



African Parliamentary Union

44th CONFERENCE
78th Session of the Executive Committee
Victoria Falls, 5 – 10 November 2022



Parliament of Zimbabwe

REPORT
of the proceedings of the
78th Session of the Executive Committee
(Adopted)

The 78th Session of the Executive Committee of the African Parliamentary Union (APU) was held in Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe) on 5 and 6 November 2022. In the chair was Mr Mohamed Ali Houmed, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Djibouti, Chairperson of the APU Executive Committee.

He was flanked by Mr Jacob Mudenda, Speaker of the National Assembly of Zimbabwe, Ms Mabel Chinomona, President of the Senate of Zimbabwe, Mr Alfred Okoe Vandderpuije, Member of Parliament of Ghana, Rapporteur of the Executive Committee and Mr Gado Boubacar Idi, Secretary-General of APU.

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

The Parliament of Eswatini participated in the session as an observer.

I – OPENING SESSION

The President of the Senate of Zimbabwe, and the Speaker of the National Assembly of Djibouti, Chairperson of the Executive Committee, addressed participants at the opening session.

In her address, **Ms Mabel CHINOMONA, President of the Senate of Zimbabwe**, expressed her honour and privilege to welcome the delegates who had travelled to take part in the 78th Session of the Executive Committee of the African Parliamentary Union being held in the beautiful city of Victoria Falls.

She also expressed, on behalf of the Zimbabwean people, the Government and Parliament and on her own behalf, her deep gratitude for giving Zimbabwe the opportunity to host this event, which is a great source of pride for the nation.

The presence in Zimbabwe of the African parliamentarians was a sign of their commitment to APU and appreciation of Zimbabwe's commitment to peace and stability in Africa. This presence only strengthens Zimbabwe's resolve to contribute more to the fight against the scourge of terrorism.

The Senate President observed that the current meeting comes at a time when many African countries are facing the threat of terrorism. She added that the destruction of lives and infrastructure, reduced investment and economic activities, are all consequences of the scourge of terrorism, indicating that the United Nations Organization has estimated the cost to African countries at 97 billion dollars annually. Terrorist attacks, she said, are an obstacle to achieving the goal of a conflict-free continent.

Terrorism, she said, is rooted in social, economic and political problems, including unresolved internal conflicts, poverty, inequality, exclusion and the absence of the rule of law. It also develops at the cross-border level, with the circulation of light weapons and small arms as well as organized crime. Thus, the UPA constitutes a platform to fight against the recruitment of youth into terrorist organizations and to share the African heritage of open, equitable and inclusive societies in which extremism has no place. In this regard, she expressed her conviction that Victoria Falls, a city of tolerance and diversity, surrounded by several countries, was the ideal place for this commitment.

The President of the Senate emphasized the urgency of putting an end to extremism, and welcomed the progress made by the African continent in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. She urged Member States to draw on APU's resolutions on combating terrorism, which also feeds into human rights violations and armed conflicts.

Lastly, she wished the delegates fruitful deliberations and a memorable stay in the beautiful city of Victoria Falls, asking them to enjoy the Zimbabwean hospitality.

Taking the floor, Mr **Mohamed Ali HOUMED, Chairperson of the APU Executive Committee**, first expressed his great pleasure at addressing African parliamentarians at the opening session of the 78th Executive Committee of the African Parliamentary Union being held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

On behalf of all the national groups of APU participating in this session, and on his own behalf, he expressed his feelings of gratitude to the Government, the Parliament and the people of Zimbabwe for the warm and fraternal welcome they have received, and the many courtesies extended to them since their arrival in this beautiful land of Zimbabwe.

He said that it was with the same enthusiasm that African parliamentarians meet among themselves, at least twice a year, to continue the dialogue, strengthen parliamentary cooperation, exchange the best practices, reaffirm their positions on the challenges facing our continent and assume their role in strengthening peace and democracy in Africa.

Following the 77th session of the Executive Committee held in Kigali (Rwanda), he expressed his joy at meeting up with the parliamentarians of the continent once again for the 78th session to consider issues pertaining to the activities and the functioning of APU. He thanked them for their presence, which was a sign of their commitment to work harder to achieve the objectives pursued for the past 46 years by the African Parliamentary Union.

