



2007 Retreat of the Association of Senates, Shoora and

Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab world

Held at the Dead Sea region

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

21st – 22nd October 2007

Communiqué

The 2007 Retreat of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab world was held in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan from Sunday 21st – Monday 22nd October 2007.

Delegates from the following member countries attended the retreat:

- a. Algeria
- b. Bahrain
- c. Burundi
- d. Egypt
- e. Gabon
- f. Jordan
- g. Mauritania
- h. Morocco
- i. Nigeria
- j. Qatar
- k. Saudi Arabia



- l. Sudan
- m. Swaziland
- n. Yemen

a. The Arab Parliamentary Union attended as an observer and a friend of the Association.

Addresses

(a) The Welcome Address was presented by His Excellency Mr. Zaid Al-Raefaay, the President of the Al-Ayan Council of Jordan.

(b) The Opening Speech was delivered by the Secretary-General of the Association, Mr. Livinus I. Osuji

(c) The keynote address was delivered by the Chairman of the Association and Speaker of the Shoora Council of Yemen, His Excellency Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani.

The Heads of Delegations delivered resounding speeches reaffirming their commitment to use their good offices to pursue with determination the achievements of the aims and objectives of ASSECAA especially:

(a) the building of a strong bond of cooperation between Africa and the Arab world,

(b) the propagation of the essence of 2nd chambers in modern parliamentary institutions,

(c) the deepening of democratic awareness in the regions of Africa and the Arab world; and

(d) contributing to international efforts to reduce the conflicts, wars and tension in the two regions.



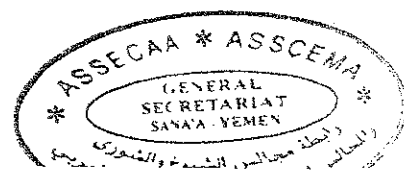
(e) the waging of relentless war against corruption in the African and Arab countries.

Papers Presented

A total of five (5) papers were presented on the following sub-themes of the retreat:

- i) The Challenges of Famine, Poverty and Under-development in the third world presented by Professor (Dr) Ruwaida Al-Maayetah of the Al-Ayan Council of Jordan.
- ii) Contributions of Education and Democracy to Political, Social and Economic Stability and Improvement presented by Dr. Aadnan Badran of the Al-Ayan Council of Jordan
- iii) The National Policy Process, Legislation and Orientation for Maintaining Peace and Progress presented by Dr. Fayez Al-Tarawena of the Al-Ayan Council of Jordan
- iv) Role of Legislatures in Deepening Democratic Awareness, Reinforcing National Institutions, Enhancing Social and Economic Development presented by Mr. Osama Malkawi of the Al-Ayan Council of Jordan.
- v) Processes, Challenges and Hopes of Cooperation among Multi-racial Developing Nations presented by Mr. Mohammed Al-Halayekah of the Al-Ayan Council of Jordan.

The delegates critically analysed the presentations and deliberated on their conclusions. The following observations and the resultant resolutions



were made consequent upon the contributions of delegates on the presentations and the proposals from the addresses read at the retreat:

Observations

It was observed that:

1. The millennium development goals set up by the United Nations in 2000 were intended to be the target of socio-economic, political and cultural development all over the world from 2000 to 2015.
2. Current reports on the achievements of these goals issued by international bodies indicate that Africa and the Arab world have not generally made substantial progress on the achievement of the set goals despite concentrated pockets of high standard of living in few countries as a result of oil revenue.
3. There is therefore an urgent need for countries of Africa and the Arab world to cooperate in pursuit of the attainment of the millennium development goals, in response to the demands of globalization and the wave of regionalization pervading the world economic order, as nations compete to achieve and surpass the set millennium development goals.
4. The apex legislative bodies (Senates/Councils) in Africa and the Arab world have a crucial role to play to assist their national governments to achieve the set millennium goals.
5. There is a strong connection between the level of education in any society and the extent of appreciation of democratic values.
6. The democratic reform has become a necessity for political, economic



and social development in Africa and the Arab countries, to enable them to achieve peace based on justice, legitimacy of governance and the rule of law.

7. The African and Arab peoples enjoy rich traditions and culture in the fields of leadership, trade and arts. They are therefore well disposed for symbiotic partnership with other regions to enhance their practice of freedom, democracy and free trade in consonance with the trends of globalization.

8. Considerable responsibility is thrown on the shoulders of parliamentarians in the Arab and African countries in spreading the values of tolerance, justice, equality of citizens, freedom within the law, encouragement of dialogue as the principal option for resolving differences.

9. Terrorism represents a direct threat to the peace of mankind, stability and progress of nations and requires from world leaders, at the senate and national council level, concerted efforts, cooperation and efficient continuous co-ordination to contain the dangerous malaise called terrorism and treat its causes.

