



AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION APU

35th CONFERENCE
Kigali, 29 and 30 November 2012

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RESOLUTION
on
**“The strengthening of democratic governance
in African countries as necessity for political, economic and
social stability**

The African Parliamentary Union, meeting at its 35th Conference in Kigali (Rwanda) on 29 and 30 November 2012,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on civil and political rights (1976), the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (1979), the African Charter on human and peoples rights (1981) and the African charter on democracy, elections and governance (2007),

Also recalling the resolution on “Preserving peace and social stability by enhancing good governance” adopted by the 33rd Conference of the APU (Malabo, December 2010), on the one hand, and the resolution on “Promoting and practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security: drawing lessons from recent events in the Middle East and North Africa” adopted by the 126th Assembly of the IPU (Kampala, April 2012), on the other hand,

Drawing on the final document of the Global Summit of September 2005, where the Heads of state and government reaffirmed that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives and *Bearing in mind* their commitment to protect and develop human rights, the rule of law and democracy,

Considering that democratic governance is based, on the effective participation of all in defining and implementing the decisions relating to them, and on states that are responsive (capable of meeting efficiently the requests of the citizen) and accountable (liable and transparent),

Considering that strengthening citizenship, youth education and the development of citizens’ dignity based on cultural values and ethics, are the cornerstone on which to build democracy, consolidate the freedom of expression and the efficient functioning of political parties,

Considering that political freedom is the main prerequisite to achieve good governance and establishment a democratic regime that guarantees civil, political, economic, and cultural rights,

Also considering that power legitimacy is a precondition for democratic governance and *Convinced* that the non-observance of the constitutional and consensual rules and mechanisms to access to power can sometimes lead to violent conflicts and jeopardise civil peace and stability at the national and even sub-regional level,

Aware that the strengthening of democratic governance requires strong, accountable and transparent governance institutions, based on the rule of law and that it is made of an accountable executive power, an efficient legislative power, an independent and impartial judicial power, an efficient and inclusive public service as well as informed, empowered and politically active civil society and people,

Convinced that democratic governance, political, economic and social stability are interdependent and mutually reinforcing,

Aware that the stability of a country, at the political, economic and social levels, is linked to factors such as social peace, the observance of the rule of law and human rights, the economic and social development, as well as a sustainable environment; that can only be achieved if they are supported by legitimate and representative powers and political institutions,

Noting that in spite of the progress made in Africa in the area of democratisation, marked by the regular holding of regional and local elections, and the significant progress recorded in terms of gender equality, especially in the political sphere, there is still work to do, to improve participation and civic commitment to public affairs, the capacity, the responsiveness and efficiency of the States, on the one hand, and harmonise the national policies, processes and institutions on the principles of democratic governance, which are gender equality, the fight against corruption and human rights, on the other hand,

Concerned by the persistence of exclusion, intolerance and the distrust of the people regarding the political process, the poor management and the consecutive waste of national resources, tax frauds, corruption and the lack of transparency that delays development and undermines the moral fabric of society,

Acknowledging that one of the main ways to prevent threats against democracy is to ensure that all levels of society, including women, youth, minorities and vulnerable peoples fully participate in the democratic process,

Convinced that respecting the diversity of ideas, values, beliefs, languages and cultural expression of the peoples means enrichment and progress, tolerance and inclusion at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels,

Taking into account the opportunities offered by the technology of information and communication (IT) in the economic and social development process, to encourage democracy, efficiency and transparency,

Aware of the need for building, everywhere on the African continent, a stable society at the political, economic and social levels,

Considering that armed conflicts, violations of human rights and basic freedoms are major impediments to democracy,

Considering the extent and seriousness of the 1994 Rwandan genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi and the continuing consequences of this unspeakable crime on the people of Rwanda, the Great Lakes Region in particular and in Africa in general,

Keen to participate actively in the struggle for the establishment of democratic governance in order to eradicate poverty and promote economic and social development in Africa,

