

# ASSECAA: Vision & Achievements

(First Issue)



**Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent  
Councils in Africa and the Arab World  
(ASSECAA)**

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 1

ASSECAA from Concept to Institutional Presence	9
ASSECAA's Objectives	10

### Chapter 2

ASSECAA's Activities	13
1-Conferences	14
2-Economic Cooperation	20
3-Democracy and Human Rights	25
4-Women Empowerment	27
5-Peace and Conflict Resolution	34
6-Parliamentary Cooperation and Exchange of Experience	40
7-Parliamentary and Cultural Cooperation.	41
8-Retreats	42
9-Participation in International Fora	48
10-ASSECAA's Role in Encouraging Scientific Research in Member Countries (ASSECAA Cup of Excellence).	49

### Chapter 3

Member Councils and their consultative practices	52
The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria	52
The National Assembly of Namibia	53
The Senate of the Kingdom of Swaziland	55
The House of Counselors of the Kingdom of Morocco	56
The Shoora Council of the Kingdom of Bahrain	57
The Shoora Council of Qatar	58
The Shoora Council of Egypt	59
The Shoora Council of Saudi Arabia	60
The Shoora Council of Yemen	61
The Council of the Nation of Algeria	62
The House of Dignitaries of Jordan	63

The House of Federation of Ethiopia	64
The Senate of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania	65
The Senate of Republic of Gabon	65
The Senate of Congo Brazzaville	67
The National Council of Provinces of South Africa	67
Council of States of Sudan	68
The Senate of Burundi	69

### Chapter 4

ASSECAA Member States' Economies	71
The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	71
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	74
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	78
Republic of Gabon	81
Kingdom of Morocco	84
Republic of Yemen	87
Republic of South Africa	89
The State of Qatar	92
The Federal Republic of Nigeria	95
Kingdom of Bahrain	98
People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	101
Republic of Sudan	103
Republic of Burundi	106
Kingdom of Swaziland	107
Arab Republic of Egypt	111
The Islamic Republic of Mauritania	115
Republic of Namibia	118
Republic of Congo Brazzaville	120
<a href="#">Appendix 1</a>	<a href="#">123</a>
<a href="#">Appendix 2</a>	<a href="#">126</a>



# Acknowledgement

It is the pleasure of the General Secretariat of ASSECAA to have completed this compendium which reflects on the objectives and activities of ASSECAA, the set up of the councils of its members and the potentials of member countries.

This venture, although it is a product of short time it is rich in content and is believed to benefit all those who unveil its pages in one way or the other.

Those who have contributed to make the venture materialize deserve respect of the Secretariat. Special thank goes to the staff of the General Secretariat who helped in making the data and relevant information available, Mr. Anwar Al-Shoaybi, Redwan Amer, Jean Paul Rwinginga, Abdul Fattah Al-Mosbahi and Ameen Al-Oqaida, and to the compiler of the materials, Mr. Yaseen Ahmed Al-Temimi, the translators to French Jean Paul Rwinginga, and to English Mr. Anwar Al-Shoaybi.

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The above demonstrate that the compendium is the product of a team work of all that have participated and I am confident that with its present spirit the team can contribute much more towards achieving the objectives of ASSECAA.

Abdulwasie Yusuf Ali,  
Secretary General

# Foreword

The Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA) was established in April 2004, representing, in terms of timing and objectives, a crucial turning point in the course of Afro-Arab relations.

The two regions share in common geographic, historical and cultural factors, and grapple with the same challenges to comprehensive and sustainable development. They also have the potentials that enable them harness their own abundant resources and then invest them economically with the aim of getting rid of economic dependence as well as the scourge of globalization that always brings forth benefits to major transnational companies.

ASSECAA's Rules of Procedure provides for a range of principles and objectives, including bicameralism, good governance, the promotion of women's participation in public life, and the enhancement of parliamentary diplomacy.

This parliamentary outfit looks new in terms of its geographic dimension, as it is the first organization of its kind that was exclusively created to best utilize parliamentary diplomacy in boosting political, cultural, strategic and security ties. Most importantly, the Association seeks to foster economic, trade and investment cooperation between Africa and Arab world, which are endowed with massive resources that enable them maximize mutual benefits in all economic spheres.

Moreover, ASSECAA aims at contributing positively to conflict resolution and the mobilization of efforts to surmount the formidable environmental and health challenges facing Arab and African nations.

Prior to the official declaration of ASSECAA's establishment in Sana'a, Yemen, from 2527- April, 2004, there had been inspiring thoughts, noble contributions and significant steps, all of which were associated with a distinctive galaxy of heads of senates, shoora and equivalent councils in Africa and Arab world, some of whom are still performing their national duties as speakers of second chambers in our countries.

The idea of creating ASSECAA was embraced when several heads of Afro-Arab senates and shoora councils met in the French Capital, Paris, during the meeting of the world senates hosted by the French Senate in the year 2002 European Senates. Those kingmakers then adopted the idea after they perceived its importance to and the impact on the future of Afro-Arab ties.

Furthermore, another meeting was held in the Mauritanian Capital, Nouakchott in 2001, during which delegates deliberated upon the parameters of the new parliamentary body. Subsequently, speakers of senates and shoora councils in the two regions held a seminal meeting in the Moroccan Capital, Rabat 2002, during which the idea of establishing ASSECAA became a reality.

Two years later, 22 speakers of senates and Shoora councils from across Africa and Arab world attended a meeting held in Sana'a, Yemen, during which they officially declared the establishment of a new outfit called "The Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA)", whose General Secretariat was headquartered in Sana'a, Yemen.

This means that the creation of ASSECAA didn't occur all of a sudden; rather, it was actually a fruit of substantial efforts exerted in this regard, as well as an objective corollary of a wide range of strategic, socio-political changes that the world has been experiencing since the eighties of the last century.

Such changes led to the emergence of a uni-polar global order dominated by liberalism, a tempting and evasive socio-economic theory, which has just got the better of Communism. Of course, liberalism involves many concepts- free economy, democracy and representation, and political pluralism. Such concepts swiftly turned into common global values, which are ostensibly being espoused by the whole world.

However, we are not oblivious of the fact that the major Western powers have never fallen short of maintaining their economic hegemony while, at the same time, forging ahead with the propagation of democratic values.

Of yet another importance is the fact that Arab and African countries have not yet been extricated from foreign economic hegemony. Nor have they managed to control and harness properly their own plentiful resources and make the best use of their revenues in such a way that achieves development, disentangles the two regions from passive dependency on the Western capitalistic economies.

In so doing, Arab and African nations would be capable of opening up horizontal avenues of exchanging mutual economic and trade interests, instead of the already existing vertical lines that almost monopolize the disproportionate economic exchange, merely restricting it to our countries and Western markets.

This is where common action comes in to create new opportunities for cooperation and the exchange of benefits between Africa and Arab world. This issue should be prioritized by the two regions at present and in the future, given that there is a variety of opportunities that catalyze them to bolster common interests, reciprocate benefits and move investment capital from Arab countries with cash surplus into Africa, which is home to abundant resources.

Certainly, Arab and African countries will be more capable of exploring the great advantages of their own relations, particularly if they work together towards achieving political and economic reforms and fostering democracy based on the cultural specificity of each country, and in a manner that sets their priorities and attains the aspirations of their polity.

However, this can never be achieved unless such reforms are geared towards hammering out more spurring policies, and elevating public participation in decision-making through effective mechanisms that ensure factual representation in state institutions, mainly the legislature.

To this end, ASSECAA has envisioned several mechanisms, including conferences, retreats, the committee on peace and conflict resolution, meetings of chambers of commerce and industry, and meetings of women parliamentarians, among others. This compendium gives a detailed background information on ASSECAA.

General Secretariat  
ASSECAA  
2013

















## Chapter 1

### ASSECAA..... From Concept to Institutional Presence

#### The motif:

The idea of establishing ASSECAA came to the fore when several heads of Arab and African senates/councils met in the French Capital, Paris, on the sidelines of the meeting of world Senates, during which time they debated the issue of creating a similar association bringing together Arab and African nations. The founding fathers of ASSECAA then agreed to organize a series of meetings to further consider the idea before putting it into practice.

Subsequently, the speakers of senates/councils held a meeting in the Mauritanian Capital, Nouakchott, from 23-21 February, 2001, which further spurred them to proceed with establishing an Afro-Arab parliamentary outfit. The event was ensued by another meeting held in the Moroccan capital, Rabat, from 6-7 June 2002, which came out with a set of procedures that cleared the way for creating ASSECAA. During that same meeting, the preliminary version of ASSECAA's Statute and Rules of Procedure, including its objectives and guiding principles, were approved.

In addition, a third meeting was held in Sana'a, Yemen from 25-27 April, 2005, drawing in speakers of senates/councils and delegates from 22 Arab and African countries. It was actually during that meeting that a new international parliamentary outfit, called "Association of Senates, Shooras and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA)" was born, and its Statute and Rules of Procedure approved.

#### The following senates/councils attended the meeting:

- The National Council of Provinces of South Africa.
- The Council of the Nation of the Democratic People's Republic of Algeria.
- The House of Federation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
- The Senate of the Republic of Gabon.
- The Al-Ayan Council (House of Dignitaries) of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
- The House of Counselors of the Kingdom of Morocco.
- The Senate of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.
- The National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia.
- The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- The Senate of the Kingdom of Swaziland.
- The Shooras Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- The Shooras Council of the Republic of Yemen.
- The Shooras Council of the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- The shooras council of the State of Qatar.
- The Shooras Council of the Arab Republic of Egypt.
- The Council of States of Sudan.
- The Senate of the Republic of Burundi.
- The Senate of the Republic of Congo Brazzaville

#### Establishment Justifications:

When the speakers of senates, shooras and equivalent councils in Africa and Arab world met in Rabat, Morocco from 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> June, 2002, they were aspiring to create a joint entity in order to make a quantum leap in respect of boosting bicameralism and common values of democracy and good governance in African and Arab countries. Therefore, the justifications for the creation of ASSECAA can be summed up as follows:

- Enhancing cooperation between Africa and Arab world while respecting cultural diversity, and contributing to dialogue on democracy and the rule of law.
- Consolidating the status of African and Arab countries amongst other nations, particularly in the light of the changes the world is currently witnessing at all levels, especially as the culture of globalization dictates new trends of integration and harmony among countries with common action potentials.
- Contributing effectively to the elimination of causes of tension and violence as well as the achievement of peace, security and stability in Africa, the Middle East and the world at large.
- Backing the efforts at fighting poverty and



famine, eradicating all forms of backwardness, and reinforcing the role of women in attaining overriding, sustainable development in all countries.

## Objectives:

ASSECAA's Statute provides for several fundamental objectives as follows:

- To strengthen parliamentary bicameral systems inside and outside Africa and Arab world.
- To bolster socio-economic, political, and cultural cooperation between Africa and Arab world and the world at large.
- To organize periodic meetings and discussions among members of senates, shoora and equivalent councils in Africa and Arab world, and adopt joint activities to facilitate cooperation, and exchange experiences.
- To coordinate the efforts of senates, shoora and equivalent councils of the two regions at regional and international organizations and forums.
- To make consultations on the issues of common interest in various national and international spheres, as well as necessary recommendations and/or resolutions thereon.
- To engage heavily in the dialogues destined for deepening democratic values and principles.
- To Boost participation in the discussions aimed at encouraging and protecting civil society organizations and human rights.
- To Build up a significant bridge of communication and cooperation between Africa and Arab world to enable the region harness its potentials and make best use of the international trends towards regional groupings.

## ASSECAA's Rotating Chairmanship:

Several heads of member councils/senates have rotated the chairmanship of ASSECAA since its inception in 2004. Below are profiles of ASSECAA's Chairmen:

### Current Chairman Mr. Gabriel Ntisezerana, President of the Senate of Burundi):

H.E Gabriel Ntisezerana, a Burundian economist and politician, is ASSECAA's current chairman. He had assumed the following positions:

- The Second Vice President of Burundi from Feb.12, 2007-August 28, 2010.
- Speaker of the Senate of Burundi in August, 2010.
- Chairman of ASSECAA since 2012.



### Madam Rose Francis Rogombe, President of the Senate of Gabon:

President of the Senate of Gabon, and chairperson of ASSECAA for 2011..

- Hailing from Ghalo tribe, Mrs. Rogombe was born on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1942, in the city of Lambarene, 240 km to the northeast of Libreville..
- Received education in law, and graduated from Nanci Collge of Law, France.
- Obtained a degree in theology in 2007.
- Worked as a counselor in April 2008, and has been representing the first constituency in Lambarene, the Capital of the middle Ogooue region since Jan.1,2009.
- Served as the minister of women and human rights under prime minister Leon M'ba..
- Elected speaker of the Senate on Feb.17, 2009, and served as the acting president of the Republic from June 10, 2009, following the demise of late President Omar







Bongo Ondemba, to October 16, 2009, when Mr. Ali Omar Bongo was inaugurated as President of the Republic.

- Assumed the chairmanship of ASSECAA in 2011.

### **Dr. Mohammed Cheikh Baidallah, Speaker of the House of Counselors of Morocco:**

- Born in Samara, Morocco in 1949.
- Obtained a PhD degree in Medicine in 1979, and worked, during that same year, as a doctor at Ibn Rushd hospital, Casablanca.
- Worked as a prominent professor and researcher in internal medicine at the Faculty of Medicine, Casablanca, 1987.
- Elected as a member of Parliament representing the city of Al-Samara in 1977, and was reelected to the same position in 1984.
- Elected chairman of the House of Counselors' committee on foreign affairs, cooperation, borders, occupied areas, and national defense.
- Elected chairman of the committee on supplies, Post and telecommunications.
- Served as the Minister of Health from 2002 to 2007.
- Assumed the Chairmanship of ASSECAA in 2010.



### **H.E Ali Yahya Abdullah, Speaker of the Council of States of Sudan (2009):**

- Born in Al-Junainah, Sudan, 1951.
- Obtained a Bachelor's degree in Law at Um Durman Islamic University. He assumed the following positions:



- Chairman of West Darfur state Court of Appeal.
- Chairman of West Darfur State's Judiciary, 1995.
- Member of the Constitutional Court, 1998.
- Member of the advisory board at the Cabinet.
- Member of Darfur committee on dialogue.
- He Took over the chairmanship of ASSECAA in 2009.

### **Late H.E Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani, Speaker of Shoora Council, Republic of Yemen (2004-2008):**

- Born in Haifan, Taiz, Yemen, in July 1939.
- Obtained a Master's degree in Economics at Colorado University, 1964.
- Obtained an honorary PhD degree in Economics at Colorado University, 1978.
- Served as the Prime Minister of the formerly Yemen Arab Republic from 1983-1990.
- Served as a member of Yemen's Presidential Council, 1990.
- Acted as Assistant Secretary General of the General People's Congress (GPC) from 1990-1995.
- Worked as a member of the World Bank's advisory board from 1993-1997.
- Served as Yemen's premier from 1994-97.
- Served as Speaker of the Advisory Council, 1997.
- Served as Speaker of Shoora Council from 2001-2011.
- Acted as Chairman of ASSECAA from 2004-2008.



It is expected that Speaker of the Shoora Council of Bahrain in the person of H.E Ali Saleh Al-Saleh will assume the chairmanship of the Association with effect from 29<sup>th</sup> May 2013 following the hosting of the 7<sup>th</sup> council meeting being held in Bahrain.



## Assecaa General Secretariat's Management



**Mr. Abdulwasie Yusuf Ali**

Secretary General

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia



**Mr. Egwim Nkemjika**

Assist. Secretary General for  
Parliamentary Cooperation, Finance & Admin.  
The Federal Republic of Nigeria



**Mr. Mohammed M. Al-Tayeb**

Assistant Secretary General for Political  
and Cultural Affairs  
Republic of Yemen

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### ASSECAA's Past Management



**Mr. Syedna Ali Ould Hanana**

Former Assistant Secretary General  
The Islamic Republic of Mauritania



**Mr. Livinous Osuji**

Former Secretary General  
The Federal Republic of Nigeria



## Chapter 2

### ASSECAA's Activities

In pursuit of its objectives, ASSECAA has, since its creation, undertaken various activities out of its keenness to keep up with the accelerated global changes, contribute effectively to addressing lots of sticking points, and lay down outlines aimed at promoting economic cooperation, boosting human rights, contributing to conflict resolutions and jump-starting cultural and parliamentary cooperation among member states.

The following table shows the activities that have so far been undertaken by the Association based on the spheres through which ASSECAA seeks to foster sustainable cooperation between Africa and Arab world.

**:Table illustrates ASSECAA's activities based on committees and events**

activities	Committee	Spheres
Rabat Conference, 2002. Constituent conference, Sana'a, Yemen, 2004. Second conference, Sana'a, Yemen, 2007. Third conference, Khartoum, Sudan, 2008. Fourth conference, Rabat, Morocco, 2009. Fifth conference, Libreville, Gabon, 2011. Sixth conference, Bujumbura, Burundi, 2012.	Meetings of speakers of member councils	Conferences
Cape Town Meeting, South Africa, 2008. Manama Meeting, Bahrain, 2010. Rabat Meeting, Morocco, 2012.	Meetings of chambers of commerce and industry	Economic cooperation
ASSECAA Day for Democracy and Human Rights, Sana'a, Yemen, 2012.		Democracy and Human Rights.
Abuja Meeting, Nigeria, 2009. Khartoum Meeting, Sudan, 2010. Khartoum Meeting, Sudan, 2011.	Committee on Women Parliamentarians	Empowerment of women
Abuja Meeting, Nigeria, 2007 Bujumbura meeting, Burundi, 2009. Addis Ababa meeting, Ethiopia, 2013.	Committee on Peace and Conflict Resolution	Peace and Conflict Resolutions
First Retreat, Abuja, Nigeria, 2006. Second Retreat, Dead Sea Region, Jordan, 2007. Third Retreat, Nouakchott, Mauritania, 2008. Fourth Retreat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2011.	Retreats Study Visit Exchange Program	Cultural and Parliamentary cooperation





### 1-Conferences:

It has been a usual practice that ASSECAA holds its annual conferences, which are attended by delegates from member councils/senates, including Speakers or their representatives. The aim is to review the report tabled by the General Secretariat to the Council, which details the activities carried out by ASSECAA in the past year, and then approve the proposed programs for the upcoming year.

Further, the Council approves the General Secretariat's annual budgets during its meetings which come up with final communiqués demonstrating delegates' attitudes towards a variety of issues of common interest to Arab and African nations.

It is worth mentioning that, according to ASSECAA's Rules of Procedure, the Council, which involves speakers of member councils, holds its annual meeting prior to conference so as to review the events undertaken by the General Secretariat in the previous year, and then approve the action plan for the next year as well as the recom-

mendations submitted by the conference committees.

By 2012, ASSECAA had held seven conferences and eight council meetings in the afore-stated member countries.

### Excerpts from final communiqués of ASSECAA's Conferences and Council Meetings

The Association's conferences and council meetings organized over the past years were successful by all standards, in terms of members' participation and enthusiasm as well as the topics debated during such events. This signals that member countries are pinning high hopes on ASSECAA in playing a key role in revitalizing parliamentary diplomacy in Arab and African countries, and the world in its entirety. For instance, some member states still contend with the challenges of underdevelopment, poverty and backwardness, and are saddled with heavy debts, while others are rich and having leverage at international fora.





Therefore, ASSECAA can utilize this advantage to reactivate parliamentary diplomacy with a view to easing the suffering of poor member countries and writing off their burdensome debts.

ASSECAA can also act as a vocal advocate for African and Arab countries as well as their common interests. Besides, parliamentary diplomacy can go a long way in addressing front burner issues at the local and international arenas.

Below are excerpts from the final communiqués of ASSECAA's past conferences and councils meetings:

## 2004 Conference:

ASSECAA's member councils/senates have undertaken to implement the resolutions and recommendations of the Conference, and contribute to the enhancement of democratic values in their respective countries.

- The Conference is also committed to cooperate with regional and international parliamentary organizations on the enhancement of democracy and public freedoms, and to support Afro-Arab just issues, atop of which is the Palestinian cause. It declares its condemnation of the brutal Israeli crimes committed against the unarmed Palestinian people, including ethnic cleansing campaigns, arbitrary arrests, and demolition of homes over civilians in Gaza and the West

Bank.

The Conference expresses its solidarity with the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle for the right to return to their







homeland, self-determination and the establishment of an Independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its Capital. In the same vein, the Conference expresses its full support for the efforts that have been exerted so far for the purpose of achieving comprehensive and long-lasting peace in the Middle East. It further voices its support for the international efforts at conflict resolution and elimination of causes of tension in a number of African countries.

On democracy, human Rights and the role of civil society, the conference recommends:

-That ASSECAA's member councils/senates contribute to deepening democratic val-

ues, boosting human rights, and reinforcing good governance by building administrative capacities, enhancing parliamentary oversight, supporting public participation in decision-making, and strengthening judiciary in line with the provisions of Sana'a Declaration.

- That civil society organizations play a significant role in boosting public participation in politics and social development, rooting democratic values, and bolstering human rights in Arab and African countries.

- That a conducive legal climate should be created with the objective of establishing civil society organizations in such a manner that further shores up social development and good governance in Arab and African countries.

Moreover, the conference stressed the importance of engaging women in politics and public life, and protecting them against all forms of exploitation and discrimination.

- It further emphasized the importance of bicameralism in enhancing public participation in decision-making, and urged all interested countries to adopt the system due to its effectiveness in meeting people's demands and absorbing seasoned actors into legislatures.

### 2007 Conference:

The conference noted that Arab and African countries are suffering from sim-





mering conflicts that posed a serious threat to the security and stability of such countries. Therefore, it approved the setting up of a committee to be called “The Committee on Peace and Conflict Resolution”, which shall be assigned with the task of contributing to the maintenance of peace and security in the two regions, and the world at large.

The Conference reaffirmed the importance of the Association in promoting democratic practices, respecting human rights, and encouraging lawful civil society organizations, in addition to empowering women to play active roles in steering national affairs, and encouraging good governance.

### 2008 Conference:

- The conference emphasized the need for defusing the conflict that has recently erupted in Eastern Congo and the Great

Lakes region, and calls upon all rivals to assume their responsibility towards their nations and to eschew the catastrophic consequences of conflicts and armed confrontations.

- It expresses support for the dialogue of civilizations and cultures, and rapprochement among religions.
- It further stressed the importance that the world order should be characterized by jus-







tice and transparency, and that the interests of developing countries must be taken into account.

#### 2009 Conference :

- The mechanisms of south-south cooperation among ASSECAA member states should be supported in order for them to be harmonious with those of the north-north cooperation based on justice and the principles of human rights.

#### 2011 Conference:

- The conference recommended that the principles of reasoned dialogue between civilization

and religions be adopted in order to achieve rapprochement among nations.

- It further recommended that the Arab Peace Initiative aimed at resolving the Palestinian question be supported in a way that achieves security and stability in the Middle East
- It stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation among Africa and Arab world being the only option to encounter any evil plans for destabilizing the countries of the two regions.







### 2012 Conference:

- It maintained that Arab and African countries have legitimate ambitions for improving the living standards of their citizens in accordance with the conditions of each country, not least the preservation of national sovereignty.

The conference recommended that the General

Secretariat of ASSECAA present a proposal to the next conference on the setting up of a permanent economic committee to be charged with conducting studies and researches in such a manner that contributes to facilitating involvement in joint investment and economic ventures in Africa and Arab world.





## 2-Economic Cooperation:

The promotion of economic, trade and investment relations between Africa and Arab world is one of the fundamental objectives ASSECAA has set for itself. Out of belief in the promising potentials abounding in both regions. Besides, Arab and African countries are full of integrated resources that make mutual cooperation an introduction to significant development breakthroughs.

Indeed, Africa is very rich in natural and human resources, while Arab countries are awash with massive cash surplus to reckon with, which no doubt needs safe and rewarding milieus.

Further, the two regions abound with renewable and non-renewable natural resources, such as oil, minerals and agricultural products. However, there is a disparity in the distribution of such potentials, which makes it imperative for Arab and African countries to adopt the strategy of prioritizing investments in such a way that ensures further integration among Afro-Arab economic entities. This in turn will be a prelude to establishing a real economic integration embodying the massive potentials of both regions.

### A-Priorities:

There is need to set economic priorities in Africa and Arab world. It is axiomatic that the achievement of self-sufficiency in the agriculture-based food products should be prioritized at this particular phase in a bid to attain food security and part ways with the Capitalistic economy dominated by Western companies.

### B-Support investments

These investments are aimed at upgrading infrastructure and improving services in such a manner that achieves an investment boom in the fields of agriculture, industry, services and tourism. To this end, swift efforts must be

exerted to make best use of cash surplus in setting up big investment ventures.

### Tourism:

Africa and Arab world are endowed with one of the most significant tourist resources pertaining to both cultural legacy and ancient civilizations, such as sumptuous antiquities, and invaluable tourist attractions, such as national parks and sanctuaries.

