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By

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on

The Role of Parliaments in Fighting Intolerance, Promoting Peaceful Co-existence and Inclusive societies

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1. Introduction

1.1 **Continuity in Change:** the quest for promotion of peaceful co-existence and inclusive societies and maintenance of international peace and stability is not a novelty. Realising these noble ideas has been a preoccupation of Heads of States and Government, national parliaments, international organizations, multi-lateral and supranational bodies for many years.

1.2 In fact, creating an inclusive, rules-based, peaceful and stable international order marked by peaceful-coexistence predates the current international system as represented by the United Nations (UN)and its various agencies- the Bretton Woods institutions and other global governance institutions.

1.3 **Shifting Contours of International Relations and Diplomacy**- to begin to notice this long history of international efforts aimed at creating peaceful-coexistence and inclusive societies- one needs to look no further than the *long duree* of international relations and diplomacy during and post the two world wars (WW I & WW II).

1.4 **Unity of Purpose**- The predecessors of the current international organizations such as the UN and regional bodies like the African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) were also preoccupied with similar issues and questions- while placing a premium on multilateralism as an organizing principle and a launching pad for creating unity of purpose. International organizations such as the League of Nations (a precursor of the UN) and the Organization of African Unity-OAU (a precursor of the AU) also viewed peaceful-coexistence and inclusive societies as an essential precondition for a peaceful and stable world.

For instance, Article 11 of the Covenant of the League of Nations states that 'any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League,

and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations'.[1]

Taking a cue from the League of Nations Covenant, the 1945 UN Charter to also viewed peaceful co-existence as critical to maintenance of international peace and security. Thus Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter specifically outline measures to be taken to maintain or restore international peace and security.[2]

1.5 **Paradigm Shift: From State Security to Human Security-** while the end of bipolarity that characterised the Cold War period did not bring about expected peace dividend- as shown by conflicts and complex humanitarian emergencies in places like the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia and East Timor and by the Rwandan genocide- it resulted to a paradigm shift in the international discourse on and practice of security.

This shift involved the broadening of the unit of analysis of security from the state to individuals and groups of people within states[3]. The post-Cold War period also coincided with the move away from 'state-centric' of security to a more broadened and people-centred understanding of security encapsulated in the concept of 'human security'. Fighting intolerance, promoting peaceful co-existence and inclusive societies are all at the heart of human security.

During the periods preceding the Cold War, security was only seen from the optics of sovereignty and statehood- taken as a *sine qua non* of 'state-ness' or as a *raison d'être* of a state[4]. Writing in the 19th century, Max Weber viewed the state as that "entity with the monopoly over the legitimate use of force"-

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[1] The Covenant of the League of Nations. Available at https://www.ungeneva.org/en/library-archives/league-of-nations/covenant [accessed on 14 February 2023]

[2] United Nations Charter (1945). Available at https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter [accessed on 14 February 2023]

3 Mbadlanyana, T and Cilliers, J. 'Development and the relationship with peace and security in Africa: observations from the Joint Africa-EU Strategy'. In Antonio Nunez (ed). "European and African answers to the security problems in Africa". Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies (IEEE) Booklet, Madrid, Spain (2010)

[4] Mbadlanyana, Thembani. "At the crossroads between moralpolitik and realpolitik: searching a common ground on the use of private military and security companies (PMSC) in African peacekeeping missions". Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies Monography 146 (forthcoming)

indirectly saying that security is a defining feature of the state and its provision is at the heart of the state.[5]

This understanding of security permeated throughout the UN system and for longest of times- informed how international relations were conducted. But with the end of Cold War, this changed completely

1.6 **Agenda for Peace- Freedom from Fear and Freedom from Want**- within the UN, the concept of human security was first formulated in the 1992 Agenda for Peace, proposed by former Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, which stressed the indispensable role of the UN in an integrated approach to human security, as one of the new requisites in peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict management[6].

The 1994 Human Development Report further expanded on the idea of human security[7]. In fact, the UNDP 1994 Human Development Report[8] set the tone for all succeeding definitions by articulating a universal, preventive, "people-centred" approach that focused jointly on "freedom from fear and freedom from want."[9]

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[5] Weber says this on his Politics as a Vocation (Politik als Beruf) a lecture given by him to the Free Students Society/Movement of the Munich University in January during the German Revolution of 1918–1919 (available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Weber) accessed on 13 March 2010. Also see Small, Michelle. Privatization of Security and military: Functions and the demise of the modern nation-state in Africa. Occassional Paper Series: Volume 1, Number 2, 2006. ACCORD, Durban

[6] Tadjbakhsh, 2005

[7] Rothschild, Emma. 1995. "What is Security?" Daedalus. 1995. 124:3. 53-98.

