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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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**Third Meeting of the Second Session of the Fifth Parliament
of the Second Republic of The Gambia.**

**Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Wednesday, 27th September, 2017.**

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THE CHAMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE GAMBIA
Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

**SECOND SESSION – THIRD MEETING
OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

Wednesday, 27th September, 2017.

1. PRAYERS

[The Speaker, Hon. Mariam Jack Denton, Reads the Prayers].

[The House met at 10:30 a.m. in the New Parliament Building, Reverend Pye Lane, Banjul].

[The Speaker, Hon. Mariam Jack Denton, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

2. COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Deputy Clerk. Honourable Members, first of all I wish to welcome you all to the National Assembly, and, in particular to the Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly, in the 2017 Legislative Year.

May I also seize this opportunity to wish you all a belated happy Eidul Adha commonly known as Tobaski may Allah the Almighty accept our sacrifices and supplications? Amen!

As Honourable Members are aware, the Third Session of the National Assembly in the 2017 Legislative Year begins today, and, ends on the 06th of October 2017. During this period, various Parliamentary businesses and State matters that require the consideration of this Assembly will be tabled for consideration.

Finally, as per the Order Paper for today, the Assembly will consider and adopt the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Monday 31st July, 2017. Thereafter, the Assembly shall proceed with the consideration and adaptation of some reports of our Parliamentary delegation.

But before I call on the Clerk to move onto the next item on the Order Paper, may I still, and, I emphasize remind all Honourable Members that we as National Assembly Members are required to comply and abide by the Standing Orders of the National Assembly in our deliberations, as far as the business of this Assembly is concerned; and, to conduct ourselves with proper Parliamentary decorum. I therefore appeal to all Honourable Members to kindly peruse the various provisions of the Standing Orders and observe them accordingly, and, at all times.

Thank you.

3. Correction of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Monday 31st July, 2017

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Monday, 31st July, 2017 is before us for consideration and adoption. Can somebody please move that the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Monday, 31st July, 2017 be considered and adopted?

HON. LAMIN F.M CONTA [KOMBO EAST]: I so move, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. OMAR DARBOE [UPPER NUIMI]: I so second, Madam Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: Page 6, were you have debate continued, number 42 "Honourable Alhagie Darboe Lower Fulladu West" instead of "Upper Fulladu West."

THE SPEAKER: Point noted, thank you.

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: Page 7, third line, "accessing" instead of "assessing."

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: The first paragraph third line, the word "assessing" should be "accessing."

HON. ABDOULIE CEESAY [OLD YUNDUM]: "The following Honourable Members absent with permission" my name is not included, I was out of the country but, I took permission before leaving.

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: Page 4 paragraph 1, the first line "before giving the floor to the Hon. Majority Leader to move for the Assembly to adjourned" remove the [ed].

HON. YA KUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: Page 3, "those absent with permission" my name was listed but I was present; I was not absent on this day.

HON. SAINY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: Page 1, were you have 'Be it resolved that this august Assembly do stand adjourned sine die" It should be "sine-a-die." The 'a' is absent.

THE SPEAKER: I think from my experience as a legal practitioner, sine die has always been sine die. I stand to be corrected, but, I think it is correct but we can go to the law dictionary and see.

HON. ALAGIE JAWARA [LOWER BADDIBU]: Pages 3, "the following National Assembly Members were absent with permission," my name is not included and I took permission.

HON. DEMBA SOWE [NIAMINA WEST]: Thank you Madam Speaker, I contributed during the Adjournment Debate but my name did not reflect on the list.

THE SPEAKER: If there are no more interventions then we move forward.

[The Record of Votes and Proceedings for the National Assembly Sitting held on Monday 31st July, 2017 has been adopted as amended.]

4. Laying of Papers and Reports

- i. Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Pan-African Parliament in Midrand, South Africa from the period 08th – 19th May, 2017 [By Hon. Sidia S. Jatta – Wuli West & Head of Delegation]**

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Madam Speaker, this was the first meeting of the Pan-African Parliament that we attended, [just by way of preliminary] it started badly and ended badly. It ended badly because we all nearly lost our lives in a car accident. This can be attributed to bad travel arrangements for the First Session of the Pan-African Parliament, and we were almost one week late. All the elections, for the different positions in the Parliament took place in our absence which meant, we have no possibility of occupying any position [at least] for this particular period.

I am happy that the second trip was totally different, arrangements were proper, we went on time and we arrived on time. We came back on time without any difficulties and I hope such type of arrangements will continue to be the fashion for our trips.

Madam Speaker, the Report:

INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Ordinary Session of the 4th Pan-African Parliament took place from the 8th - 19th of May, 2017 in Midrand, the Republic of South Africa.

The Session was officiated by the President of the Pan-African Parliament, Honourable Roger Nkodo Dang.

In his opening and welcoming address, the PAP President said the Session is critically important as amongst other matters, the Bureau and Bureaus of the PAP Organ will look into the formulation of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan for the Pan-African Parliament and shall among others debate the following:

- a] The Activity Report of the PAP for October 2016 – March 2017 period,
- b] The State of the Union Report by the AU, including the Budget of the African Union
- c] The Draft Model Laws on Policing in Africa, and,
- d] The Protection of Cultural Property.

"This will be an intense session. We hope to achieve much more than what was achieved in the past years. Apart from strengthening our Secretariat, we will add greater value to the Continent by debating at least two model laws; advance the issue of free movement of Africans in the Continent, as well as dwell on the Sustainable Development Goals, as required by our mandate..." said Honourable Nkodo Dang.

The Presidents of Burkina Faso and Malawi, their Excellencies Roch Marc Christian Kaboré and Prof. Arthur P. Mutharika respectively, graced the Opening Session including a good number of other African Ambassadors.

The Chairperson of the African Union, His Excellency Moussa Faki, also graced the event. The Permanent Representative of the African Union to the United States of America, H.E Dr Arikana Chihombori, the President of the National Assembly of Serbia, Mrs Maja Gojković, as well as, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly

of the Mediterranean, H.E Pedro Roques, all delivered goodwill messages of solidarity at the event.

At least 30 new Members of Parliament [MPs] from eight African countries namely, Botswana, Chad, Ghana, Nigeria, Niger, Seychelles, Somalia and the Republic of The Gambia were sworn in as Members of the Pan-African Parliament.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the Session were in principle to strengthen the capacity of the PAP and its Members, as well as, improve the quality of services offered by the staff.

Further to this growth component, it is envisaged that this drive would further consolidate the Bureau and Committees in their strategic activities.

3. OFFICIAL ADDRESSES

During the course of the Session, the following personalities successively delivered Opening Addresses and Messages of Goodwill and Solidarity;

Messages of Goodwill

- ❖ H.E. Dr Arikana Chihombori [Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the African Union to the United States of America]
- ❖ Mrs Maja Gojkovic [President of the National Assembly of Serbia]
- ❖ H.E. Pedro Roque [President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean]
- ❖ H.E. Dr Meshal Al-Sulami [President of the Arab Parliament]
- ❖ Hon. Luwellyn Landers [Deputy Minister of Cooperation and International Relations, Republic of South Africa]
- ❖ H.E. Prof. Arthur P. Mutharika [President of the Republic of Malawi]
- ❖ H.E. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré [President of the Republic of Burkina Faso]
- ❖ H.E. Honourable Gertrude Mutharika [First Lady of Malawi]
- ❖ H.E. Ali Hassan Bahdon [Minister of Defense & Minister in-charge of Parliamentary Relations of Djibouti]

- ❖ Prof. Carlos Ruiz Miguel [Professor of Constitutional Laws at the University of Santiago]
- ❖ Alexandre Barro Chambrier [Former Founding Member of PAP]

4. **PRESENTATIONS AND DEBATE ON THE THEMATIC AREAS**

(4.1) The Presentation of the Report on the Participation of the Pan-African Parliament at the 22nd UNFCCC Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (COP 22), that was held in Marrakesh in 2016, was delivered by Honourable Jacqueline Amongin [Uganda] on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture, Rural Economy, Natural Resources and Environment

The Report centered on the following responsibilities of the (COP 22)

- (i) Gathering and sharing information on greenhouse gas emissions, national policies and best practices,
- (ii) Implementing national strategies and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs),
- (iii) Addressing issues on greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to foreseen climatic change,
- (iv) Determining the provision of financial and technological support to developing countries,
- (v) Cooperating to prepare to adapt to climate change effects.

(4.2) The presenter also challenged the PAP to specifically advocate for the promotion of these initiatives to ensure:-

- (i) The uptake of technologies that minimize high carbon pollution,
- (ii) Create awareness on the green economy,
- (iii) Support ecological innovative practices, policies and programmes; and,
- (iv) Institute environmental regulations and enforcement and support.

(4.3) Parliamentarians on the Advocacy for the Ratification and Implementation of the Paris Agreement focused on the following:-

- (i) Advocacy and lobbying for the ratification of the Paris Agreement,
- (ii) Advocacy and lobbying for the implementation of the Paris Agreement,
- (iii) Climate legislation; and,
- (iv) Budget approval for climate activities.

(4.4) For the PAP to draw more benefits from participating in the meetings and side events that takes place at the level of COP, it is imperative to take into account among others, the following recommendations:-

(i) The PAP should position itself in future COPs given its advocacy role for the ratification and domestication of the legal framework relating to the Paris Agreement,

(ii) PAP should consider increasing the number of Members attending future COPs for maximum coverage of the different thematic areas in order for it to move at the same level while at the COPs,

(iii) Given the mandate of the PAP as enshrined in the PAP Strategic Plan, its Members should strategically be positioned in future COPs to **represent PAP in strategic meetings as follows:**

(a) PAP Members to attend thematic group meetings relating to the uptake of technologies that minimize carbon pollution,

(b) PAP Members to attend thematic group meetings relating to ecological innovative policies, practices and programmes,

(c) PAP Members to focus on thematic programmes relating to environmental regulations and enforcement,

(d) PAP Members to focus on thematic group meetings relating to awareness creation in the global economy and climate change financing,

(e) PAP Members to attend the African Negotiators Group briefing meetings. It is also recommended that:

(i) PAP holds a briefing meeting for delegates to come up with the African position before heading to the COPs. A focal point person should be assigned to support the MPs in each of these thematic group meetings to capture and record the proceedings,

(ii) PAP delegations should plan and strategize their participation to maximize benefits from the different and various discussions,

(iii) The delegation should be able to meet often to report, share experiences and information in the different aspects of their participation,

(iv) The PAP should consider increasing the number of staff for administrative support while at the COPs,

(v) There is need to acquaint African Parliaments about most of the AU-driven innovative initiatives, like the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, the Africa Race Capacity and the Africa Adaptive Initiative to facilitate the achievements of the objectives of these initiatives,

(vi) PAP should plan well in advance the side events and the role of parliamentarians in the next COPs 23 scheduled for Bonn, Germany,

(vii) The PAP should strongly advocate for the inclusion of African Parliamentarians in national delegations to most of the fora, and, in particular, those participating in COPs,

(viii) In collaboration with the COPs, PAP should plan for other side events on specific topics such as climate legislation among others; and,

(ix) PAP should also follow up on countries that have not ratified the Paris Agreement.

5. Presentation of the Report on Brainstorming Session on the Sustainable Development Goals – Role of Parliament was delivered by Honourable Jacqueline Amongin of Uganda.

The objects of the presentation is to:

- (i) Update parliamentarians on the SDG goals and the level of progress made in achieving and focusing on progress made by African countries,
- (ii) Inform Parliamentarians on existing monitoring tools to track progress of SDGs at national levels; and,
- (iii) Discuss expected role of Parliamentarians in monitoring SDGs.

The Presenter further suggested that PAP Committees should focus on the following SDGs:-

- (i) Goals 10, 16 and 17 - International Relations and Conflict Resolutions,
 - (ii) Goals 7 and 9 - Transport Industry, Communication, Energy, Science and Technology,
 - (iii) Goal 8 - Committee on Finance and Monitoring,
 - (iv) Goal 3 - Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs,
 - (v) Goal 4 -Committee on Education, Culture, Tourism and Resources,
 - (vi) Goal 5 - Committee on Gender and Family, Youth and People with Disabilities.
- We definitely did not forget the other caucuses.

Key Recommendations

- (i) Review the legal and institutional measures for giving effect to international law obligations assumed under multiple environmental agreements to which they are a party and rectify gaps through appropriate laws and regulations,
- (ii) To ensure that the requirements of the SDGs are incorporated in legal instruments and institutional measures,

- (iii) Implementing the Parish Agreement on Climate Change especially with regards to adaptation, mitigation and action in the forest sector,
- (iv) International environmental crimes; ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promoting appropriate access to such resources.