The current session of the Executive Committee, he said, which immediately precedes the Conference of Speakers, was an opportunity to take stock of the work accomplished by APU, by reviewing the implementation of the decisions and recommendations adopted at the end of previous meetings. In this regard, he outlined the relevant resolutions adopted at the last Conference held in Djibouti in October 2021, on:

- *The COVID-19 pandemic, its effects on African populations and the African economy;*
- *The political, economic and social role of African women in response to this crisis;*
- *The security situation in some African countries.*

He said that the present session was of great importance for the African Parliamentary Union, as the Union's work programme and funding for the coming year would be decided. In addition, the session would review the important issue of the payment of membership dues by APU member parliaments, an issue which had always been at the core of their concerns and for which they had decided in Kigali to set up an ad hoc committee which would submit its conclusions and recommendations to them.

The Chairperson said that as members, they were committed to the effort, and determined to provide their organization with the funding needed to carry out its programme of activities. He stressed the need to put an end to the accumulation of arrears, as the budgetary resources of APU are essentially made up of contributions from its members. He also urged the members to give this issue the attention it deserved. He expressed his confidence that at the end of meeting, a permanent solution would be found to that recurring problem.

At the same time, he commended those parliaments which had made their contributions for 2022 as well as those that had paid up their arrears. It was a sign of their commitment to APU and its objectives, he added.

The Chairperson then drew the attention of the members to the emergency of the expansion of the Union to all parliaments on the continent. Efforts must be pursued in that direction. He seized the opportunity of the ongoing meetings in Zimbabwe to launch an appeal to the parliaments of the Southern African region to join APU, in order to strengthen African parliamentary action.

On the meetings in Victoria Falls, he stressed the importance of the general theme on terrorism and its impact on the governance of countries and the resilience of the people, issues that would be addressed by the two committees as well as by the Committee of Women Parliamentarians.

Turning to the agenda item on the renewal of the mandate of the Secretary-General, the Chairperson reminded them that at its last session held in Kigali, the Executive Committee had agreed to renew its trust in Mr Gado Boubacar Idi and decided to submit this proposal to the Conference.

He invited parliaments to offer to host upcoming APU meetings and reiterated his thanks and deep gratitude to the Parliament of Zimbabwe for the excellent conditions of stay and work in Victoria Falls.

Lastly, he declared the 78th Session of the Executive Committee of the African Parliamentary Union open.

After this intervention, the meeting was adjourned

Meeting resumes

II – ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chairperson gave the floor to the Secretary-General to read out the items on the agenda.

The Secretary-General presented the draft agenda as follows:

1. Admission(s) and readmission(s)
2. Review of the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Conference
3. Review and adoption of the annual work programme for 2023
4. Consideration and adoption of the proposed budget for 2023
5. Consideration and adoption of the draft agenda of the 44th Conference
6. Renewal of the term of office of the APU Secretary-General
7. Draft agenda of the 79th Session of the Executive Committee
8. Date and venue of the 79th Session of the Executive Committee.

The draft agenda was adopted

III – CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEMS

A – Application(s) for observer status

The Secretary-General informed the Executive Committee that APU had received two applications for observer status, one from the State Duma (Parliament) of the Russian Federation and the other from the African Association of Libraries and Information Institutions (AfLIA).

He first read out the report on the application of observer status from the State Duma (Parliament) of the Russian Federation.

The members of the Executive Committee were of the view that the request was in keeping with the provisions of Article 9 of the Statutes. However, they noted that the application should have been submitted by the Speaker of the Parliament and not by the Chairman of the International Affairs Committee. They therefore decided to accept the request for observer status from the State Duma of the Russian Federation subject to receiving a request from the Speaker of that Parliament.

The Secretary-General then read out the report on the application for observer status from the **African Association of Libraries and Information Institutions (AfLIA)**.

The members of the Executive Committee were of the view that although the application was in keeping with the statutory provisions, there was not enough information to warrant a definitive opinion. They then requested the Secretary-General to seek further information on the Association's objectives and activities. The Committee, based on the report of the Secretary-General, would consider the application of the African Association of Libraries and Information Institutions at its next session.

B – Consideration of the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Conference

Before proceeding with this item, the parliamentarians welcomed the presence of representatives of the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement, and the coordinating mechanism of parliamentary assemblies against terrorism.

The Secretary-General then presented his report on the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Conference.

Several issues were raised by the members of the Executive Committee, including the role of the Deputy Chairpersons of the Executive Committee, the representation of the APU at international conferences and the regular organization of the Afro-Arab parliamentary conference which was to be held every two years.

With regard to some of the issues raised, the financial constraints faced by the Union made it quite impossible to hold meetings such as the Bureau of the Executive Committee, outside APU sessions, as resources were low because many members had not paid up their contributions.

At the end of these discussions, the Executive Committee approved the report on the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Conference.

