AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION

APU

40th CONFERENCE
71st Session of the Executive Committee
(Ouagadougou, 6 – 10 November 2017)

Activity report of the Secretariat

(November 2016 – November 2017)

Pursuant to the provisions of its Rules of Procedure, this report is being presented to the 40th Conference of the African Parliamentary Union. It covers activities carried out since the 39th Conference held in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on 8 and 9 November 2016.

The activities carried out by the Union mainly covered statutory meetings convened by APU since its 39th Conference, and also activities and meetings held at the international level.

I. State of the Union

1. Members

APU currently has 40 members: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Following the decision by the Bureau of the Executive Committee to approach non-member countries to encourage them to join the Union, parliamentary missions were sent to Cabo Verde, Tanzania, Mozambique and Mauritius. As some countries were not completely ready to host the mission, we could not send them to those non-member parliaments.

The interest shown by the parliamentary authorities of the countries that received the APU delegations and the meetings held and interactions all augur well for the future membership of those parliaments.

These efforts should be continued with other parliaments, such as Botswana, Eritrea, Lesotho, Malawi, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia.

We cannot overemphasize the benefits of having as many parliaments as possible in our organization, as it is becoming increasingly clear that at international forums such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, African national parliaments do have quite an influence on the decisions and recommendations made.

2. Finances

The financial results mentioned in the management account of the 2016 fiscal year submitted to the 70th Session of the Executive Committee held in Rabat, in July 2017, showed a positive balance, marking a return to a situation where APU could carry out its activities without difficulty.

This result stemmed from better recovery of contributions for the fiscal year as well as arrears. Parliaments that have fallen back in their payments, should, however, make the effort to pay up their contributions. Indeed, the lack of resources affect the activities of the Union, especially as it is called upon to tackle immense challenges, using a parliamentary approach.

That is why each member parliament should first and foremost, pay up its annual contributions as stated in the budget. Arrears could be negotiated with the APU authorities.

With regard to the current fiscal year, up until now, only 13 of the 40 parliaments have fulfilled their dues obligations for 2017, while three parliaments have cleared their arrears.

II. APU sessions and meetings

1. 39th Conference of the African Parliamentary Union

The Secretariat transmitted the outcomes of the deliberations of the Conference held in Rabat on 8 and 9 November 2016, to all member and non-member national parliaments of the Union, and also to international and inter-parliamentary organizations. The resolutions emanating from the meetings are as follows:

- *Participation of citizens, especially the youth, in promoting democracy*
- *Role of African parliaments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals*
- *Combating terrorism in Africa*
- *Lifting of unilateral economic sanctions against Sudan and Zimbabwe*

These resolutions are available on the APU website (www.africanpu.org)

The report of the meetings Rabat meetings has been sent to member Parliaments.

2. Sessions of the Executive Committee

Pursuant to the statutory provisions of the Union, the Executive Committee held two ordinary sessions. The first in Rabat on 20 and 21 July 2017, and the second, which has just been held in Ouagadougou, 6 and 7 November 2017.

2.1. 70th Session of the Executive Committee, Rabat, 20 – 21 July 2017

At this session, members of the Executive Committee expressed their recognition and gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Moroccan Parliament and the people of Morocco, for their generous hospitality and for the successful organization of the 70th Session. This demonstrates their unflinching support to APU and commitment to strengthening the parliamentary institution and democracy in Africa.

The Executive Committee took note of the decision by the Namibian Parliament to withdraw from the Union and recommended that a mission should be sent to the country to request the authorities to reconsider their position. Members of the Executive Committee also took note of the Bureau's decision to organize missions to countries whose parliaments were not yet members of the Union.

Upon reviewing the financial situation of the Union, the members of the Executive Committee expressed concern over the fact that budget credits had not been used, mainly because over half of the parliamentary members had not paid their dues to the Union. On the other hand, they noted with satisfaction, the efforts made by the Secretariat to ensure financial equilibrium, while carrying out the activities of the Union, as stated in the annual work programme.