The Presenter of the Report further proposed the creation of Joint Working Groups of the PAP, to ensure the implementation of the recommendations. It should be noted that as enshrined in this proposed **TOR FOR JOINT WORKING GROUPS of the PAP the Meeting agreed for the terms of the sub-committees to include the following:**

- (5.1) Allocate roles and responsibilities in response to SDGs across the PAP, particularly in the Standing Committees,
- (5.2) Review periodically the status of the SDG domestication and localization at national, regional and continental levels,
- (5.3) Audit and monitor SDG domestication and localization especially at national levels,
- (5.4) Galvanize governments to finalize SDG indicators and base lines,
- (5.5.) Prepare governments to the ultimate periodic global reporting to the UN,
- (5.6) Cabinets to fulfil their executive roles regarding the SDGs,
- (5.7) Influence and oversee that resources are channelled to higher and other tertiary education institutions for research and development of SDG implementation,
- (5.8) Ensure that SDG related programmes and projects are witnessed on the Ground,
- (5.9) Assistance in identifying good practices on SDG domestication and localization to be shared across the Continent,
- (5.10) Involve all the relevant stakeholders at the level of the Pan-African Parliament Secretariat and national Parliaments in promoting national awareness on SDGs,

(5.11) Mobilize resources and people to build capacity through training across governance levels,

(5.12) Organize annual SDG gala with the Member States and the Pan-African Parliament as the leaders,

(5.13) Establish a subcommittee on SDGs that comprises all the relevant committees under the leadership of the Agriculture Committee.

6. Message of Support and Solidarity by the FAO on using Agriculture and its Potential to Contribute to Sustainable and Inclusive growth as well as to Peace, Security and Prosperity presented by Dr Lewis Hove [Representative of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization in South Africa]

(6.1) The Presentation also focused on Agriculture's Potential for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth as well as the Comparable Advantage including:

- (i) The control of trans-boundary plant and animal pests and diseases,
- (ii) Climate change and the environment,
- (iii) Youth employment, urbanization and migration,
- (iv) Gender and Women's Empowerment; and lastly,
- (v) Renewed interest in private sector investment in agriculture, among others.

(6.2) A short presentation was delivered by H.E. HONOURABLE MICHAEL GAHLER [CHAIR OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT]

The Presentation focused on the main reason why the EUP has to set up a separate delegation in the European Parliament for relations with the Pan-African Parliament,

- (i) To try and follow-up on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, and,

- (ii) Follow-up on the five priority areas of the 2014 to 2017 Roadmap established after the 4th EU-Africa Summit in April 2014.

7. Presentation and Debate on Peace and Security in Africa by H.E. Ambassador Mull Katende of the Republic Of Uganda [Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union]

The Presenter stated that the Peace and Security Council [PSC] has particularly identified the following challenges:-

- a) The continental early warning systems remains weak and needs to be strengthened.
- b) Persistent financing constraints especially of AU led peace support missions. However, Ambassador Katende clarified that the Heads of State in the very last two Summits resolved to play a positive role regarding the financing of their agenda, and, hoped that financing shall no longer be dependent on external sources.
- c) Programmes on post-conflict reconstruction and development needs to be strengthened.
- d) Many Member States on the African Continent need to undergo security sector reforms.

8. Subsequent Presentations also covered the following topics:-

[i] Presentation and Debate on the Draft Motion on the Rotation of the Presidency of the Pan-African Parliament [by Hon. Santosh Vinita Kalyan of South Africa]

This Presentation was debated extensively and may require further analysis and consideration in subsequent PAP Sessions. The main reason for the divergent views during the debate is that there is no clause in the PAP protocols suggesting a statutory approach to the rotation of the PAP Presidency. The practice is therefore a "gentleman's agreement" which is simply about a principle of rotation.

[ii] A presentation was also delivered by PROF. EMMANUEL DANDAURA [MEMBER OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AU MODEL LAW ON PROTECTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY]

[iii] Presentation and Debate on the Report of Palestine's Request to be Granted Special Observer Status in the Pan-African Parliament [By Honourable Inzougou Massanga Zely, Chair of the Permanent Committee on Privileges]

This Presentation was also followed by a Motion to support Palestinian Prisoners.

[iv] Presentation and Debate on the Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and, the Maputo Protocol in the Francophone, Sub-Sahara Region. This Presentation was delivered [By Justice Mrs Yvonne Léopoldine Akoa [Judge and Chairperson of the National Committee for Protection of Women's Rights in Cameroon]

[v] Presentation and Debate on the Report of the Workshop on the Role of the Pan-African Parliament in Promoting Free Movement of People and the African Passport.

[vi] Presentation and Debate on the Report of the Fact Finding Mission to Chirundu One-Stop Border Post in Zambia.

[vii] Presentation and Debate on the Report of the Workshop on the Transport Sector in Africa: Challenges and Prospects.

[vii] Presentation and Debate on Draft Model Law on Policing in Africa by Mr Sean Tait [Director, African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCO)]

The proposed texts for the model law underlines the following fundamental issues:-

- (a) Informing the frame work for domestication,
- (b) The importance of supporting democratic governance; and,
- (c) The Rule of Law.

The first part sets out a preliminary section articulating the purpose of the law and definitions of key concepts used.

Whilst Part 2 looks at the Police organization itself and in keeping with the traditional legislative frameworks for Police law enforcement.

[viii] Presentation and Debate on the Report of the Joint Workshop on Combating Gender-based Violence through Education – Parliaments Response towards Achieving Women's Empowerment.

This presentation was delivered by Honourable Amoussouvi Kpadenou, Vice-Chairperson of the Permanent Committee on Gender, Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.

9. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE GAMBIA'S DELEGATION TO THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT ON SOME OF THE MOTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS AT PLENARY (Verbatim Quotes)

[i] HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [GAMBIA] on the Presentation and Debate on the Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Maputo Protocol in the Francophone, Sub-Sahara Region: Thank you very much Madam Presenter, for the competence and effectiveness with which you handled your presentation. Your document is very informative. Mr President, this is fundamentally important but, unfortunately, we do not have time to discuss it in detail.

The issue I want to raise is that matters dealt with in the document are so important but, it seems [to me] that the research was based on Francophone countries only.

This is because, there is reference to only two countries which are outside the Francophone zone, that is, South Africa and Cape Verde. It would have been more interesting if it was continentally based, because such documents would eventually help [us] to harmonize laws in certain areas.

We must bear in mind that when we begin to legislate in this Chamber, we are not going to legislate National laws, but, Continental laws. So, we must begin to consider the issue of harmonizing laws.

Mr President, in The Gambia, CEDAW has not only been ratified, but it has been translated into three major languages, to make it accessible to women who are literate in their own languages.

The same also goes for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. That also, has been translated into the three major languages in The Gambia. For the last 22 or 23 years, the Vice Presidency in The Gambia has been handled by women, and we have several ministers and directors who are women. Therefore, it is important that this type of study is also done in the [so-called] Anglo-phone Africa.

[ii] HON. FATOU K. JAWARA [GAMBIA] On the Presentation and Debate on the Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and, the Maputo Protocol in the Francophone, Sub-Saharan Region: Thank you very much Mr President, I would like to thank the Presenter. When we talk about women we should also talk about the girl child.

The discrimination against the girl child starts from our [own] homes. In a family, if you are blessed with both a girl and a boy child, on return from school, the boy will rest or chose to go to the football field, while the girl has to wash clothes and do all form of domestic chores at home. Such a situation adds to their low performance in schools. So, we have to address issues like that. Thank you.

(iii) HON. ALHAGIE S. DARBOE [GAMBIA]: Also contributed to the Presentation and Debate on the Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and said;

Thank you very much, Mr President. I also wish to thank the Presenter for that wonderful presentation.

The man may be the face, but, as another presenter puts it, the woman is a symbol of love and care in the family. Protecting the woman therefore means we are protecting the family in the entire world.

The Maputo Protocol and the CEDAW protects not only the woman but the family, the nation and mankind.

We should endeavour to get rid of all obstacles to these Protocols achieving their objectives. We need to sensitize not only the women, but, also the community and other stakeholders so that they know about these Protocols. Therefore, to achieve our collective objectives in eliminating discrimination against women, we need to engage and sensitize women as well. Thank you.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [GAMBIA] On the Presentation and Debate on the Report of the Workshop on the Role of the Pan-African Parliament in Promoting Free Movement of People and the African Passport: Mr President, travelling in Africa is generally a nightmare.

On this issue of free movement of persons and goods - if I take the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods, as an example, this Protocol came into being in 1975, and had a grace period of five years; which means that by 1980, they should have started to fully implement it, but, it is still not implemented.

Almost forty years now it is not implemented, but, it is ratified. We all agreed that after a five-year period the issue would become history. But, it is still the same. What is wrong? We make protocols and conventions that we sign and ratify, but we do not practice them at all. So, what is the essence?

I think the fundamental question, and, the effort that this Parliament, and, institutions like this should do, is to make sure that when conventions and protocols are made and ratified, we see to their implementation, otherwise there is no sense in having them. Thank you.

HON. ALHAGIE S. DARBOE [GAMBIA] Also on Free Movement ... Thank you very much. Mr President Africa cannot be fully integrated without the free movement

of its people. The free movement of people in Africa will demonstrate the true spirit and ideals of the African Union and will enhance the realization of the unification process in Africa.

Therefore, the introduction of an African passport will play a pivotal role in the free movement of people in Africa. It is pathetic for the Gambian Delegation, [even though they were on a diplomatic mission], to take hours to get to South Africa. Hence, if there is free movement and the African passport in place we would not find ourselves in a situation like this. Thank you.

HON. ALHAGI SANKUNG JAMMEH [GAMBIA] Thank you very much Mr President for giving me the opportunity, to add my voice to this important document, the **Draft Report of the Workshop on the Role of the Pan-African Parliament in Promoting the Free Movement of People and the African Passport.**

Mr President, we cannot call ourselves Africans if we cannot go to each other and cannot solve each other's problem. We can only do that if we can go to each other.

Going through this document, I have seen a lot of important points that if we all agree in concrete terms to put them in practice, Africa is going to be one of the best continents in the world. There cannot be meaningful development if there is no cooperation among ourselves. As Africans, we have to come together to solve our own problems. We cannot solve our problems when we do not know each other's home.

We can only do that when we visit each other's home. If we hear of a problem in any part of Africa, as a Parliament, we should come together to solve it amicably.

If we do that, it will bring Africa as we always say "One Africa One Voice". But if our borders are restrictive, it means that we are creating differences among ourselves which will not bring us together. On that note, I thank the Committee that prepared this Draft Report. Thank you.

[Vii] HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [GAMBIA] Thank you Mr President, and, Honourable Colleagues. I rise to comment on the Report of the Committee on Transport, Industry, Communications, Energy, Science and Technology on the Transportation Challenges. It is indeed sad to hear of some of the challenges in the transport sector in Africa which can be attributed to the lack of African experts in that area.

If you look at some of the projects mentioned in this Report, you will realize that, feasibility studies, implementation, monitoring and supervision are mostly given to foreign experts. Then you talk about the payments associated with these projects all go back to the foreign banks instead of the African banks.

If we want to graduate from dependency on other countries or continents, we need to look at the education sector across the Continent, to try and see how best we can harmonize the subject areas, as well as, to create consistency in what we teach in our universities.

No amount of lecture or literature can substitute for research and development, a key constraint in African universities, where research and development basically do not have enough funds.

I will suggest to our Committee on Education, Culture, Tourism and Human Resources, to think about assisting African universities in terms of forming associations, for example Association of African Universities where knowledge sharing, research and development, sharing best practices and collaboration among others could be strengthened.

From what we teach in the universities in Africa, hardly do you see a university that teaches transportation and logistics or aeronautics and aviation. So, where are we actually going, if the fundamental issue of how to support the transport sector is not taught in our schools and universities? Mostly, we depend on foreign experts to help us.

It is about time we solve [our] African issues on our own, to invest heavily in research and development, especially in the transport sector which will get down to science and technology. Thank you very much Mr President.

10. CRITICAL ISSUE RELATING TO THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

[10.1] Debate on the Pan-African Parliament Budget for 2018 by Honourable Michael ... Chairperson of the Committee on Monitoring and Financial Affairs

This Presentation covered the following areas

- [a] The PAP Protocols and Ratification Campaign,
- [b] Increased visibility of PAP,
- [c] The African Union Agenda 2063; and,
- [d] The issue to build on Members' allowances which were incorporated into the PAP 2017 Budget.

The following Recommendations were made for this Presentation.

[i] There is urgent need to rethink the process of allocation of finances for the Committees. MPs' activities should inform the budget process and not vice versa, that is, Committees should be allocated funds based on what has been approved. The Committee appealed to the Bureau to review the period within which the Joint Planning Meeting is held.

