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NINTH PARLIAMENT- SECOND SESSION

REPORT OF

THE 43RD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE 26TH CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION HELD IN ACCRA, GHANA, 17-21 OCTOBER 2003

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS NAIROBI

NOVEMBER 2003

REPORT OF THE 43RD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE 26TH CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION HELD IN ACCRA, GHANA, 17 - 21 OCTOBER, 2003

The 43rd Session of the Executive Committee and the 26th Conference of the Africa Parliamentary Union (APU) were held in Accra, Ghana at the Accra International Conference Centre from 17th to 21st October 21, 2003.

The Kenya Parliament was represented by the Hon. David Musila, MP Deputy Speaker / Leader of the Delegation, the Hon (Prof.) Ruth Oniang'o MP, the Hon Gachara Muchiri, MP, the Hon. Moffat Maitha, MP and Miss M.J. Chesire Clerk Assistant as the Secretary to the Delegation.

The National Groups of the following countries participated in the Conference:

Algeria, Angola, Benin Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central Africa, Congo, Cote d'Voire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. The ECOWAS was represented in the Conference.

The 43rd Session of the Executive Committee took place on 17th and 18th October 2003. The Speaker of the Ghana Parliament the Rt. Hon Peter Ala Adjetey and the Chairman of the African Parliamentary Union (APU) Executive Committee, the Hon Boubacar Ibrahim Keita chaired. The APU Secretary General, Mr Abelgadir Abdalla, APU Secretary- General was in attendance.

The report of the Executive Committee is hereby attached (Appendix 1).

During the opening ceremony the Speaker of the Ghana Parliament the Rt. Hon. Peter Ala Adjetey welcomed the participants to Ghana. In his speech, he reminded the delegates that APU could only justify itself if it continuously engages itself and prods governments and other international and regional bodies to find effective solutions problems facing the continent. The statement by the Speaker is hereby appended (Appendix 2).

The Chairman of the African Parliamentary Union the Hon Ibrahim Boubacar Keita challenged the delegates to use the meeting to design strategies to promote durable development on the African continent. The speech by the APU Chairman is appended (Appendix 3).

A meeting of women parliamentarians was held on Saturday, 18th October 2003. During their deliberations the women called upon the African governments to commit themselves to ensuring that women were given adequate voice and representation in all aspects of decision making process and in all areas of governance. They also called upon the African Governments to sign and ratify all international protocols and instruments promoting the rights and welfare of women that have not yet been ratified. They also recommended the implementation of the resolution made during the 25th APU Conference held in Khartoum, Sudan, regarding the establishment, within African Parliamentary Union, of a Committee of women parliamentarians which will be responsible for assessing peculiar problems faced by women. Participating in the meeting were women Members of Parliament representing Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Central Africa, Congo, Cote d'Voire, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo and Zimbabwe.

The 26th Conference of the African Parliamentary Union was officially opened by His Excellency the President of Ghana, the Hon. John Agyekum Kufuor. In his opening remarks, he

challenged the National Parliaments on the continent to help consolidate good governance. He asked African legislators to be in the forefront in the fight against incipient of bad governance and dictatorship.

He stated that Parliament in making laws to govern the nation also should promote consensual decision making to strengthen its cohesion and be arena of peoples views, no matter how divergent, to ensure that their best interests are catered for. The speech is appended (Appendix 4).

Two Committees were set up to consider and make recommendations on item agenda as indicated below.

Committee 1 was to consider the following agenda items:

- ◆ The promotion of the role of women in the development of Africa
- ◆ The role of parliamentarians in the promotion of human rights

Committee 2 was to consider the following agenda item:

- ◆ The strengthening of the democratic institutions for the implementation of NEPAD

The reports of the two Committees are shown as Appendix 5.

The Conference adopted the recommendations made by the two Committees appointed by the Executive Committee.

Several Members made their contributions during the Conference. Such contributions touched on many matters, including annual membership payment by individual branches. It was resolved that Parliaments send their reports on their activities periodically to the General Secretary for submission to the Executive Committee.