[8] According to Tadjakhsh (2005) and Alkire 91997), this report was also explicitly crafted as an agenda for the Social Summit in Copenhagen, at which extensive discussion of the peace dividend was expected

[9] Alkire, Sabina. A Conceptual Framework for Human Security. Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) Working Paper 2, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford 2003

In the Report of the Secretary-General titled- 'In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all'[10] once again, peaceful co-existence and inclusive societies were seen as an integral part of human security

1.7 **New Agenda for Change: Human Development**- immediately after the post-Cold war period- the focus was on new agenda for change **– thus the concepts of human security and human development came to dominate debates on security and development**[11].

1.8 As they gained strong acceptance in international security, development and legal discourse, they also became instrumental in bringing into the international community's attention the threats that the emerging global issues such as intolerance, absence of peaceful co-existence and inclusive societies, intrastate wars, terrorism, climate change, diseases, food insecurity, human trafficking, displacement and others pose not only to the international peace and security but also to the wellbeing of individuals and communities[12].

1.9 **Creating an Inclusive Society**- In 1995, world leaders made commitments for global social change in the World Summit for Social Development [that resulted to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development]. Amongst others; they committed to '***create an inclusive society'***, "a society for all", as one of the key goals of social development.[13] The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme

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[10] United Nations General Assembly 59th Session. (2005). In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all'. UN, New York. Available at https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/A.59.2005.Add.3.pdf (accessed on 13 February 2023)

[11] Ibid

[12] Ball, N. 2001. Ministerial meetings: Report of a Conference organized by the Programme for Strategic and International Studies. Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva March 8-9 2001. According to Ball (2001, both security and development actors have begun to incorporate a human dimension into their policies. One reason behind this shift is the growing realization that a concept of security that places individuals and communities at its centre is a fundamental co-condition of development.

[13] World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development-1995

of Action, a key outcome of the Summit, pledged to make the eradication of poverty, full employment and social integration overriding objectives of development. Member states made a commitment to promote social integration through fostering inclusive societies that are stable, safe, just and tolerant, and respect diversity, equality of opportunity and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.[14]

2. Conceptual Overview: What is Tolerance, Peaceful Co-existence and Inclusive Society?

2.1 The three are interrelated and/or mutually reinforcing- you cannot talk about one without mentioning another.

2.2 **Tolerance-** according to the United Nations Millennium Declaration tolerance means that human beings must respect one other, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language. A critical aspect of tolerance is that differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted. Viewed from the optics of politics, tolerance is 'the willingness to extend basic rights and civil liberties to persons and groups whose viewpoints differ from one's own. It is a central tenet of a liberal democracy'.[15]

2.3 **Peaceful Co-existence-** this concept is self-explanatory and simply refers to living together in peace rather than in constant hostility.[16] From the international relations perspective, peaceful coexistence 'signifies in essence the

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[14] https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/compilation-brochure.pdf [Accessed on 14 February 2023]

[15] Avery, Patricia G. (2001). Developing Political Tolerance. Eric Digest ED458186 2001-12-00. Available at https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED458186.pdf [Accessed on 14 February 2023]

[16] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peaceful%20coexistence [Accessed on 14 February 2023]

repudiation of war as a means of solving controversial issues…. it presupposes an obligation to refrain from every form of violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of another state'.[17]

2.4 **Inclusive Society:** according to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), 'an inclusive society is a society that over-rides differences of race, gender, class, generation, and geography, and ensures inclusion, equality of opportunity as well as capability of all members of the society to determine an agreed set of social institutions that govern social interaction'.[18] The World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 1995) defines an inclusive society as a "society for all in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play".[19]

Such an inclusive society must be based on respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, cultural and religious diversity, social justice6 and the special needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, democratic participation and the rule of law.[20] It is promoted by social policies that seek to reduce inequality and create flexible and tolerant societies that embrace all people. The World Summit for Social Development, established the concept of social integration to create an inclusive society, "a society for all", as one of the key goals of social development.[21]

2.5 Given its cross-cutting nature- the concept of inclusive society is closely related to other equally important concepts that have assumed a prominent place in the global public policy agenda, namely: social integration, social cohesion and social inclusion.

