REPUBLIC OF KENYA

KENYA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TENTH PARLIAMENT- SECOND SESSION

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC WORKS

REPORT ON ATTENDANCE TO THE 2ND CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (APKN) IN CAIRO, EGYPT

(5TH AND 6TH JUNE, 2008)

Clerk's chambers,
National Assembly,
NAIROBI

June, 2008

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PREFACE

Hon. Speaker Sir,

The 3rd conference of the African Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN) was held in Cairo Egypt on 5th and 6th of June, 2008. The conference was hosted by the People's Assembly of Egypt at the Assembly buildings.

The Kenyan Parliament delegation to the session comprised: -

i.	The Hon. (Eng) James Gordon Rege, M.P	-	Leader
ii.	The Hon. James MainaKamau, M.P.		
iii.	The Hon. Nicholas Gumbo, M.P.		
iv.	Mrs. Esther Kamau	-	Chief Librarian
v.	Mr. George Gazemba	-	Secretary

Hon. Speaker Sir,

The delegation is grateful to you for entrusting it with the task of representing the National Assembly of Kenya at the session. The delegation also wishes to express gratitude to the Office of the Clerk for providing technical and logistical support.

Hon. Speaker Sir,

On behalf of the delegation, it is my pleasant duty and privilege to present to the House, a report of the committee on the proceedings of the conference.

H̦on. James G̦ Rege, M.P.

Leader of Delegation

Date July 23, 08

ABREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APKN   African Parliamentary Knowledge Network
AU   African Union
ICT   Information in Computer Technology
PAP   Pan African Parliament
UN/DESA   United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

<u>LIST OF APPENDICES</u>

i. List of participants; and

ii. Draft charter

1. THE AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY KNOWLEDGE NETWORK'S (APKN) FORMATION AND OBJECTIVES

The African Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN) was created at a meeting hosted by the National Assembly of Nigeria in Abuja in March, 2007. The meeting was attended by Members of Parliaments and officials from twelve (12) National Assemblies of Africa and the Pan-African Parliament. The meeting was convened by the United Nations under the auspices of the Pan-African Parliament.

The objective for the establishment of APKN is to promote and enhance the sharing of ideas, experiences and good practices among Parliaments in the areas of legislation, information, research, documentation and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). These thematic networks would promote at continental level the training and capacity development of Parliamentary staff through organization of seminars and training sessions, the establishment of online fora and shared services, the promotion of thematic working groups and information portals among others.

2. CONVENING OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference was hosted by the People's Assembly of Egypt at the Assembly buildings and was organized by the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) in conjunction the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA) through its regional initiative Africa I-Parliament Action Plan and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.

3. PARTICIPATION

The conference was attended by the President of the Pan-African Parliament, Amb. Gertrude Mongella, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, Hon. Abdirahim Haithar Abdi, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt Hon. Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Speakers of Ghana and Lesotho, Members of Parliament and staff from thirty eight (38) National and Regional Assemblies, the United Nations (UN), Universities and other Organizations and Institutions. Names of all participants are shown in the list of participants attached hereto as "**Annex I'**

4. OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference was officially opened by the President of the Pan-African Parliament, Amb. Gertude Mongela. In her opening remarks, she commended the Peoples Assembly of Egypt for agreeing to host the conference despite being engaged in preparations for hosting the 2008 AU summit. She also commended UN/DESA for providing technical and financial support to the organization of the conference. She underscored the importance of the conference, which she equated to a partnership that must bear fruits.

She was optimistic that at the end of the conference, participants would have endorsed a charter for the cooperation of African Parliaments in areas of legislation, information, research, documentation and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and African Parliaments would be able to share knowledge, which was crucial in harmonization of their policies.

She said that Africa could not develop without Information in Computer Technology (ICT) and with APKN, it was possible to build open learning in Parliaments. ICT was crucial in strengthening capacity of Members and staff, which was essential in development of Parliaments.

The Pan-African Parliament had put in place an Integrated Knowledge Management System for the benefit of Members of Parliament and Staff at the Pan-African Parliament and this was one major step towards the development of the institution. PAP was also in the process of establishing a secretariat to oversee the effectiveness of APKN activities.

The Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Speaker of the Shura Council of Egypt, Mr. Mohamed Safwat al Sherif and Chief Governance and Public Administration Branch, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs John-Mary Kauzya also issued statements during the official opening and underscored the importance of the APKN to African parliaments. They called for political backing of APKN initiatives.

5. THE CHALLENGES OF APKN AND THE NEED OF POLITICAL COMMITMENT

Mr. Jaffrey Griffith, Senior Advisor, Global Center for ICT in Parliament presented to the conference the World e-Parliament

Report, 2008 with regard to challenges of APKN and need for political commitment.

THE WORLD E-PARLIAMENT REPORT 2008

The report is based on a survey carried out in 105 Assemblies in the world. The report constitutes the first assessment from a global perspective of how Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are being employed by Parliaments across the spectrum of activities for which they are responsible. It also draws on experiences exchanged during the World e-Parliament Conference 2007 and relevant available information.

The report had been produced for the purposes of helping Legislatures evaluate the potential benefits of ICT in supporting Parliaments' basic values of transparency, accessibility, accountability and effectiveness. The report outlines the definition of e-Parliament as a legislature that is empowered to be more transparent, accessible and accountable through ICT.

The report addresses nine (9) substantive areas where key issues and related findings from the survey results are analyzed. These are:-

(i)   Parliament, ICT and information society;
(ii)   Vision, innovation and leadership;
(iii)   Implementing the vision, management, planning and resources;
(iv)   Infrastructures and services;
(v)   Documenting the legislative process;
(vi)   Parliamentary websites;
(vii)   Building knowledge base for parliaments;
(viii) Parliaments and citizens: enhancing dialogue; and
(ix)   Cooperation and coordination.

The results of the survey confirm that the income level of each country plays a significant role in determining the extent to which ICT is adopted in Parliaments. However, technologies in older legislative bodies, organizational flexibilities in younger parliaments and the rapid evolution of technologies are all factors that can help level the playing field among Legislatures. Attaining high level of performance in the application of ICT is not only dependent on resources but also requires strong political backing.

Approximately, 10% of the Assemblies that responded to the survey have undergone tremendous ICT development in a wide range of areas such as:-

(i)   Developing systems of managing essential documents;
(ii)   Utilizing open documents standards;
(iii)   Creating rich websites that present information through a variety of formats and channels; and
(iv)   Providing access to a wide range of online information linked to pending legislation.

An issue of special importance to Parliaments in today's world is improving dialogue with citizens. Some Assemblies were exploring new approaches using the web while others have plans to test new ICT-based systems. However, very few Legislatures had systematic capabilities for interactive communication with citizens.

The report concludes that there is a significant gap between what is possible with ICT development in Assemblies and what the Assemblies have accomplished so far. On the other hand, survey responses clearly show that most Assemblies have plans to improve their use of technology to support their goals and work. Narrowing the gap would require increased cooperation and coordination among Assemblies and other stakeholders.

5.   PARALLEL SESSIONS

Participants were divided into three groups and held parallel sessions to discuss plans of action on various subjects and reported to the Plenary.

GROUP 1:- APKN CHARTER AND POLICY

The group finalized the draft charter, which is annexed hereto as **"Annex ii"**. The draft charter would be forwarded to Parliaments and Assemblies for consideration for the purposes of assenting to it. A conference of Speakers and Presidents would be convened to consider and adopt the document at a date to be communicated.

It was decided that responses assenting to the document may be forwarded to the Peoples Assembly of Egypt, which was elected to be the interim secretariat.

GROUP II:- LEGISLATIVE PROCESS & INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

The group agreed on a plan of action to:-

(i)   Establish a forum of African draftsmen;

(ii) Tracking and monitoring of legislative processes in Africa;

(iii) Institutionalization of Information and Research Services and Professional development strategies;

(iv) Institutionalization of Legislative Services and Professional Development Strategies;

(v)   Capacity building;

(vi) Open access to information; and

(vii) Development of tools to support legislative work.