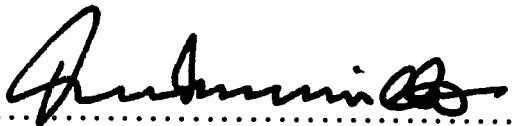
The Conference was also addressed by the Chairperson of the Pan African Parliament (PAP), the Rt. Hon. Frene Ginwala who is also the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa. She explained that the PAP would be the custodian of the democratic values and principles of the African Union. She reminded the delegates that the Heads of States of Africa have also prioritized the establishment of the PAP among the three organs to be established first. The other three organs are Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (Ecosocc). The statement by the Chairperson is appended (Appendix 6)

The Secretary-General of the Union presented a report detailing the activities of the Union for the period from October 2002 – October 2003. (Appendix 7)

The Executive Committee will decide on the date and venue of the 27th Conference of the APU. By consensus, branches wishing to host the meetings of the Union were requested to forward their proposals to the APU Headquarters in Abidjan.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for May, 2004 in Morocco.

The Conference was officially closed on Tuesday, October 21, 2003.

Signed


Hon. David Musila, MP
Deputy Speaker/ Leader of the Delegation



AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION

43RD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & 26TH CONFERENCE
Accra, October 17 - 21, 2003

43ème SESSION DU COMITE EXECUTIF & 26ème CONFERENCE
ACCRA, 17 - 21 OCTOBRE, 2003

الدورة (43) للجنة التنفيذية والمؤتمر (26) للاتحاد البرلماني الإفريقي
أكرا - جمهورية غانا ، 17 - 21 أكتوبر 2003



43rd Session of the Executive Committee

Accra, 17-18 October 2003

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE 43RD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The 43rd Session of the Executive Committee of the African Parliamentary Union, met at the Accra International Conference Centre, in Ghana, on 17 and 18 October 2003 under the Chairmanship of its President, Honourable Ibrahim Boubacar KEITA, Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

He was assisted by the Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, Honourable Peter ALA ADJETTEY, Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Honourable ZARAY Mohamed SALAH, Honourable AHMED RASALAM, Rapporteur of the Executive Committee and the Secretary General of the APU, Mr. Abdelgadir ABDALLA.

Delegates from the following parliaments took part in the deliberations :
Ageria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lybia, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.

The representatives of the Parliaments of Sierra Leone and Zambia as well as the following international organisations participated in the session. They are ECOWAS, ICRC, the Arab League, Arab Interparliamentary Union, Arab Magreb Union.

I - OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chairperson of the Executive Committee opened the Session by giving the floor to the Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana.

The Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, in his speech, welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Ghanaian people and parliament and wished them a pleasant stay.

He then declared that Ghana has a historical role to play for continental unity and in the achievement of peace in the continent.

He also listed the challenges facing Africa, namely conflicts, diseases with AIDS in the lead, illiteracy, poverty and called on Parliaments and Governments to forge strategies to meet all these problems.

He particularly urged the countries to settle the conflicts which undermine the African continent and which impede its development, in order to establish democracy.

He also emphasised that the Parliament has a role to play in international cooperation and called on all parliaments to exchange their experiences for the purpose of mutual enrichment.

Lastly, after welcoming the delegates once more, he informed the delegates that Ghana has ratified the Protocol establishing the PanAfrican Parliament.

At the end of the speech of the Hon; Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, the chairperson of the Executive Committee took the floor to thank the National Group of Ghana for all the facilities provided to the delegates.

He also paid a glowing tribute to the first President of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. KWAME NKRUMAH, for his Panafrican Vision.

Furthermore, he thanked the African Group meeting in the IPU Conference held in Geneva for its stance regarding the venue of the next Conference of the IPU, following the refusal of Great Britain to grant visas to certain personalities from Zimbabwe. Thanks to this firm position, the African Group was able to safeguard the dignity of Africa.

He then declared that the agenda of the Session of Accra would enable the Executive Committee to assess the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Conference, the actions taken and the difficulties that the Union encounters in its functioning. He emphasised the fact that members should honour their obligations in respect of the Union in order to enable it increase its audience at the regional and international level.

He also underscored that the Union is called upon to play a very significant role on our continent and moreover, to be vector of democracy and sustainable development in Africa.

He ended his speech with the hope that the proceedings become fruitful and contribute to the achievement of common objectives.

II - ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

On resumption, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee called on the Secretary General to present the Agenda.

1. Request for admission and readmission
2. Examination of the implementation of decisions and recommendations of the Conference
3. Adoption of the annual work programme
4. Examination and adoption of the draft budget for 2004
5. Draft Agenda of the 26th Conference
6. Draft Agenda of the 44th Session of the Executive Committee
7. Date and venue of the 44th Session of the Executive Committee.

The draft agenda was adopted.