Besides, the two regions have fascinating eco-systems, which are home to millions of species, organisms, plants and animals. They are also noted for marvelous customs and traditions that may turn them into significant tourist destinations.

Further, economic integration relative to this vital sector should be based on several considerations, the most important of which is that tourist services in Arab and African countries are highly competitive. Hence, tourism is a renewable resource that must be better harnessed in order to close the gap existing in other economic sectors.

So being, this sector needs huge investments in order to generate plentiful revenues in the future, enhance its own competitiveness and upgrade its infrastructure.

There are many investment opportunities available in Africa, mainly in tourism, which has promising prospects for future economic integration between Africa and Arab world.

Accordingly, ASSECAA has been keen to contrive effective mechanisms to achieve its goal of buttressing Afro-Arab economic relations and creating robust partnership between the countries of the two regions.

For this purpose, a proposal for holding periodic meetings for chambers of commerce and industry in

Africa and Arab world was approved by the Council.

**Accordingly, ASSECAA has so far held three such meetings as follows:**

### First Meeting:

The first meeting of chambers of commerce and industry in Africa and Arab world was held in Cape Town, South Africa from 25-27 October, 2008. It was attended by delegates from 11 member and non-member countries,







including Yemen, Nigeria, Jordan, Bahrain, Mauritania, Morocco, Guinea, Gabon, Libya, South Africa, and Ethiopia.

The delegates, including chairmen of chambers of commerce and industry, deliberated upon several topics appertaining to the advancement of economic cooperation in the spheres of trade, industry and investment among member countries. Also, a number of work-papers were presented at the meeting and specialized committee set up to debate the issues stipulated therein. Foremost among such issues are:

- a) Tariff regimes
- b) Local products
- c) Availability of mineral resources
- d) Business laws and regulations
- e) Indigenisation, privatisation and nationalisation of business activities.
- f) Investment opportunities available in the region.
- g) Investment cooperation.
- h) Resources available in the region.

The meeting stressed the importance of the following key issues:

1- The restoration of peace, security and political stability in the Arab and African countries is a pre-requisite for socio-economic and political development, free trade and flow of investments between the two regions.

2-Arab and African countries should advance their

companies and service sectors in order to attract foreign investments.

The meeting also came up with several recommendations on the consolidation of economic ties and the creation of common markets to uplift the economic status of ASSECAA's member states.

### Second Meeting:

The second meeting of chambers of commerce and industry in Africa and Arab world was held in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, from 27-28 October, 2010. It was attended by delegates from ASSECAA's member



and non-member countries, including Algeria, Nigeria, Jordan, Bahrain, Mauritania, Morocco, Libya, South Africa, Yemen, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Senegal, Iraq and



Qatar.

The meeting deliberated upon several issues, including the promotion of economic situation in member countries, among others, as a number of work-papers were presented and debated by work committees set up for the purpose.

The event, which also considered a wide range of economic issues, arrived at the following conclusions:

- The meeting observed that Africa and Arab world have a common, strong desire to build up robust and overriding trade ties.
- There is need to gather information on investment opportunities in African and Arab countries.
- The meeting took cognizance of the importance of regional trade fairs, and workshops on economic development, as well as the exchange of visits



- among the region's businessmen.
- It also confirmed its readiness to seriously forge ahead with achieving close economic







- cooperation between Africa and Arab world.
- The meeting is fully conscious of the emergence of similar business institutions in other parts of the world and fully cognizant of the fact that other world regions have broadened their engagement in the globalized socio-economic and political order through regional economic groupings.

### Third Meeting:

The third meeting of chambers of commerce and industry in Africa and Arab world (ASSECAA) was held in the Moroccan capital, Rabat, from 29-30 November, 2012 at the chambers of the House of Counselors of Morocco. It was attended by delegates from many Arab and African countries, including Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Gabon, Burundi, Bahrain, Nigeria, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Djibouti, Morocco, Ethiopia, Sudan, Mauritania, Yemen, and Congo.

Also in attendance were the representatives of the United Nations' Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Institute of African Studies in Morocco, chairmen of chambers of commerce, industry and services of Morocco, business institutions, and Afro-Arab diplomatic Corps accredited to Morocco.

The event, which was organized under the auspices of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab world (ASSECAA), the House of Counselors of Morocco and the Federation

of Morocco's chambers of commerce, industry and services, aimed to reflect deeply on the possibility of establishing trade and investment partnership between Africa and Arab world, and to develop mutual cooperation between them.

### The meeting came up with the following conclusions:

- There is need to exploit the economic groupings existing in African and Arab countries in order for Arab countries to set up industrial, agricultural and service projects in partnership with African states.
- There is need for Arab and African countries to set up infrastructures in different development sectors to encourage domestic investments and attract foreign investors, including Arabs who have surplus funds.
- It is also important to facilitate the administrative procedures pertaining to cash remittances on the part of investors operating in Arab and African countries.
- Setting up channels for boosting institutional and regular communication with the components of the Afro-Arab private sectors.
- Urging Afro-Arab decision-makers to ease restrictions on the strengthening of Afro-Arab trade relations as well as the development of investment dynamics among Arab and African countries.
- Giving special attention to the creation of







information centers and databases for the benefit of businessmen and investors.

- Calling upon all concerned parties to provide legal and political conditions necessary for the emergence of Afro-Arab trade and investment pole.
- Reducing customs restrictions and facilitating their procedures in order to encourage trade exchange between Africa and Arab world, taking into account the interests of productive sectors.
- preparing for phased creation of Afro-Arab free trade zone, taking into account the interests of both regions.
- Adopting productive policies in keeping with international

standards and specifications in order to enhance competitiveness.

- Encouraging oil-producing countries in Africa and Arab world to invest in ventures that depend on contrived production techniques catalyzing economic diversity and increasing the size of trade exchange among Arab and African countries.

- Urging Arab and African governments and legislatures to introduce radical reforms into the laws on the movement of trade and financial investment.

- Establishment of taskforce to coordinate and follow upon the implementation of the recommendations.







### 3-Democracy and Human Rights:

#### A- Democracy:

a-The term “democracy“, which is etymologically Greek, means the rule of the people. At present, it has a broader connotation to it, as it means an encompassing approach to governance based on the fact that the people are the supreme source of power. Thus, they delegate powers to state institutions and individuals by means of free and fair elections in which all eligible citizens engage in accordance with the constitution and law.

This means that the people, including voters and modern civil components, such as civil society activists, are the sole source of power, in the sense that any authority not derived from the will of



the people is illegitimate as per the Social Contract Theory.

In addition, democracy is a social system based on the values of equal citizenship, and respect for the law and human rights. By exercising their right to election and mandate, the people

are adopting the principle of peaceful transfer of power, which implies respect for the will of the majority.

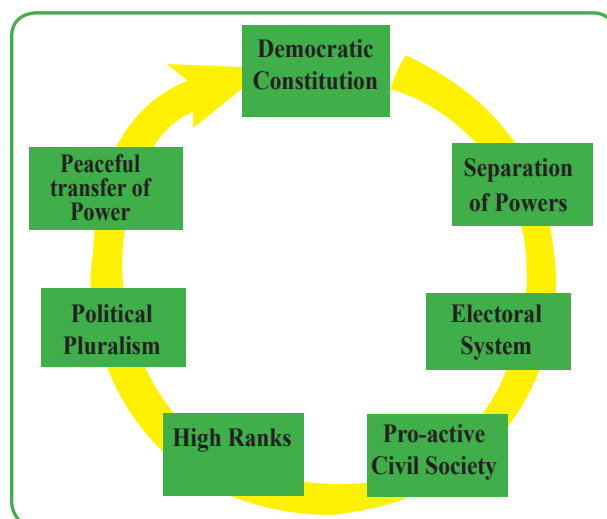
Two concepts for democracy have thus far evolved: The first such concept is that of Liberal Democracy, which is embraced in the United States of America, Canada and Western Europe, with the exception of the Scandinavian states, and Japan, among others. It is based on individual freedom, and free market mechanism being an economic tool that ensures human dignity.

In this context, the majority is required to meet



the needs of different groups, such as indigenes, the minorities and the disabled, as enshrined in the International Convention on the socio-economic and Cultural Rights as well as the international treaties on human rights.

Such conventions stated that the said groups have the right to equal opportunity if democracy is to be adopted. They also stated that those groups have political and civil rights, including fair wealth-sharing, equality and justice, in addition to the right to self-rule and fair representation in state institutions. This signals that decentralization should be embraced.



Liberal democracy seeks to ensure a delicate balance among the three arms of government - the executive, the legislative and the judiciary on



the one hand, and between religion and the state, something suggestive of secularism.

**Social democracy:** It ensures some sort of socio-political oversight over market economy in order to attain equal opportunity amongst citizens and guarantee the socio-economic and political rights enshrined in the UN's conventions.

Broadly speaking, to determine whether or not a country is adherent to democracy, as we have stated above, entails a democratic constitution approved through popular referendum, a clear separation of the three authorities of the state, peaceful transition of power. It also necessitates an electoral system expressive of the people's will, political plurality, a pro-active civil society, and a high rank on international democracy indices.

It is evident that democracy has become a key feature of political systems in Arab and African countries, which are mostly nascent democracies. It also represents a key interest to several members of ASSECAA that takes into account the two regions' social and cultural parameters and seeks to make well-considered political, social and cultural breakthroughs in this respect.

It is against this backdrop that the Association's General Secretariat organized "ASSECAA Day for Democracy and Human Rights" in Sana'a, Yemen on May 7, 2012. During the ceremony, which was attended by a host of prominent

figures, diplomats and government officials, the participants reviewed a myriad of democratic practices in member countries.

### B-Human Rights:

Human rights span the whole gamut of rights and civil liberties to which everybody is entitled as human being. The concept of human rights entails recognizing the universal values and dignity of mankind whose individuals deservedly have basic

liberties that enable them live in peace and make decisions charts a course for their lives. in such a way that

The declaration, which was issued by the French Revolution on August 26, 1798, constituted the most important turning point in human history. Indeed, the French Revolution took the credit for issuing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is the best yet man-made convention guaranteeing the protection of human rights.

The UN Supreme Commission of Hu-







man Rights confirms that “Human rights are inherent in mankind, regardless of nationality, residence, race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language or any other status. We are fully entitled to our human rights on equal footing, and without any discrimination. All such rights are correlated, inalienable and indivisible”.

The Commission stresses the importance of the universal dimension of such rights, in the sense that they transcend the national sovereignty of nations, and are binding upon all countries. It follows that human rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible and non-discriminatory.

Universal human rights are usually enshrined in laws, conventions norms, general principles, and other sources of international law.

Further, the international law provides for the commitments that all countries should fulfill in terms of promoting human rights and protecting freedoms of groups and individuals.

Articles 1,2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights tersely encapsulated the universal human rights encompassing every human being on the planet.

#### **The two articles stated thus:**

-All people are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and are endowed with reason and conscience. Therefore, it is incumbent upon them to act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

The two articles’ provisions seek to achieve the lofty purposes of divine religions and Scriptures: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, whose objectives are crystal-clear. This is as manifested in the holy Quran that states thus: “We have created you of one soul”, and “The most dignified of you with God is the most righteous”.

Further, such religions have established rules and tenets expressly stating that all human beings are equal in rights and duties, and that they should not be discriminated against based on gender, race and/or color.

Human rights run the entire range of human life, including independent judiciary, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearance, terrorism, child abuse

and disability.

They also involve business, immunity, minorities, human trafficking, environment, sustainable development, torture, education, discrimination, and good governance, let alone the socio-economic, political, cultural and civil rights, democracy, the rule of law, slavery, and aborigines, among other issues.

As a matter of fact, there are positive indicators that ASSECAA’s member states are committed to the promotion of human rights, a practice which is in line with the democratic approach adopted by most of them. Therefore, it is important to highlight ASSECAA’s commitment to the promotion of human rights, a key issue that figures high on the agendas of its activities. Indeed, ASSECAA is making best use of its parliamentary diplomacy and multi-dimensional activities in terms of enhancing human rights in an effort to integrate them into members’ socio-political practices and popular cultures.

For this purpose, the Association held “ASSECAA’s Day for Democracy and Human Rights” on May 7, 2012, during which time participants reviewed the experiences of member countries in honoring international human rights conventions. This initiative was indicative of ASSECAA’s keenness to reinforce democracy and human rights in member countries.

## **4- Women Empowerment:**

The concept of Women’s empowerment dates back to the eighties of the last century, as the United Nations adopted it within the framework of a strategy aimed at ending the marginalization of, and discrimination against women based on sex and/or gender.

This came against the backdrop that societies across the world were discriminating against women, including by denying them the normal right to equal opportunities on par with men, among other practices.

In a study titled “The concept of Empowerment and its Common Scopes”, which was posted on “Muslim Online” website, Dr. Fatima Hafez



opines that the UN's move was made "due to governments' procrastination on putting a halt to discrimination against women. The international body opted to step in order to endorse an international policy ensuring women's equal involvement in development, and stemming discrimination against them".

The UN defines the term "empowerment" thus: "a vital and significant process, which is indispensable to any society". The importance of "empowerment" lies in the fact that it builds up robust economies, creates fairer societies, and attains the international community's objectives related to development and human rights, in addition to improving the quality of life.

Besides, the United Nations' Women's Development Fund defines the term "empowerment" as "the group work done by aggrieved or downtrodden groups to circumvent handicaps and forms of discrimination that belittle their status or deny them their rights". This definition encompasses all marginalized groups, including women.

Moreover, the socio-economic committee of West Asia defines "Women's empowerment" as "The process through which women, whether individually or in groups, became cognizant of the way power relations affect their lives". Consequently, they become self-confident, and capable of with-



standing inequality between them and men".

The procedural definition of the empowerment of women as coined by specialized sources implies "The provision of cultural, educational and material tools in order to enable the individuals take part in decision-making and resource control".

More specifically, the empowerment of women mainly focuses on putting a stop to the socio-economic and political exclusion of, and discrimination against women, their dependency and passivity.

More importantly, The UN pinpointed a number of quantitative and measurable indicators for the empowerment of women. These are:

- Participation in leading positions.
- Involvement in public positions and committees.
- Availability of modern education and training opportunities.
- Engagement in decision-making.
- Acquisition of organizational skills and abilities to set up pressure groups.

Furthermore, the principle necessitates working towards the eradication of all obstacles, be they political, socio-economic, cultural or otherwise, which are usually ascribed to the lack of political will, flawed laws, weak institutions and/or erroneous administrative procedures.

It also requires a conducive ambi-







ance within which political, legislative and administrative measures can be taken to enhance women's participation in public life and further spur them to develop and utilize their abilities.

Politically speaking, this issue tops the agendas of countries and international organizations, as it is regarded as a key yardstick for democracy, especially when it comes to political participation and representation.

In effect, several Arab and African countries have made a great stride in this respect, as women are now assuming leading positions. The participation of women in some Arab and African parliaments crossed 30%. This suggests that there is a trend to boost Arab and African women's engagement in public authorities, mainly the legislatures.

Nonetheless, it is still incumbent upon our countries to undertake extensive programs to train women in various political and parliamentary spheres so that they can acquire much-needed skills that enable them assume their responsibilities effectively.

Out of its belief in the political empowerment of women and the promotion of their role in decision-making, ASSECAA has thus far organized a series of meetings of women parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world as follows:

### **First Meeting of Women Parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world-Abuja-Nigeria:**

The first meeting of women parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 6-7 October, 2009. It was

attended by women delegates from across Africa and Arab world, including Algeria, Swaziland, Morocco, Togo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, Gabon, Malawi, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Yemen, Mauritania, Liberia, Sudan, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Senegal, Nigeria, Chad, Burundi, Cameroon and Benin.

The meeting then resolved into committees that debated several issues of key concern to women, including the challenges to women's participation in public life.

The function observed that there have been a wide range of obstacles to women's engagement in political life, and, accordingly, specified the following basic needs that should be met so as to help women overcome such hurdles:

- a- There is need for political education of women on their rights to participate in the political processes in their countries.
- b- There is need for the creation of suitable environment for women to participate in the political process.
- c- There is need for civil society organizations in Africa and the Arab world to play a better role in enhancing the participation of women in political process
- d- There is need for political parties in Africa and the Arab world to grant quotas based on U.N recommendation of 30% of political offices for women
- e- There is need for families in Africa and Arab world to encourage their girl children to attend or complete their education.
- f- There is need for governments in the regions of Africa and the Arab world to put in place mechanisms for implementing all protocols and treaties on gender parity ratified by individual countries.
- g- There is need to eliminate all discriminations



against women in respect of access to land for agricultural and other economic purposes.

h- There is need to abrogate all customs that inhibit inheritance rights of girls/women throughout Africa and the Arab world.

**After in-depth discussions, the committee recommended as follows:**

- a- The enhancement of women and girl child education, to enable women contribute positively towards national development.
- b- Entrenchment of Social Security System through legislation, and where it exists, it should be enforced.
- c- Poverty eradication policies/programmes to be put in place, e.g. women empowerment programmes, skills acquisition programmes, access to credits by women through micro financing institutions that offer lower rates and less cumbersome procedures should be encouraged.
- d- The domestication of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by all countries.
- e. Fora for the discussion on national development plans should include women.
- f. Good governance at all levels should be enhanced, strengthening transparency, accountability and elimination of corruption.

In that same meeting of Abjua, committee Four, which was chaired by the head of delegation from Senegal, Hajia Aissatou MBODJ, recommended as follows:

- a. Women parliamentarians should be given higher posts in their parliaments and other parliamentary forums in the regions.
- b. Every parliament in Africa and the Arab world should assume an obligation to send at least a woman as part of its delegation to every regional or international parliamentary meeting and conference
- c. Every parliament in Africa and the Arab world that has a second chamber should nominate representatives to ASSECAA and formalize its membership of the Association at the commencement of each parliamentary term.
- d- All countries in Africa and the Arab world that are signatories to international conventions on wom-

en's rights should ratify and domesticate them. This will further enhance women's participation in the governance of the countries of the regions.

- e- A committee that will regularly monitor regional and international developments, affecting the interests of women should be established in the structure of ASSECAA, like its Committee on Peace and Conflict Resolution.
- f- ASSECAA's council should adequately fund the activities relating to the promotion of women empowerment
- g- The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians in Africa and the Arab world should be held at least once in two years.

**The meeting accordingly resolved that:**

- a. Parliaments in Africa and the Arab world should enact gender friendly legislations that facilitate the participation of women in political processes, through the provision of quota based on UN resolutions of 30% of political offices for women.
- b. Governments in the regions of Africa and the Arab world should implement as a matter of urgency, all protocols and treaties on gender parity ratified by individual countries, formulate policies that enable women to have easy access to credit facilities, create equal employment opportunities and remunerations for both men and women.
- c. All parliaments should enact legislations to eliminate all customs and laws that inhibit women from inheritance and access to land for economic purposes.
- d. All governments in Africa and the Arab world should establish free health care services for pregnant women and children from 0 – 5 years of age, intensify the war against HIV/ AIDS and other endemic diseases.
- e. The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians in Africa and the Arab should be held at least once in two years.

**Second meeting of the Committee on women parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world-Khartoum, Sudan, 27 -28 September, 2010:**

At the kind invitation of the Council of States of





Sudan from where hails the Chairperson of the committee Miss Wedad Yacoub, the second meeting of the committee on women parliamentarians in Africa and Arab was held in Khartoum, Sudan, from 27-28 September, 2010 to prepare the programme, agenda and logistics for the second meeting. Women representatives of the following senates/councils attended the meeting:



- The Shoora Council of the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- The House of Counselors of the Kingdom of Morocco.
- The Shoora Council of the Republic of Yemen.
- The Council of States of Sudan.
- The Senate of the Republic of Gabon.

Also in attendance were the Secretary General of ASSECAA, Mr. Livinus I. Osuji, and the General Secretariat's secretarial staff.



After the meeting had debated the conclusions from the last meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria, the committee recommended that Parliaments, which were represented at Abuja meeting, must stick to the resolutions from that event. It also recommended as follows:

- 1- Parliaments in Africa and the Arab world should enact gender friendly legislations that facilitate the participation of women in political processes, through the provision of quota based on UN resolutions of 30% of political offices for women based on the UN's recommendation.
- 2- Governments in the regions of Africa and the Arab world should implement as a matter of urgency, all protocols and treaties on gender parity ratified by individual countries, formulate policies that enable women to have easy access to credit facilities, create equal employment opportunities and remunerations for both men and women;
- 3- All parliaments should enact legislations to eliminate all customs and laws that inhibit women from inheritance and access to land for economic purposes
- 4- All governments in Africa and the Arab world should establish free health care services for pregnant women and children from 0-5 years of





age, intensify the war against HIV/AIDS and other endemic diseases;

- 5-All African and Arab governments should enact legislations to facilitate and encourage women and girl child education in order to prepare them to shoulder major responsibilities in the public and private sector at the national level.
- 6-All governments in Africa and the Arab world have to improve the level of transparency and accountability in governance, in order to reduce the tension and strife in politics.
- 7-All women parliamentarians in the region have to use their outreach programmes to educate their constituents on the negative influence of cultural, religious, and traditional practices that inhibit the development of women.

### Third meeting of women parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world, Khartoum, Sudan, 18 - 19 March, 2012:

The second meeting of women parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world was held in Khartoum, Sudan, from 18-19 March, 2012. It was attended by delegates from 17 Arab and African countries, including Sudan, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Egypt, South Africa, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Bahrain, Yemen,

Jordan, Ethiopia, Chad, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Niger.

The meeting was also attended by a representative from the African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU's ECOSOCC).

Several work-papers were presented at the meeting, all of which focused on womenfolk's status and the means of elevating it. Besides, the meeting resolved into committees that discussed women-related laws and the ways of revitalizing them, in addition to the role of women parliamentarians in achieving socio-economic development and attaining peace and security in Africa and Arab world. The event came up with a number of recommendations that would contribute tremendously to the reactivation of women's role in society as follows:

- 1- Boost the role of women parliamentarians







in enacting legislation, set out policies, plans and programmes and follow upon the implementation thereof, in addition to participation in all intellectual and negotiable activities.

- 2- Enact the legislation that meets citizens' basic needs in respect of fighting poverty, redistribution of income among social segments and fulfilling the needs of women and children.
- 3- Consolidate the role of women leaders in Africa and Arab world to enable them engage in decision-making.
- 4- Enact legislation on women in order to enable them balance their family work with the jobs they used to do outdoors.
- 5- Stress the importance of formulating a par-



- liamentary women's mechanism for reviewing family-related laws to achieve the following:
- a-Introducing the proportional representation system (Quota) and including same in the applicable laws in order to enable women MPs assume their regulatory and legislative role.
  - b-Revitalizing women-related laws to help them exercise their political rights.







## 5- Peace and Conflict Resolution:

The Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA) has, since its inception, taken note of the risky impacts of tensions and conflicts in several Arab and African countries on peace, security and development.

Therefore, ASSECAA has prioritized the peaceful resolution of conflicts based on the fact that it is one of the key principles set forth in the international law, and figures prominently on the agenda of international relations.

Further, peace and security are highly significant, given that several Arab and African countries, including ASSECAA's members, are experiencing geopolitical tension spots that negatively affect regional security, disrupt development as well as economic and political reform programs. In addition, conflict also hamper countries' plans for improving living conditions of citizens, and squander resources that are diverted from development towards the purchase of weapons, as well military and security operations.

In practice, ASSECAA has exerted genuine efforts to achieve its goals of resolving conflicts through parliamentary diplomacy, including the setting up of the committee on peace and conflict resolution in Africa and Arab world, which was endorsed by the annual conference held in Sana'a, Yemen, from 7-9 May, 2007.

Some 13 member states expressed willingness to join the committee in order to contribute to studying the conditions of tensions, disputes and wars raging in Africa and Arab world, and participate effectively in reinforcing peace and security in the

region and the world at large. These are South Africa, Sudan, Morocco, Algeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Bahrain, Jordan, Gabon and Mauritania, in addition to ASSECAA's Secretary General.

Since its creation, the panel held two meetings: The first was held in Abuja, Nigeria, in December, 2007, while the second took place in Bu-



## Encyclopedia of CONFLICT *Resolution*







jumbura, Burundi, in March, 2009.

**The committee seeks to achieve the following objectives:**

- 1- To Contribute tremendously to the international efforts at conflict resolution in Africa and Arab world.
- 2 – To create favorable climates for peace and co-existence in Africa and Arab world.
- 3- To encourage dialogue as an alternative to violence in the resolution of conflicts in Africa and Arab world and the world in its entirety.
- 4- To Project the Association as an internationally recognized regional body, as well as its ability to forge bonds of communication, through international parliamentary fora, between Africa and Arab world on the one hand, and between the region and the other parts of the world on the other.

#### **Abuja meeting, Nigeria, 12-13 December, 2007:**

The first meeting of peace and conflict resolution committee was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 12-13 December, 2007. It was attended by delegates from member councils, including Algeria, Nigeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Burundi, Sudan, Mauritania, Egypt, Ethiopia and Morocco.

