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About The Pan African Parliament

The Pan African Parliament was established as an organ the African Union (AU) in order to ensure the full participation of African peoples in the development and economic integration of the continent. The first Parliament was inaugurated on 18 March 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and its headquarters is in Midrand, South Africa. The ultimate aim of the Pan African Parliament shall be to evolve into an institution with full legislative powers, whose members are elected by universal adult suffrage. The new protocol granting these powers has been adopted by the AU and is currently under ratification by member states. However until such a time that the new protocol comes into force, the Pan African Parliament shall have consultative and advisory powers within the AU.

The Abuja Treaty of 1991 provides that the establishment of a Pan-African Parliament would ensure that the people of Africa are fully involved in the economic development and integration of the continent. This was further reinforced by Article 17 of the AU Constitutive Act. It is against this background that the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Pan-African Parliament was adopted on 2 March 2001 in Sirté, Libya and entered into force on INSERT DATE. Accordingly, the Pan African Parliament was inaugurated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in March 2004 as one of the organs of the African Union. The first Ordinary Session of the PAP took place in South Africa, the PAP's permanent seat, in March 2005. The PAP holds two Ordinary Sessions per year. The Sessions are normally preceded by meetings of Committees dealing with a wide range of issues pertaining to the agenda of the PAP.

The establishment of the Pan-African Parliament was necessitated by the vision to provide a pan-continental platform for African parliamentarians to be more involved in discussions and decision-making regarding the problems and challenges facing the continent. In order to give practical expression to the imperative of ensuring the representation of the diverse peoples of the continent, Article 4 enjoins national parliaments forwarding members to the PAP to

ensure that two of the five members of each of their delegations are members of opposition parties.

Members of the PAP have a term of five years in office. In its first term – from 2005 to 2009 – the PAP operates in an advisory capacity. This means that it discusses political and developmental matters pertaining to the continent and makes recommendations for implementation by various stakeholders, including AU organs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and AU Member States. It is envisaged that, in its second term and beyond, the PAP will be transformed into a legislative body with powers to make continental laws. This, therefore, calls for the review of the PAP Protocol in order to facilitate the transformation.

The objectives of the Pan African Parliament is to:

- Facilitate the effective implementation of the policies and objectives of the OAU/AEC and ultimately the African Union.
- Promote the principle of human rights and democracy in Africa.
- Encourage good governance, transparency and accountability in Member States.
- Familiarise the peoples of Africa with the objectives and policies aimed at integrating the African Continent within the framework of the establishment of the African Union.
- Promote peace, security and stability.
- Contribute to a more prosperous future for the peoples of Africa by promoting collective self-reliance and economic recovery.
- Facilitate cooperation and development in Africa.
- Strengthen continental solidarity and build a sense of common destiny among the peoples of Africa.
- Facilitate cooperation among Regional Economic Communities and their Parliamentary fora.

Five Parliamentarians represent each AU Member States at the Pan African Parliament, at least one of whom must be a woman. The representation of each Members State must reflect the diversity of political opinions in each National Parliament or other deliberative organ.

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