III – EXAMINATION OF THE AGENDA ITEMS

Item 1 : Admission of Gambia

The Secretary General read the report on the readmission of the Parliament of Gambia. After the presentation of the report, the delegates delivered speeches recommending to the 26th Conference readmission of the Parliament of Gambia.

This request for readmission will therefore be submitted for approval by the next Conference.

Item 2 : Examination of the implementation of decisions and recommendations of the Conference

The Secretary General submitted his report on the implementation of decisions and recommendations of the conference. It was based on three points :

- . The Solidarity Committee with Libya
- . The Follow-up Committee on the Panafrican Parliament
- . Contributions in arrears.

As regards the first item, the delegates were delighted with the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Libya and requested that a motion of commendation be addressed by the 26th Conference to the General People's Congress and to the people of Libya..

Concerning the 2nd item, the delegates recommended that the Parliaments put in more in order to accelerate the process of ratification of the Protocol relating to the Pan African Parliament and get in contact with their governments for this purpose. They also hoped that the APU and AU meet in order to actually review the status of ratification.

With regard to contributions in arrears, delegates emphasized the importance of settlement of these contributions which enable APU to ensure its functioning and growth.

Item 3 : Adoption of the Annual work Programme

The Secretary General read out the draft of the work programme for the year 2004.

The delegates took the floor to obtain some clarifications on the organisation of the meetings and on the level of representation of the APU. They insisted on the follow up of the ratification of the Protocol relating to the Panafrican Parliament and requested that, by the end of the year, the majority of African Parliaments ratify it..

They expressed satisfaction concerning the organisation, next year, of a Conference on the refugees and another on democracy and development as well as the role that APU plays in the international fora, particularly in the IPU.

With regard to the Conference on democracy and development, the organising country, Egypt, fixed the meeting from 12 to 14 January 2004.

The delegates, expressing dissatisfaction with the state of Afro-Arab cooperation, hoped that the framework of the Afro-Arab Parliamentary Conference which brings together the AIPU and the APU every two years should further strengthen and consolidate this cooperation.

The delegates do not understand why African countries turn to the European countries for investments whereas some Arab countries are in a position to grant them funds needed for their development.

They requested that an Afro-Arab Parliamentary Conference be organised to instance cooperation between the two parties and to formulate sufficient strategies in order that this cooperation be beneficial to one another.

At the end of all these interventions, the annual programme was adopted .

Item 4 : Examination and adoption of the draft budget for the year 2004.

Following the presentation of the budget for 2004, members of the Executive Committee requested clarifications and made observations. They were of the opinion that the draft budget presented for their consideration is in line with the annual work programme.

The Executive Committee, moreover, insisted on the settlement of the contributions of the National Groups in order to enable the execution of the budget and permit the APU to champion its activities. It, in this regard, recommended the intensification of the efforts in respect of countries which are behind schedule in terms of payment of contributions.

In view of the fact that the draft budget for 2004 was prepared in a bid to preserve a relative financial stability, the members of the Executive Committee adopted the draft budget which is balanced in revenue and in expenditure at US\$1, 055, 920.

Item 5: Draft agenda of the 26th Conference

The Secretary General read the following draft agenda:

1. Admission(s) and re-admission(s)
2. Report of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee
3. Report of the Secretary General on the activities of the Union
4. Report of the Pan African Parliament follow-up Committee
5. Report of the Solidarity Committee with Libya
6. Financial situation of the Union
7. The promotion of the role of women in the development in Africa
8. The role of Parliamentarians in the promotion of human rights in Africa
9. The reinforcement of the role of the democratic institutions with a view to implementing the NEPAD
10. Date and venue of the 27th Conference.

The draft agenda was adopted.

Item 6: Draft agenda of 44th Session of the Executive Committee

The Chairperson presented the following agenda:

- 1- Admission(s) and readmission(s) into the Union
- 2- Examination of the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the conference
- 3- Examination of the audited management account for the 2003 financial year
- 4- Drawing up of the draft agenda of the 27th Conference
- 5- Draft agenda of the 45th Session of the Executive Committee
- 6- Date and venue of the 45th Session of the Executive Committee.

Item 7 : Date and venue of the 44th Session of the Executive Committee

The Chairperson of the Executive Committee and the secretary General were requested to contact the national groups to see which country will be ready for the organisation of this Session.

