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# AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION APU

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R. 144/40/17

## **The contribution of parliaments to preserving national sovereignty and strengthening peace and security in Africa**

Resolution 144 (2017) adopted by the 40<sup>th</sup> Conference  
(Ouagadougou, 10 november 2017)

The African Parliamentary Union, meeting at its 40<sup>th</sup> Conference on 9 and 10 November 2017 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso,

*Recalling that* sovereignty is held by the people, as a political body, the Nation,

*Also recalling that* such sovereignty is delegated to elected representatives and is expressed through the national parliament,

*Underlining that* other State institutions, acting on behalf of the people, exercise this national sovereignty in the same manner as the Parliament,

*Affirming that* the principles of the sovereign equality of States and political independence constitute the basis for international cooperation, an essential factor for peace, security and stability,

*Recalling that* the main purposes of the General Assembly of the United Nations, are to “maintain international peace and security and to develop friendly relations among nations, maintain and strengthen universal peace, based on equality, justice *and respect for basic human rights and to develop friendly relations among nations, despite the differences of their political, economic and social systems, and their levels of development.*

*Also recalling the principles stated in United Nations Resolution 2625:*

- *States shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations,*
- *The principle that all States shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter,*
- *The principle to not intervene in the affairs of any other State, in compliance with the Charter;*
- *Principle of sovereign equality of States*

*Affirming that* no principle can be raised to infringe on the national sovereignty of a country, in violation of international rights and international legitimacy,

*Aware of the importance of the economic, social, environmental and human conditions in the consolidation of peace and security,*

*Concerned* about the unending conflicts in several African countries, which threaten peace and security at the national, subregional, regional and international levels,

*Affirming* that the prevention of conflicts is first and foremost an internal affair of the governments concerned, which by their management of public work and democratic principles, should create an enabling environment for peace and security,

*Reaffirming* that terrorism and transnational crime are all additional threats to peace and security in African countries and in the world, often originating from national and regional tensions which shake the political stability and constitute serious obstacles to development,

*Stressing* that the weakness or flaws of institutions, corruption, nepotism and discrimination in all forms are a threat to peace and security and major sources of conflict, that can only be solved by sustainable development,

*Affirming* that the democratic ideal is based on a system of government in which citizens exercise their right to take political decisions through representatives chosen by them and responsible before them,

*Considering* that the need to protect the people should not be considered as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of a State, based on political issues and other external considerations,

*Recalling* the universal character of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the obligation of all States to respect and promote these democratic principles for all individuals,

*Emphasizing* that Parliament is a key institution for the organization and functioning of the State, with the fundamental role to express the will of the people by passing laws and controlling government action,

*Recalling* the essential role played by parliaments in the defense of the Rule of Law at the national level,

*Emphasizing* the responsibility of Parliaments to promote peace and security at the national, regional and international levels,

*Reaffirming* the role of parliamentary diplomacy as a way of contributing to furthering dialogue and peace among people,

*Stressing* on the importance of education, the role of the media and the need to remedy the deep causes of conflicts,

*Underlining* the role of women in the preservation and promotion of security,

*Emphasizing* the importance of youth participation in political life and in promoting peace and security,

Reaffirming the importance of involving women in the decision-making process for gender equality and the need to address the current imbalances in the participation of men and women in the political life of the nation

*Aware* that some African countries combating drought, famine and other disasters have difficulty in servicing the external debt, which is a serious handicap to sustainable development,

*Recalling the goals and principles related to sovereignty in the United Nations Charter and the African Union Constitutive Act, and its non-aggression and Common Defence Pact,*

*Recalling also the goals of Agenda 2063 adopted by the 24<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, 30 and 31 January 2015,*