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[17] George F. Kennan Peaceful Coexistence: A Western View. Published in the Foreign Affairs, January 1, 1960. Available at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1960-01-01/peaceful-coexistence

[18] Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Social Integration, Helsinki, July 2008). Also see DESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009). Creating an Inclusive Society. United Nations, http://undesadspd.org [accessed on 13 February 2023]

[19] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).
[20] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).
[21] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).

2.6 **Social Integration**- according to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, social integration is understood as a dynamic and principled process of promoting the values, relations and institutions that enable all people to participate in social, economic, cultural and political life on the basis of equality of rights, equity and dignity.[22] It is the process in which societies engage in order to foster societies that are stable, safe and just – societies that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as respect for and value of dignity of each individual, diversity, pluralism, tolerance, non-discrimination, non-violence, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security, and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.[23]

2.7 **Social cohesion:** for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, social cohesion refers to the elements that bring and hold people together in society.[24] In a socially cohesive society all individuals and groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy.[25] Social cohesive societies are not necessarily demographically homogenous. Rather, by respecting diversity, they harness the potential residing in their societal diversity (in terms of ideas, opinions, skills, etc.). Therefore, they are less prone to slip into destructive patterns of tension and conflict when different interests collide.[26]

2.8 **Social inclusion:** for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affair, social inclusion is understood as a process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background, so that they can achieve their full potential in life.[27] It is a multi-dimensional process aimed at creating conditions which enable full and active participation of every

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[22]United Nations Millennium Declaration. Adopted in 08 September 2000 by the UN General Assembly resolution 55/2. Available at https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/united-nations-millennium-declaration
[23] United Nations Millennium Declaration
[24] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).
[25] United Nations Millennium Declaration
[26] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).
[27] for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affair

member of the society in all aspects of life, including civic, social, economic, and political activities, as well as participation in decision-making processes.[28]
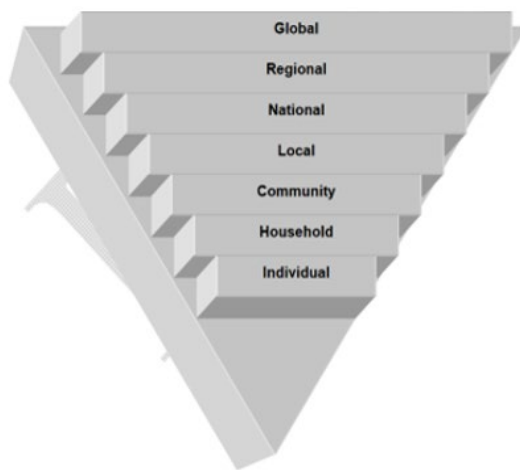

Figure 1: *Levels involved in a social inclusion process*

Figure 2: *Steps to promoting Social Inclusion*

2.9 At its core, social inclusion focuses on creating conditions for equal opportunities and equal access for all, is considered to be useful when describing the actual process involved in promoting social integration.[29] Social inclusion is also often more easily accepted as a policy goal, as it clearly eliminates a connotation of assimilation that some associate with the term "integration" - not all individuals and/or groups in societies are eager to be "integrated" into mainstream society, but all strive to be included.[30]

2.10   At the core of most definitions of social inclusion lies the concept of full participation in all aspects of life, while exclusion refers to the conditions (barriers and processes) that impede inclusion. Participation is most significant as it denotes an active involvement in the process, not merely having access to society's activities, but engaging in them, and building and maintaining a social network. Participation also creates a sense of responsibility towards

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[28] United Nations Millennium Declaration
[29] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).
[30] for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affair

others, a community or an institution, and influences decisions or enables individuals to have access to the decision-making processes.

