



CONFERENCE REPORT

EU Presidency Seminar on Africa in Finland

REPORT OF THE EU PRESIDENCY SEMINAR ON AFRICA – *PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF NEPAD AND THE MDGS,*
HELSINKI, 23 – 24 NOVEMBER 2006



Parliamentarians agree upon actions for Africa's Economic Development

MPs from Africa and Europe discussed and adopted Recommendations for Parliamentary Action to increase Africa's economic development P 3

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MPs discuss the economic empowerment of women

Parliamentarians promoted the necessity of the participation of women in the economic and political development of Africa for gender equality and genuine democracy P 6

MPs seek ways to improve economic development in Africa

Dr. Jan Nico Scholten, the Executive President of AWEPA:

"It is the overarching goal of every nation to improve its economic development, as a more prosperous economy under certain conditions can ultimately lead to a greater income per person, raised living standards, better education, improved healthcare and environmental protection. African countries strive for economic development: to meet the Millennium Development Goals African countries need to sustain a real growth rate of 7% by 2010 from current levels of close to 3%. At this rate of growth African economies would double in a decade".

The EU Presidency Seminar on Africa, entitled "Parliamentary Partnership for Africa's Economic Development in the framework of NEPAD and the MDGs", was held during the Finnish Presidency of the European Union in November 2006. AWEPA was very pleased to welcome representatives of 13 European and 8 African parliaments at this seminar in Helsinki.

The overall aim of the EU Presidency Seminar on Africa was "to foster an engaged African-European parliamentary dialogue about economic development

and to identify actions that parliamentarians on both continents can undertake to assist development in Africa". A number of sessions took place, covering a broad range of African-European parliamentary issues under the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These were all linked by the theme of economic development.

The African and European MPs took steps to translate the discussions that took place during the seminar into concrete action by adopting the



Dr. Jan Nico Scholten, AWEPA Executive President

"Recommendations for Parliamentary Action", see also page 9.

AWEPA would like to thank the Finnish Parliament, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for supporting this fruitful conference in the interest of Africa, in the interest of human dignity. •

EU Presidency Seminars strengthen Euro-African partnerships

AWEPA organises twice per year international parliamentary seminars under the auspices of the rotating EU Presidency.

During these seminars the focus is on the following key areas: keeping African priorities, in the context of NEPAD and the MDGs, on the political agenda of the European Union and the EU member states, promoting partnerships between European and African parliaments to strengthen strong parliamentary democracies, and promoting dialogue and networking for parliamentarians from Africa with each other and with their colleagues from Europe stimulating action to achieve the MDGs.

In conjunction with the Austrian chair of the EU during the first half of 2006, AWEPA organised an EU Presidency

seminar entitled "Euro-African Pact for Africa's Development: The Role of Parliamentarians", in Cape Town in May 2006.

The overall aim of this seminar was to promote dialogue and partnership between MPs from Africa and Europe, especially parliamentarians from the new EU member states. During the seminar both European and African parliamentarians committed themselves to strengthen their partnerships and develop new ones in order to further the goal of actively monitoring the development assistance from Europe to Africa. In addition, African parliamentarians committed themselves to the fulfilment of the MDGs through effective oversight, legislation and budgets. The European parliamentarians

committed themselves to fulfil the promises made to Africa concerning ODA, debt relief and trade reform. In Europe, AWEPA will facilitate the monitoring process, through the ongoing European Development Policy Tracking Mechanism.

At the EU Presidency Seminar in Helsinki the main topic of the Cape Town seminar of strengthening partnerships between European and African MPs was continued, but with a special focus on the enhancement of the economic development of Africa. Furthermore, the Helsinki seminar briefly reported back on the AWEPA conference on parliamentary and private sector cooperation which took place in Arusha, in September 2006. •

MPs from Africa and Europe adopt Recommendations for Parliamentary Action for Africa's Economic Development

The MPs from both continents identified actions that parliamentarians can undertake to further the goal of the successful development of the economies of African countries. During the seminar, a fruitful parliamentary dialogue between African and European MPs took place in order to explore the necessary conditions for an improved climate for investment and (international) trade. The parliamentarians fully reaffirmed and supported NEPAD and the MDGs and adopted Recommendations for Parliamentary Action for Africa's Economic Development. They committed themselves to undertake action upon the following key issues:

- The MPs welcomed the Draft Guidelines for Parliamentary Action on Creating a Conducive Environment for Business, Entrepreneurship,

Investment and Trade (September 2006), highlighting the important role of the private sector in economic growth.

