

ECOWAS, EAC Move to Forge Pan-African Parliament Network, Push Unified Voice on Global Issues

The Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, Hon. Hadja Memounatou Ibrahima, has concluded a three-day working visit to the East African Community (EAC) headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. The delegation presented a joint Concept Note proposing the creation of a Network of Regional and Supranational Parliamentary Institutions. The proposed network would focus on common continental and global challenges, including climate change, migration, peace and security, economic integration, digital transformation and governance. Under the concept, participating institutions would operate through a rotational leadership structure and hold sessions twice a year.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament is seeking to deepen legislative cooperation between West and East Africa through the proposed establishment of a network bringing together regional and supranational parliamentary institutions. The initiative was unveiled during a three-day working visit by the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, Hon. Hadja Memounatou Ibrahima, to the headquarters of the East African Community (EAC) in Arusha, Tanzania. Ibrahima and her delegation were hosted by the Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Rt. Hon. Joseph Ntakirutimana, and the Clerk of the Assembly, Mr. Alex Obatre. The visit brought together senior representatives of key regional institutions and provided an opportunity for the two regional blocs to explore mechanisms for closer parliamentary engagement and coordination.

During the engagements, the ECOWAS delegation held consultations with officials of the EAC Secretariat, the East African Court of Justice and the Pan African Postal Union. At the centre of the discussions was a joint Concept Note proposing the creation of a Network of Regional and Supranational Parliamentary Institutions. The proposed network is envisaged as a platform through which regional and continental legislative institutions can share experiences, strengthen institutional capacity and develop coordinated responses to issues affecting African countries. Institutions that could participate include the EALA, ECOWAS Parliament and Pan-African Parliament (PAP), while the concept also envisages engagement with other supranational parliamentary institutions, including the European Parliament. The initiative is expected to operate within existing international parliamentary frameworks, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), while

creating a more structured mechanism for cooperation among regional legislative bodies. According to the concept, institutional cooperation would constitute one of the major pillars of the proposed network. The participating institutions would be expected to exchange knowledge and best practices in areas such as legislation, governance, parliamentary administration and digital transformation.

The proposed arrangement would also seek to strengthen Africa's collective voice in international affairs. Rather than individual regional blocs pursuing separate positions on major international questions, the network would provide an avenue for parliamentary institutions to consult, harmonize positions and coordinate strategies in multilateral forums. The proposal comes against the backdrop of growing calls



for greater African integration and stronger continental coordination in responding to issues that increasingly transcend national and regional boundaries. Migration, climate change, peace and security, economic integration and other cross-border challenges have increasingly required coordinated responses from African countries and institutions. The proposed parliamentary network would therefore provide a platform for legislators to contribute to those continental responses, while also strengthening parliamentary diplomacy between regional organizations. Another key component of the proposal is a rotational leadership structure. Under the concept, leadership of the network would rotate among participating institutions, while biannual sessions would provide regular opportunities for members to review progress, coordinate positions and address emerging issues. The proposed arrangement is intended to promote inclusiveness and prevent the initiative from being dominated by any single regional institution. The Arusha engagement also underscores growing efforts to strengthen institutional links between West and East Africa at a time when the continent continues to pursue deeper political and economic integration.