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Finance & Economy

Ghana's Leader of Delegation to ECOWAS Parliament Advocates for Direct Transfer of Levies

Kwaku Sakyi-Danso

Following delays in some member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in transmitting the zero point five (0.5) levy they collect on goods imported into the West African sub-region that produce in the region, leader of the Ghanaian delegation to the Community Parliament, Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin is advocating for a system to be put in place in this age of technology advancement, to ensure that levies collected from the various member states are transmitted straight to the West Africa sub-region block.

According to him there is the need for a political will from the ECOWAS Commission, Author-

ity of Heads of States and Government or those responsible for coordinating to ensure that when the levies are collected, they are transmitted on time.

“We should not allow bureaucracy in collecting the levies; there should be a network in place which ECOWAS would automatically receive funds once payment is made. A lot of our member states in their various ports charges go to respective institutions directly”.

In an interview, as to how the delay of the payment of the Community levy can be resolved, he noted that the system he is advocating for when put in place is one way of resolving the problem to avoid excuse from member states who collect levies but delay in making sure funds are sent to the sub-regional body.

“it’s these levies that are used for capacity building and all activi-

ties for stability and work to progress. Salaries for workers in all the community institutions depend on this levy; that is our only source of income for funding to operationalize our activities in the sub-region and is the key thing that must be considered”.

Mr. Afenyo-Markin further noted that the recent downturn in business is as a result of the economic crises leading to low import, more especially in the wake of the Russian Ukraine war, which set in just after the COVID-19 pandemic.



Hon Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin

Speaker Mapisa-Nqakula Urges P20 Speakers to Help Nations in their Post-Covid Health and Economic Recoveries

**PARLIAMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF
SOUTH AFRICA**

The South African National Assembly Speaker, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula has said that Parliaments need to build on a positive step of the G20 countries on the

‘debt interest payment’ moratorium to enable poorer countries to recover from the devastating Covid-19 pandemic effectively.

Addressing the 8th P20 Parliamentary Speakers’ Summit held in Jakarta – Indonesia, during a debate on building an “effective parliament, vibrant democracy”, Speaker Mapisa-Nqakula said the ‘door is open to the cancellation of debt on a case-by-case basis.

She said the strengthening of multilateralism progressively enables the resolution of the “world’s most pressing problems including poverty, inequalities, climate change and gender-based violence.

The Parliamentary Speakers’ Summit – P20, is led and hosted by the House Speaker of the Indonesian Parliament Ms Puan Maharani in line with the G20 countries’ traditions, as Indonesia

holds its Presidency this year.

Speaker Mapisa-Nqakula said Parliaments must play more hands-on roles in addressing global challenges by strengthening coordination on a multilateral basis. She said the strengthening of Parliamentary diplomacy helped boost the Parliaments’ capacity to deliver on its core mandate of making laws, monitoring executive action and enhancing citizen engagement to build a better life for all.

The speakers’ summit held at the Nusantara Building of the Indonesian Parliamentary Complex, was officially opened by President Joko Widodo who applauded the mainstreaming of the Parliament’s role in addressing global development challenges. The G20 countries comprise mostly the world’s largest economies, which are expected to play a significant role in building a better and more equitable world order.

Speaker Mapisa-Nqakula and her delegation that includes House Chairperson for Committees, Oversight and ICT Mr Cedric Frolick, and the Secretary to Parliament Mr Xolile George,

held bilateral meetings with the Russian and Ukrainian Speakers on the sidelines of the two-day summit. They first met the Speaker of the Russian Federal Council (Parliament) Ms Valentina Matvienko followed by the Deputy Chairwomen of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine, Ms Olena Kondratiuk.

Speaker Mapisa-Nqakula, who also serves as part of the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s (IPU) Task Force on War in Ukraine, described the bilateral engagement as fruitful. She is due to continue with her bilateral meetings on the second day of the P20 Parliamentary Speakers’ Summit today. Furthermore, she is scheduled to deliver a keynote address on Social Inclusion, Gender Equality, and Women Empowerment, which will be followed by a debate with other Speakers’ inputs.

The P20 Speakers’ Summit will conclude with the adoption of a joint statement and addresses by the co-organizers, the Indonesian Speaker of the House of Representatives Dr Puan Maharani and the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Mr Duarte Pacheco.



South African National Assembly Speaker, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula

Gender, Children and Social Welfare

PAP PRESIDENT CALLS FOR A MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY - "Let's put our money where our mouth is"

PAP Comms Dept

The President of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), H.E. Hon. Chief Fortune Charumbira has told global Parliamentarians, gathered in Kigali, Rwanda, for the 145th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), to go beyond rhetoric and utilize their budgetary powers to fast-track gender equality and mainstreaming around the world.

The leader of the continental Parliament made the call as he addressed the Assembly of the IPU's General Debate on: "Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world." H.E Chief Charumbira



President of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), H.E. Hon. Chief Fortune Charumbira

urged legislators to self-introspect and critically assess the contribution of Parliaments in advancing gender equality. He further remarked that providing positive answers to pertinent questions on the role of parliamentarians will strengthen the ability and attitude towards gender equality and, ultimately, foster peace and sustainable development.

"The question, therefore, is: Are we putting our money where our mouth is? Gender equality and gender mainstreaming cannot be achieved by mere political rhetoric without the requisite budgetary support which, in itself, is a reflection of the political will to promote gender parity. Do our national Budgets reflect our commitment to gender parity?" asked H.E Hon. Chief Charumbira.

He continued: "As Parliaments charged with the power of the purse, are we analyzing these budgets with a gender lens? Do we have the capacity to analyze these budgets with a gender lens and ensure that the differential needs of women, men, boys and girls are catered for before we pass our respective national budgets?"

After recalling the mandate of the PAP and signaling the insti-

tution's return to full functionality, following the election of the new Bureau in June 2022, the President of the PAP briefed the Assembly of the IPU on the initiatives undertaken by the legislative organ of the African Union to strengthen and consolidate efforts to empower women through meaningful participation of women and equal partnership in driving development in Africa.

"As the Pan-African Parliament, in addition to the Women's Caucus and the Committee on Gender, Family, Youth and People with Disability, which seek to advance the common cause of women on the continent, we have created space for an annual Women's Conference at every October Plenary Session, through which the PAP is able to harness the enormous potential of constructive engagement of African women to Africa's development agenda."

"Our theme for this year's conference is "Women Empowerment and Inclusion in Governance." We undertake to use that opportunity to self-introspect, guided by the IPU Plan of Action on Gender-Sensitive Parliaments, and come up with concrete proposals to further promote gender equality on the continent and

make the PAP as an institution more gender sensitive.

Citing some of the concrete actions taken by the PAP in recent years, H.E Hon. Chief Charumbira highlighted fact-finding missions to assess the situation of women and girls in conflict areas including Chad (May 2006); Central African Republic (April 2007); Burkina Faso (2008); Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (July 2011) and Sudan and South Sudan (September 2012). In a bid to increase awareness and eradicate harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, the IPU Assembly was informed of the PAP's missions to various member states including Ethiopia in 2009, which contributed to the launch of a pilot training programme for African midwives in Sudan in 2012; towards strengthening health systems, particularly in the provision of maternal health services in Africa.

Furthermore, the PAP President announced that the Parliament is expected to debate and adopt a model law on gender parity during the upcoming October Plenary Session, which he hopes will be used as a benchmark by African countries in improving national legislation to ensure the promotion of gender equality.



"The question, therefore, is: Are we putting our money where our mouth is? Gender equality and gender mainstreaming cannot be achieved by mere political rhetoric without the requisite budgetary support which, in itself, is a reflection of the political will to promote gender parity. Do our national Budgets reflect our commitment to gender parity?" asked H.E Hon. Chief Charumbira.

