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ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

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**ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT COVERING
THE PERIOD JULY 2017 TO JUNE 2018
PRESENTED BY HONOURABLE ROGER NKODO DANG**

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Introduction

In application of Rule 76 of the Rules of Procedure of the Pan-African Parliament, which stipulates that **the President shall present resolutions and reports of Parliament**, it is my singular honour to present this report to Your Excellencies on the activities of the Parliament over the July 2017 to May 2018 period. The report gives an overview of the statutory meetings, those being the ordinary sessions and the meetings of the permanent committees. In addition, the Parliament carries out other, non-statutory activities, through its organs and in partnership with other African Union organs and partners. It is also active on various international fora where it takes a vocal stance on issues that dovetail with its objectives and African Union policies, especially Agenda 2063.

Consistent with Rule 28 of its Rules of Procedure, **the Parliament holds at least two sessions over a twelve-month period**. To help it achieve its strategic objective of **establishing and operationalising its mechanisms and procedures**, since the penultimate Summit, the Pan-African Parliament has held all its statutory meetings, particularly its October 2017 and May 2018 Ordinary Sessions, which were preceded by preparatory sittings of the Permanent Committees in August 2017 and March 2018.

Similarly, in March 2018, the PAP Women's Caucus, together with the Committee on Gender Equality, Family, Youth and Persons with Disability, organized activities to mark the International Women's Day.

This report rapport sets out the different activities undertaken by the Parliament, in the order in which they took place.

1. August 2017 Meetings of the Permanent Committees , 9th Conference of Speakers of Parliament and Meeting of Clerks of Parliaments

The 11 Permanent Committees sat from 3 to 11 August 2017 at the precincts of the Pan-African Parliament in Midrand, South Africa. They considered and deliberated on various issues pertaining to Union policies and objectives. Their reports were discussed at the October 2017 session.

During the August 2017 committee sittings in, the Parliament hosted the 9th Conference of Speakers and Presidents of African National Parliaments and Senates, two platforms for awareness creation and reflection on the AU.

The Clerks' meeting was a one-day event held on 9 August to discuss ratification of AU legal instruments. The Final communiqué of the meeting enriched the discussion at the Parliamentary Speakers' Conference.

The 9th Annual Conference of African Parliamentary Speakers, held under the theme: “**Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth - role of national and regional parliaments**” took place at the Parliament on 10 and 11 August 2017. The conference adopted a Final Communiqué committing the Presidents of National Assemblies and Senates to ensure that their respective institutions would adopt legislation that is sensitive to issues concerning young people and empowers the youth. They also pledged, among other things, to prevail on their respective States to give pride of place to youth issues in their policies and programme and to make the attendant investments.

The Conference of Presidents of Parliaments also discussed the ratification of African Union legal instruments and undertook a strong commitment to develop common strategies to accelerate ratification, accession and implementation of AU instruments, to challenge the Executive on measures being taken by the governments of our respective countries towards signing and ratifying the Malabo protocol. They pledged to take necessary action to ensure that their respective Parliaments ratify the revised Malabo Protocol before 31 December 2017.

A reminder letter in that connection was sent to the African Presidents of Assemblies and Senates asking them to follow up on compliance with the terms of the communiqué. As a result of the commitments made, buttressed by additional advocacy missions by the President, a number of countries, such as Benin and Cameroun, have ratified the protocol.

Apart from the Parliamentary presidents’ conference, the August 2017 Permanent Committee sittings enabled the committees to consider and draft reports that enriched the discussions at the ordinary session of the Parliament held in Midrand, from 9 to 19 October 2017.

2. Yaounde International Conference

As one of the pivots in the continental integration process, the Pan-African Parliament organized a continental conference in Yaoundé from 22 to 25 August 2017, under the esteemed patronage of His Excellency President Paul Biya of the Republic of Cameroun. The theme of the conference was “**Political and Socioeconomic Integration of the African Continent: Role of the Pan-African Parliament**”.