Of the most important topics ensconced in the work-papers presented to the meeting were the conflicts in both Somalia and Sudan, in addition to armed disputes in Africa in general.

The meeting came out with a set of recommendations as follows:

- 1-Urge the international community, including the United Nations, the African Union, IGAD, the Arab League, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to show commitment to conflict resolution in Somalia.
- 2- Call upon Arab and African governments to contribute financial and human resources to the Somali people in order to enhance the role of the peace-keeping forces there.
- 3-ASSECAA together with Arab and African



countries should show commitment to backing all the efforts aimed at the restoration of peace and stability in Sudan and Somalia.

- 4-Urge all parties to conflict, especially in Somalia, to shun violence and adopt dialogue as the best means of conflict resolutions, as was the case in Burundi, Liberia, and other countries that experienced disputes and civil wars.
- 5- Give equal opportunities in future negotiations to armed groups, conflict parties, special interest groups and all social groups in concerned countries so that they can partake of shaping up the feature of their respective countries.
- 6- ASSECAA must contribute effectively to the international efforts at the consolidation of peace and stability as well as conflict resolution in the African and Arab countries suffering from wars and conflicts.

#### **Bujumbura Meeting, Burundi, 2- 3 March, 2009:**

The second meeting of the committee on peace and conflict resolution was held in Bujumbura, Burundi from 2-3 March, 2009. It was attended by delegates from several member countries, including Algeria, Burundi, Ethiopia, Jordan, Nigeria, Swaziland, Yemen, and Sudan.

**The following representatives attended the meeting as observes:**

- 1- A representative from the Kenyan Parliament.
- 2- A representative from the Legislative Assembly of East Africa.



**The meeting considered a variety of political issues including:**

- The conflict in the Great Lakes region.
- The conflict in Darfur.
- The dispute in Somalia.

**Following two days of elaborate discussions, the committee arrived at the following recommendations:**

- The committee reasserts ASSECAA's stance condemning the atrocities committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in Gaza, and calls for opening border crossings and ending the unjust blockade. It also stresses the importance of achieving the Palestinian reconciliation involving all factions, and attaining comprehensive and long-lasting peace in the Middle East.
- The committee stressed the importance of speeding up the efforts at containing the simmering conflict in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Great Lakes region, and called upon rivals to shoulder their responsibility towards their nation, including by shunning violence and armed disputes.
- The committee hailed the efforts that led to the achievement of the Somali reconciliation that culminated in the election of the president of the Republic and formation of a new government. It reasserted the importance of backing the new government in maintaining law and order and attaining peace and security.
- The committee emphasized the importance of

rallying regional and international support to combat piracy in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and hailed Yemen's call for setting up a regional anti-piracy center.

- The committee stressed the role of ASSECAA in following up all issues relative to peace and conflict resolution, as well as liaising with member countries to project such a role and encourage the parties concerned to attain the desired peace in Africa and Arab world.
- The committee recommends formulating a charter on peace and conflict resolution based on international conventions and norms, which shall be later ratified by member countries while ASSECAA shall put it into practice in all tension spots and conflict areas in the two regions.

**Third meeting of peace and conflict resolution- Addis Ababa-Ethiopia, 23-24 February, 2013:**

The third meeting of peace and conflict resolution was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 23-24 February 2013.

Delegates elaborately debated the following work-papers:

A work-paper titled "Towards a common goal: Co-operative ways of resolving conflicts in Africa" -A work-paper entitled "Yemen's experience in conflict resolution through political settlement based on the GCC-brokered and internationally-backed initiative".

- General Secretariat's proposal on the establish-







ment of Friends of ASSECAA for Peace and Security (FAPS).

- A work-paper entitled “Federalism and Conflict Management in Ethiopia: Social and Psychological analysis of Prospects and Challenges”.

**The meeting came out with the following recommendations:**

- 1-The participants express their profound gratitude to the General Secretariat of ASSECAA as well as the House of Federation of Ethiopia, represented by its head, H.E mr. Kassa Teklebrhan, for the generous hospitality and warm reception accorded to delegates and for organizing this significant event.
- 2- They urge ASSECAA’s General Secretariat to regularly organize



cal tensions and conflicts and preempting disputes by providing judicious and wise counseling to policymakers and national institutions in relevant countries in such a manner that allows for dialogue and candid deliberations on the issues of disagreement and prevents a slide into chaos and conflicts that result in bloodshed and hamper development and progress.

the meeting in line with the developments taking place in Africa and Arab world.

- 3- They also demand parliaments, especially senates, shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab world, to assume their national responsibility of eliminating the root causes of politi-

They called upon parliaments to make use of the experiences of Arab and Af-







rican countries plagued by conflicts and wars in order to reach convenient solutions through responsible and brave political talks.

- 4-The participants express their gratitude to the genuine efforts that are still being exerted by some neighboring, sisterly and friendly countries to mediate proper solutions to disputes and help bring together different views with an aim to prevent the countries experiencing conflicts from slipping into lawlessness; the GCC-sponsored deal is a case in point.

They express their utter rejection of foreign interventions, whether Iranian or otherwise, in the internal affairs of countries for any religious or political reasons as has recently hap-



pened in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Republic of Yemen. They also consider any such interventions as an aggression on the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries as well as a breach of the UN Charter.

- 5-The delegates call upon Arab and African countries and their respective parliaments to broaden the base of public participation, boost the respect for human rights, dispense justice and reinforce the rule of law in such a way that enhances security and stability, achieves economic development and leads to the building of stable and prosperous societies.

- 6- The delegates strongly condemn all forms of violence and terrorist acts carried out by armed terror groups as has recently taken place in Yemen, and prior to that, the terrorist





actions that had occurred in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo. They also denounce in the strongest possible terms the terror acts taking place in Mali and express their solidarity with and support for this African country in terms of maintaining its independence and territorial integrity.

The delegates further condemn the terror acts occurring in the Palestinian territories as well as the terror bombing attack on Ain Amnas gas station to the south of Algeria. They also express their full support for the responsible reaction of the Algerian authori-



ties to such an attack, which was carried out in a way that spared lives and preserved properties.

urge all governments and civil society organizations to exert concerted efforts to eradicate such a phenomenon which is strange to our countries and communities.

7-The participants have taken notice of the Egyptian experience and its peacefulness as well as the role played by both the Egyptian people and military during the pioneering Egyptian revolution with the objective of revitalizing the mechanisms of democracy and consultations.

8-Regarding the proposal for the establishment of Friends of ASSECAA for Peace and Security, which was submitted to the meeting by ASSECAA's General Secretariat, the meeting resolved that a legal Committee should be established







engage in the matters of Peace and Security.

## 6-Parliamentary cooperation and Exchange of experiences:

### A-Exchange of Experiences, and Training Programs:

ASSECAA has been very enthusiastic to reinforce cooperation amongst member councils since its establishment. The council meeting held from 9-10, November, 2005, resolved that ASSECAA's activities should include training programs for administrative heads in member councils as well as study visit exchange programs.

In fact, a comprehensive training program to develop the skills of those engaged in legislative action, be they legislators or administrators, is highly significant, given the positive results the function would yield in terms of promoting the performance of legislatures in member countries and enhancing direct interaction and communication amongst the trainees.

Furthermore, the program aims at achieving the

following goals:

- Dissemination of current information on modern law enactment and analysis within the legislatures of member countries, and in accordance with scientific standards.

- Creating awareness, amongst member countries' lawmakers, of the importance of objective thinking when debating legislation by explicating its nuances and assessing its social impacts.

- Achieving maximum symmetry in the inputs of the legislative and administrative performance of member countries' legislatures.

- Boosting the skills of those in charge of administrative and organizational work in member countries' legislatures.

Exchanging experiences amongst participants through interactive training:

### B-Exchange of Visits among member councils:

The Study Visit Exchange Program was approved with an aim to enable member councils /senates to visit one another, share experiences, compare notes and rub minds on Parliamentary activities and the democratic environment and structures in which they are operating.

### In the past, several member councils had undertaken the program as follows:

In 2006, several member councils undertaken the program proposed by ASSECAA's General Secretariat. In the course of this period, a delegation from the Council of the Nation of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria paid a visit to the Shoora Council of Qatar. Besides, a delegation from the House of Dignitaries of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan undertook a visit to the Senate of the Republic of Gabon, while delegates from the House of Federation of Ethiopia visited the Council of Provinces of South Africa. Also, a delegation from the Shoora Council of the Republic of Yemen visited the Senate of the Republic of Burundi.

In 2007, a number of member states executed the





program proposed by the General Secretariat, including the House of Dignitaries of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan that visited the Senate of the Republic of Burundi, and the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that paid a visit to the Senate of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

In 2008, delegates from the Senate of Burundi visited the Shooras Council of Yemen, as well as the House of Dignitaries of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Further, a delegation from the Senate of Namibia visited the House of Dignitaries of Jordan.

In 2009, a delegation from the Council of Provinces of South Africa visited the Shooras Council of Yemen as well as ASSECAA's headquarters, as did a delegation from the Council of the Nation of the Sultanate of Oman. Both delegations were briefed on the course of action at the Association.

**More importantly, the program is meant to achieve the following goals:**

- Reinforcing informal meetings among member councils.
- Boosting cooperation and joint action among member councils in such a way that enhances bilateral and multi-lateral relations among them.
- Sharing the experiences of member councils in terms of addressing local and regional socio-economic, political and cultural issues.

Comparing notes and considering the roles played by member councils in debating legislations, especially those pertaining to infrastructure facilities, in addition to comparing the performances of such councils.

The program shall afford the visiting councils the opportunity to deliberate upon local and regional socio-economic, political and cultural issues, and then create harmony to contribute to the enhancement of common interests in Africa and Arab world. This would contribute to reaching a regional consensus on how to deal with international affairs.

- Strengthening member councils' ability in addressing various developments, including the problems and challenges facing other councils,

and then appreciating their need for assistance when necessary.

## 7- Parliamentary and Cultural Cooperation:

Cultural cooperation represents a key factor in strengthening relations among nations, and nudging the barriers of political and geographic isolation. It contributes to displaying common values, achieving rapprochement, and establishing a solid ground for building up interests based on common understanding.

The effective mechanisms of robust cultural cooperation are as follows:

### 1-Student Exchange Program:

**The program can be put in place by adopting the following:**

- a- Exchanging scholarships by colleges, institutes, varsities, and specialized academies. The program would afford scholars the opportunity of receiving university education, and forging emotional and scholarly bonds with the countries wherein they school. Back home, the students would turn into stores of expertise in terms of introducing such countries, including their customs and traditions, to their countrymen. In addition, they would serve as focal points between their countries and the societies wherein they received education.

More importantly, the scholars would be more capable of adopting effective policies towards the countries with which they are well familiar, when they become leaders and decision-makers in their respective countries.

- b- Setting up cultural centers to introduce the cultures of member countries through direct communication with the general public, and holding activities and festivals that feature different cultural aspects, including customs and traditions.
- c- Making use of modern communication technology that turned the globe into one village, including by investing in such a technology, allocating airtime to introduce national culture while using the languages



spoken by target communities.

D- Establishing specialized study and research centers with an aim to provide authentic scientific information on target communities to media, scientific institutions, researchers and/or scholars.

2-Utilizing sporting games in deepening social communication among nations, given the importance of popular sporting activities in attracting the attention of people from different age groups. In this context, inclusive sporting activities, including university games, can be adopted with an aim to enhance cultural cooperation between Arab and African countries.

Accordingly, ASSECAA has prioritized the promotion of cultural cooperation between Africa and Arab world.

Moreover, the Association is keen to buttress cultural cooperation between Africa and Arab world through cultural communication programs, including scholarships and sporting activities, which would enhance common understanding and help with the exploration of cultural diversity with which the two region abound.

ASSECAA is fully conscious that such programs have far-reaching effects on regional cooperation, given that the youths involved in the cultural exchange programs would acquire accumulative experiences and skills enabling them to rid of the feelings of fear, suspicion and prejudice prevailing in the two regions due to youth's ignorance of lifestyles, as well as moral and cultural systems of both sides.

Accordingly, ASSECAA has proposed that member states nominate students to study specific majors in selected universities in both regions. The sending country would offset the costs of students' air tickets, and school materials, and provide them the financial assistance necessary for covering the expenses of their food, while the host country would pay for their accommodation, tuition fees and necessary medical services.

## 8-Retreats:

The annual retreat is one of the mechanisms that have been adopted by ASSECAA in the pursuit of its fundamental objectives. Therefore, The General Secretariat organizes annual retreats in accordance with article 3 of its Statute, which stipulates that "The Association organizes at least one annual retreat during which the issues of common concern would be discussed"

The retreat is highly significant, as it affords the speakers of member councils the opportunity to deliberate upon the issues related to the Association's roles and responsibilities. It is one of the viable and workable activities that constitute a strong pillar for multi-pronged cooperation among member countries in a way that sets the stage for political and economic groupings.

Furthermore, the retreat offers an invaluable opportunity for members to share views and seasoned opinions on a wide range of issues of on both regional and the wider comity of nations. It affords the Association a rare event of listening to proposals from scholars, statesmen and public policy analysts on how ASSECAA can be strengthened to contribute to the betterment of Africa and Arab world and consequently achieve avowed objectives of the Association.

It is also a window of opportunity to share views on the role of senates and second chambers in member councils in circumventing the problems facing nations, and adopting dialogue as the optimum means of resolving intractable north-south conflicts. It also enables the Association exchange views with sisterly organizations, which are usually invited to the event by the General Secretariat.

**Below is a presentation of the retreats held by ASSECAA over the past period:**

### First Retreat –Abuja, Nigeria:

The first retreat for members of ASSECAA was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 5-6 June, 2006. It was attended by speakers, deputy speakers and representatives of member councils/senate, including Algeria, Bahrain, Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Ara-





bia, South Africa and Sudan, and Yemen.

The Heads of Delegations in their speeches reaffirmed their commitment to the fundamental aims and objectives of the Association as conceptualized by the founding fathers. The Delegates unanimously endorsed ASSECAA as a platform for the cross-fertilization of ideas on the deepening of the awareness of democratic norms, encouraging bicameralism and parliamentary democracy and stimulating cooperation in political, economic, social and cultural dimensions between Africa and the Arab World.

Several papers were extensively discussed and debated by delegates. The following resolutions, based on the papers and the contributions of delegates were made:

- (A) Global effort to maintain international peace and security must contend with three major challenges, namely;
- (B) the phenomenon of globalization;
- (C) the question of international political decision-making;
- (D) the problem of corruption.

When there is internal peace in all member states of the international community, there is bound to be international peace.

African Parliamentarians should adopt the following African economic initiatives; the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA).

It was also recognized that within Africa and the Arab World, there is need to strive for educational, social and cultural reforms and developments through identifying, analyzing and appreciating the impediments to such reforms.

It was agreed that ASSECAA should play a pivotal role in stimulating foreign relations and economic cooperation amongst its member states.

The Association urged Africans and Arabs, wherever they live together to respect one another's culture and rights and pursue honest means of livelihood.

The Association resolved to exert influence on African and Arab governments to contribute substantially to the recovery of the Sudan nation and the establishment of lasting peace in the country.

The Association regretted the worsening political situation in Somalia and urged all parties to the conflict to eschew bitterness and contribute to the restoration of peace in the country.

The Association noted with regret the continuing conflict in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East, particularly between Palestine and Israel and urged all parties to the conflict to respect the United Nations resolutions and ensure a speedy resolution of the conflict.

### **Second Retreat-Dead Sea region-Jordan:**

The second retreat was held in the Dead Sea region, Jordan from 21<sup>st</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> October 2007. It was attended by delegates from Algeria, Bahrain, Burundi, Egypt, Gabon, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Swaziland and Yemen.

### **The retreat came up with several observations/conclusions on the existing situation in the region as follows:**

- 1- Current reports on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals indicate that Africa and Arab world have not generally made substantial progress on the achievement of the





set goals despite concentrated pockets of high standard of living in few countries as a result of oil revenue.

- 2- It is obvious that the apex legislative bodies in Africa and Arab world have a crucial role to play to assist their national governments to achieve the set millennium goals.
- 3- It is obvious that there is a strong connection between the level of education in any society and the extent of appreciation of democratic values.



In order to create the conducive environment for the attainment of the millennium development goals, the regions of Africa and Arab world should:

1-Re-orientate national priorities on development by engaging more urgently on policies and programs that have immediate and direct bearing on poverty alleviation and combating of famine. This presupposes that development policies should focus significantly on human development which includes enhancing capacities of citizens through qualitative education and different forms of training.

- Youth orientation and development should form an integral part of national development strategy which shall include investment in provision of work-

ing opportunities.

- There should be visible and enforceable provisions in the national statutes for achieving justice and equality among the citizens irrespective of class distinctions while the judiciary should be strengthened.

- Good governance shall be a cardinal principle of governments. The war against corruption should receive emphatic prominence in national programs and practical steps should be taken to ensure victory on the program. Governments should make accountability a familiar system in their relationship with people.

- There is an urgent need for legislations, pertaining to human rights and citizens' freedom in all manifestations, according to laws; recognition

of civil society organizations and adherence to the rule of law as a manner of socio-political order in the Arab and African countries.

- There should be a conscious effort by governments to encourage the partnership principle in development programs between the public and the private sectors as well as the inclusion of input from the citizens on development projects.







- Cooperation and collaborative efforts between Africa and Arab world should be harnessed to combat such disasters as desertification, flooding, drought, earthquake, volcanoes and epidemics.

- Governments should prioritize projects on the improvement of agricultural production as a national emergency to enhance the productivity of small rural farmers, increase their capacity for generating incomes, enhance their resistance to crop failures and thus buoy the country against famine or food insecurity.

- Parliaments and national councils in Africa and Arab world should improve their knowledge of national and international events so as to be properly guided in their deliberations and they should strengthen their research bureaucracy to provide them with dependable statistical indices and objective information in their appraisal of proposed measures and public opinion.

A breakthrough on democracy and the rule of law is a essential for ensuring the protection of human rights and liberties. This requires regional, inter-state and individual partnership with the aim of exchanging views and expertise, finding peaceful solutions to disputes, restructuring state institutions and ensuring development and good governance.

- Education for all and basic freedoms, equality among men and women, acquisition of information technology, raising of educated labor force will strengthen a country to build a knowledgeable society to confront challenges of globalization and be involved in its exchanges along with other nations.

- There is a yawning need for investment attraction through legislations that create conducive climate and availability of functional infrastructure in Africa and the Arab countries.

- Economic growth in Africa and Arab world should be characterized by transparency, corruption-free dealings, expansion of inter-state and inter-regional trade that may lead to common market; the development of competitive environment to provide the best commodities with the lowest prices for consumers.

ASSECAA members recognized the need for them to contribute effectively to drafting a comprehensive road map for conflict resolution in Africa and Arab world.

ASSECAA's members call upon creditor countries to urgently consider complete cancellation of all debts ascribed to African and Arab countries to enable the region to commence a process of emerging from its economic emergency.

### **Third Retreat, Mauritania, Nouakchott, 2008**

The third ASSECAA retreat was held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, from 5-6 May 2008. In attendance were delegates from Algeria, Bahrain, Burundi, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, South Africa and Yemen.

The Republic of Mali attended as observer. The following brother organizations attended the retreat:

- The Arab Parliamentary Union.
- The East African Legislative Assembly.
- The Arab League.

Delegates deliberated upon a number of papers and made informed comments thereon. They ultimately arrived at the following recommendations:

- a-The flourishing movement of illegal arms in the two regions of Africa and Arab world is contributing to the easy recourse to violence and conflict in the regions.

- b-No development and progress can be attained in a country or region in the absence of peace.

- c-The modern political thought cannot conceive a constitutional system without the existence of a legislative authority.

- d-The legislature by its constitutional position, embodiment of its membership, popular legitimacy, mandate and method of operation, stands as a forum for national cohesion, constructional order, and ensures national peace by effective representation of the electorate, articulation of their interests and dutiful oversight of executive functions.

- e-The independence of the legislature and the judiciary are necessary requirements for good governance, peace, reduction of socio-political friction and violence.



- f-The effective organization and wholesome constitutional working relationship among the three arms of government are needed for socio-economic and political development.
- g-The quantity of illicit arms and ammunition, the utilization by particular groups such as child soldiers and their illicit traffic deserve a particular effort to undertake an effective action of control to limit the casualties in Africa and Arab world.

**Accordingly, the retreat recommended as follows:**

- i-Democracy is not to be exported from one region to another, but should be rooted in the socio-political, cultural and economic experiences. The common denominator is the existence of popular mandate in governance, a system of checks and balances, and fundamental rights and the rule of law.
- ii-The legislature for it to meet its constitutional roles shall defend the rights of the people and make laws that support freedom of the people and unity in the nation.
- iii-Parliament shall promote democracy and egalitarianism, social justice and education of the electorate.

-Regular, free and fair elections shall be a visible feature of all democracies in Africa and Arab world in order to validate the mandate of legislature and confer undisputable national cohesion on parliamentary statutes.

Legislatures shall strive always to ensure balance in government by guarding the institutional legal personality of the parliamentary institutions, and acting with respect and obvious patriotism in its relationship with other arms of government.

- Parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world shall strive to protect the rights of women and youths by legislation to maximize their invaluable contributions to the national development.

- The Association calls upon Arab and African countries to strengthen national security agencies to assure citizens of the needlessness of acquiring private militia.

- The Association calls upon African and Arab countries to take urgent steps to sign international agreements on arms control in their countries.

## Fourth retreat –Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,2011

The fourth Retreat of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Council in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA) was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 24-25 September 2011.

Delegates from the following member countries attended the Retreat:

1. Council of the Nation of the Democratic Republic of Algeria
2. Shoora Council of the Republic of Yemen.
3. The House of Federation of Ethiopia.
4. Shoora Council of Qatar.
5. Shoora Council of the Kingdom of Bahrain.
6. The Senate of the Republic of Burundi.
7. National Council of Provinces of South Africa.
8. The Senate of the Republic of Gabon.
9. The Senate of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.
10. Council of States of the Republic of Sudan.
11. House of Dignitaries of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
12. The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Egypt, Morocco and Saudi Arabia were represented by their own ambassadors to Ethiopia.

At the outset, the delegates observed one-minute silence in memory of H.E. late Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani, Speaker of Shoora Council of Yemen, who passed away in the aftermath of the criminal bomb attack that targeted him alongside the leadership of the Republic of Yemen.

They paid tribute to the pivotal role he, as one of the founding fathers of ASSECAA, played in establishing and sponsoring the Association during its founding stage.

Enhancement of the role of bicameralism to strengthen the democratic institutions in member countries.

- Consolidation of parliamentary diplomacy to achieve the common interests of member countries.
- Respecting human rights, especially the rights of women.
- Spurring the private sector in member countries to work towards cooperation and joint action.
- Resolving the problems facing youth to help





them achieve their ambitions for education and job opportunities that enable them lead a dignified life.

- Making use of the successful experience of sustainable development, particularly the Ethiopian development experience, and exchange of experience among member states.
- Respecting the rights of different ethnic groups and adopting equal citizenship as a basis for rights and duties.
- Reviewing investment positions, social communication, and unifying political visions among member states so to be able to encounter current challenges.
- Strengthening relationships with parliamentary Organizations in African and Arab World such as the African Parliamentary Union, the African Union and the Arab League.
- Enhancing cooperation among financial centers in member countries.
- Establishing political economic studies center to present views and recommendations to ensure the strengthening of relation among member countries.







## 9- Participation in International Fora:

As the apex regional parliamentary association in Africa and Arab world, ASSECAA is keen to engage in international fora and assert its role in decision-making in the region.

In pursuit of this objective, ASSECAA's General

Secretariat has been participating as an observer in the meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which are being held biennially. Indeed, ASSECAA has heavily involved in the IPU fruitful and carefully-thought out deliberations on a variety of regional and international issues.







## ASSECAA's Role in Encouraging Scientific Research in Member Countries (ASSECAA Cup of Excellence)



indicator of a country's ability to accomplish socio-economic, political and cultural development. Out of its keenness to achieve the objective of buttressing cultural cooperation amongst its members, ASSECAA set out a mechanism to spur youths, mainly university students, to heavily engage in scientific research in order to build up robust Afro-Arab partnership. It is against this backdrop that the Association, in cooperation with Sana'a University's Political and Strategic Studies Center, organized "ASSECAA Cup of Excellence" activity, which was intended to encourage students to conduct instructive researches that enable them address the issues related to the attainment

Undoubtedly, youths are the driving force behind the development of nations. Therefore, of socio-economic development, as well as the they should be catalyzed to make best use of their potentials with the aim of contributing to the achievement of comprehensive socio-economic development in their own countries. Indeed, it is through early and serious sponsorship of rising generations that they can effectively shape up their future.

Further, youths are a key







harness the potentials of scholars and researchers in eliciting scientific approaches that can provide deep insight into the issues of common concern. This can be done through spurring university students to acquire the skills of scientific research, creating strong bonds between science and academia, and prioritizing social issues in such a way that achieves social development.