- The parliamentarians called on countries in Europe to give higher priority to the establishment of fair trade relationships in international trade negotiations.
- The access to finance, especially access of African women to micro-finance needs to be improved in order to attain MDG number 3 of gender equality and the (economic) empowerment of women.
- Special attention has been given to the importance of the UNICEF Global Campaign "Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS" and the need to participate actively in policy dialogue on Orphans and Vulnerable Children

(OVC) in Africa and the North.

- The targets set for the Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa are monitored by the NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians (NCGAP) in their joint project with AWEPA. The MPs recognised that greater transparency and mutual accountability by their governments is needed. Besides, African parliamentarians should play a bigger role in the OECD/ECA Mutual Review of Development Efficiency.

A complete overview of all the recommendations that the participants agreed upon can be found at the end of this report.

Economic Empowerment of African Women

The Access of African Women to Micro-Credit

At the Helsinki seminar the importance of the economic empowerment of African women was addressed. One of the key strategies to enhance the economic empowerment of women and in the end reduce poverty is to increase women's access to credit. Micro-finance gives poor people the opportunity to improve their economic welfare and it helps to empower women, since it supports gender equity and improves the well-being of households. Experience to date indicated that women who benefit from micro-finance services have already contributed significantly to the GNP of some countries in Africa. Nevertheless, a lot of self-employed still lack access to micro-credit programmes. The unmet demand is very high.

Besides micro-finance, economic empowerment for women can be enhanced through intensive capacity building in relevant areas, e.g. agriculture and cottage industries. Also the legal framework (e.g. family law, commercial

law and rules of work) to protect women's rights should be strengthened and institutionalised. Special attention should be given to equal access to and control over economic resources and equality in employment. Furthermore, HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) funds must be made available for micro-credits to women who have shown that they can generate income.

The parliamentarians at the seminar acknowledged their role in these issues. They did this against the background of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of Women in Africa (the African Women's Protocol), in particular Article 13 on Economic Rights and Social Protection. Also the recommendations "The Access of Central African Women to Micro-Credit", which were drafted by the Network of Women Parliamentarians of Central Africa (RFPAC) at a conference on 7 September 2006 in Arusha were welcomed by the participants.



Dr. Jennifer Riria, Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Women Finance Trust

The Global Campaign “Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS”

In sub-Saharan Africa alone, there are more than 48 million children who have lost at least one parent due to HIV/AIDS and other causes.

In 2005, UNICEF and its partners launched a global campaign on Children and AIDS with the aim to “make significant, practical, measurable and sustainable contributions to local, national and international efforts to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS in children and adolescents”. In line with NEPAD and the MDGs to combat HIV/AIDS, the campaign is looking to increase resource flows, scale up action and step up advocacy and communication work in five main areas, known as the **Five Ps**:

- **PMTCT Plus:** drugs to prevent MTCT and voluntary testing and counselling services are widely available to children and mothers. Children and pregnant women that are HIV infected are prioritised into care, support and treatment programs.
- **Paediatric treatment:** paediatric HIV drug formulations, including cotrimoxazole to prevent opportunistic infections.

- **Protection,** care and support for children affected by HIV/AIDS: increase the proportion of children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS receiving quality family, community and government support, including education, healthcare, nutrition and psycho-social support.
- **Prevention:** reduce adolescent risks and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS by increasing access to and use of gender-sensitive prevention information, skills and services.
- **Partnerships:** one of the most important elements in the Global Campaign on Children and AIDS.

Furthermore, UNICEF will also help the countries that have ratified the “Convention on the Rights of the Child”, i.a. to take affirmative action and to meet their responsibility to provide special protection for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).

