



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA**

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY RT HON JUSTICE DR  
PATRICK MATIBINI, SC, MP AND SPEAKER OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA**

***ON THE TOPIC:***

***PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH  
PARLIAMENTARY LENS***

**DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE AT THE**

***THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF  
PARLIAMENT, UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK, 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST TO  
2<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2015***

**August, 2015**

The IPU President,

Session Chairperson,

The Secretary General,

Hon Colleagues,

I would like to thank you for granting me this opportunity to join my colleagues in contributing to the general debate styled “Placing Democracy at the Service of Peace and Sustainable Development: Building the World the People Want.”

As previous speakers have constantly stated, later this month, World Leaders will converge here in New York to adopt the next Agenda for Sustainable Development which will focus on completing the unfinished business of the MDGs and hopefully raise the bar for tackling emerging issues and challenges. In this regard, we Members of Parliament are in vantage position to contribute to the shaping, advancement and implementation of sustainable development agenda within our respective countries. In this respect, we can crucially contribute by enacting relevant legislation and closely monitoring the implementation of the various programmes and initiatives in the next development agenda. As direct representatives of the people, we can and should make their voices heard and define the fiscal and budgetary trajectory of our nations.

However, it is a matter of regret that currently, Parliaments tend to be left behind in critical developmental conversations and processes. Yet Parliaments are the central and cardinal institutions of democracy which embody the will and aspirations of the people.

That said, I would now like to briefly highlight Zambia's experiences in dealing with this subject matter. The Constitution of the Republic of Zambia, vests the legislative power of the Republic in Parliament. In practice, this entails, law making, the oversight function, budgetary and representative functions performed by Parliament. Through the discharge of these key functions, the Zambian Parliament contributes significantly to the maintenance of peace and democracy, as well as acceleration of development in the country. Since 2002, an ambitious process of enhancing the core functions of Parliament has been prosecuted through the parliamentary reform programme. These parliamentary reforms have in particular enhanced parliamentary oversight in the following ways:

- alignment of parliamentary committees to Government Ministries to enhance policy development and implementation. This ensures that all Government ministries are effectively covered and scrutinised;
- the opening of doors of the committees to the public to enable the public participate in committee proceedings through making submissions on various Government programmes and initiatives;
- field visits undertaken by parliamentary committees to oversee Government activities and projects; and
- In addition through various in-house mechanisms. These include questions for oral and written answer to Ministers and the Vice President's Question Time.

In exercising the legislative function, various stakeholders and interested groups are provided a platform to submit and contribute to the legislative process.

When considering the budget estimates, we have provided for an Expanded Committee of Estimates which includes chairpersons of portfolio committees to scrutinise the proposed estimates on behalf of Parliament. This dispensation allows for diverse perspectives during the discussion of the estimates at committee level. Further, through engagement with civil society organizations, the business community and other stakeholders, Parliament promotes peace and the practice of democracy, thereby fostering sustainable development.

The representative function has been enhanced through the establishment and construction of constituency offices in all the 150 constituencies in the country. Through this platform members of the public and the constituency are accorded an opportunity to participate in the corporate life of Parliament, thereby contributing to the promotion of peace and sustainable development. The constituency offices are strategically deployed as centres of democracy and development. Through the constituency offices, the views of the most marginalised groups are heard. There is however a great deal of latitude to improve the effectiveness of the offices granted that this democratic project, is still in its nascent stage.

Mr President and dear colleagues, as I conclude, it is instructive to note that no development agenda can be championed, and no peace effort can be sustained without the people's representatives. Therefore, no effort should be spared in the integration of the people's representatives in the formulation and implementation of the international development agenda.

I thank you for your attention.

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