The opening ceremony was attended by H.E Abdul Rahman Mohammed Ali

enhancement of Afro-Arab cultural relations.

The event was just a prelude to other activities that shall be held in the future at the level of member countries' universities and research think-tanks; it was also a corollary of the past activities carried out by ASSECAA on strategic political and economic fronts.

In addition, the Association seeks to properly

Othman, Speaker of the Shoora Council of Yemen, H. E Muamar Al-Eryani, Minister of Youth and Sports, and a host of politicians, scholars, parliamentarians, researchers and intellectuals.

Competing students submitted researches on bicameralism, the rule of law as a principle of good governance, and the maintenance of







peace and security to achieve development in Arab and African countries.

The first three winners were awarded invaluable cash prizes, while other participants were granted token awards to encourage them into conducting informative researches in the future. Accordingly, the function would create an awareness of the importance of scientific research as well as the researched-upon topics, spur university professors to give a special attention to academic studies,



and ginger up students to augment their knowledge.

In conclusion, the program would achieve the objective of involving academic research institutions in addressing the key issues that preoccupy the Association and its members.





## Chapter 3

### Member Councils and their Consultative & Parliamentary Practices

In this chapter, we shall expatiate upon the parliamentary practices of member councils in the context of the political systems of each member state, in addition to identifying the roles assumed by such chambers based on the information that the General Secretariat has obtained from members.

It is noticeable that member states share the same democratic orientation that places limits on rulers' responsibilities before the people who assume an oversight role through their representatives pecked out in free and fair elections.

As Arab and African countries are being perceived as young democracies, as is the case with many countries in Asia and Latin America, there is a disparity in terms of democratic practices in both regions. This is evidenced in the democratic tools adopted in each country, including house of representatives, upper chambers and bicameral systems.

Thus, it can be said that there is a global trend towards democracy despite differences in the progress made as well as the factors that induced democratic reforms.

Below is a presentation of member councils which are emblematic of members' political systems:

#### The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

There are in the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria a total of 109 members all directly



elected by the electorates of their different constituencies for duration of 4 years. The chamber is convened by a proclamation issued by the President of the Federation. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that after 4 years from the date of the first sitting, the Senate stands dissolved.

The Senate of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria cannot be dissolved before the end of its session.

The two Houses have equal legislative competence. Every bill passed by either House has to be passed by the other House in identical form before it can be forwarded to the President for assent.

The Senate is expected to sit for a total of 181 days in a year.

#### PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

The Presiding Officer of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is called "The President of the Senate". He is elected at the same time with others basically as a Senator. He is subsequently elected President by his colleagues by a simple majority of votes in the Chambers.

#### THE FUNCTIONS OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER INCLUDES:

- 1- Chairing the plenary sessions of the Chamber and the committees of the whole Senate
- 2- Ruling on Points of Order
- 3- Final interpretation of the Chambers rules
- 4- Appointment of Chairs and members of the committees in consultation with the committee of selection, which he chairs.
- 5- He represents the National Assembly at ceremonial occasions

The constitution of Nigeria makes him number 3 on the National Order of Precedence. Other

#### Principal Officers of Senate are:

- Deputy Senate President
- Senate Leader
- Senate Minority Leader
- Deputy Senate Leader
- Deputy Minority Leader
- Senate Majority Whip
- Senate Minority Whip
- Deputy Majority Whip
- Deputy Minority Whip

#### A brief Outline of their Functions is as follows:

- The Deputy Senate President acts with full powers in the absence of the President.
- The Senate Leader leads debates on all Govern





- ment bills and measures
- The Minority Leader seconds all formal motions by Senate Leader
- The Deputy Senate Leader acts in the absence of the Leader
- The Deputy Minority Leader acts in the absence of the Minority Leader
- The Majority Whip organizes his Party for major debates and ensures discipline in the Chamber.
- The Minority Whip organizes his Parties for major debates and ensures discipline among his members.

## COMMITTEE SYSTEM

The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from 2003–2007 has a total of 54 committees. The number of members in each committee ranges from 9–13.

The committees have the role of studying and researching on bills and motions referred to them and report their findings to the Chamber.

The committees are classified into Special Committees and Standing Committees.

The President of the Senate in consultation with the committee of selection appoints the Chairmen of the Committees.

The Committee Chair presides over the meetings of the Committee. He rules on points of order, interprets the rules, signs and presents committee reports to the Chamber.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE SENATE

The Senate has as an oversight functions the investigation of the implementation of the Annual Budgets by Executive Departments and the Supervision of Nigeria's Foreign Policies by passing into legality treaties entered into by the country.

The Senate also approves Diplomatic and Ministerial Appointments, Judiciary Appointments and Removal of Judicial Officers at the Federal level. It also approves States and Local Governments creation and amends the constitution when necessary.

The Senate can discipline and control its members in the Chamber.

On immunity, no member of the Senate can be sued or arrested for anything he says on the floor of the Senate.

## The Senate of the Republic of Namibia

There are 26 members in the National Council of Namibia all elected. 19 males and 7 females from the regional council for a period of 6 years. One must have been up to 21 years of age, a Namibia citizen, sound mind and must not have been convicted prior to independence for an offence for which he or she has been sentenced to death or to imprisonment for a period of more than 12 months without an option of fine, unless he or she has received a free pardon or such imprisonment has expired at least 10 years prior to the date of election.



A member can also be removed before the end of the tenure by the Regional Council or by his or her political party or if the member crosses the floor for reasons of a decline in his membership of the political party that elected him or if he as a member of a Regional Council absents himself or herself without leave of the Regional Council on three consecutive sittings of the Regional Council and his or her absence is not condoned by the Regional Council.

The chamber is convened by a notice circulated by the office of the Secretary of the National Council to the 13 Regional Councils informing them of the date of the first meeting of the Council.

Bills are first introduced in the lower chamber and then referred to the upper chamber for review. There is no fixed number of times that the Council must sit in a year.

## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

The Presiding Officer of the Council is called the Chairman. He is elected at the same time with other members for a six-year tenure then elected as Chairman at the first meeting of the Council by a simple majority vote (501). The Presiding Officer can also be removed before the end of his tenure through the same process – simple majority of the members of the Council by passing a vote of no confidence. When removed, he can still retain



his seat as a member of the Council.

**His functions include the following:**

- Presides over sessions of the National Council
- Maintains order during the sessions/debates-
- Makes rulings
- Acts as the spokesperson of the National Council

**Other Principal Officers of the National Council of Namibia are:**

- (a) Vice Chairperson – elected by the Council.
- b) Leader of the Official oppositions
- c) Chief Whip of the Ruling Party
- d) Chairpersons of Committees
- e) Deputy Chief Whip of the Ruling Party
- f) Assistant Whip.

Different political parties elect these Principal Officers.

The Principal Officer can be removed if a vote of no confidence is passed on him through the same process by which he was elected.

**A brief outline of the functions of other Principal Officers who are also elected as follows:**

- The Vice Chairperson is the Chairperson of the Committee of the whole Council and acts in the place of the Chairman in his absence. He is the coordinator of committees.
- The Leader of the opposition acts as the head of the opposition Minority Party in the National Council.
- The Chief Whip of the Ruling Party is the head of the Members of the Majority Party in the House and his or her functions are at a political level and to ensure that his or her party members attend sessions and vote in accordance with the mandates received from their Party.
- Chairpersons of Committees chair the Committee meetings and table reports of committees in the House.
- Deputy Chief Whip stands in for the Chief Whip when the latter is absent
- Assistant Whip takes the minutes during their caucus meetings.

## COMMITTEE SYSTEM

There are 9 Committees in the Council each having between 4 to 6 members. The Chairman of the Council also belongs to a Committee.

**The structure of the Committees is as follows:**

- Committees Coordinator
- Chairperson of the Committee

- Vice Chairperson of Committees
- Committee Clerks

**The Committees are classified into two:**

- In-House Committees
- Standing Committee (Port folio)

There are no particular qualifications for the Chairs of the Committees. The Chairmen of the Committees are appointed by the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders.

**The Committee Chairs have the following as duties:**

- Chairing of Committee Meetings
- Table reports of Committees
- Coordinate Committee's activities
- Convene meetings of Committees

## POLITICAL PARTIES

**There are three Political Parties represented in the Namibian Council:**

- **SWAPO:** South West Africa People's Organization.
- **DTA:** Democratic Turn hale Alliance
- **UDF:** United Democratic Front

## FUNCTIONS OF THE CHAMBER

The Council has oversight functions with regards to other arms of Government but is not involved in anyway in the foreign policy process of the country.

**A brief Outline of the Functions of the Council is as follows:**

- The Council reviews Bills
- It investigates and report to the National Assembly on any subordinate legislation, which is referred to it by the National Assembly for Advice.
- The Council recommends legislation on the matters of regional concern for submission and consideration by the National Assembly.
- It performs any other functions assigned to it by the National Assembly or by an Act of Parliament.

At a resolution adopted by the Lower House, the council can amend or suspend its rules. The Chamber also controls discipline among its members.

On immunity, no member shall be liable to any civil or criminal proceedings, arrest, imprisonment or damages by reason of anything done





in the exercise of his or her right to freedom of speech in parliament or whilst taking part in any proceeding in parliament.

The staff of the Council are recruited by the Public Service Commission of Namibia and funds are released to it by the Ministry of Finance.

## The Senate of Swaziland

Some 10 members of the Swaziland Senate are appointed by the House of Assembly while the others are appointed by the King. The House of Assembly constitutes itself into an electoral college for this purpose. The duration of the members' mandate is 5 years.

A member can be removed before the end of the tenure by the King in Council if convicted for an offence with a sentence not less than six months



imprisonment. The chamber is convened by messages passed through the radio, telephone and by the Presiding Officers.

The chamber can be dissolved according to Order No 1 of 1992 and by the King in Council (SNC). The Senate and the lower chamber complement each other. The Senate sits for at least 7 months in one year.

## Chamber's Structure:

- President of the Senate
- Deputy President
- Chairpersons of sessions and ad hoc committees.
- Senate Clerk.

The President is the Presiding Officer of the Senate. He has five years mandate as the Presiding Officer.

He is appointed/elected into the House at the same time with others, before being elected as the President of the country's Legislature.

## Functions of the Presiding Officer:

- He is an overall arbiter in the chamber which

entails maintenance of order during debates.

- He draws the Agenda of the Senate's business
- He calls and selects Speakers on the floor of the chamber

The President of the Senate must obtain the highest number of votes cast in the chamber among three contestants for his election.

He can be removed from office before the end of his tenure by the members of the chamber if a vote of no confidence is passed on him or if he is convicted for an offence exceeding an imprisonment term of 6 months.

In the event of his removal, he retains his seat in the Chamber.

## Other Principal Officers are:

- Deputy President
- Chairpersons of sessional and ad hoc committees

The other Principal Officers can also be removed from office before the end of the tenure by the King or if convicted for an offence exceeding an imprisonment term of 6 months.

## Functions of other Principal Officers:

- The Deputy President acts as the President in his absence
- The Chairpersons of sessional / ad-hoc committees assume the following responsibilities:
- Convene committee meetings
- Maintain law and order in the committee meetings
- Prepare reports of committees and presents them to the chamber
- These other Principal Officers are elected by the Senators.

## Committee System

The Swaziland Senate operates a committee system and each committee is made up of 7 members. The President of the Senate belongs to a committee. The welfare committee caters for the welfare of the Senators.

## Committee Structure:

- Chairperson and his/her Vice
- Committee members
- Clerkship - Senate Clerk or any Clerk who may be so delegated by the Clerk of the Senate-

## The committees are classified into:

- a- Standing Orders Committee
- b- Welfare



- c- Government Assurances Committee
- d- Sessional Committee

Sessional committees have 1 year tenure while ad-hoc committees end with their assignments.

The Chairmen of the committees are appointed by the Senators. A committee Chair convenes meetings, maintains order and presents report to the chamber.

### Functions of the Chamber:

- The Senate has oversight functions with regard to other arms of government and these functions are performed by the government assurances committee.
- It also ratifies and domesticates international conventions.
- It also sits as a court

There are standing rules that guide the business of the chamber. Legislations also exist which specify the relationship between the chamber and the other arms of government. It can also amend/suspend its rules and can discipline erring members.

A Senator cannot be arrested in the premises of Parliament. Recruitment matters are handled by the Ministry of Public Service which houses the Civil Service Board. The Senate does not control its own budget. The Ministry of Finance through the Treasury Department does.

### House of Counselors of Morocco

There are 279 members in the House of Counselors of the Kingdom of Morocco all elected for a duration of 9 years. One third of the members are elected into the Council every year.

Members of the Council are elected through an Electoral College, which is constituted by the elected members of local authority and members of Trade Union Chambers. A member of the Council can lose his membership of the Council before the end of his tenure for legal reasons like election irregularities in which case he has to leave the chamber for the execution of justice.

The Council has two sessions in a year. The first session starts in October while the second starts in April. Each of these sessions lasts for 3 months. Additional sessions may be held on a request

from the Government and two third majority support of members of the Council.

The King of Morocco has the power to dissolve the Council within the tenure or at the expiration of the tenure. According to the Moroccan constitution, the relation between Parliament and the House of Counselors is complementary.



### PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

The current President of the Council is Dr. Mohammed Cheikh Baidallah, who presides over the activities of the Chamber. He is elected by an absolute majority in the first round, then a simple majority in the second round for 3-year tenure. He is the third in rank in the Moroccan National Order of Precedence.

#### THE PRESIDENT HAS AS FUNCTIONS:

- To direct the Council administratively and financially.
- To represent the Council at local and international meetings
- To take charge of the activities of the Council and delegate powers to others when necessary

#### OTHER PRINCIPAL OFFICERS WHO ARE ALSO ELECTED INCLUDE:

- 1- Five Deputy Presidents
- 2- Three Secretaries General
- 3- Three Accountants

They deputize for the President in his absence and help in the General administration of the Council. They also represent the Council at functions.

### COMMITTEE SYSTEM

There are 6 committees in the Council, each made up of 45 members. The Presiding Officer is a member of one of the committees.

Bills are sent to the committees from the chamber for study and analysis and the committees can recommend changes where necessary.





## The Shoora Council of Bahrain

There are 40 members in the Shoora Council of the Kingdom of Bahrain, including 34 males and 6 females, all appointed by the King for tenure of 4 years, which can be extended but the Council is never dissolved.

The Speaker is appointed by the King and can also be removed by him before the expiration of his tenure. His removal could be for the reason of another appointment violation of rules and regulations etc. The chamber meets weekly by a call from the Speaker.



The Kingdom of Bahrain runs a bi-cameral legislative system. The two chambers must approve any proposed bill before it is passed. Where there is a disagreement, they constitute the National Council presided over by the Speaker of the Shoora Council to vote on the issue of dispute. The Council must sit for at least seven months in a year.

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## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

The current Speaker of the Council is H.E Ali Bin Saleh Al-Saleh, the senior official of the chamber. He is appointed at the same time with others for a period of 4 years. He follows the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the parliament.

### SOME OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SPEAKER CAN BE STATED AS:

- Representing the Council and overseeing the activities of General Secretariat
- Presides over the sessions of the Council
- He assigns matters to different committees and Chairs the Committees when it is urgent

### OTHER PRINCIPAL OFFICERS ELECTED BY THE COUNCIL ARE:

- The First Deputy Speaker
- The Second Deputy Speaker
- The Chair of Legal and Legislations Committee
- The Chair of Finance and Economic Committee

### FUNCTIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL OFFICERS:

- Approve the Council's Agenda
- Review the comments of members on the minutes of meetings

- Discuss the Council's Budget and the final account
- Follow up the committees' activities and coordinate them
- Analyze the reports of delegates of special duties before reporting to the Council
- Administers the Council when the members are on recess

## COMMITTEE SYSTEM

There are five committees in the Council. The Finance and Legal Committees have 8 members each while the others have seven members. Other Committees may be formed as the need arises.

Each Committee has a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and a Secretary from the staff. The Chairmen and Deputies are elected by the Committee members for a renewable one tenure. The Committees have as function to study the Draft Bills and any other Proposal referred to it from the Council and report back to the Council for discussion.

The Committee chairman sets the Agenda of the meetings, convenes the meetings, endorses the minutes of meetings, reports to the Speaker and represents his Committee when necessary.

There are no Political Parties represented in the Council but Political Associations exist.

The Council has no oversight function on the other arms of Government but is involved in the Foreign Policy Process of the Country by legislating on Draft Bills relating to Agreements and Accords.

### THE COUNCIL ALSO PERFORMS OTHER IMPORTANT DUTIES LIKE:

- Deliberating on Draft laws in conjunction with the lower House before the King could issue them.
- Members of the Council propose Bills which when passed, could affect the decisions of Government.
- The Council also oversees the Cabinet and can question the Ministers when necessary.

The Relationships between the chamber and other arms of Government are contained in many mandates and procedures in the Parliament's laws and constitution, and in the Council's rules



of procedure.

The rules of procedure of the Council were decreed by law and it can be amended by a proposal by the Council members which will then be deliberated upon and perhaps passed.

Members of the Council cannot be questioned or arrested for an opinion expressed in the chamber or its committees. If any member has to face the law, it must be with the approval of the Speaker of the Council.

The Shoora Council of Bahrain is autonomous in the recruitment of staff. The Council is also in control of its budget. It agrees with the Government on its budget before funds are released.

## The Shoora Council of Qatar

The Council has 35 members all appointed by His Highness the Emir of Qatar and mandates take effect from the date of appointment till the end of the Council's tenure in accordance with the rules of procedures.



A member of the Council can be removed before the end of the mandate by a decree from His Highness, the Emir as a result of his inefficiency. The Council is convened by a proclamation by His Highness, the Amir either for an annual session or an emergency session and can also be dissolved in the same manner even before the end of mandate. The Amir can

also dissolve the Council in the interest of the Public. The Council is expected to sit at least for 8 months in a year.

The legislature in the State of Qatar is unicameral.

## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

The President is the Presiding Officer of the Council. The current President elected by secret ballot in the Council with a simple majority.

The Council also elects the Deputy President and the Controller

**Brief outlines of the President's Functions are**

**as follows:**

- He oversees the general Administration of the Council
- He presides over the sessions and secures order
- He supervises the budget and final accounts
- He represents the Council in different occasions

**Other Principal Officers of the Shoora Council of the State of Qatar include:**

- The Deputy President helps the President in his duties and acts for him in his absence
- The Controller

**Other Functions of Principal Officers include:**

- Supervision of minutes writing
- Preparation of the Council's budgets and closing statements
- Nomination of delegates to international conferences-
- Follow-up of committee activities as well as the administration of the Council

## COMMITTEE SYSTEM

There are 5 committees in the Shoora Council of the State of Qatar formed in consideration of their relevance to the needs of the Council as stated in the Rules of Procedure. Each committee must have at least five members.

A committee must have a Rapporteur and Secretariat. The tenure of the committees is the same as the tenure of each session. A committee chair participates in the discussions, maintains order in his committee and approves the committees' findings for submission to the Council.

There are no Political Parties represented in the Council.

The Rules of Procedure as stated in the law 6 of 1979 regulates the chamber's legislative business.

The Rules of Procedure can be amended by a two-third majority, in addition to a law issued by the Council endorse the amendments.

Members cannot be questioned for their opinions on the floor of the Council.

The Secretary General and other employees are recommended by the President of the Council with the approval of the chamber.





## The Shoora Council of the Arab Republic of Egypt

The Shoora Council of Egypt is a representative chamber with legislative jurisdictions. It currently has a total of 270, 180 of whom are elected through direct elections by all constituents listed in the Voter Register while 90 are appointed by the President of the country. The members' mandate duration is 6 years. A member loses his membership of the Council if he resigns or his election nullified. A member also loses his mandate if he is given a new position in Government.

The Council is convened by a call from the President for the inauguration of the Council and then the Speaker of the Council takes over.



Upon a decree by the President, the Council can be dissolved. In addition, the decree must also include a call for new elections. This could be before the end of its session or at the end of the session as stipulated in the constitution.

The Shoora Council of Egypt enjoys was temporarily entrusted with exercising all legislative powers after a referendum vote was conducted on the country's first constitution framed in the wake of the Egyptian revolution.

The Council should sit for at least seven months in a year.

### PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

The Speaker is the Presiding Officer of the Council. He is elected directly by members of the Council through simple majority of the votes cast for a three-year tenure. He is the third person in Egypt's National Order of Precedence. He can be removed before the end of the tenure if he gets a new post or found to be ineffective; however, he can still retain his seat in the chamber.

### FUNCTIONS OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER:

- He represents the Council at official functions, speaks on its behalf

- He works to preserve the dignity and security of the members and oversees the Council's activities.
- He chairs the meetings of the Council and announces decisions taken
- He supervises the work of the committees and discusses urgent issues with them

### OTHER PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE SHOORA COUNCIL OF EGYPT ARE:

- Two Deputies of the Speaker.
- The Secretary General
- Assistant Secretary General

The two Deputies of the Speaker cannot be removed but the others can be removed by the Speaker if it is in the interest of the public as they are also appointed by him after they have been recommended by the Council's office.

### THE FUNCTIONS OF OTHER PRINCIPAL OFFICERS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- The Deputies can be assigned duties or be delegated by the Speaker to either preside over the meeting of the Council or represent him at functions.
- They also take charge of the Council in the absence of the Speaker.
- The Speaker and his Deputies form the Council office, which supervise the Council's activities and prepare the Council's agenda
- They take care of the Parliamentary delegations

### COMMITTEE SYSTEM

There are ten committees in the Shoora Council of Egypt with a membership of between 15 and 40. The Speaker of the Council does not belong to any committee but can attend the meetings of any of his choice and even presides over the meeting.

The committees discuss Draft Bills and other issues that may be referred and other issues that may be referred to it prior to the preliminary sittings. There is a chairperson in each committee, two Deputies and a Secretary.

The members of the Council usually choose the committees to work with and the Council then endorses their choices. These members then go ahead to elect their chairs, for a period of 3 years. Committees are formed every 3 years that is twice within the tenure of the Council.



Chairmen convene the committee meetings, set agenda and choose a rapporteur to present the committee report to the Council.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE CHAMBER

There is no oversight function over the other arms of Government, but the Council can discuss the political and foreign issues as well as internal policies of Government and report its findings and suggestions to the President of the Republic.

### OTHER FUNCTIONS INCLUDE:

- Involvement in the amendment of the constitution.
- Deliberation on Draft Bills from members and from the President on peace accords, alliances, border matters and on issues that affect the sovereignty of the country
- The Council discusses the country's plan for socio economic development
- It can also ask questions on Government policies

There are standing rules that govern the Council's business. The constitution and the Council's law number 120 of 1980 define the relationship between the Council, lower chamber and the other arms of Government. It also has the power to suspend or amend its rules. The chamber can control and discipline erring members. The committee on values takes care of the behaviour of members vis-à-vis the Egyptian Society values and can impose or recommend punishments.

The criminal code cannot be applied to the members unless they are caught in action. The Council is autonomous in the recruitment of staff. It also approves its budget and controls it.

## The Shoora Council of Saudi Arabia

The Shoora Council of Saudi Arabia has a total of 150 members (all males) appointed by the King of Saudi Arabia for duration of 4 years. In early 2013, a Royal decree was issued appointing 30 women to the chamber. Members of this Council can also be removed by the King for inefficiency or if a member asks for resignation. The chamber can also be entirely dissolved by a Royal decree from the King. The Council sits weekly on a call

by the Speaker of the Council. The Shoora Council is the only legislature in Saudi Arabia

## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

The Presiding Officer of the Council is the President. The King appoints him for a period of 4 years. The King can also remove him and if this happens, he loses also his seat in the chamber.

### AMONG HIS FUNCTIONS ARE:

- Overseeing of all the Council's activities
- Representing the Council in relation to other organizations
- Presides over the meetings and approves issues to be discussed and bring them forward for voting.
- He also presides over committee meetings.

### OTHER PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL INCLUDE:

- The Deputy President
- Secretary General of the Council
- The other Principal Officers are also appointed by the King and can be removed by him.

Brief outline of the functions of other Principal Officers is as follows:

- The Deputy President assists the President in his absence
- The Secretary General supervises the writing of the Council's minute meetings, informs the members of the time and agenda of meetings and performs other mandate given to him by the Speaker.

### FUNCTIONS OF THE CHAMBER:

The Council has some oversight functions with regard to the other arms of Government. It discusses the Public Policies of the Government that are referred to it by the Cabinet. The Council also studies and analyses the accords and agreements to be entered into with foreign organs and comments on them.

### OTHER FUNCTIONS ARE:

1. The Council discusses and approves the socio economic plan for development.
2. Studies and analyses laws, bi-laws and inter-







national accords and suggest whether what could be done.

3. Explains and illustrates laws and bi-laws.
4. Studies and analyses the annual reports that are submitted from the different ministries of Government.

## COMMITTEE SYSTEM

There are 12 committees in existence at the Shoora Council of Saudi Arabia, which study issues referred to it from the Council or from the President. In addition, special committees are set up to study specific topical questions when necessary.