Defense, Interior and Security

WADEMOS Makes a Call for Peace and Unity Through Civic Engagement in Burkina Faso following the 2nd Junta

By Clement Akoloh

The West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS) has made a clarion call on the military junta leaders in Burkina Faso to maintain the peace and unity in the West African country, which has just had another coup experience after a democratically elected government was toppled in a previous coup d'état by the military.

WADEMOS is a transnational network of independent, non-partisan civil society organizations (CSOs) in West Africa. With a current membership of over 30 CSOs located in 15 countries in West Africa, WADEMOS mobilizes, coordinates, and leverages the collective power of its members and other pro-democracy actors, resources, and opportunities within the West African Region to advance, defend, and reinvigorate democracy and promote democratic development in the sub-region.



Burkina Faso's new military leader Ibrahim Traore

Following an announcement by the military junta that it has taken over power from one of their own, a press release by WADEMOS, expressed regrets that Burkina Faso has suffered yet another coup d'état, since the beginning of this year 2022. And that, as a network of civil society organizations committed to the peaceful, stable, and democratic development of the West African region, they were deeply concerned that coups and counter-coups in Burkina Faso at this time will only serve to disrupt and derail the patient efforts already made by the Burkinabe people since the coup of January 2022 is yet to reach a settlement of the security crisis caused by armed terrorist groups and an orderly restoration of democratic and constitutional government in the country.

"We are especially concerned, considering the sharp escalation recently in deadly extremist and terrorist attacks against the population, that a cycle of coups and counter-coups will weaken and undermine the cohesion and singleness of purpose that both the Burkinabe military and the society at large need to confront the very grave and continuing threats to the security and sovereignty of the country and its people," it said.

The release noted with satisfaction that the action of September 30, 2022, which resulted eventually in the removal of Lt. Col.

Damiba as Head of State, did not degenerate into fratricidal combats or violent reprisals within the Burkinabe military or society.

"We commend the religious and customary leaders of Burkina Faso for their swift and patriotic intervention in brokering a peaceful and successful resolution to the crisis, thereby paving the way for a smooth regime transition and averting a potentially protracted and destabilizing conflict.

"We similarly commend the incoming junta led by Capt. Ibrahim Traore for acting quickly to restore order and calm and for agreeing to the terms of the settlement for the exit of Col. Damiba, including guaranteeing the safety and non-prosecution of the leaders of the former junta and their collaborators, committing to pursue national reconciliation and to engage in broad consultations, and agreeing to honour existing commitments and plans, for an orderly return to democratic and constitutional rule by July 2024," the release said.

The West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network also expressed the trust that the terms of the Seven Point agreement will be implemented in good faith in the interest of the people of Burkina Faso. It further urged the Government of Capt. Traore to work collaboratively and constructively with the diverse segments of Burkinabe civil society, media, and the political class, as well as with regional partners, so as to build and sustain the mutual trust, united front, and regional solidarity the country desperately needs at this time to address the difficult challenges it is confronted with.

"We are confident that the good people of Burkina Faso have the courage and determination to overcome their present challenges. On our part, we, as a network of civil society organizations working in solidarity with one another to promote peaceful democratic development across West Africa, remain steadfast in our commitment to support and assist the processes of political transition in Burkina Faso."



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WADEMOS
West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network

Defense, Interior and Security

President Paul Kagame Urges Parliaments to Work Together for Peace and Democracy

News Desk

The President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, has urged Parliaments across the world to work together to combat the growing ideology of dehumanization, genocide and racism, which according to him threatened peace and democracy.

He intimated that genocide denial and reversionism were fast becoming a growing threat to peace and security globally and also Acknowledged that social media was partly responsible for all those forms of threats, adding that hate speech and misinformation, which had existed for a long time, played a major role.

“Collaboration between Parliaments is needed to work on all these challenges to criminalize all forms of dehumanization and racism worldwide,” he stated.

More collaboration

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the 145TH Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) assembly in Kigali on October 11, 2022, Mr. Kagame said “When we think that all the problems of dehumanization, genocide and reversion are confined to Africa, we immediately realize that other parts of the world are going through similar challenges that affect peace and democracy.

“What a better way then can we think of to find solutions than through cooperation. And I think we need to

work together more and more,” he said.

The six-day event was held on the theme “Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world”.

It has brought together about 1,200 delegates, including some 60 Speakers and deputy Speakers of Parliaments from 120 Parliament across the world.

The participants include the Speaker of Ghana’s Parliament, Alban Sumana Bagbin, and five MPs from the country.

The assembly will facilitate the exchange of ideas on good practices to make Parliaments more gender-sensitive, encouraging the legislature to spearhead transformative actions and curb the proliferation of terrorism, the impact of war and atrocity on civilian populations.

Shared humanity

The Rwandan leader said there was no individual country or region in the world that could have all the solutions to the diverse threats against global peace and security.

He, therefore, emphasized the need for Parliaments and nations to work together to improve democracy and peace, saying that “if we do not do it through cooperation, I do not think we can achieve anything,” he stated. Mr. Kagame also expressed the view that no country or people could assume that they had it all and they could tell others what they should be doing.



President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the 145TH Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

“It does not work like that and it is not the reality of the world that we live in. Solidarity in the fight against genocide ideology however marched more than enacting laws.

“It is about recognition of our shared humanity for the betterment of our societies and the protection of future generations,” he said.

Women empowerment

Mr. Kagame told the assembly that all over the world Parliaments existed to protect the interests of citizens, an objective that could not be met without the full and active participation of women in Parliaments, especially in leadership positions.

In his view, despite study gains made over the years, equality between women and men continued to be widespread.

He explained how certain cultures took “us a step” close to equal representation but did not address the full spectrum of inequalities in Parliaments and in society at large.

“Gender equality is better achieved when we acknowledge that it is a right for everyone everywhere.

“Women are the backbone of resilient and peaceful societies; we need strong legal and policy frameworks in place with an emphasis on implementation and results,” he said.

Citing the important roles women played in Rwanda’s liberation struggle, he said women remained a fundamental part of Rwanda’s transformation journey, with women participation in peacekeeping missions across the African continent.

Let’s work together

The President of IPU, Duarte Pacheco, also reiterated the urgent need for Parliament to work together to solve problems facing humanity in much the same way the world worked together to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

Constitutional imperative

The Speaker of Deputies of Parliament of Rwanda, Donatille Mukabalisa, said in Rwanda, promoting gender and women in leadership was a constitutional imperative.

She was happy that today there was a strong political commitment at the highest level and adequate measures were taken to boost gender equality and women in political participation and empowerment.

At A glance

The high-level meeting of the 145th Inter-Parliamentary Union opened in Kigali, Rwanda, with a call on Parliaments to enact laws to criminalize all forms of dehumanization and racism.

TOGOLESE PRESIDENT CALLS FOR COMMITMENT TOWARDS PEACE AND SECURITY IN SUB-REGION

Kwaku Sakyi-Danso

The President of the Republic of Togo H. E. Faure Gnassingbe has stressed on the need for a common commitment towards working together in achieving peace and Security in the West African sub-region.

According to him there are a number of challenges affecting the sub-region, hence encouraging cooperation to drive acceptable solutions for West Africa.

He made this remarks on Thursday, October 6, 2022 when the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament Rt. Hon Dr Sidie Mohamed Tunis paid a courtesy call on him, in Lome

where the second Extraordinary Session of the parliament is being hosted.

During their meeting, the Honorable Speaker took note of the good relations between the ECOWAS Parliament and the Republic of Togo, and the prospects for their further consolidation. Dr. Tunis then lauded His Excellency Gnassingbe for the important role he is playing to promote peace, security and development in West Africa and his integral initiatives that are geared towards the restoration of stability in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso.

“It was a great honor to meet with the President of the Republic of Togo,” Speaker Tunis said.

He expressed his gratitude to the government and people of Togo for hosting the ECOWAS Parliament and for the enormous support received.