GROUP III:- INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The group agreed on a plan of action to:-

(i)   Develop standards for parliamentary websites, intranets, and ICT infrastructure and architecture;

(ii) Encourage dedicated ICT steering committees in each parliament;

(iii) Develop ICT governance models;

(iv) Complete skill matrix and conduct two e-seminars to meet the highest needs;

(v)   Consult with potential partners to explore possibilities for cooperation in capacity building;

(vi) Develop plan for ICT Awareness materials for MPs and parliamentary leaders;

(vii)   Establish and strengthen relationships with existing regional structures and establish regional centres of ICT excellence;

(viii) Establish a database of ICT expertise in parliaments; and

(ix)   Establish contact points for ICT thematic area in each national parliament.

The conference was officially closed by the President of the Pan-African Parliament, Amb. Getrude Mongela on 6th June, 2008.

United Nations

People's Assembly

Pan-African Parliament

شبكة المعلومات البرلمانية الأفريقية
القاهرة ـ جمهورية مصر العربية
٤ ـ ٥ يونية ٢٠٠٨

Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network
Cairo - Arab Republic of Egypt
4 - 5 June 2008
Réseau d'informations parlementaires africaines
Le Caire - République arabe d'Egypte
4 - 5 juin 2008

قائمة المشاركين
List of Participants
Liste des participants

Africa i-Parliaments

GlobalCentre ICTParliament
Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliament

I. NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

ALGERIA

Tayeb Nouari (Mr.)	Member of the National People's Assembly
Karima Boureghda (Ms.)	IT Director, National People's Assembly

ANGOLA

Candida Narciso (Ms.)	President of the Committee of Science and Technology, National Assembly
Paulo Mateta (Mr.)	Member of the Committee of Science and Technology, National Assembly
Pedro Vieira Morais (Mr.)	Member of the Committee of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, National Assembly
Amaro Kacona da Silva (Mr.)	Member of the Committee of Foreign Relations, National Assembly
João Francisco Antonio (Mr.)	IT Technician, National Assembly

BOTSWANA

Ronald Ridge (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Dominic Thabo Mogwe (Mr.)	ICT Officer, National Assembly
Ellenor Notto Moseki (Ms.)	Assistant Clerk
Neo Thebe (Ms.)	Assistant Clerk Policies

BURUNDI

Jacqueline Baranyizigiye (Ms.)	Member of the Senate
Karim Mibohe (Mr.)	Head of ICT Services, Senate

CAMEROON

Joseph Owona Kono (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Hermine Béatrice Ename Ename (Ms.)	IT Network Administrator, National Assembly
Amin Ahmad Amin (Mr.)	Webmaster, National Assembly

CHAD

Ibrahim Ismail (Mr.)	Vice-President of the National Assembly
Mohamed Kouchilami (Mr.)	Secretary General of the National Assembly
Tidjani Saboun Mohammad (Mr.)	Director, Translation Department, National Assembly

COMOROS

M. Dhoifir Houmadi (Mr.)	Vice-President, Assembly of the Union
Eddine Said Ali Kemal (Mr.)	President, External Relations Committee, Assembly of the Union
Anzimata Abdou (Ms.)	Editor of Laws and Legal Service, Assembly of the Union

CONGO

Justin Koumba (Mr.)	President of the National Assembly
Thomas Emerson Mavangui (Mr.)	Special Advisor to the President, National Assembly

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Placide Tshisumpa Tshiakatumba (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Willy Nyamango Muzengio (Mr.)	Head of the IT Division, National Assembly
Camille Mobangabi Mokweti (Mr.)	Office of Studies and Design, National Assembly

EGYPT

People's Assembly

Ahmed Fathy Sorour (Mr.)	Speaker
Abdelaziz Mostafa (Mr.)	Deputy Speaker
Abdelahad Gamal Eldin (Mr.)	Representative of the Majority Party
Amal Osman (Ms.)	Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional and Legislative Affairs
Hamdi El Tahan (Mr.)	Chairman of the Committee on Transportation
Sherif Omar (Mr.)	Chairman of the Committee on Education and Scientific Research
Mohamed Abou El Ayneen (Mr.)	Chairman of the Committee on Industry and Energy
Georgeit Kelleni (Ms.)	Member of the People's Assembly
Mostafa El Gendi (Mr.)	Member of the People's Assembly
Mohamed Abdel Aziz Shaaban (Mr.)	Member of the People's Assembly
Mohamed Sherdi (Mr.)	Member of the People's Assembly
Sobhi Saleh Moussa (Mr.)	Member of the People's Assembly