[ii] The Committee resolved that all Committees should present their budgets to the Committee on Finance during the March Committee Sitzings each year. This would allow the Committee on Finance to be able to include all committee requirements in the Budget for the following year. When meetings are held in October, the Committees are simply left to share what has already been approved and that is not the way to do things.

[iii] Thirdly, the presentation and deliberations on the PAP Budget to be communicated to the Chairperson of the Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs in a timely manner, through the Committee Clerk, and, the Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs to be involved in the African Union budgetary process from its inception.

[10.2] Presentation and Debate on the Report of the Committee on Audit and Public Accounts [CAPA] by Honourable CHIEF FORTUNE CHARUMBIRA [ZIMBABWE]

The Presenter submitted that, the Report centered on the Financial Rules of the African Union relating to financial management and integration. It further relates to the Financial Procedures and Rules of the AU. For the benefit of new Members of the PAP, the Report gave a brief history of the establishment of the Committee on Audit and Public Accounts and its responsibilities.

Thus, it is worth noting that CAPA is mandated to look into procedures, processes, adherence to procedures and good governance.

The Presentation also touched on and covered seven other reports, notably:-

[i] Report on Certification and Audit of PAP Expenditure from the African Capacity Building Foundation for the period August to December 2015.

[ii] Report on the Review of the Implementation of the Budget of the Pan-African Parliament for the Year ended December 2015.

[iii] The Report on the Certification and Audit of the EC 30 million Dollar Support Programme for the period January to June 2016.

[iv] Report by the Board of External Auditors on the Financial Statements of the Pan-African Parliament for the Year ended 2014.

[v] Report by the Board of External Auditors on the Financial Statements of the Pan-African Parliament for the year ended 31st December, 2015.

(vi) Follow-up Report on the Implementation of Recommendations of the Board of External Auditors covering the period January 2013 to December 2015.

(vii) Status of Implementation of CAPA Recommendations.

The Presentation also focused on the following critical issues.

(10.3)(a) Host Country Agreements,

(b) Disclosure of contributions from the Republic of South Africa to the PAP,

(c) Recognition of Members of Parliament in the African Union's New Rules and Regulations.

(10.4) Staff Matters

(a) Staff emergency loans, in terms of the AU rules,

(b) Staff travel advances,

(c) Salary advances in 2015,

(d) Review of Accountability,

(e) Charging of Recruitment of staff under the EC Fund,

(f) Employment of a staff member,

(g) Appointment and promotions,

(h) Health insurance scheme for Members of Parliament,

(i) Office of the Internal Auditor,

(j) Delays by Management in responding to Audit Queries,

- (k) Service Culture.

(10.5) Other Transactions

- (a) Signing of Local Purchase Orders,
- (b) Airline expenses and cancelled tickets,
- (c) Unauthorized expenditure while on missions,
- (d) Delayed remittance of pension contributions,
- (e) Review of Budget Performance within 2017,
- (f) VAT Receivables from the South African Revenue Service,
- (g) Development partner receivables,
- (h) Lack of procurement plans.

11. Conclusion

The Fourth Ordinary Session of the 4th Parliament ended on the 19th of May, 2017 with a colourful ceremony in Midrand, the Republic of South Africa after the swearing-in of some 25 Honourable Members from about eight countries.

The Gambia Delegation comprised the following:-

- HON. SIDIA S. JATTA - Head of Delegation
- HON. ALHAGI SANKUNG JAMMEH
- HON. ALHAGIE MBOW
- HON. FATOU K. JAWARA
- HON. ALHAGIE S. DARBOE
- MR DANIEL CARDOS - Secretary to the 4th Ordinary Session.

NB: 1. The verbatim reports (HANSARD) are available at the National Assembly Website for further reference

2. Copies of presentations are available at the National Assembly Library.

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. ALHAGIE SANKUNG JAMMEH [FONI JARROL] I so second, Madam Speaker.

[Question Proposed]

HON. ALHAGIE SANKUNG JAMMEH [FONI JARROL] Thank you Madam Speaker. First of all I thank the whole House who first accepted our membership as Members of the Pan-African Parliament representing The Gambia. We thank God for enabling us to attend the First Session.

As the mover rightly said, our first trip was very short, why? Because we did not reach there on time. We found the Session almost at the finishing point. Almost all the important points were discussed in our absence, important positions were all filled. So, we were rather fortunate or unfortunate that we were given portfolios that are not so important. But as the white man says, "half a loaf is better than none."

Thank God we were put into committees where at least we will also try to play our role as representatives from The Gambia at the PAP, and, in Africa as a continent.

The Report is not controversial, the mover read what happened there. During debates that we were fortunate to witness, the PAP we realized as an institution is not a one man show. It is a place where all African countries have roles to play, so it is not an easy place.

We thank God that through our able team leader Honourable Sidia S. Jatta, we were able to cope with the situation because he was our coach during the trip. After Sessions we will sit to discuss issues as to the way forward for the following day. So, we thank him very much for his guidance as far as membership to PAP Committees are concerned.

We cannot call ourselves Africans if we are not one, if we are not in unison [together] as one continent. If we are free with proper documentation, to visit one another and to go to each other, I think the way forward will be very easy and it will be a better continent for all of us. Today we [The Gambia] cannot be in a problem

and our neighbouring country is ignoring us, because if we are at peace, the neighbouring country will also be at peace, but if we are not at peace, they will also not be at peace. So, we have to come together as one understand each other's problems and see how best we can solve it. That is the only thing that can make Africa have one voice and be one Africa.

I will also thank the secretariat for facilitating our second trip. Because, our second trip we went on time even though it was Committee Meetings. We went safely and participated as expected and I wish this trend will continue. If it continues, [it means] we will have a better report because nothing will happen in our absence and whatever is due to us we will get. Thank you.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. The Report delved into 3 elements ...

THE SPEAKER: Sorry Honourable, there is just one observation I wanted to make. I believe we all have a copy of the Report and I assume we all must have read and absorbed it. So, what we are doing right now is to come up with issues and concerns, comments, observations maybe [some] recommendations vis-à-vis the Report. Thank you Honourable Member you can continue.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH: The Report delved into 3 elements:

1. The Paris Agreement
2. The Sustainable Development Goals
3. As well as the Issue of Peace on the Continent

It even mentioned some form of harmonization of our laws. The Honourable Member has emphasized the need to look into our contributions to the evolution of the Pan-African Parliament, which is inconceivable without real planning of trips. I am sure that is taken into consideration.

Essentially, the information we gather is what will help this Parliament to make its contribution. They have mentioned the shortcomings in terms of movement, but,

what is the greatest shortcoming that this Body must prevail over our other Colleagues in the Continent, is the state of our institutions, the state of the Pan-African Parliament itself. I was a Member of the Pan-African Parliament on its founding.

It remains a consultative and advisory Body rather than a legislative one. And as long as it continues to be a consultative and advisory body - then we do not create our own agenda. As you can see the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals and Issues of Peace on the Continent - the agenda is really coming in support of what is in the world, rather than being the architect of an agenda for the world.

It is therefore important that in their next Session we begin to question the source of its salary, because the time I was there, it was Libya that was contributing most of the funds, maybe now South Africa. That is just an assumption that essentially, some were not even paying.

We talked about institutions, you have the institution of an Assembly of Heads of State, you have the Ministers, but you hardly see ministers coming and giving reports on trade, finance and on issues that concerns us. Look at the issue of migration, the Continent is in turmoil and restless. What I am simply saying is that we can assist our Committees by way of recommendations and articulating some of the issues. I want that Parliament to be transformed into a legislative organ rather than being merely a consultative and advisory Body. Thank you.

HON. SUNKARY BADJIE [FONI BEREFET]: Madam Speaker, I will like to first and foremost thank the delegates for a job well done, their contributions were very meaningful.

I was thinking of one fundamental thing which the PAP should have come up with as an agenda, although it was briefly highlighted as governance, but the area I am coming up is with particular reference to decentralization.

Today, we all know the importance of decentralization. It plays a very important role in our development agenda and most of our countries are going towards

decentralization. Unfortunately I have not seen anything in the Report relating to decentralization.

The Report is also very important because it touches on key things affecting Africa - that is agriculture, peace, free movement of people and goods. One of the previous speaker highlighted that the free movement of people and goods has been ratified but the devil lies in the implementation. I want to ask, what is really stopping this ratified instrument from being implemented?

Climate change, we cannot think of development especially in the agricultural sector without addressing climate change. The issue of climate change should have been given much prominence in terms of planning and also technological research. Food self-sufficiency is very important and to ensure food self-sufficiency in Africa, the agricultural sector needs to be given great importance. So, I want to recommend that particular emphasis be given to climate change if the African Continent wants to attain sustainability in food.

The free movement of goods and persons is very essential perhaps the reason why it is not being coordinated, is because of Africa's security nature some countries are at peace while some are not. Therefore, implementation would be very difficult. However, there should be strategies to ensure it is implemented as this will effectively contribute to our economies. Stopping at ratification only will not help in meeting our objectives. Thank you.

HON. BILLAY G.TUNKARA [KANTORA]: Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity. Permit me I am having flu. I am a little bit in disarray in understanding the main functions of the PAP because going by the Report and contributions made by our delegates for example Honourable Sidia S. Jatta, with your permission I quote, "We must bear in mind that when we begin to legislate in the Chambers we are not going to legislate national laws but continental laws." This means that the PAP has actually moved to more of a legislative Body for the Continent. And in doing so, proper laws have to be made in terms of understanding the constraints of the African Continent.

This issue of migration and youth unemployment are very pressing. We understand they have touched some pivotal areas such as the issue of African passports which will ease the free movement of goods and persons living around the African sub-region. But, we have realised from the leadership itself right into our own countries, if you look around, even within our country here The Gambia we are a member of the regional organisation – ECOWAS, you will see the manner in which immigration officers are actually running after immigrants. The mode of approach is too bad. You now question yourself - that is Africans treating each other like this? So, the issue of making laws is one thing but putting them into practice in our own countries is very fundamental.

Leadership is actually a big problem. We have to set examples, charity begins at home. It is not just enough to go to plenary to adjudicate for laws to be implemented. What is significant is, how we domesticate those laws into our national constitutions or laws and also publicise them as well. In so doing we are actually going in the right direction, if not the PAP will be at cross roads to achieve its aims and objectives.

Secondly, it is the attitude of Africans not been receptive, not been actually accommodative. Look at the xenophobia in South Africa. We have seen repressions on foreigners in South Africa a country hosting the PAP. Actually this does not show a sign of unification of Africa. When African countries are actually confronting each other, feeling so happy to send their brothers away. Things are just put on paper but, in actual sense, practically they are not being implemented. So, attitudes needs to be changed right from our homes and our communities.

We have to be receptive, we have to accommodate each other. Let the spirit of brotherhood run in our veins. It is only that then I am sure that we can accomplish the aims and objectives of the PAP. These are my observations. I thank you so much.

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: Madam Speaker, I also want to join my colleagues to thank the delegation for representing The Gambia and participating in the proceedings. Of course we also sympathize with their ordeal.

Going by this Report, on the PAP dealing with critical issues relating to the Pan-African Parliament, debating and discussing the African UN Agenda 2063 which has a governance component - I don't know how they decide on issues to be tabled or to be part of the agenda - I don't know how that is done, but my concern is the Peer Review Mechanism.

Agenda 2063 is emphasizing the Peer Review Mechanism which was established but weak in terms of what it intends to do in further democratizing Africa. Of course some countries like The Gambia, we overcame a system and about to build another system to strengthen democracy in The Gambia. But I believe this mechanism helps in [we are talking about harmonizing], influencing other countries because a country like Togo, is grappling with democracy to ensure the will of the people prevails. The system there is not delivering, yet, the people are finding it difficult to change it.

So, I would want the Gambian delegation to take this up as one of their missions to ensure that this Peer Review Mechanism is properly in place and is functioning. During the time of former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and the former President of Mali onetime former AU Chairperson, it was very effective.

As part of my recommendations, if The Gambia can really champion to see that this Peer Review Mechanism is in place. We will be learning from best practices as to what obtains globally from which The Gambia can also benefit. Countries that are more on the democratic path can be influencing the process to ensure there is democracy. Thank you.

HON SAMBA JALOW [NIAMINA DANKUNKU]: Madam Speaker, thank you very much for giving me the floor. Let me join my Colleagues to thank our PAP delegates.

I just have few comments, in the area of the Pan-Africa Parliament moving from an advisory Body to a legislative Body. In 2014, when the Heads of State met in Malabo, they adopted the Protocol but now ratifying this Protocol is a problem.

