



Tenth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament

Placing Democracy at the Service of Peace and Sustainable development, Building the World People Want

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Democratic governance entails political participation exemplified by regular, periodic free and fair elections in which the mandate of the leaders is evaluated, assessed and either endorsed or rejected. It also entails the observance of human rights, access to justice for the people both in the public and economic systems. It involves the establishment of accessible justice structures including the Courts, the prosecutors and the investigating machinery.

Democracy also entails the establishment of equitable education systems to which all citizens, an overall improved quality of life, a healthy environment and personal security. On the other hand, the citizens must be informed, engaged and assertive.

The state institutions must be inclusive, transparent, accountable and responsive. The main arena for the practice of democracy is within the Parliaments and the Local Governments. It is in the Parliament that the rights, the interests and the stake of the populations can be articulated via the representative role of the legislators; it is also the main arena for the budgets that would support the programmes for financing peace and sustaining it.

It is the venue to carry out oversight on the work of the Executive; to ensure that the policies, the programmes and the laws are being implemented and that the funds budgeted for are used for the purpose for which they were allotted. If a Government says it is engaged in peace keeping, peace building, is it possible to identify the activities that are being carried out? It is also an opportunity to

check if indeed a country that is not at war under threat of war should spend so much on defense expenditure rather than on the social services of the population.

Sustainability requires stability, openness, transparency, and a well-informed population. It requires clear structures and programmes established with timelines accountability structures both within the Government as well within the Legislatures. It is only an elected Government or elected Legislature that can establish the Action Plans, funding of the Action Plans and carrying out oversight by the Legislatures and the Local Governments.

It is essential that as part of transparency, accountability and oversight, the Government ought to regularly report to the country through the Legislature on the status of Sustainable Development Goals and Targets.

The Parliaments should in order to support the implementation of the goals, establish Committees that specifically examine the funding, availability of the human resources, and maintain Government performance of the Goals and Targets.

