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DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

### PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE AND PANA AFRICAN PARLIAMENT MEET TO ENHANCE INTERACTION



**Nazareth, Ethiopia 30 March 2012-** A meeting bringing together the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) and the Pan African Parliament (PAP) from 29-30 March allowed the two organs of the African Union to discuss key issues aimed at improving processes and interaction between them. The retreat was a follow up to their first meeting held in South Africa in 2010,

which noted the differences in approach between the PAP and the PRC that were mainly due to lack of communication, and resolved that the bureaus of the two organs should consult on a regular basis to enhance dialogue between them.

Both organs work to achieve the AU vision of a prosperous, peaceful and united Africa, and as such, more cooperation between them will benefit the African people. The Pan African Parliament is especially tasked with providing a platform for African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora and their grassroots organisations to be more involved in discussions and decision making on the problems and challenges facing the continent. The PRC is charged with the responsibility of preparing the work of the Executive Council and acting on the Executive Council's instructions. It comprises permanent representatives to the African Union and other plenipotentiaries of member states.

Officiating at the meeting were Mr Ferdinand Montcho, the Chairperson of the PRC; Mr. Amadi Bethel, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of the PAP, Dr Maxwell Mkwezalamba, AUC Commissioner for Economic Affairs on behalf of the Deputy Chairperson Mr Erastus Mwencha; and the AUC Secretary General Ambassador Jean Mfasoni.

The meeting discussed the kind of support that the PRC could lend to the adoption of the PAP Protocol which is currently under review by the structures of the AU. This Protocol is being reviewed along with other Protocols by government experts

and Ministers of Justice and/ or Attorneys General. The protocol was adopted in 2001 under the provisions of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community.

The Nazareth meeting evaluated implementation of the 15 recommendations adopted at their first retreat held in 2010.



The Pan African Parliament presented reports in the following areas that are key to enhancing interaction and cooperation; report on the transformation of the PAP from an advisory authority into a legislative body; PAP activities in promoting the ratification of AU treaties; the PAP organisational structure; report on the implementation of AU decisions related to the PAP, and the PAP budget. The

parliament also brought up for discussion, the issue of its involvement in AU election observer missions, and conditions of service for parliamentarians. On this score, the meeting appreciated the role being played by PAP and its parliamentarians towards the promotion of the ratification of AU treaties within AU member states and encouraged it to continue.

The PRC pledged collaborate with the PAP. The PRC Chairperson Mr Montcho went on to say that the collaboration should be developmental in nature, with decisions in being taken in conformity with decisions of the Executive Council. The decisions should take into account the resources of member states, he said.

The African Union Commission, through its Commissioner of Economic Affairs, Dr Maxwell Mkwezalamba reiterated the need for regular engagement and improved relations. The Commissioner said further to the meetings, the two organs should ensure follow up and implementation of their agreements and that the retreats should be used to monitor implementation. The Commission's Director of Administration, Human Resources Management Dr Abdul Hakim El Waer addressed the issues of recruitment at AU organs in general and explained the status of recruitments at PAP in particular. He said the African Union is making all efforts to fill the core positions as defined by the International Labour Organisation. African Union experts in finance, audit, strategic planning and economic affairs were at hand to share further information. The meeting was briefed by the experts that the AU budget runs on a yearly cycle and it contains both social and economic aspects and that the Commission is aiming at a transparent budget. The experts also emphasised that the whole African Union is in transformation from activity based to results based management and that all organs of the African Union should comply with the calendar and deadlines in order to achieve an efficient and effective organisation. Popularising the PAP through the Information and Communication Directorate of the AUC and the communication unit at the PAP, was also mentioned

by the retreat's co-chairperson Mr Amadi Bethel as a critical factor in ensuring increased interaction between the PAP and the PRC.

The meeting made a number of recommendations on all the issues they discussed, which though not legally binding, will be submitted to a meeting of government experts scheduled in May 2012 for consideration, with a view to improving the draft Protocol of the PAP. Among the recommendations were that the two bureaus of the PAP and PRC should meet twice a year, that budgets should be timely, transparent and responsive, and that they should be owned by the AU; reporting on programme implementation should also be timely. Other recommendations relating to gender representation in the PAP and election of members of parliament, will be fine tuned by the AU legal Counsel for presentation to the May experts' meeting

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