

ASSOCIATION OF SENATES, SHOORA AND
EQUIVALENT COUNCILS
IN AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD



رابطة مجالس الشيوخ والشورى والمجالس
المماثلة في أفريقيا والعالم العربي

ASSOCIATION DES SENATS, SHOORA ET CONSEILS EQUIVALENTS
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Final communiqué of 6th council meeting and 5th conference of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA) Libreville, Gabon from 25-26 February 2011.

In response to the kind invitation of the Senate of Gabon, the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA) held its sixth Council meeting and fifth conference in Libreville, Gabon from 25-26 February, 2011. Delegates from the following member councils attended the conference:

- House of Counsellors of Morocco

- Shoora Council of Saudi Arabia

- Shoora Council of Qatar

- The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

- Shoora Council of the Republic of Yemen.

- The Senate of Burundi

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- The Senate of the Republic of Gabon.
- The Council of the Nation of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.
- The Senate of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.
- Council of States of Sudan.
- The House of Federation of Ethiopia.

H.E Madam Edna Madzongwe, Speaker of the Senate of Zimbabwe, and H. E. Nouredin Bouchokuj, Secretary General of the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) attended the conference as observers.

The opening session of the Council meeting was started with a speech delivered by H.E. Mohammed Cheick Baidallah, Speaker of the House of Counselors of Morocco, and Chairman of the Association. In his speech, Baidallah expressed immense gratitude to H. E Ali Omar Bongo Odimba, President of Gabon, for his kind sponsorship of the conference. He also thanked H. E Rose Francine Rogombe, President of the Senate of Gabon, for the generous hospitality accorded delegates, and accurate organization of the conference.

He pointed out that the conference is being held under extremely delicate circumstances that are still being experienced by our region in a way that makes it directly encounter

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unprecedented challenges, mainly the security challenges that started imposing themselves on several parts of our region, which necessitates looking for instant solutions to their root causes.

He maintained that the region is still facing other challenges, including the non-achievement of human development goals, indicating that we should seriously consider the issue of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. He highlighted that Arab and African countries should exert efforts to overcome the environmental and globalization challenges.

He also emphasized that Arab and African countries should speed up the process of drawing up effective policies mainly focusing on establishing security, stability and the rule of law, preserving the national unity and enhancing democracy, political pluralism and human rights in a manner that ensures a smooth and peaceful transfer of power through carrying out free and fair elections. He stressed the importance of strengthening Afro-Arab cooperation based on the socio-economic and geopolitical interests.

Baidallah touched upon the achievements ASSECAA has made so far despite its limited financial and human resources, indicating that such achievements were the result of an awareness of the importance of partnership between Africa and Arab World. He noted that the chairmanship of the Association has made a lot of achievements since the fourth conference was held in the Kingdom of Morocco. These included the participation last year by the Chairmanship of the Association in several regional and international activities, let alone presenting proposals on improving the legislative and administrative regulations of the Association. He finally congratulated H.E Rose Francine Rogombe for taking over the chairmanship of the Association.

H.E Rose Francine Rogombé gave a speech in which she warmly welcomed the delegates, wishing them a very successful and fruitful conference. She added that "Our responsibilities as

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parliamentarians include contribution to the enhancement of the democratic march in our countries, as democracy is the sole tool that speeds up the development which the mankind seeks to achieve. Indeed, the objectives of the Association include the enhancement by member councils of such concepts. Accordingly, ASSECAA should be an effective instrument for consolidating such values”.

She emphasized the importance of supporting south-south cooperation in a way that brings forth fruitful results on the ground, pointing out that the Association should contribute effectively to the strengthening of economic cooperation among ASSECAA’s members and non-members.

She urged that the conference come up with a clear and candid declaration on the importance of achieving the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Rogombé finally wished ASSECAA and its member a very successful and fruitful conference.

The Secretary General of the Association, H.E. Mr. Livinus I. Osuji, presented the annual report of the General Secretariat to the Council meeting. The report explained in detail the achievements that have so far been made by the General Secretariat since the holding of the fourth conference in Morocco. These included the following:

- Several audit reports on the annual accounts of the Association and review of the administrative and financial regulations.

- The Meeting of Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee was not held due to lack of venue.

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- The upcoming retreat shall be held in Yemen.
- Member countries should be urged to implement the Study Visit Exchange Programme.
- Women Parliamentarians have held successful meetings in Nigeria and Sudan. The conference is therefore invited to support this initiative.

The report stressed the importance of considering the annual draft budget of the Association for 2011. It touched upon the achievements that have been made through the holding of the meeting of chambers of commerce and industry held in Bahrain. It further emphasized the importance of holding a workshop for the administrative heads of member councils, and of implementing the student exchange programme. It pointed out that the Association should continuously engage in various international activities, including the IPU meetings. It highlighted that the General Secretariat presented several proposals for activating the above-mentioned activities in a manner that achieves the objectives for which ASSECAA was established. The proposals shall be submitted to the conference committees that would consider them and present recommendations thereon to the conference.

