

ECOWAS Parliament proposes mediation committee on Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

The Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, has proposed the appointment of Adhoc Mediation Committee to prevail on three member states Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger not to leave the regional bloc. The Acting Speaker of the Community Parliament, Barau Jibrin, who is also the Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate, disclosed this at the opening of 2024 Second Extraordinary Session of the Sixth of the ECOWAS Parliament in Kano State, North West Nigeria. Senator Jibrin, who is the first Deputy Speaker of the regional Parliament, emphasized that there is no alternative to a strong united regional bloc.

"According to Senator Jibrin, "I will, in consultation with my colleagues on the Bureau, be proposing the appointment of an Ad hoc Mediation Committee whose mandate will be to work with all stakeholders in getting our brothers to rescind their decision and come home and work towards promoting dialogue with a view to resolving conflicts in the region. It's no doubt that we are stronger and there is absolutely no alternative to our collective aspirations of a united, peaceful and secure ECOWAS. Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso had in January this year announced their withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS. The junta-led countries had been suspended from the regional bloc for coup d'état and were urged to return to democratic rule. Reacting to the suspension, the three governments took the decision to withdraw from ECOWAS as according to them it was a "sovereign decision" to withdraw from the regional block. Senator Jibrin disclosed the session will also provide an opportunity for the Community Parliament to deliberate and provide fresh perspectives on pressing issues in the ECOWAS Region and proffer recommendations on how peace, security and stability can be attained.

"As the Parliament looks towards facilitating the promotion of democracy, checks and balances, as well as accountability in the ECOWAS Community, having a strong ECOWAS Parliament is indispensable. I have had the esteemed honor of leading this Parliament for barely two months and I have concluded that much needs to be done in terms of asserting the independence of the Parliament in the exercise of its important roles of parliamentary oversight and representation. There is, also, a compelling need to build strong collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission and undertake joint initiatives aimed at strengthening regional security and advancing development. While it is true that each institution has its unique prerogatives, the fact remains that there exist cross-cutting issues that are best addressed with enhanced collaboration among the community institutions.

He noted that since the inauguration of the sixth legislature of the ECOWAS Parliament on Thursday, April, 2024, it has been able to make some notable achievements and participated in various regional, continental and international programmes. "Within this short period, the ECOWAS Parliament participated in the Third Parliamentary Policy Dialogue on the Protection of Vulnerable Targets against terrorism, which was hosted by the United Nations Office on Counter Terrorism, a Capacity Building Training on Labor Migration Governance under the auspices of the African Union Commission and the International Conference on enhancing the role, relevance, and effectiveness of the ECOWAS Court of Justice through the strengthening of synergies between the Court and national stakeholders, which was hosted by our sister Institution the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice.

Additionally, members of the ECOWAS Female Parliamentarian Association were invited by the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies to share experience with the National Assembly of Nigeria on the modalities in establishing a multi-party women's caucus in the Nigerian National Assembly. We look forward to more of such engagements, especially with our counterparts

at the National Level, with the view to promoting regional integration.

In his address the Kano state Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf, emphasized the need to tackle the citizenship issues among ECOWAS member countries, regional security, integration, environmental and natural resources challenges, and higher education, employment, poverty, and democratic volatility.

He cautioned against allowing global powers to turn the region into a dumping ground for finished goods, stressing that Africa is not a dumping ground for global markets. The Kano Governor urged the Regional Parliament to revisit the issue of a common currency and passports, which would enhance the region's economic viability and global competitiveness. Governor Yusuf expressed concern about the proliferation of illicit drugs and arms and light weapons, calling for concerted efforts to combat these menaces.

Governor Yusuf said that, despite challenges, the West African regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stood at \$633 billion as of 2023, highlighting the region's potential to become a significant global economic key player.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs in Nigeria, Yusuf Maitama Tuggar in a message who assured the community of Nigeria's Government continued support identified ECOWAS Parliament as vital institution in fostering regional integration.