1. *Reaffirms* that the Rule of Law, involving democratic power transfer, an independent justice system, good governance, respect for human rights and traditional values, security, the fight against inequalities, are building blocks for peace and stability;
2. *Commits* Parliaments to enact laws designed to improve the lives of the people and strive to build societies founded on respect for universal principles of democracy and fundamental freedoms and respect for specific national circumstances;
3. *Calls upon* national Parliaments to strive for the implementation of peacebuilding and conflict prevention strategies, by enhancing the role of civil society stakeholders and mobilizing the people, including the youth and women, to involve them in nation building;
4. *Calls upon* States to promote the path of political dialogue rather than resorting to violence and armed struggle;
5. *Invites* African parliaments to to strive to strengthen democratic governance at the national and local levels, the peaceful settlement of internal disputes, consolidation of national unity, through inclusive dialogue and take the measures necessary against the forced overthrow of democratically elected and legitimate governments;
6. *Calls for* the peaceful settlement of disputes among States, and where necessary, making use of international arbitration bodies;
7. *Emphasizes* the role of national parliaments in the preservation of national sovereignty and on the importance of its institutional involvement in the implementation of multilateral cooperation aimed at settling tensions and conflicts;
8. *Commits* national parliaments to fully play their role and establish legal bases and national legal mechanisms to prevent all external interventions that threaten the sovereignty and independence of States;

9. *Requests* parliaments to actively take part in the planning of policies and initiate investigation missions to prevent internal and inter-State conflicts, bearing in mind that ethnic rivalry, economic and social problems, poverty, chronic underdevelopment, the issue of migration and refugees, the weaknesses of institutions are major factors of instability, which should be dealt with to ensure peace and security;
10. *Calls* for cooperation between national parliaments so as to act together to promote peace and security and settle disputes between States, through political dialogue between the parties without any ideological, political, ethnic and religious differences;
11. *Also calls* for efficient cooperation among States in the area of combating terrorism, transnational crime and cyber crime, which threaten stability, security and national sovereignty;
12. *Urges* parliaments to promote policies aimed at guaranteeing national sovereignty, economic independence, building the capacities of the national armed forces and human development, all which imply that the basic needs of the people are met as a priority;
13. *Invites* parliaments to strengthen national systems on the respect, promotion and protection of human rights, by fostering the introduction of independent and efficient national human rights institutions, and also to get involved in regular and transparent electoral processes;
14. *Appeals* to African countries to take all appropriate measures towards implementation of their international obligations on human rights, and urges parliaments to take active part in controlling the implementation of these obligations;
15. *Commits* parliaments and Governments to take legal and regulatory measures to reduce poverty and social disparities;
16. *Appeals* for further cooperation between parliaments and parliamentary institutions, and also regional governmental organizations, with a view to enhancing peace and security in Africa and the world;
17. *Focuses on* strengthening international cooperation and partnership between the North and the South, so that advances in science and technology are applied to agricultural and food production, devising appropriate industrial processes, providing energy and healthcare and rational management of the environment;
18. *Invites* governments and their institutions, including parliaments, in their international practices, to draw from the principles stated in the United Nations resolution 2625, which are fundamental principles of international law and to develop their mutual relations based on the rigorous respect of those principles;
19. *Requests* Parliaments to forestall all external interferences in the internal affairs of independent States;

20. *Urges* Parliaments to foster the participation of women and the youth in national, regional and international decision-making on conflict prevention;
21. *Encourage* Parliaments to work together with governments to put in place a regional surveillance mechanism aimed at promoting and enhancing peace and security in Africa and preserving the national sovereignty of States;
22. *Appeals* for a comprehensive and lasting settlement to external debt problem, through debt cancellation, streamlining and rescheduling and a substantial interest rate reduction;
23. *Reiterates* the appeal for a transfer by developed countries of 0.7% of the Gross Domestic Product in official development assistance (ODA), so as to reduce absolute poverty and contribute to the sustainable development of the countries concerned;
24. *Calls* upon the international community to maintain its commitment to helping and supporting economic, social and institutional development in vulnerable African countries, to ensure long-term peace and stability;
25. *Adopts* the Ouagadougou Declaration on inter-African dialogue and combating terrorism.