SPEECH BY AMBASSADOR DR. DEO MWAPINGA, SECRETARY GENERAL, FORUM OF PARLIAMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION (FP-ICGLR) DURING THE 153RD IPU GENERAL DEBATE, ARUSHA, TANZANIA

07TH OCTOBER 2026

Hon. President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Dr Tulia Ackson

Honourable Speakers, Leaders of delegations, and Members of Parliament,

Hon. Secretary General, Anda Filip

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply humbled to address this Assembly on behalf of the Forum of Parliaments of the ICGLR, a regional parliamentary forum committed to advancing peace and stability, democracy and human rights, and, more broadly, the regional integration agenda of the Great Lakes Region.

Today's theme, ***"Enhancing good governance and empowering communities through inclusivity, trust and opportunities for all"***, reminds us that good governance is not measured only by the strength of our institutions, but by whether ordinary citizens feel included in decision-making, trust those who govern them, and have a fair chance to build a better life. Inclusivity, trust and opportunity are not three separate goals; they reinforce one another. Where people are included, trust grows; where trust exists, opportunities can be shared; and where opportunities are shared, communities are empowered.

Excellencies,

Yet these ideals are under strain. The world today is witnessing several wars and conflicts, many of them rooted in failures of governance. Their wider effects, from disrupted supply chains to external economic shocks, are borne unequally, falling most heavily on countries of the Global South, including those of the Great Lakes Region.

Our own region is no exception. Renewed tensions and conflicts continue to threaten the foundations of good governance, reminding us how urgent it is to institutionalise the very ideals at the heart of today's theme: ***inclusivity, trust, and opportunities for all.***

Excellencies,

Parliaments play a central role in meeting this challenge. As parliamentarians, our primary duty is to ensure accountability and to promote responsive governments that empower communities. We do this by creating equal opportunities and ensuring inclusivity, especially for the marginalised sections of our societies, including women, children, youth and persons with disabilities.

In this spirit of inclusivity, I have the honour to inform this Assembly that the Forum of Parliaments, in close collaboration with the Parliament of Tanzania and its partners, will host the first-ever Women Parliamentary Conference (WPC) in Dar es Salaam from 2 to 5 November 2026. The venue is fitting: ***Dar es Salaam is closely linked to the founding of the ICGLR through the adoption of the Dar es Salaam Declaration in 2004.***

Allow me, therefore, to thank the United Republic of Tanzania-in particular the Parliament of Tanzania- for agreeing to host this conference. This gesture further symbolises Tanzania's leadership and long-standing commitment to peace and security, in our region and beyond.

Excellencies,

Over four days, the Women Parliamentarians' Conference in Dar es Salaam will address a wide range of issues. Delegates will examine peace and security, particularly the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. They will also discuss sustainable resource

management as a precondition for economic growth and the need for a gender-responsive legislative framework to guide the mineral sector, among other topics.

To ensure these discussions are truly inclusive, the Conference will bring together a broad range of stakeholders: Speakers of Parliaments; women parliamentarians from all 12 ICGLR Member States and beyond; selected male parliamentary champions of gender equality; representatives from the AU (African Union) and regional intergovernmental organisations; and civil society organisations, among others. The aim is to develop a Dar es Salaam Declaration on Women in the Peace Agenda and a regional action plan anchored in Parliaments.

Excellencies,

On behalf of the Forum of Parliaments of the ICGLR, I thank the IPU for providing this global platform for dialogue. I reaffirm our unwavering partnership to promote good governance and empower communities through inclusivity, trust and opportunities for all.

In that same spirit, I warmly invite you to join us in Dar es Salaam this November, whose very name means ***"Haven of Peace".*** A city where the Indian Ocean meets the warmth of Tanzanian hospitality, let us gather not only to speak of inclusion, trust and opportunity, but to bring them to life, so that the voices of women may help write the next chapter of peace in our region. I finish by saying: ***Karibu Dar es Salaam! Karibu Tanzania!***

Asante sana.