AWEPA and UNICEF agreed to work together to scale up parliamentary efforts in the struggle against HIV/AIDS on OVC in line with the Global Campaign. In Africa, AWEPA and UNICEF jointly



Mr. Heimo Laakkonen, Representative for Kenya, UNICEF Representative for Kenya UNICEF ESARO

organised several activities to further the goal of protection, care and support of OVC, among others through stimulating MPs to draft National Plans of Action on HIV/AIDS and OVC (e.g. draft questions, motions, inquiries and adjusted development policies). The next step will be to bring these results to the attention of the MPs in Europe. AWEPA together with the UNICEF national committees across Europe, will organise information briefings in the national parliaments in Europe and the European Parliament to strengthen their awareness, monitor European commitments and pledges made and stimulate new commitments. •

Parliamentary Oversight of Development Assistance

At the meeting of the European Council on 24 May 2005, all EU Member States agreed to increase their Official Development Assistance (ODA) extensively in order to be able to attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

There are several mechanisms to assess and monitor the progress in delivering on commitments and achieving the goals. The African Partnership Forum (APF) is a monitoring mechanism jointly agreed upon by G8 Heads and African Leaders after the Evian G8 Summit in May 2003. The role of the APF is to record, monitor and report on delivery of financing and policy commitments, identify issues and difficulties and agree the way forward. However, parliamentarians are not involved in this process yet.

In line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which sets out the commitments of donor and partner countries to address the challenges of

scaling up effective aid, another monitoring mechanism was launched, namely the “Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness”. This consultation mechanism between Africa and the OECD countries was initiated by the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) and developed by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Although it’s a very valuable mechanism, since it requests for mutual accountability, it is also lacking the parliamentary involvement and it has not been as open as it should be.

African and European parliamentarians have a vital oversight role to play in exercising oversight over their national governments with regard to ODA. At a meeting of MPs from across Africa in Nairobi in 2003, a resolution was adopted

to establish the NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians. In line with the objectives of NEPAD, the Contact Group will process and analyse the ODA data, looking at the amounts, allocations, targets etc.

In October 2006 AWEPA and the NEPAD Contact Group started a pilot project with the aim “to enhance the participation of parliaments in Africa and Europe in development policy with respect to African countries in the context of NEPAD as called for in the Paris Declaration”. As a pilot AWEPA collected information on ODA in three European countries: Ireland, the United Kingdom and Sweden concerning the following African countries: Egypt, Mali, Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa.

In addition, AWEPA continues to inform parliamentarians through the “European Development Policy Tracking Mechanism”, which is an ongoing process. •

Opening Session

At the opening session the key note speakers addressed the essential role of parliamentarians in the improvement of Africa's economic development and the need to bring this process forward together. In the context of NEPAD and the achievement of the MDGs political dialogue and a common approach are required to discover new opportunities for Africa's recovery and to enhance Africa's integration into the global economy.



H.E. Marjatta Rasi, Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

“Without economic growth it is not possible to beat poverty”

H.E. Marjatta Rasi, Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, emphasized the need for a common framework “to promote the achievement of the MDGs and to cement ties between the two continents beyond formal political and economic interaction”. Therefore, as Ms. Rasi said, a necessary and logical step would be to transform the current EU Strategy into a Joint EU/Africa Strategy. In line with the APRM she mentioned the importance of African ownership when looking at the broad-based as well as the business development. As Ms. Rasi said it is “our aim to give African economies a possibility to participate in global economic production networks and structures”.



Hon. Arja Alho, Member of the Parliament of Finland, Head of the AWEPA section in Finland

“Finland became the first country to have more than a third of its MPs women”

“The global economy offers endless possibilities if we play it fair”

The Speaker of the Finnish Parliament, Hon. Paavo Lipponen, opened the seminar and paid some special attention to the 100 year anniversary of their parliamentary system. Finland became the first country in the world where all citizens of age, irrespective of wealth or gender, were given the right to vote in elections and stand as candidate. Political as well as economic equality is a crucial prerequisite for the eradication of poverty and to increase economic growth and development in Africa. The EU Member States agreed to increase the EU aid to Africa. In order to accelerate progress, parliamentarians



Hon. Paavo Lipponen, Speaker of the Parliament of Finland

should hold their government to account to deliver on commitments regarding ODA. Furthermore, the Speaker emphasized that business cooperation between companies and organisations in developing and developed countries, needs to be encouraged and governments in developing countries have to keep up work on reform to create a better investment and business climate.

“African parliaments need to be empowered to play their watchdog role”

Hon. Samuel John Sitta, Speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania, raised the issue of parliamentary oversight. Hon. Sitta emphasized that parliaments are oversight institutions and they have the responsibility to ensure that the government lives up to the expectations of the people. They need to monitor the implementation of programmes such as NEPAD and the MDGs at the global level. Hon. Sitta said that parliaments, in order to be effective and efficient, must have access to information from the government and participate in all stages of projects from planning to evaluation. In short, the empowerment of African parliaments is a prerequisite for the empowerment of the people.

