



**OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER/PRESIDENT OF THE SPEAKERS OF THE
ICGLR PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM**

REMARKS BY THE RT HON. KENNETH MAKELO LUSAKA, (MP, EGH)

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Office of the UN- Special Envoy

Vice-Chair Regional Women Forum

Office of the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association

Distinguished Senators and Members of Parliaments

Distinguished Ladies, and gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is a great honor to join you virtually this morning, I would like to thank the organizers of this virtual event for the quick action to ensure we are all safe as much we would have all loved to meet physically in Arusha. Tanzania.

The *COVID-19* pandemic is causing untold *human* suffering and economic devastation around the world. It has robbed individuals of their livelihoods and countries across the globe of their prosperity.

The economic and social pressures that have followed the COVID 19 have led to mental breakdowns leading to an increase in domestic violence. At the onset

of the pandemic, lockdowns and quarantines were a necessary measure in reducing the spread of the virus, however, they also precipitated an increase in violence against women and children, some of whom were trapped in abusive homes.

In the recent past, I have had the privilege of hosting several leaders from the Office of the UN Special Envoy, Regional Women Forum, African Ombudsperson and Mediators Association, Ambassadors, and heads of government institutions to deliberate on pertinent issues in the context of the legislation on Gender-Based Violence at home and in the political process.

The fight against Gender-Based Violence should not stop with the 16days of activism, it should be a continuous conversation across the board. I, therefore, ***want to emphatically appeal for peace at home, peace at work, peace in the institutions of learning, peace on the streets, peace in the nation, peace in the region, and peace across the globe during this festive period and always.***

Distinguished Ladies, and gentlemen,

As the head of the legislative arm of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and as the Senate Speaker of the Senate of the Republic of Kenya; **I want to pledge to support regional parliament in their efforts to become gender-sensitive in supporting Women, Peace, and Security**

I would like to leave a legacy of having supported the region to achieve milestones in the Women Peace and Security Agenda by:

- Supporting parliamentary democracy across the region, which will ensure the number and positions of women in leadership increases

- Improving the Legal policy and Framework – ensuring that legislation promotes gender equality. (Laws that do not discriminate). I promised to second Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jr. to support the region on this aspect.
- Support gender mainstreaming across the board; in national and local legislation, structures, implementation, and resource allocation.

Echoing, the sentiments in the Kampala Declaration on GBV; ***“Gender-based violence is not a private issue but one that involves society as a whole and therefore calls for a holistic approach promoting preventive solutions.”***

I call on upon the ICGLR member states to meet the international commitments and the important regional legislations and declarations including the Kampala declaration on GBV. And, most importantly, enact laws that promote and protect family values, promote gender equality and inclusivity, actively participate in reviewing legislation and propose alternatives. Simply, be proactive in legislation.

I urge our partners, friends, supporters, and governments across the region to make the promotion of Women, Peace, and Security and the prevention of violence against women a priority in legislation and in the COVID 19 prevention plans.

Lastly, I call upon all judiciaries across the region to prosecute all violent perpetrators in a timely manner. The legislative arms should also diligently work on laws that deter violence at home, at work, in the streets, and online. Peace is paramount in all aspects of life; no nation can prosper with the lack of peace, security; women’s rights, and freedom.

We must therefore deliberately and collectively prevent violence at home, at work, online, and in the streets to achieve the desired development in our nations. Let us do the work; I look forward to a one-on-one convergence in 2022.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very prosperous 2022.

I thank you!