Before I left, only 5 countries had ratified the Protocol The Gambia inclusive. Looking at it, the political will must be there for the Pan-African Parliament to move from advisory to legislative.

If the Heads of State can meet in Malabo and adopt the Protocol what is stopping countries to ratify it. It is about 3 years now; and you count only 5 countries, that means the political will is not there. So, what are we going to do?

The other issue is funding, the Honourable Member for Serrekunda mentioned that it was Libya, when Libya had a problem Egypt was contributing the greater part; Egypt also developed a problem so now the Pan-African Parliament depends on external funding. Our [own] African institution cannot fund itself we must depend on external funding and those external funding come with conditions. "You do it this way I will do it, if you do not do it this way I will not." This is why we are always dancing to their tunes.

The last time they met in Kigali, they discussed [may be now they are trying to develop a situation] where every material imported in Africa, a percentage levy will be paid on that material. I think if they go with that they can manage to get money. If not, the Pan-African Parliament would definitely have a big problem with regards to funding. There are so many programs which are not conducted because of the lack of money.

The free movement of people in Africa is a problem. The Presenter mentioned that they had to travel far before they could get to South Africa. Travelling in Africa is a nightmare. That also is another factor which the African Continent should look into.

Today, if I want to travel to South Africa I must have a night stop in Dakar, I cannot fly from The Gambia to South Africa direct. I must go and spent a night in Dakar then early in the morning, I either take a direct flight to Johannesburg which takes about 9 hours. The other alternative is to fly from Dakar to Bamako to Addis Ababa to South Africa. I think that was the route they took which is very hectic. On that note Madam Speaker, I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Any more interventions?

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [BADDIBU CENTRAL]: Madam Speaker, I will like to thank the delegation for the efforts. I only have few points to raise for the Members representing us at the Pan-African Parliament, and, my number one recommendation will be;

- You have to know the history of Pan-Africanism in order to represent us well. You have to do a lot of research about Pan-Africanism so that Gambians can also be conscious of Pan-Africanism.

If you do not know the history of Pan-Africanism, how it started and where we are now, you will not be able to participate in the debates effectively.

The other recommendation that I want to put across is,

- The idea had been born for a very long time. We have to assess ourselves and see the impacts it created.
- We also have to look at our educational system. Our educational system needs to move from only theory into skills to put in practice what we are learning in our institutions. The education that is given to us, is more of job orientation, it is not addressing food security, and it is not empowering the African youth to be self-reliant.

The other issue that I want to talk about is, to ensure that our curriculum is revisited where we can have Pan-Africanism as a subject to be taught in our schools, so that children that are coming up will know what Pan-Africanism is all about, and be able to move the agenda forward.

Madam Speaker, this is my contribution and I want to say bravo to the team for their efforts. Thank you

HON. SAINÉY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: Madam Speaker, I also want to thank the Presenter for that wonderful presentation. Let us look at the acronym PAP [Pan-African Parliament] Madam Speaker, this acronym is supposed to represent Africa in general, but I am deeply flabbergasted because Honourable Jatta in his intervention said when it comes to the movement of people, this is still a problem. Why is this a

bottleneck when the PAP is there to represent us? I cannot understand I think we should go beyond this now. Since the establishment of the PAP, we are still struggling with teething problems. The PAP is no longer in its embryonic stage it has been with us for quite a long time now. We have to work seriously and make sure we respect whatever we preach. We should have passed this stage Madam Speaker, the PAP is no longer in its embryonic stage, it is old enough now.

There should be free movement of peoples, goods and services without any let or hindrance. That is my take Madam Speaker. Thank you very much.

HON. DEMBA SOWE [NIAMINA WEST]: Madam Speaker, I also thank the Gambian delegation and say bravo to them. Looking at the size of The Gambia, it is one of the smallest country in Africa, but that does not reflect that The Gambia is silent. The Gambia is contributing in lots of international bodies.

I am glad by the contribution of our Parliamentary delegates, but I want them to reflect more on trade and free movement of goods to make sure African countries open their borders. Our borders are not open because everywhere you go, at every military check point before you enter their country you have to pay something. If you go to immigration they ask you 2 mille, if you go to customs you are asked to pay, this does not augur well for Africans.

We should be given the opportunity to have access to each country in Africa because in Africa we say we are all one, we speech the same language. Yet, that does not reflect on the free movement of people.

Democracy! I am happy The Gambia has adopted a system of democracy now - every Gambian is now proud of our democratic system. People have been allowed to debate in radios without that station being closed, and, also in the newspapers. Bravo to the Government and to the entire citizenry. Thank you.

HON. MOMODOU S. CEESAY [JANJANBUREH]: Madam Speaker, I would want to join other Honourable Members to congratulate the Honourable Member for Wuli West and head of delegation to the Pan-African Parliament [PAP].

My concern about the PAP is, some presidents in Africa are fiddling with their constitutions and this was not even discussed in this Report. So I am recommending that at their next meeting they come up with this issue. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Any more interventions?

HON. NDEY YASSIN SECKA [NOMINATED]: Madam Speaker, my question is for the head of the delegation to the PAP. He said during their session women issues were discussed and emphasised. However, when he talked about disability, he did not say much. So, what aspects did they touch on regarding people with disabilities? Thank you.

HON. BABA GALLEH JALLOW [SANIMENTERENG]: Madam Speaker, I am also thanking the delegation for their wonderful presentation. My intervention is going to be based on the Member for Tallinding's presentation, which is the discrimination against the girl child.

When we talk about discrimination of the girl child we only think of FGM as the problem. But no, in our local communities we believe that when a woman has a girl child she has to relax, because we believe that this girl is going to get married tomorrow and should be able to cook, wash dishes and do everything. That is why many women would sit down and let this girl child do every job in the house.

There is a saying in English, "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." From my experience, the girl child will go to school but instead of focusing in the classroom, all she would be thinking about, is, after school I am going fetch water, clean the house and wash the dishes. This is always jeopardising her academic performance. Therefore, women in the homes should take up their responsibilities to make sure they help the girl child so that she can excel tomorrow. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Any more intervention?

HON. SAINY JAWARA [LOWER SALOUM]: Madam Speaker, I welcome you and your delegation from China. I thank members of the PAP for doing a fantastic

job and for raising the Gambian flag high on issues affecting Africa, and The Gambia in particular.

My contribution is leaned on issues affecting The Gambia likewise Africa: women empowerment, investment in agriculture, climate change and environment. We all know these are diseases affecting The Gambia. These are diseases if cured, we will see the Gambian flag up.

My advice to our PAP delegates, is to bear in mind that they are not in the PAP to criticise they are there for The Gambia and Africa's interest. Therefore, whenever they are called by the PAP, and the Office of the Clerk provide their needs, it is incumbent on them to go as soon as possible.

This is nation building and we love what they are doing. I would want to thank them for highlighting issues related to the nation. I thank you all.

HON. MOMODOU CAMARA [FONI BINTANG]: Madam Speaker, may I join my Colleagues in thanking the Members of the PAP for their contributions at the PAP.

If we want Africa to be together we have to come together. Some African countries to go there you need a visa. If we really want Africa to be together we have to abolish this visa issue, because even the PAP Members the reason why they were late going to South Africa it is because of this visa issue. I therefore want to recommend to the PAP Members to emphasise for visa free entry to all African countries.

We are good in formulating laws and ratifying agreements, but the main problem in Africa is implementation which we should work on very hard. Members of the PAP should work very hard to see that all the agreements that have been laid and ratified are implemented fully. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: We can now safely close the debate and allow the Honourable Member to respond to the issues raised in the debate.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Thank you very much for your comments.

I think, first, we need to understand the nature of the institution that we have been

talking about - the Pan African Parliament. ECOWAS is much older than the PAP, much older. The ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Peoples, Goods and Services is over 30 years old, yet, it is not enforced. You know why? We have a role to play in all these; all the National Parliaments in Africa have a role to play.

The Protocol as I said, had a grace period of only 5 years, after that automatically ECOWAS should have been by now, just like one big country where I can go. I can go to Nigeria and work there as if I was born there; I can go to Ghana work there as if I was born there, but why is that not taking place? We must understand the nature of our countries and the type of economies we have.

When we say free movement of persons, goods and services that is crucial. If goods and services are moving freely in ECOWAS zone, what will that amount to for countries like The Gambia? It means, we will not be getting taxes from the goods that are coming into our country. From one ECOWAS country into The Gambia without tax; it is just like moving goods from Basse to Banjul. The only thing you pay is transport and if that happens it is going to affect our economies. So that is why it is taking these people so long to implement it. That is not the only factor, there are many other factors.

The Pan-African Parliament is much younger, and, the process that ECOWAS is taking to be a legislative institution is the same process the PAP is taking to become a legislative body. The ultimate objective is for institutions to become Parliaments like this one. ECOWAS should be legislative West Africa. Let me give an example, in East Africa; the East African Legislative Assembly is fully elective and legislative. Members there are elected to that institution and they are not members of their national parliaments. If you are elected in Uganda to that institution, you are only a member of that institution, because you cannot serve two institutions at the same time. These are just make shift arrangements.

In a few days time some of us will be going to ECOWAS while this Parliament will be on session. It means I will be absent [here], and I am elected to serve in this Parliament, but this Parliament has also elected me to serve in another parliament.

This is not a good practice, but, it is meant to serve a purpose until arrangements are made for us to have those institutions become elective institutions. It is taking long because there are so many factors we have to take into consideration.

For the PAP to get money to carry out its activities, this is a problem. The PAP is always in conflict with the authorities in Addis. So, parliaments in Africa have a role to play, we have to prevail on our governments that when certain protocols are ratified, the purpose is to implement them. That is one fundamental role we can play.

Honourable Members should also understand that the session we attended was short and it had an agenda. Naturally when you have an agenda you cannot discuss anything beyond that agenda. All the issues that they have raised it is not that the PAP does not deal with those issues. They are dealing with everything, the same as we are dealing with everything Africa – from agriculture, health, education, road infrastructure to everything regarding the development of the African Continent. It is not that PAP is forgetful of the issues that we have; in fact, we have special committees on some of these issues, almost all these issues that we have here.

With regard to the issue on constitutions, I think PAP was in dialogue with big institutions in Africa that are highly opposed to this manipulation of constitutions by presidents.

Again, national institutions have a role to play; parliaments are involved in helping presidents to manipulate constitutions. You are all witness to what happened here during the impasse. This Parliament was used to expand the lifespan of the Presidency. How? There is a section in the Constitution that says if Parliament expands its life, automatically the lifespan of the Presidency is also expanded. There was no need for them to expand their lifespan, but because they wanted to expand the lifespan of the President to make it possible for him to pursue those foolish court cases regarding the election, Parliament did that. So, parliaments are crucial in all these.

Presidents cannot manipulate constitutions without the participation of Parliaments. It is our responsibility, let's speak to ourselves. We help them to do whatever they do. All the foolish laws that were made here during the impasse were laid in this Chambers, so Parliament was responsible.

As it stands, the PAP and ECOWAS are not legislative, they are just mere advisory bodies. Something very interesting was said, which is that, if this advisory role is to be effective and fully exercised; then if any parliament or institution makes recommendations there should be a Minister or somebody from somewhere to come and responds to those issues. However, we hardly have any Minister from anywhere in Africa to come and address the PAP on those issues.

Yes! Sometimes, we invite presidents to come and open the Parliament's session, to make a contribution, and sometimes AU comes from time to time to give reports to Parliament, but that is not... because we are always dealing with matters relating to Africa's development, agriculture and education. Last session was consecrated to meeting of committees. My committee had three [3] fundamental workshops on two fundamental issues ...- *[interruption]*.

They are there but maybe that is also PAP's fault. The Presidency could have invited ministers from different places to participate in some of the discussions - for example when we are dealing with [some] ordinary issues of education, harmonisation of education policies and harmonisation of curricula. We deal with all these. So, it would be interesting if Ministries of Education are present in some of these discussions because their input is fundamental but we do not have that.

So, it means that the reorganisation of the way they operate should be considered. Particularly for one like ECOWAS, because they have been there for a long time and they don't have any problem with money. They are fully sourced as far as money is concerned as opposed to the PAP.

Madam Speaker, one of the crucial issues that was discussed in my workshop regarding persons with disability - if you go to any office in The Gambia [here], none of them is friendly to somebody who has a disability of one thing or the other. No

office is designed to help a person with disability. There is no office that is designed in a way that allows a person with a wheelchair to go in, that was discussed there. It is important for all offices everywhere in any country to be designed with that in view, because they are people and citizens and they have the right to access those places. So, you must provide them with the facilities to go there and of course their empowerment, and in what way, empowerment with education.

They were asking the British Members of Parliament [MP's] in the PAP, some of the gadgets that they need to properly do their work, we discussed all that.

