



African Parliamentary Union

44th CONFERENCE
78th Session of the Executive
Committee

Victoria Falls, 5–10 November 2022



Parliament of Zimbabwe

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS
OF THE AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION

(Adopté)

At the 44th Conference of the African Parliamentary Union, the Committee of Women Parliamentarians met on 8 November 2022 in Victoria Falls, Republic of Zimbabwe, with the Honourable Veneranda Nyramirwa, Member of the National Assembly of Rwanda, as Chairperson of the Committee.

She was assisted by Hon. Said Rasha, Member of the National Assembly of Egypt, Vice-Chairperson, Hon. Raymonde Kayi Lawsonde Souza, Member of the National Assembly of Togo, elected Rapporteur for the period from November 2022 to November 2023 and Mr. Gado Boubakar Idi, Secretary-General of APU.

Members of the following parliaments took part in the meeting: Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

At the opening of the meeting, before adopting the draft agenda, Hon. Veneranda Nyramirwa, MP from Rwanda, Chairperson of the APU Committee of Women Parliamentarians, thanked the Zimbabwean authorities and people, as well as the Zimbabwean women parliamentarians, for all the attention and kindness shown to the participants at the meeting.

Addressing the theme on the agenda, “**The role of African women in combating terrorism and violent extremism**”, she expressed the wish that women would be able to participate in all decision-making processes in order to better take into account their concerns, so as to continue their efforts in mobilizing their communities to carry out activities on the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism.

She then expressed her gratitude to all the women parliamentarians and guests who took part in this meeting of the APU Committee of Women Parliamentarians.

She also thanked the Zimbabwe National Group for all the arrangements made for the Committee to be held in Victoria Falls.

The Right Honourable Mabel Memory Chinomona, President of the Senate of Zimbabwe, then took the floor to welcome all the participants to the meeting of the APU Committee of Women Parliamentarians to discuss the theme on “The role of African women in combating terrorism and violent extremism”. She presented the

African context as marked by increasing terrorist attacks, which is perhaps the biggest obstacle to achieving the goal of a conflict-free continent.

We must create an environment in which terrorism and violent extremism do not enjoy sympathy and support. We can do this by addressing the promoters of terrorism and the incentives for youth recruitment. The APU platform allows us to share the African legacy of open, equitable, and inclusive societies in which extremism cannot thrive, she continued.

In conclusion, she stressed the urgency of ending terrorism and violent extremism. Hence, the pressing need for Member States to implement APU resolutions to address the risks posed by terrorism. And, as parliaments, they are in a better position to ensure that States address poverty and reduce inequality. This will discourage young people from joining terrorist and violent extremist activities, she stressed.

In conclusion, she wished them Committee of Women Parliamentarians success in their deliberations.

There was also a message from the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Djibouti, Chairperson of the Executive Committee of APU, the Right Honourable Mohamed Ali Houmed.

He welcomed the presence of African women parliamentarians and expressed his solidarity with them. He indicated that the African women parliamentarians could count on the support of men in their fight for the recognition of their role, in general, as the first factor of economic and human development and of the African woman, in particular.

Lastly, he expressed his desire to encourage the women in their discussions on “the role of African women in combating terrorism and violent extremism” and wished them every success in their deliberations.

After the address by the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the Chairperson of the APU Women's Committee invited the participants to watch the video of the excursion of 7 November 2022: trip to the Animal Park and to Victoria Falls. The delegates were impressed by a welcoming city rich in culture and natural heritage. It joins the giant Zambezi River and the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. The borders of Botswana and Namibia are not far away either. A city that represents the diversity of the African continent.

The Committee then moved on to adopt the draft agenda and to consider the items listed:

1. Report by the Chair of the APU Committee of Women Parliamentarians;
2. Role of African women in combating terrorism and violent extremism;
3. Adoption of the draft resolution;
4. Any other business.

The Committee moved on to consider the items on the agenda, as follows:

Report of the Chairperson of the APU Committee of Women Parliamentarians

On this item, the Chairperson of the Committee reported that the activities carried out after the meeting held in Djibouti in November 2021, on the occasion of the 43rd APU Conference, focused on the implementation of the regional study conducted jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the African Parliamentary Union on “sexism, harassment and violence against women in African parliaments”.

One of the main thrusts of the implementation strategy for this study was the organization of an African parliamentary awareness and action conference for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff on sexism, harassment and violence against women in African parliaments, in order to encourage legislative institutions to take action to eradicate such violence.

Consultations were immediately carried out with APU member Parliaments to find a country willing to host the said conference.

The Chairperson of the Committee informed the Committee that the Parliament of Togo had agreed to hold the conference in Lome from 30 November to 1 December 2022.

The Conference will have the following objectives:

- Raise awareness among parliamentarians in Africa on the forms and prevalence of violence against women in politics and in parliaments as well as on the issues pertaining to this problem.
- Mobilize parliamentarians in Africa around concrete solutions to the problem of violence against women in politics and parliament.
- Identify effective measures to create a political and electoral environment free of violence against women.
- Identify effective measures to ensure a working environment within political institutions and organizations that is free of sexism, harassment and violence.

The Chairperson informed the meeting that the preparations for this conference were underway and welcomed the support of the APU General Secretariat and the collaboration of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as well as the availability of the host country, Togo.

On other activities of interest to women parliamentarians, she said that efforts were being made to obtain partnerships with other organizations on issues such as early girl marriage, unemployment, immigration, and improving women's participation.

Furthermore, she invited her parliamentary colleagues to support these efforts by requesting their respective parliaments to organize thematic conferences.

In this regard, African women parliamentarians are called upon to initiate such events, by requesting their respective parliaments to host them.

The role of African women in combating terrorism and violent extremism.