The high-level conference commanded a massive turnout of parliamentarians, academics, civil society organizations, and senior officials of the African Union Commission amongst whom was its Vice-President, His Excellency Thomas Kwesi Quartey, as well as representatives of the European Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, the Arab Parliament, and the continent’s regional parliaments. It was co-organized by IDEA with support from the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), the Government of Cameroon and national and regional MPs.

The meeting was held, primarily, to carry out a close study of the legal instruments on the continent's political and socioeconomic integration such that the stakeholders would have a common understanding and sense of ownership, and put forward issues relating to those aspects that are relevant to achieving the socioeconomic integration of the continent. The conference truly provided an opportunity to review past and current progress and identify challenges surrounding continental integration, to determine the role of parliamentarians and civil society in promoting and supporting the continent's integration mechanisms, and raise their awareness of that role. Participants were able to share best practice with regional and national parliamentarians and get a better grasp of the shared values of the African Union. Lastly, the participants gained more insight into the new developmental approach to natural resource management and enhanced their capacity for identifying the challenges surrounding the AU's African Mining Vision (AMV) in relation to the problems connected with regional integration and the continental free trade area.

The success and the merit of the continental conference in Yaounde lie in its having set the bar high for subsequent regional conferences to follow. Apart from the flawless organization, its immediate outcome was that the Central African Heads of State adopted a measure making free movement of goods and persons within CEMAC operational. The recent signing of the Free Trade Area Agreement in Kigali underscores how much progress is being made at continental level.

3. October 2017 Fifth Ordinary Session

Pursuant to Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure of the Pan-African Parliament, the Fifth Session of the Fourth Parliament was held from Monday 9 October to Friday 19 October, 2017 at the PAP precincts in Midrand, South Africa. Participants at the session continued to discuss the AU 2017 theme, **“Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth”**.

His Excellency President Brahim Ghali of the Sahrawi Arab Republic graced the official opening of the Session with his presence.

The Pan-African Parliament, exercising its oversight function, invited H.E. Mull Katenden, Ambassador of the Republic of Uganda to the African Union (AU), Chair of the African Union Peace and Security Council for the month of May and COREP member, who presented a report of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to the House. Having debated said report, the Parliament took note thereof and commended the Union as a whole for its efforts in this area.

Major issues deliberated by Honourable Members during the Session included the activity report of the Pan-African Parliament, the report by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), reports of the Permanent Committees and the outcomes of the 10th Women's Conference.

The following recommendations were adopted:

- i) Recommendations of the 10th Annual Conference of the Pan-African Parliament on the Rights of Women;
- ii) Recommendations of the fact-finding mission of the Pan-African Parliament to the Republic of Sudan;
- iii) Recommendations on the transport sector in Africa;
- iv) Recommendations on the Common African position on the *Global Compact on Migration*;
- v) Recommendations on the mission to Tunisia to promote ratification and implementation of the Maputo Protocol.

4. Activities of the Women's Caucus at the October 27 2018 meeting during the 5th session

To ensure citizen representation that includes women, the Pan-African Parliament established a Women's Caucus as a structural framework for debate on appropriate themes. The Caucus usually carries out its activities during the first parliamentary session for the year, which often takes place in October. The 10th Conference on the Rights of Women was held on 12 and 13 October 2017 during the 5th ordinary session of the Fourth Parliament. Its theme was **“Role of Parliamentarians in promoting international and regional Human Rights instruments, especially those related to Women and Youth, Peace and Security, and Female Genital Mutilation, in order to achieve the Demographic Dividend”** . The main objective of the conference was to rally the members of the PAP to the cause of promoting peace and security, international and regional human rights instruments and the accelerated elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), a practice which is an obstacle to achieving the demographic dividend.

The Conference praised the 38 African Union Member States that have ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights relating to the rights of women and have domesticated and are implementing it. Countries that have not yet done so are urged to take urgent measures towards its ratification and domestication. The conference made recommendations calling on African countries to commit to ending harmful practices obstructing the achievement of Agenda 2063, and specifically, to pass legislation to protect women, young girls and youth by increasing advocacy and sensitization on the issue.