The Executive Committee adopted the draft agenda of the 40th Conference and the following study themes for consideration in Ouagadougou:

1. *Contribution of national parliaments to the preservation of national sovereignty and enhancement of peace and security in Africa* (Political Committee)

2. Challenge of coping with persistent drought and famine in the context of agriculture and agro-industry in Africa, for sustainable economic development (Economic and Sustainable Development Committee)

2.2. Preparations for the 71st Session of the Executive Committee and 40th Conference, Ouagadougou, 6-10 November 2017

Following the invitation by the National Assembly of Burkina Faso to hold the Session of the Executive Committee and Conference, the Secretariat went on a mission to Ouagadougou from 15 to 17 June 2017, to agree with the authorities of the Burkinabe Parliament on the dates and venue, and the practical arrangements for the meetings. This mission led to the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the National Assembly of Burkina Faso and the African Parliamentary Union on the organization of the 71st Session of the Executive Committee and 40th Conference of Speakers of National Parliamentary Assemblies of APU.

The invitations to the 71st Session of the Executive Committee and the 40th Conference were then sent to all member and non-member parliaments, and inter-parliamentary and international organizations.

The 71st Session of the Executive Committee, which you have just participated in, considered, among other items, admissions and readmissions into the Union, implementation of the decisions of the 39th Conference, the programme of work of the Union for 2018, the draft budget for 2018, the draft agenda of the 40th Conference and the draft agenda and date and venue of the 72nd Session of the Executive Committee.

3. Meeting of the Committee of Women Parliamentarians

In accordance with the Statutes of APU, the Committee of Women Parliamentarians of APU held its meeting during the 39th Conference of the Union, on 7 November 2016 in Rabat. At the meeting, the Committee discussed the following point: "***Contribution of African parliaments to the fight against women's and child labour***

At the end of their deliberations, the women parliamentarians adopted a resolution, which was approved by the 39th Conference and communicated to all member and non-member parliaments of APU.

III. Inter-parliamentary and international activities

1. Twelfth session of the Conference of the Parliamentary Union of OIC Member States, 28 - 29 January 2017, Bamako

APU participated as an observer in the 12th Session of the Conference of the Parliamentary Union of OIC Member States (PUIC), held 28 and 29 January 2017 in Bamako.

Participants deliberated mainly on the developments and challenges faced by Muslims, including the Palestinian cause, the occupied Arab territories in Syria and Lebanon, the fight against terrorism and extremism, rejection of unfair sanctions against Islamic States, protection of Muslim communities and minorities, acquisition of modern technologies for peaceful ends, and creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear arms, in the Middle East.

At the end of the deliberations, the PUIC Conference adopted a final communique and a declaration dubbed the Bamako Declaration. The Conference:

- Reaffirmed its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity and national unity of Mali, while condemning terrorism, and asked the governments of member countries to provide substantial financial support to the country and provide them with the resources needed to cope with threats against peace and stability in the country and in West Africa in general.

- Condemned all aggression against holy Islam sites, including Makkah Al Moukarramah, which is considered by all Muslims as red line that must not be crossed, while reaffirming the content of the resolution adopted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of PUIC member States on 17 November 2016 on the launch of a ballistic missile on Makkah Al Moukarramah.

- Reaffirmed the central character of the Palestinian and Al Qods cause for Islamic Ummah, and emphasized that a comprehensive, lasting and equitable solution should found to the Palestinian issue, including the creation of a Palestinian State, with the capital as the city of Al Qods, was a prerequisite for restoring peace and stability in the Middle-East

- Urged PUIC member States to institute a new economic order based on Islamic solidarity, and create a platform to reinforce economic, commercial and banking relations without discrimination between peoples, through the development and consolidation of regional and subregional cooperation, to realize economic growth and sustainable development

- Urged rich countries in the Muslim world to increase assistance to Muslim countries on the African continent to enable them to meet their development challenges, in the area of industrial development.

(The texts of the Bamako Declaration and Final Communiqué are available for delegates).

2. Twenty-fourth Conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, 20-21 March 2017, Morocco

APU participated in the 24th Conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), held 20 and 21 March 2017 in Rabat.

The Conference considered the general situation of the Arab nation against the backdrop of growing extremist tendencies, and reaffirmed the importance and value of dialogue among Arab nations to find appropriate solutions to problems, tensions and disagreements between Arab countries and conflicts between the various components of the same country, emphasizing the efficiency of Arab inter-parliamentary diplomacy.

