

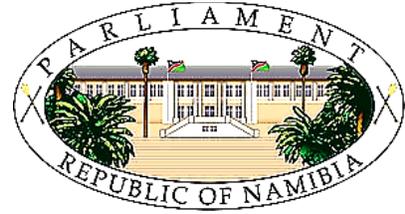
**136TH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION ASSEMBLY
DHAKA, BANGLADESH**

1 – 5TH APRIL 2017

**CONTRIBUTION BY HON. PROF. PETER H. KATJAVIVI, MP,
SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

***“REDRESSING INEQUALITIES: DELIVERING ON DIGNITY
AND WELL-BEING FOR ALL”***

Item 3



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136th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly Item 3

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1-5 April 2017

**Hon. President of IPU,
Secretary-General of IPU,
Hon. Speakers and Presidents of various National
Parliaments,
Honourable Members,
Members of the Media,**

I salute you all in the name of the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia and the people of Namibia. We congratulate the IPU leadership for choosing this topic for our conference. Let me also extend our thanks and appreciation to the Parliament and the people of Bangladesh for hosting us.

The inequalities confronting many of our countries, be it economic, political, class, gender, academic or religious, are a historical legacy that creates great challenges.

The people of Namibia weathered the storms of colonialism and apartheid but we cannot continue to sit idle and do nothing about the deficit we inherited. We have just celebrated our 27th Anniversary of Independence and the country continues to strive to overcome inequality.

The President of our country, H.E. Dr. Hage Geingob, introduced the Harembee Prosperity Plan in 2016, outlining measures to intervene in specific social and economic sectors. He set up a Ministry of Poverty and Eradication and Social Welfare, which is developing suitable programmes including a food bank and increased social grants for poor and vulnerable members of society.

Our Parliament continues to work with the Government, to craft policies and legislation aimed at facilitating economic transformation so as to overcome poverty and underdevelopment.

The Parliament and the Government are working towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Budget 2017 commits 47% of government expenditure towards social welfare and poverty eradication programmes, and includes education and skills development as well as health services.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a need for our various parliaments within the IPU family, to share strategies on how to contribute towards the betterment of the welfare of our respective peoples and nations.

It is in this context that I would like to share the following with you:

- Our countries should ensure and encourage responsible fair and ethical investments; encouraging foreign investment but also beef it up with social protection and local entrepreneurship.
- Our parliaments and governments should promote value addition to our natural resources and ensure the protection of our infant industries.

- In addition, we note that the inequality debate is polarized between pro-growth and redistributionist camps. We should therefore redress inequality through skills development and entrepreneurship.
- Furthermore, public procurement should be used by our various governments to economically empower marginalized sectors of our communities.
- Finally and most importantly, meeting the needs and aspirations of our people requires us to ensure timely and adequate service delivery.

Honourable Members,

The most important aspect to note as legislators is the fact that the foundational pillar of democracy is the will of the people. It lies in the legitimacy of primary benefactors to derive the choice and power to be involved in making decisions about their lives, their society and their country.

Simplistically put, they should be empowered and involved to make decisions that affect their lives. It is only then that they can identify with and further, defend these initiatives.

We need to craft innovative pathways to deeply engage our communities, the private sector and civil society groups in working closely with our parliaments. Whereas we acknowledge the fact that our various countries have different cultures and environmental settings, benchmarking and sharing experiences is critical. This is why IPU provides a very significant platform for inter-parliamentary cooperation in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As leaders and opinion drivers, we need to openly declare our support and solidarity towards this cause of redressing inequalities in order to restore the right of our global citizens to dignity and well-being.

I thank you.