This year, the meeting of the Women's Caucus was held on 8 March, International Women's Day. They organized a debate around the theme of the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the theme of the African Union's 2018 anti-corruption theme.

Following on the discussions on International Women's Day, the Women's Caucus, together with the Permanent Committees on Gender Equality, Family, Youth and People with Disability, took part in the 62nd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York, from 11 to 23 March 2018. On 20 March 2018, the Women's Caucus also co-hosted the PAP Women Parliamentarians' Forum on the CSW62 theme: **“Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls”**.

5. Conference of PAP Youth Caucus on Youth in Sudan

Organized by the Pan-African Parliament in collaboration with the National Assembly of Sudan, the Youth Caucus of the Pan-African Parliament was attended by the PAP Young Parliamentarians, youth parliamentarians from across Africa, members of the Pan-African Youth Union, representatives of the National Assembly, the Sudanese Youth Organization and the Institute for Security Studies. It was a forum for discussion around the theme : **“Improving the role of young parliamentarians in promoting the shared values of the African Union”** This is an off-shoot from the 2017 theme on youth, viewed through the prism of making young people accountable masters of their own destiny. The Pan-African Parliament's contribution to the discussion from this viewpoint culminated in a final communiqué that sets out the relevant recommendations.

6. PAP participation in African Union activities

From July 2017 to date, the Pan-African Parliament has carried out several other activities with AU organs or departments in areas that promote the policies and programmes of the African Union. Such activities involve either the permanent committees, the Bureau of Parliament or the PAP Secretariat.

First, the Parliament took part in the June-July 2017 Summit where the President delivered his report, adopted by the Conference. It also participated in last year's Extraordinary Summit here in Addis Ababa and the Extraordinary Summit last March in Kigali, Rwanda, at which the Continental Free Trade Agreement, and Free Movement of Persons and Goods and the African passport was signed. The Parliament immediately hit the ground running, presenting a report by its Permanent Committee on Trade, Immigration and Customs on this agreement. The Parliament will organize regional awareness-raising meetings to push for its ratification and implementation.

As part of its own efforts to help achieve the goal of promoting and upholding good governance, democracy and respect for human rights on the continent, the Pan-African Parliament in December 2017 actively participated in the meeting of the *African Governance Architecture* as the chair of AGA before passing the baton to the APRM, the current AGA chair. The PAP Secretariat was also an active participant at the most recent AGA, held in Johannesburg from 28 to 30 January 2018, which drew up strategies and a work programme for AGA implementation.

Last January, the Bureau and Secretariat also attended the Summit and related meetings. A summary of all the joint meetings that the PAP Permanent Committees held with the AU Commission departments and other organs is attached in appendix to this report.

As part of their efforts to promote one of the Parliament's objectives relative to protection of human rights, democracy and good governance in Africa, Pan-African MPs, with PAP staff members, were part of African Union Joint Election Observer Missions in Algeria, the Kingdom of Lesotho, Congo, Senegal, Kenya and Angola. The Parliament is expecting the overall report on all these missions for its consideration.

Through its permanent committees, the Pan-African Parliament continues to strengthen cooperation with the African Union organs and Specialized Agencies, RECs and relevant organisations. Their representatives attend PAP permanent committee and plenary meetings where they deliver presentations and respond to questions about their mandate. The President of the African Union Commission recently attended the opening of the plenary session of Parliament and the Vice-President had also earlier attended the plenary in 2017 to present the budget of the Union for 2018. In general, the PAP's permanent committees collaborate with AU departments and other AU organs on technical matters and these are either geared towards building parliamentary capacity, furthering the common work programme or exercising parliamentary oversight.

7. Participation of the Parliament at international fora

The Pan-African Parliament participates in international meetings, and justifiably so, as its missions are undertaken either to enable it defend the interests of certain countries and African peoples or to lobby States to ratify Union legal instruments, particularly the revised Malabo Protocol.

