

Statement by
Rt. Hon. Onasari Gharti, Speaker, Legislature-Parliament of Nepal
at the General Debate on
"Redressing Inequalities: Delivering on Dignity and Well-Being for All"
136th Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly
(Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1-5 April, 2017)

The Honorable President of the 136th Session of the IPU Assembly,

Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh,

Rt.Hon. Speakers of the Parliaments,

H.E. President of the Inter Parliamentary Union,

Members of the Parliament,

Distinguished Participants and Observers,

1. **First of all**, on behalf of the delegation of the Legislature-Parliament of Nepal I would like to thank the Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh and President of the IPU for inviting us to participate in the 136th IPU Assembly. I would also like to extend our gratitude to the Government, Parliament, and People of Bangladesh for extending generous hospitality to us since our arrival here in this historic capital city, Dhaka.
2. The topic of this general debate today, "Redressing inequalities: delivering on dignity and well-being for all" has a very wide scope of action as this issue is deeply associated with the Sustainable Development Goals – the SDG 10, that calls "*Reduce inequalities within and among Countries*".

3. Other SDGs, in particular the SDG 1: "*End poverty in all its forms everywhere*", the SDG 5: "*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*", and the SDG16 "*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*", are close inter-linked with the topic this august Assembly is focusing on its deliberations today.
4. The main essence of these SDGs is to include all the segments of the society in order to redress inequalities. Any kind of unequal behavior and activities within the society, the country, and among the countries in the world remains the greatest threats not only to sustainable development but also for the global peace and harmony.

Honorable President of the Assembly,

5. In many developing countries, large segments of our population are still far behind with regards to the generation of minimum income for their daily livelihood. The level of economic, social, and political participation of deprived population of the society is quite far behind in comparison to the people having multiple opportunities. Therefore, inequality among human beings is an alarming issue at the national level as well at the global level debates.
6. We may all share the similar thoughts that ensuring of equal opportunities especially in the economic, social, and political sectors of society would definitely assist to reduce the multiple inequalities that continue to prevail in our societies. It is therefore vital that respective parliaments, as the representative body of their people address these inequalities through the

making of necessary laws, budgetary sanctions and oversight to the policies and programs of the governments.

7. Another important measure to redress inequalities is to ensure social justice, dignity and protection to those in need which contributes to nurturing human dignity and well-being for all in the society. To this end, the benefits and bonus of development and growth must be shared justifiably and not be concentrated within a select few in the society and nation.
8. It is my belief that all segments of the society must benefit from the growth and advancement. The government needs to adopt appropriate policies and programs of social justice to ensure benefits sharing of the overall developments without discouraging entrepreneurship. I believe, the similar approach of reducing inequalities can be applied to minimize existing inequalities among the least developed, developing, and developed countries across the world.

Honorable President of the Assembly and members of Parliament,

9. My country Nepal is working on harmonizing policies and programs to incorporate the SDGs into our national development plans focusing on the objective of addressing poverty, reducing inequalities, and creating opportunities for all. We are very much aware that inequalities may cause conflicts. We have also observed that inequalities in social and economic sectors could lead to political unrest in a nation.

10. The Constituent Assembly of Nepal led the historic process of writing the constitution in 2008 and in 2013 in a democratic, inclusive, participatory and transparent manner. The Constitution of Nepal was promulgated in September 2015 bringing the peace process to a logical conclusion and heralding a new era of social cohesion, rights-based approach to development, equal opportunities, distributive justice and shared prosperity. The Constitution has adopted various inclusive provisions of social justice, particularly for women, indigenous nationalities, marginalized communities or disadvantaged segments of the society as well as for those living backward in order to mainstream them into the various State affairs.

11. Empowerment of the women, the poor and the marginalized groups of people is critical to ensure their participation in development and to promote social justice and shared prosperity for all. In Nepal, we have ensured that at least one third of the Members of the Federal Parliament and State Assemblies must be women, while at least forty percent of representatives in the local bodies should be women.

12. I am very happy to mention that, currently, Nepal has President of the Country, Speaker of the Legislature-Parliament and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court all headed by women.

13. Importantly, with the view of ensuring political representation of women at the local level, particularly from the backward communities, the Local Level Election bill endorsed by the Legislature-Parliament has provided that all political parties must field at least one Dalit woman candidate in the post of ward committee member. Similarly, two seats are reserved for women from the

Dalit or minority communities in the village council while three seats are reserved for women from the Dalit or minority communities in the municipal council. This would certainly contribute to gender mainstreaming into local and national development process.

14. The role of Parliamentarians is vital for the strengthening of democratic governance, social justice and sustainable development. It is important to foster dialogue and participation of all the excluded segments of our societies with resources and tools required for their capacity enhancement in order to benefit them from the fruits of development. Periodic elections are equally important to ensure democratic exercise and promote sustainable peace and inclusive development in the country. Let me note here that Nepal is also preparing to hold the local elections on 14 May 2017.

15. **To conclude Honorable President,** we all share the view that inclusion in socio-economic and political sectors along with State institutions plays a significant role in reducing inequalities and overcoming deprivation. The issues of inequality need to be urgently addressed at the local, national, regional, and at the global level. This forum of global Parliamentarians needs to work more in assessing our efforts to redressing economic, social, political and other forms of gaps.

16. The SDGs have broadly diagnosed this issue which require concerted national efforts and international support measures to translate national needs and priorities into redressing inequalities that exists in the society today.

17.I am very much confident that, under your able stewardship, the 136th IPU Assembly would result in constructive exchange of ideas and adoption of more pragmatic resolutions for addressing inequalities across the societies and nations in the world. In that, we would be definitely contributing to the promotion of human dignity and well-being for all, to ensure that no one is left behind, in the days ahead. **I wish all the success of the Assembly. I thank you for your kind attention.**