## The Shoora Council of the Republic of Yemen

There are a total of 111 members in the Shoora Council of the Republic of Yemen made up of 109 males and 2 females. All appointed by the President of the Republic of Yemen.

There is no fixed tenure of mandate for members. A member can be removed before the end of the tenure by the President of the country for political reasons. Chamber is convened periodically by a call from the Chairman of the Council. It can only be dissolved by a decree from the President of the Country.

On the relationship with the lower chamber, there are constitutional mandates that both Councils share. The sitting days of the Council is not limited as long as there are issues to be deliberated upon. The law also states that the Council can hold sessions in a year from January to July then September to December.



## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

The Presiding Officer of the Council is known as the Speaker. His tenure is the same as the tenure of the Council. Members of the Council elect him

with an absolute majority of votes. The President of the country can also remove him before the end of his tenure or by the Council if he fails to perform properly. In the event of his removal as the Presiding Officer of the Council, he still retains his seat as a member of the Council unless he gets a new appointment.

## OTHER PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL:

There are three other Principal Officers of the namely: Two Deputy Speakers whose official ranks are Deputy Premiers, elected from the Council. The third is the Secretary General of the Council whose official ranking is that of a Minister and is appointed by the President. Other Principal Officers can also be removed either by the Council or by the President of the Republic for the reason of lack of performance or political decisions.

The Deputies as usual, assist the Speaker in the performance of his duties. The Secretary General oversees the Administrative activities of the Council under the supervision of the Speaker and his Deputies.

## BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL:

He presides over the council's meetings, explains issues and subjects of discussions. He also concludes the final results of the council's discussions and puts them to vote. He signs agreements and contracts relating to the Shoora Council, refers issues to the committees, speaks on behalf of the Council and executes any mandate given to him by the Council.

## COMMITTEE SYSTEM

The Council runs committee system and has about 13 committees whose number of members' stretches between 7 and 11. The Speaker of the Council does not belong to any committee. Each committee's role in the legislative process is enshrined in the Rule of Procedures of the Council. Each committee is structured to have a Chairperson, Deputy and a Rapporteur. The Chairs of the committees are usually elected from amongst the most qualified and experienced members by the members of the committees themselves.

### The Chairs of the committees have the following as duties:

- Presiding over the committee meetings
- Share the activities of the committees
- Plan and co-ordinates relations between the committees and the chamber
- Inform the committees of any views or ideas put forward by the Council
- Approve the minutes of meetings

### The Council of the Nation of Algeria

The Ouma Council is made up of 144 members. Out of this number, 96 members are elected while 48 members are appointed. The Council has 140 Males and 4 Females members; all drawn from respectable members of the society and some are former high-ranking Government officials.

Two third of the members are elected indirectly through local Councils and secret balloting while one third are appointed by the President of the Republic in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. The members have mandate duration



of six years. The Council can remove a member before the end of the tenure if he is found guilty of a case against him after due investigation. According to the provisions of the constitution, the chamber cannot be dissolved.

When a bill is introduced, deliberated upon and passed by the Peoples National Council (Lower House). It is then sent to the Council for analysis. The Peoples Council sits in two sessions every year, each lasting no longer than five months, but can also hold emergency sessions upon a call by the President or by a two third majority request.

### PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

The Presiding Officer of the Council is the President. He is elected directly by members of the Council by absolute majority of votes for and an extendable tenure of three years. He can also be removed by the Council before the end of his ten-

ure if found to be ineffective. He can retain his seat as a member when removed.

### COMMITTEE SYSTEM

The Peoples' Council of Algeria has 9 committees. The committees on Legal matters and Administration, Human Rights, Economy and Finance have between 15 to 19 members each. Other committees' membership ranges from 10 to 15.

The Presiding Officer does not belong to any committee but he and his Deputies can participate in the meetings of any committee without votes.

A committee has the duty to study and analyze the Draft Bills and any other matter and give reports to the chamber for final discussion and assent. Each committee has an office and is composed of the Chairman, Deputy and Rapporteur. The committees are formed based on the mandates given to the Council by the constitution and proportional political party representation is taken into account when forming the committees. The Chairmen of the committees should preferable have a good knowledge of the functions of the committee he is to chair. The Parliamentary groups usually agree on the Chairmen or members of the committees can directly elect them for a period of one year, which can also be extended.

A committee Chairman supervises the committee's activities for example, setting of the agenda of meetings, chairing committee meetings, choosing a rapporteur.

### FUNCTIONS OF THE CHAMBER:

The Council has oversight functions on the other organs of Government through the power it has to approve Government programmes and the Scrutiny of Government budget. The Council can also question and investigate Government activities. Foreign Policy is the responsibility of the President of the Republic, but the Council can advise and supervise the performance of the Government in this regard. The Council also supports the Government through Parliamentary diplomacy with the international community. The Council can advise on Principal Political matters like, the dissolution of the first chamber, state of emergency and war matters. It also contributes to the consolidation of stability of the entire system.

The chamber has standing rules for the conduct of





its business. The constitution of the country, the basic laws of both chambers show the mandate of the chamber and the relationship between it and the Lower House and Government.

The rules of the Council can be amended upon a proposal by the President of the Council or by at least 30 members of the Council submitted at the Council's office.

The chamber can control and discipline its members through the implementation of the internal rules.

The law states in article 109 that a member cannot be sued or be questioned for his or her opinion or for the execution of his official duties.

The People's Council of Algeria is autonomous in staff recruitment. It approves its budget and asks the Government to include it in the Government budget.

## The House of Dignitaries of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

There are 55 members of the House of Dignitaries of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, made up of 48 males and 7 females, all appointed by His Majesty, the King of Jordan for a 4 year tenure.

His Majesty, the King can remove a member before the end of the tenure.

The Council is convened by a call from the King to sit when the need arises.

His Majesty the King can also dissolve the Council before the end of the tenure through a royal decree.

Bills originate from the Lower House before they go to the Council.

The Council sits in ordinary session for a period of four months. The King can however, call for other sessions when the need arises.

### PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

The chairman is the President appointed by the King for a period of two years, which is extendable.

### THE FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL'S PRESIDENT:

- He presides over the Council's meetings

- He chairs the Supreme Council for the interpretation of the constitution
- He chairs the joint meeting of both chambers

The President of the Council comes after the Prime Minister in the country's National Order of Precedence

- His Majesty, the King can remove him before the end of his tenure

**The Council elects members of Supreme council for the interpretation of the constitution. They are as follows:**

- Three members of the House of Dignitaries for the membership of the Supreme council for the interpretation of the constitution.
- First Deputy President
- Second Deputy President
- Two Assistants to the President

They lose their membership if they resign, or are appointed into new positions. Their functions are as follows:

- Representing the Council at official engagements when it is on recess
- Supporting the President in his duties
- Taking charge of the Council in the absence of the President

## COMMITTEE SYSTEM

There are nine committees elected by the Council each having a maximum of 15 members and members of interim committees which are set up when the need arises. The committees have as roles, to study the Draft Bills referred to them from the president of the Council and to discuss policies and decisions relevant to their different mandates. Each committee elects its chairman.

Members of Committees are elected for 2-year tenure. The Chairs preside over the committee meetings and report the findings on each matter to the chamber.

### FUNCTIONS OF THE CHAMBER:

- Legislation

The council has as a role to study and discuss the Draft Bills referred to it from the House of the Representatives and takes appropriate decision.



### - Oversight

The council has oversight functions with regards to the function of executive power.

The Jordanian constitution is specific on the relationship between the council and the other arms of the government.

The council functions with its rules of procedures and it can amend the rules of procedures in accordance with the functions of the council, and the provisions contained in the rules of procedures permit the council to discipline erring members.

Members of the council cannot be sued, questioned, detained or jailed without the approval of the council unless caught in the act and in this case the council shall be informed immediately.

## The House of Federation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia



The House of Federation is the second chamber of the Ethiopian Parliament. The House represents Ethiopia's 75 Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. Each Nation, Nationality and People has at least one representative plus one additional representative for each additional million of their respective population. It has currently 135 members.

Members can either be elected directly by the people or through the regional councils for a term of five years. The House meets at least twice per year as a general assembly.

### Based on Article 62 of the Constitution, the House:

- Interprets the Constitution;
- Determines the division of revenues derived from joint Federal and States and decides on subsidies;
- Decides on the issues relating to rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to self-determination, including the right to secession;

- Promotes the equality of the people; promote and consolidate their unity based on their mutual consent,
- Strives to find solutions to disputes or misunderstandings that may arise between States,
- Orders Federal intervention if any State, in violation of this Constitution, endangers the constitutional order and
- Determines civil matters which require the enactment of legislation through the House of Peoples Representatives

### Structure of the House:

- Speaker,
- Deputy Speaker,
- Standing Committees/ ad-hoc Committee,
- Council of Constitutional Inquiry and Secretariat.

### Duties of the Speaker

The Speaker of the House is appointed by the general assembly of the House. The Speaker shall:

1. Administer the meetings of the House;
2. Manage all the House's administrative works;
3. Implement the disciplinary measures the House takes on its members;
4. Follow up the implementation of the decision of the House;
5. Submit the House's work program and budget to the House for the Peoples' Representatives and implement same upon approval;
6. Execute other responsibilities as determined by law.

The Deputy Speaker acts on behalf of the Speaker in his absence.

### Structure of the Standing Committees

There are two Standing Committees in the House. The Speaker nominates 15 members each, including the Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons. The House shall confirm the assignment. The Members of the Standing Committees nominate their Secretaries.

Standing Committees of the House are:

Constitutional and Regional Affairs and Subsidy and Concurrent Revenues Distribution Affairs.

### Structure of the Council of Constitutional Inquiry

The Council of Constitutional Inquiry is an advisory body, in Constitutional Interpretation, to the House. The Council gives recommendations for





the interpretation and can reject cases. It has 11 members, which is chaired by the President and Deputy President of the Federal Supreme Court. Six of its members are appointed by the President of the Republic and the remaining three from the members of the House of Federation.

## The Senate of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

The Parliament consists of two chambers: the National Assembly and the Senate. They represent the legislative power. Parliament may be convened in extraordinary session by decree of the President of the Republic. The Parliament meets twice a year in ordinary session (November and May). During these sessions the members of parliament enjoy immunity (unless lifted by their respective assemblies) and cannot be prosecuted or arrested on criminal or correctional matters. It is Parliament that passes laws but it can authorize the government (in agreement with the President) to take actions that are in the field of law. The legislative initiative and the right of amendment really belong concurrently to the Government and Parliament.

- Members are elected for five year term by direct suffrage. They must be at least 25 years old;
- Senators are elected for six year term by indirect suffrage with one third renewed every two years. They must be at least 35 years old.

### COMPOSITION OF THE SENATE:

The Senate has 56 Senators including 35 elected by indirect universal suffrage represent local authorities in the country

-Three appointed by the previous representatives of Mauritians living abroad.

Senators' functions are incompatible with those of members of the Government, or some functions in the civil service.

The Senate convenes two ordinary sessions per year: the first opens on the second Monday of November and the second session on the second Monday of May. The duration of each regular session shall not exceed two months.

Special sessions are held at the request of the President or of a majority of the members of the National Assembly on a specific agenda. These sessions are opened and closed by a decree of the President of the Republic. Their duration may not exceed one month.

The Senate also convenes rightfully when the President implements the emergency powers provided by the Constitution and for the application of the state of siege or state of emergency.



## The Senate of Gabon

According to Article 3 of the Constitution, "National sovereignty belongs to the people who exercise it directly through referendum and election, according to the principle of pluralist democracy, and indirectly through the constitutional institutions", among them is the Senate.

Section 4 in turn, states that suffrage may be direct or indirect but it is always universal, equal and secret.

Finally, Article 35 organizes this representation of the sovereign people through a parliament consisting of two chambers (the National Assembly and the Senate) and specifies that Deputies are elected for a five year term through direct universal suffrage and Senators for six year term through indirect universal suffrage.

The Senate is a permanent assembly since senators cannot be sent back to their constituents before the end of their tenure. This permanence is the basis of stability of the Senate and justifies its place within the institutions of the Republic.

Indeed, unlike the National Assembly, the Senate can-





not be dissolved, even in case of prolonged conflict with the Government. In return, it cannot overthrow the Government for any procedure or for any reason whatsoever.

### **The Bureau of the Senate**

The Bureau is headed by the President of the Senate including, in addition, six deputy-presidents, two secretaries and six Quaestors (Article 6 of the Rules and Regulation) who are elected at the same time with the President, by their colleagues for the duration of the legislative term through secret ballot (Article 40 paragraph 2 of the Constitution.). Although a collective body, the Bureau is composed of various categories of members who have clearly defined roles:

#### **President**

The President of the Senate represents the Senate and the Bureau of the Senate. He is assisted by other members of the Bureau. He coordinates the direction and the control of all services of the Senate. He is the organizer of the budget. He chairs the meeting, directs the discussions. He is responsible for ensuring internal and external security of the Senate. For this purpose, he has the strength of law enforcement under his authority.

#### **Deputy Presidents**

They assist the President in the exercise of the powers conferred upon and replace him in the absence or incapacity (Article 15 of the Regulation) or for the direction of the debate.

#### **The Quaestors**

They are responsible, under the authority of the President of the Senate, of coordinating and controlling the management of financial services (Article 17 of the Rules of Regulation).

#### **The Secretaries**

They oversee the drafting of the minutes of the meeting. They register the senators who ask to speak, supervise the roll calls, record the handing votes or sitting or standing votes and count them (Article 16 of the Regulation). In fact, they are the ones who assist the Chairman in organizing the votes and, as such, they append their signatures beside his signature to authenticate the Minutes of the meeting.

The Senate Bureau has broad powers. As the governing body of the institution, it has all powers

to direct the debates, to operate and organize services. It represents the Senate with other State institutions. It determines autonomously the rules of procedure, the rules of organization and operation of services of the Senate (article 12).)

It also has the power to authorize the lifting of parliamentary immunity outside the sessions, or to refer to the Constitutional Court in order to determine if a member is in a case of incompatibility.

### **The Presidents Conference**

It is a management body consisted of:

- President of the Senate who directs the duties
- Vice-Presidents of the Senate and all other officers.
- The chairmen of the standing committees
- The presidents of parliamentary groups

Office Secretaries of the Senate and the Quaestors take part, but without right to vote during sessions.

The Conference of Presidents shall be convened by the President of the Senate at the beginning of each session and whenever it deems it necessary, in order to set the agenda of the work. This agenda includes first, the review of the bills, and secondly, the written and oral questions.

The Government is kept informed of the date and time of the Conference and can send a representative.

Finally, the Conference of Presidents determines the order of oral questions that senators want to ask members of the Government.

### **Standing Committees**

They have to examine matters in their field of competence.

At the beginning of the first ordinary session, the Senate constitutes the following 6 standing committees during plenary session.

Senators are divided among the 6 standing committees according to their preferences and skills. The Bureau of each Committee consists of a President, one or two Vice-President (s) and two or three Rapporteurs. The Vice-Presidents shall assist the President and replace him in his absence.





## The Senate of the Republic of Congo Brazzaville

### I - COMPOSITION

The Senate represents the local authorities. It has 72 members (since the last renewal in 2008, following the creation of the new Department of Pointe-Noire), elected for six years by indirect election of local government councils.

### II - ELECTORAL SYSTEM:

The Chamber is half renewable every 3 years (first election: 11/07/2002)

Senators are elected in one round majority uninominal ballot by the members of the department and municipal councils.



#### The Senate term includes:

A system of incompatibility: the term is incompatible with any other public position.



A system fixing eligibility conditions: being 45 years old at least, being Congolese national, living in the country, enjoying its civil and political rights and having not been convicted of a crime.

**The Senate has different ways to control the action of the executive (art.89 of the Constitution) as follows:**

- Interrogation
- Oral and written questions of current interest
- Hearings in committee

Parliamentary inquiry.

Parliament authorizes the ratification of peace, defense, trade, natural resources treaties, agreements relating to international organizations, those involving the public finances, modifying law provisions of a legislative nature, those relating to the state of people, and those involving transfer, exchange or addition of territory.

The Parliament is informed of any negotiations for the conclusion of an international agreement not submitted to ratification.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

The President may, at any time, send messages to the Senate (or Assembly), which do not give rise to any discussion. Once a year, he addresses a message on the state of the nation in Parliament sitting in joint session.

President of the Senate shall be consulted by the President of the Republic before the implementation of exceptional measures when there is a serious and imminent threat regarding the Republic institutions, the independence of the Nation, the integrity of the national territory or the fulfillment of international agreements, and when the normal functioning of public authorities is threatened or interrupted.

In the event of vacancy by death, resignation or any other cause of definitive incapacity, the functions of President of the Republic shall be temporarily exercised by the President of the Senate for a maximum period of 90 days. President of the Senate cannot be then a candidate for the presidential election.

The President of the Senate, in the event of death or definitive incapacity of one of the candidates to the presidential election, may refer to the Constitutional Court for the prorogation of deadlines fixed by the Constitution for the elections.

## The National Council of Provinces of South Africa

The National Council of Provinces, Parliament of the Republic of South Africa has a total of 54 members, 36 males and 18 females.

The members of the NCOP are nominated by their political parties in the provincial legislatures and then appointed to the NCOP by the provincial legislatures, which act as the Electoral College.

NCOP members have a



term of five years provided they are not removed from office.

The Presiding Officer is addressed as the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces

Section 64(2) provides that the Chairperson and one of the Deputy Chairpersons are elected from among the permanent delegates for five years unless their terms as delegates expire earlier.

He is nominated at the same time with other members to the provincial legislature from where he is appointed to the NCOP. Section 64(6) provides that the Council may remove the Chairperson or a Deputy Chairperson from office.

## Council of States of Sudan

Article 83 of the Constitution stipulates that National Legislature comprises both houses:

- (a) National Assembly.
- (b) Council of States

Article 117(2) of the Constitution on the formation of National Legislature states that “ Pending conduct of elections, the President of the Republic appointed state representatives to the Council after consultations within the Presidency. Southern States’ representatives were appointed on recommendation from the head of South Sudan’s government after consultation with relevant state authorities.

Article 91(1) of the Interim Constitution stipulates that “ The national legislative body with its two houses represents people’s determination. Imperative, thus, that it consolidate national unity, accomplish legislation on national level, monitor the executive and promote decentralized governance.



Clause (2) above stipulates that the national legislative body discharges its duties in joint meetings chaired by the Speaker of the National Assembly, while the Speaker of the Council of States acts as his deputy; each chamber functions, as set forth in the Constitution, in separate meetings.

The Constitution also provides that each house shall have its own regulations.

## Functions of the Council:

- Law enforcement:

Article (22) of Constitution lays down that principles envisaged in Constitution are essential for governance. The state is obliged to follow and adhere thereto when formulating policies and laws.

## Decentralized Governance:

The Constitution assigned the Council of States an original task viz. taking the lead in the field of national legislation on the system of decentralized governance and other major issues of interest and significance to the states. This is with the object of attaining development and rendering public services with equality and equity, thereby enhancing decentralization of power and decision making.

Better still, the Constitution awarded the Council the right to amend draft laws that adversely affect the interest of states and which are referred to it by the joint standing committee of both houses in accordance with Article 912\((5)(b)\) of the Constitution. It is to be presented directly to the President of the Republic without referring it back to the National Assembly. The procedure confirms the fact that the Council of States, alone, possesses the original task of legislation on decentralized governance system.

The Council is also empowered to issue resolutions and directives on the system of decentralized governance to guide all levels of government in conformity with Articles 25, 25, 26 of the Constitution.

The Council will contribute to the enforcement of these principles by strictly adopting same when formulating policies regarding development and rendering of services so as to ascertain fairness all over the Sudan. This is by presenting recommendations and propositions in this respect when participating in the deliberation of the address of the President of the Republic before the national legislative body and by monitoring development through overseeing the National Fund for construction and Development.

The Council is competent in the approval of constitutional court judges’ appointment and their





deposition, with the majority of the two thirds of all representatives.

This takes effect through representation of states representatives by reflecting worries and difficulties of the states in the Council and voicing grievances in decision making center and through performance of their duties in the Council by paying attention to the interest of the states when formulating policies and plans in all spheres.

In the field of foreign contacts with parliamentary unions and similar institutions:

Regulations stipulate that the Council maintains relations with countries that adopt the bicameral system so as to benefit from these relations in all spheres. The Council, as well, has the right to representation in various parliamentary unions and international for a.

#### **Council's leadership:**

Lt. Colonel Adam Hamid Moussa, Speaker.  
Professor Ismail Al-Haj Moussa, Deputy Speaker.  
Hassan Moussa Sheikh Al-Safi, Secretary General.

#### **Committees of the Council:**

- Committee on Financial and Economic Affairs
- Committee on Development and Public Services
- Committee on Decentralized Governance
- The Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and National Unity
- The Legal Affairs Committee
- Political Affairs and External Communications Committee
- Council's Affairs Committee.

## **The Senate of Republic of Burundi**

Composition of the Senate

The Senate is composed of 41 senators divided into 3 categories, all the senators, irrespective of category, are of the same constitutional status.

- Some 34 senators are pecked out from each province. An electoral college composed of provincial municipal councilors elects two Senators from different ethnic groups by means of direct ballot.
- Three Co-opted Senators representing the ethnic group of Batwa that hails from different areas.
- Four senators representing former heads of state,

all of whom are physically fit for the job.

Finally the Constitution provides for a minimum of 30% of Senate seats for women. There is a procedure of co-optation to correct, if necessary, the composition of the Senate as a result of the three previous categories by adding seats for women Senators.



#### **SENATE BUREAU:**

In addition to the Speaker, the Senate Bureau includes two Deputy-Speakers, who are elected according to the same methods and for the same term. The Bureau members cannot come from the same ethnic group, or have the same gender.

When the Bureau members take and quit office, they must write a statement of their possession and patrimony. The statement is addressed to the Supreme Court.

Each Deputy-Speaker has specific prerogatives: the First Deputy-Speaker is competent for political, diplomatic and communication matters, the Second Deputy-Speaker being competent for economic, social and financial matters.

The Bureau represents the Senate on national and international levels. It has all powers to preside over Senate deliberations; it determines, by internal instructions, the organization and functioning of Senate services.

The Bureau's decisions are taken by consensus, but, failing this, by a 2/3 majority of its members. Lastly, the Senate Bureau meets frequently: practically, the meeting is on weekly basis. The Bureau meets every Monday, either in its simple form, or in form of an "Extended Bureau."

#### **Composition of the Senate Bureau**

**The Bureau of the Senate is made up of the following:**

Hon. Ntisezerana Gabriel, President  
Hon. Persille Mwidogo, First Vice President  
Hon. Pontien Niyongabo, Second Vice-President



### THE EXTENDED BUREAU:

The Extended Bureau is made up of the three Bureau members plus chairmen of standing committees of the Senate. The mission of the Extended Bureau is to examine the agenda of the Senate sessions, consider Government prerogatives, and set the complementary agenda that the Senate can freely decide.

During sessions, the Extended Bureau convenes weekly called by the Speaker and these meetings are to examine not only the agenda but also any matter concerning the Senate and senators.

This practice therefore favors the Senate's collegial management, broader than the one which would impose the strict implementation of rules and regulations.

### ROLE OF THE SENATE

#### THE LEGISLATING SENATE :

The Senate has a general legislative competence (Articles 189 and 190 of the Constitution) but the Constitution confers particular prerogatives to it, regarding organic laws, electoral law and local communities (Article 187 § 1 and 3 of the Constitution).

#### Right of Initiative

The right of initiative is the right to propose a future draft law for an assembly's reading and adoption.

It belongs jointly to the President of the Republic, the Government, the National Assembly and the Senate.

### EXERCISE OF THE SENATE'S REGULATION POWER:

The Senate, continuator of the transition Senate from the Arusha Accord, indeed adds a specific mission of controlling ethnic and territorial balances as mentioned in the Constitution.

In three fields, the Constitution gives the Senate a specific mission of control which is actually analyzed in a mission of regulation:

#### Respect of Representation Balances

That is first of all the case for philosophical principles founding the Constitution: the Senate is in charge of controlling the implementation of con-

stitutional provisions requiring ethnic, gender representation, and balance in all structures and institutions of the State.

### Respect of Regional Balances

This is also the case for balanced territory development: the Senate can make investigation into public administration and issue recommendations so that no region of the territory or no group of population is excluded from the benefit of public services.

### APPROVAL OF GIVEN NOMINATIONS

The Senate's special position among institutions is also marked by the power from the Constitution to approve nominations for the most important posts of the Republic. Indeed, nominations by the President of the Republic become effective only once they are approved by the Senate for the following functionaries:

- Heads of defence and security corps
- Province governors
- Ambassadors
- Ombudsmen
- Members of the Magistracy Higher Council
- Supreme Court members
- Constitutional Court members
- The Public Prosecutor and Public Prosecution magistrates
- President of the Court of Appeal and President of the Administrative Court
- The State Prosecutor of the Court of Appeal
- Presidents of High Level courts, of Trade court and Labor Court
- State prosecutors

In conclusion, the Senate presents very marked and original characters that strongly make it different from the National Assembly. Its election mode, its composition, its functions make it a legislative Assembly with an obvious political character although non-partisan, it is also a representative assembly of populations and local authorities, an assembly with a regulatory function of particular control; in brief, an assembly deeply rooted in Burundian reality in tune with the highest aspirations of the population: national reconciliation, stabilization, institutional and political moderation in the exercise of power for the service of peace and balanced development.





