



In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Peace and Conflict resolution Meeting

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

23-24 February, 2013

Final communiqué

At the kind invitation of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab world as well as the House of Federation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Meeting of peace and conflict resolution in Africa and the Arab world was held in Addis Ababa, the Capital of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia from 23-24 February 2013.

The meeting comes in the framework of the activities organized by the General Secretariat of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab world (ASSECAA) in coordination with member councils/senates.

The opening session started at 9:30 am on Saturday, February 23, 2013 at Sheraton hotel, Addis Ababa, and delegates from 17 countries and organizations were in attendance as follows:

- 1-The Shoora Council of Qatar
- 2-The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- 3-The Shoora Council of the Arab Republic of Egypt
- 4-The Senate of the Republic of Burundi
- 5-The Shoora Council of the Republic of Yemen
- 6-The Council of the Nation of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- 7-The Senate of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- 8-The House of counselors of Morocco
- 9-The Council of States of Sudan
- 10-The House of Federation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- 11-The Senate of Congo Brazzaville

- 12-The Senate of the Republic of Zimbabwe
- 13-The Shoura Council of the Kingdom of Bahrain
- 14-The Senate of the Republic of Gabon
- 15-The Gulf Cooperation Council
- 16-The African Parliamentary Union
- 17-The Arab Maghreb Union

H.E Kassa Teklebrhan, the Speaker of the House of Federation of Ethiopia, delivered a keynote address in which he welcomed delegates and thanked them for their participation in the meeting. He said that Ethiopia lies at the confluence of Africa and the wider Arab world, not only geographically but also in historical and cultural terms. He indicated that Ethiopia is strongly committed to ASSECAA's mission and objectives and look forward to participation of peoples, a viable and promising solution can be found for all present problems and challenges.

He expressed hope that the meeting will focus on sharing experiences in all matters of common interests, maintaining that Ethiopia's existing commitments to promote the noble idea of sustainable friendship and partnership between Africa and Arab world are one of the precious legacies of late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, the architect of the present democratic Ethiopia, who gave maximum attention and relevance to Ethiopia's contribution towards regional economic integration and sustainable peace in the African continent.

He further pointed out that Ethiopia had played a significant role during the struggle for African liberation, in addition to the fact that it constituted a bridge of inter-civilization contacts throughout history, and as one of the earliest hosts of the three great world religions, including Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The Speaker of the House of Federation of Ethiopia, in conclusion, asserted that his country has adopted democratic and judicious ways to address the grievances of its nations, nationalities and people, in addition to adopting the federal democratic order to tackle internal disputes.

Then, H.E Gabriel Ntisezerana, the sitting chairman of ASSECAA, and Speaker of the Senate of Burundi, delivered a speech in which he welcomed the delegates and expressed immense gratitude to the General Secretariat of ASSECAA as well as the House of Federation of Ethiopia for organizing and hosting the event.

He highlighted that ASSECAA should heavily engaged in reducing the simmering conflicts flaring up in Some African and Arab countries, such as Mali, the Central Republic of Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Syria.



He pointed out that there are other challenges that may pose a threat the Afro-Arab peace initiatives, such as the global economic crisis facing all world countries, including the developed nations. He stressed the importance of achieving solidarity and cohesion among African and Arab countries in order to reduce the effects of the global economic crisis on developing countries.

He urged ASSECAA to utilize this meeting to boost peace and security in Africa and Arab world in particular and the world in general.

H.E Abdulwasie Yusuf Ali, Secretary General of ASSECAA, then addressed the meeting, stressing the importance of the meeting which comes at a time when the Afro-Arab arena is witnessing a lot of political events and tensions that sometimes amounted to conflicts.

He pointed out that the wars and conflicts Africa and Arab world have witnessed over the past 25 years, which included wars between Ethiopia and Eritrea, North and South Sudan, and Kuwait and Iraq, in addition to the simmering conflicts in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Mali, Ivory Coast and Congo, have resulted in unbearable, ineffable difficulties, as evidenced in the destruction of infrastructure, and backwardness in economic development in the countries that experienced such conflicts.

He stressed the importance that the lessons taken from such conflicts must spur Arab and African countries to seriously work towards preventing conflicts and searching for friendly solutions to disputes.