I attended one congress, the secretary to that congress was a person with disability. He took all the minutes of the congress because he was armed with equipment which facilitated that. These are some of the things that we discussed and there is a lot to be done in this country in that regard. If you go to offices in Banjul and you think of people with wheelchairs they are prevented from going there.

ECOWAS and PAP Protocols indicate that after a period they should be reviewed and recommendations made for transformation into legislative bodies. PAP's protocol was reviewed that was what he was citing. It is there, few countries have ratified it and they needed at least 18 [sic] countries for it to come into force. Until now we have not got 18 [sic] countries to ratify it, so it is there. In fact, certain decisions we were to make during the last session could not be made, because we had nothing to refer to. Nothing to bank ourselves on because the Protocol is not ratified.

So, Parliaments in Africa have a role to play in making sure that these Protocols are ratified if we want to keep them moving effectively.

It is good to know the history of Pan-Africanism, but it does not mean that if you don't know the history of Pan Africanism you cannot become a Member of the Pan-African Parliament. It does not mean that you cannot participate in discussions regarding the PAP, because if we are discussing issues of agriculture regarding Africa I don't need to know the history of Pan-Africanism to be able to contribute, because in this Continent [at least] I know what agriculture is in The Gambia and every country in Africa.

So, if that issue is being discussed at the level of the Pan-African Parliament, anybody who has knowledge of that type can contribute effectively in that discussion. It is good to know the history of Pan-Africanism to be able to always contribute positively towards discussions about the unification of the Continent; but it is not necessarily an imperative need for any Member to become a Pan-African Parliamentarian.

While you are there you can teach yourself or you can do research about the History of Pan-Africanism. How many people among us here have some knowledge about it? This thing has been floating about for so long that I do not think there is anyone of us who have not heard or read about Pan-Africanism while he/she was in high school or somewhere else in another educational institution.

What is important for any Member whether in the PAP, or, this Parliament is that Members of Parliament must be really informed. They must be really informed to be able to articulate issues as expected. We must be really informed because otherwise we cannot scrutinise or positively input into policies.

Madam, Speaker, we must begin to force Ministers to bring policies before they are implemented. No policy should be implemented in The Gambia without being ratified here in Parliament - that is our fundamental role. It is not being done.

When I was in the old Parliament; I even said one time that I was going to give her a medal if I had the means - the former Vice President, she was the only one bringing policy matters into Parliament for discussions. She was the only one during my tenure, the 15 years I was here she was the only one who had ever brought policy documents here for consideration; others don't.

Right now we are having some crises regarding policy. If you take the issue of ID cards and passports, what is the policy on ID cards and passports? People are in need of ID card and they can't get it. What is the role and policy of government in that? These are the issues and we have a role to play in all these.

The issue of trade, this is very dear to ECOWAS and very dear to the PAP - South-south trade, inter-African trade. Again, we have to really examine issues critically

why some of these things are not taking place. There are factors which are preventing this, you only need to look at them to be able to help shape policies in those areas, but inter-African trade is fundamental to the life of the African Continent.

If Africa is integrated, trade among African countries would be highly facilitated. Once that is done, coupled with this idea of free movement of persons and services then Africa, would become a continent ... with pulse. Unless we are able to deal with factors which are making it impossible to implement these things we will always be making protocols, agreements which will never see the light of the day.

I don't think we need to belabour the point - the boy girl relationship at home and the boy child preference to go to school. I think that discrimination is dying. If you go to any school for example Nusrat, make an inventory of students who are there the girls are far more than boys. The teachers may tell you that may be the girls are doing far better than the boys. So, I don't think any father would now say I would not send my daughter to school because she is meant for the kitchen. All these children are now given equal opportunities to acquire an education, but as parents every mother or father should examine him/herself on the issue. There is problem with some parents in that regard also.

Finally, Madam Speaker, one of the workshops that we had [with the presenter coming from the African Economic Community Secretariat], the emphasis was on youth empowerment. Another Honourable Member was talking about skills and that presentation was fundamentally about the need for youths to be empowered with skills to become productive even where they are not employed, but they can become self-employed if that also is facilitated. That is why AU has a Youth Fund. I don't know how it is being accessed, but they have a fund for empowerment of the youth. Last time we discussed and said when we come here, we were going to find out how that Fund is being accessed by people in this country; but there is a Youth Fund by AU for the development and empowerment of the youth.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member for Wuli West. Before I continue I have one or two observations that probably I should have made before the Honourable Member responded to the issues. I have observed that most of us don't understand the PAP very well. May I suggest that we visit their website so that we can understand the structure, the mandate and everything dealing with the PAP? May I suggest further that not only the PAP, but all other organisations that the National Assembly is a member of? I think that would broaden our horizon, enlighten us more and make our understanding of the various institutions more relevant to us. That way when we go through various reports we may be able to look at it with an eagle eye because we already understand how they operate and work. This is just my humble observation and suggestion.

On that note I thank you very much and I wish to thank everybody for their participation, intervention, comments and observations.

[Question Proposed, Put and agreed to]

[Report by the Delegation to the Pan-African Parliament [PAP] has been adopted]

ii. **[Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to the First Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament in Abuja Nigeria from the period 10th - 25th May, 2017 [By Hon. Kebba K. Barrow-Kombo South/Head of Delegation]**

HON. SAMBA JALLOW [NIAMINA DANKUNKU/MINORITY LEADER]: Madam Speaker, I rise to withdraw the Report of the ECOWAS Parliament until further notice.

THE SPEAKER: You wish to move a motion for the withdrawal of the Report?

HON. SAMBA JALLOW [NIAMINA DANKUNKU/MINORITY LEADER]: Yes!

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MAHTARR M. JENG [LOWER NIUMI]: I so second, Madam Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Report by the Delegation to the ECOWAS Parliament, has been withdrawn until further notice]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we were scheduled to sit up to one 0' clock but in view of the fact that the second motion has been withdrawn, we still have 45 minutes to make use of. So, I am suggesting we continue with the next item on the Order Paper. That would give us time to probably close earlier in the afternoon. If you agree we can proceed along those lines otherwise we suspend and come back at 2:30 pm.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Madam Speaker, a member of our delegation has just brought to my notice that we need to sign the Report before presentation. The request is, if we can be given time until tomorrow so that we go through it properly do the vetting and signing before presentation.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I am sorry, I don't think we would be able to accommodate you tomorrow. However, if you can make arrangements for it to be signed, we can adjourn the Session and come back in the afternoon.

HON. SALLAH: Yes!

THE SPEAKER: We can take other reports to save time. We have Bureau meetings tomorrow.

HON. SALLAH: If it so pleases you Madam Speaker, we can continue and submit it with amendments and it would be accepted as a Report submitted with amendments. If you so desire.

THE SPEAKER: I want to be guided, what do you mean by signature?

HON. SALLAH: The Report is still in a draft form and we need to consult the secretariat, there is really no format in the presentation of reports.

THE SPEAKER: I have seen your point. Probably we can go ahead considering the fact that we are not having plenary tomorrow. I am just not sure about the legal

implications of adopting a report that has not been signed. I will not be very comfortable with that, I would rather it to be signed. [Undertone]

I will accept your first proposal, we adopt it with amendments. Thank you very much. We now move on to the next Report.

iii. Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to the 46th ACP Parliamentary Assembly and the 33rd ACP-EU JPA Session in Malta from the Period 14th-23rd June, 2017 [By: Hon. Halifa Sallah- Serrekunda & Head of Delegation]

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Madam Speaker, the members of our delegation comprising; Honourable Momodou S. Ceesay, Honourable Madi M.K Ceesay, Honourable Alhagie H. Sowe, Honourable Kaddy Camara and our Secretary Mr Mustapha Baldeh left this country to attend the 46th Session and 33rd Session of the ACP – EU JPA held in Malta from the 14th to 23rd June, 2017, and here by submit this Report for adoption by this august Body.

It is important for Members to bear in mind that there are 28 EU Members to this Assembly, and 79 ACP African Caribbean and Pacific Members to this Assembly. This was established under Article 17 of the Cotonou Accord which established the Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

Madam Speaker, you will not see in our Report names being mentioned of contributions done by members of our delegation. This is not due to lack of participation, but due to a format that we did not know about until we read the Rules of Procedure as new Members. It is important to bring to the notice of this august Body that the Rules of Procedure for the ACP Parliamentary Assembly simply states that we have a head of delegation that is the Permanent Representative and an alternate.

The Permanent Representative is actually the member who participates in the deliberations. And we have a five-member delegation, but this august Body needs to select, not only the head of delegation, but, also an alternate to represent the Body should the head of delegation be absent in any Session.

So, it is important also for us to begin to question why that should be the case. The fact that I present before you demands that all the members of the delegation should actually be participants and there is room for that to happen, but that is not the Rule of Procedure.

The Session is divided into two - that is why you talk about the 46th Session of the ACP and 33rd of the Inter-Parliamentary the Joint Session. What happens in the ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly is the creation of two Chambers, the ACP Chamber and the EU Chamber. What is required is for the ACP Chamber to meet and come to common agreements before participating in the Joint Session; the same goes for the EU Parliamentary Assembly. Once this happens you have a Bureau of the ACP States, then you have Standing Committees and a Joint Assembly.

The Bureau of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly has two co-Presidents and 24 Vice Presidents. The Standing Committees comprise those countries who are allocated on the basis of each Standing Committee - a country has to participate in one Standing Committee only. For example when we arrived we discovered that The Gambia was already a member of the Social Affairs and Environment Committee. But there are two other standing committees, the Standing Committee on Political Affairs and the Standing Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade.

So, in essence, the country becomes restricted to a particular standing committee and would not know what happens in the other committees until we have the final Joint Session. This does not appear to be very inclusive. And from our parliamentary Body we would have to recommend that those other members of the delegation should always be in those other committees representing the country.

We should have countries represented since they are a delegation of five they should have representations in all these committees. That would be more efficient and inclusive. We will be putting it before our own Assembly that as we move to join them in other sessions, we will be trying to impact on that process so that we will be included. Our members would be included in the other committees.

The 46 session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly, took place between the 14th and the 16th of June 2017. The starting point was to consider a vacancy which occurred. A vacancy of the co-Chair Person of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly, because a Gambian National Assembly Member, Hon. Netty Baldeh was the co-President, because he was no longer a Member of the National Parliament of The Gambia, he had to vacate his sit. When we looked at the Rules of Procedure, we discovered that there was no provision indicating what should happen when that sit becomes vacant. It did not provide for the First Vice President to automatically assume the sit. So, this became a controversy at the level of the meeting of the ACP States.

There were interested parties - Nigeria and Sierra Leone both wanted the position. It took a long time, because the objective was to build consensus, but we could not arrive at the consensus initially. We were heading towards voting. What we actually did was to volunteer - Gambia volunteered to mediate and Niger also volunteered to participate and ultimately through mediation, we were able to convince those who were vying for the position to accept one. The person who was there much longer had greater exposure, thus Honourable Member for Bundungka Kunda was ultimately elected by selection, by common appeal, to unanimous approval to be the co-President of the Joint Parliament Assembly.

The Parliamentary Assembly dealt with three elements, Resolutions on Political Affairs, Development, Finance and Trade; and, Social and Environmental Affairs. These were the three Committees. The Committees did meet in their separate formations, ACP-EU; considered all the Resolutions and finally the Joint Assembly was held to consider the Resolutions from the Joint Standing Committees.

In short, the Standing Committees of the different Chambers will meet, harmonise their positions, and then the Standing Committee of both the Joint Chambers will meet to harmonise their position on each area, then make their Resolutions and present them to the Joint Assembly.

The Committee on Political Affairs, this time focused on the funding of political parties. This was identified as a key necessity for having democratic governance throughout the ACP/EU States. They emphasized that, funding was indispensable to the efficiency of political parties. They recognised that the way funding is acquired could be questionable, and, could lead elected representatives to be loyal to those who give them funds rather than to the electorate and their Nations. So, consequently, there is an argument that States should give funding and private funding could also be acquired from outside the State structure. But the emphasis is, there should be regulation. All States are therefore being asked to look into the issue of political party funding and the regulations that should govern such funds.

The other issue dealt with was the issue of Economic Development, Finance and Trade. The Cotonou Accord which will expire in 2020 is an Agreement based on cooperation. The objective is to promote not only democracy, rule of law, good governance, but, also to eradicate poverty, and, promote the integration of ACP States in the development of the world. Many ACP States aspire to be middle income countries. However, the discussions, the papers presented, generally indicated that despite this long relationship, poverty still remains in the ACP countries, and, they remain part of countries that are at the bottom of the development ladder. They are questioning what has really been achieved by this cooperation and would want the cooperation to be reinvented. At the moment, there is a debate, and, we should be participating in the debate as to what framework of cooperation will be necessary, to enhance aid or to enhance development, not just aid as charity, but, aid that will ultimately lead to the development of countries.