The Speaker was pleased to inform the participants that the Parliament of Tanzania and AWEPA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Friday 24 November parallel to the seminar. The Tanzanian Parliament and



Hon. Samuel John Sitta, Speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania.

AWEPA renewed their cooperation to enhance and strengthen the Parliament as an institution through the implementation of a Parliamentary Cooperation Programme in Tanzania.

Economic Empowerment of African Women

The speakers of this session promoted the necessity of participation of women in the economic and political development of Africa for gender equality and genuine democracy. Although African governments committed themselves to a range of international, regional and Pan-African declarations on gender equality, including the Beijing Declaration, these remain unfulfilled. The practical situation is still that African women face systematic barriers and discrimination in the political and economic life.

This session was chaired by **Hon. Arja Alho**, Member of the Parliament of Finland, Head of the AWEPA section in Finland, re-emphasized Finland's long-standing cultural tradition of gender-equality, e.g. women's right to education, women's right to work and married women gained the right to manage their own income.

Dr. Jennifer Riria, Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Women Finance Trust (KWFT), called on the participants to promote micro-finance as a vehicle for the

empowerment of women in Africa. She stated that "micro-finance, by providing small loans, savings, insurance, is the key strategy for reducing poverty in all forms".

Besides, women also need non-financial services that address other needs such as: access to fuel, water, energy and housing.

"Increasing women's access to credit"

Hon. Winifred Masiko, Chairperson of the Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), informed the parliamentarians that the economic empowerment of women can be realized through "the promotion of equal access to and control over economically significant resources and benefits". Furthermore, increasing women's access to credit has also been a key strategy for women's economic empowerment. Hon. Masiko continued by stating that the legal framework to protect women's rights needs to be institutionalized. In Uganda, there are various national mechanisms for promoting gender issues. For example, a political initiative developed as a follow up to the Beijing conference is a



Hon. Winifred Masiko, Chairperson of the Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA)

National Action Plan on Women which is aimed at the attainment of equal opportunities for women by giving them the opportunity to participate in and benefit from socio-economic and political development.

Parliamentary Action for an Improved African Investment Climate

At the Millennium Summit the international community set a target to halve poverty by the year 2015. In order to achieve this the parliamentarians in Africa and Europe are urged to take priority actions to create a conducive investment climate for sustainable economic growth of Africa. During this session the key-note speakers and participants discussed the prerequisites to provide such an environment.

Ms. Delene Mark, Chief Executive Officer of the organisation "Health, Opportunity, Partnership, Employment" (HOPE) Africa, stressed the importance of partnerships to advance the development of African countries, economically, politically and culturally. These emerge after a long process of consultation and arriving at the same place with the same vision. In order to achieve this, Africa's voices for Africa's development should be promoted.

Mr. Timo Vuori, General Secretary of the Finnish Section of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC Finland), spoke in his presentation about the promotion of global trade and economy, which will ultimately lead to poverty reduction. In order for Africa to achieve this

goal Mr. Vuori stated that "the attraction of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the Africa is a condition for fair market access". Other prerequisites to the economic integration of African countries would be political stability, transparency, fair and equitable treatment from local governments and a well developed private sector.

Ms. Davina Makhan, Programme Officer of the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), paid special attention to the importance of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and investment. According to Ms. Makhan "EPAs are more than just trade. Regional markets will increase credibility, stimulate reforms and set an institutional framework necessary to attract investments".

"More aid is not enough"

Hon. Kimmo Kiljunen, Member of the Parliament of Finland and Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank and AWEPA Council Member, stated that "not only more aid, but more coherent development policies are required to meet the MDGs". He continued by stating that aid also has to be spent more effectively. The responsibility of the oversight of the development assistance lies in the hands of both continents. Fact is that if the global export of developing countries would increase by 8%, their income perspective would be the same as doubling the global aid. Therefore trade facilitation, opening the access to the world markets for products from developing countries, is crucial in building a strong economy in those countries. In this light Hon. Kiljunen also addressed the importance of good governance and anti-corruption. The resources should be divided equally, since it would be impossible to make economic progress in a politically unstable country.

Update on the Global Campaign “Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS”

In 2005, UNICEF and its partners launched the Global Campaign “Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS”, focusing on 5 main areas of concern, namely: PMTCT Plus, Paediatric treatment, Protection, Prevention and Partnerships. The campaign aims to increase resource flows, scale up (parliamentary) action and calls for more advocacy and communication work. During this session a number of these necessary actions were discussed, in particular the need to accelerate funds.