Shura Council

Mohamed Safwat Al Sherif (Mr.)	Speaker
Mohamed Ragab Ahmed (Mr.)	Representative of the Majority Party
Refat Mohamed El Sayed (Mr.)	Leader of the Unionist Progressive Party
Nagy Abdel Fatah El Shahapy (Mr.)	Leader of the Democratic Generation
Mohamed Shawky Youness (Mr.)	Member of the General Committee

Nabeel Looka Bebawy (Mr.)	Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Culture, Media and Tourism
Mohamed Nageeb Abou Zeid (Mr.)	Member of the Shura Council
Samya Shenowda Gergess (Ms.)	Member of the Shura Council

ETHIOPIA

Tesema Tekele (Ms.)	Chairperson of Capacity Building Affairs Standing Committee, House of People's Representatives
Workinesh Woju Chagasha (Ms.)	Member of the Media and Culture Affairs Standing Committee, House of Peoples' Representatives
Tezerash Mare Bobo (Ms.)	Head of ICT/Webmaster, House of Peoples' Representatives

FRANCE

Philippe Bourasse (Mr.)	Deputy Director, International Relations Department, Senate

GAMBIA (THE)

Sainey Jaiteh (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Foday Jallow (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Isatou Conteh (Ms.)	Editor, National Assembly

GHANA

Ebenezer Begyina Sekyi Hughes (Mr.)	Speaker of the Parliament
Emmanuel Anyimadu (Mr.)	Clerk to Parliament
Solomon Nkrumah (Mr.)	Special Assistant, Parliament
David Melford Addow-Quarshie (Mr.)	ICT Director, Parliament

KENYA

Maina Kamau (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Nicholas Gumbo (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
James G. Rege (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
George Gazemba (Mr.)	Clerk Assistant and Secretary to Delegation, National Assembly
Esther Kamau (Ms.)	Chief Librarian, National Assembly

LESOTHO

Ntlhoi Motsamai (Ms.)	Speaker of the National Assembly
Majoro Libuseng (Ms.)	Assistant Deputy Clerk, National Assembly

LIBERIA

Togba J. Mulbah (Mr.)	Deputy Speaker of the House of Representative
Winifred H. Parker (Ms.)	Secretary, House of Representatives

MALAWI

Berson Henry Lijenda (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Madalo Prisca Khoza (Ms.)	System Analyst Programmer, National Assembly

MALI

Hamadaou Sylla (Mr.)	President of the Independent Parliamentary Group
Bouba Traore (Mr.)	Member of the Committee of Education, Culture and Communication

MOROCCO

Chafik Rachadi (Mr.)	Member of the House of Representatives
Aziz Mouhib (Mr.)	Head of the Division of Information and Communication, House of Representatives

MOZAMBIQUE

António José Amélia (Mr.)	Member of the Assembly of the Republic
Ilda Monica Come (Ms.)	Chief of Department of ICT, Assembly of the Republic
Júlio António Da Silva (Mr.)	Director of Parliamentary Documentation Division, Assembly of the Republic

NIGERIA

Ike Ekweremadu (Mr.)	Deputy President of the Senate
Ramoni Mustapha (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Smart Adeyemi (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Mohammed Danjuma Hassan (Mr.)	Assistant Director, Legislative Drafting
Sylvester Shikyil (Mr.)	Legal Expert, National Assembly
Richard Homsuk Kwalmi (Mr.)	IT Manager, National Assembly

RWANDA

Higiro Prosper (Mr.)	Deputy Speaker, Senate
Bashoga Bernard (Mr.)	Legal Adviser, Chamber of Deputies
Yvan Mwitabangoma (Mr.)	ICT Director, Parliament