President of the Republic of Togo H. E. Faure Gnassingbe welcoming the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament Rt. Hon Dr Sidie Mohamed Tunis

General News

Government Of Guinea-Bissau Admits Postponement Of Legislative Elections

News Desk

Guinea-Bissau's Minister of Territorial Administration, Fernando Gomes, and several parties say that it may "be difficult" to hold the legislative session on the scheduled date, on December 18. PAIGC says it's the government's fault.

The Minister of Territorial Administration of Guinea-Bissau, Fernando Gomes, admitted this Wednesday (10.12) the postponement of the legislative scheduled for December 18, after a meeting with political parties that considered it "difficult" to hold the elections on the scheduled date. "We understand today to convene political parties to discuss the electoral process together and ideas and opinions were unanimous, with the parties recognizing that at this stage in which the

process is at, it is difficult to hold elections on December 18", said Fernando Gomes.

Political parties with and without parliamentary seats, the Minister of Territorial Administration, the Technical Support Office for the Electoral Process and the National Election Commission met for about three hours at the Government Palace, in Bissau, to debate the electoral process. At the end of the meeting, most parties with parliamentary seats in Guinea-Bissau reaffirmed that it was "impractical" to hold legislative elections on 18 December.

Guinean President Umaro Sissoco Embaló has set the elections for December 18. The main parties have called for a grassroots voter registration, which is expected to last three months, but has not yet started. The minister explained that the reasons behind the delay in the beginning of the electoral process was the fact that the parties required a new voter registration and that the delivery of voter cards was made at the time of registration, which forced the acquisition of specific printers, which only arrived in the country in mid-September.

Accessibility problems in some areas of the country, due to the rainy season, the sensitivity of materials that cannot be wetted and the fact that in the interior of the country many people are in the agricultural fields, were other reasons that led to the request for postponement. of the elections.

"The Government brought us the concern and the existing constraints for carrying out the census. It seems to me that the Government wanted to discard the responsibility of proposing to the President to change the date, because it is clear that the date of December 18 is impracticable", said Armindo Handem, permanent secretary of the Union for Change.

The secretary general of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), Ali Hijazy, blames the Government for the situation: "When this date was set, if the Government fulfilled its obligations in accordance with the laws, it was possible to hold the election on December 18. Unfortunately, until this moment, there is still a lot to be done.



Guinean President Umaro Sissoco Embaló has set the elections for December 18

30th Anniversary Of The Constitution Of Cape Verde Observed

News Desk

The National Assembly held on the 11th of October, a Solemn Session commemorating the XXX Anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic, promulgated on September 25, 1992, with the objective of highlighting the social, economic and political guarantees brought by the Magna Carta.

During the Session, all political parties with parliamentary seats intervened defending the putting into practice of what is enshrined in the Magna Law, as well as the need for its revision. The first intervention came from the representative of the Cape Verdean Independent and Democratic Union (UCID) who said that the ar-

chipelago still has a long way to go in fulfilling what is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic.

António Monteiro defended that "there is a lot of work ahead to be able to make the citizen feel that, in reality, this Magna Letter, which is the Constitution of the Republic, is the greatest hat that guarantees rights, freedoms and guarantees to which everyone owes fight, regardless of who is pleasing or not". That parliamentarian also defended the need for a new review so that the CRCV can keep up with the country's challenges and reality.

In turn, the Parliamentary Leader of the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV) considered, in his communication, that Cape Verde has a Constitution that can serve as an example for

any democratic state in the world.

However, João Baptista Pereira understands that, "despite notable gains during these 30 years of validity of the CRCV Cabo Verde remains a vulnerable country, with constraints of various kinds and a situation of democratic deficit and perversion of the system".

Thus, he appealed to everyone, particularly the public authorities, to commit to making "the Cape Verde that is in the Constitution of the Republic for the gaudio and happiness of all Cape Verdeans" a reality.

In his speech, the Parliamentary Leader of the Movement for Democracy (MpD) considered that the party that supports the Government is concerned with acting so that the Constitution is a living law and increasingly known by citizens and civil

society for its own benefit. Paulo Veiga also argued that "twelve years later, in a context of desirable stability, it seems that it is time for the Constitution - although consensual in its matrix and identity - to be evaluated in its application and impact, and perhaps corrected where justified. Because, like Democracy, the Constitution is never an immutable, finished and perfect work."

The Session took place in the Salão Nobre Abílio Duarte and was attended by the President of the Republic, who also spoke, the Prime Minister, President of the Supreme Court of Justice, members of the Government, representatives of the diplomatic corps, religious denominations, elected municipal officials, students, among others.



The Head of State of the Republic of Cape Verde, José Maria Neves

General News

GHANA GOVT ADVISED TO HIKE TAX ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS For Revenue and for Consumption Control

By Clement Akoloh

The Government of Ghana has been advised by experts to take advantage of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to adopt a mixed tax system of ad valorem and specific tax on tobacco and tobacco related products such as shisha and e-cigarettes to raise revenue for health and to discourage the use of the substance in the country by the teeming youthful population and the society at large.

According to these experts, while the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) encourages price and tax measures as effective means to reduce tobacco consumption; Ghana's ad valorem tax structure does not lead to significant increase in the retail prices, hence extremely low for tobacco control purposes and therefore, making the youth and women to get addicted to flavored tobacco, shisha and e-cigarettes.

The current single tax regime of ad valorem on tobacco imported into the country is failing to yield its deterrent purposes of effectively controlling the consumption of the substance which has harmful effects on the health of the people and also increases the disease burden of the society which also has

the tendency to throw the country's health budget out of proportion.

The country's Finance Minister, Ken Ofori Atta, who is expected to present the 2023 Budget to Parliament in November this year, has therefore been urged to consider hiking the tax component on tobacco to reflect the internationally recommended standards.

The recommendation was made when the Vision for Alternative Development, (VALD-Ghana) held a day's capacity building training workshop for members of the Private Newspapers and Online Publishers Association of Ghana (PRIN-PAG) on Tobacco Control and Tobacco Taxation in Ghana.

The workshop which was in partnership with the media fraternity was aimed at bringing the members of the inky fraternity up to speed on new developments in Tobacco regulation and control in the country which calls for attention and to also seek their support for the campaign against the use and abuse of tobacco related products.

In his opening remarks, the Executive Director of Programmes for VALD, Mr. Labram Musah indicated that since Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in the world and also the leading preventable cause of non-communicable diseases in Ghana, it is a huge threat to the country's health system and economy, especially the youth who are supposed to be the

future of the country.

He mentioned that a recent report has stated that 9 out of 10 smokers started smoking in their teens and have now become chain smokers. Setting the premise that an estimated 5.6 million youth of today under the age of 18 will eventually die prematurely from tobacco related diseases.

"In Ghana, it is estimated that tobacco kills 6,700 Ghanaians annually because of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke and of course, accounting for 3% of all deaths in Ghana... Additionally, other studies are concerned about the rapid emerging tobacco products which will eventually worsen the increased burden of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, stroke, diabetes, lung diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, etc..." he stressed.

Mr. Labram therefore courted the partnership of the media in the fight against the threat of tobacco hence the capacity building workshop for the members of the Private Newspaper and Online Publishers Association of Ghana (PRIN-PAG) on Tobacco Control and Tobacco Taxation.

He further explained that the Tobacco Taxation has proven to be an effective way of controlling tobacco use and therefore calls on the stakeholders involved to ensure that Tobacco taxation is effectively implemented in the advancement of public health.

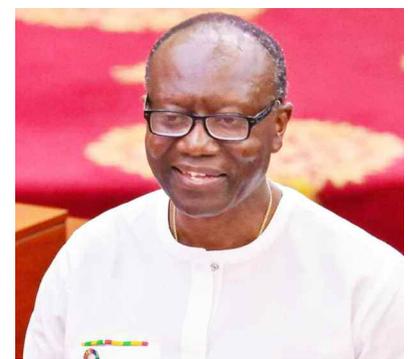
The Executive Secretary of PRINPAG, Mr. (Kenteman) Nii Laryea Sowa expressed concern about the lack of consistency on campaign on projects such as Tobacco control in order to gain the traction that is required for the needed change in the status quo. This, he indicated, goes to defeat the purpose for the otherwise, very laudable campaigns. While he appealed to the government to support the campaign on the effective implementation of the Tobacco Taxation by VALD, he pledged the support of PRINPAG to the course. The Deputy Minister for Information, Fatimatu Abubakar who gave the keynote address at the workshop, emphasized the need for strong regulatory measures to tackle the menace of health issues caused by tobacco use.

