



# The African Parliamentarian

*The Newsletter of the Pan African Parliament*

## President Zuma Addresses the PAP



The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) opened its First Ordinary Session of the Second Parliament, with a call from host President, H.E. Jacob Zuma, for African leaders to speed up regional integration efforts. He assured the House of South Africa's commitment "to the aim of the Pan-African Parliament to evolve into an institution with full legislative powers, whose Members are elected by universal adult suffrage." He added that African leaders "must pay greater attention to the economic integration" of the continent. "Our economic development is hampered by the barriers we ourselves have constructed along the lines of the colonial maps," Mr Zuma told the Members of PAP. "As a consequence, we find ourselves divided into more than 50 different markets, with a multiplicity of trade and investment regulations, manufacturing standards, currencies, and jurisdictions", he added.



President Zuma was received at the PAP by Hon. Moussa Idriss Ndele, President of the Pan-African Parliament and the Members of the Bureau. The First Ordinary Session of PAP was held from October 26 to November 5, 2009.

## PAP Holds its First Ordinary Session of the Second Parliament



The Pan-African Parliament held its First Ordinary Session of the Second Parliament from October 26 to November 05, 2009. The Session was chaired by the new President of PAP, Hon. Dr. Moussa Idriss Ndélé, MP, who was elected at the end of the previous Session in May 2009, thus marking a new era in the Parliament's history.

Addressing the Parliament, Hon. Ndélé reiterated the commitment of the new Bureau to transforming the PAP into a parliament with some legislative powers by 2011. He said that the continental

legislature would work towards ensuring a free and democratic Africa. "Let's build a united PAP so that we can become a parliament with full legislative powers to exercise oversight and ensure that all governments pursue African Union programmes," Hon. Ndélé said.

The First Ordinary Session debated a number of issues including the revision of the Protocol establishing the PAP and the transformation of the PAP into a legislative organ, climate change, South Africa's hosting of the 2010 soccer World Cup and the PAP Budget for 2010.

# AUC Chairperson at PAP

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), H.E. Dr. Jean Ping paid a visit to the PAP during its First Ordinary Session of the Second Parliament, which was held from October 26 to November 05, 2009. H.E. Dr. Ping was invited to brief the PAP Plenary on the status of the review process of the PAP Protocol.

In what was his first address to the PAP Plenary, H.E. Dr. Ping stressed the importance of all African countries ratifying the Protocol establishing the PAP, saying it would facilitate the promotion of good governance on the continent that is renowned for armed conflicts. *"The need for ratification of the Protocol cannot be over-emphasised. Nothing can come into place without ratification."*

H.E. Dr. Ping held consultations with the President of the PAP, Ho. Dr. Moussa Idriss Ndélé in which it was agreed to have closer cooperation between the two Organs of the AU.



# African Parliamentary Speakers Conference Held at PAP

Speakers of national parliaments from across Africa met at the PAP precincts in Midrand, South Africa, for a two-day conference on October 08 and 09, 2009 under the theme: *'Linking the Pan-African Parliament with National Parliaments'*.

Their meeting, which was also attended by a number of the PAP Parliamentarians, discussed various issues including the PAP's quest to transform itself from a consultative body to one with legislative powers, and the need for ratification of all international instruments adopted by the AU, among others.

The Speakers expressed their support for transforming the PAP into a legislative body and called on African Heads of State and Government to speed up this process.

It was agreed that PAP should organize similar conferences on an annual basis. The next one is scheduled to take place in September 2010.



# PAP Committees and Caucuses Elect New Leaders

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) Permanent Committees and Regional Caucuses held elections to choose new leaders. Each Committee and Caucus elected a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and a Rapporteur.

This was done in conformity with the decision of the Parliament in May 2009 to elect new leadership at all levels.

# Stand Against FGM at PAP Women's Conference

By: James Odera\*

The spot light was cast on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) during the PAP Women's Platform for Action, held in Midrand during October 05 – 06, 2009, with the Honorable Members expressing dismay at the continued violation of women's human rights in the guise of culture and traditions, hailing the practice "as a stark reminder of how harmful some of our African traditional practices can be to women, both physically and emotionally with far reaching effects on their dignity", Hon. Dr. Farida Ilimi, Chairperson of the PAP Women's Caucus said.

Despite wide spread condemnation from various quarters, FGM remains a major obstacle to the fight for human rights, with many cultures from both within the African continent and abroad, continuing to practice the gender based discriminatory rite which completely disregards women's freedom from violence, discrimination and even life.

Nearly three million women and girls are believed to undergo this atrocious act annually in spite of protocols that have been ratified to safeguard against it.

In an effort to demonstrate PAP's unflinching support for the emancipation of women from domestic abuse, PAP President Hon. Dr. Moussa Idriss Ndélé said "human beings should not be violated, each human being has a right to be respected, no one can be deprived of this right as it is an infringement to his or her person."

The Chairperson of the African National Congress (ANC), Hon. Baleka Mbete, who also addressed the conference, decried the marginalization of women in Africa, and called for unity of purpose and action between men and women



in the pursuit of the redefinition of the African continent. Her sentiments were echoed by the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda Rt. Hon. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga, who moved on to encourage her fellow doyens to follow her lead by holding their governments and parliaments in account for violations of human rights among their constituents. She called on the lawmakers to use their privileged positions of power to lobby their governments to set up funds for income generating projects as alternative sources of income for those who had been making a living from the practice of FGM.

host of women luminaries, including the Chairperson of the ANC and former Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Hon. Baleka Mbete; the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda Rt. Hon. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga; as well as the President of Socialist International, Mrs. Pia Locatelli. The women parliamentarians, who lauded the importance of the PAP Women's Platform for Action as a fundamental tool in ensuring the full participation of women in the integration process of Africa, set forth a ten point action plan, which they resolved to present to African Heads of State and Government for action.