SENEGAL

Abdoulaye Sene (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Samba Khary Cisse (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly

SEYCHELLES

David Payet (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Marie-Nella Azemia (Ms.)	Clerk to the National Assembly

SOUTH AFRICA

Mzikayise Sydney Mbangula (Mr.)	Division Manager of Corporate Services, Parliament
Leon Kevin Gabriel (Mr.)	Section Manager, Information Services, Parliament
Fatima Boltman (Ms.)	MSP Programme Manager in the ICT Office, Parliament

SUDAN

Ismail El Hag Musa (Mr.)	Chairperson of the Justice and Legislative Committee, National Assembly
Fadl Ahmed Mohamed (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly

SWAZILAND

Thandi Dane Maziya (Ms.)	Member of the Senate
Petros Mavimbela (Mr.)	Member of the House of Assembly
Esther Nxumalo (Ms.)	Librarian, House of Assembly

TANZANIA

Khadija Salum Ally Al Qassmy (Ms.)	Member of the National Assembly
Mohamed Missanga (Mr.)	Member of the National Assembly
Didas Alphonce Wambura (Mr.)	Assistant Director - ICT, National Assembly

TOGO

Touh Pahorsiki (Mr.)	Member of the Parliament
Arouna Kokouvi Lardja (Mr.)	Director of Communication, Parliament

TUNISIA

Foued Gargouri (Mr.)	Chairman of the Committee for Education, Information, Culture and Youth, Chamber of Deputies
Mondher Rezgui (Mr.)	General Director, Chamber of Deputies
Mohamed Samoud (Mr.)	Director, Chamber of Deputies

UGANDA

Aloysius Makata (Mr.)	Director, ICT Services, Parliament
Paul Gamusi Wabwire (Mr.)	Deputy Clerk, Legislative Services, Parliament

ZAMBIA

Munsaka Douglas Syakalima (Mr.)	Member of the Parliament
Fairchild Chibomba (Mr.)	Deputy Clerk, National Assembly
Mwango Sharpe (Ms.)	Assistant Principal Clerk - ICT Operations, National Assembly

ZIMBABWE

Nomasontho Sunga (Ms.)	Principal Committee Clerk, Parliament
Alex Masumba (Mr.)	Principal Research Officer, Parliament
Ganyani Khosa (Mr.)	ICT Director, Parliament

*****

II. REGIONAL PARLIAMENTS AND PARLAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES

EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Abdirahim Haithar Abdi (Mr.)	Speaker
Straton Ndikuryayo (Mr.)	Member
Paul Cyril Masami (Mr.)	Clerk Assistant

PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

Gertrude Mongella (Ms.)	President
Mostafa Boudina (Mr.)	Member of the Parliament
Njingum Musa Mbutoh (Mr.)	Member of the Parliament
Ahmed Thabet El-Dieb (Mr.)	Chief of Protocol
Victoria Mazula (Ms.)	Administrative Assistant

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

Bookie Kethusegile (Ms.)	Assistant Secretary General
Abednego Bongani Mkhaliphi (Mr.)	Resource Centre Officer
Cecilia Rudo Matanga (Ms.)	ICT Officer
Gordon Oyomno (Mr.)	Consultant

*****

III. UNIVERSITIES

EPFL SWISS FEDERAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Gianluca Misuraca (Mr.)   Research Associate

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

Giovanni Sartor (Mr.)   Professor of Legal Informatics and Legal Theory

UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM

Severine Mushamba Rugumamu (Mr.)   Professor of Development Studies

*****

IV. UNITED NATIONS

UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

John-Mary Kauzya (Mr.)   Chief of Governance and Public Administration Branch

Gherardo Casini (Mr.)   Executive Coordinator, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

Flavio Zeni (Mr.)   Chief Technical Adviser, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan

Jeffrey Griffith (Mr.)   Senior Advisor, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

Daniela Giacomelli (Ms.)   Programme Officer, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

Avinash Bikha (Mr.)   Programme Officer, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

Ashok Hariharan (Mr.)   Consultant, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan

Miriam Ngoka (Ms.)   Bungeni Portal Consultant, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Girma Dessalegn (Mr.)   Programme Officer

*****

V. OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

APLESA - ASSOCIATION OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES OF EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Innocent Rugambwa (Mr.)   Director, Library and Research

Simon Joseph Engitu (Mr.)   Assistant Director, Library Services

EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE

Erik van der Goot (Mr.)