## Chapter 4

### ASSECAA Member States' Economies

Statistics reveal that ASSECAA member countries are endowed with abundant economic resources to the extent that some of them rank high amongst the world's resource-rich countries.

Moreover, African and Arab countries have a range of diversified potentials, which provide a myriad of economic, trade and investment opportunities that might encourage the influx of capitals and individuals into the region not only for trade and investment purposes but also for tourism.

Indeed, ASSECAA's member countries are considered as significant global tourist attractions rich in unique and exquisite cultural heritage, which is symbolic of great ancient civilizations. There is no gainsaying the fact that the region is home to a plenty of natural resources, lush eco-systems and fascinating natural reserves.

Through an effective strategy, there can be established a better Afro-Arab cooperation and partnership in economic, financial and trade spheres, let alone development and mutual investment. This would enable the countries of the two regions build up robust economies with high competitiveness on the global market.

Experts on Afro-Arab relations opine that the promotion of inter-trade would further boost sustainable development, ensure job opportunities, increase income and improve living conditions, in addition to attracting investment and eradicating poverty.

Afro-Arab cooperation requires a joint action in respect of agriculture and food security that should be significantly prioritized by optimally utilizing the resources available in the two regions. There are vast agricultural areas and plentiful water resources in Africa while

Arab countries have surplus cash, which necessitates making best use of such potentials in such a way that achieves food security.

This would increase the agricultural productivity, and upgrade production and anti-pesticide tools in a manner that gives African countries more opportunities to globally market their products and get more revenues that will contribute to raising the living standards of citizens.

In this chapter, we shall dwell upon the legislation regulating investment as well as the role played by chambers of commerce and industry in ASSECAA's member countries.

#### The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia:

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia



exploits its fertile farmlands, rains and rivers in cultivation on which the Ethiopian economy largely depends. Agriculture represents 50% of the country's Gross Domestic Production (GDP), 43% of exports, and covers 85% of total employment.

Ethiopia has vast arable lands; however, only 17% of such lands is cultivated. The agricultural products include coffee, cereals, legume, oilseeds, and khat.

Recent development of the floriculture sector means Ethiopia is poised to become one of the top flower and plant exporters in the world.

### Exports and Imports:

Ethiopia's imports include oil and its products, wheat, sugar, corn, cereals, steel and cars, while the exports include coffee, livestock, Khat, leather and oilseeds.

The agricultural sector yields other revenues, as the country is endowed with a good deal of livestock that meets citizens' needs of meat as the surplus is exported abroad. Besides, Ethiopia is also the 10th largest producer of livestock in the world. Other main export commodities are khat, gold, leather products, and oilseeds and processed food.

The mining sector is quite small in Ethiopia. The country has deposits of coal, opal, gemstones, kaolin, iron ore, soda ash, and tantalum, but only gold is mined in significant quantities. In 2001, gold production amounted to some 3.4 tons. Ethiopia also has other natural resources such as salt, potash, copper, platinum and natural gas.

The Ethiopian government is striving to solve the problem of population growth that raised unemploy-



ment amongst the youth to 70%. This makes it imperative for the consecutive governments to provide thousands of job opportunities annually. For this reason, Ethiopia is one of the poorest nations in the world.

Further, the country is still struggling to wipe off the effects of drought that hit it hardest, let alone the war it fought with Eritrea.

To eradicate poverty that spread due to the population explosion coupled with natural and man-made disasters such as droughts and wars, the current government has embarked on a program of economic reform, including privatization of state enterprises and rationalization of government regulation. While the process is still ongoing, the reforms have begun to attract much-needed foreign







investment.

Though there is a trend to stimulate manufacturing in Ethiopia, the bulk of which is concentrated in Addis Ababa, the sector, which has shown some growth and diversification in recent years, constitutes about only 4 percent of overall economy.

A glimpse at this promising sector shows that food and beverages constitute some 40 percent of



the sector, but textiles and leather are also important, the latter especially for the export market.

In addition, manufacturing is one of the sectors that attract foreign and domestic investments. However, in financial services, no foreign banks are allowed, and it remains almost impossible to find start-up loans for small and medium businesses.

### Investment in Ethiopia:

There are many investment opportunities available to local and foreign investors in Ethiopia. A program to privatize state-owned enterprises, transportation and communications, has been laid out by the cur-

rent government. The areas of investment include agriculture, construction and real estate, manufacturing and processing, mining, power and energy, transportation and tourism.

The Investment Proclamation No.280/2002 (as amended) provides that a foreign investor can undertake investment either:

- As a sole proprietor, with full equity ownership



(100% equity ownership); or

- Jointly or in partnership with domestic investor(s), or the Government.

The Law also stipulates the following capital requirements:

- A minimum capital of 100,000\$ for a single investment project in cash and/ or in kind for wholly foreign owned investments;



- A minimum capital of 50,000\$ in cash and/ or in kind per project in areas of engineering, architecture accounting and audit services project studies or business management consultancy services; or publishing.

A foreign investor intending to invest in partnership with domestic investors is required to invest a minimum capital of:



- 60,000\$ in cash and/or in kind per project; or
- 25,000\$ in cash and/ or in kind if the investment is made in the aforementioned areas.

The Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (ECCSA) is a non-profit, autonomous private sector organization responsible for



trade promotion and private sector development.

- Its mandate is to promote Ethiopia's products to the world, develop international trade and promote investment in Ethiopia, thereby fostering the development of a vibrant and dynamic private sector in the country. As an effective secretariat for the private sector, it also acts to defend the interests of the business community and acts as a bridge between the government and the private sector.

ECCSA also works towards promoting trade and investment by providing demand driven service to its members and by advocating for favorable business environment based on international best practices.

## Tourism:

Public services are one of the sectors privatized by the government. This sector is almost based on tourism which is being run by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Ethiopia is known for its ancient history and civilization as well as its archaeological sites that have become fascinating tourist attractions. These include Islamic and Christian antiquities and national landmarks expressive of a great civilization that went deep into the annals of history.

Prominent among such milestones are 11 rock churches located in the small town of Lalibela in northern Ethiopia, which date back to the 12th century.

Still, there are other antiquities such as Addis Ababa Lion Statue and museum, the walled city of Harar, Axum Zion church, Gonder's fortresses, Blue Nile rapids, Tana lake, Awash park, and Omar suf.

## The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which is situated to the north of the Arabian peninsula, is a young democracy characterized by the existence of a multi-party system and civil society organizations.



Jordan's population amounts to 6.25 million (six million two hundred and fifty thousand people), while its surface area stands at 89.287 sq km.

Jordan's economy depends mainly on the business services sector, tourism and some manufac-





tured products such as fertilizers and medicines.

The country has many natural resources, such as phosphate mines in the south of the Kingdom, which make the Kingdom the third largest source of this metal in the world. Other resources include potash, salt, natural gas and limestone, in addition to extractable mineral wealth.



Further, Jordan is famous for growing vegetables such as tomatoes, olives, cucumbers, citrus melons, bananas, eggplant, wheat, barley, lentils, chickpeas, and grains; it exports food products in addition to other agricultural crops.

In 1987, natural gas was discovered in Jordan, and experts estimate that there are about 150-400 billion cubic meters of natural gas. Foreign companies have made operations for exploration of oil in Jordan. According to the Natural Resources Authority of Jordan, the country's resources are still not relatively exploited.

Further Jordan has made strides in terms of literacy and education facilities, as there are a sufficient number of universities and colleges of technical education.

## Investment Areas:

There are various areas of investment in Jordan as follows:

- Transport
- Education (preschool, elementary, preparatory and secondary education).
- Power generation and distribution
- Tourism (building of holidays resorts)
  - Hotels, guest houses and airlines agencies.
  - Hospitals and clinics
  - Telecommunications, modern technologies and computers.

Jordan has six economic zones that attracted investments amounting to billions of Dollars, including Alaqabah, Mafraq, Ma'an, Agloan, Dead Sea and Irbid. It also has a lot of industrial zones that produce goods, such as textile, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

The existence of modern investment laws is considered to be the most important incentive for investment in Jordan.

## Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Jordan:

Jordan, which is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), is a regional hub for information technology, communications and tourism; it





is also one of the region's countries that attracts investments most.

The Union of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce was established previously and commenced its functions on 19 December, 1955 in accordance with law No.41 for the year 1949. It acts as a representative of the private sector in all economic, trade and service fields. It is also responsible for cooperation and partnership through dialogue with the private and public sectors in the kingdom, particularly government departments and Al-Ayan (House of Dignitaries) in order to achieve economic prosperity and gear its external economic relations towards serving public interest.

On the 12th of June, 2003, a provisional law (law of chambers of commerce) No. 70 was issued, and, accordingly, Jordan's chamber of commerce was established to assume the functions of the formerly union of chambers of commerce.

The main activities of the chamber include achievement of the interest of business community, provision of information, provision of advice to members, promotion of economic development, provision of economic statistics on market situations, encouragement of foreign investments and facilitation of international trade.

### Investment incentives in Jordan:

Investment promotion law No.(16) and its amendments for the year 2000 is considered as an appropriate legislative framework for attracting foreign investments and encouraging local ventures.

The legislation is competitive, as it includes benefits, incentives and guarantees for investment at the regional level.

Further, the law provides for custom and tax exemptions for several business sectors, including industry, agriculture, hotels, hospitals, maritime transport and railways, leisure and recreational compounds, convention and exhibition centers, extraction, transportation and distribution of water, gas and oil via pipelines.

### Exemption from Custom Duties:

Jordan grants custom and tax exemptions as follows:

- Fixed assets are exempted from fees and taxes provided that they are imported into the Kingdom for investment purposes. These involve machinery, equipment and supplies, including furniture for hotels and hospitals.
- Imported spare parts intended for investment projects shall be exempted from fees and taxes provided that their value does not exceed 15% of that of the fixed assets for which they are required.
- Fixed assets required for the expansion, development and modernization of investment projects shall be exempted from fees and taxes provided that such an exemption leads to an increase in projects' productivity by no less than 25%.
- Hotel and hospital projects shall be granted exemption from fees and taxes once every seven years for the purchase of furniture and supplies required for modernization and renewal.
- Any increase in the value of fixed assets which are imported for ventures shall be exempted from fees and taxes, if such an increase is a result of a rise in the price of such assets in the country of origin, a rise in freight charges applicable thereto, or of changes in exchange rate.
- Exemptions from income tax and social services.
- Project that falls within the sectors or sub-sectors mentioned above has the following exemptions and facilities:
  - 25% if the project is a class A of development in the region.
  - 50% if the project is a Class B regional development.





75% if the project is a class C development area.

The period of exemption based on the decision of the Committee is ten years from the commencement of the project, or from the date of production for industrial projects. The committee grants an additional exemption if a project was developed, expanded or modernized in such a way that leads to an increase in its productivity. The extra exemption would last for at least one year or four years maximum in return for productivity increase not less than 25%.

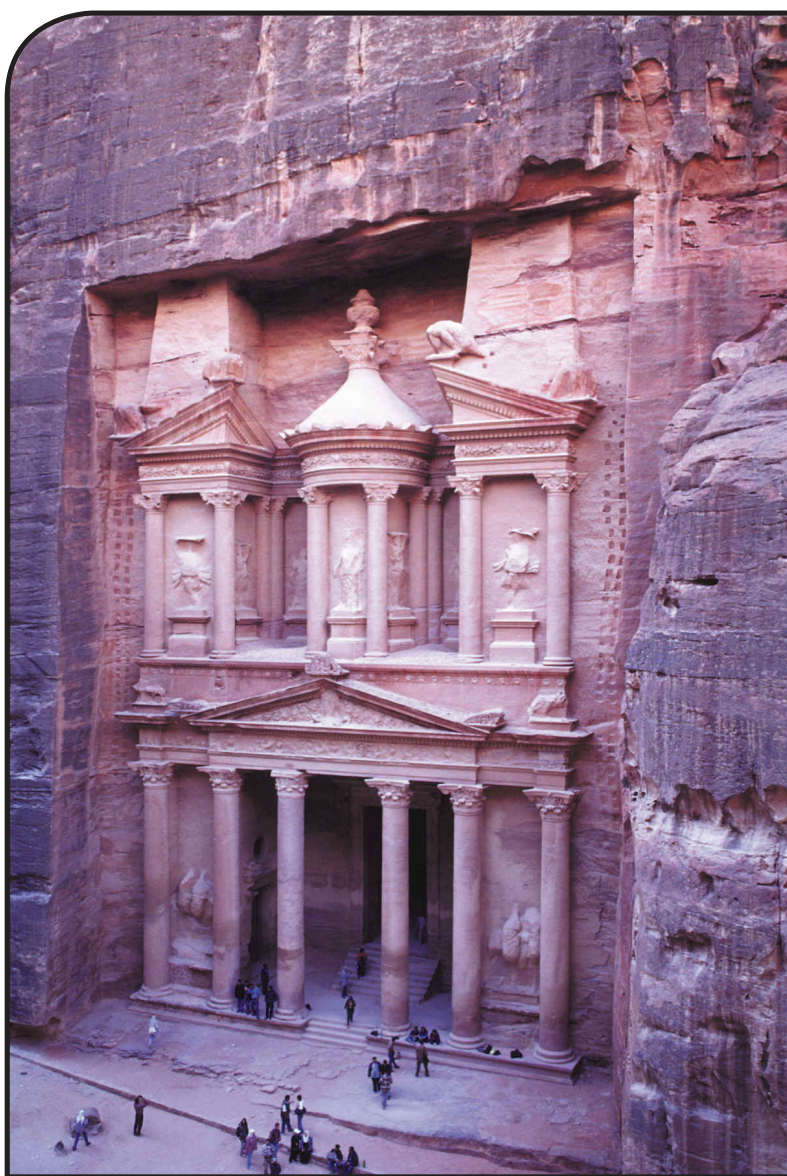
### Investment Guarantees

- The different laws governing investment in Jordan offer equal treatment to both Jordanian and non-Jordanian investors, thus allowing the non-Jordanian investor to own any project in full or in part, or to engage in any economic activity in the Kingdom.
- The minimum capital for the non-Jordanian investment may not be less than fifty thousand Jordanian Dinars (JD 50.000) except for participation in public shareholding companies.
- The investor has the right to manage the project in the manner he/she deems appropriate, and through the person(s) chosen by the investor for this purpose.
- Non-Jordanian investors shall be entitled to remit abroad without delay, and in a convertible currency, the invested capital together with any returns and profits accrued, the proceeds of liquidation of the investments as well as the proceeds of the sale of all or part of the project.

### Tourism:

Jordan is noted for medical tourism, as people hailing from neighboring countries and the GCC states, Yemen and Egypt, visit the country for medical treatment. According to the World Bank, revenues from medical tourism in Jordan amount to \$700 million per annum.

Further, the Arab country ranks the first in the Middle East region and the fifth in the world in terms of therapeutic tourism. This can be imputed to the fact that Jordanian doctors are highly experienced in carrying out delicate cardiac, ophthalmic, renal and lung surgeries.



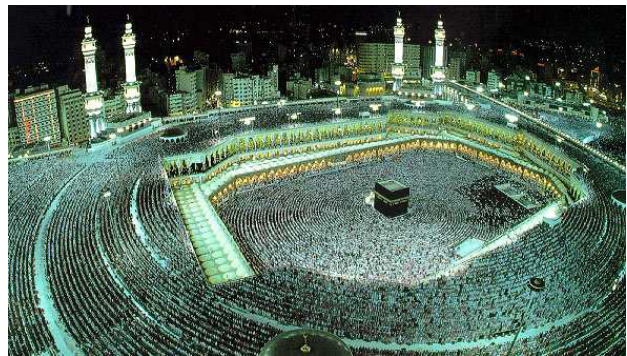
Jordan is one of the countries providing both physiotherapy and recreation, as its territory is endowed with all natural medicines, such as mineral-rich hot water, volcanic soil, moderate climate and breath-taking scenery. This has turned the country into a medical resort frequented by a lot of patients seeking medication.

Of the most important museums in Jordan are the Jordanian antiquity museum, Martyr Edifice Museum, Hiya Cultural Center, Relics Museum, the Jordanian University, the Cultural folklore Museum and Irbid antiquity Museum. Other museums are the Jordanian popular heritage museum, Um Qais antiquity museum, Ancient minted coin museum and Islamic shrine museum. Medical resorts include Afra saunas, Al-Hama springs, and Ma Ain (spa) saunas. In addition, The clay and mud extracted from the Dead Sea can be used for medication due to its medical benefits.

## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stretches over the bulk of the Arabian peninsula, bordering the Red Sea on the west, and the Arabian Gulf on the east. It has the largest oil reserves (25.6%) in the world, and ranks the first among the world's largest producers and exporters of oil.

Oil and gas revenues represent 75 % of the total



returns of the economy and 45% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Other sectors account for the remaining rate of the GDP.

During the past decades, the Saudi economy made great strides in terms of oil products, petrochemicals, agriculture, and banking.

It has also opened up to global economy, as foreign investment law in Saudi Arabia was issued on 15/1/1421 Hegira, which is considered to be the most prominent event regarding the kingdom's economic affairs, in addition to the establishment of the General Authority of Investment. According to the World Bank's 2009 business report, Saudi Arabia ranked 13th out of 181 countries in terms of investment, up from 67th in 2005.

### The Key incentives enshrined in the investment law include:

- Reduction of taxes imposed on foreign investments and adoption of the principle of carrying over the loss to the next years without specifying a certain period.
- Foreign investors has the opportunity to get loans from the industrial development fund.
- Individual ownership of investment ventures is allowed, including the assets necessary for the enterprise; there is no expropriation of projects, except for public interest, and in lieu of fair compensation.
- Investment licenses can be obtained within one month.
- Information on investment in Saudi Arabia is available and transparent.







- Energy.
- Information technology and communication.
- Transportation and logistic services.
- Health
- Biology.
- Education.
- Tourism

### Exports and imports

The most important exports are oil, plastic products, petrochemicals, some foodstuffs, minerals, paper and their products.

Imports include machinery, equipment, electrical appliances, foodstuffs, transportation equipment, textiles, and timber.

### Foreign Investment Attraction:

The Council of Chambers of commerce and industry of Saudi Arabia, which is based in Riyadh, was established in accordance with the Royal decree 6 issued in March 1980 to represent the Kingdom's chambers of commerce at the local and international level, and

- An Investor has the right to sponsor himself and his employees and to receive equal treatment on par with Saudi citizens.
- The law includes regulations for resolution of disputes and ensures the right to equal treatment.

to promote the role of the private sector in national economy.

The Council takes executive and legislative meas-

Saudi Arabia's Total Foreign investments amounted to \$552 billion at the end of 2009, while the total increase of foreign and joint investments amounted to \$1,126 billion, up from \$279 billion in 2005.

### Investment opportunities in Saudi Arabia:

Investment opportunities worth \$300 billion in energy, \$100 billion in transportation and \$100 billion in technology – based industries. These include:



ures in order to attract and protect local and foreign investments. It also takes part in setting out business policies and regulations, follows up and monitors all internal and external economic changes in such a manner that fits the investment milieu.

### Tourism:

Saudi Arabia is home to the holiest Islamic sites, including the Holy Mosque in Mecca, and Prophet Mohammed's Mosque in Al-Madina. Both landmarks are visited by multitudes of Muslims swarming the two sacred cities for pilgrimage and Omra (minor pilgrimage) in what can be described as religious tourism that brings huge revenues into government coffers.

Jedda, a city on the Red Sea Coast, and Al-Ahsa, a township on the Arabian Gulf coast, are the most attractive marine sporting destination.



The General Authority for Tourism and Antiquities caters for tourism. It set up dozens of museums such as the national museum, the two holy mosque museum, Masmak fort museum, and other museums named after the Saudi cities and regions, including Jedda, Mecca, Al-Taif, Tabuk, Najran and Jazan. Archaeological sites include Dareyeh, Masmak palace, Muraba'a palace, Shabra palace, Saqaf palace, Khuzam palace, Beit Nasif, Najran emirate palace, Ayref fortress, Heritage Souq, Al-Saiari mountain and Um Al-Ajrass village.

### Agriculture:

About 57% of cultivated lands are concentrated in the middle region-Riyadh and Qasim emirates, 19% in the southern region spanning Jazan, Aseer, Najran and Baha emirates. Hael, Tabuk and Jawf emirates account for 13% of farmlands, while the remaining 11% is scattered over the western and eastern regions.

Food exports, including wheat, eggs, meat, poultry, dairy, and some vegetables, amounted to roughly 2 million tons in 1990.

Animal wealth varies; estimates indicate that Saudi Arabia has 7,8 million heads of goat, 4,4 million heads of sheep, 422,000 camels, and around 204,000 cattle. Fisheries are booming, as local catch stood at 49,920 tons in 1994, 50% of which was exported abroad.





## Republic of Gabon:

The country is divided into nine regions, the largest of which is Libreville, the Capital.

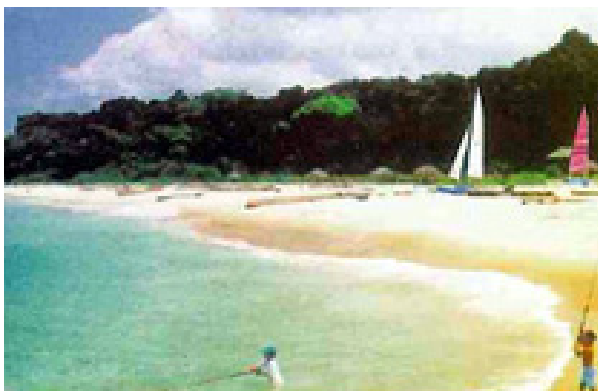
The crops grown in Gabon are cocoa, coffee, sugar, palm oil; rubber; oakum (a tropical softwood); for cash crops production. However, Contrary to other African countries, agriculture's contribution is less than 10% of the GDP. Consequently, large quantities of foodstuffs are imported from neighboring countries like Cameroon and Europe.

### Animal wealth available in the country:

In Gabon, there is huge animal wealth, includ-



ing domesticated animals. Livestock farming is based on cattle ranching. The country is endowed with fishery products. Fishing intake off Gabon's coastline are evaluated to 32,000 metric tons per year and can be increased to cater for the needs of landlocked Central Africa and Chad. However, fishing industries, while making strong contributions to the national economy, are not yet fully



and efficiently exploited and need private investments for their development.

### Manufacturing:

Gabon manufactures food, beverages, textile, lumbering, plywood, cement and chemicals. Natural resources are available in the country, including oil, manganese, uranium, gold, iron ore and phosphate. However, Oil plays the biggest part in Gabon economy and often accounts for up to 60% of the GDP and 80% of exports. Indeed, Gabon is the fourth-largest crude oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa and the 37th-largest in the world. But oil production has been dwindling since 1998.

Gabon's authorities are seeking a way to compensate for the decline of oil's production and boost the production and industrial transformation of other abundant mineral resources. Indeed, unless new oil fields are discovered, Gabon's policy-makers are now confronted with the challenge of finding economic alternatives to oil to boost the economy. Otherwise, the country will slowly sleepwalk into economic "recession" when existing oil fields run dry.



### Nevertheless, there are promising alternatives including:

- Forestry that accounts for 85% (12.5m hectares) of the national territory.
- Timber exploitation (4,340,000 to 5 million logs per year) may garner more profits if necessary measures are taken to diversify manufacturing wood products such as house flooring, wood

house kits and furniture designed for African and international markets.

### Food security:

The country tries to achieve food security in light of the fact that Gabon currently imports more than 85% of its food products, a staggering percentage that poses another threat to Gabon's policymakers. This makes it imperative for them to exert substantive effort to achieve food security.

However, economic growth and diversification in Gabon is limited due to lack of skilled manpower and rising labor costs.

Further, the Gabonese authorities try to negotiate with international donors (IMF and World Bank) to obtain additional financial means. But these institutions request drastic macroeconomic measures. That is why private investments, especially foreign ventures, are strongly encouraged.

### Gabon's competitive advantages:

The Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture, Industry and Mines works towards promoting economic development in the private sector, contributing to the amelioration of business climate, and promoting overall economic growth.

It provides technical assistance, consultancy and support to business firms. It also set up a database of economic operators, commercial and investment opportunities as well as consultancy. It organizes training courses to build the capacity of businessmen. In terms of economic competitiveness, Gabon joined CEMAC, a sub-regional economic community representing a market of 30 million consumers.