OPENING REMARKS BY THE RT. HON. MR. PETER ALA ADJETEY SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF GHANA, AT THE 26TH CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION IN ACCRA, GHANA, ON MONDAY, 20TH OCTOBER 2003

Your Excellency, Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana and Chairman of the ECOWAS Heads of Government

Hon. Chairperson of the APU and Speaker of the National Assembly of Mali, Alhadji Ibrahim Boubacar Keita

Hon. Heads of Delegations

Hon. Delegates

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Ghana is indeed highly honoured to be hosting this Conference. On behalf of the Parliament of Ghana, I welcome all of you once again to our beloved country, Ghana.

Many of you delegates have travelled thousands of kilometres to honour the invitation to attend this Conference and participate in its deliberations. My exhortation at the opening of the 43rd Session of the Executive Committee of the Pan African Union to savour the hospitality of the people of Ghana can bear repetition to you here.

This 26th Conference of the African Parliamentary Union provides an auspicious occasion for dealing with many of the issues that confront us as African Parliamentarians. The theme chosen for this conference, that is, “African Parliaments for the Consolidation of Democracy” is very apposite. African nations need to consolidate the democratic gains made in the last few decades, develop the democratic ethic, ethos and culture, and prevent a return to the dark days of autocratic and dictatorial rule by Governments in many of our countries.

This conference will address very critical issues including:

- (i) The promotion of the role of women in the development of Africa”;
- (ii) The role of Parliamentarians in the promotion of human rights in Africa and;
- (iii) The reinforcement of the role of democratic institutions with a view to implementing the NEPAD.

It is a fact that most legislatures in Africa are nascent and inchoate. The countries in which they function are themselves described as “emerging” democracies. Although almost all legislatures experience some teething problems, there are peculiarly temporary problems faced by African legislatures.

There is first the absence of institutional consciousness, which results in members' loyalties to political parties or leaders to far outweigh their concerns for the legislature as an institution. Where the institutional consciousness is weak or non-existent, the members are likely to have a lack of vision or concern for the power and effectiveness of their legislatures. Unless at least some key members or leaders are concerned about legislative power and the legislature as an institution, the legislature is likely to remain relatively weak.

Secondly, there is also the issue of poor perception by, and relations with, civil society. Our legislative rules and procedures remain a mystery to the people we represent. Individuals and groups in civil society may not understand the complex workings of the legislature, and are often ineffective in articulating their views to the legislature. Many of our countries are yet to develop the system where professional lobbyists articulate the views of interest groups and civil society to the legislature. A legislature unresponsive to the needs of the electorate will tend to lack public support.

Thirdly, although generally formal law-making and oversight authority is given to most African Parliaments, some of these powers have been clawed back by provisions in some national constitutions which derogate from the norm – such as provisions which drastically reduce the legislature's traditional power of the purse. Additionally, most African

Parliaments lack the human and material capacity required to utilize whatever powers they do possess.

Fourthly, a lack of access to information to ensure effective oversight of the Executive is a critical constraint facing many African Legislatures. Many of the libraries in African Parliaments are poorly resourced and therefore incapable of responding to the legislators' needs.

Fifthly, there is the problem of inadequately trained staff and most of the legislatures in Africa are only recently beginning to develop the tradition of having professional legislative staff although these are still in insufficient numbers.

Finally, many African legislatures suffer from inadequate facilities and equipment. The number of meeting rooms, sound systems, computers, phones, copiers, offices, and other infrastructural facilities all tend to fall short of what is required for the Parliamentary institution to function effectively.

How does an elected Member of Parliament perform his duties and functions effectively under these unfavourable conditions? The job of a legislator is a complex one, yet very few of our legislatures provide adequate training opportunities for either new or returning members due to inadequate funding. Legislators are often unaware of their authority,

how to best organize their time and conduct their business or how to deal effectively with their constituents and the press.

I have taken the trouble, distinguished delegates, to outline these problems which confront African Parliaments in order to highlight the enormity of the tasks ahead of the African Parliamentary Union.

Our Union must develop a programme, I believe, which addresses all the above concerns through an aggressive Legislative Development Agenda for Africa aimed at strengthening our respective legislatures to take on the challenges of effective law making and oversight of the Executive.

As we all know, effective legislatures are the key to effective governance by performing important functions necessary to sustain democracy in the very complex and ethnically diverse African societies. Democratic societies need the arena for the airing of societal differences provided by representative assemblies with vital ties to the populace. Africans need legislative institutions that are capable of enacting good laws in both the political sense of getting agreement from participants, and in the technical sense of achieving the intended legislative purposes.