While vehemently condemning the persistent Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and its territories and holy sites, the 24th Conference reaffirmed that the Palestinian issue was central to the Arab Nation, and renewed its support to the Palestinian people in its national struggle for the creation of an independent State, with East Jerusalem as capital of all the Palestinian territories, and restoration of the 4 June 1967 borders, as a prerequisite for comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

The Conference also lauded the political and diplomatic efforts deployed by the Jerusalem Committee led by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, to put an end to Israeli occupation of the holy city, and stop all efforts at its Judaization.

The 24th Conference also considered the situation in other Arab countries and expressed solidarity with them in their struggle to preserve the security and integrity of their territories and the unity of their peoples. It called upon the political leaders of the countries concerned to work towards national reconciliation.

The Conference condemned terrorism in all its forms, aspects and practices, and recommended that concerted effort should be made at the national, regional and international levels, including harmonizing legislation in the Arab world through the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, to deal with the issue. Recalling the related decisions taken by the League of Arab States, the Conference recommended that a "Joint Arab Council to combat terrorism and extremism" should be set up. It should devise joint strategies and policies to combat terrorism. Also, a distinction should be made between terrorism and the right of people to resist, free their territories from occupation and restore their legitimate rights, in line with international charters and resolutions.

3. Regional seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals for parliaments in sub-Saharan Africa, 1 - 3 March 2017, Kampala

At the request of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Senator Pierre Flambeau Ngayap, Member of the Senate of Cameroon and Deputy Chair of the Executive Committee of APU, for Central Africa, participated as speaker at the Regional Seminar of the Sustainable Development Goals for parliaments in sub-Saharan Africa, held from 1 to 3 March 2017, in Kampala. Jointly organized by the Parliament of Uganda and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the workshop was the first in a series of regional workshops aimed at enhancing the work and the contribution of parliaments to SDG issues.

Eight sessions were organized, with topics such as "The role of parliaments in achieving the SDGs", "Becoming fit for purpose: African parliaments engage on the SDGs", "Effective governance as a critical element of sustainable development", "Achieving sustainable development through tackling climate change", "Ensuring good health and wellbeing for all through the SDGs", and "Mobilizing resources for SDG implementation in sub-Saharan Africa".

The statement by the Deputy Chair of the Executive Committee of APU was on "Becoming fit for purpose: African parliaments engage on the SDGs" (Session VIII).

The seminar highlighted the fact that functional institutions, visionary leaders and participatory governance mechanisms were the key elements of Africa's transformation programme.

At the feedback session on the main lessons learnt in the seminar, the proposal of the Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee to encourage African parliaments to form national networks of parliamentarians for the SDGs to ensure monitoring and visibility and sustainability of their commitment to the SDGs was adopted in the resolutions of the outcome document of the seminar.

In the outcome document, "participants stressed the role of parliaments in implementing the SDGs and the need for parliamentarians to work across party lines to build political will to implement the SDGs in their countries and consider creating parliamentary mechanisms to spearhead work on the Goals. The document also calls upon parliamentarians throughout Africa to play an active role in convening a dialogue with key stakeholders, including the executive, citizens and civil society.

Participants recognized the importance of achieving gender equality, not only as goal per se, but also as a factor facilitating achievement of the SDGs. Young people must also be engaged. Parliaments must include them when developing national development plans, because implementing the SDGs will have a major impact on their life.

Lastly, the outcome document calls upon parliaments to tackle climate change by transposing international agreements into national legislation. Environmental degradation is a problem which is increasingly prevalent in Africa. Parliaments should therefore explore ways to develop legislation to incentivize rather than compel, changes in behaviour, habits and attitudes that have a negative impact on the environment in order to improve the situation.

