

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Pan-African Parliament

Conference of Speakers of Parliaments concludes with a pledge to strengthen continental solidarity.

The high-level consultation between the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and Speakers of Regional and National Parliaments has concluded with calls for strengthening links through continental solidarity and support for the implementation of the continent's flagship development blueprint, the [Agenda 2063](#). The meeting took place in Midrand, South Africa on the sidelines of the Sitting of the PAP Committees under the African Union (AU) theme of the year [2022 as the year of Nutrition](#). The 11th conference of heads of African legislatures endorsed Agenda 2063 as a mechanism to an integrated and prosperous Africa driven by its own citizens. Hence the meeting called on the AU Member States to enact enabling legislation for effective implementation and realisation of the Aspirations of Agenda 2063.

In line with this vision, the PAP was encouraged to establish formal frameworks and communication channels to regularly transmit information on AU treaties requiring signatures and ratification. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was recognised by the Speakers of Parliaments, as a vehicle for continental integration and economic development. In this regard, the African Parliamentary leadership called for ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community Relating to [Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment](#). The meeting further called upon the removal of Trade Tariffs and other barriers to facilitate and speed up the free movement of goods in order to boost African economies.

Reflecting on the adverse effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the African continent, the meeting advocated for greater collaboration and innovative ideas on building formidable resilience into internal processes to respond to any future global pandemics. There were calls to support respective governments in an effort to improve healthcare systems through the formulation of legislation that strengthens public healthcare delivery and enhances the capacity of healthcare workers. Closely linked to this was the support for the AU and the African Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in establishing a continental vaccine and medicine centre.

Additionally, the Speakers of National and Regional Parliaments were encouraged to ensure that their respective Parliaments work closely with the PAP and the African Governance Architecture (AGA) in promoting the achievement of the universal ratification of the [African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance](#) (ACDEG), by ensuring its ratification and effective implementation. AU Member States were also encouraged to hold

regular, transparent, free and fair elections to entrench the value of democracy and to take adequate measures to prevent unconstitutional changes of governments.

Addressing the visibility challenges faced by the Continental Parliament, recommendations were made for AU Member States to look into hosting some of the PAP Sittings as a means to enhance visibility. And put in place robust programmes, including instituting open days to allow the public to be sensitized about the operations of the PAP. On the [Protocol to the Constitutive Act of the African Union relating to the Pan-African Parliament](#), the meeting congratulated the 14 AU Member States that have ratified the revised Protocol and urged those that have not yet done so to ratify in order to strengthen the PAP's ability to ensure effective participation of African peoples in the economic integration and development of the Continent.

In line with the AU theme for 2022, the meeting, after discussions on food security and nutrition in Africa, resolved that AU Member States should honour the [Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security](#), and increase their annual budgetary allocations to the agriculture sector by at least 10 percent. There was also consensus that the Member States should subsidize agricultural inputs and implements, and develop and supply high-yielding, early maturing and drought-resistant varieties of seeds and seedlings.

In closing the two-day meeting, the PAP President, H.E Hon Chief Fortune Charumbira committed to improved information sharing mechanisms with National and Regional Parliaments. He reiterated that the PAP has been reinvigorated and redirected to achieve the aspirations of the African people. "There is a lot of work that lies ahead of us but we are willing to work as the continental, regional and national Parliaments therefore we need to have continuous engagements and follow-ups. We will come up with frameworks and proper structures on how to share information as a forum as we work towards transforming the lives of the continent's citizens," said Hon Chief Charumbira.

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