It is therefore very critical and important for both our respective national Governments and the bilateral and multilateral funding organisations to focus their financial support on legislative institutions in Africa, if we

are to make any headway in our efforts at true and effective democratisation and if we are to succeed in inculcating the tenets of democratic culture in our citizenry.

This 26th Conference of the APU has come at a time when we as African Parliamentary representatives need to rethink our strategies and work assiduously to deliver our respective countries from the entrapment and strangle-hold of poverty, corruption, preventable diseases, the H.I.V/ AIDS pandemic, and more frustratingly, the slow pace of economic development and growth experienced on our continent.

In conclusion, Your Excellencies, it is my firm expectation that the deliberations at our conference would yield real and effective solutions for consolidating the democratic gains already achieved in our respective countries and produce a working plan for African Inter-parliamentary support in consonance with the NEPAD objectives, to be effectively coordinated by the African Parliamentary Union and its Secretariat.

In accordance with Article 11 of the Constitution of the APU, I hereby declare the 26th Conference of the APU open and may God guide the Conference throughout its deliberation.

**OPENING SPEECH OF HONOURABLE
IBRAHIM BOUBACAR KEITA
CHAIRPERSON OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION (APU)**

*Honourable and respected brother, Speaker of the Parliament of
Ghana, Peter Ala Adjetey,*

Honourable Speakers of African Parliaments,

Mr. Secretary General of the APU, Brother Abdalla Abdelgadir

Honourable Parliamentarians,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After Tripoli, we find ourselves in Accra for our 43rd Session, thus responding to the kind invitation of the National Group of Ghana to which I express my sincere thanks for all the facilities enabling us to meet to day.

In my turn, brother Adjetey, permit me to pay homage merited to the man who devoted his life to African Unit, Osageyo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

I remember when I was a young schoolboy at the Bamako Secondary School, we used to sing Ghana, Guinea, Mali the nucleus of the Great Union, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Africa is now awaken.

First it was Ghana, Guinea, now it is Ghana, Guinea, Mali. Very soon it will be all Africa.

Homage therefore to the enlightened, steadfast Panafricanist that Kwame Nkrumah was.

The agenda of this session which will lead us to discuss particularly the implementation of the recommendations of the

Conference, annual programme, the draft budget of 2004 and preparation of our 26th Conference.

We shall therefore have the opportunity here in Accra to assess the Union's actions as well as the difficulties that it will encounter for its smooth functioning. I would like in this regard, to recall that as members, we have obligations to honour in respect of our organisation.

As a matter of fact, the African Parliamentary Union will endeavour to increase its audience at the regional and international level, thanks to our willingness to provide it with policy facilities. I must say that the voice of African Parliamentarians is well transmitted through the APU and its leading organs. We assess the importance of the APU as a structure grouping African National parliaments the moment it is requested by the international organizations to participate in partnership programmes or to give a parliamentary dimension to a particular debate.

*Honourable parliamentarians,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I shall not elaborate further on this subject, which will indeed be the subject of discussion during our Accra deliberations.

I can affirm, in my capacity as Chairperson of the Executive Committee, that our organisation is called upon to play a more significant role on our continent and elsewhere as vector of democracy and sustainable development in Africa.

It is certain that we shall spare no effort to reinvigorate our Union and make our voice heard wherever we shall be.

May our deliberations be fruitful and contribute to the achievement of our common objectives.

I thank you and declare the 43rd session of the Executive Committee of the APU open.



AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION

43RD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & 26TH CONFERENCE
Accra, October 17 - 21, 2003

43ème SESSION DU COMITE EXECUTIF & 26ème CONFERENCE
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الدورة (43) للجنة التنفيذية والمؤتمر (26) للاتحاد البرلماني الإفريقي
أكرا - جمهورية غانا ، 17 - 21 أكتوبر 2003



THE SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Mr. Speaker, Rt. Hon. Peter Ala Adjetey of the Parliament of Ghana,
Distinguished Chairperson of the African Parliamentary Union,
Hon. Ibrahim boubaacar Keita, Speaker of the National Assembly of Mali,
Hon. Speakers of Parliaments of Sister Countries on our Continent
Members of the Council of State,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Hon. Ministers of State of Ghana,
Hon. Members of Parliament, Ghana,
Niimeɪ, Naameɪ,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad that this 26th Conference of the African Parliamentary Union is taking place here in Accra. On behalf of Ghana, and myself, I welcome all of you honourable members.

This Conference has the makings of a historic meeting, because of current developments on our continent, which have focused world attention on Africa.