4. 136th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and related meetings, 1 - 5 April 2017, Dhaka, Bangladesh

At the invitation of the Chairperson and Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, APU participated in the 136th Assembly and related meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), held 1 to 5 April 2017 in Dhaka. The agenda of the 136th Assembly of IPU was as follows:

1. General debate on "Redressing inequalities: Delivering on dignity and wellbeing for all"
2. The role of parliament in respecting the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States (Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)

3. Promoting enhanced international cooperation on the SDGs, in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)
4. Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade for the 138th Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs
5. Urgent international action to save millions of people from famine and drought in parts of Africa and Yemen *(Emergency item)*

At the end of the general debate on inequality in all its forms - social, economic and political - the 136th Assembly adopted the outcome document in which parliamentarians, while recognizing that each country must solve the problem of inequality democratically, under its own social contract, said that they were aware of the fact that extreme inequalities came at a high cost. Indeed:

- Individuals find themselves unable to achieve their full potential, as they are denied of their fundamental rights.
- The majority of people see their purchasing power diminish; this slows down economic growth.
- Concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few people weakens social cohesion and the very viability of the democratic process, thereby fomenting violence and insecurity.

Several countries are already confronted with these problems while several others will face the same fate if firm and concerted measures are not taken.

Lauding Goal 10 of the SDGs, which calls upon the international community to "reduce inequalities within and among countries", the parliamentarians committed to place the fight against all forms of inequalities - social, economic or political - high on their agenda. In so doing, they placed emphasis on gender inequality, which stems from discrimination against women, and occupies a rather important place in the fight against the multifaceted problem of inequality.

(The text of the Dhaka communiqué is available for delegates).

Items 2, 3 and 5 led to resolutions, which were adopted by the Assembly.

At the 200th session, the IPU Governing Council approved requests for reaffiliation, including that of the Central African Republic Parliament. The total number of IPU members increased to 173 national parliaments and 11 associate members.

With regard to the appointment of a Secretary-General for the four-year term, the Governing Council approved the unanimous recommendation by the Executive Committee to appoint the incumbent Mr. Martin Chungong of Cameroon for a second term. It was therefore decided not to hold elections on account of the satisfactory results he had produced.

During the 136th Assembly, IPU organized several activities, including a joint IPU-UNICEF field visit to two facilities catering to the needs of adolescents and disadvantaged children, as part of UNICEF's overall objective to promote the rights of the child; a field visit by the Consultative Group on HIV/AIDS and mother, newborn and child health, and an interactive debate on the theme "parliamentarians and social networks"; and a parallel meeting on the theme "Breaking down barriers for improved health of young generations: A multisectoral approach".

The 137th Assembly will take place from 14 to 18 October in St Petersburg, Russia, during which the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights will consider the topic, "Sharing our diversity: The 20th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Democracy".

Meeting of the African Group

At the 136th Assembly, the Secretariat of APU organized a meeting of the African Geopolitical Group, on Friday, 31 March 2017, with Ms. Rebecca A. Kadaga, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, in the chair. The agenda was as follows:

1. Report of representatives of the African Group within the Executive Committee of IPU
2. Emergency item to be included on the agenda of the 136th Assembly
3. Positions to be filled during the 136th Assembly
4. Any other business

The African Group first heard the report by its representatives on the the Executive Committee of IPU, which mainly dealt with activities carried out after the Geneva Assembly; setting up a parliamentary solidarity fund, which is an internal mechanism of IPU aimed at granting parliaments facing difficulties financial aid to facilitate their participation in the activities of the Union; the situation of some members; financial issues; cooperation with the United Nations, revision of the IPU 2017-2023 strategy and forthcoming inter-parliamentary assemblies and meetings.

The African Group then considered six requests for the inclusion of an emergency item on the agenda, that were tabled before the Assembly and decided, unanimously, to give its support to the merged proposal of the delegations from Kenya, Belgium and the United Kingdom, on famine in Africa and other parts of the world. This merged proposal was adopted by the Assembly, following a roll call vote, and included on the agenda of the 136th Assembly.

The Group then appointed its representatives to fill vacant posts in the organs, committees and other working groups of IPU.

On the margins of the Assembly, the Secretariat of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union and the APU Secretariat organized a meeting to consider issues of common interest. The two Secretaries-General reaffirmed the need to better coordinate their activities, given the growing importance accorded to geopolitical groups in the work of IPU. The meeting was also used to exchange views on holding a parliamentary forum in 2017 on "the challenges of globalization and its effects on national cultures in Africa and the Arab world", as decided by the 14th Afro-Arab Parliamentary Conference.