1. *Urges* the States which have not done so yet, to speed up the ratification of the African Charter on democracy, elections and governance and *Supports* NEPAD efforts in the areas of democracy, human rights and governance, which are seen as major challenges to be addressed to achieve progress in the continent;
2. *Stresses* the need for African states to establish truly independent and neutral bodies tasked with organising free and transparent elections, in order to confer to the elected representatives a legitimacy and legality accepted by all and build strong and democratic institutions that can ensure peace and social stability;
3. *Calls upon* African states to work toward the deepening and irreversibility of the whole democratisation process in the continent and *Recommends* to the African Union to maintain its total rejection of the unconstitutional government changes and its determination to end this scourge as it undermines the on-going democratisation of the continent and threatens peace, security and stability in Africa;
4. *Recommends* African states to overcome the democratic gap in the relations between the different actors of the society by promoting, at the political level, tolerance between citizens and political leaders, through education and communication;
5. *Supports* regional and sub-regional initiatives and efforts aimed at preventing and ending armed conflicts in the continent;
6. *Requests* African states to adopt measures enabling the return of refugees and displaced persons and guaranteeing the full enjoyment of their rights;

7. *Requests* African states to adopt legal instruments to prosecute and judge the perpetrators of the serious crimes in the continent, including economic crimes, by prioritizing their extradition to their countries of origin;
8. *Believes* that parliaments can play a major role in setting up institutions that are more accountable, more transparent and more aware of human rights and the rule of law, and needed to build relevant and efficient states, providing a predictable and transparent framework for the conduct of public affairs and hold accountable those in charge;
9. *Asks* parliaments and parliamentarians to ensure, that the legal national framework provides adequate protection for the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all the citizens, on the one hand, and that the electoral process and mechanisms reflect and take into account diversity, on the other hand;
10. *Exhorts* African parliaments to adopt laws and measures protecting political parties, civil society organisations, including human rights agencies and the media that strengthen their intervention capacity and ensure that they freely conduct their activities;
11. *Encourages* parliaments to take the relevant steps to strength their oversight of the Executive action, more particularly in terms of public development assistance focused on developing governance to reduce poverty;
12. *Urges* parliaments to adopt laws and measures that can create a stable and transparent environment, suitable to entice the mobilization of investment, funds, technology, skills and other foreign resources that are necessary to ensure growth and development;
13. *Invites* parliaments to prevent, fight and eradicate all forms of discrimination and *Urges* all African parliaments and governments to ensure the full and fair involvement of all, including women, youth, minorities and vulnerable peoples, in the democratic process;
14. *Encourages* African parliaments to promote the culture of participation by adopting measures to improve their transparency, their relations with the civil society and the media and the how they make their work public, especially through public hearings and the use of IT;
15. *Pleads* for more cooperation, between African parliaments, on the one hand, and between African parliamentarians and those of the rest of the world, on the other hand, for the good practices of democracy in terms of democratic governance, to be spread across the continent, with a view to a more active involvement of all in the local, national, and international governance;

16. *Urges* African parliaments and governments to strive to expand and intensify the process of decentralisation and ensure the effective transmission of knowledge by providing the decentralised authorities with the financial, human, technical and material means, as well as with the administrative and legal means needed for their functioning;
17. *Request* parliaments to ensure the implementation of the systems of governance which, with respect for human dignity, aim at improving the livelihoods of citizen and thus, their living standards, to achieve the objectives of the Millennium development goals and help restore trust in the democratic institutions and democracy;
18. *Also request* parliaments and States to define and implement efficient policies to promote the knowledge of rights and civil responsibilities by ensuring citizens non-discriminatory access to quality education and training, which are essential to provide them with the means to hold to account the institutions tasked with the enforcement of the laws and policies that protect their rights;
19. *Urges* governments and parliaments to speed up the signature and ratification of the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration which is an instrument to improve public governance and which ultimate aim is to build efficient states;
20. *Invites* parliaments and parliamentarians to encourage and participate actively in achieving the reforms aimed at instilling in the public service and civil servants, the values of honesty, integrity, impartiality, transparency, accountability;
21. *Welcomes* the establishment of the Secretariat of the African Union advisory board on corruption and *Urges* African states to support it in its role of developing and strengthening the necessary mechanisms to prevent, detect, punish and eradicate corruption and its related offences in the public and private sectors in Africa;
22. *Encourages* the various initiatives taken at the national, regional and sub-regional levels, aimed at including the IT governance, as a way to institutionalise rigour and transparency in the management of public affairs, with a view to reducing poverty and stimulating sustainable growth and development.