The Parliament undertook a joint mission to the United States of America with the Government of Sudan in 2017 during which the parliamentary delegation met members of the United States Congress and the Under-Secretary of State for African Affairs. Their lobbying for the lifting of sanctions against the Sudanese people was successful as the sanctions on the sister country were partially lifted.

Missions to promote ratification of instruments were conducted to certain countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Togo, during the Summit of the International Organisation of la Francophonie, and Senegal, during the last ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit. These intense advocacy missions resulted in the signing and ratification of the Malabo Protocol by more countries, bringing the number of ratifications from five to ten. The Pan-African Parliament urges all these countries to complete the process by depositing their ratification instruments with the Commission Secretariat.

The President led a delegation of parliamentarians to the Europe-Africa Summit in Abidjan, in 2017. A joint Pan-African Parliament/European Parliament Forum was organized on the side-lines of that summit with the two parliamentary institutions calling for joint action by the European Union and African Union to address people trafficking and the atrocities being committed against migrants in Libya. The joint parliamentary meeting also noted that tackling the underlying causes of migration requires huge investments in creating more jobs and opportunities for young people. The two Parliaments called upon EU and AU Member States to ensure that any migration flows were safe, legal and voluntary. Countries receiving migrants should endeavour to integrate them, based on fair burden sharing; those repatriating their citizens needed support to complement their efforts to reintegrate them.

The parliamentary meeting further called on Heads of State and Government gathered in Abidjan to develop a blueprint that offers young people in the 21st century a better future. The Parliament's position on the theme of the Abidjan Summit, a topical issue, was laid out in a joint communiqué which the PAP President presented at the Summit.

Lastly, The Pan-African Parliament also called for the revision of the Cotonou Agreement to pave the way for effective partnership rather than dependency. That agreement should deliver on the pledges made at the United Nations regarding the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, to bring a real improvement in peoples' lives and ensure sustainable use of the natural resources on our shared planet.

A Pan-African Parliament delegation headed by its President also took part in the 23rd Conference of Parties (COP23) at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Bonn to discuss follow-up action on and implementation of the Paris Agreement.

The COP23 programme was packed with various presentations, exhibitions and discussions. Members of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) led by the President, participated in events that ranged from the implementation of the Paris Agreement to climate justice, climate finance, and good practices for overcoming climate challenges. The members of the Pan-African Parliament also participated in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Africa Day programme at COP23.

On 14 November 2017, Pan-African Parliament Day, PAP members had an excellent opportunity to engage with other stakeholders, including NEPAD, the African Group of Negotiators, and other parliamentarians from Africa to discuss the role of African parliamentarians in advancing the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The Parliament's participation in COP enhanced its role as an advocate for initiatives that promote environmental regulation and policymaking, and enabled it to contribute to the current climate change discourse on the continent.

The Pan-African Parliament is deepening its parliamentary diplomacy and increased its cooperation with the European Parliament. Palpable results have been achieved in vibrant relations between the two institutions with capacity building missions organized to boost election monitoring and observation capabilities. Pan-African parliamentarians and some PAP officials took part in those events in September 2017 and March 2018. The technical immersion tour undertaken by staff of PAP under the programme in 2017 was repeated in 2018 for parliamentary staff.

It is also noteworthy that a delegation from the European Parliament visited Midrand during the May session and held a working meeting with Pan-African MPs on the joint Europe/Africa strategy.

In March, a parliamentary delegation headed by the President attended the IPU summit as observers.

8. May 2018 Meetings of Permanent Committees

PAP permanent committees held their March meetings ahead of the May session. In addition to the technical committee meetings, the Women's Caucus organized events and discussions in celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March.

9. May 2018 Ordinary Session

The May 2018 Session took place under the African Union's 2018 anti-corruption theme, focusing on the African anti-corruption drive and the role of parliamentarians in winning the fight against corruption - **legislation and leadership (a high-impact conversation with parliamentarians on the anti-corruption campaign)**. His Excellency Mussa Faki Mahamat, President of the African Union Commission, was the Special Guest of Honour.