Tuggar, represented by Ambassador Musa Nuhu, the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to ECOWAS stressed the need for ECOWAS Community to strengthen its democratic institutions for the benefits of the region. He said, "we need to collaborate with all organs and institutions within the ECOWAS. You have at your disposal so many instruments to use for you to achieve that."

The Minister urged the ECOWAS Parliament to use its various mechanisms to engage member countries that currently under unconstitutional changes of government. Tuggar said, "as regional Parliamentarians, you have a role to play in harnessing the cooperation of our people. The Parliamentarians are closer to our populace and that is why you have to underscore the importance of the role you have are occupying today especially in this period where our sub-regional organization is so much challenged with numerous issues." He described the hosting of the regional meeting in the commercial city of Kano as important as it will greatly bridge the gap between the citizens and the regional community. During this session, the regional parliament is expected to hold deliberations and adopt three very important instruments which bear heavily on the progress and effective implementation of our mandate. They are, the Rules of Procedure of the Sixth Legislature, which was deferred from our Inaugural session. The Strategic Plan of the Sixth Legislature, and The Work Plan of the year 2024. The Rules of Procedure serves as a guide and direction for the parliament in checking procedural deficiencies. The Strategic Plan, on the other hand, serves as a crucial and indispensable tool in ensuring that the programs and activities of the parliament are directly linked with the overall strategic institutional objectives of ECOWAS, while the Work Plan sets the agenda for the engagements the year.

New, parliamentarians were sworn as members of the sixth legislature of the Community parliament before the commencement of plenary. They are Hon. Members of Parliament Ahmed Idris; Zainab Gimba; Usman Lawal Adamu; Ndume Mohammed Ali; Salam Bamidele. The ceremony was attended by the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero, the Emir of Bichi, Alhaji Nasiru Ado Bayero, the Emir Karaye, Alhaji Ibrahim Abubakar II and Emir of Gaya, Alhaji Aliyu Ibrahim.

ECOWAS Parliament new speaker proposes code of ethics, good conduct within parliaments

The newly elected Speaker of the Parliament of Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, Memounatou Ibrahima, has pledged to make the Community Parliament a respected and admired institution. Ibrahima made the pledge in her speech after she was sworn in as the speaker of the regional Parliament at the 2024 Second Extraordinary Session of the Sixth Legislature of the ECOWAS Parliament in Kano, North West Nigeria. She disclosed that for the parliament to get the respect it deserves a code of ethics and good conduct needs to be initiated within the parliament. According to her, "The first challenge is to continue to improve the image and functioning of our Parliament in order to make it a respected and admired institution. Indeed, we must succeed in inspiring respect, consideration and admiration through our individual and collective dedication, and through the quality and relevance of our work and resolutions.

With this in mind, we will be considering the possibility of putting together and implementing a code of ethics and good conduct within the Parliament, because our people want to be proud of their parliament, whose members must demonstrate diligence, efficiency, objectivity and accountability." Ibrahima, who is the first female speaker of ECOWAS Parliament, also expressed her commitment to strengthen relationships with national parliaments, with a view to consolidating the basis for collaboration and fostering synergy in initiatives, actions and programmes. "To achieve this, we intend organising rotational activities, bringing together Members of the ECOWAS Parliament and those of national parliaments," Ibrahima explained. On the parliamentary functions of the Community Parliament, Ibrahima said the regional parliament under her leadership will aim at concrete results and giving priority to sessions dedicated to oral

and written questions on major concerns of the populations. "We will also place special emphasis on the effective fulfilment of our twofold parliamentary mission, namely our right to propose amendments and to oversee the actions of Community institutions and agencies. In the same vein, the Sixth Legislature will strive, in accordance with the provisions of our Rule of Procedure, to be highly creative and will aim for concrete results by giving priority to sessions dedicated to oral and written questions on the major concerns of our populations."