They emphasized that after 50 years of cooperation, there is need for evaluation of the cooperation agreement and promote for EU partners to meet their commitment to contribute not less than **0.7%** of their GNP to development cooperation. So, we envisage that we will be participating in that debate.

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs and Environment this time focused on the issue of sports. They found that sports constitute a means to promote education and even poverty eradication, if it is developed to a point where it becomes income

generating. They have seen sports to serve a useful purpose in creating social harmony, in promoting peace among people, and, between nations in developing the health of an individual; in also removing disparities between humans. They have emphasized the need to reflect on the discrimination against women in providing facilities and opportunities to participate in sports.

So, in short, what is very clear from this groupings, is that every committee comes up with resolutions and after the resolutions, a new agenda is prepared for the next session. For example the Social Committee, there is an agenda that intends to look into the issue of urbanisation, which is seen to come up with drainage problems in our countries, waste management problems, and, unemployment for youth. So, that will be the basic topic we will be addressing as a Standing Committee in our next session. And I happen to have been appointed as a rapporteur for that Session.

Essentially, Honourable Speaker, we participated in all the fora for example there was a fora on migration, and we emphasized [to them] that the poverty in our countries are not permanent, but created through policy. That what we anticipate [now] is not simply creating barriers for our young people so that they will not be able to enter Europe; that is really not the solution. We emphasized that the issue of concentrating billions in building military apparatus, to prevent young people who are deprived from their countries to enter Europe will just be wasting resources. That rather, we should be able to come up with small medium size enterprises in our countries where young people will be engaged in, and, those billions they are spending on military hardware and strategies, will actually be redeployed into those projects. That way young people will not see the need to even move, because their earning capacities would have been enhanced. We believe this is the contribution we can make in rethinking the whole concept of how to deal with the migration problem.

We also looked into the issue of development cooperation. We emphasized in our presentations, that the issue of development cooperation is not just about aid. That we must look at exactly whether what is being injected by our partners, is actually going into the productive basis of our economies, to enhance the growth of our

economies, so that we can have a win-win situation and a genuine trade between us.

I will conclude here, by saying of course the fora were many, there was one on women and the youth. We raised the same issues that women are part and parcel of the development process and you cannot leave them behind and expect society to move forward, we must move along.

In essence, the contributions that we make would have to be enhanced so that we move into issues that are of permanent significance to us, that is the issue of development. Without it, even democracy will be undermined, because poor people will always find it difficult to maintain stable societies. So, it is paramount to work on this development cooperation in order to enhance it in the future for our common benefits. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. Any seconder?

HON. MOMODOU S. CEESAY [JANJANBUREH]: I so second, Madam Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Parliamentary Delegation to the 46th ACP Parliamentary Assembly and the 33rd ACP-EU JPA Session held in Malta, during the period 14th to the 23rd of June 2017].

HON. LAMIN F.M. CONTA [KOMBO EAST]: Honourable Speaker, I must applaud members of the delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Session held in Malta. I am pleased they did a tremendous job. But, I wonder why our [Gambian] delegation was/is not interested in finishing the term of the then Honourable Member, since his term expires in December. As a Permanent Member of the Social Affairs and Environment Standing Committee, I want to recommend that in future programmes of this nature, they do their best since the then Honourable Member was a representative from The Gambia not an individual representation. I thank you.

HON. MOMODOU S. CEESAY [JANJANBUREH]: Madam Speaker, permit me to first congratulate our team leader for his brilliant presentation. There are some points which needs clarification that is the representation of the delegation to the

EU-ACP. The manner in which the presentation was done, it looks like it is only one permanent representative and the others are [just somehow] accompanying him. This is an issue that he buttressed on during his presentation and it needs to be looked into.

Also some members of the delegation were almost late for the opening ceremony due to visa processing and cumbersome travel route. These are things that needs looking into against our next trip. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I am sure during his winding up of the debate he will respond to some of the issues that you have just raised. I am also sure that the Office of the Clerk will improve on future travel arrangements. Sometime these invitations come in late, and travelling, well maybe in the developed world it is easy but coming from Africa, it is always a problem but we will try to improve. Thank you.

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Madam Speaker, I will like to thank the ACP-EU delegates. The Report is of essence and I believe lots of important components were touched. But the most important component that I want to touch on is youth migration.

If you look at The Gambia, lots of young people are not employed and their condition is very unfavourable that leads them to go into illegal migration or regular migration as it is sometimes called. I believe if young people are empowered with skills, we decentralize development and initiate projects for the youths in both the rural and urban areas migration through the Mediterranean Sea to Europe will be history. I therefore thank the delegation for doing justice to that component. That way The Gambia will also consider investing in the youth as opposed to spending funds on military equipment.

Madam Speaker, I do not understand when he talked about party funding and will want the presenter to elaborate more on that. Is it that when parties are funded they will be more accountable to the funders than the electorate or what? That is not clear to me. Thank you.

HON. BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA]: Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity once again. I also join my colleagues to thank members of The Gambia's ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly to Malta.

Going through the Report, at the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly meeting matters are actually raised and discussed, such as entrepreneurship, migration and investment. Basically this is my [own] recommendation in trying to ease the number of youths travelling through the Mediterranean Sea or risking their lives in search of greener pastures. Sometimes, we tend to look at the cause and not understanding where we stumbled first. There is need for a rethink, for us to understand the genesis of this problem. The question is, why migration in the first place? Taking a critical look, many of these youths actually risk their lives based on the mechanisms or challenges they [actually] face in securing visas. Embassies are now turned into money making machines, extorting Africans, and depriving them of their rights by denying them visas for no reasons.

They feel so deprived because those people who were taking us forcefully to Europe, now they are saying before you come to Europe you must go through some processes and meet some requirements and protocols, forgetting the genesis, forgetting that it was the sweat of Africans that developed the West. Now they are coming up with mechanisms and measures restricting movements by absolutely denying us visas. People are complaining.

A good example is the American Embassy, they ... the same section - something like - 1 24 Immigrant Visa. So many people would apply but would be denied without any substantive reason. So, there should be recommendations that the embassies, EU Member States operating in our countries should actually be accommodative and give visas to people that actually merit those visas. I am not [actually] promoting the exodus of people from here to Europe. But, we should also try to make sure that at least, people are given due consideration and not deprived of their rights. Thank you so much.

[SUSPENSION OF SITTING]

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member. I think this is a convenient point for us to suspend sittings until 2:30. So we will reconvene here at 2:30 p.m. prompt.

[The Sitting stands suspended until 2:30 p.m.]

[27/09/2017 Afternoon sitting [About 15 minutes of this Session was not recorded in either of the devices [recorded device or cassette] due to technical problems]

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: The migration...., our experience is teaching us that there must be a change in the way we conceive international relations. 28 EU members cannot all be successful colonial powers, some of them are in fact subjected to national oppression. So the EU you have today is entirely different from the colonial conception that we may have had of Europe itself even though their agenda still is excluding our people and therefore we need to interrogate that agenda and come up with our own agenda.

Our experience during the debate is that we were been listened to, we help bridge many contradictions of that nature where people conceive the conflict to be North South and it was very intense even generating hostility but we managed to build a concession that the North needs the South and the South needs the North. What we need is a win-win situation, what we need is to interrogate development cooperation because the Cotonou accord indicates that the ACP states should come up with their own developmental agenda and the EU should respond to that agenda. That is why we will circulate a concept paper to see what will happen by 2020. What should be the operation agenda for 2020? So, rather than to just simply think that - well the white versus black scenario or Europe versus Africa scenario- we have to look inward and see where we are going wrong, what our shortcomings are and what type of relation has been built because of our shortcomings and then build upon our own systems so that they can negotiate with other systems on the basic of equality.

I believe our delegation did see eye to eye with that type of approach and it seems an approach that was very popular on all side of the political spectrum and this delegation intends to promote that, to move away entirely from the white versus

black, North versus South...and then interrogate institutions, interrogate values and try to show that we are capable of building democratic and republican values.

I must add here that Gambia is holding a high esteem for the type of democratic change which had occurred here, a peaceful democratic change. There is absolutely no doubt that if we can build on that by at least promoting democratic and republican values, we are likely to be able to change the way Africa is seen, and therefore have greater impact on policy on the European continent.

The issue has also been raised about migration and we agreed that is really the agenda we must promote. But the issue is not just excluding citizens who by virtue of economic deprivation seek greener pastures in that part of the world but we must interrogate development operations to be people centred and responsive to the nature of the people of all members of the EU and ACP so that throughout our development operations we can come up with at least projects that will serve that category of youth who are vulnerable to unemployment and there is the push effect of making them leave the country in search of better lives.

The advice is also taking that we must work hard so that we make sure that we do not have the problem that we had in arriving on time. Now the issue of operation - well we did function as a unit, we were constantly together inspiring each other throughout but what we are emphasizing is that the rules of procedures should change so that the participation will be extended, that it will not just be consultation but it will be direct participation that is what we are proposing.

Well those are the issues that I have on my plate, and, I believe what we are now heading towards is another session in October. I think the final issue is party funding. The debate was that political parties in Africa emphasized that unless the state provide a degree of funding to political parties they will remain vulnerable and consequently many of them maybe move from their democratic agenda because of the provision of finance, and the likelihood is that others will finance them for their own individual interest rather than for the national interest.

So, they did emphasized that there is need for state to finance parties. How that finance will go is what need to be define. And this Parliament needs to look into that, we can make it a subject - I have seen that is not debated yet but hopefully we will make it a subject so that will inform our minds. I can just brainstorm on the subject itself - I would have thought that if States finance the headquarters and regional centres of all parties and maybe 2-3 of the officers who run those centres, well obviously we will be contributing to the building of political parties so that they can become national institutions and they can account for that. If you provide the funds they will be able to account for it, you will able to audit them for that particular purpose.

So, in essence it is a debate, I am not saying what should be done but I am saying that is the kind of debate that is involved and at the same time parties receive funding in different ways from different sources and that create a ground that is not so level in some instances. So, they are talking about regulations been establish that even if you are receiving funding maybe the issue of how to regulate that so that is not subjected to abuse, those are the issues that are been floated for debate. I hope I have clarified the issue.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member.

May I thank the Honourable Members who have contributed towards the debate on the Report tabled by the leader of the Parliamentary Delegation to the 46th ACP Parliament Assembly and the 33rd ACP EU JPA Session held in Malta for the period 14th to the 23rd of June 2017?

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to the 46th ACP Parliamentary Assembly and 33rd ACP EU JPA Session held in Malta during the period 14th - 23rd of June 2017. The Report has been adopted as amended].

Report of The Gambia's Delegation to the High Level Regional Meeting of Members of Parliaments of ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad for Adequate Health Financing, Demographic Dividend and Population and Development Policies held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from the period 20th -22nd July 2017 [By Hon. Ousman Sillah Member for Banjul North and Head of Delegation]

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Report of the Gambia Delegation to the High Level Regional Meeting of Members of Parliament of ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad for Adequate Health Financing, Demographic Dividend and Population and Development Policies Held from 20th -22nd July 2017 in Ouagadougou Burkina Faso.

The delegation from the National Assembly comprised the following:

Honourable Ya Kumba Jaiteh - Member of the Public Accounts Committee,

Mr Tamsir Ann Coordinator Network of Parliamentarians on Population and Development and

Myself as the Chair of the Health Committee and Head of Delegation.

As agreed I am not going to read the whole report, it is bulky; I will be touching on the salient points as I go through the pages.

THE SPEAKER: In fact, I did indicate that Honourable Members already had received the document and they had gone through it. So it is not necessary to read the whole Report. What is essential I believe is just to highlight the main points and then Members will come in with their interventions.

Thank you.

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker, noted.

Starting with the introduction and that explains that The Gambia as a member state of ECOWAS was invited to participate in this High Level Regional Meeting of

Members of ECOWAS, Mauritania which is not part of ECOWAS and Chad which is also not part of ECOWAS. As I earlier indicated 3 Members from the National Assembly and another person from the Ministry of Health in the person of Momodou Njie, Director of Health Promotion at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare who by virtue of his position as the Executive Director of the National Network of Advocacy Champions for adequate Health Financing attended.

It was a 3-day session and the background stated that ECOWAS has the highest fertility rate in the whole continent with a population of 335,000,000 (three hundred and thirty-five million) and of these about **50%** are below the age of 19 years which causes a serious demographic challenge. Of course, it is observed that the region benefits from this rapid population growth especially the youth. If appropriate and strategic measures are taken particularly in the sectors of health and education and accompanied by sound economic policies that are able to create decent employment, their full potential can be harnessed thereby ensuring their contribution to economic growth. This is what is meant by taking advantage of the demographic dividend.