Business law is modern and harmonized with the Organization for the Harmonization of the Law in Africa (OHADA); Gabon boasts a strong telecommunications network; an Investment Charter has been established to structure relationships with in-

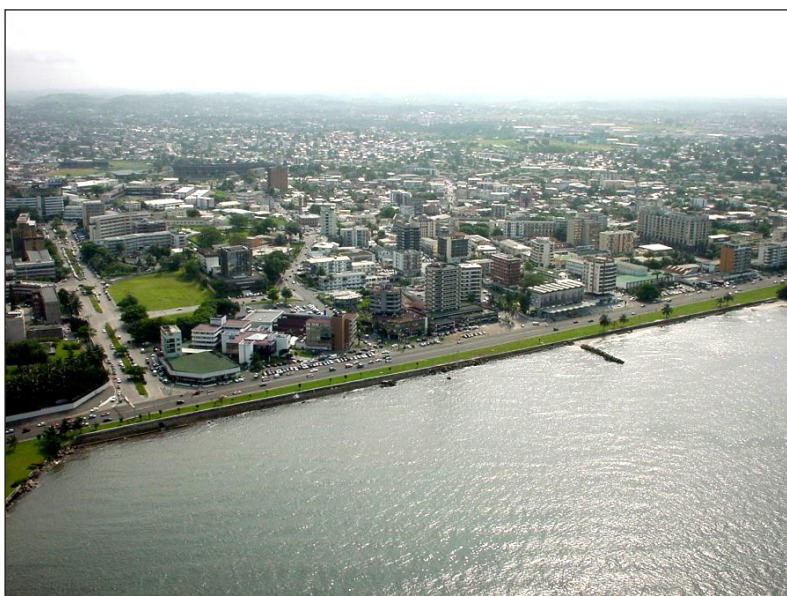


vestors and ensure transparency and accountability; Gabon's banking sector is viable and the tax regime is attractive to businesses and individuals. Hopefully, the political and social stability the country is currently witnessing would reflect positively on development and the inflow of foreign investments.

### Investment Opportunities:

Gabon has investment opportunities in the sectors of agriculture, forestry, tourism, industry, its rich wildlife, food and services.

In accordance with the law, all legal entities that wish to do business in Gabon must first request a preliminary approval from the Ministry of Commerce. More specifically, the Ministry of Commerce requires information on the investment







project to be undertaken, identity cards, and work license. The Ministry also requires six copies of the Rules of Procedure of the company and the minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors in which the company has decided to establish a corporation or a subsidiary in Gabon.

Business firms, mainly limited liability companies, are the most common in Gabon. Therefore, each corporation must have at least seven shareholders a board of directors and a chairman. The law does not provide that the company should be chaired by an individual. Rather, it can be presided over by a board of director.

For registration, foreign companies can open up a branch in Gabon for a maximum of two years without registering with the relevant authority.

### Exports and imports

Gabon exports timber, manganese, uranium and oil to its key trading partners, including the United States, Japan and China.

The main products imported into the country are chemicals, foodstuffs, petroleum products and equipment. Import partners are the United States, France and the Netherlands.

### Tourism:

Gabon is known for its rich cultural legacy that attracts foreign tourists to visit the country in quest for both entertainment and knowledge. The country is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society whose cultural heritage is widely diverse. For instance, some tribes have special customs when it comes to marriage and dowry, while some believe that twin birth is correlated to myths.

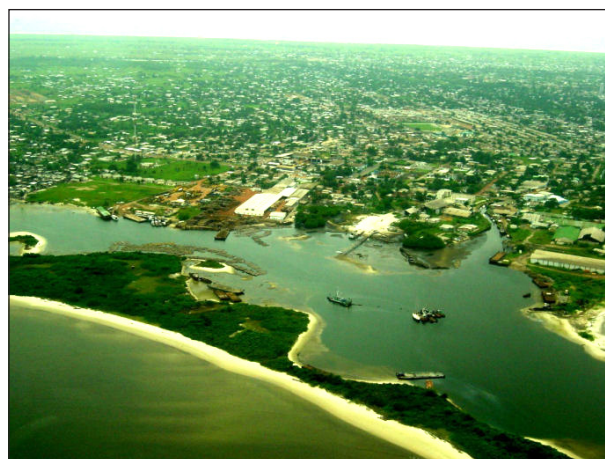
Further, polygamy and big posterity are common among some ethnic groups, such as Fang, which believes that infertility is anathema.

This same tribe is noted for its traditional face-masks, which are an integral part of its cultural legacy. The masks are worn for ornament during folk dance or to show sadness at times of mourning. Still, some tribesmen wear facemasks during festivals and ceremonies, especially those living along Ezanga lake.

Moreover, tourists usually enjoy an assortment of Gabonese food known for its delicacy, such as fish tinged with chocolate, peanut soup, Indian potato, marrow soup, and cucumber salad. All such dishes are usually served with some appetizers, including potatoes, tomatoes, parsnip and banana.

Visitors can also tour many wonderful landmarks, such as Lope national park, breath-taking Denis coast, and Bateke plateau, among others.

Tourists can embark on boat trips at southern lakes, such as Evaro, Onangué, Nogomo, Zile and Oyenano island. Boats often leave in the morning and sails across Ogooue lake where visitors can see a variety of birds and animals, such as rhinos,



pelicans, monkeys and other wild animals.

There are many tourist attractions in Gabon, such as Bunghara national park that lies on the left bank of Komo lake tributary and near to the Atlantic Ocean. The park is covered in mangrove trees and savannahs. It also houses a research site where researchers can keep track of turtle nestling and egg hatching.

Also, of the most attractive places are Pointe Denis resort which is usually accessed by boat, and Ekwata village, which lies offshore Nogombe city, where visitors enjoy the sight of serene blue water.

On the city's sandy beach, visitors can exercise various sporting activities, such as wave riding,



arching, angling, and forest strolling. Gabon's equatorial climate is influenced by water streams coming from the Atlantic Ocean that bring temperature to an average of 25 degrees all year round.

### Tourism infrastructure:

In an effort to diversify its economy, the Gabonese government works towards the promotion of tourist sector. There are many luxury hotels in Libreville, Port Gentil, Makoku and Franceville.

There are many tourist facilities under construction across the country, particularly along coastline and in townships close to national parks.

## Kingdom of Morocco

The Kingdom of Morocco is situated to the north-west of Africa. According to 2004 census, the total population of Morocco amounts to 29,840,273, including 51,435 foreigners, mostly French and Spanish living in Tangier. The country's area is 800,000 square kilometers.

Morocco's Gross Domestic Product is estimated at about \$61.3 billion, with an average per capita income of \$2000. The GNP is estimated at about \$162 billion, with an average per capita income of \$5,249.

## Agriculture:

The area of the country's arable lands is estimated at about 95,000 square km, according to 2003 census. The most important crops are cereals, particularly wheat, barley, maize, lentils, beans and citrus. The cultivation of fruit and olive trees is an important activity, as Morocco is the second largest producer of citrus in the world and the seventh producer of olive oil. It is also one of the world's largest fish producers; it produced about 593,966 tons of fish in 2004, to the tune of 700,368,246 Euros.

### - Services sector

Tourism occupies a leading place in the service sector, as it yields a revenue of 59 billion dirham (\$8.16 billion). In 2007, 7,407,617 tourists visited the country, a rise of about 13% compared to the previous year i.e. an estimated 16,893,803 tourists per night.

### Industry

Industry constitutes about 28% of the Gross Domestic Production (GDP). This sector has seen a remarkable growth thanks to a series of agreements signed by Morocco with many international companies. Moroccan industries are fairly advanced and diversified. There are of course food and chemical industries, and the latter being second only to that of South Africa in terms of quality; pharmacological Industry is covering 90% of domestic demand, while the rest is exported to many African and European countries. Morocco is one of the leading exporters of textile to the EU. Automakers has also been existing in Morocco since after a recent agreement was signed by the Moroccan government with Runner Nissan automobile company.

## Investment:

In addition to tax exemptions endorsed under public law, the Moroccan laws and regulations provide for privileges of a financial, tax and custom nature that are granted to investors





in the framework of investment contracts or agreements entered into with the State, provided that these should meet the standards required.

Examples of the aforementioned privileges are as follows:

- The government covers some of the expenses associated with investment: Investment Promotion Fund;
- The government shoulders some of the expenses related to the promotion of



investment in specific industrial sectors and the development of modern technologies:

Hassan II Fund for Economic and Social Development;

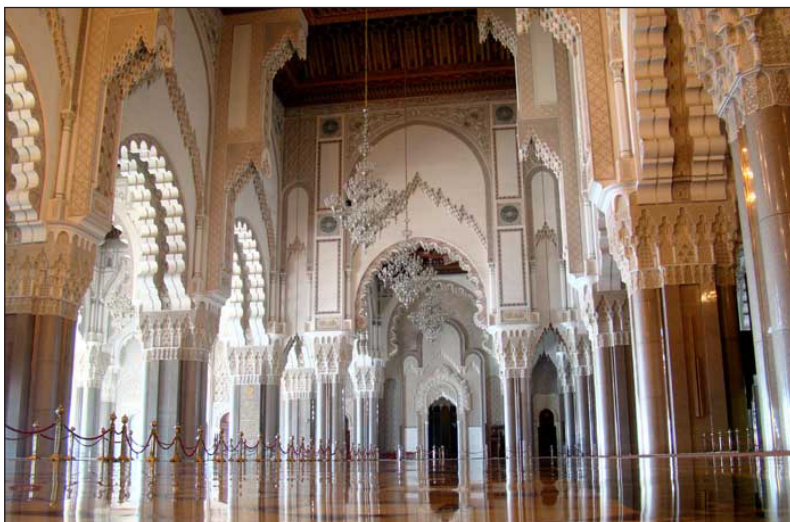
- Exemption from customs duties under Article 7.I of the Finance Act No. 12-98;
- Exemption from VAT on imports under Article 123 - 22 (b) of the General tax law.

### **Incentives of investment:**

Investment opportunities abound in Morocco; however, the prioritized

fields include industry, tourism, solar energy, agriculture, wind energy, and fishing.

In addition to tax exemptions granted for the investors in accordance with the law, the Moroccan law provides for certain privileges, including taxes and customs duties; this will be in accordance with investment agreements signed by the state provided that be subject to the required standards.



#### These standards are as follows:

- Contribution of the country to certain expenditures related to investment through The investment promotion's funds.
- Contribution of the state to certain expenditures for promoting investment in specific industrial sectors.
- Development of modern technology through Al-Hassn Althani Fund for economic and social development.
- Exemption of customs duties in accordance with article 7.1 of Finance law no.12/98.
- Exemption of added value tax (VAT) imposed on imports in accordance with clause 123 b -22 of general tax law.

#### Federation of Moroccan Chambers of Commerce:

The Federation provides information and assistance for Moroccan companies on issues related to international trade. It also plays an important role in producing administrative documents such as certificates of origin and membership cards.

Moreover, the Federation is sometimes associated with foreign chambers of commerce which can provide assistance and information to Moroccan exporters through their business trips.

#### Imports & exports:

##### Exports:

Morocco's key exports include phosphate, iron and steel.

##### Imports:

The country imports oil, manufactured goods, agricultural products, clothes, machinery and equipment.

#### Tourism in Morocco:

The Ministry of Tourism and Traditional Industries is in charge of the tourist sector, which is one of the key pillars of the Moroccan

economy. Morocco is characterized by tranquil tourist environment abuzz with landmarks and archeological sites frequented by visitors.

There are many such landmarks such as Al-







Wadiya house, Hassan minaret, Bujuld walled gate in Fas, Al-Manara groves, Aghno gate in Murakush, Bab Al-Masoor La'alaj, Kutubaih Mosque, Uzud cataracts in Azla, Al-Fana Mosque and Tarudant city walls.

## Republic of Yemen

The Republic of Yemen is located in the southernmost tip of the Arabian peninsula, and to the southwest of Asia. It commands two of the most strategically important waterways: the Gulf of Aden in the Arabian Sea and Bab Al-Mandab straits in the Red Sea. Yemen's population is 23,154,000 as per 2004 census, while the surface area stands at 5,478 sq km.

The country has a coastline of 2600 km, in addition to 250 strategic islands, including Socotra archipelago in the Arabian sea, Hunashi archipelago, and Mune island in the Red Sea.

The Yemeni government, backed by the UN, Friends of Yemen and international donors, is seeking to develop more sustainable alternatives to oil, including agriculture, fisheries, tourism and industry.



## Exports and imports:

Oil is Yemen's most important export commodity, as it forms 92% of the country's overall exports and 30% of GDP. The country produces some 250,000 barrels per day. In 2002, the overall oil production amounted to 440,000 barrels per day. Yemen ranks 33rd out of 206 countries in the world with respect to gas reserves, which are estimated at 478.5 billions cubic meters.

Exports include crude oil, gas, fish and coffee, while imports include food commodities, machines, chemicals. The total value of Yemen's annual exports amounts to \$6,682 billion against \$9,627 million.

## Agriculture

Yemen is characterized by diverse topography, hence the diversity in its agricultural products. The country largely depends on rains and underground water for agriculture. Yemen's terrains are traversed by a number of wadis and valleys.

Key agricultural crops are millet, maize, wheat, Mango, banana, papaya tree, melon, citrus, pear, apples, peach and grapes. Official and unofficial efforts have so far failed to uproot the home-grown and locally-consumed Khat tree, which





yields no revenues but occupies almost 50% of arable lands.

### Investment laws:

Investments in Yemen are governed by the new investment law No. 22 enacted in 2002. The legislation aims to encourage foreign investment in the fields of industry, agriculture, fishing and tourism... etc.. To benefit from the advantages offered by this law, an investor must obtain an investment license from the concerned authority within 15 days from receipt of business file.

### Key investment incentives include:

- Foreign companies are treated on equal basis with their local counterparts.
- Arab and foreign investors are allowed to lease or buy land or buildings during the project's implementation period.
- Imports of goods intended for breeding live-stock and fishing are exempted from customs duties and taxes, while capital equipment meant for other projects are exempted of 50% of customs duties and taxes.
- Profits of investment projects are exempted from taxes for a period of seven years.
- Royalties are exempt from taxes for a period of 5 years.
- There are no restrictions on the transfer of capital and profits as well as there is no re-

striction imposed on currency exchange.

The 2008 Republican decree 28 on chambers of commerce and industry and their federation was intended to keep up with economic development, increase the role of the private sector and embody the new economic policy of the Republic of Yemen that aims at enhancing partnership with the private sector and encouraging its development.

### Investment Opportunities:

Investors seeking to set up ventures in Yemen can get a lot of opportunities in the agricultural sector with

cheap labor and bustling markets, let alone the fertile soil and moderate climate conducive for the production of cash crops.

The transport sector, including airports, ports and road infrastructure, has seen a considerable development.







### Tourism:

Tourism, a promising sector, has been rapidly growing since 1990, except for the drop it experienced from 2011-2012 due to the political unrest that reigned in the country at the time.

The UN's World Tourism Organization estimates that the sector will grow steadily at an average of 10% compared to 7 % in other Middle East countries. In addition, the World Council of Travel and Tourism reveals that the economy of travel and tourism, which will reflect positively on employment and export revenues through foreign visitors, would grow by 16.4% by 2019.

### Tourism in Yemen:

Yemen has promising tourist attractions; however, revenues from the tourist sector are still too small given the available potentials.

In the governorate of Sana'a, there are many places to visit, including Prophet Shuaib mountain, which is located in Bani Matar area at a height of 3,666 meters above sea level, Ahmed mount which is located in Al-Haima at a height of 2400 meters above sea level, Jabal Al-Ar and Badaj, which are 2240 m and 2080 m high respectively.

Consecutive ancient civilizations had existed in Yemen, as evidenced in the archeological sites and landmarks scattered across the country. There are many historic cities in Yemen which are known for their magnificent architecture such as Tarim in Had-

ramout, the Old city of Sana'a, Shibam Hadramout, and Zabid, the last three were placed on the UNESCO list of world heritage.

Yemen has lots of forts that have been standing on mountaintops for hundreds of years. Besides, the country has diverse terrains and climate, thereby attracting tourists throughout the year.

There are many areas known for marine tourism such as Socotra, Kamaran and Hunaish archipelagoes, where visitors can enjoy swimming, diving amid coral reefs, and recreation.

Further, there are many saunas destined for medical tourism, including Damt volcanic steam bath in Dalea governorate, Ali steam bath in Dhamar, and hot springs in Hadramout. Taiz is the cultural capital of the country, which is bustling with cultural centers and intellectuals.

### Republic of South Africa

The Republic of South Africa is situated in the southwestern part of Africa, with an area of 471008 sq km; the population is 49 million.

The country is a popular tourist destination, and a large amount of revenues comes from tourism.

South Africa is an agrarian country par excellence; it is one of the world's largest producers of chicory roots, grape fruit, green maize, maize, castor oil seeds, sisals, and pear and fiber crops.

The government is encouraging businessmen in the field of biotechnology, information technology and other areas of modern technology. Many companies have been established in South Africa in what can be described as a step forward towards diversifying the economy to be more dependent on advanced technology. Indeed, South Africa can neither compete with the economies of the Far Eastern countries in manufacturing, nor rely on the mineral wealth forever.



## Investment Regulations:

The government plans to make it easier to do business in South Africa by setting up a national one-stop shop for investment approvals, reforming BEE codes, and simplifying the red tape required of small businesses.

South Africa has a well-developed and regulated competition regime based on best international practices.

The country's economic system is predominantly based on free market principles. However, as in most developed economies, competition is controlled.

The Competition Act of 1998 fundamentally reformed the country's competition legislation, substantially



vice (Sars). Some key points are:

- Business profits are taxable in South Africa if the business is conducted in SA.
- Income from services is taxable in South Africa if the services are rendered in SA.
- Businesses must file annual income tax returns with Sars.
- Businesses may select their own financial year-end.
- For individuals, the tax year runs from 1 March to 28 February.
- Two provisional tax payments based on an estimate of annual income are made during each financial year, the first after six months, and the second at the end of the financial year.

## Exports:

The country is the world leader in several specialized manufacturing areas: it produces and exports more gold than any other international competitor, and also exports considerable amounts of coal; and it leads in the field of mineral processing to form fer-



strengthening the powers of the competition authorities along the lines of the European Union, US and Canadian models.

## Tax regulations

South Africa has a well-developed and regulated taxation regime based on international best practices. Here are the tax basics for foreigners investing or working in SA.

The tax regime is set by the National Treasury and managed by the South African Revenue Ser-







roalloys and stainless steels.

### Areas of investment

There are several areas of investment in South Africa, such as tourism, agriculture, livestock development, and construction. The service industry is undergoing rapid growth at the moment.

### Chamber of Commerce & Industry

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which is formally known as South African Chamber of Business (SACOB)), comprises almost 50 constituent chambers, in addition to approximately 20,000 small, medium and large enterprises across the breadth of the nation. The chamber is a lifeline to businessmen.

Large enterprises are generally direct members of SACCI while small and medium enterprises are members through more than 50 local and regional chambers and 15 national associations.

### Tourism:

South Africa played host to the world cup tournaments held in 2010. It is a buzz with a wide range of tourist activities to the satisfaction of visitors seeking adventures, recreation, and sand skating, which has rapidly grown in recent years.

For those seeking excitement, they can exercise sand skating, crocodile cage diving in Kango wildlife ranch. They can also exercise bungee jump over Bloukrans bridge, the highest bungee jump place. Air skiing is exercised in Durban and



Kurman. For those not fond of excitement, there are other alternatives, such as safari and zoos, where visitors can see wild animals from behind walls.

Tourists can also visit Garden route, a long coastal road leading to Golf courts, ancient forests and isolated artist communities, shopping malls, sculptures, serene mountainous parks, coasts, and recreational places. Tree enthusiasts can visit the



world's largest pawpaw tree in Sunland, where they take drinks at the tree bar.

South Africa is a sunny country where visitors can bask comfortably and engage in safaris. It has long been a favorite destination for tourists seeking medical treatment, as it is located in the proximity of Europe.

Though accommodation and food costs are exorbitant in South Africa, they are still 50% less than the US.



Tourists visit South Africa every year to enjoy serene and fascinating sceneries, recuperate or get quality medical services, as the country has highly



competent medical doctors. It is worth mentioning that the first heart transplant surgery was carried out in Cape Town in 1967, making the country among the leading countries in terms of medical tourism.

### The State of Qatar:

Qatar is one of the smallest Arab countries in terms of both land mass, which amounts to 11.521 sq km, and population. Qatar is a resource-rich country, and this is why unemployment rate is too slight at only 0.3%.

Qatar's oil production reached 733,000 barrels per day (according to the statistics of 2010); it has huge deposits of liquid gas. The Gross Domestic Production (GDP)

is almost \$1,730, 2 billion, with a growth rate of 20%. The country's per capita income stands at \$102.700.

Further, Qatar is the world's third largest gas exporter, having some 14% of the world's gas reserve. Its gas output rose to 17.9% or 5.8 billion cubic meters, the highest in the Middle East.

The northern gas field, the largest in the world, which was discovered in 1971, produces the bulk of Qatar's gas, and accounts for 20% of the world's gas reserve.

### Investment fields:

The terms and conditions for foreign investments are set forth in the investment law 13 for 2000 as follows:

- Exploitation of available natural resources (fishing, fish farming).
- Production of local crops for domestic consumption and export.
- Improvement of animal wealth.
- Human development (universities, technical education)
- Transportation (land, air and water).
- Schools education development (kindergarten, primary and secondary schools).
- Power generation and distribution.
- Tourism (building of holiday resorts, hotels, Guest houses, airlines operation).
- Hospital and clinics.
- Production and importation of medical equipment / drugs.
- Telecommunications and modern technologies (mobile operators, computer services and training).







The areas that fully absorb foreign investments include industry, agriculture, tourism, education, health, exploitation of natural resources, energy, technical services, information technology, cultural and sport services. Foreign investments are not allowed in banks, insurance companies and trade firms.

Joint investments are allowed in all areas, where foreigners can get 49% of any investment venture while locals can get 51% and above.



### Exports:

Qatar's key exports include liquefied natural gas, petroleum, fertilizer products, iron and steel.

### Imports:

The Gulf country imports machinery, transport equipment, food products and chemicals.

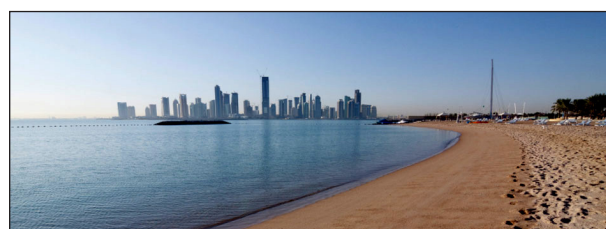
### Investment incentives:

Qatar is blessed with a solid base of attractive investment package. It is a politically and socially stable country and production conditions favor the engagement in the vast power consuming industries in light of the fact that the country has the largest sin-



gle concentration of non associated gas in the world, which has earned it a remarkable edge on economic advancement.

The country is located in the hub on the gulf region, and being a peninsula gives it longer shorelines and so more maritime access routes to the world, which makes it more competitive as a



center for international investment. In addition, the Qatari economy is market oriented; and the State continually enacts and updates legislation to bolster the trend of economic openness towards all countries of the world.

Customs charges and bureaucratic or procedural restrictions are minimal or non-existent with regard to all transactions including repatriation of foreign capitals; and legislation is in place to provide incentives and facilities that could help raise the profit margins of investments.

The State gives topmost priority to infrastructure including roads, utilities, ports and communications to bring about economic diversification, attract foreign investments and help increase the sources of national income.

Qatar facilitates the recruitment of the foreign workforce required for the development

projects of the country.

Foreign investors are allowed according to the Qatari investment laws to invest in all national economy sectors provided that they have a Qatari partner who has a share of at least 51% of the capital of the joint venture and that the company is duly established in accordance with the provisions of the law of commercial companies.

According to an approval from the Minister, the shareholding of foreign investors in joint ventures can surpass the limit of 49% and reach up to 100% of the capital in selected sectors such as agriculture, industry, health, education, tourism, development of natural resources or energy and mining, on condition that the projects in question are in line with the country's development objectives; give priority to optimizing the utilization of and add value to local raw materials and local products; are export oriented; introduce new products; use new technologies; seek to introduce industries to international fame and develop the national human resources.

Based on an Emiri decree, The Qatari law allows full shareholding of foreign investments in sectors such as industry, agriculture, mining, energy, tourism or contracting provided that the investment is geared to develop the industry in question or provide a public utility or service that serves the best interests of the community. The law also allows non-Qatari investors to import the required materials that are not available locally for their projects.

Qatar is committed not to impose any additional restrictions on foreign investments in Qatar in order to avoid undermining the requirements of fair competition between foreign and Qatari capitals. However, foreign investors are not al-



lowed to invest in the fields of banking, insurance, commercial representation and real estate purchase.

### Exports:

Qatar's key exports include liquefied natural gas, petroleum, fertilizer products, iron and steel.

### Imports:

The country's imports include machinery, transport equipment, foodstuffs and chemicals.

The Chamber of commerce of Qatar was established in 1963 and has been working as one of government departments until law 11 for 1990 was passed, turning the chamber into an autonomous public welfare institution.

