



Keynote Address

By

Honorable Advocate J.F.N Mudenda

(Speaker of the Parliament)

at the

**THE AFRICA COLLOQUIUM OF LEGAL COUNSELS
TO PARLIAMENT**

on the theme

***"Law Making, Oversight and Innovation: The
Centrality of Legal Offices in Legislatures."***

Counsels to Parliament;

Distinguished invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I welcome you warmly to the Victoria Falls City, the cradle of the majestic Victoria Falls, the smoking waters that perennially thunder skyward creating an alluring rainbow as one of UNESCO's designated seven wonders of the world. It is my hope that the convivial environment offered by the Victoria Falls will inspire your deliberations so that you can come up with cutting edge outcomes. In that regard, I encourage you to find time to visit the Victoria Falls and also undertake some game drive into nearby Hwange National Park where you may be luck to encounter the BIG FIVE.

May I prelude my keynote address by quoting **Klaus Schwab** who affirmed precisely that ***"One new reality is global interconnectivity and the fact that all challenges must be addressed on the basis of 'togetherness.' Thus, the most crucial factor in***

accepting the new reality and confronting its opportunities and risks is our willingness to develop shared norms on all levels".¹ Indeed 'global interconnectivity' is the bedrock of multilateralism which espouses that the world is now a global village whose challenges require global solutions in the spirit of solidarity. That is Schwab's import of "togetherness" as you gather here to interrogate the centrality of legal offices in our legislatures in the law making and oversight processes which must be underpinned by innovation, which is the ability of transforming creative new ideas, products or processes in order to improve upon solutions that generate positive change. To that an extent, Schwab recognizes that it is imperative to accept the novelty of the process during which an idea of law is transformed into a law (law making or legislating) being an exercise of crafting an instrument that enforces normative behavior in society. Hence, the key role of the legal offices in the legislatures as the fulcrum of shared norms that must create a togetherness founded on

¹Togetherness Quotes (353 quotes) (goodreads.com)

the unity of purpose whose strategic intent is qualitative law making of statutes, must stand the test of time. Accordingly, allow me to extend my profound commendation to the Africa Colloquium of Legal Counsels to Parliaments for orchestrating this regimented 7th Colloquium of Legal Counsels to Parliaments, whose pertinent theme is ***"Law Making, Oversight and Innovation: The Centrality of Legal Offices in Legislatures"***. Consequently, this Colloquium must shed light and percolate through your roles in your legal offices across Africa's Parliaments. Your presence here, therefore, offers you a valuable opportunity for introspection as Counsels to Parliaments on how you should exponentially enhance your legal expertise in scrutinising Bills tabled before your Parliaments by the Executive as you interface closely with your Parliamentary Legal Committees and the Select Committees to which the said Bills might relate. In carrying out this hallowed responsibility, Counsels to Parliaments would be advancing the oversight role of Parliamentary Select Committees in the legislative agenda.

Counsels to Parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen;

This Africa Colloquium brings under one-roof Legal Counsels to African Parliaments in the spirit of Pan-Africanism in order to share your legal experiences guided by the Nairobi Principles that compel you to create innovative pathways in your legal practice. There is now consensus amongst Counsels to Parliaments that there is need to acclimatize to the application of digital technologies which are driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the law making process. To that end, Counsels to Parliaments must be schooled in the phenomenon of AI which is the development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, whereby machine learning, deep learning and natural language processing as tools in the digitalized law making matrix, that can be applied. The use of data analytics and algorithms for predictability of the legal impact of legislation are measures that command attention for Counsels to Parliaments. Ironically, the same application of AI must be deployed in such a manner as to ensure that this digital

technology is applied responsibly and ethically in accordance with moral principles, societal values and inalienable human rights. It is in that context that Counsels to Parliaments should appreciate and extol innovation in law making as long as cognisance is taken of the possibility of the misuse of AI application in the process.

Counsels to Parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Despite the possible negative impacts in the use of science, technology and innovation as driven by AI, there is a positive balance in the application of AI in our legislatures through the legal expertise of Counsels to Parliaments. As you deploy AI in your legal tasks, do appreciate the predication of AI on science, technology and innovation. Science seeks to understand the natural world, technology applies that understanding by humanity for humastic practical benefits and innovation uses both to create value in our socio-economic development inclusive of the legislation process. Your law making through the centrality of the legal offices in legislatures guarantees a justiciable

barometer of normative scales of justice, peace, order and good governance. On this score, AI can be used to analyse Bills, make accurate comparative scrutiny of laws whose subject matter relates to the Bills in question and thereafter come up with clinically sifted Bills using AI data analytics.

Counsels to Parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Beyond attending to the usual law making processes, your Colloquium has a heavy responsible in assisting African legislatures in the perspicacious analysis of International Agreements and Treaties, especially those that are of an economic nature. Sometimes, some of these Agreements and Treaties are skewed against the African interests. For an example, foreign companies agree to extract crude oil from an African country and insert a clause indicating that the oil will be refined in the investor's country of origin only to sale the refined oil as petrol or diesel at high prices much to the chagrin of the local citizenry. This is economic colonialism. Members of this African Colloquium of Counsels to Parliaments must rally their legal experiences

and save Africa from such economic imperialism by ensuring that International Agreements and Treaties vouch for Africa's resources value addition and beneficiation in the spirit of Agenda 2063 and the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement.

Furthermore, the Colloquium should take concrete measures on how to have cutting edge interventions so that African Parliaments can harmonise trade laws, immigration and customs laws as well as Information Communication Technology legislation so as to boost the movement of goods and services within Africa. Africa must leverage on digital technologies in these legislative harmonization efforts. However, much depends on the degree of the internet penetration. To date, Africa is at 46% internet penetration thereby leaving 600 million African out of reach of the digital technologies, especially in the use of Artificial Intelligence.

Counsels to Parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The Colloquium should consider the capacitation of its members if the members are to leverage on the application AI in the law making arena. The use of AI is very current and will be so in the future governance of our Parliaments let alone that of the entire governmental architecture of nations. More than that, the application of the Internet of Things (IoT) is now irreversible. Counsels to Parliaments should move with the digital technological times through deliberate exposure to digital technologies. That is why the Parliament of Zimbabwe has resolved to establish the COMMITTEE OF THE FUTURE to be the telescope that will conceptually define the Zimbabwe Parliamentary ecosystem for the next 50 years as shall be underpinned by Artificial Intelligence application. Herein lies that centrality of legal offices in the legislatures.

It is now my honour and privilege to declare this Colloquium officially open as I wish you incisive and constructive deliberations.

GOD BLESS ZIMBABWE!

GOD BLESS AFRICA!

SIYABONGA!

TINOTENDA!

MWASHUMA!

ASANTE SANTE!