The Report continues to note that with this human capital, which is regarded as the most valuable asset, a society cannot claim any development; that quality human capital requires amount other things, robust, coherent and equitable public health programmes that are capable of preventing or addressing health problems that can adversely affect individual performance.

It was in light of the above that the Heads of State of Africa in April 2001 met in Abuja and made a declaration that Africa should be working towards allocating **15%** of their national budgets to health. This is what they mean by 'Abuja Declaration' it was this commitment made by Heads of State and Government.

It was in this light that the West African Health Organization (WAHO) which is based in Bukujirasso in Burkina Faso conceived the idea of organizing this high level meeting comprising Parliamentarians and Speakers of the National Assemblies to discuss 3 issues, but let me just read these objectives.

Objectives

The objectives of this high level Meeting are to strengthen the commitment of Parliamentarians of ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad in addressing key issues related to adequate and sustainable domestic financing of health, demographic dividend and population and development policies.

More specifically, the Meeting is aimed at garnering support and commitment of Speakers and Parliamentarians of the ECOWAS sub-region, Mauritania and Chad to take strategic initiatives through parliamentary advocacy and actions for these 3 areas:

- To fast-track the implementation of the Abuja Declaration;
- To secure the commitment of Parliamentarians of ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad towards capturing of Demographic Dividend [DD] and enhanced integration of population issues, concerns in National Development policies;
- Establish a regional coordination of advocacy champions' network for adequate Health Financing and Demographic Dividend (RCPFAS-DD) within ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad whose mission is among others to conduct advocacy for the effective implementation of the recommendations and commitments of the High-Level Parliamentarian's Meetings.

Of Course, there were expected outcomes -

Expected outcomes

- Renewed recognition and reaffirmed commitment to the implementation of the framework and meeting of the target of the Abuja Declaration in the ECOWAS.
- Strategies for adequate domestic health financing and attainment of the Abuja target developed, reviewed and adopted;
- To get Parliamentarians to be committed to further support domestic sustainable financing of health;

A Regional Federation of Network of Champions for the coordination was formed with current presidency in Togo until March 30th 2018 because Togo is occupying the presidency of the ECOWAS.

They also expect Parliamentarians to be committed to further supporting this Network. There were 3 main teams

- Sustainable Health Financing
- Demographic Dividend and Population Policies;
- Exchanges of experience between the advocacy champions

There was a methodology adopted for this 3-day meeting

The first two-days were meant for technical preparatory session and this was 20th and 21st in which participants focused on one hand, the preparation for the creation of thematic working groups and plenary sessions to adopt a common vision on the demographic dividend, and on the other hand, to establish a regional coordination of this network.

A high level meeting of Speakers was also held on the third and last day for them to discuss and adopt recommendations and commitments made by Parliamentarians of ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad on Health Financing and Demographic Dividend.

About 150 participants including Parliamentarians, Experts and Speakers of National Assemblies attended this high level meeting.

Day 1

As usual we started with an opening ceremony in which the Chairperson of the Local Organizing Committee, Dr Ousseni Tamboura of Burkina Faso, who is also the 4th Deputy Speaker of the Burkina Faso Parliament delivered the welcome remarks. This was followed by remarks by the Director General of (WAHO), Xavier Crespín who is from Cape Verde.

In his statement, he indicated that no society or country can develop without a healthy population hence the importance attached to health in the planning,

formulation and implementation of national and sectoral development policies, strategies and objectives.

He indicated that the high level regional meeting is meant to speed up the implementation of the Abuja declaration to secure the commitment of parliament and parliamentarians to support and ensure that adequate resources are allocated to health demographic dividend, population and development policy issues. He emphasized the need to develop strategies to build resilient economies and create sustainable environments.

After his welcoming remarks, the meeting was officially opened by the First Deputy Speaker of the Burkina Faso parliament who represented the Speaker. Unfortunately, the speaker who was also in attendance and did the closing ceremony has passed away.

THE SPEAKER: Sorry Honourable Member, in fact I had indicated on my notes that after your report, I will announce that to the General Assembly and observe a minute silence of prayer. Thank you.

We were very much aware of it, in fact we sent a condolence message. Thank you.

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: The Deputy Speaker Maître Benewende Sankara delivered the opening statement and recalled the Abuja Declaration indicating that it is a historical turning point for the African continent and therefore appealed to the Speakers of National Assemblies in the ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad to work towards meeting the Abuja target of **15%** budgetary allocation to the health sector.

He reiterated the fact that after 16 years of implementation of the Abuja Declaration, none of the participating countries is yet to achieve this target except Burkina Faso that is moving towards the **15%** target. As for The Gambia, under **7%** of our National Budget is committed to health. Of course there are recommendations which I will come to. So he urged Parliamentarians to commit themselves to increasing the health budget.

On the high fertility rate that West Africa is experiencing, he called for investments in family planning; girls' education; child survival and support services; employment creation, technical vocational education and training, youth entrepreneurship and skills development as the intervention areas that can help address and take advantage of the demographic dividend - the increasing population in other words.

He urged Parliaments to influence and approve increased health budget and to effectively monitor and control their implementation. He also urged the Parliaments of ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad to encourage the Executive in their respective countries to create opportunities for the harmonious and durable development of the participating countries by ensuring the adequate financing of health, improvement of health services and controlled population growth.

After the opening session participants were divided into...well, first we started with the presentations. There were nine [9] presentations notably:

- **2016, 2020 strategic plan.**
- **Key interventions of (WAHO) directed to adequate Health Financing and the Demographic dividend.**
- **Status of Implementation of the Abuja Declaration in ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad.**
- **Status of the health system in Burkina Faso. This was presented by the Minister of Health in Burkina Faso.**
- **Status of maternal, newborn and child health in West Africa.**
- **Introduction of Demographic Dividend, including challenges related to demographic control (including a summary of the RAPID surveys in the countries of intervention of AGRI-PF).**

- **Status of Implementation of Current Population Policies in ECOWAS Member States.**
- **Intervention in the Field of Reproductive Health and Family Planning in ECOWAS region.** This was done by the USAID.
- **Overview of existing Legislation on Reproductive Health, Family Planning and Population.**

Participants were then divided into groups and of course during the presentations a member of our delegation, Honourable Ya Kumba Jaiteh was identified as one of the secretaries during the Plenary. And then when we went for group work, I was also identified as rapporteur for the group that was assigned to brainstorm and make recommendation on Parliament's role in adequate and sustainable Health financing.

Honourable Jaiteh was in the group that was tasked to brainstorm and make recommendation on Parliament's role in capturing demographic dividend as well as the ...The third group was tasked to brainstorm on and make recommendations on Parliament's role in making follow ups and monitoring implementation of health financing.

I am very sorry, Honourable Jaiteh was in the third while Mr Ann the expert on Demographic Population from the National Assembly of The Gambia served in the second group.

For the Network, Mr. Njie who I mentioned earlier was part of this network. He was part of the group that was tasked to brainstorm on how to improve the work of the Network in Adequate Financing and Demographic Dividend.

Day 2

I guess each and every one of us has a copy of the report, you can go through it.

Like I said, there was the third day, the closing day, which was dedicated to

Speakers of National Assemblies but unfortunately our Speaker could not attend. Honourable Ya Kumba Jaiteh deputized her at this meeting and it was only the Speakers of 3 National Assemblies who attended, that was Mali, Benin, Niger and of course Burkina Faso making it 4 out of the 17 countries that attended the Meeting.

They had a close door session to work on the recommendations we presented to them to constitute the declaration of Speakers. The Speakers committed themselves to working through exercising of rights to amend laws to make consistent increment of the draft budgets of our respective states, with a view to securing successive annual increases of at least **2%**. The Gambia is under **7%**, we are expecting that with the next budget, The Gambia is going to go 9% minimum. If we cannot reach the **15%** there should be a **2%** increment for the national budget allocated to health.

This was the commitment made with expectations that this is going to be incremental up to 2025. We are hoping that by 2025 all the States in ECOWAS Mauritania and Chad would have reached that target of allocating a minimum of **15%** of their national budgets to health.

On the demographic dividend, the Speakers solemnly committed themselves to:

To paying a favourable attention within the Parliaments of their respective countries to consider all issues relating to national population, development and health policies with a view to contributing to the success of demographic transition in the member states in the perspective of capturing the demographic dividend to fast-track economic growth.

To actively support all the strategies and interventions of their respective countries and governments whose objective are as follows: Well the objectives are also outlined in the report.

They also made commitments to work to increase annually by at least 5% the budget allocated to the implementation of national plans for family planning repositioning for:

- Drastic reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality in our countries
- The creation of an environment that is conducive to family planning,
- The fight against early marriage of young girls
- The fight against early pregnancy of young girls
- The fight against harmful traditional practices/female genital mutilations/cutting

To call on the ECOWAS Member States, Mauritania and Chad to work towards reducing their respective total fertility rates to a maximum of three children per women by 2030.

To work for each parliament to organize a national dialogue on the demographic dividend with faith-based and other customary entities by the end of 2018.

They are expecting National Assemblies to convene a national dialogue on demographic dividend with faith-based and other customary entities by the end of 2018.

And the last recommendation was for national assemblies to establish a committee of Parliamentarians who would be part of a larger committee, Inter-parliamentary Committee of the Parliament of ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad on the demographic dividend to monitor the commitments mentioned above.

This is a summary of the Report by the delegation of the National Assembly that attended this high level meeting held in Ouagadougou , Burkina Faso from the 20th-22nd of July 2017.

Thank you very much Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable. May I call on any Honourable Member to second the motion; any seconder?

HON. YA KUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: I so second. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Nominated Member. Now may I put the question?

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

Considering and adoption of the Report of The Gambia delegation to the High Level Regional Meeting of Members of Parliament of ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad for adequate Health Financing, Demographic Dividend and Population and Development Policies held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso for the period of 20th-22nd July 2017.

Before I call on Honourable Members to make their interventions, I would like to inform this Honourable Assembly of the demise of the Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso. The sad event occurred almost less than two weeks after this meeting. In fact, we did send a message of condolence to the House through the Office of the Clerk on your behalf.

Can we rise to observe a minute silence of prayer?

[A minute of silent prayers on behalf of the late Speaker of Burkina Faso]

Thank you. Please sit down. Any Honourable Member who wishes to make an intervention may do so now. Yes! Honourable Member for Serrekunda, I thought I saw your hand?

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker.

The basis for inviting law makers, decision makers and advocates of different aspects of development is to enable decision makers to know exactly what the challenges are for action. So, when we are exposed to such meetings and we are told 15% of national budget should go to a particular area, then it means that when we are looking at the budget-which we should be doing very soon - those will become the guidelines of interrogating what is presented to us. But what is also very significant is to look at what is realistic and what is ideal. It means that adequate preparation must be made before such meetings are convened so that country situations are analysed in relation to all budgetary items to see what is actually possible before actually making commitments. To make commitments without

backing it with action really amounts to mere futility and we should not build castles in the air at the moment.

It is also important, I do not know Madam speaker whether you are very comfortable with the content of the declaration and I would really request for the Honourable Speaker to look at the content again and see whether the commitments made could actually be actualized by the Speakers themselves.

It looks as if...well pushing the Speakers into an executive position to make decisions and I would humbly request our own Speaker to look into this. And if my fear is actually what present itself in the document then we should begin to interrogate this Declaration so that they will not push the Speakers to assume powers they do not have and make commitments they actually cannot put in place without Parliament.

I would emphasize again that this issue of health is fundamental. Linking health to demographic dividend is precisely what economic policy is all about. It is making people healthy so that they contribute more effectively to the development of their countries. But if we increase health budget without increasing the productive base of the economy to be able support the health budget, ultimately we will run into a crisis of not having the financial...to be able to finance those health budgets. So, fundamentally we must link education, health and all social services to the development of reproductive base of our economies.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member, I am sure you are aware like every other Honourable Member that, our system of government/governance is different from [probably] some of the French speaking countries. Ours is based on the separation of powers, the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary and we as Members of Legislature do not have the powers of the executive. So, really we cannot commit ourselves to what is indicated in the Report. Probably what can we do is, we can relay the message to the relevant authorities for them to include it in their policy guidelines or papers. But as of now, as you rightly said, we would have to look at it and then pave the way forward.

Thank you.

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: Thank you Honourable Speaker for the opportunity. I want to seize the opportunity to thank the delegation that represented our Parliament in this important forum.