Afterwards, the conference resolved into committees to consider the proposals and topics presented by the General Secretariat, including the draft budget for 2011. They included the following:

- The budget committee

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- The programme committee

- The administrative Committee.

- The Communiqué drafting committee

At 5: 30 pm, on Friday, 25th February, 2011, the delegates, who, based on the Statute of the Association, formed the Council of the Association, held a meeting to select a new secretary General for the Association, as the term of office of the outgoing secretary General, Mr. Livinus I. Osuji, has come to an end. After deliberations, Mr. AbdulWasie Yusuf Ali from the Federal Republic of Ethiopia was elected Secretary General. The council agreed that the term of office of both Assistant Secretaries General, namely Mr. Mohammed Al-Tayeb of Yemen, and Mr. Seydna Ali Ould Hanana of Mauritania, be renewed for one year.

On day two, February 26, 2011, the conference held its general meeting at 10: 00 am which started the review of committee works. After extensive deliberations, the committees reached a number of recommendations and conclusions as follows:

The budget committee recommended the approval of the Association's budget for 2011, taking into account the remarks related to the implementation of the budget as well as some necessary increments. It further recommended that the audit report for 2009 shouldn't be considered as final, as it noticed some violations in terms of implementing the budget. It therefore resolved that the audit report should be verified and cross-checked.

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Accordingly, the conference approved the committee's recommendations. It also approved the formation of a committee to be made up of several member countries, namely Yemen, Sudan, Gabon, and Algeria, Qatar, Nigeria and any other member country that may seek to join the panel. The purpose is to audit and verify the General Secretariat's accounts, including the expenditures made under the travel sub-head, the annual increments in staff salaries, and the increment in the costs of the requisites and furniture of the new Secretary General's residence.

The programme committee presented a number of recommendations on the Association's activities for 2011as follows:

- That ASSECAA's annual retreat should be held in Yemen during the second half of 2011.
- That member councils should continue implementing the study visit exchange programme.
- That the Association should continue organizing the meetings of chambers of commerce and industry in Africa and the Arab world.
- That the student exchange programme should be activated.
- That the meeting of women parliamentarians should be held as planned.

The committee further recommended that the hosting of the six conference of the Association should be made in accordance with the English alphabetic order of member

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countries, unless a member state offers to host it. The conference accordingly approved the above recommendations.

The administrative committee recommended that the Association's administrative and financial regulations submitted by the committee set up during Khartoum conference and approved during the fourth conference held in Morocco, should be used temporarily. It also resolved that the Statute and Rules of Procedure of the Association are the authentic reference for all the regulations emanating therefrom. It recommended the formation of a committee to finalize the drafting of the administrative and financial regulations. The committee shall comprise several member countries, namely, Yemen, Gabon, Sudan, Nigeria, and Algeria.

After that, speeches were delivered by the delegates from the following member countries:

- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

- Republic of Sudan,

- Yemen

- Gabon

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- Burundi
- Morocco
- Qatar.
- The Federal Republic of Ethiopia.

The speakers expressed desire for improving the performance of the Association in order for it to be able to assume its role and achieve the hopes pinned on it, given the fact that it serves as a space for Arab and African countries that have social and developmental aspirations.

They stressed that ASSECAA should have its own place among the outstanding international organizations known for their performance, efficacy and representation of member states.

They stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation among Africa and Arab world, and strengthening the dynamism of south-south cooperation within ASSECAA's member states. The delegates also emphasized the importance of enhancing cooperation in the fields of justice, security, stability, and adopting democracy and social justice being the only option to encounter any evil plans for destabilizing the countries of the two regions.

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They maintained the Arab and African countries have legitimate ambitions in their endeavor to improve the living standards of their citizens in accordance with the conditions of each country, not least the preservation of national sovereignty.

They finally confirmed that Arab and African countries are capable of running their own internal affairs without any foreign interventions.

H.E Mrs. Edna Madzongwe, Speaker of the Senate of Zimbabwe, addressed the conference, underlining that her country supports the ideas and principles through which the Association seeks to achieve its objectives.

At the end of the conference sessions, the delegates approved the following recommendations:

-That the speeches of H. E Mohammed Cheikh Baidallah, Speaker of House of Counselors of Morocco and Chairman of the Association, and H.E Rose Francine Rogombé, Speaker of the Senate of Gabon, be considered among the documents of the conference.

-That H.E Rose Rogombé be congratulated for taking over the chairmanship of the Association.

-That the reports and recommendations submitted to the conference by the three committees be adopted.

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That the selection of Mr. Abdul Wase'a Yusuf Ali from the Federal Republic of Ethiopia as the new secretary General be welcomed, and that the two Assistant Secretaries General, namely Mr. Mohammed Al-Tayeb and Mr. Sydna Ali Ould Hanana be congratulated for having their tenures renewed for one year.

-That the Senate of Gabon be thanked for hosting this conference.

The conference adjourned sine die at 5: 30 pm on Saturday,

February 26, 2011.