She expressed concern about the increasing use of Shisha in the country and the extremely low cost of cigarettes in the country and therefore supports the call for increased taxes measures on tobacco and tobacco related products in the country in order to reduce its consumption by the population.

She appealed to the media to give their full support to the campaign to discourage tobacco use and to protect the youth of Ghana from the use tobacco and other harmful drugs which would jeopardize their future development.

Making a presentation on the structure of the Tobacco Taxation regime in Ghana at the workshop for the media, Dr. Alex Combat from the Ghana Revenue Authority indicated that, although Ghana's 175% Excise Duties on Tobacco products is one of the highest in the subregion, its effects on the retail cost of the product is insignificant to deter potential youthful smokers.

The current tax element on the product amounts to just about GHC1 which renders it very cheap and places tobacco products in the reach of children and the youthful population. The recommendation is for the Government to consider adding a specific tax using a conservative amount of GHC2 on tobacco products. This will help the Government raise some extra revenue to support the economy and also help reduce the consumption of tobacco and its related products which is estimated to go down by 17%.



Ghana's Finance Minister, Ken Ofori Atta

UGANDA: OPPOSITION KICKS OFF CONSULTATIONS ON COPYRIGHT LAW

Opposition MPs have started holding stakeholder engagements with a view of improving a draft private Members' Bill that seeks to amend the 2006 Copyright and Neighboring Rights Act.

The Bill is sponsored by the Shadow Minister for Culture and Performing Arts, also Mawokota North MP, Hillary Innocent Kiyaga (NUP).

The first stakeholder meeting was held on Friday, September 23, 2022, at Parliament under the chairmanship of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament (LOP), Hon Mathias Mpuuga, and drew the participation of officials from the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs led by the Deputy Solicitor General, Pius Biribonwoha, Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) and representatives from the arts industry.

The proposed amendment seeks to close gaps in the 2006 law to recognize and protect the rights of a composer of artistic work and to streamline the registration of copyrights among others.

The Registrar General, Mercy Kainobwiso told the meeting that while her agency, URSB recognizes that there are gaps in the existing law coupled with implementation challenges, there is no need for a Private Members' Bill her entity had already engaged Uganda Law Reform Commission to process an amendment that would lead to the domestication of international treaties on copyright and audiovisual performances.

"The provisions of this Bill and the proposed amendments of the current Act may be parallel to the steps URSB is taking to amend the Act," Kainobwiso said.

Her submissions were however challenged by MPs, Abdulhu Byakatonda (Ind., Workers), Geoffrey Kayemba Solo (NUP, Bukomansimbi South) and Kiyaga. Their concerns were amplified by artistes, Hanington Bugingo (comedian) and Sylver Kyagulanyi from the Copyright Institute.

"We wish to have this law amended in the areas of regulation, administration and protection. Regulation is so pertinent

because we already have an existing issue with [Uganda Communications Commission] UCC," Kyagulanyi said in reference to the stage plays and public performance rules which were announced by UCC in 2019.

"We the creatives need to be regulated but what UCC is doing is an exhibition of the gap in the current law. UCC is using a 1964 draconian law – The Stage Plays and Public Entertainment Act which ought to be repealed. UCC would be within their mandate if they try to regulate broadcast but are trying to [stretch their mandate] to the regulation of everything including creativity and creative work," he added.

The meeting later agreed to a harmonization of the positions of the two sides and hold joint consultations to have the legislation processed within the current financial year.

"With these very good proposals, if we don't sit and agree on the issues as we have heard them, we [risk] talking about the 2022 law the same way we are talking about the 2006 law," Biribonwoha said.

Gender, Children and Social Welfare

PNAfrica Organizes Maiden Town Hall Meeting for Dzifa Gomashie

Under the Gender Advocacy to Parliament (GAP) Project

By Clement Akoloh

The Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica) has organized its maiden Town hall meeting for the Member of Parliament for the Ketu South Constituency in the Volta region, with pump and pageantry under the Gender Advocacy to Parliament (GAP) project.

Madam Dzifa Abla Gomashie, who happens to be the very first female Member Parliament in the Southern Volta area, was very well received



The Town hall meeting which is part of a comprehensive programme being implemented by the Parliamentary Monitoring Origination with funding support from the French



Embassy in Ghana, aims at creating the platform and the enabling environment for women and women groups in the constituency to interact with their female Members of Parliament, where gender angles to the agender of a particular Parliamentary meeting are discussed. It also serves as an avenue for the Member of Parliament to pick useful feedbacks from her constituents to inform her work on the floor for the next Parliamentary meeting.

In her deliberation on the issue of women empowerment, Madam Abla Dzifa Gomashie, Member of Parliament for Ketu South vehemently disagreed with the 'women are their

own enemies' claim.

She said in most cases, the men counterparts were rather guilty of being the main architects behind the rivalry and the unhealthy competitions among women, and demanded that the men put a stop to deliberately stocking the fires between women in order for them to take their deserved positions in the leadership structure of society.



Participants identified challenges to women's involvement in politics and other fields, and suggested ways to addressing them.

"Women are not their own enemies," Madam Gomashie rejected the claim and said, "it is the culture that determines how to think. The patriarchal system, the socialization process – assigning gender roles to boys and girls pulled women back early in life."

The first-ever female MP in the entire southern Volta: Akatsi North and South, North, Central and South Tongu, Ketu North and South, and Keta and Anlo Constituencies since the Fourth Republic encouraged women to conquer the fears, discrimination, perceptions and all other obstacles to attain their aspirations.

She used herself as an example saying, she defied all odds, closed her ears to discouraging comments and soldiered on, and noted she would not have made history as the first female MP from the area if she had given up.

Mr. Gilbert Borketey Boyefio, Programmes Manager, PNAfrica said Ghana must be seen to be making efforts to attain the sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality, and empowerment of women and girls, and the best way to do that was to retain the current number of female MPs and vote more women to the next Parliament to advocate for women issues.

Participants at the meeting identified cultural limitation, lack of resources, stigmatization and right to education among others as setbacks to women's involvement in politics and progress in other fields.

They proposed the creation of a fund by the women caucus in Parliament to empower the women to join politics, female-child empowerment and finding ways to deal with teenage pregnancy to remove some of the barriers to girls and women progress.



"Women are not their own enemies, it is the culture that determines how to think. The patriarchal system, the socialization process – assigning gender roles to boys and girls pulled women back early in life."

by her constituents at the meeting and showed a lot of enthusiasm and appreciation for the programme which lasted from morning into the late afternoon. The town hall meeting which was entirely organized with her as the focal person, also witnessed the presence of some of the male MPs within the Volta caucus who came to offer her their support.

Gender, Children and Social Welfare

Parliament Incomplete Without Matching Numbers for Women

By Ewoenam Kpodo

Speakers at a Gender Advocacy to Parliament (GAP) Townhall meeting at Aflao, Ketu South Constituency in the Volta Region, say the 40 females out of a total of 275 Members of Parliament (MPs) make Ghana's Parliament incomplete.

Mr. Emmanuel Kwasi Bedzrah, MP for Ho West and Chairman, Minority Caucus of Parliament said this under-representation was not unique to Ghana, but also an issue in the sub-region where out of the 115 from representatives of 15 countries in the current ECOWAS Parliament, the females were less than 20.

Citing the significant role women played, he narrated an incident at a meeting of the ECOWAS Parliament where a female Nigerian MP was able to bring calm during a near scuffle among some of the Parliamentarians.