Mr. Heimo Laakkonen, UNICEF Representative for Kenya UNICEF ESARO
“protecting children is central to economic and social welfare”

Several countries in sub-Saharan Africa that suffer from the HIV/AIDS pandemic have introduced so-called “social protection programmes”, as Mr. Laakkonen noted.



Hon. Kimmo Kiljunen, Member of the Parliament of Finland, Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank and AWEPA Council Member

He explained that social protection refers to: social insurance, social assistance, public work programmes, cash transfers and micro-finance, which are all important mechanisms to address the desperate conditions and deprivations that impact OVC and put the whole development of Africa at risk. However, the current social protection programmes lack sufficient funds to reach the poorest and most vulnerable households and children on a large scale. Furthermore, Mr. Laakkonen paid special attention to social cash transfer programmes, to provide cash grants to the poor. These include pensions, which are crucial in supporting the care of grandmothers for OVC.

Patrick McCormick, Communication Officer, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe, started his speech with some positive news. He informed the participants that “we have seen more progress in the last few years than in the previous 20”. Regarding the P of Prevention we have noticed positive trends in young people’s sexual behaviour, which resulted in declines in HIV prevalence among young people in several African countries. Since the launch of the Global Campaign there has been significant progress for children, however a lot more can and should be done. In this light Mr. McCormick mentions the need to strengthen healthcare systems in low income countries, the increase of funds to realize the goals, political will and conviction. “With enough committed people, we can make the campaign work”.



Hon. Phillip Okundi, Member of the Parliament of Kenya and Chairman OVC Committee.

“above all they need to be children who enjoy their childhood”

“HIV/AIDS, more than any other health issue, is critical in setting back a country’s development because it attacks children, young people in their most productive years, placing an undue strain on the economy”, said Hon. Okundi. He continued by stating that parliamentarians as elected representatives have a vital role to play and must be encouraged to actively participate in and support the global campaign. He described various parliamentary actions to be taken, e.g. monitoring and evaluating the responsibilities of the governments, particularly in the health sector. Another effective initiative is the development of a plan for basic needs and employment, connected to poverty-reduction projects, to generate income for OVC. At present, micro-finances are being established in the constituencies of Kenya, to assist and support the communities.



Parliamentary Oversight of Development Assistance

At present, aid is very often negotiated between governments of the donor countries and recipient countries, without informing parliaments. However, parliamentarians have a key role to play in assessing and monitoring the achievement of commitments and goals concerning ODA, including as part of its financial oversight role. This session addressed the issue of parliamentary oversight of development assistance.

Ms. Anni Sinnemäki, Member of the Parliament of Finland, informed the MPs and experts that the image of development assistance is quite positive at the moment, 70% of the Finnish population is of the opinion that this should be increased. The Fins have faith in a correct spending of aid and they respect the work that is done by the parliamentarians. However there is still a lot that needs to be done. Finland has stayed behind in comparison to other Nordic countries and has not reached the initial target of 0.7% and although the amounts had been increased, the estimation for next year will be only 0.43%.

Mr. Karim Dahou, Advisor of the Africa Partnership Forum Support Unit of the OECD, addressed the Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness, as “a biennial process of dialogue between Africa and OECD leaders and policy makers on development progress in Africa, focusing on African policies and performance and OECD policies and performance”. It is a consultation mechanism between Africa and OECD countries to assess and monitor progress in delivering commitments made by OECD countries. In this respect Mr. Dahou emphasized the importance of “ownership and leadership”

by the different partners, since this is essential for the relevant impact of mutual accountability arrangements. Also the tone is important, it should be objective, frank and reasoned. Furthermore, by also examining the lessons learnt (e.g. peer learning), constructive engagement can be accomplished.

“We need to know that every euro voted has an effect on the ground”, as **Hon. Brendan Howlin**, MP Ireland and Vice-President of AWEPA, stated. According to Mr. Howlin we are often ignorant about

how exactly development aid is spent and who in the end receives it. This is the role of the parliamentarians in Europe, but also in Africa. Therefore, as Mr. Howlin continued, we also need to empower our brothers and sisters in the parliaments of Africa, so they can exercise the oversight capacity given to them, to the people of the recipient countries, in order for them to determine how the aid is spent and how effectively it is spent. The information flow must be accessible. “We need to ensure that we are delivering what is required”.