5. 137th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and related meetings, 14-18 October 2017, St. Petersburg, Russia Federation

APU participated in the related meetings organized by IPU at its Assembly in St. Petersburg.

The agenda of the 137th Assembly of IPU was as follows:

1. Consideration of requests for inclusion of an emergency item on the agenda of the Assembly.
2. General debate on "Promoting cultural pluralism and peace through inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue
3. Sharing our diversity: 20th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Democracy (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)
4. Reports of standing committees on Peace and International Security; Development, Finance and Trade; and United Nations Affairs
5. Approval of the theme of study for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 137th Assembly of IPU and appointment of rapporteurs
6. Putting an end to acts of persecution, violence and discrimination against the minority Rohingya population in Myanmar, which was a threat to peace and international security and guaranteeing their immediate and unconditional return to Myanmar (Emergency item).

At the end of the general debate, the 137th Assembly adopted a declaration whereby the parliamentarians, recognizing that inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogue was essential to cultural pluralism, committed to work towards cultural pluralism and peace through inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogue by:

- Strengthening standard-setting processes and legal frameworks, in line with international instruments on human rights
- Making parliaments the most representative and efficient institutions
- Preventing human rights violations related to culture and religion
- Establishing social dialogue to promote inclusive multicultural societies
- Focusing on civic education and improving relational competences
- Promoting international cooperation

The Assembly endorsed a declaration from the President of IPU on the state of democracy in the world, which showed that parliaments, as institutions, have become the targets of attacks, while parliamentarians are increasingly subject to threats, retaliation and other forms of intimidation, even as the political space is narrowing in many countries.

This declaration calls upon parliamentarians the world over to continue to uphold tolerance, political dialogue and peaceful solutions without ever forgetting that above all else, they have been elected to serve the interests of their people and respond to their aspirations to live in dignity and peace and security, with prospects for the future. They have a tool which has stood the test: parliamentary diplomacy.

(The text of the declaration is available for delegates).

Items 3 and 6 led to resolutions, which were adopted by the Assembly.

IPU also held meetings and debates on the following topics:

- Role of the United Nations General Assembly in international governance: what path forward?
- Engaging the private sector in implementing the SDGs, especially on renewable energy
- Role of parliament in monitoring the action of national armed forces participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations
- Using science and research to achieve the highest health standards

IPU also held an information session on the theme, "The Parliamentary contribution to the 2017 United Nations Climate Change Conference"

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians held a joint debate on "Holding the purse strings: Exercising oversight for the common good".

The Governing Council at its 201st session on 18 October 2017, elected Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, member of the Senate of Mexico as President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The next Assembly of IPU will take place 24-28 March 2018 in Geneva.

Meeting of the African Group

At the 137th Assembly of IPU, the Secretariat of APU held a meting of the African geopolitical group on Friday, 13 October 2017, with Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, in the chair.

Apart from the report presented by the representatives of the African Group on the Executive Committee of IPU, the Group also considered requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda of the Assembly, thereby providing its support for the merged proposal presented by Morocco, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Islamic Republic of Iran, Sudan and Turkey. It was that proposal, which was adopted after a vote by the Assembly and added as item 6 on the agenda.

The Africa Group also listened to the two candidates vying for the presidency of IPU, one of whom was a member of the Senate of Mexico, and the other a member of the Senate of Uruguay. The Group also appointed its representatives to some organs of the Union.

Lastly, the Group elected Mr. Chiheb Seddi, member of the National Assembly of Algeria as Chair of the meeting for a one-year term.

6. African consultative parliamentary meeting on climate, 27 October 2017, Rabat

An APU delegation led by the Chairperson of the Executive Committee attended the African parliamentary consultative meeting held on 27 October 2017 in Rabat, on the theme "Climate and sustainable development, from agreements to action: the vision of African parliaments".

The meeting was organized by the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco and attended by Speakers of national parliaments or their representatives and chairpersons of continental or subregional parliamentary organizations and their respective delegations. The meeting was held to enable African parliamentarians to harmonize their points of view on the parliamentary dimension of activities undertaken by African countries to cope with climate change.