GTZ – GERMAN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Nicole Schaffer (Ms.)   Advisor to the Pan-African Parliament/Acting Programme
Manager for SPAI

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES OF THE UNITED STATES

Gene Rose (Mr.)   Communications Director

Ann Driscoll (Ms.)   Program Manager

UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION

Tobias Andrew Dorsey (Mr.)   Legislative Counsel

*****

VI. EMBASSIES

ANGOLA

Pedro Hendrik Vaaal Neto (Mr.)   Ambassador of the Republic of Angola in Egypt

Manuel Domingos Nogueira (Mr.)   Minister Counsellor

Victor Branco Carvalho (Mr.)   Press Attaché

Pedro Muamba (Mr.)   Head of Protocol

Dalia Samir Victor (Ms.)   Official Translator

CAMEROON

Francois Xavier Ndongou (Mr.)   First Secretary of the Embassy of Cameroon in Egypt

شبكة المعلومات البرلمانية الأفريقية
Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network
Réseau d'informations parlementaires africaines

Draft Charter

Preamble

Acknowledging the resolutions of the Pan African Parliament inviting African assemblies to strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation, especially through information and communication technologies, for improving coordination of information exchange, capacity building and collaborative development;

Taking into consideration the outcome and recommendations of the World e-Parliament Report 2008 issued by the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union;

Recognizing the importance of establishing an institutional mechanism for sharing knowledge, experiences and practices among parliamentary administrations of African assemblies to better meet their representative, legislative and oversight responsibilities;

Acknowledging that to ensure the institutional strengthening of parliamentary assemblies it is critical to sustain the professional development of parliamentary officials;

Building upon the results of the Conference held in Abuja, Nigeria, in March 2007, on these matters;

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We representatives of African assemblies meeting in Cairo, Egypt, this 5th day of June 2008 do hereby resolve to form an African-wide institution named Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN).

Article 1
Mission

The mission of the APKN shall be to:

- support the work of African assemblies by establishing mechanisms and procedures for exchanging information, ideas, experience and practices in all areas of parliamentary administration of common interest;

- strengthen cooperation among parliamentary services for capacity building and staff training; and

- collaborate on technology development and implementation to serve parliamentary functions.

Because of their importance to parliaments, the APKN shall give special attention to the areas of:

- legislative processes

- information and research services

- information and communication technologies and tools

The APKN shall cooperate with other networks dealing with the exchange of information among parliaments in Africa and at the international level.

Article 2
Composition

The members of the APKN are:

- The Pan African Parliament and all regional parliamentary assemblies and forums in Africa wishing to be members of the APKN, as determined by their Speaker or President or by their governing body.

- All national parliamentary chambers of African countries wishing to become members of the APKN, as determined by the Speaker or President of the Assembly.

- The APKN may cooperate with non-African parliamentary chambers by granting observers' status.

Article 3
Structure and organization

Plenary

The APKN operates under the authority of the Speakers and Presidents of member assemblies meeting in plenary every two years. The plenary shall approve the reports of activities and the strategic plan of action of the APKN as presented by the Executive Committee, and set new priorities and goals. The plenary shall approve requests for new membership and grant observer status to requesting non-members.

Executive Committee

For its functioning, the APKN shall establish an Executive Committee composed of five Secretaries General, identified by the Speakers and Presidents of member assemblies.

The Executive Committee shall represent the five African regions, namely, North, West, Central, East and Southern Africa, and shall serve for the tenure of two years.

The members of the Executive Committee shall elect among themselves the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson.