3. <u>Five Steps of Social Inclusion</u>

3.1 In order to understand the actual process of social inclusion, Goran Therborn (2007, 2) suggests that the following five categories of inclusion could be considered as incremental steps to promote social inclusion.[31]
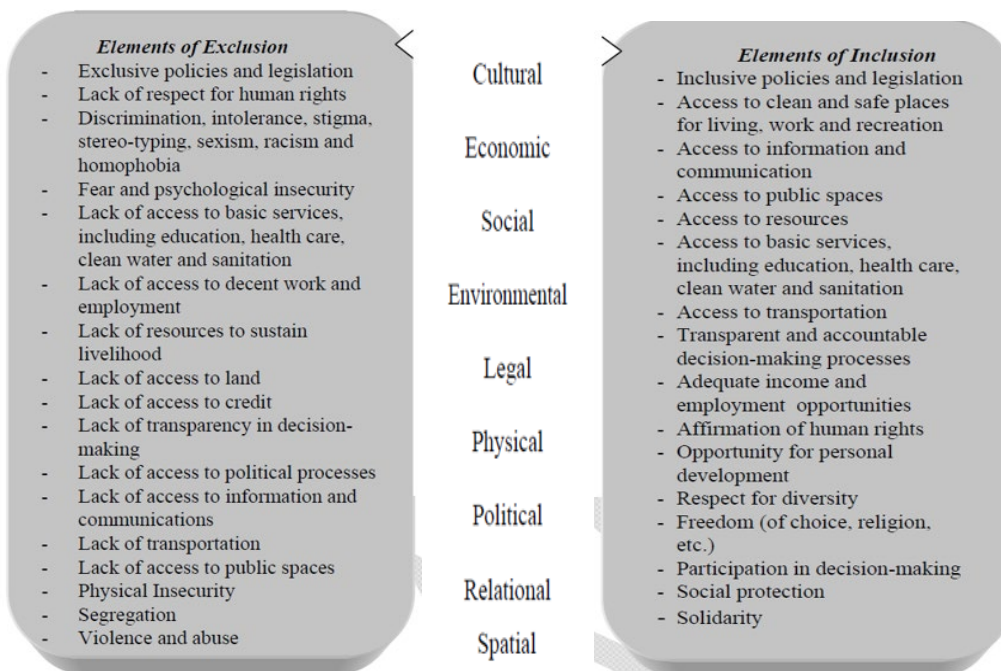
   a. *Visibility*: First and foremost, people need to be noticed, recognized, and have their own voices. There is no possibility of having a voice if an individual or group is not accounted for and represented in the processes that make up formal society. One of the greatest difficulties even at a local level is the actual census of population. People remain uncounted and therefore invisible.

   b. *Consideration*: The concerns and needs of individuals and groups are taken into account by policy-makers. Often policy-makers do not consider the poor and other marginalized groups as important stakeholders, and therefore, do not incorporate their needs and concerns.

   c. *Access to Social Interactions*: People must be able to engage in society's activities and social networks in their daily life, including economic, social, cultural, religious, and political activities.

   d. *Rights*: People must have rights to act and claim, rights to be different, legal rights, rights to access social services, such as housing, education, transportation, and health care. They must have the right to work and the right to participate in social, cultural and political life. The right to claim will regress if one is discriminated.

   e. *Resources to fully participate in society*: Those who do not have access to rights are not able to participate fully in society. However, even if people have rights to access, they cannot participate fully without adequate resources. Therefore, resources to fully participate in all

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[31] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).

aspects of societal activities are the ultimate step for successful social inclusion

4. <u>Dimensions and elements of Social Inclusion and Exclusion</u>

4.1 Social inclusion touches almost all dimensions of life, both individual and societal. These dimensions can be categorized in many different ways.

Elements of Exclusion
- Exclusive policies and legislation
- Lack of respect for human rights
- Discrimination, intolerance, stigma, stereo-typing, sexism, racism and homophobia
- Fear and psychological insecurity
- Lack of access to basic services, including education, health care, clean water and sanitation
- Lack of access to decent work and employment
- Lack of resources to sustain livelihood
- Lack of access to land
- Lack of access to credit
- Lack of transparency in decision-making
- Lack of access to political processes
- Lack of access to information and communications
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of access to public spaces
- Physical Insecurity
- Segregation
- Violence and abuse

Cultural
Economic
Social
Environmental
Legal
Physical
Political
Relational
Spatial

Elements of Inclusion
- Inclusive policies and legislation
- Access to clean and safe places for living, work and recreation
- Access to information and communication
- Access to public spaces
- Access to resources
- Access to basic services, including education, health care, clean water and sanitation
- Access to transportation
- Transparent and accountable decision-making processes
- Adequate income and employment opportunities
- Affirmation of human rights
- Opportunity for personal development
- Respect for diversity
- Freedom (of choice, religion, etc.)
- Participation in decision-making
- Social protection
- Solidarity

5. <u>Key Groups to be Included: Who is Marginalized?</u>

5.1 There is a substantial variation from country to country regarding which groups are subject to exclusion[32].
   a. Women
   b. People living in poverty
   c. Persons with disabilities
   d. Children, youth and older

5.2 In many countries, social cohesion is threatened by social tensions or institutional biases that exclude: People with different ethnic, religious or

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[32] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).

cultural backgrounds. Recent migrants are also often excluded by local communities or society at large.