He promised to do his best to retain all four female MPs from the Volta Region, and called for deliberate efforts to increase the number of female MPs across the country, for "Parliament is incomplete without women," he said.

The Meeting was organized by the Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica), a civil society Parliamentary Monitoring Organization working across Africa with support from the French Embassy.

The maiden meeting under the GAP project for women and women group organizations meant to discuss the gender angles to the Parliamentary meeting and to ensure that women MPs received feedback from these groups to inform their work on the floor of Parliament, was interactive and engaging.

Mr. Kwame Dzudzorli Gakpey, MP for Keta challenged women, who he called "the most powerful people in our homes, in our society" to rise above every limitation to engage in politics to bridge the gap and ensure equal representation of the people in national politics.

Mr. Gilbert Borketey Boeyfio, Programmes Manger, PNAfrica said women were better managers of society and increasing their number in Parliament to advocate for women (who make up the majority) issues would serve

the country's interest.

"All is not well because out of the 275 MPs, we have only 40 females. Parliament has to be gender sensitive. Parliament reflects society and when women are far more than the men by our statistics, why should we have less women in Parliament?"

Madam Abila Dzifa Gomashie, MP for Ketu South acknowl-

edged factors such as cultural limitations, lack of resources, stigmatization, right education, and adversarial nature of politics among others identified by participants as setbacks to women's involvement in mainstream politics.

She encouraged women to take their eyes off the obstacles, perceptions and attempt to break new grounds.



Dzifa Abila Gomashie, MP for Ketu South (L) and Emmanuel Kwasi Bedzrah, MP for Ho West (M) @ GAP Maiden Town Hall Meeting

AUC Deputy Chairperson Nsazabaganwa, Pledges Support for PAP Women's Caucus

PAP Comms

Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), H.E Dr. Monique Nsazabaganwa, has pledged her personal support as well as the support of the financial and administrative structures of the Union that she oversees, for the PAP Women's Caucus.

The AUC Deputy Chairperson made the pledge when she received in audience, the Members of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) Women's Caucus as part of the information and advisory mission undertaken by the forum of women Parliamentarians of the continental Parliament to the Commission.

H. E Dr. Nsazabaganwa told the PAP delegation that the African Union intends to pursue a holistic approach to gender that includes women, peace and security issues but also empowerment and gen-

der equality initiatives. The Deputy Chairperson further made reference to the AU Women & Youth Financial & Economic Inclusion (WYFEI) 2030 initiative, a programme aiming to mobilize USD 100 million by 2020-30 for the benefit of women and young people. This initiative will facilitate access to finance,

technology and training among others.

In this regard, H.E Dr. has appealed for support from the PAP Women's Caucus in helping AU member states revise their legislative framework to allow for a business environment with a strong involvement of the private

sector. The meeting agreed to develop actions to support this initiative.

In line with the Caucus's 2022 Action Plan, the mission sought to strengthen the collaborative links with AU organs dealing with gender issues and women, and identify priority sectors of intervention which will inform the Women's Caucus strategic plan for the period 2023 to 2026.

The team led by Hon. Amina Tidjani Yaya (Chad), Chairperson of the PAP Women's Caucus, also sought to seize the opportunity to be acquainted with AU programmes including the African Union strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) 2018-2028.

Members of the PAP delegation needed to further engage on the legal, policy and institutional responses to violence against Women and Girls, especially in the context of the Men's Conference of Heads of State and Government on ending violence against Women and Girls.

The information and advisory mission of the Women's Caucus to Addis Ababa serves as preparatory exercise for the upcoming Pan-African Parliament Conference on Women's Rights under the theme: "Women empowerment and inclusion in governance". The conference will take place on 3 November 2022 on the sidelines of the First Ordinary Session of the Sixth Parliament.

The PAP delegation was comprised of Hon. Caroline Kamusiime (Uganda), 1st Vice Chairperson of the Women's Caucus; Hon. Victoria Kingston (Malawi), 2nd Vice Chairperson of the Women's Caucus; and supported by Mrs Wawa Dahab Josiane Mbogo, Senior Assistant Clerk of the Parliament.



Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), H.E Dr. Monique Nsazabaganwa (2nd from left)



Gender, Children and Social Welfare

SPEAKER BAGBIN URGES PARLIAMENTS NOT TO LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND IN NATIONAL LIFE, ESPECIALLY WOMEN



“For there can be no peace without justice and the much talked about peace, prosperity and sustainable development will continue to elude the world without gender equality,”

Ghana Parliament

THE Speaker of Ghana’s Parliament, Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, has urged Parliaments across the globe to act collectively to ensure that no one, especially women and girls, is left behind in any aspect of their national life.

He said a just and peaceful world would be in sight the day when women and men would enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including cultural, social, political, economic participation and decision-making.

“For there can be no peace without justice and the much talked about peace, prosperity and sustainable development will continue to elude the world without gender equality,” he said.

Prioritize women’s interests

Addressing the 145th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) assembly in

Kigali Thursday (Oct 13), Mr Bagbin said “Since women constitute the majority of the world’s population, their interest must equally find expression in whatever we do.

“This is a sine qua non to ensuring a more resilient and peaceful world. The reverse produces an antithesis—a polarised, divisive, bitter, poor, unjust, undeveloped and war-prone world,” he said.

The event, which is being held on the theme “Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world,” has attracted over 1,200 delegates, including Speakers and deputy speakers of parliaments, representative of diplomatic corps and international observer bodies.

The meeting will facilitate the exchanges on good practices to make parliaments more gender-sensitive as well as encourage parliaments to pledge transformative action.

Equal representation

Mr Bagbin said given the current demographics of more than 50 per cent of the global population being females, their equal participation in whatever society did was an imperative to ensure inclusive and responsive governance.

He said gender equality, when promoted through gender-sensitive parliaments, would be one of the most reliable and effective drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world.

“It is against this background that goal five of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) target seeks to ‘ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life’,” he said.

In the view of Ghana’s Speaker of Parliament, the legislature is the heart and life blood of democracy and good governance.

He said parliaments was the House, in fact the home, of the people and as such its composition ought to be a true reflection, a mirror of the people it represented.

“This means all the people must be equally represented, heard and given equal opportunities.

The role of Parliament

Mr Bagbin told the assembly that parliament itself could play a significant role in the creation of a gender-sensitive institution.

Through legislation, regulation and policy adaptation mechanisms parliaments could remove barriers to the full participation of all sections of society, such as women, the youth, physically-challenged and minorities, he said.

In executing its mandate, a gender-sensitive parliament ought to ensure that policies and legislations were well scrutinized and subjected to gender analysis to include the articulation of the interest of all groups, he added. “This is to ascertain whether the gendered differentiated outcomes put women, girls, the youth, physically-

child started from the creation of a desk in the Office of the President to the setting up of a Secretariat and from the creation of National Commission on Women and Development to the establishment of a full-blown Ministry of Gender and Children,” he said.

Among others, Mr Bagbin spoke about how legislation was made by Ghana’s Parliament to remove social, cultural and political barriers to gender equality and women empowerment. Those initiatives found expressions in the provisions of the 1992 Constitution and had produced two women



disabled on equal footing with boys and men,” he said.

Case of Ghana

Touting the success story of Ghana in promoting gender equality, Mr Bagbin said the country had definitely made conscious effort to support gender equality since 1958.

Chief Justices in a row and the first lady Speaker, one of my predecessors of Parliament.

“The increase in the number of women in Parliament from that of the 30 in the Fifth Parliament of the Fourth Republic out of 275, representing 11 per cent, to 40



The Parliament of Ghana, he said, had been working to ensure the realization of that goal.

“The need to be a driver of change through a number of policy measures has therefore not been lost on Ghana’s Parliament.

“The efforts of Ghana towards the emancipation of women and the girl

women representation in the Eighth Parliament, representing about 14.5 per cent of the 275-member Parliament.