Under the guidance of the Chairperson, the Executive Committee shall have the following duties:

- formulate the policies of the APKN

- monitor the annual activities of the APKN and propose mechanisms to benchmark its effectiveness

- approve the budget of the APKN

- take such measures as to ensure the proper management of the APKN

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a year in conjunction with the meeting of the Council of Coordinators, and as often as necessary at the request of three of its members.

The Executive Committee shall report to the Plenary and shall take decisions by the majority of votes.

Council of Coordinators

The Secretaries General of each member assembly shall appoint a senior parliamentary official as APKN Coordinator to represent the assembly in the Council of Coordinators of the APKN.

The APKN Coordinators shall have direct access to their respective Secretaries General in dealing with APKN matters and shall receive the delegation of authority to coordinate the activities of the parliamentary officials in their assembly who are requested to play an active role in the APKN activities.

The APKN Coordinators shall be responsible for interacting with the APKN Secretariat throughout the year and for initiating, organizing, and supporting knowledge-related activities in their assembly.

In particular, APKN Coordinators shall be responsible for:

- coordinating the systematic collection of information and lessons from the experiences of their assembly and disseminating them to other members of the APKN;

- promoting a knowledge driven learning culture and raising awareness among parliamentary officials about the benefits of the adoption and use of modern tools for information management and knowledge sharing;

- supporting the exchange of information and documents among members by responding in a timely way to requests for information and documents from the Secretariat;

- initiating requests for information and documents on behalf of their assembly through the APKN Secretariat.

The APKN Coordinators will meet once a year in the Council of Coordinators, chaired by the Secretary of the APKN.

In cooperation with the Secretary of the APKN, the Council of Coordinators shall be responsible for the drafting of the report of the activities and the strategic plan of action of the APKN, as well as for supporting the organization of the activities of the APKN.

The report and the strategic plan shall be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval, and subsequently by the Executive Committee to the Plenary for endorsement.

The Council of Coordinators shall take decisions by consensus. If consensus is not reached, the matter shall revert to the Executive Committee.

Secretariat

The APKN shall have a small Secretariat hosted by a member assembly to be identified by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee shall appoint a full time Secretary to lead the APKN Secretariat.

The Secretary shall be supported by parliamentary officials and by technical and support staff as needed and as resources permit.

The Secretary shall be responsible to the Executive Committee for the following duties.

- heading the Secretariat and administering its affairs;

- acting as Secretary to the Executive Committee;

- implementing the decisions of the Executive Committee;

- coordinating and executing the activities and programmes of the APKN, in cooperation with the Council of Coordinators.

Article 4
Working modalities

The APKN shall promote cooperation among its membership through the exchange of information and documentation, production of joint studies, and the organization of seminars of significant common interest.

The APKN Secretariat shall facilitate the above by establishing a virtual forum for the Council of Coordinators, through which requests of information from members will be channelled, documents exchanged and activities coordinated.

The APKN shall also promote the production of shared training materials and training services, including e-learning modules, training sessions and courses, and mechanisms for providing continuing education with the aim of sustaining the capacity of parliamentary officials and increasing their level of knowledge and expertise.

When it considers that a given area requires a continuity of activities, the Council of Coordinators may decide on the appointment of a Coordinator responsible for promoting close cooperation among the members in that area.

On a proposal from the Secretary, in cooperation with the Council of Coordinators, and to meet specific terms of reference, the Executive Committee may decide to establish specific thematic working groups composed of parliamentary officials from member assemblies. The Executive Committee shall determine their duration and the working group coordinators.

Article 5
Financing

Member assemblies shall meet the cost of participation of their officials in APKN activities, as well as the cost of communication with the APKN Secretariat.

Member assemblies undertaking or organizing activities of the APKN shall bear the costs of such activities.

The operating costs of the Secretariat of the APKN shall be covered by the budget of the host assembly.

Member assemblies may voluntarily contribute resources to the APKN Secretariat.

Upon the opinion of the Executive Committee, the APKN Secretariat may accept outside contributions and donations from non-member institutions to support its functioning and activities related to its programme of work.

Article 6
Amendment of the Charter

The responsibility of the revision of the Charter shall rest with the Speakers and Presidents of member assemblies meeting in plenary.