The PAP Women's Platform for Action was attended by a

\*Pan-African Parliament

## PAP Observes Namibian Elections

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) participated in the November 2009 Presidential and National Assembly Elections in Namibia with an Observer Mission of eighteen Members of Parliament and eleven support staff. The Mission was led by Hon. Ambrose Dery, MP, from Ghana.

At the end of the Mission, an Interim Statement was issued in which the Mission declared the elections as generally free and fair. However, some observations and recommendations were made by the Mission for consideration in future elections.

A number of independent commentators and African Ambassadors hailed the Mission's Statement as the most objective among all the other observers.



# PAP and Peer Review: Enhancing Involvement, Adding Value

By: Steven Gruzd\*

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is arguably the strongest tool for Members of Parliament to promote and monitor governance in Africa, but interaction with the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) so far has been peripheral. Although these institutions are housed within a few kilometres in Midrand, they appear miles apart.

The following practical recommendations demonstrate how, through more regular, sustained and meaningful engagement with the APRM – at minimal extra cost – the PAP could add value by exercising oversight and championing accountability within and across states.

## 1. Regularly table, discuss and comment on reports

The PAP's mandate is clear. The APRM Base Document (2002), says in paragraph 24: "Six months after [each Country Review Report (CRR)] has been considered by the Heads of State and Government of the participating member countries, it should be formally and publicly tabled in key regional and sub-regional structures such as the Pan-African Parliament ...". To date, just five (Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Algeria and South Africa) of twelve CRRs have been tabled without much preparation, analysis or debate.

- The PAP should signal its seriousness by requesting a meeting with the incoming APRM Panel of Eminent Persons in April 2010, and formally request that the seven other available CRRs are tabled.
- PAP MPs need to receive full reports and summaries in advance of tabling from the APRM Secretariat, to read, study and comment on them. The PAP should

also request the regular tabling of the annual APRM implementation reports. All deliberations should be published on the PAP website, and publicised through press conferences, articles and written briefings.

- The PAP Justice and Human Rights Committee could take the lead, until a PAP Committee on the APRM is constituted.

## 2. Build MPs' capacity

Building on the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) November 2008 workshop *Enhancing the Role and Effective Participation of Parliamentarians in the APRM Process*, there is scope to strengthen the ability of MPs, National Parliaments and the PAP to engage with the APRM.

- The PAP could invite a key APRM speaker to regularly address it, publishing reports of the discussions.
- The PAP could hold hearings on the APRM, inviting public submissions.
- The PAP could drive the development of a manual or guidebook targeted at MPs on their roles and responsibilities in the APRM.
- The PAP could undertake to improve its capacity in this area through partnership with an institution like SAIIA to provide technical assistance.

## 3. Undertake APRM missions

PAP MPs constitute a valuable core of experts who could participate in the missions that the APRM regularly undertakes to participating countries. All missions should have non-MPs seconded to provide technical backup.

- The PAP should submit CVs of its MPs to UNECA and the APRM Secretariat, for consideration for APRM Country Support Missions and Country Review Missions, at no cost to the PAP.
- The PAP could raise funds to undertake its own missions, in cooperation with the APRM Secretariat, to good APRM performers (to learn best practices) or slow APRM states (to help remove logjams).

## 4. Mainstream the Mechanism

The PAP must understand the APRM, embrace it and insert itself into the process. The APRM needs to be mainstreamed into the Plenary, and become a regular agenda item. The PAP is uniquely positioned to produce an integrated and co-ordinated evaluation of cross-country progress and challenges. It should also lead debate on the role of parliaments and political parties to democratically transform our continent.

By engaging more actively on the APRM, the PAP could become a key force in holding the executive branch more accountable to citizens across the continent. It cannot afford to miss this chance.

*\*Steven Gruzd is the head of the Governance and APRM Programme at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) in Johannesburg, an independent public policy think tank. This article is based on recommendations made in a presentation to the PAP Committee on Justice and Human Rights on 4 March 2010.*

## PAP Establishes new Committee on Administrative and Financial Evaluation

During its First Ordinary Session of the Second Parliament, the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) voted to establish a new *ad hoc* Committee on Administrative and Financial Evaluation.

The new ten-Member Committee, with representation from the five regions of the continent, is expected to facilitate the prudent management of resources of the PAP.

Hon. Fabakary Tombong Jatta, MP from the Gambia was elected to chair the Committee.



## Obituary

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) is very sad to announce the untimely death of one of its Members; the late Hon. Moise Sodahlon from Togo, who passed away as a result of a motor accident while campaigning in the recent general elections in his country. May God rest his soul in eternal peace.

## Forthcoming Events\*

NO	EVENT/ACTIVITY	DATE	VENUE
01	6 <sup>th</sup> Bureau Meeting	15 - 17 July 2010	Kampala, Uganda
02	AU Summit	19 - 27 July 2010	Kampala, Uganda
03	Committee Sitings	02 - 07 August 2010	PAP precincts
04	Women's Conference	04 - 05 August 2010	PAP precincts
05	7 <sup>th</sup> Bureau Meeting	23 - 24 September 2010	PAP precincts
06	African Speakers' Conference	27 - 28 September 2010	PAP precincts
07	8 <sup>th</sup> Bureau Meeting	13 - 14 October 2010	PAP precincts
08	Joint Meeting	15 October 2010	PAP precincts
09	Third Ordinary Session of the Second Parliament	18 - 29 October 2010	PAP precincts
10	Regional Economic Community and Parliamentary Fora Seminar (Northern Africa Region)	TBA	TBA
11	PAP/PRC Retreat	TBA	TBA

\* Please note that this is a draft calendar of activities, correct at the time of printing.

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