Pull quote

“For there can be no peace without justice and the much talked about peace, prosperity and sustainable development will continue to elude the world without gender equality.”



Speaker of Ghana’s Parliament, Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin

Gender, Children and Social Welfare

ECOFEPA Will Advocate for Quality Legislation to Enhance Women and Youth Participation in Leadership and Politics - *Sen. Olujimi*



First Vice President of ECOFEPA, Sen. Biodun Olujimi

By Kwaku Sekyi Danso

The First Vice President of the Economic Community of West African States, Female Parliamentary Association (ECOFEPA), Sen. Biodun Olujimi has stated that the body will push for quality legislation that will lead to the empowerment of women and youth across the Sub-region.

She said this at the opening of the ECOFEPA Women and Youth Leadership Symposium under the theme: “Unleashing the Potentials of Women and Youth in Politics & Entrepreneurship” in Lome, Togo.

Sen. Olujimi who is also one of the

Nigerian Delegation to the ECOWAS Parliament stated that women and youth’s empowerment of the ECOWAS Community is key in availing them with opportunities to participate in creating new frontiers for the political landscape of the Sub-Region.

“ECOFEPA gave the female Parliamentarians of ECOWAS the opportunity to use the collective mandate to empower women and youth through qualitative legislation, representation, and participation in the sub-region.

“As we know, development, diversity and inclusion all go together, the phenomenon that has a high indication that when women and young people are in the representative leadership and key decision-making body, they bring about the bracket of changes.

“To say the least, evidence of repeated success on this matter is bound in many countries, especially

developed countries such as Norway, Iceland, and New Zealand. May I also add that these are some of the Countries with the happiest people in the World. This means that women make the world happy.”

She added that ECOFEPA will play a key role in the regional body’s vision for 2050 to achieve their desired objective.

“With the new ECOWAS vision 2050, which aims to create an integrated community with strong institutions that respect fundamental freedoms, inclusive and sustainable development, the ECOFEPA mandate is more important than ever”, she said.

The Nigerian lawmaker further said one of the five key pillars of the ECOWAS vision is social inclusion with the strategic objective being to create a community of people fully inclusive of women, children, and youth.

She, however, urged her fellow parliamentarians to take action by promoting inclusion as well as strengthening social cohesion, gender diversity for social development and progress.

“It is no secret that there is the insufficient political representation of women and youth in the sub-region. “A huge part of this leadership symposium is therefore to create awareness and interest among our participants, this will help bring solutions to the limited representation facing groups who will lack sufficient models to look up to, thereby naturally, a career in politics and leadership seems less attainable and attractive.

“There is no understanding of the fact that we need to break this circle, we need to show the women and youth the full range of options available to them and bring them to optimum awareness of their potential, this will no doubt bring us closer to the ECOWAS that we earnestly deserve”, she said.



“With the new ECOWAS vision 2050, which aims to create an integrated community with strong institutions that respect fundamental freedoms, inclusive and sustainable development, the ECOFEPA mandate is more important than ever”,



Civil Society Relations

ECOSOCC Holds High-level Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue On CSO Engagement with the AU and the African Peace and Security Architecture

Source: AU - ECOSOCC

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) is holding a high-level multi-stakeholder dialogue on Civil Society Organization engagement with the African Union (AU) on the European Union (EU) Support Programme on the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

The meeting is attended by members of the AU Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), members of ECOSOCC, African Union Commission staff, and staff of COMESA.

The overall objective of the meeting is to facilitate a high-level multi-level dialogue with AU member states, CSOs, and peace and security experts, in order to enhance civil society contributions to conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

In particular, the meeting will increase CSOs' knowledge of the mechanisms put in place to fortify their engagement with the AU, as well as their participation in AU programmes related to conflict prevention, management and resolution, democracy, governance, constitutionalism, the rule of law, human rights, and transitional justice.

The meeting is further expected to bridge the gap between the AU and CSOs; and build on the expertise and capacities of CSOs in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

Opening the meeting, Dr. Dharmraj Busgeeth, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Mauritius to Ethiopia and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, commended ECOSOCC for convening the meeting and assured ECOSOCC of the support from the AU's PRC and in particular, Mauritius in the roll out of its initiatives and programs.

ECOSOCC Presiding Officer, Mr. Denise Kodhe in a keynote address called on delegates to support the Organ in carrying out its mandate in enhancing CSO's capacity in engaging with the African Union.

He further urged African CSOs to support and advise African leadership on issues affecting the continent.

ECOSOCC Head of Secretariat, Mr. William Carew commended African CSOs for positioning themselves as key actors and partners in mitigating violence, and facilitating the conditions necessary for building sustainable peace in Africa.

"This is why ECOSOCC is ever committed to the full implementation of the Livingstone Formula and Maseru Conclusions, especially in light of the EU-APSA IV Project, because in addition to the actualization of Agenda 2063, the successful implementation of this project will also serve to position ECOSOCC as a viable and reliable stakeholder at all stages of conflict prevention, management, and resolution in Africa," he said.

Mr. Carew gave an overview of the work that ECOSOC has em-



barked on including, producing policy related documents like policy opinions and policy booklets; civil society toolkits and manuals to build the capacity of African CSOs to operate effectively as developmental partners of the African Union.

So far ECOSOCC has produced over 25 policy related outputs like, Policy Manuals and Toolkits on: Monitoring Agenda 2063 at the national, regional and continental level and Strategic planning for civil society organizations; The conduct of advocacy within African civil society and Fundraising for Civil Society Organizations.

Others include the development of a new Strategic Plan for ECOSOCC and Research and Policy Studies on: "Assessing the impact of COVID-19 Response measures on women and girls in Africa; Research Study on "Civil Society and the AFCFTA: Consolidating African Integration in the new single market; Research Study On "Civil Society as Partners In Emergency Response – The Case of COVID-19,"; Research Study on Government-Civil Society Relations in Africa: Building a more constructive partnership and Fatally misinformed: Examining the role of social media misinformation on COVID-19 and lessons for future emergencies.

Further, ECOSOCC is currently finalizing the development of legal and operational frameworks in pursuance of the relevant decisions of the AU's Executive Council relating to the establish-

ment of ECOSOCC National Chapters, the establishment of an accreditation mechanism for African CSOs, and modality for the engagement of the African Diaspora in the operationalization of ECOSOCC.

Mr. Raymond Kitevu, Conflict Early Warning Expert - Governance, Peace and Security, from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) reiterated COMESA's commitment to the peace and security initiatives and highlighted the importance of the meeting to bridge the gap with CSOs and enhance engagement with them.

ECOSOCC, as the AU's civil society Organ, has been instrumental in expanding the space for CSOs in various thematic areas, particularly in the area of peace, security, governance and human rights.

Within the scope of the Organ's mandate, ECOSOCC has established a platform for CSOs to participate in efforts to promote peace, security, stability, good governance, and protect human rights in Africa. Article 8, sub-articles 10, 11, and 20 of the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol, as well as the Livingstone Formula and the Maseru Conclusions — all of which are important components of AU Agenda 2063's Aspiration 4, which envisions a peaceful and fully functional and operational African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) — to guide ECOSOCC's initiative to strengthen CSOs capacity in these areas.

"This is why ECOSOCC is ever committed to the full implementation of the Livingstone Formula and Maseru Conclusions, especially in light of the EU-APSA IV Project, because in addition to the actualization of Agenda 2063, the successful implementation of this project will also serve to position ECOSOCC as a viable and reliable stakeholder at all stages of conflict prevention, management, and resolution in Africa,"

Energy and Extractives

Africa's Longest Oil Pipeline Takes Shape in Niger



The landlocked West African state became an oil producer in 2011. The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), exploiting the reserves, has been sending oil by pipeline to refineries in Zinder in south-central Niger.

AFP

At Gaya in southwest Niger, near the border with Benin, the longest oil pipeline in Africa is being built. With a projected length of nearly 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles) — including 1,250 km in Niger itself — the pipeline will connect oil wells in the eastern region of Agadem, a zone troubled by deadly jihadist incursions, with the Beninese port of Seme.

