



**Remarks by Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi, MP
SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
138th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS
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**President of the IPU,
Secretary-General of the IPU,
Fellow Speakers and Parliamentarians,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted to be here with you today as we attend the 138th Assembly of the IPU, whose theme is “*Sustaining peace as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development*”.

First of all, let me once again congratulate our IPU President, Senator Gabriela Cuevas Barron, who was elected in October 2017, on her assumption of the Office.

Allow me to also take this opportunity to thank the IPU Secretariat for recently facilitating the Namibian Parliament to host the Seminar on Evaluating the Level of Gender Sensitivity of the Parliament of Namibia. On this note, let me extend my appreciation to IPU for especially facilitating the

former Speaker of the Australian Parliament to serve as the key facilitator of the seminar.

I believe that the report on this important event will be shared with other sister Parliaments.

On the main theme of the Assembly and the theme of the General debate, for many of us who were involved in the struggles for the liberation of our various countries, we experienced first-hand what a conflict can do to a nation, its people and property there-in. Besides, every now and then the world has continued to witness pockets of conflict in various corners and this creates wanton suffering for many people. These circumstances bring around migration which has led to many other related challenges as we are sharing in this Assembly.

It is against this background that we in Namibia attach great importance to peace and stability.

We designed our National Constitution in particular, to ensure that peace and stability are cherished and maintained in the country. The Namibian Constitution upholds equality for all, the strengthening of institutions that cater for human rights and the rule of law, as well as sustainable development which will ensure that all citizens enjoy fair and equal treatment.

Therefore, our theme is a powerful reminder of the need for our societies to work towards the achievement of a lasting peace, which in turn will create a conducive environment to promote sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Looking at the theme of the General Debate, “*Strengthening the global regime for migrants and refugees: the need for evidence-based policy solutions*”, this is a complex and challenging subject to all governments and parliaments around the globe.

On one hand, we have people who are forced by circumstances beyond their control, relating to personal safety, social and economic reasons, but on the other hand, we have criminal tendencies linked to human trafficking, terrorism and other crimes and quite often, there is a thin line or rather it is difficult to accurately tell which migrant needs to be protected and which one needs to be denied refuge.

I therefore appeal to the IPU Secretariat and our various Parliaments who are part of the IPU family, to ensure that we discuss this discourse of migration while looking at all these facets related to migration and the facilitation of refugees.

The concept note and the broad conclusions around the discussion on the theme of the general debate should enjoy the support of our various parliaments.

As I conclude my remarks, let me take this opportunity to express our view on the proposed amendments to the IPU Constitution. Yes, it is essential that we take stock of how our organisation is performing so as to ensure that we have a dynamic and resilient institution which ably responds to changing times. However, such amendments must be looked at carefully in order to be well-informed about the financial and strategic implications of some of the changes that are being proposed.

We are delighted that there is an agreement to subject the proposed amendments to a reasonable timeframe in order to ensure that we do not work in haste. This is indeed a welcome development that will certainly inspire confidence in the entire process.