C – Annual work programme 2023

After the Secretary-General had presented the 2023 annual work programme, it was pointed out that there was no reference to actions aimed at admitting new members to APU. In response, the Secretary-General said that efforts were constantly being made in that direction, without incurring additional cost to the Union. He, however, recognized the necessity to explicitly include these actions in the Annual Work Programme.

The Executive Committee also welcomed the annual thematic conferences organized in partnership with international and inter-parliamentary organizations, such as the one on violence against women and on counter-terrorism. Topics were proposed, such as climate change, food security, water management, illegal migration - all challenges that affect the youth. Water management and participation in political life by disabled people were also raised.

The members of the Executive Committee expressed the hope that the meetings on counter terrorism would be organized as a priority in countries, such as West Africa countries, that are suffering from this scourge, in order to boost the effectiveness of counter-terrorism activities of the countries concerned.

The Secretary General took the opportunity to announce that a high-level conference would be held in Lome on January 19 and 20, 2023 on "Parliamentary engagement with civil society organizations: a collective response to terrorism and violent extremism". This meeting will be organized by the UNOCT Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in conjunction with APU, the Parliament of Togo, the Shura Council of Qatar and the G5 Sahel Inter-Parliamentary Committee.

Following these observations and proposals, the Executive Committee approved the Annual Work Programme for 2023.

D – Consideration and adoption of the draft budget for financial year 2023

(a) Draft budget for financial year 2023

Following the Secretary-General's presentation of the draft budget for 2023, the members of the Executive Committee made observations on certain items.

These remarks called for some clarifications from the Secretary-General on the functioning of the General Secretariat and the external travel expenses which sometimes were not systematically borne by the APU budget.

The recurrent issue of non-payment of financial contributions by more than half of the member Parliaments was once again raised to illustrate the difficulties faced by APU to manage its finances.

The Executive Committee expressed its thanks to the members who regularly honour their financial obligations towards APU.

At the end of the debate on this agenda item, the Executive Committee approved the draft budget for the year 2023, which balances in income and expenditure at 1 138 177 Euros.

Lastly, the Executive Committee appointed two auditors to audit the accounts of the Union for the financial year 2022, namely, MrDiibahi Dodo Amédée (Ivory Coast) and MrPierre Flambeau Ngayap (Cameroon).

(b) Report of the Ad hoc committee on contributions

The Chairperson of the Executive Committee, before moving on to the next item on the agenda, invited Mr Tafanana Zhou (Zimbabwe), Rapporteur of the ad hoc committee on membership contributions, to present the report of that committee.

The Executive Committee approved the report with recommendations as follows:

- ✓ contribution arrears shall not be subject to cancellation;
- ✓ efforts must be continued with a view to paying dues;
- ✓ involve regional representatives and focal points responsible for monitoring contributions in their respective parliaments by systematically copying them the related letters;
- ✓ get closer by all available means to the parliaments concerned by the arrears of contributions, especially through visits, in order to know the reasons for the non-respect of their statutory obligations;
- ✓ make the African Parliamentary Union better known, through the APU website and social media, as an organization of national parliaments working to promote interparliamentary exchanges and representative democracy like other interparliamentary organizations in all regions of the world;
- ✓ the change of the current ad hoc committee on financial contributions into the Follow-up Committee of financial contributions as provided by article 17 of the APU Statutes and which would meet on the occasion of each session and present its conclusions to the Executive Committee;

(See attached report)

E – Draft agenda for the 44th Conference

The Secretary-General introduced the following items on the draft agenda of the 44th Conference:

1. Report of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee
2. Activity Report of the Secretary-General
3. Report of the Committee of Women Parliamentarians
4. *Contribution of parliaments to combating terrorism and violent extremism: mitigating the effects of this scourge by promoting sound democratic governance* (Political Committee).
5. *Economic and social consequences of terrorism on populations: building resilience.* (Economic and Sustainable Development Committee)
6. Renewal of the term of office of the Secretary-General of APU
7. Date and venue of the 45th Conference
8. Election of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee (*Article 10, paragraph 6 of the Statutes*)

The Executive Committee approved the draft agenda of the 44th Conference and took note of the proposal of the Parliament of Niger to host the 45th APU Conference in Niamey around October and November 2023.

F- Renewal of the term of office of the Secretary-General of APU

The Executive Committee, unanimously, renewed its confidence in the Secretary-General, Mr Gado Boubacar Idi, for a new term. This proposal of the Executive Committee will therefore be tabled before the Conference for the renewal of the Secretary-General's term of office, in accordance with the statutory provisions.