6. <u>Removing the Obstacles to Social Inclusion</u>

6.1 One mechanism of removing obstacles to social inclusion include eliminating and/or amending Discriminatory Laws and Practices. This is often as the fundamental first step to lay the foundations for an inclusive society.[33]

6.2 There are core legally binding international human rights treaties within the UN human rights system, which can be effectively applied to promote inclusion of vulnerable groups. These are:

- Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),
- Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD),
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT),
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD), and Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICPMW)

6.3 In addition, there are many other universal instruments relating to human rights, including;[34]

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989),
- Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities,

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[33] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).
[34] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).

- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms ofIntolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief and;
- United Nations Principles for Older Persons

7. <u>International Policy Frameworks for Achieving Social Inclusion</u>

7.1 It is widely acknowledged that achieving social inclusion requires long-term strategic response on the part of all institutions and organizations, also at an international level.[35]

7.2 There are mechanisms in place through a variety of international bodies and groups to support empowerment and capacity building of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples.

7.3 In this area, comprehensive frameworks have already been developed with their implementation action plans or programmes adopted at the United Nations summits and conferences. Among others, the following are important:

- The Beijing Platform for Action;
- The World Programme of Action for Youth;
- The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing;
- World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons.

8. <u>United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</u>

8.1 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.[36]

8.2 At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership.

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[35] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).
[36] https://sdgs.un.org/goals#history

8.3 The SDGs build on decades of work (shown below) by countries and the UN, including the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs:[37]

I.   In June 1992, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, more than 178 countries adopted Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action to build a global partnership for sustainable development to improve human lives and protect the environment.

II. Member States unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 at UN Headquarters in New York. The Summit led to the elaboration of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce extreme poverty by 2015.

III. The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation, adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa in 2002, reaffirmed the global community's commitments to poverty eradication and the environment, and built on Agenda 21 and the Millennium Declaration by including more emphasis on multilateral partnerships.

IV. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, Member States adopted the outcome document "The Future We Want" in which they decided, inter alia, to launch a process to develop a set of SDGs to build upon the MDGs and to establish the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The Rio +20 outcome also contained other measures for implementing sustainable development, including mandates for future programmes of work in development financing, small island developing states and more.

V.   In 2013, the General Assembly set up a 30-member Open Working Group to develop a proposal on the SDGs.

VI. In January 2015, the General Assembly began the negotiation process on the post-2015 development agenda. The process culminated in the subsequent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with 17 SDGs at its core, at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015.

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[37] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009).

VII.	2015 was a landmark year for multilateralism and international policy shaping, with the adoption of several major agreements: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (March 2015) Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (July 2015) Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 SDGs was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York in September 2015. Paris Agreement on Climate Change (December 2015)

8.4 The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what these did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

8.5 The following are the SDGs that are relevant to fighting intolerance, promoting peaceful co-existence and inclusive societies:

I.	Goal 10: Reduced Inequality within and Among Countries

II.	Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

III.	Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

9. Fighting Intolerance, Promoting Peaceful Co-existence and Inclusive societies: Current Realities and Future Prospects

9.1 **A Rules-based and Stable Global Political and Economic Order based on effective multilateralism**: The UN and its agencies and international organizations like IPU have to be commended for continued efforts aimed at maintaining international peace and security and for bringing stability and order to the international system of international relations.

9.2 *Shouldering Global Responsibility for attainment of Global Commons*: Many efforts at global, continental, regional and national levels have been made to avoid other world wars and instability that characterised most of the Cold war era. Such collective efforts included, as indicated above:

> - Developing legally binding treaties and conventions;
> - Establishing global governance institutions and international criminal justice institutions such as the International Criminal Court
> - Developing global partnerships and making international commitments to advance agenda for change to protect the future of humanity as evinced by Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals

9.3 **The world is becoming unsafe**: notwithstanding concerted efforts to bring order and stability in the international system and ensure that the international community still enjoys the post-cold war peace dividend- the sad reality is that we seem to be reversing the gains made thus far (particularly on security and development) and we are regressing on many fronts- as the world is increasingly becoming unsafe.

