



International Conference
African Legal Resources
Challenges and Opportunities of Legislative Informatics
21 – 22 March 2007
Abuja, Nigeria

FINAL DECLARATION

The International Conference *African Legal Resources: Challenges and Opportunities of Legislative Informatics* took place in Abuja, Nigeria on 21 and 22 March 2007 and gathered delegations from the Pan African Parliament and the Parliaments of Angola, Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe. Officials from the SADC Parliamentary Forum, the European Parliament, the UK Parliament, the United States National Conference of State Legislatures, and representatives of the United Nations and of African and European universities also attended the Conference. The Government of Egypt and Italy sent diplomatic envoys to follow the event.

The Conference was preceded by the international workshop *Towards the Establishment of an African Parliamentary Knowledge Network on ICT, documentation and legislation* held on 20 March 2007.

The Conference was co-organized, under the aegis of the Pan African Parliament, by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the National Assembly of Nigeria, with the support of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.

The Conference, having benefited from the discussions and different views of presenters and participants, intends to reflect the spirit of the meeting through this final Declaration.

The Conference:

Recognizing the value of the regional initiative *Strengthening Parliaments' Information Systems in Africa*, funded by the Italian Government through the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs;

Acknowledging the process of support to African Parliaments' modernization taken forward by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Pan African Parliament since 2005;

Recalling the final Declaration of the International Conference *Parliaments' Information Management in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities of ICTs to Strengthen Democracy and Parliamentary Governance*, which took place in Nairobi, Kenya on 10 and 11 February 2005;

Taking note of the ACP-EU- Joint Parliamentary Assembly resolution on the role of National Parliaments in Implementing the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, which made reference to the Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan and the partnership formed around it;

Recalling the resolution adopted by the Pan African Parliament on 2 December 2005 to reiterate the strengthening of the role of African parliaments in fostering democracy and good governance through knowledge and information management;

Taking note of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the United Nations and the Pan African Parliament in relation to the above mentioned resolution and the implementation of the Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan;

Acknowledging the work carried out by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs on African standards for the management of digital parliamentary and legislative documents, on collaborative and open source parliamentary and legislative information systems, and on the guidelines for legislative drafting;

Reaffirming African Parliaments' ownership of the process set in motion and renewing the commitment to its goals and objectives;

Invites African Parliaments to take full advantage of the tools placed at their disposal by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and to drive the process of modernization of parliamentary practices in a cooperative manner;

Endorses AKOMA NTOSO (Architecture for Knowledge Oriented Management of African Normative Text using Open Standards and Ontologies) and encourages all Parliaments to adopt common African standards for parliamentary and legislative digital documents;

Welcomes the development of Bungeni as an open source parliamentary and legislative information system and encourages Parliaments to be a part of this collaborative development effort;

Invites African Parliaments to contribute to the elaboration of legislative drafting guidelines for Africa to promote better legislation and foster the harmonization of

legislation at continental level, which is a strategic objective of the Pan African Parliament;

Urges African Parliaments, universities and stakeholders in the legislative process to work together and seize the opportunity offered by information and communication technologies to improve access to and management of information;

Adopts the final communiqué of the International Workshop which preceded the Conference as an integral part of this Declaration and welcomes the agreement to establish the African Parliamentary Knowledge Network;

The Conference invites the Pan African Parliament to take note of this Declaration and to find ways to endorse its content and to transmit it to the African Union.

The Conference reiterates the call for development partners to seriously consider supporting these important initiatives.

The Conference expresses its deep gratitude to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and in particular to the National Assembly of Nigeria, for their warm hospitality and the organizational aspects of the meeting; to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the substantive support of the Conference; to the Government of Italy for the continuous support provided in this area of work; and to the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament for its contribution to the Conference.

Abuja, Nigeria, this 22nd day of March, 2007.