Climate campaigners are clamoring for an end to investment in carbon-spewing fossil fuels.

But in Niger -- the poorest country in the world according to the benchmark of the UN's Human Development Index -- this project is seen as an economic lifeline.

The landlocked West African state became an oil producer in 2011. The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), exploiting the reserves, has been sending oil by pipeline to refineries in Zinder in south-central Niger.

For exports, Niger initially planned to ship crude through the Cameroonian port of Kribi via neighboring Chad.

It eventually opted for the "Beninese corridor" terminating on the northern rim of the Gulf of Guinea. Launched in 2019, the project was supposed to be completed in 2022, but the Covid-19 pandemic slowed it down, said Nafiou Issaka, deputy

general manager of the West African Oil Pipeline Company (WAPCO).

More than 600 km of pipeline has already been laid, and Niger is on track to sell crude on the international market from next July, according to the ministry of petroleum and energy.

More than 700 soldiers have been deployed to ensure security for the project, though a large part of the territory it crosses has so far been spared from jihadist violence, according to a security source who asked not to be named.

'Niger's biggest investment'
Niger has long been a major producer of uranium, ranked in global 7th place in 2021 with a total output of 2,248 tonnes, after a year-over-year decline in the past decade, according to the World Nuclear Association.

But uranium revenues continue to fall and the country's leaders are banking on oil to boost the national budget, much of which is devoted to the fight against jihadists in the southeast and the west.

Six billion dollars will be invested in the pipeline.

"It is Niger's biggest investment since independence" from France in 1960, said Kabirou Zakari, who heads the ministry's oil refining

division.

From 2023, oil production should be increased to 110,000 barrels per day, of which 90,000 barrels will be exported, Zakari told AFP. Oil could then "generate a quarter of the country's GDP" — more than 13.6 billion dollars in 2020 according to the World Bank — and "about 50 percent of Niger's tax revenue", compared to four percent and 19 percent respectively today, added Zakari.

He estimated Niger's oil reserves at around two billion barrels. According to official projections, Niger will produce 200,000 barrels per day in 2026.

Fuel smuggling
The Algerian oil company Sonatrach has announced an "encouraging" discovery of oil in Kafra, a vast area of 23,737 square kilometers (9,165 square miles) on the border with Algeria.

The British company Savannah Energy, a major player in the gas industry in neighboring Nigeria, says it too has found deposits in the Agadem region, where the Chinese are already operating.

A black market for oil products is flourishing in the capital Niamey and in other big cities. A liter of petrol (gasoline) exchanges hands for 300 FCFA (40 US cents), just under half of the price at the pump.

On Tuesday, Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum said fuel smuggling organized from neighboring Nigeria had become a source of "supply for terrorists" and called for a crackdown.



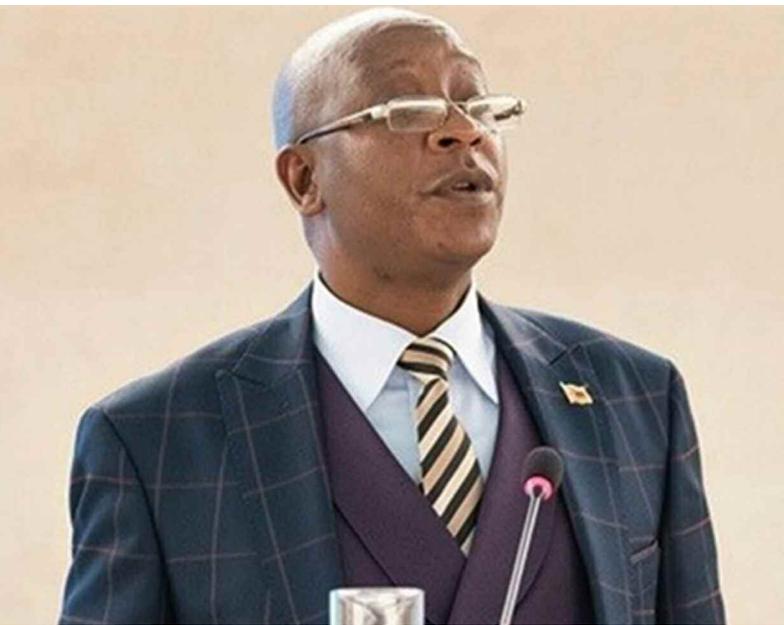
Six billion dollars will be invested in the pipeline. "It is Niger's biggest investment since independence" from France in 1960, said Kabirou Zakari, who heads the ministry's oil refining division.



Chinese and Nigerien workers haul giant steel pipes over mounds of earth as heavily armed soldiers keep guard.

General News

Zimbabwe's Electoral Act Amendment Gets Nod



Zimbabwe's Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Ziyambi Ziyambi

By Elvis Dumba

The government has given a nod to the amendment of the electoral law.

The cabinet received and approved the Electoral Amendment Bill 2022 as presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Ziyambi Ziyambi during a cabinet meeting.

The bill seeks among other things, to provide a timeframe when a candidate can withdraw from contesting in a national assembly or local authority elections.

"The Bill seeks to amend the

Electoral Act [Chapter 2:13] to provide for, among others a timeframe within which the National Assembly and Local Authority candidates can withdraw from contesting in an election," he said.

"Once the Electoral Amendment Bill; 2022 is enacted into law, it will assist in ensuring that only citizens are able to vote in an election; that proper candidates are allowed to contest in an election; providing clarity on when and how a candidate can withdraw their candidature in an election so as to afford ZEC sufficient time to make changes to the design of the ballot, and advising the electorate of any changes to the candidature in an election".

The law change is expected to

also allow the activation of the women and youth quota system.

"The law will lead to the incorporation of the 30% women quota as well as the youth quota and amendment of the definition of proof of identity. In terms of the constitution of Zimbabwe, one has to be a citizen in order to qualify as a voter. Accordingly, only the valid Passport or National Identity Card will be required as proof of identity."

Currently, there is no law that stipulates when a candidate can withdraw from an election. In the past, some contesting individuals would withdraw from the race on the eve of an election with their name still on the ballot paper when they will be no longer participating.

National Assembly Of Cape Verde Resumes Parliamentary Sitings

News Desk

The first Session of the Parliamentary year of the National Assembly of Cape Verde took place from 12 to 14 October, highlighting the debate with the Minister of Education, scheduled by the Parliamentary Bench of the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV).

According to the call, the holder of the Education portfolio was also appointed, by the parliamentary group of the Movement for Democracy (MpD), to answer questions from the Deputies to the Government.

In an interview with Inforpress, the President of the National Assembly said that he expected a productive year, with a serene parliamentary political debate and open-mindedness on the part of all parliamentary subjects aimed at understanding certain matters such as, for example, the reform package, still on the table.

"I am talking about the Superior Council of the Judiciary, the Councils linked to the Court of Auditors, but, also, now I think that the debate on the need, or not, of improving some text of the Constitution of the Republic has already been launched and I believe that It will be a year with a very strong agenda and, above all, in which parliamentary leaders will play a very important role" shares Austelino Correia.

From the deputies and all parliamentary benches, the President yearns for "an open spirit" capable of focusing on what is most important for the development of Cape Verde. He clearly tells Correia that everything must be for the elevation of the Parliament's image and the well-being of Cape Verdeans and the country. A role that belongs to all parliamentary subjects.

"I hope that all deputies will contribute to raising the image of Parliament. It is to participate actively in the work, to be engaged, to have a political debate with elevation to debate ideas, projects and proposals and not for the assassination of character or for the finalization of the debate or, still, for the crisping of the parliamentary political en-

vironment. It's just that what we do inside will be reflected outside", he reveals.

Austelino Correia considers that the debates can indeed be heated, but with elevation in order to contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of Cape Verdeans and the development of the country.