9.4 As we speak, there are still countries embroiled in internecine and intermitted armed conflicts- thus effectively turning other regions of the world into neighbourhoods of instability

9.5 **Regions of Instability**: According to the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, 'there are **more than 45 armed conflicts in Middle East and North Africa**'.[38] And 'this is, in numbers, the most affected region: more than 45 armed conflicts are currently taking place throughout the Middle East and North Africa in the following territories: Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Yemen and Western Sahara'.[39]

9.6 **Africa comes second in the number of armed conflicts per region** with more than 35 non-international armed conflicts (NIACs) taking place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic

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[38] See https://geneva-academy.ch/galleries/today-s-armed-conflicts [accessed on 13 February 2023]
[39] See https://geneva-academy.ch/galleries/today-s-armed-conflicts [accessed on 13 February 2023]

of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. Several armed groups – fighting against government forces and/or against each other's – are involved in these conflicts.[40]

9.7 According to the Geneva Academy, **Asia is the theatre of 19 non-international armed conflicts (NIACs)** involving 19 armed groups. These are happening in Afghanistan, India, Myanmar, Pakistan and The Philippines.[41]

9.8 On the other hand, **Europe is also the theatre of an international armed conflict (IAC) between Ukraine and Russia**, and of two non-international armed conflicts (NIACs) in Ukraine opposing governmental forces with the self-proclaimed 'People's Republics' of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine.[42]

9.9 What makes matters worse is the rise in political intolerance, narrow nationalism, political and religious fundamentalism- which all frustrate efforts aimed at promoting peaceful-co-existence and inclusive societies

9.10 While many governments have brilliant policies and have adopted futuristic policy making as shown by the National Development Plans with long term horizon- there is still **a disjuncture between policy making and policy implementation**- which result to failure of redress programmes and systematic inequalities

9.11 While many governments make international commitments, sign treaties and conventions- **domestication and harmonisation of international treaties with national laws and policies happens at a snail's pace**. Progress on implementation of national government programmes and on following up on international commitments happens, if at all, in a parsimonious fashion.

9.12 To make matters worse, 'the world is not on track to meet its goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030'. In fact, global progress to reduce extreme poverty "has grinded to a halt" over the past few years and we're in the middle of the largest increase in global inequality since World War II.[43]

9.13 **An increasingly unequal world**- equally concerning is the global growth in inequalities –particularly in the developing world in general-global South in particular. For instance, South Africa had the highest inequality in

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[40] See https://geneva-academy.ch/galleries/today-s-armed-conflicts [accessed on 13 February 2023]
[41] See https://geneva-academy.ch/galleries/today-s-armed-conflicts [accessed on 13 February 2023]
[42] See https://geneva-academy.ch/galleries/today-s-armed-conflicts [accessed on 13 February 2023]
[43] https://www.one.org/international/blog/global-inequality-facts-stats/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIsdKJncWd_QIVy4FQBh2ECQlEEAAYAiAAEgJm2vD_BwE

income distribution in 2021 with a Gini score of 63 and its neighbours Namibia and Zambia followed in second and third, respectively.[44]

9.14   Moreover, according to the Global Hunger Index 2022, which was adopted by the International Food Policy Research Institute, Yemen was the most affected by hunger and malnutrition, with an index of 45.1. The Central African Republic followed with an index of 44.[45]

9.15   **Post-Covid19 period, New Normal- Gloomy Global Economic Outlook**- the following is the depressing state of global political economy:[46]

  ➢ People with the lowest incomes faced the steepest costs during the pandemic.[47]

  ➢ Income losses averaged 4% for the poorest 40% of people. That's double the losses faced by the wealthiest 20% of people. This caused global inequality to rise for the first time in decades. And COVID-19 pushed 70 million people into extreme poverty in 2020 — the largest single-year increase since 1990. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 60% of all people living in extreme poverty, or 389 million people. The region has the world's highest poverty rate: about 35%.

  ➢ Almost 2 billion workers now live in countries where inflation is outpacing wages. A shocking 1.7 billion people don't have high enough wages to keep up with inflation — and it's having major consequences on people's lives.

  ➢ Over 820 million people (or about 1 in 10 people) don't have sufficient food. Women and girls make up nearly 60% of the world's hungry population.

