



Background on the Pan-African Parliament

Sources: www.au.int and www.panafricanparliament.org

Purpose

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) is one of the nine organs proposed in the 1991 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty). Its purpose, as set out in article 17 of the AU Constitutive Act, is “to ensure the full participation of African peoples in the development and economic integration of the continent”. The Parliament is intended as a platform for people from all African states to be involved in discussions and decision-making on the problems and challenges facing the continent. The Parliament sits in Midrand, South Africa.

While the long-term aim is for the Parliament to exercise full legislative powers, its current mandate is to exercise advisory and consultative powers. The Parliament has up to 250 members representing the 50 AU Member States that have ratified the Protocol establishing it (five members per Member State).¹ Under rule 7 of the PAP Rules of Procedure, a parliamentarian’s tenure of office begins on the date he or she is elected or designated as a Member of Parliament.

A parliamentarian’s term should correspond to his or her own national parliament term or any other deliberative organ that elected or designated the parliamentarian.

The long-term aim is for the Parliament to hold direct elections by universal suffrage. The PAP’s functions are set out in the 2001 Protocol to the Abuja Treaty relating to the Pan-African Parliament and in its Rules of Procedure. These include to:

- Facilitate effective implementation of the OAU/African Economic Community’s (AEC’s) policies and objectives and, ultimately, the AU Work towards the harmonisation or coordination of Member States’ laws
- Make recommendations aimed at contributing to the attainment of the OAU/AEC’s objectives and draw attention to the challenges facing the integration process in Africa as well as the strategies for dealing with them
- Request OAU/AEC officials to attend its sessions, produce documents or assist in the discharge of its duties
- Promote the OAU/AEC’s programmes and objectives in Member States’ constituencies
- 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 AU's establishment
- Promote the coordination and harmonisation of policies, measures, programmes and activities of Africa's parliamentary forums.

The PAP Committee on Justice and Human Rights is mandated to:

1. Assist Parliament in its role of harmonizing and coordinating the laws of Member States.
2. Promote respect for and develop sound principles of freedom, civil liberties, justice, human and people's rights and fundamental rights within the Union.

For more information see: <http://www.panafricanparliament.org/>