Prof. Ben Turok, MP and Chair of the NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians (NCGAP)

“Examine the true character of ODA”

Prof. Ben Turok, MP and Chair of the NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians (NCGAP), said that “we are hoping that by re-examining the traditional economic relations between Europe and Africa, by way of looking deeper into ODA, we shall strengthen our own political institutions, in particular parliamentary oversight, and uncover new opportunities for Africa’s recovery so that it can take its rightful place in the world system”. Prof. Turok called on the

parliamentarians from Africa and Europe to perform their respective roles and responsibilities in exercising oversight over their Executives. According to Prof. Turok development assistance for Africa is not adequately discussed in the Parliaments of Europe and Africa. In addition, Prof. Turok noted that aid is negotiated between the governments of Europe and the governments of Africa and parliamentarians are not involved in this process. The MPs should wonder why this information is not publicly available, since both the public in the donor countries and the public in Africa would like to be reassured that ODA is used properly and effectively. To see whether the allocations are in tune with the objectives of NEPAD, the NEPAD Contact Group will process the data by recipient country and the relevant parliaments. Then it is the task of the recipient parliament to analyse this data in the context of their national budgets.

Closing remarks

During the closing session Dr. Jan Nico Scholten, AWEPA Executive President together with Hon. Arja Alho, Member of the Parliament of Finland, Head of the AWEPA section in Finland, reflected on the sessions that took place, the discussions that were held and the achieved results. They concluded that it is crucial to cooperate, to create strong partnerships in order to improve the economic development in Africa and to meet the MDGs in line with the objectives of NEPAD.



Mr. Pär Granstedt, AWEPA Vice-President, presented the recommendations for parliamentary action which were discussed by the participants. The full result can be found in the following section of this report.

Hon. Alho closed the seminar with the following appropriate poem:

By Eino Leino: ONE FAITH ALONE

*On this earth there are many faiths
and one supports the other.
The bard alone has but one
and for him that is quite enough.
As much that there is love in us
as much we have eternity,
as much will also then remain
when the end of our day is here.
(translated by Börje Vähämäki)*

**Parliamentary Partnership for Africa's Economic Development in the
Framework of NEPAD and the MDGs
Helsinki, 23 – 24 November 2006**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARLIAMENTARY ACTION

We, as Members of Parliaments from Africa and Europe, participated in the EU Presidency Seminar on Africa that was organized by AWEPA in cooperation with the Parliament of Finland, with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. In the framework of the Finnish Presidency of the European Union we met in Helsinki on 23 and 24 November 2006 to discuss maintaining enduring partnerships between African and European parliamentarians in order to create a conducive climate for sustainable economic development in Africa.

Parliament is the pre-eminent democratic institution to provide oversight and accountability, and to initiate actions in the areas discussed during the Seminar. Parliament must be given the opportunity to function well, in the interest of participatory democracy, and to undertake regional and inter-regional dialogue among parliamentary colleagues. We reaffirm our full support for the 'New Partnership for Africa's Development' (NEPAD) and commit ourselves to promote partnerships based on mutual respect. We reaffirm our full support for the 'Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) and call for a speedy and effective implementation of the commitments made by African governments and the European Union.

We would like to undertake action upon the following points:

INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN AFRICA

- **Africa**
- 1. We note and support the commitments of NEPAD policy and of the AU Heads of States meetings to promote economic development, including entrepreneurship, investment and trade in and with Africa, including the Maputo Declaration (2004) highlighting the importance of the agricultural sector and its contribution to African economies.

- 2. We note and support the Draft Guidelines for Parliamentary Action on Creating a Conducive Environment for Business, Entrepreneurship, Investment and Trade, which resulted from the EALA/AWEPA/UNEP regional seminar in Arusha, Tanzania, on 8-9 September 2006, and stressed the importance of the private sector for economic growth.