My hope is that by the end of the conference, your deliberations would have served to prove that the conference has, indeed, been historic.

The terms for this conference '**National Parliaments For the Consolidation Of Good Governance**' should be analysed to connote good governance as the critical factor for proper development, as generally accepted in the advancing world. It

would then become imperative that national parliaments should see it as their central role to consolidate good governance.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Generally, a state is defined by its constitution, which in the process equips it with the various arms, agencies and laws to make it establish its authority. Invariably, a parliament is established as one of the main arms of the state vested with the authority for governance.

Classically, and functionally, parliament or legislature should be the main forum of the people, through their elected representatives, to make laws to govern the nation; promote consensual decision making to strengthen the nation's cohesion; and be an arena of peoples' views, no matter how divergent, to ensure that their best interests are promoted. Additionally, parliaments should serve as the watchdog of the people on their governors to ensure accountable and transparent management of the affairs of the state.

Further, they should supervise the finances of the state, in terms of their collection and allocation to ensure efficacious use of resources, for efficient management of the polity, for the benefit of the people. Thus, if properly run, a parliament

should be the organ of state, above all others, that is best mandated by the people, to establish the well being of the individual citizenry, as the central rationale for government. Again, it should be in the forefront in the fight against incipient mis-government and dictatorship.

Looked at, in this way, parliament becomes an essentially democratic institution, because, it enables the people through their elected representatives, to enforce accountable and transparent governance.

The question is whether all the parliaments on our continent are cast in this mould? This, necessarily, also questions whether the constitution establishing our states are democratic? To answer these questions, as individual African parliaments, meeting together, here in Accra we must do some introspection because the theme assumes a convergence of values among all the African parliaments, which alone will enable the consolidation it talks about to take place.

Fortunately, the emergence of the African Union and its offshoots NEPAD, and the sub-regional groupings, all prescribe good governance as the critical input for social and economic development of our nations, regions and the continent. This is what has attracted the attention of the rest of world to our continent. And this should, perhaps, facilitate

the introspection that must be done across the continent on the communality of values among parliaments.

Mr. Chairman,

Good governance gained a lot of currency in the late eighties when development programmes experienced serious implementation difficulties, which were attributed to the failures of public administration owing to unaccountable, patrimonial and non-transparent governance.

The frustrations and exasperations with our nations and continent were expressed consistently and graphically throughout the world by the powerful global media, depicting the internecine wars, diseases, illiteracy and extreme poverty that afflicted our peoples, in the face of the tyranny, intolerance and perceived corruption of many of our governors.

As a result, good governance has become a prerequisite in international development without which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to get assistance and support from the international community. The marginalization of the continent, in the attraction of investment, has been largely blamed on good governance.

It is to correct this unacceptable image and expensive neglect that the current crop of leaders across the continent, after far-reaching consultations, decided to make the concept central to the new direction captured in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and the basic principles of the NEPAD.

Mr. Chairman,

Broadly speaking, good governance is defined in terms of promotion of fundamental and universal human rights, free and fair elections, independent judiciary, the rule of law, freedom of speech and of association, respect for property rights, ethnic and religious tolerance, anti corruption initiatives, effective healthcare, education and combating poverty, civil society participation in governance, minority rights and gender balance. All these are now taken as part of the definition for good governance. Flowing from this definition, it should not be difficult to appreciate that good governance may entail multi-partyism practiced under a constitution, through the ballot box, as the exclusive means of alternating power among parties without recourse to violence.

As far as it is constitutionally viable, decentralization of governance and devolution of power should be seen as important vehicles to effectively involve the citizenry in

governance, no matter their tribe, religion, or political persuasion.

Another serious factor that should be considered is how well parliament must be resourced, to enable it function well to pursue good governance. The world is ever becoming complex, with its rapid opening up. Africa is inviting partnership both from within and outside its territory for developments.

Unless its parliaments are well resourced with high caliber supporting staff for research and administration these staff must be well remunerated and equipped to support the Members of Parliament, the targets of good governance might prove illusory. It is also important to acknowledge the seriousness of this concept of good governance through the medium of the peer review mechanism which NEPAD has adopted, and whose protocol a number of African countries have already signed and ratified.

Mr. Chairman

This august conference definitely, has a lot on its agenda to deliberate upon and its theme enjoins it to conclude with explicit resolutions for the consolidation of good governance in our individual countries as well as throughout our continent. The Conference should convince Africa of the possibility of