He confirmed that the main goal of the meeting is to provide participants with necessary information and essential mechanisms of creating awareness in member councils and communities with an aim to prevent conflicts by means of eradicating or reducing their root causes in both regions.

He highlighted that the political experts affirm that the reasons behind conflicts and wars include lack of good governance, widespread corruption, the absence of political and socio-economic justice, disrespect for human rights and the absence of democracy and the rule of law.

Just after the morning session, the head of the Nigerian delegation H.E. Senator Ahmed Abdul Ningi moderated the discussion of the first work-paper presented by Mr. Mulugeta G. and Zeru , which was titled "Towards common goal: Collaborative ways of conflict resolution in Africa", in which he pointed out that there are many reasons for conflicts in Africa, including socio-economic, political and cultural reasons.

The paper highlighted that Africa is suffering from conflicts and armed violence and that armed disputes cost Africa \$ 18 billion a year, which means that such conflicts constitute a dangerous obstacle to development.

It enumerated several alternative means of conflict resolution, including prosecution, negotiations, mediation and arbitration.

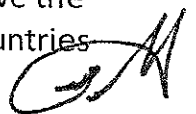
It pointed out the African experiences in ending civil wars by means of negotiations and referendums supervised by the United Nations, such as the referendum vote conducted in Eritrea and Sudan in 1993 and 2010 respectively. The post-election crises that occurred in Kenya and Zimbabwe can be taken as an example of reducing the damages from post-election violence.

It explained that it has become largely accepted that elected representatives are the key actors in terms of preventing conflicts, and peace building, as they can play a decisive role in embracing different groups in a particular country, in addition to preventing conflicts by laying out a legislative and institutional frameworks to help stem violence.

After the lunch break, the second session, which started at 2:00 pm, was chaired by the head of the Bahraini delegation, H.E Mr. Khaled Bin Khalifah Al-Khalifa. During the session, Dr. Ahmed Al-Asbahi, member of Shoura Council of Yemen, and former foreign minister, presented a work-paper in which he reviewed the experience of the Republic of Yemen in conflict resolution through the political settlement which was based on the deal brokered by the GCC countries and backed by the international community and the United Nations' Security Council.

He touched upon the political crisis and related internal conflicts in addition to the different attempts at resolving such a crisis that swept Yemen during the Arab spring uprisings. He explained that the GCC countries played a major role in resolving the Yemeni crisis by brokering a deal envisaging the resignation of the former president as well as the election of a new president to steer the affairs of the country during a two-year transitional period.

He further explained that the international community, mainly the five permanent member states of the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary General, who appointed a special envoy to Yemen to follow upon the implementation of the initiative. In his comment on Dr. Asbahi's paper, Mr. Sa'ad Al-Arifi, head of the Yemen-based GCC mission, confirmed that the GCC countries were deeply engaged in finding appropriate solutions to the Yemeni crisis as evidenced in the GCC-brokered deal that aimed to preserve the unity of Yemen, its security and stability. He further maintained that the GCC countries



would follow upon the implementation of the GCC-mediated initiative in order to attain its objectives on the ground.

At 5:30 pm, delegates paid an inspection visit to different suburbs of Addis Ababa.

The meeting sessions resumed on Sunday morning, 24 February, 2013, as the General Secretariat of ASSECAA presented a proposal on the establishment of "Friends of ASSECAA for Peace and Security", which is based on the principle enshrined in the Association's Rules of Procedure stating that "The Association's founding fathers expressed desire to play a more vital role in the elimination of the causes of tension and violence, and contribution to establishing peace and security in Africa and Arab world, the Middle East and the world at large".

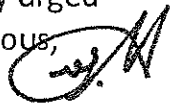
The proposal envisages the creation of an entity bringing together activists, civil society leaders, intellectuals and academics known for their keenness to reinforce peace, security and development in their respective countries. The FAPs shall focus on enhancing peace, security and stability in Africa and Arab world and the world as a whole by exerting genuine civil, unofficial efforts. Dr. Ahmed Al-Asbahi from the Shoora Council of Yemen moderated the deliberations on the proposal.

Then, professor Habtamu Wondimu, IPSS/AAU, presented a work-paper entitled "Federalism and Conflict Management in Ethiopia: Social psychological analysis of the opportunities and challenges" in which he opines that Federalism is the most optimum way for conflict resolution in multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries. He pointed out the Ethiopian experience in adopting federalism, administering justice and enforcing the principle of equality among citizens and different groups, in addition to resolving conflicts through negotiations.