Madam Speaker, the Member for Serrekunda has already addressed the issue of health financing I concur with all the issues that he has raised. Madam Speaker, the challenge that we are now going to face is the issue of religion. The issue of religion is very sensitive in this sub-region particularly here in The Gambia. We the National Assembly Members can attest to that, during our campaigns, the expectations of people on marriage and traditional practices is not the same as captured in this document. One of the bullet points that I want to read out could be a solution to that misunderstanding or miscommunication.

It is on page 21, bullet number 4 with your permission "... Involving all stakeholders, in particular religious and traditional authorities..." and the rest continues, this is where the problem is. The religious leaders and traditional authorities and I think at this particular time, the Select Committee on Health and Related Matters should take it upon themselves to organize a national conference so that all the stakeholders will come together to discuss the issue of population to know exactly what are the implications so that if anything comes now to this Parliament, it will be very easy for us the National Assembly Members to pass it. Otherwise, whatever we may be doing here without proper communication with these stakeholders it is going to be like flying paper without a destination.

This is what I have captured, I don't know how soon it will be but I see it as very relevant if the Select Committee on Health and Related Matters in collaboration with the National Assembly can work towards that.

On that note, I want to thank the delegation for their work well done.

Thank you.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Thank you. Madam, three [3] sectors are fundamental to the survival of every nation. Education, Agriculture and Health. No nation can survive without these 3 fundamental sectors. Before we talk about the Declaration that was made in Maputo regarding allocation to agriculture which is not respected generally by those Members who themselves made the declaration. Now we have another declaration - 15%. I would say even 15% is very small, if you take our situation currently in this country allocation to every health facility is exhausted even before the end of the month. You go to a health facility, there is a need for an ambulance, they tell you there is an ambulance but there is no fuel because the fuel allocation is already exhausted.

How can we serve the supreme needs of people in a country in that way? If ambulances are available but they are not fuelled which means that there are no ambulance because ambulance without fuel is no ambulance and this is the situation in this country to start with.

You go up to the provinces now, particularly this time of the rainy season patients are always transported [in my area] on horse carts sometimes they die on the way, sometimes pregnant women deliver on horse carts on the way to the so called health facilities. So if this Declaration is not respected, it means that we are not even interested in serving the fundamental needs of our people because health is important. There is no nation which survives without health so that is the first thing to be addressed. That is why I said the 3 sectors health, education and agriculture are indispensable to the survival of nations, in fact when we are doing budgeting, these 3 fundamental sectors should be given the upmost priority.

I would like you to clarify yourself Madam because I don't understand when you talked about separation of powers, it is not as far as I know peculiar to Anglophone. Separation of powers is universal. The man who thought about it and promoted it in the world is a French person - Montesquieu and he is not an English speaking person, he is French. So it is not peculiar to Anglophone, it is fundamental to legislatures, fundamental to organisational regulations, powers must be separated.

Of course the system we have inherited now - elected members cannot be ministers

but in England elected members are ministers. May be it is the same in France may be it is not but my knowledge about it is that it is not peculiar to the Anglophone world. It is a universal practice and if it is not respected universally that means there is something fundamentally wrong in the running of the arms of the government.

It is indicated on page 8, for example if you look at the last paragraph of page 8, all these are fundamental. If I may just read the last sentence of that "... He called for investment in family planning, girls' education; child survival and support services, employment creation, technical, vocational educational and training, youth entrepreneurship and skills development." These are what we were talking about this morning in some of the reports we read this morning in this Parliament. And 15% allocation for health is good, if this can be respected. But this in fact is small as far as I am concerned Madam, but we can do something about it because the budget is finally scrutinized and adopted here in this Parliament. So I think it is our duty to tie our belts when we are reviewing the estimates and budgets to make sure that all the priority areas are properly resourced. Rather than resourcing the Parliament to buy expense vehicles, we should resource departments to provide the required services for our people. If parliament can't do these, I don't know which other institutions can do it and that is for any country in the world. Where there is a Parliament it is its responsibility to make sure that institutions which are vital are properly resourced for the survival of their countries.

Madam thank you very much.

HON. YA KUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: Thank you very much Madam for giving me the floor. I just wanted to clarify one point raised by the Honourable Member for Serrekunda - the issue of whether Speakers of National Assemblies would be exercising the powers of the Executive if they want to enforce such a declaration. I think that is a misunderstanding because if you look at the commitment the Speakers made, they said, "... solemnly commit ourselves to paying a favourable attention within the Parliaments..." I think they have taken into consideration the fact that the Speakers must act within their powers. The

Declaration need the Speakers to pay favourable attention to health matters within Parliaments. For example in order to achieve the 15% stated, there could be like a day's debate on health matters in parliaments in relation to the matters stated in the Declaration. A specific day that all we talk about in Parliament is health to raise awareness and do advocacy work for the health department to increase the budget on health.

Another way this could be done by the Speaker is to allocate more sitting time to the health committees for example not more than 3 sittings a month for them to discuss all these issues in health and report back to Parliament. We all agreed that health is a major problem in this country and this is one way of doing advocacy to be moved forward by the Speakers. I think this is what the Declaration meant not for them to force the Executive. In any case at the end of the day the budget is within our powers, we the Parliamentarians decide which money goes where and what goes to what.

So, unless advocacy is done, proper advocacy starts here for all of us to understand why we need to increase the budget for health. We cannot achieve that and the Speaker has within her powers to allow the space for that to happen. I think that is what the Declaration is referring to.

Thank you.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: Thank you Madam Speaker. ...-
[Interruption]

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: If you read page 17 Madam Speaker, the top of the page, "...Solemnly commit ourselves to working through exercising of our rights to amend laws..." Is it the right of Speakers to amend laws? *[Laughter]*.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: I will stop there Honourable Speaker, what I suggested Honourable Speaker is for you to look into the document.

THE SPEAKER: You've already said that and I responded earlier that I will look at it. Thank you.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: Thank you Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor. I just want to thank our delegates for this insightful Report from their visit to Burkina Faso. My intervention is going to be based on two [2] areas: 1, the Abuja Declaration that was done in 2001, where various governments allocated 15% of their total annual national budget to the health sector; which [all] countries are still struggling to achieve.

If you look at some of the declarations which our Heads of Government are making for the past few years, you will see that basically they are just talking but I am not sure if they are really committed to following or enforcing the declarations they are making. This morning we talked about the Malabo Protocol, which to date they have not acted upon. I would have preferred our African Governments and institutions for example ECOWAS, to build a centre for disease control where they can actually monitor and mobilize resources that can help any nation that is undergoing any kind of epidemic. For example, we all saw what actually happened in Sierra Leone with the Ebola crisis what actually happened in Liberia and Guinea and it looked like African countries were not even ready to help them. Building a centre for disease control and prevention, I think that will be more effective than trying to say 15% of national budgets be allocated to health sectors and this has been going on since 2001.

Another area basically is that the budget amount is not that very significant, but then will they be putting all that 15% into the right places. You can give them as much money as you want but again if you don't have very committed people in those institutions to ensure that the money actually goes to where it needs to go it does not really matter. Percentage does not matter what matters is to ensure that any money that is actually put aside for the health, education of any other sector is actually put to best use instead of just talking about declarations or protocols or whatever.

We or governments need to depoliticize their development agenda because you can choose a particular area and say if you don't support me as a political party I am not going to do this for you, that is where the problem actually comes in. So we really

need to depoliticize our development agenda if we really want to move forward in terms of education, health or even the agriculture sector.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank very much Honourable, anymore interventions?

HON. YA KUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: Just a point of clarification. I attended this meeting and I know where the declaration is coming from just to clarify. As it says 'we the Speakers' it does not mean Speakers in person, it means the Speakers representing their National Assemblies and we all agreed that as National Assemblies we are the ones who have the powers to amend laws, we are the ones who have the powers to decide on the budget, that is what it means but not necessarily the Speakers in their own powers and rights. Just to clarify.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, I will reserve my comments until I go through the document. Thereafter, I will probably engage you and the delegation.

Any more comments, interventions. May I now call on the mover to respond to the issues raised and to wind-up the debate?

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: Thank you very much Honourable Members for your interventions. There was this issue raised by the Member for Serrekunda, that when making commitments it is important to make commitment on things that are realistic and ideal. Of course, as noted by the Honourable Speaker, there is separation of powers, the National Assembly has a responsibility and it stops somewhere. What this Meeting was doing was, the Heads of State and Government of Africa made a commitment in 2001 in Abuja - after realizing that depending on foreign aid to support such an important sector as health is not sustainable. It realized that for governments to support their population, their citizens, it is important that they commit national resource that is adequate. This important meeting was all about ensuring that there is adequate financing for health.

It was a follow up meeting for National Assemblies to ensure that this commitment made by Heads of State is abided by. Of course there is an element that commit

Speakers to commit themselves. But what National Assemblies can do is since they are the authority that approve budgets and in this Report, what is stated is that, of course it has to be realistic, we may not expect The Gambia or we cannot force the government to increase the next budget to **15%**. But what we agreed at this meeting is that we can start by **2%** from where we stopped. For example The Gambia is presently under **7%**, this National Assembly can ensure that the next budget on health is increased by **2%** making it **9%** or under **9%**. At least we are moving towards the target.

2025 is the date line we are hoping that all the countries in Africa would have met this target of **15%**. Of course, we do have challenges especially at the bilateral, the Ministry of Finance often have ceiling as to how much they are allocating to sectors. But I believe as National Assembly, we have the power to boost that ceiling if they want to maintain it as it is under **7%** or something below, for them to increase it by at least **2%**. That is what this Report is all about and that is what we are appealing for the National Assembly to do.

Honourable Member for Basse, the recommendation is contained in the Report, that there is need for a national dialogue to be convened involving faith based organizations that is religions and traditional leaders of course included to discuss this issues like child marriage, FGM and to provide evidences to convince them that is the way forward. We are counting on the support of the National Assembly to work with the Health Committee to convene national dialogue before the end of 2018.

The Honourable Member for Wuli West was also talking about health being fundamental in the development of any country. It still goes back to what I have been saying, that it is important for this National Assembly to ensure that sectors are given - to the best of our ability - as much as possible, to ensure that allocations to this sector is increased [of course I have a natural bias towards health since I am coming from health] by at least **2%** in our next budget and very soon we will be working on the budget for 2018. We must ensure that the budget is increased by at

least by **2%**, to meet this commitment. I do not think it is unreasonable to ask for a minimum increment of **2%** increment.

The Member for Upper Saloum also talked about having disease control centres as opposed to having increased financing for health. Yes! It is important, in fact it is part of our recommendation that it does not stop at allocating the resources. We have to ensure that the mechanisms are in place to monitor the effective implementation of the recommendations and to ensure that the resources are put where they should be put. That is also part of the recommendations that it is not only giving but ensuring that what is given is really spent on where it supposed to be spent which calls for effective mechanisms in place. And it also goes to what they are talking about now - programme based budgeting-not only budgeting where resources are spent on personal emoluments, vehicle, fuel and travel but actual programs, drugs, health workers been more venerated so that we address the issue of health turn over. And health has the highest attrition rate among all the sectors. So we are ensuring that this **15%**....in fact this **15%** is needed, because it is going to address that. Most of the people who are trained using public funds are attracted to the private sector because that is where they are well paid. The conditions are so terrible within the public sector, so how do we ensure that we retain them, how do we ensure that there are adequate and affordable drugs in our health delivering system.

To conclude, I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the Health Committee and the delegation that went to attend this high level meeting that we are calling on the National Assembly, I repeat to ensure that health is adequately financed or adequately resourced to ensure effective delivery system in the health sector. With that I beg to resume my seat. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank very much Honourable Member and head of delegation. I hope it does not just stop at ensuring that the budget is increased but I think monitoring or proper scrutiny is also very crucial and key. If the money is there and it is misused and does not reach the end users, it is of no use. Then the increase would have been of no value. So I hope we also take that into consideration and the

Health Committee will lead and I am sure everybody will follow. Thank you very much.

[Question Proposed, Put an Agreed To]

"Be it Resolved that this Honourable Assembly do adopt the Report of The Gambia delegation to the High Level Regional Meeting of Members of Parliament of ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad for Adequate Health Financing, Demographic Dividend, Population and Development Policies held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from the 20th to the 22 July, 2017. *[Felicitations]*

I think that concludes the business of the day. And now that it has been concluded, I take the opportunity once more to thank everybody for the deliberation and to wish everybody well. But please! I want to inform Honourable Members that there shall be no plenary sitting tomorrow Thursday the 28th of September 2017. As committee bureaus will be sitting. Sitting shall resumed on Friday the 29th of September for question and answer session with some Honourable Ministers as indicated in the Order Paper for Friday 29th September 2017. The Order Paper has been circulated to that effect.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House was adjourned to Friday, 29th September, 2017]