The speaker said the Parliament will initiative programmes to enhance the skills of women and the youth, help combat the radicalisation of young people, reduce the number of victims of illegal immigration, and make Parliament more visible and appreciated by the local population. At international level, Ibrahima said the Parliament's activities will be pursued and intensified to enhance its reputation, accelerate regional integration and contribute to

peace on the continent and in the world. She said: "I am delighted that significant progress has already been made in the area of inter-parliamentary cooperation. The participation of several heads of regional and international institutions and diplomatic representations at our sessions is evidence of this. This confirms our strong partnership and effective solidarity in the face of the many challenges facing the region and the world. Ibrahima, from Togo, was elected the speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, in accordance with the provision of the alphabetical rotational speakership of the regional legislative body as stipulated by the Supplementary Act on Enhancement of Powers of the Community Parliament. Her predecessor was Sidie Mohamed Tunis from Sierra Leone.



ECOWAS Speaker vows to strengthen communication division

The newly inaugurated first female Speaker of the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Rt. Hon. Maimunatu Ibrahima, has vowed to strengthen the communication division of ECOWAS Parliament, as part of her renewed effort to reposition the Parliament. The Speaker who made this pledge in her inaugural speech, also said, the Legislature will have to put in place an effective communication policy and strategies that will enable it to lend a listening ear to the people on a permanent basis, and to better disseminate Community acts adopted by Parliament. She explained: "its one thing to successfully accomplish one's mission, but it's another to make it known and, above all, to make the outcome available to the beneficiaries. This means that our Legislature will have to put in place an effective communication policy and strategies that will enable it to lend a listening ear to the people on a permanent basis, and to better disseminate Community acts adopted by Parliament. For this reason, national delegations will be called upon to lead feedback sessions on the work of the ECOWAS Parliament in their national parliaments. We will also strengthen our partnership with media professionals in Member States. We will consider organising interactive activities between Members of the ECOWAS Parliament and the populations of member countries.

"As you can see, the mandate given us is a weighty but very exciting one, since it's all about serving the community to ensure its prosperity and development. We have willingly chosen to be on this battlefield. Therefore, let us join forces beyond our differences in order to remain faithful to our commitments and make our Legislature indelibly etched in history. Let us resolutely get to work to produce concrete and useful results for ECOWAS. Dear fellow Members of Parliament and dedicated members of Parliament's administrative staff, I know I can count on your efforts, your contributions, your effective presence at our deliberations and, above all, your determination throughout this Legislature. Your

passion, dedication and commitment to achieving the objectives of Parliament will enable us to make ECOWAS an ECOWAS of Peoples, where peace, security and prosperity will prevail for all".

Ibrahima also averred that despite the tremendous work of her predecessors and the enormous contributions of Parliament to the development of the ECOWAS populations, the region is still bedeviled by numerous political, economic and security crises in several Member States.

The most serious of these crises, the Speaker said, include the resurgence of coups d'etat, tensions resulting from peoples' desire for self-determination, high unemployment among West



African youth, climate change and the resurgence of terrorist attacks in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. This, she noted, prompted the adoption in 2020 of the ECOWAS Vision 2050 by the Authority of Heads of State and Government. "This

Vision 2050, which succeeds Vision 2020, requires us to focus our efforts on the following five pillars: – Peace, security and stability; – Governance and rule of law; – Economic integration and inter-connectivity; -Transformation, inclusive and sustainable development and – Social inclusion. These are the pillars that inspired the development of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan and 2024 Activity Plan of the ECOWAS Parliament, which we have validated". She said that as MPs, they have a weighty responsibility to shoulder, and they must be aware of this and remain fully faithful to their commitments. She added that that is why they need to work together, with wisdom, rigor and determination to meet the major challenges that lie ahead. The Speaker equally pointed out that the first challenge is to continue to improve the image and functioning of Parliament in order to make it a respected and admired institution. "Indeed, we must succeed in inspiring respect, consideration and admiration through our individual and collective dedication, and through the quality and relevance of our work and resolutions," she concluded.