G – Draft agenda of the 79th Session of the Executive Committee

The Secretary-General introduced the items of the draft agenda as follows:

1. Admission (s) et readmission(s)
2. Consideration of the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Conference

3. Review of the audited management accounts for fiscal year 2022
4. Preparation of the draft agenda of the 45th Conference
5. Draft agenda of the 80th Session of the Executive Committee
6. Date and venue of the 80th Session of the Executive Committee.

The draft agenda was adopted.

H – Date and venue of the 79th Session of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee directed the Secretary-General to conduct consultations to determine which member parliament would be ready to host the 79th Session of the Executive Committee in May 2023.

The Parliament of TOGO thereafter proposed to host the 79th Session of the Executive Committee. The proposal was accepted by the Executive Committee while addressing its thanks to the Togolese Parliament.

REPORT of the ad hoc Committee on financial contributions

The ad hoc Committee on dues set up by the Executive Committee during its 77th session in Kigali, met on November 4, 2022 in Victoria Falls.

The following committee members took part in the meeting:

- Mrs. MOLOMA DON Annie, Member of the National Assembly (Central African Republic)
- Mr. Zhou Tafanana, Member of Parliament (Zimbabwe)
- Ms. LAWSON –de SOUZA Raymonde Kayi, Member of the National Assembly (Togo)
- Mr. RUHAKANA Albert, Member of the Chamber of Deputies (Rwanda)
- Mr. SALMI Mouhamed, Member of the Council of Nation (Algeria)
- Mr. Khalihina El Garch, Member of the House of Councilors (Morocco)
- Mr. El Gabaly Sherif, Member of the House of Representatives (Egypt), Auditor (Fiscal years 2020 and 2021)
- Mr. Salifou Moussa, Member of the National Assembly (Niger), Auditor (Fiscal years 2020 and 2021).

The Secretary General of the APU, Mr. IDI Gado Boubacar, also took part in this meeting.

The members of the committee appointed Mr. RUHAKANA Albert from the Parliament of Rwanda as Chairperson and Mr. Zhou Tafanana from the Parliament of Zimbabwe as Rapporteur.

The Committee, having taken cognizance of the note on the payment of membership fees of member parliaments drawn up by the APU General Secretariat, considered that this question is of paramount importance. Following a wide-ranging discussion, the members of the Committee considered it useful not to initially apply overly restrictive measures but to seek other means likely to improve the situation. To this end, the members of the committee agreed to submit the following recommendations to the Executive Committee:

- ✓ contribution arrears shall not be subject to cancellation;
- ✓ efforts must be continued with a view to paying dues;
- ✓ involve regional representatives and focal points responsible for monitoring contributions in their respective parliaments by systematically copying them the related letters;
- ✓ get closer by all available means to the parliaments concerned by the arrears of contributions, especially through visits, in order to know the reasons for the non-respect of their statutory obligations;
- ✓ make the African Parliamentary Union better known, through the APU website and social media, as an organization of national parliaments working to promote interparliamentary exchanges and representative democracy like other interparliamentary organizations in all regions of the world;

- ✓ the change of the current ad hoc committee on financial contributions into the Follow-up Committee of financial contributions as provided by article 17 of the APU Statutes and which would meet on the occasion of each session and present its conclusions to the Executive Committee.

Note on the payment of dues by the Member Parliaments of the African Parliamentary Union

In accordance with the statutes, the operating budget of the APU is financed by contributions from member parliaments according to a scale approved by the Executive Committee. Thus, the resources of the Union are constituted by the contributions of the Member Parliaments. The operation and implementation of the APU activity program is therefore dependent on the effective payment of contributions.

It was noted that, on a recurring basis, the level of payment of these contributions is around 50% of the annual forecasts. In other words, the annual financing of the Union's activities is only half realized. This situation has a negative impact on the program of activities, which is thus reduced to a minimum, namely the organization of statutory sessions (twice a year) and the operation of a limited general secretariat.

Over the last five years, the contribution collection rate is as follows:

-2017: 46.28%

-2018: 54.93%

-2019: 48.88%

-2020: 49.17%

-2021: 46%

The overall total of contribution arrears reached, as of December 31, 2021, the amount of 3,232,251 Euros.

Of the forty members of the Union, we find that between fifteen and twenty Parliaments pay their annual dues. The others only pay their dues sporadically or not at all. Thus, the situation of the members is as follows:

Parliaments with effective payment of dues: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Zimbabwe;

Parliaments with frequent delays in payment of dues: Cameroon, Comoros, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Gambia, D.R. Congo, Chad;

Parliaments with non-payment of dues: Central African Republic, Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan.

It should be noted that the Union's financing effort currently relies on these same countries, which pay their contributions annually. Also, there is reason to congratulate them for respecting their statutory obligations.