10. The forum of ASSECAA has created a formidable pillar of regional legislative groups that can mobilize the potentials of the Arab and African countries, for cooperation and co-ordination in various spheres of concern to the countries and erect strong relations of the parliamentary community, in the region, to evolve a solid base of wholesome parliamentary involvement in the regional questions and events, especially those pertaining to maintenance of international



peace, security, democracy, human rights and social activities that relate to achieving sustainable development process to attain the ends of the millennium development goals.

11. The achievement of security and peace, protection of lives and property, (private or public) alleviation of poverty and famine are sublime aims of international law. International organizations whether at the wider inter-continental level or regional levels, perforce, subscribe to the observation of these principles and pursuit of their achievements.
12. The United Nations commitment to help developing countries to achieve the third millennium goals will not be beneficial to the developing countries if they do not make essential changes in their perspectives of strategy, democratic and development processes.
13. Foreign assistance will not be sufficient for achieving development goals if the developing nations do not dedicate honest efforts, internally generated resources combined with the foreign assistance to pursue development goals.
14. Infrastructural reform of state institutions on the right basis is a fundamental condition for achieving development while legislation is the most essential tool for infrastructural reform of state institutions. It is therefore possible to say that the state which is able to achieve sustainable development must be a state of institutions and law.



Resolutions

The Retreat resolved that to create the conducive environment for the attainment of the millennium development goals, the regions of Africa and the Arab world should:

1. Re-orientate national priorities on development by engaging more urgently on policies and programmes that have immediate and direct bearing on poverty alleviation and combating of famine.
2. Development policies should focus significantly on human development which includes enhancing capacities of citizens through qualitative education and different forms of training, acquisition of modern expertise and undertaking deep courses in science and technology if the region is to stand on its own ground in the ensuing consuming wave of globalization.
3. Youth orientation and development should form an integral part of national development strategy which shall include investment in provision of working opportunities.
4. There should be visible and enforceable provisions in the national statutes for achieving justice and equality among the citizens irrespective of class distinctions while the judiciary should be strengthened.
5. Good governance shall be a cardinal principle of governments. The war against corruption should receive emphatic prominence in national programmes and practical steps should be taken to ensure victory on the programme. Governments should make accountability, a familiar system in their relationship with the people.



6. There is an urgent need for legislations, pertaining to human rights and citizens' freedom in all manifestations, according to laws; recognition of civil society organizations and adherence to the rule of law as a manner of socio-political order in the Arab and African countries.
7. There should be a conscious effort by governments to encourage the partnership principle in development programmes between the public and the private sectors as well as the inclusion of input from the citizens on development projects.
8. The Arab and African countries should intensify cooperation between the educational, scientific, research organizations and exchange of expertise, studies and science.
9. An urgent imperative has arisen for Africa and the Arab world, to co-ordinate their efforts to find lasting solution to the malignant continuous wars, political tension, conflict, terrorism and extremism in the two regions which have been diverting national resources, attention and energies from the pursuit of development goals and to ratify international agreements that contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security.
10. Cooperation and collaborative efforts between Africa and the Arab world should be harnessed to combat such disasters as desertification, flooding, drought, earthquake, volcanoes and epidemics.
11. Governments should prioritize projects on the improvement of agricultural production as a national emergency to enhance the productivity of small rural farmers, increase their capacity for generating



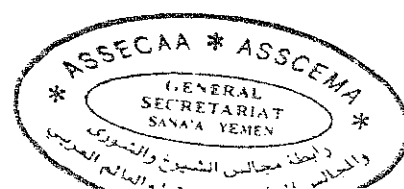
incomes, enhance their resistance to crop failures and thus buoy the country against famine or food insecurity.

12. Parliaments and national councils in Africa and the Arab world should strengthen their oversight functions of government business to maintain transparency, expose corruption, and ensure that laws and policies are executed in accordance with the provisions of the laws. They should improve their knowledge of national and international events so as to be properly guided in their deliberations and they should strengthen their research bureaucracy to provide them with dependable statistical indices and objective information in their appraisal of proposed measures and public opinion.

13. The legislatures and national councils in their allocation of national resources through budgeting should pay attention to projects that affect the generality of the people and through their oversight functions, monitor the implementation of the projects until their completion.

14. Education for all and basic freedoms, equality among men and women, acquisition of information technology, raising of educated labour force will strengthen a country to build a knowledgeable society to confront challenges of globalization and be involved in its exchanges along with other nations.

15. The Association should evolve a students exchange programme among the member countries to facilitate cultural exchanges and familiarization among the youths and future generation of Africans and Arabs as well as provide avenue for member countries to assist one another in socio-economic development.