The Pan-African Parliament, by virtue of its power to initiate debate on AU objectives and policies and serve as a discussion platform for formulating appropriate recommendations, discussed a variety of issues during the May session in response to the different reports that were presented:

- Report on AU institutional reform–implementation of Decision 635 (XXVIII) of the African Union;
- Activity Report of the Parliament;
- Report on the role of parliamentarians in health and in achieving desired health outcomes;
- Report of the Committee on Cooperation on the theme : Connecting the Dots: Supporting the 2030 Agenda, the Arms Trade Treaty(ATT), and the

United Nations Programme of Action, through parliamentary engagement and action within the international process;

- Report on the Final Continental Free Trade Area, the Protocol on free movement of persons and the African passport, signed at the extraordinary summit in Kigali;
- Report on the Parliament's participation at the Convention of Parties - COP23- from 6 to 17 November 2017 in Bonn, Germany.

These discussions and the different reports and topics debated resulted in the adoption of resolutions and recommendations, attached as appendices to this report.

The May session was an election session and new members were elected to the Bureau of Parliament and the bureaux of its parliamentary organs: Permanent Committees, Regional Caucuses, Women's Caucus and PAP Youth Caucus.

For elections to the Bureau of Parliament, in accordance with Rule 15(1) which lays down the principle, **each region shall nominate candidates: one for the presidency and two for vice-presidents, ensuring equal representation of men and women from each region.** For the position of President, the Central Region, North Africa Region and Southern Region nominated Honorable Nkodo Dang Roger from Cameroon (outgoing President), Honorable Moustapha from Egypt and Honorable Chief Charambira from Zimbabwe respectively.

The nominations put forward for the positions of Vice-President were: Honorable Aidara Cisse for the West Africa region, Honorable Safia Djibrine from Djibouti and Honorable Stefan Julius Masele from Tanzania for the East Africa Region, and Honorable Bouras Djamal of Algeria for the North Africa Region.

As stipulated in the Rules of Procedure, the Bureau elections were held in two parts. First, an ad hoc committee consisting of a representative from each regional group conducted the election for the position of President. Thereafter, the President, following his re-election conducted the elections for the positions of Vice-President. At the end of a free, fair, transparent secret ballot, the following Honourable Members were elected:

- President : Hon. Roger Nkodo Dang, re-elected with 133 votes;
- First Vice-President: Honorable Stefan Julius Masele, elected with 156 votes for East Africa;
- Second Vice-President : Honorable Haidara Cisse, elected with 123 votes for West Africa;
- Third Vice-President: Honorable Bouras Djamal of Algeria, elected with 93 votes for North Africa.

As the Southern Africa Region did not field a candidate, the election for a Vice-President from that region will take place at the next session.

Lastly, the session considered and adopted two recommendations, seven resolutions and a statement, all of which are attached as appendices to this report.

Conclusion

Since July 2017, the Pan-African Parliament has successfully organized two ordinary sessions and its permanent committee sittings, and it has thus been able to add to the discourse on the themes for 2017 and 2018.

Its advocacy missions, such as the one to the United States, were also successful having been instrumental to the lifting of sanctions against Sudan and having also helped to raise the visibility of the Parliament beyond the confines of our continent. The mission to lobby countries to ratify the legal instruments of the Union was equally successful as the number of countries that have ratified the Malabo Protocol increased to ten as a result.

Internationally, and on the continental scene, the Pan–African Parliament, most notably, participated in the COP 23 and made its voice heard as a Parliament while also affirming the role of parliamentarians in efforts to combat climate change. Its cooperation with the European Parliament has been equally productive as it has been able to initiate discussion, still ongoing, as to the next course of action on the joint strategy.

PAP is building institutional relations. Its collaboration with African Union departments and other AU organs is growing apace even though it has yet to reach the desired level as the Parliament is still striving to fully exercise its right of oversight over them. Notwithstanding, based on the reassurances we have received from the President of the African Union Commission, we have every reason to be optimistic in this regard.

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