At the end of intense and fruitful discussions, the APU Committee of Women Parliamentarians formulated the following draft resolution:

The Committee of Women Parliamentarians of the African Parliamentary Union, meeting on 8 November 2022 in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe,

- (a) *Considering* that the role of African women in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism on the continent is paramount;
- (b) *Noting* that a better understanding of the causes of this scourge and the methods of operation of extremists will make it possible to find creative approaches to combat the phenomenon
- (c) *Considering* the need to set up security cooperation mechanisms, at the bilateral and/or multilateral levels, to draw inspiration from best practices in the fight against terrorism,
- (d) *Considering* also that African women have difficulty making their voices heard and are sometimes caught between terrorism and the fight against terrorism and violent extremism,
- (e) *Convinced* that African women can play an major role in the fight against terrorism and constitute an instrument of peace, given the important role they play in the family circle and in society as a whole
- (f) *Aware* that African women are called upon to strengthen their involvement in civil society, as well as in cultural and social organizations that promote a culture of living together and tolerance
- (g) *Recalling* resolution 2242 (2015), “on women, peace and security, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism”, adopted by the Security Council at its meeting of 13 October 2015
- (h) *Taking into account* the three areas of focus of the 2016 International Women's Day (IWD) on “the context of increasingly radical and violent extremism”:
 - Raising awareness about the different roles and perceptions of women and men in the context of violent extremism and radicalization;

- Identifying and supporting women's experiences and capacities as architects of peace and drivers of change;
- Recognizing and celebrating, on the occasion of IWD, the efforts by many women to assert their power by saying "no" to radical extremism;

Proposes to the 44th APU Conference the following recommendations:

1. Harnessing women's leadership as a critical resource for peace;
2. Involvement and participation of women in efforts to prevent and combat terrorism;
3. Reviewing and implementing all counter-terrorism measures in accordance with the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination;
4. Achieving gender equality, empowering women and promoting women's participation in security decision-making processes;
5. Developing policies and processes that take into account gender issues;
6. Taking into account UN Women's approach to promoting counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism, as well its strategic plan 2018-2021 on prevention of violent extremism;
7. Adopting an economic and social approach aimed at fighting inequality, poverty and social insecurity, through an initiative for human development that will undeniably prevent latent radicalization among disadvantaged or marginalized populations;
8. Improving infrastructure (roads, health, education, etc.) and access to basic services, by proposing plans to support economic activity and entrepreneurship among young people and women;
9. Creating an environment in which sustainable development will be strengthened, aiming to limit the influence of extremist groups on youth, their support and recruitment;
10. Improving the security of cross-border regions that are ideal havens for armed terrorist groups;
11. Capacity-building and exchange of best practices, particularly with respect to inter-agency cooperation among African states;
12. Coordination of national policies, information sharing and identification of best practices;

13. Pursuing terrorists within and across borders to disrupt support networks, prevent planning, travel and communications, and access to funding and materials used to carry out attacks;
14. Implementation of counter-terrorism strategies on a continental and global scale; this strategy does not exclude the development of regional strategies that are more adapted to the realities of the area;
15. Development of multi-sectoral (security, governance, development) and multi-dimensional approaches; coherent involvement of all existing programmes, bodies and institutions of the African Union in its efforts to curb the terrorist threat;
16. Improving border controls and reducing the mobility of terrorist groups by fully involving African civil society, including women, and coordinating their actions in the area of prevention and fight against terrorism;
17. Coordination of the African Union's action plan on counter-terrorism with the efforts undertaken by the United Nations in the framework of the global counter-terrorism strategy;
18. Building the capacity of the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT);
19. Representation of women at all levels of decision-making in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and settlement of disputes;
20. The provision of human and financial resources to the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) as well as to the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT), both organs which work with parliaments in the prevention and fight against terrorism;
21. Taking into consideration issues related to women, peace and security in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism;
22. The implementation of measures by African States and the United Nations system to ensure the participation and authority of women and women's organizations in the development and implementation of strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism;
23. Collaboration between the APU and the AU to ensure that women are given slots in AU peacekeeping missions;

24. Negotiations between the APU and the AU to ensure women's representation in negotiations concerning countries that are currently suffering from terrorist attacks, thus giving women the opportunity to engage in peace processes;
25. APU's support to the AU for the establishment of a single African market. This is to help reduce the socio-economic causes of terrorism as many Africans will be engaged in trade. The abolition of visas by some African countries for Africans is to be commended;
26. The organization by the Parliaments of a general debate (of one hour) on terrorism and violent extremism so that the message is received in the country.

Any other business

The Chairperson gave the floor to the Secretary-General of the APU to present the status of the activities carried out on the regional study on “Sexism, harassment and violence against women in African Parliaments”, and to provide information on the preparations for the Conference to be held in Lome on 30 November and 1 December 2022 on the theme:

“Preventing and responding to violence against women in politics and parliaments”

The Secretary-General said that following the initiative of the Chairperson of the Committee of Women Parliamentarians of APU, and after the study conducted by IPU on “sexism, harassment and violence against women in African Parliaments”, the findings of which were very negative, the APU submitted the Chairperson's project to IPU, which accepted it.

To this effect, this conference will indeed take place in Lome from 30 November to 1 December 2022 on the said theme. Invitations have already been sent to member and non-member Parliaments of APU.

The Secretary-General indicated the following modalities for participation:

- 4 representatives per Parliament
- 6 representatives for bicameral parliaments.

The gender component should be respected. That is to say half/half.

At the end of the meeting of the APU Committee of Women Parliamentarians, the President expressed her satisfaction with the active contribution of the participants through enriching exchanges on the theme and the other items on the agenda.

She also congratulated the APU General Secretariat on the technical support provided to the Committee. This contributed to the smooth running of the meeting.

Done at Victoria Falls, 8 November 2022