  ➢ The richest 1% of people captured 63% of all new wealth since 2020. Only 37% of new wealth went to the entire rest of the world population,

[44] https://www.statista.com/statistics/269924/countries-most-affected-by-hunger-in-the-world-according-to-world-hunger-index/ [accessed on 13 February 2023]
[45] https://www.statista.com/statistics/264627/ranking-of-the-20-countries-with-the-biggest-inequality-in-income-distribution/
[46] Anne Paisley. (2023). How extreme is inequality? Here are 6 shocking facts. One Global Movement, 18 January 2023. Available at https://www.one.org/international/blog/global-inequality-facts-stats/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIsdKJncWd_QIVy4FQBh2ECQIEEAAYAiAAEgJm2vD_BwE [accessed on 13 February 2023]
[47] Anne Paisley. (2023).

according to Oxfam. That's $26 trillion to the richest 1% … and only $16 trillion to everyone else over the past three years.

10.   What is to be Done? The normative role of Parliaments

10.1   With this depressing state of global affairs- the two main questions that arise are: what is to be done? And where are Parliaments? In particular, what is the Role of Parliaments in Fighting Intolerance, Promoting Peaceful Co-existence and Inclusive societies?

10.2   Parliaments have an indispensable role to play in changing this depressing state of affairs and in refocusing and redirecting the international community to a right trajectory.

10.3   Through their **law-making, oversight and accountability and facilitation of public participation**- parliaments can play a more meaningful role in Fighting Intolerance, Promoting Peaceful Co-existence and Inclusive societies.

10.4   As the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs acknowledged back in 2009, the essential role of international organizations, national and local governments, parliaments and civil society groupings in promoting peaceful co-existence and inclusive societies cannot be overlooked.[48]

10.5   **Law Making**: engage in transformative law making by repealing old laws that are not consistent with the values and/or ethos of constitutional democracy and those that are stifling or frustrating progress on cross-cutting socio-economic policy issues such as promoting peaceful co-existence and inclusive societies through, amongst others; social cohesion programmes

10.6   **Public Participation**- through facilitating public engagement of multiple stakeholders, especially civil society in legislative processes, parliaments can ensure active participation of all members of society in finding solutions to the

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[48] E-Dialogue on "Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical strategies to promote social integration", organized by DSPD/UNDESA, 20 May - 20 June 2007

problems at hand (intolerance and social exclusion) regardless of their backgrounds.[49]

10.7   **Transformative Budgeting and Legislative Processes**: parliaments to use their constitutional powers to ensure that they pass government budgets that talk to adequate allocation of resources to social cohesion and social inclusion programmes.

10.8   **Focused and Intentional Oversight and Accountability**: in exercising their oversight and accountability duties, parliaments need to pay closer attention to government's implementation of policies and programmes with potential to have amplified impact on attainment of international, continental, regional and national development goals. Through effective monitoring and evaluation systems and processes, Parliaments need to monitor whether governments are utilizing more efficiently the resources allocated for various implementation of various government programmes- more especially social development programmes.

10.9   **Robust Resolution Tracking Mechanism and International Instruments**: parliaments need to also have functional resolution tracking mechanisms to ensure that commitments made and decisions taken in international forums such as the World Summit for Social Development are being implemented   in order to achieve the goals of the Summit through national action and regional and international cooperation.

10.10   During the World Summit for Social Development, amongst others, countries committed in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development (1995) to "an improved and strengthened framework for international, regional and sub-regional cooperation for social development, in a spirit of partnership, through the United Nations and other multilateral institutions". Parliaments need to follow up on commitments like these.

10.11   **Harness Parliamentary Diplomacy for attainment of developmental outcomes**: parliamentarians need to learn from and collaborate with other parliamentarians on a number of issues including on developing non-binding model laws and in developing global common positions on developmental

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[49] E-Dialogue on "Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical strategies to promote social integration", organized by DSPD/UNDESA, 20 May - 20 June 2007

issues. In addition, they also need to complement, strengthen and positively influence traditional government diplomacy advantageously.

11.   <u>Conclusion</u>

11.1   Undoubtedly, parliaments have an indispensable role to play in fighting intolerance, promoting peaceful co-existence and Inclusive societies.

1.1 Whilst there are many challenges faced by the international community today- there is still hope for a just, equal, peaceful, stable and prosperous world and parliaments have an equally important task of ensuring that the future generations get to live in such a world. And the only way they can do that is to use their constitutional mandates (law-making, oversight and accountability and public participation) to fight intolerance in all its guise, promote peaceful co- existence and Inclusive societies.