16. ASSECAA member countries should endeavour to introduce, for the purpose of effective cooperation between Africa and the Arab countries a form of free movement of citizens(laissez-passez) between the two regions with a reduction of visa requirements for indigenes going from an Arab country to an African country and vice versa.

17. There is a yawning need for investment attraction through legislations that create conducive climate and availability of functional infrastructure in Africa and the Arab countries.

18. Economic growth in the Arab and African countries should be characterized by transparency, corruption-free dealings, expansion of inter-state and inter-regional trade that may lead to common market; the development of competitive environment to provide the best commodities with the lowest prices for the citizens and encourage the establishment of a Development bank to support the founding of joint ventures, promoted by Africans and Arabs, within the two regions.

19. Sustainable development in the two regions shall require expansion of the bases of mass participation in political affairs such as the establishment of 2nd legislative chambers, respecting healthy work ethics, guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary, encouraging the existence of responsible civil society, independent media and strict respect of the functional limits of the executive, the legislative and judiciary institutions.

20. The Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab world calls upon creditor countries to urgently consider complete cancellation of all debts ascribed to African and Arab countries

to enable the region to commence a process of emerging from its economic emergency.

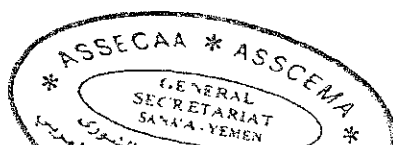
The Association:

i) noted with dismay the continuing violence in Iraq and called on the parties to the violence in Iraq to consider the hardship on the displaced women, children, the elderly and the bereaved families and seek an end to their sufferings.

ii) noted with regret the continuing conflict in the horn of Africa which is leading to prolonged dissipation of resources that should have been applied to improvement of infrastructure and services to the people and called on the parties to the conflict to choose the opportunities for dialogue being offered by the United Nations, African Union, the Arab League, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar and the Republic of Yemen to resolve the conflicts without creating further hardship for the citizens of that region.

iii) intensely regretted the current developments in Darfur where the African Union peace troops were surprisingly attacked and overwhelmed at a time when serious discussions under the auspices of the United Nations were taking place to find a lasting solution to the Darfur conflict and called upon the government, the armed groups and the people of Sudan to embrace the opportunity for peace being offered by various regional and United Nations initiatives to end the fratricidal wars.

iv) called upon the peoples of the Middle East to show purposeful commitment to the United Nations Resolutions, the peace negotiations being sponsored by the Arab nations and other international bodies to



resolve their age-long conflicts, to give the people of Palestine a homeland where they can live in peace with their neighbours.

v) called upon the African and Arab chambers of commerce and industry to massively attend the first meeting of the chambers of commerce and industry scheduled to take place in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in 2008, under the auspices of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab world and use that golden opportunity to initiate strong economic links and cooperation between African and Arab countries.

vi) called upon member Senates and Councils to attend in good numbers, the meeting of the Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee of the Association scheduled to take place in the Federal Republic of Nigeria from 11th to 13th December 2007 and to utilize the opportunity of that committee, to forge practical strategies that will enable ASSECAA to make productive contributions to the resolution of the debilitating conflict, wars and tension among and inside African and Arab countries.

vii) called on member Councils/Senates to take practical steps to implement the resolutions of the 2007 retreat.

The delegates resolved to place on record their sincere gratitude to the following:

- i) The government and people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for hosting the 2007 retreat. Accordingly, a message of gratitude was approved to be sent to the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.



- ii) The President, His Excellency Mr. Zaid Al-Raefaay and the members of the Al-Ayan Council of Jordan for the organization of the retreat in Jordan.
- iii) His Excellency Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani who has held the Chairmanship of the Association for four years with a palpable determination to nurture the young organization
- iv) The Secretariat of Al-Ayan Council of Jordan headed by. Dr. Khalaf Al-Hmeisat for the efficient organization of the retreat.
- v) The distinguished scholars and members of the Al-Ayan Council of Jordan, who presented the five papers at the 2007 retreat of the Association namely:
 - a) Dr. Ruwaida Al-Mayeetah
 - b) Dr. Adnan Badran
 - c) Dr. Fayez Al-Tarawena
 - d) Mr. Osama Malkawi
 - e) Dr Mohammed Al-Halayekah
- vi) The member councils and their delegates to the 2007 retreat of the Association for their impressive participation at the retreat.
- vii) The Secretary-General of the Association, H.E Mr. Livinus I. Osuji and the officials of the General Secretariat of ASSECAA for their dedication and unwavering commitment to ensure the realization of the objectives of ASSECAA.

***The General Secretariat of the Association of
Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in
Africa and the Arab world
22nd October 2007.***