At the end of the deliberations, the parliamentarians adopted a declaration confirming the position of African parliamentarians, to be presented and defended at the parliamentary meeting to be held on 12 November 2017 in Bonn, on the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 23).

Per that declaration, the parliamentarians, aware of their responsibility to represent the people and defend their rights, in order to further sustainable development and progress of the continent, affirmed their willingness to achieve the goals set under the COP, as part of exercising their legislative power and monitoring public policy.

They proposed that an African parliamentary working group should be set up to defend the interests of African countries in international financing mechanisms and programmes, to cope with the effects of climate change. They also called for the institution, within APU, of an African parliamentary forum on climate and sustainable development, to:

- Detect the effects of climate change on the African population and drawing public attention to the fallout for African countries.
- Prepare reports for multilateral parliamentary organizations on the progress made in implementing international commitments to Africa, in order to reduce the impact of climate change on the African continent.

(The text of the Rabat Declaration is available for delegates).

IV. Other activities

1. APU mission to the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York, 14-15 February 2017

In line with the recommendation of the Executive Committee to inform the Secretary- General of the United Nations about the resolutions adopted by the 39th Conference held 8 and 9 November 2017 in Rabat, the Chairman of the Executive Committee and the Secretary-General of APU, during the annual parliamentary hearings, jointly organized by IPU and the United Nations, went on a working visit on 14 and 15 February 2017 to the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

(a) The APU delegation was received in the afternoon of 14 February by Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chief of Cabinet, representing the Secretary-General of the United Nations. During the audience, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee and the Secretary-General of APU introduced the Union and the work it is doing on the African continent, and asked the United Nations for support. The texts of the last resolutions were given to the representative of the Secretary-General, noting that the work of APU met the expectations of the United Nations. She promised to report to the Secretary-General, putting special focus on emphasis to the resolution on "Lifting unilateral economic sanctions against Sudan and Zimbabwe.

(b) In the morning of 15 February, the APU delegation was received by Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Under Secretary-General and Director of the UNDP Regional Office for Africa. During the discussions, the APU delegation introduced the Union, its resolutions and and SWOT analysis of the organization, requesting UNDP to support it, under a partnership, and give it the assistance needed to achieve its goals The Director of the Regional Office for Africa expressed the will to favourably consider the case and meet with the Secretary-General of APU in March 2017 in Abidjan on his next mission to Abidjan.

At the end of the meeting in Abidjan, the Director of the UNDP Regional Office appointed Dr. Ozonnia Ojielo, the Regional Cluster Director, Governance and Peace building in Africa, to follow up on the APU case.

2. APU mission to non-member parliaments

At the end of its meeting held on 21 July 2017 during the 70th Session of the Executive Committee, the Bureau of the Executive Committee decided to send missions from August to October to the following countries: Botswana, Cabo Verde, Eritrea, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia, to urge them to join APU Only four countries could be visited because of busy schedules or unavailability of either the members of the APU delegation or the parliaments to be visited.

They are: Cabo Verde, Mozambique and Tanzania, which received the delegation from 18 to 26 August 2017. The delegation was led by Honourable Cipriano Cassama, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and it comprised Honourable Alhaji Mohammed Hardi Tufeiru, Member of Parliament of Ghana, and Mr. N'zi Koffi, Secretary-General of APU. A delegation also visited Mauritius from 2 to 5 October 2017, led by Honourable Pierre Flambeau Ngayap, Member of the Senate of Cameroon and Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee, together with Mr. Nzi Koffi.

We must sincerely thank the Speakers of Parliaments of these countries, not only for their generous hospitality to the delegations, but also for the favourable reception accorded the APU message. We hope that quite soon, they will join the Union, so that together, we can work towards strengthening parliamentary action for development and democracy in Africa.

3. Activity reports by parliaments on the implementation of the recommendations

On 29 August 2017, the Secretariat sent a letter to all member parliaments, requesting them to send their reports on measures and activities undertaken to implement the recommendations made in the resolutions adopted by APU, in accordance with Article 5 of the Statutes of the Union. A document recapping the recommendations was attached to the letter.

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