Furthermore, H.E Mr. Kassa Teklebrhan, Speaker of the House of Federation of Ethiopia, made an in-depth intervention on the Ethiopian experience in adopting federalism that led to the attainment of the principles of democracy, social justice and good governance in such a way that defused decades-old ethnic conflicts amongst different groups and nationalities.

The session during which the above paper was debated was chaired by the Speaker of the Zimbabwean Senate, H.E Madame Edna Mazongwe.

During the afternoon session, several heads of delegations gave speeches and remarks in which they emphasized the importance of the meeting as well as the issues that topped its agenda. They further affirmed the importance that the Association should exert further efforts at peace building and conflict resolution, in addition to taking lessons from the blunders made by some countries and led to tensions and violence. They urged parliaments to propagate the culture of peace, shun violence and adopt serious,



responsible and courageous dialogue in order to attain the interests of people and their aspirations for progress and development.

Recommendations:

At the end of the meeting, delegates came up with the following recommendations:

1-The participants express their profound gratitude to the General Secretariat of ASSECAA as well as the House of Federation of Ethiopia, represented by its Speaker, H.E mr. Kassa Teklebrhan, for the generous hospitality and warm reception accorded to delegates and for organizing this significant event.

2-They urge ASSECAA's General Secretariat to regularly organize the meeting in line with the developments taking place in Africa and Arab world.

3-The delegates express their immense gratitude to paper presenters, and urge ASSECAA's General Secretariat to document such work-papers in the three languages of the Association and then circulate same to the organizations and councils that didn't attend the meeting.

They also demand parliaments, especially senates, shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab world, to assume their national responsibility of eliminating the root causes of political tensions and conflicts and pre-empting disputes by providing judicious and wise counseling to policymakers and national institutions in relevant countries in such a manner that allows for dialogue and candid deliberations on the issues of disagreement and prevents a slide into chaos and conflicts that result in bloodshed and hamper development and progress.

They called upon parliaments to make use of the experiences of Arab and African countries plagued by conflicts and wars in order to reach convenient solutions through responsible and brave political talks.

4-The participants express their gratitude to the genuine efforts that are still being exerted by some neighboring, sisterly and friendly countries to mediate proper solutions to disputes and help bring together different views with an aim to prevent the countries experiencing conflicts from slipping into lawlessness; the GCC-sponsored deal is a case in point.

They express their utter rejection of foreign interventions, whether Iranian or otherwise, in the internal affairs of countries for any religious or political reasons as has recently happened in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Republic of Yemen. They also consider any

such interventions as an aggression on the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries as well as a breach of the UN Charter.

5-The delegates call upon Arab and African countries and their respective parliaments to broaden the base of public participation , boost the respect for human rights, dispense justice and reinforce the rule of law in such a way that enhances security and stability, achieves economic development and leads to the building of stable and prosperous societies.

6- The delegates strongly condemn all forms of violence and terrorist acts carried out by armed terror groups as has recently taken place in Yemen, and prior to that, the terrorist actions that had occurred in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo. They also denounce in the strongest possible terms the terror acts taking place in Mali and express their solidarity with and support for this African country in terms of maintaining its independence and territorial integrity.

The delegates further condemn the terror acts occurring in the Palestinian territories as well as the terror bombing attack on Ain Amnas gas station to the south of Algeria. They also express their full support for the responsible reaction of the Algerian authorities to such an attack, which was carried out in a way that spared lives and preserved properties. They urge all governments and civil society organizations to exert concerted efforts to eradicate such a phenomenon which is strange to our countries and communities.

7-The participants have taken notice of the Egyptian experience and its peacefulness as well as the role played by both the Egyptian people and military during the pioneering Egyptian revolution with the objective of revitalizing the mechanisms of democracy and consultations.

8-Regarding the proposal for the establishment of Friends of ASSECAA for Peace and Security, which was submitted to the meeting by ASSECAA's General Secretariat, the meeting resolved that a legal Committee should be established in order to study the legal framework of this project on the basis of the remarks presented thereon by some participants bearing in mind that other organizations such as African Union, Arab League; organizations which our respective countries belong to, engage in the matters of Peace and Security .



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

5: 00 pm

Sunday, Feb.24,2013.