Also, according to the draft Agenda, national elected officials will generally approve the Proposed Law approving the General Regime for Forestry Policy; as well as the one that makes the first amendment to the legal regime relating to weapons and their ammunition, approved by Law no. 31/VIII/2013, of 22 May.

With regard to Draft Resolu-

tions, approval will be given, which requests the Court of Auditors to carry out an audit of the construction works of the new Market in the Municipality of Praia; and the Draft Resolution that makes the third amendment to Resolution No. 5/X/2021, which sets the number and designation of the Specialized Committees and determines their respective members.



Cape Verde National Assembly, Plenary sSession

Criticism Levelled Against The Justice System Of Guinea-Bissau

News Desk

Civil society organizations, ordinary citizens and governments recognize that there is much to be done in the justice sector in Guinea-Bissau.

"The justice sector is facing difficulties of various kinds", acknowledged, this Wednesday (12.10), the Guinean minister of Justice and Human Rights in the official act of celebration of the National Day of Justice.

Teresa da Silva admitted that there is a "weak independence" of the judiciary in

the country, "insufficient personnel" and "insufficient infrastructure for justice services". In fact, according to the official, several judicial institutions that work in rented houses have already been the target of eviction, due to non-payment of rent. But there are more problems to be solved, recalls the vice president of the Guinean League for Human Rights (LGDH), Bubacar Turé. Justice in the country continues to be associated with "sluggishness" and "corruption", he says.

The "permeability" of Guinean Justice "to political and economic influences" is one of the main challenges, comments Turé, adding that this is a phenomenon related to the "galloping level of corruption that

reigns in the sector and which constitutes a serious threat to the State itself".

In addition, justice continues to be inaccessible to ordinary citizens, adds the activist: "More than 90% of the courts in the sectors are currently closed due to the incompetence of successive governments".

Several citizens heard by DW Africa on the streets of the Guinean capital also disapprove of the current state of justice- "There is no justice in Guinea-Bissau". Many people end up not going to court because they don't believe that their problems can be solved", said a civil servant.

One teacher added: "Justice is not doing

its job and citizens are discouraged and don't trust it." On October 12, 1974, the then colonial administration sent all documents related to justice to the Guinea-Bissau authorities, newly installed after the country's independence, to assume their "sovereignty" in the sector.

48 years later, criticism continues to increase against the performance of justice institutions. Bubacar Turé, from the Guinean Human Rights League, outlines some ideas to change the scenario: "The Guinean Justice needs urgent therapy, which necessarily involves profound reforms, which make it immune to political and economic pressures and accessible to all citizens, irrespective of economic conditions."

General News

Fist Fight in Parliament after Speaker Wetangula Rules Kenya Kwanza has Majority

By George Maringa

A vicious fight broke in the National Assembly on Thursday evening, October 6, after Speaker Moses Wetangula ruled that the Kenya Kwanza Coalition has the majority number of MPs in the House.

A Member of Parliament tried to grab the Mace to express displeasure at the ruling.

At 5:20pm, the Serjeant-at-Arms were forced to throw a cordon around the Mace, which is the symbol of Parliamentary authority.

It is the duty of the Serjeant-at-Arms to protect, secure and maintain it. Speaker Wetangula had earlier ruled that the Kenya Kwanza Coalition has 179 MPs to take up the majority leadership in the National Assembly. Kenya Kwanza's rival coalition, Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya, has 157 MPs, the speaker said.

The cause of the chaos, was the placement of 14 MPs, who originally belonged to Azimio la Umoja.

The 14 MPs' political parties, Maendeleo Chap Chap (MCC), Pamoja African Alliance (PAA), the United Democratic Movement (UDM) and the Movement for Democracy and Growth (MDG), were initially mem-

bers of Azimio la Umoja before shifting allegiance to Kenya Kwanza after the August 9, 2022 General Election.

Azimio MPs argued that the constitutional timeline allowing for de-camping had not yet reached, hence making the 14 MPs members of Azimio coalition as per the law.

Speaker Wetangula, however, observed that coalitions are not "cast in stone", and that the membership can change before or after elections.

"Coalitions are not cast in stone and are an evolving arrangement which can occur both prior to and after the elections," he said while reading his ruling.

With the 14 MPs removed from the Azimio tally, the coalition's number dropped from 171 to 157.

Kenya Kwanza's numbers, consequently, rose from 165 to 179, Wetangula said.

With the ruling now made, Kikuyu MP Kimani Ichung'wah will be the Majority Leader in the National Assembly, deputised by Kilifi North MP Owen Mbaya.

South Mugirango MP Sylvanus Osoro will serve as the Chief Whip, assisted by Marsabit Woman Representative Naomi Jilo Waqo.

Wetangula ruled that the Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya Coalition will

take up Minority Leadership positions in the National Assembly.

As a result, Ugunja MP Opiyo Wanjai, who had been proposed for the Majority Leader position, will serve as the Minority Leader in the National Assembly. His deputy will be Kathiani MP Robert Mbui.

Suna East MP Junet Mohamed will, consequently, serve as Minority Whip, deputised by Nominated MP Sabina Chege.

The chaos targeting the Parliament's Mace threw the House into disarray on Thursday evening, with the live broadcast of the event discontinued. The parliamentary Mace, which

bears the Coat of Arms and made of a blend of gold, ivory and gold coatings, is four-and-a-half feet long and weighs 12.5 kilogrammes.

It is associated with the authority of the speaker and the House as a whole.

When the speaker is officiating over the House, the Mace ought to be in its proper place on a table, lying horizontally, with the larger end that bears the Coat of Arms facing the right-hand side of the House as viewed from the speaker's chair. If the Mace is stolen, or removed from where it should be, the proceedings of the House are considered unofficial.



Speaker of the National Assembly Moses Wetangula being escorted out of the House after chaos erupted on October 6, 2022.

IPU Assembly Calls for End to Russian Occupation of Ukraine

IPU

The 145th IPU Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda has adopted a resolution on Ukraine entitled Condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine and of the subsequent annexation of territories, in defence of the territorial integrity of all States.

The resolution calls for "an immediate end to the Russian military occupation of sovereign Ukrainian territory, restoring its territorial integrity back to its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters, and consequently the rule of international law".

It supports "the resolutions of various international bodies to investigate and prosecute the

perpetrators of possible war crimes committed in Ukraine" as well as the creation of courts with specific jurisdiction to investigate them.

The resolution also reaffirms support for the ongoing work

of the IPU Task Force for the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine.

At the Assembly, the IPU Task Force, met high-level parliamentary delegations from both the Russian Federation and

Ukraine separately.

The Task Force, led by MP Dr. Ali Al Nuaimi of the United Arab Emirates and composed of eight prominent parliamentarians representing the global parliamentary community, was set up following the adoption of a resolution at the 144th IPU Assembly in March 2022, Peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, respecting international law, the Charter of the United Nations and territorial integrity.

Any Member Parliament of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda, which is then debated by the parliamentarians attending. A drafting committee, made up of representatives of the different geopolitical groups at the IPU, then adjusts the resolution, taking into account comments made during the debate.

The IPU resolution follows a resolution adopted at the United Nations General Assembly earlier this week which demanded that Moscow reverse course on its "attempted illegal annexation" of four regions of Ukraine.

The IPU is the global organization of national parliaments. It was founded more than 130 years ago as the first multilateral political organization in the world, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between all nations.

Today, the IPU comprises 178 national Member Parliaments and 14 regional parliamentary bodies. It promotes democracy and helps parliaments become stronger, younger, gender-balanced and more diverse. It also defends the human rights of parliamentarians through a dedicated committee made up of MPs from around the world.





PRESENTS

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FACILITATORS



Benjamin Tachie Antiedu, ESQ
Senior Assistant Clerk
Committees Department
(Science and Technology Cluster)



Irene Ohene
HR Consultant
MD SKAIK Consulting

DATE

27TH OCTOBER, 2022

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