence-Based Policy Solutions”**.

This theme is of critical importance because migration has now assumed catastrophic levels of human dehumanisation almost tantamount to modern slavery which is an unacceptable indictment to human civilization. Globally, there are 258 million people living as migrants, and of that figure, 21 million are deemed to be refugees. Africa accounts for 24,7 million migrants whilst women comprise 48,4 % of the global statistics. Of greatest concern behind these statistics is the attendant human suffering of these migrants and refugees who suffer from statelessness which is an affront to their human dignity. The key drivers of human unabated mobility are complex and unprecedented. The key drivers for migration encompass economic, social, political and environmental imperatives which the IPU must address through evidence - based policy solutions.

Madam President,

As we congregate here, these migrants and refugees continue to experience untold human suffering, sometimes deaths and violated human dignity whilst in transit and in the countries of their destination. This arises from unjustified beliefs that migrants and refugees are a threat to some countries' security, national sovereignty and perceived disruption of the social cohesion of the hosting countries.

Consequently, migrants and refugees have experienced brazen discrimination, xenophobic attacks, and sometimes for the women- folk forced prostitution. In that regard, the IPU must take heed of the salutary injunction by the United Nations (UN) Deputy Secretary General Jan Eliasson who implored that, *“we need to take greater responsibility for protecting the lives of many thousands of migrants – men, women and children – who are compelled to undertake dangerous and sometimes fatal journeys. Those forced to flee should never be denied safe haven or rescue. Migrants as all people, deserve protection and empathy”*.

To that extent, Parliaments of the IPU must experience a prickled human conscience to act practically against the

migrants' callous and inhuman treatment. The IPU must, therefore, positively respond to the Sustainable Development Goal(SDG) 10.7, which requires countries to: **“facilitate orderly, safe and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well managed migration policies”**. To affirm this response, the 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants which sets out the commitments by the signatories to that declaration must enhance the protection of migrants and refugees as people deserving the respect of their human rights which must be religiously actualised.

Madam President,

It is thus an imperative to have evidence -based solutions on migration so that our governments can act from an informed position. There is need, therefore, for Participatory Research by our relevant tertiary institutions and International Organisations such as the IMO in order to come up with robust evidence – based solutions which appropriately respond to the teething problems of migration. These evidence – based solutions must be anchored on a sound legal framework crafted by our Parliaments on the bedrock of justiceability.

Zimbabwe's Parliament has already taken the cue by enacting the Trafficking In Persons Act in that regard. Time is now for the IPU to demonstrate unflinching commitment towards mapping out implementable evidence – based solutions to curtail the migrants' human catastrophe. Why not appoint an IPU High Level Working Group to spearhead the modalities for the need for timely and applicable evidence – based solutions so that our National Parliaments can be so guided accordingly? **Madam President,** why not rise to the challenge and act expeditiously?

I THANK YOU