- **Europe**

- 1. We are committed to creating an enabling environment for Africa's economic and social development. Therefore high priority must be given to the establishment of fair trade relationships in international trade negotiations, including the WTO and EPAs, and the enhancement of Aid for Trade.
- 2. We call for harmonization among the EU Member States of effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions against corruption, including in the private sector, and to monitor the implementation of anti-corruption clauses, including to make European anti-corruption laws and mechanisms more effective in terms of prosecution in Europe and Africa.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF AFRICAN WOMEN

- **Africa**
- 1. We endorse the ratification and domestication of the 'Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of Women in Africa' (the African Women's Protocol) with a special focus on Article 13: "Economic and Social Welfare Rights", stating that legislative and other measures will be taken to safeguard equal opportunities for women in work and career advancement and other economic opportunities, such as Family Laws, property rights and reproductive and sexual rights in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
- 2. We welcome the recommendations on the role of parliamentarians in improving access to finance, especially the access of African women to micro-finance, which resulted from the UNEP/AWEPA regional seminar in Arusha, Tanzania, on 8-9 September 2006, and capacity building in agriculture and cottage industries, especially in rural areas.



3. We support the recommendations on the provision of services in water, energy and insurances, as well as skills formation in business development, cooperation with the private sector and support for locally-based micro-finance institutions.

- **Europe**

1. We are committed to undertake action to reach Millennium Development Goal #3: “promote gender equality and empower women” by 2015. We will give special attention to the promotion of women’s economic independence and women’s equal access to training opportunities, credit and other economic resources.
2. We are committed to the implementation of the Platform for Action, which resulted from the Beijing Declaration (1995) and which has been reviewed in New York in 2000, especially the strategic objectives and actions linked to the chapter on women and the economy and more generally women’s empowerment, gender equality, the promotion of women’s economic independence and women’s equal access to economic resources.

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN “UNITE FOR CHILDREN, UNITE AGAINST AIDS”

- **Africa**

1. We note and support the Cape Town Declaration of 2004 and promise to

take action to develop, implement or improve the National Plans of Action (NPA) and National Parliamentary Plans of Action (NPPA) for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in our countries, to enhance and scale up the positive developments already taking place.

2. We call on our governments to strengthen healthcare systems and budgets and to enhance the capability of communities to properly respond to the OVC challenge, and to offer adequate social protection to vulnerable children.

- **Europe**

1. We fully support the Cape Town Declaration of 2004 and commit to ensuring political accountability by monitoring our governments’ compliance with their commitments, initiating the reopening of parliamentary debate and participating actively in policy dialogue on OVC.
2. We recognize the importance of the UNICEF Global Campaign “Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS”, with special attention given to the 4 P’s [Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT), Paediatric Treatment, Prevention of the spread of HIV among young people, and Protection of OVC], and we will encourage our parliaments to participate in and support the campaign.

PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

- **Africa**

1. We support the NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians (NCGAP) in their joint project with AWEPA to monitor how European Official Development Assistance (ODA) is spent in Africa.

2. We call for a parliamentary role in the OECD/ECA Mutual Review of Development Efficiency, and a greater role for parliamentary scrutiny of ODA agreements, before and after they are signed.

- **Europe**

1. We will continue to undertake action to hold our governments to account on international commitments, to exercise parliamentary oversight and to stimulate parliamentary questions and debates about the level, distribution and effectiveness of the European ODA.
2. We support the NCGAP/AWEPA ODA monitoring project and will facilitate its work wherever possible, in the interest of greater transparency and mutual accountability. ●



Participant	Institution
Hon. P. Bayr	Austrian Parliament
Hon. F. Glaser	Austrian Parliament
Ms. I. Jäger	AWEPA Council Member, Austria
Hon. J. Wirnsperger	Austrian Parliament
Hon. M. De Meyer	Belgian Parliament
Hon. M. Smet	AWEPA Vice President, Flemish Parliament, Belgium
Hon. A. Abdi	East African Legislative Assembly
Hon. K. Kamba	East African Legislative Assembly
Hon. Maj. Gen. M. Muntu Oyiera	East African Legislative Assembly
Ms. D. Makhan	East African Legislative Assembly
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More details

For more details for the Helsinki EU Presidency Seminar, including electronic copies of the Recommendations for Action, the Terms of Reference, the full programme, and the speeches made in full, please see the new AWEPA website at www.awepa.org.

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AWEPA works to support the well-functioning of parliaments in Africa and to keep Africa on the political agenda in Europe. Action is undertaken for human resource development with parliamentarians and other elected representatives and institutional capacity building within parliaments and decentralised authorities.

This includes attention to:

- the key role of well-functioning parliaments with regards to democracy, human rights, peaceful conflict management, poverty reduction and sustainable development
- the attainment of gender equality at all levels of political decision-making;
- African-European sharing of parliamentary experience
- building parliamentary networks at national, regional and inter-regional levels as fora for political and non-governmental interaction

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