Though the chamber is autonomous members were appointed through a royal decree till law







11 for the year 1996 was issued, providing for the direct election of the chambers' board of directors.

In April, 1998, Qatar's chamber of commerce witnessed the first real democracy through the election of a board of directors comprising 17 members. The chamber seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- Organizing commercial, industrial and agricultural interests.
- 2- Representing and defending the private sector.
- 3- Promoting and supporting economic and productive activities.

### **Tourism:**

The General Authority for Tourism works towards supporting the tourist sector which currently has lots of exhibition centers with an area of 9 sq km, thus turning Qatar into a major hub for business and in-

ternational conferences that attract more visitors. Doha plays host to a variety of high-profile international diplomatic and cultural activities.

Qatar has now an exhibition center with an area of 15,000 square m. There will be added two new conference and exhibition halls with a total area 95,000 sq m by 2011, which makes Qatar a landmark destination for tourists and business and international conferences. Doha used to host a large number of high-profile cultural and diplomatic conferences. Further, Qatari citizens embrace new ideas and warmly welcome visitors as guests and friends. Qatar represents a vector for deep-seated traditions.

### **The most important tourist sites are:**

- Celine Beach Resort:

It is 25 kilometers away from the capital Doha. The resort offers a wide choice of rooms, villas and chalets.

## **The Federal Republic of Nigeria**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located to the west of Africa. It is the largest African country as well as the largest black country in the world in terms of population that stands at almost 154 million; it has an area of 923, 768 sq km. It is bounded by Benin on the west, Chad and Cameroon on the east, Niger in the north, and the Gulf of Guinea on the south. Abuja is the capital of the country, which was established in 1991.

Nigeria has an array of natural resources, mainly oil and water, with the latter constituting the sinew of agriculture.

Two main forms of agriculture are prominent in the state namely, food crop production and industrial crop production. The food crops produced include rice, yam, cassava, fruits and vegetables,



in addition to mangoes, pawpaw, pineapples, banana, pepper and tomatoes.

The industrial crops include rubber, oil palm and palm kernel.

Further, oil is the key pillar of the economy as well as the bridge of friendship with different countries. Nigeria is the sixth largest exporter of oil in the world and the fifth-largest exporter of oil to the United States. It is also the United States' largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa, largely due to the high level of petroleum imports from Nigeria, which supplies 8% of U.S. oil imports--nearly half of Nigeria's daily oil production.

Bilateral trade between Nigeria and the US in 2010 was valued at more than \$34 billion, a 51% increase over 2009, largely due to the recovery in the international price of crude oil. In 2010, U.S. imports from Nigeria were over \$30 billion, consisting overwhelmingly of crude oil. Cocoa, bauxite, aluminum, tobacco, waxes, rubber, and grains constituted about \$73 million of U.S. imports from Nigeria in the same year.

### Areas of investment:

Nigeria was recently recognized among the five most industrial destinations of the world by 2015. It has one of the fastest growing telecommunications markets in the world; major emerging market operators (like MTN, Etisalat, Zain and Globacom) abasing their largest and most profitable centers in the country. The government has recently begun ex-



panding this infrastructure to space based communications. Nigeria has two space satellites which are monitored at the Nigerian National Space Research and Development Agency Headquarters in Abuja.

The country has a highly developed financial services sector, with a mix of local and international banks, asset management companies, brokerage houses, insurance companies and brokers, private equity funds and investment banks.

Nigeria also has a wide array of underexploited mineral resources which include natural gas, coal, bauxite, tantalite, gold, tin, iron ore, limestone,



niobium, lead and zinc. Despite huge deposits of these natural resources, the mining industry in Nigeria is still in its infancy.

### Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA):

The Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture is the umbrella organization for all the city/state and Bilateral Chambers of Commerce within the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It represents businessmen before the government, protects their interests, and provides prospective investors with the latest information on a variety of investment opportunities in Nigeria.

Nigeria offers a wide variety of tourist attractions such as the Wikki Warm Springs as well as the Yankari sanctuary located around the Gagi River. The reserve covers over 2 sq kms of savanna woodland and is well-stocked with elephants, baboons, crocodile, hippopotamus, and buffalo, among oth-





er things.

The Wikki Warm Springs are one of the best features of the game reserves. Flood-lit at night, it is wonderful to relax in the warm water. The park is inhabited by a variety of birds, including the huge saddlebill stork, golliath heron, bateleur eagle, vultures.

The Mambilla Plateau, in the southeast corner of Taraba State, shares a border with Cameroon. A high grassland plateau averaging about 1800 meters, it is scenic, cool and a pleasant change from the heat and humidity. Mambilla has cattle ranches, tea plantations and rolling, grassy hills, and is home to some rare species of birds and animals.

### **Gashaka-Gumti National Park:**

Gashaka-Gumti National Park is located to the south-east corner of Taraba State, adjoining the Mambilla Plateau. It contains Nigeria's highest mountain, Chapal Waddi as well as swaths of guinea savanna, gallery forest, moist forest, mountain forest and grassland. Many rivers flow through the park, including the Taraba, a major tributary of the River Benue.

Nigeria also has many rivers and reserves such as



Kam River and forest reserves of Bashi-Okwango and Oban, one of the richest in Africa. The Kainji National Park is another tourist attraction. This Park, in Kwara State, incorporates the Borgu Game Reserve and Zugurma Game Reserve to the southeast in Niger State.



Coconut Beach is a beautiful beach in the coastal town of Badagry, west of Lagos. The beach is attractively set in an area surrounded by coconut trees. About 20 miles towards the border of Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, Coconut Beach is accessible through the Lagos-Badagry expressway.

Bar Beach, also known as Victoria Beach, BeachTarkwa Bay is a sheltered beach along the Lagos harbor.

### **Calabar Beach:**

This superb beach is located at the mouth of the new Calabar River. The beach is virtually isolated and lends visitors the luxury of privacy, because it is flanked by a swamp and can only be reached by boat or canoe. Other awe-inspiring beaches include L'ekki Beach along the Lekki Peninsula, and Eleko, the newest of Lagos' Beaches, down the Lekki Peninsula about 30 miles from Lagos.

Other tourist attractions in Nigeria include the Oqbunike Cave, Yankari game reserve, Ushafa and lower Usman dams, the confluence of the Rivers of Niger and Benue.

### **Promising investment opportunities are available in Nigeria's tourist sector as follows:**

- Building of tourist lodges
- Building of reception centres at Natural/Physical Attractions
- Provision of cable bus system to take tourist through the very rugged but scenic terrain of the mountains especially in Kanyang, Obudu



and Mambilla Plateau Construction of lodge cabins for expedition tourist and rangers.

- Establishment of hotels and resorts near waterfalls, springs, caves and temperate climate areas such as Obudu, jos and Mambila Plateau.
- Development of water transportation Provision of educational facilities for water skiing and swimming.
- Development of arts and crafts which constitute symbol of the people's cultural values and love for nature.

### Business Opportunities:

Transportation in Nigeria has attained a high level of good transportation system especially Airline and Road Transportation, investment opportunities are still needed in water recreation transportation and rail services. Meanwhile, most of Nigeria's beautiful beaches locations are still largely without accommodation facilities, which are targets for investors in most tourism destinations across the globe.

**For more information, please visit the following website:**

[www.tourism.gov.ng](http://www.tourism.gov.ng)

## Kingdom of Bahrain

The population of the Kingdom of Bahrain is 1,234,596 living on an estimated area of 750 sq km. According to the UN Heritage Foundation's Economic Freedom Index for 2006, and Wall Street Journal – the economy of Bahrain is considered to be the most liberal in the Middle East and ranks 25th in the world. The Kingdom's economic development is imputed to a range of measures taken by the government to tackle the gradual decrease in oil production.

Further, the country's economy is branded as a modern one due to the fact that it has sophisticated telecommunication and transport infrastructure. There are many international companies operating in Bahrain.

The Kingdom has upgraded its heavy industries, banking sector and tourism; therefore, it is considered to be the main banking hub in the Gulf and the center of Islamic finance.

It has benefited from the oil boom seen in 2001, which led to economic growth and attracted investments from the GCC countries that contributed to the development of infrastructure and other projects. This has gone a long way in improving living standards and services, such







as health, education, housing, electricity, water supply and roads.

Oil and natural gas are the country's main resources that yield 60 % of its revenues.

Bahrain's industries include aluminum and its related factories, in addition to ship building and repairing.

The GCC country has made great breakthroughs on information technology and the development of programmes that provide suitable solutions to modern age problems.

The Gulf state has a considerable deposits of fisheries; however, it suffers from the dearth of arable lands that constitute only 1% of the country's area.

Since ancient times, Bahrain has been a key trade and geographical centre in the Arabian Gulf. In the past, it was an international passage for trade caravans coming and going through the Gulf and the Mediterranean, or in other direction towards the Indian subcontinent and the Far East. Hence, Bahrain was highly reputed for transit trade.

The people of this island came to have an instinctive feel for trade, and through their practice they gained an understanding of both local and foreign trade.

### **Chamber of Commerce & Industry:**

In 1939, The General Traders' Association was established in Bahrain, becoming the first ever

chamber of commerce to be created in the Gulf region. Since its inception,, it has been keeping pace with economic development in the country. It also plays an effective role in enhancing the private sector's contribution to the country's development.

In addition, the chamber contributed to the welfare of the society, including by developing and supporting its economic institutions, and providing various services to such institutions in such a way that achieves development and economic growth.

### **Areas of investments:**

Bahrain has long been the most optimum destination for investments in the Middle East due to its conducive business environment that provides competitive advantages to investors and entrepreneurs seeking to do business there. It also offers tempting legislative incentives with an aim to attract more investors into the country.

The kingdom also opts for setting up joint partnerships in various fields, namely agriculture, food and pharmaceutical manufacturing, information technology, training and education....etc

### **Industrial areas:**

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce is operating 10 industrial zones with an overall area of 2.288 hectares. It offers the opportunity of leasing such zones to investors on 25-year contracts. All



basic services, including power, road networks, telecommunications, water and sanitations, are available in such areas.

Enterprises set up there are exempted from capital and raw material tax, and are granted low power tariffs.

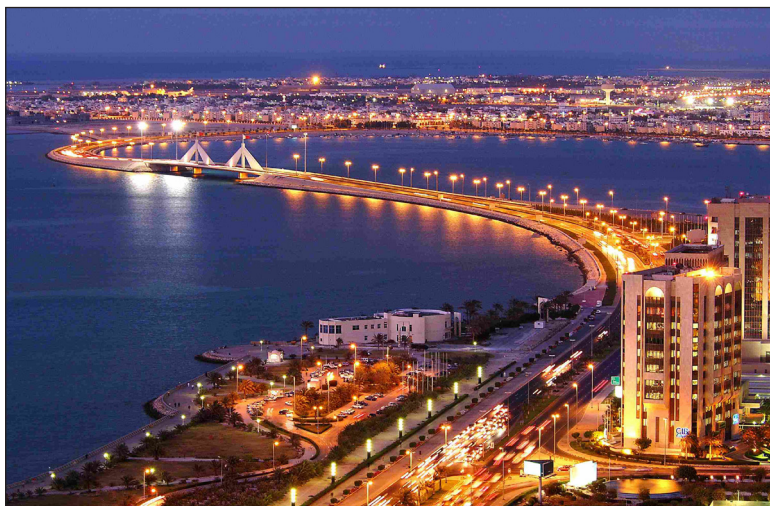
### Investment laws:

Investors are fully free to set up a wide range of commercial and industrial ventures in Bahrain, as the country's valid investment laws provide for the



legal protection of investors and entrepreneurs, including by setting out relevant legal and administrative mechanisms.

Other legislations, such as the business firm law, provide for the freedom of foreign investments, including by allowing non-Bahrainis to establish associated companies.



They also allow foreigners, be they ordinary or legal persons, to own real estate, including buildings and lands.

Moreover, Bahrain set up a national committee to cater for its relations with the World Trade Organization (WTO), and make best use of the WTO's trade agreements. The move suggests that the country is taking carefully thought-out steps to embrace the principles of globalization.

Investors can have their dealings approved by government agencies in no time.

In Bahrain, there are no tariff regimes, nor is there any income tax imposed on investors.

### Tourism:

Several ancient civilizations had existed in Bahrain, as evidenced in the historic archaeological sites and landmarks to which the new Bahraini generation has added new milestones. The country has lots of popular markets which are known for selling high-quality gold.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism seeks to develop a creative, dynamic and sustainable tourism industry. The Ministry's Tourism department is the key organ responsible for marketing, promotion, licensing and ensuring the quality of services, researches and statistics, in addition to product development.





## People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

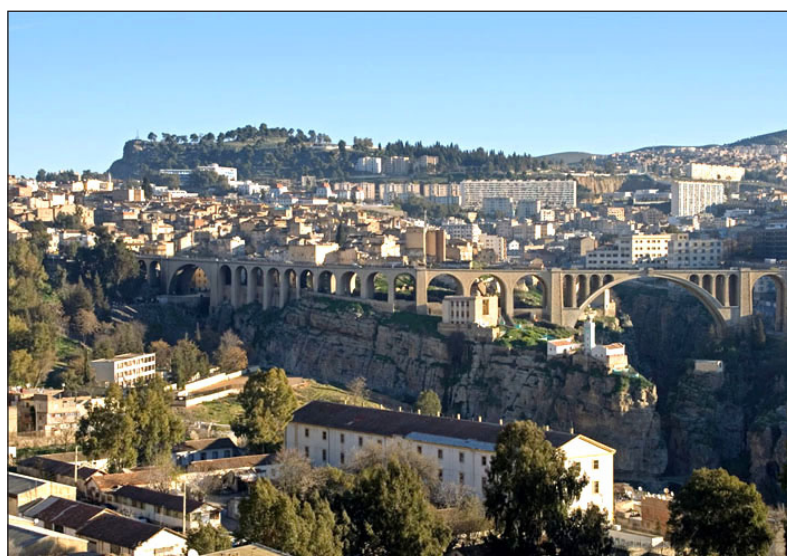
The country is officially known as the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

### Population:

According to 2011 census, the population of Algeria is 36.3 million. Algeria has one of the largest economies in Africa, with an estimated GDP of \$ 120 billion. The oil sector is the sinew of the Algerian economy, accounting for about 60% of the country's overall budget, 30% of GDP and 97% of total exports. Algeria seeks to reduce dependence on oil revenues by focusing on more sustainable alternatives, mainly agriculture. To this end, the country has kick-started ambitious programs, including by encouraging the privatization of the agricultural sector. It also seeks to minimally reduce the importation of agricultural products, such as cereals, potatoes and fruits, while, at the same time, encouraging the export of dates for which Algeria is famous.

Algeria ranks 51st among 195 countries with highest GDP rates; unemployment is relatively high at 17.7%. According to 2004 statistics, Algeria ranks 17th in the world as regards unemployment. Algeria saw a considerable economic growth in the second half of the nineties, due to the World Bank support for policy reforms and the process of debt restructuring approved by the Paris Club.

Overall investments amount to about AD 2001



billion, which is equivalent to more than \$16 billion, including 730 billion Algerian Dinars or more than 60 percent, provided by the state and about 250 billion AD provided by the national economy while more than 200 billion dinars are provided by foreign institutions.

Algeria has mineral and energy reserves, which are among the largest in the world. Such deposits are available generally in the south. According to Algeria's Sonatrach company, 67% of the oil and gas reserves are existing in the Hassi Messaoud and Wadi Mia. The city of Illizi has 14% of such reserves while the rest is scattered across the country.

Mining activity in Algeria is very diverse; there are more than 30 minerals, including iron, salt, zinc, lead, barite, marble, tungsten, gold and precious metals, such as diamond, precious stones and rare metals, in addition to iron, gypsum, lime stone, cement, clay and sand.

The most important investment sectors in Algeria are energy, gas exploration, mining, tourism and agriculture.

### Investment privileges:

The National Agency for Investment Development, based on Statutory Order 01 -03 on the development of the investment, provides a system applicable to national and foreign investments falling within the framework of economic activities, including the production of goods and services, as well as the investments made in the framework of granting concessions and licenses.

### Privileges:

In addition to tax, non-tax and customs incentives enshrined in the law; investors enjoy the following benefits:

- Reduced rate of customs duties on imported equipment, which directly contribute to the implementation of the investment project;
- Exemption from VAT for goods

and services that contribute directly to the completion of the investment project;

- Exemption from the fees incurred from the transfer of ownership of property necessary for the completion of the investment project.
- The investment project shall, after the commencement of its actual activity, get a 10-year exemption from corporate taxes, income and total payments taxes and professional tax to which dividends are amenable.
- Ordinary and legal person, whether Algerian or otherwise, from both the private and pub-



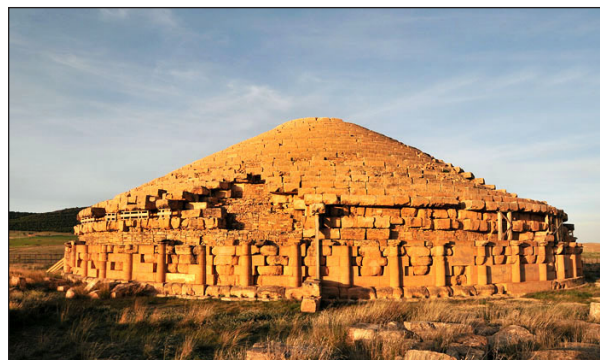
lic sectors, shall be treated on the same footing with Algerians in respect of investment rights and obligations.

- The possibility of recourse to international arbitration in the event of disputes for non-resident investors.

### Chamber of commerce and industry of Algeria

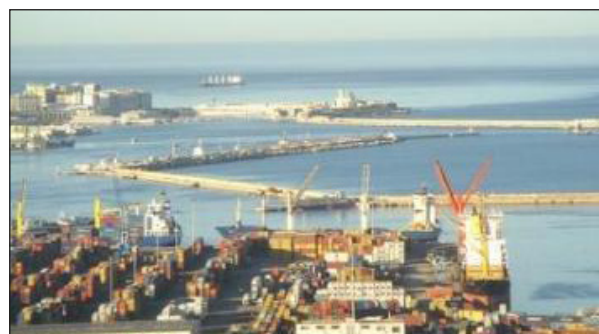
The functions of the chambers of commerce and industry of Algeria include the following:

- It furnishes public institutions, upon their requests, with opinions, proposals, and recommendations on a variety of issues related to



trade, industry and services.

- Organizing retreats for members of chambers of commerce to enable them share their views on the proposals submitted to them by management for consideration and counseling.
- Implementing the recommendations and proposals adopted by the chamber of commerce and coordinating programs.
- Carrying out activities of common interest to chambers of commerce and encouraging the initiatives of economic actors.
- Ensuring representation at other government institutions and national forums.
- Implementing the activities aimed at developing national economy and intensifying commercial activities on foreign markets.



Algeria is currently witnessing an economic boom. Therefore, it is getting increasingly attractive for foreign investors who can set up a range of ventures, including restaurants, automakers, telecommunications, and clothing factories. Many foreign companies are scrambling to invest in different sectors, such as tourism, industry and agriculture, among others.





Furthermore, the government of Algeria offers a myriad of incentives to foreign investors as follows:

- Foreign investors are treated on equal footing with local counterparts, meaning that no extra taxes are imposed on foreign capitals. The government also provides many advantages to foreign capitals including:

Reduction of custom duties when bringing in necessary equipment for investment projects. foreigners are entitled to the same privileges as local investors. In case of legal disputes, the investor can resort to international arbitration.

- Exemption from VAT on goods and services that directly contribute to the implementation of the project;

### Exports and imports:

Algeria exports oil, gas, phosphates, fruits, vegetables and steel iron. It imports food products, consumer goods, equipment and machinery.

## Republic of Sudan

Sudan's economy is largely dependent on agriculture. The area of the country's arable lands is estimated at 840, 000 km<sup>2</sup>. However, only 18% of such an area is cultivated. Hopefully, the process of bringing peace in to the country would help Sudan's economy recover in a manner that enables it become Africa's breadbasket.

The main agricultural products are cotton, sesame and groundnuts. Sudan is the largest producer of Arab gum and the third largest producer of sugar in Africa.

Animal husbandry is thriving in Sudan, which is home to 20, 000, 000 heads of livestock, 22, 000, 000 heads of sheep, and 18, 000, 000 heads of goats. The country has sprawling swathes of forests that contribute to the promotion of national economy, and produce 25 million cubic logs a year.

### Investment opportunities:

In 2002, the Sudanese government established the Ministry of investment, which is currently in charge of attracting local and foreign investments, including the provision of facilities and necessary guarantees for the success of ventures.

In order to facilitate administrative procedures and remove obstacles to the flow of investment into the country, the Ministry established "The one window system" to finalize all investment-related procedures as soon as possible. Therefore,



investors are issued licenses within 72 hours from the delivery of project studies.

### Investment law advantages:

Sudan's investment law provides for many advantages for investors as follows:

- All kinds of investment have the same advantages and the same treatment.
- Foreign, Arab, and local investors are treated equally in terms of rights and responsibilities.
- The law provides for flexible administrative procedures.
- It provides the necessary guarantees for investors to transfer abroad their capitals and revenues generated from their ventures.
- It proposes internationally recognized approaches to the settlement of disputes.
- The law does not stipulate a minimum capital for any investment project.
- An Arab or foreign investor is entitled to full project ownership and doesn't need to have a Sudanese partner.

### Federation of Chambers of Commerce of Sudan:

The Sudanese Business Community established the chamber of commerce of Sudan in 1908 to achieve several objectives, foremost among them are:

- 1- To collect and disseminate significant business information.
- 3- To communicate with the government of Sudan regarding all business issue, and preserve business interests in the country.
- 4- To give opinions on business-related matters.
- 5- To submit all matters of common interests to competent agencies.



- 6- To liaise with other chambers of commerce when need arises, and respond to queries trickling into its offices from time to time.
- 7- To assist with the resolution of disputes through arbitration and peaceful means when need be.
- 8- To carry out all functions that contribute to the growth of national economy.

Several chambers of commerce have recently been established across Sudan, especially after local business markets had expanded while huge development projects were created.







In view of such developments, businessmen deemed it necessary to set up an umbrella organization pulling together all Sudanese chambers of commerce. For this purpose, the Federation of Sudan's Chambers of Commerce and Industry was established; it comprises seven specialized chambers as follows:

- 1 - Chamber of Exporters
- 2 - Chamber of Importers.
- 3 - Chamber of Services
- 4 - Chamber of Information Technology and Communications.
- 5 - Chamber of Health, Education and Training
- 6 Chamber of Contractors
- 7 - Chamber of States

Every chamber consists of many departments, each of which has its own executive committees.

Other federations were subsequently established, including the federation of chambers of industry, the Federation of transport chambers, the federation of chambers of small industries and craftsmen, and the federation of agricultural chambers. These federations were then merged into one entity called "The Federation of Sudanese Employers" that seeks to achieve many objectives as follows:

a-To encourage the development of national economy.

- b- To take part in planning national development.
- c- To create a conducive environment for fruitful relations between all business bodies in general and businessmen in particular.
- d- To provide legal protection to its members.
- e- To conduct studies and researches that contribute to the promotion of development.
- f- To lay out schemes and policies aimed at boosting economic growth.
- g- To participate in seminars and workshops tackling economic issues.

### Investment incentives:

In 2002, the Sudanese government established the Ministry of Investment to cater to the interests of local and foreign investors, including by providing the necessary facilities and guarantees for the success of their investments.

### Exports:

Sudan's key exports include oil, gasoline, kerosene, gas, gold, sesame, cotton, Arab gum c, sugar, meat, peanuts, hides, molasses, livestock and corn, among other things.

### Imports:

The country imports machinery, capital equipment, food products, manufactured goods, transport means, chemicals, and textiles.

### Investment Opportunities:

Sudan is a promising and viable country that provides investors with a variety of business opportunities in the following areas:

- Agriculture
- industry
- Oil
- Real estate
- Fisheries.
- Tourism
- livestock farming.

### Tourism:

The Ministry of Tourism, Antiquities and Wildlife is in charge of tourism in Sudan. Services provided by the Ministry include licensing of the following companies:

- Companies that undertake tourist activities, and are registered in accordance with national invest-

ment laws.

- Foreign companies operating in the field of internal and external tourist transport.
- Companies with capital partnership or foreign management.

## Republic of Burundi

The Republic of Burundi has an area of 27834 sq km, while its population stands at 8.3 million.. It is an agrarian country, with the agricultural production accounting for 58% of GDP. Cultivation is the main source of foreign currency.

There are two types of crops grown in the country: food crops, including beans, bananas, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize and sorghum, and cash crops, such as coffee, tea, cotton, and quinquina). It is worth noting that coffee -Arabica and Robusta- accounts for nearly 90% of the country's export revenues. The tea produced in Burundi is of high quality, and Cotton is the third export product.

The country has massive animal wealth; however, livestock farming is still in limbo and animals remain largely wild.

### Water resources:

Burundi is boarding the Lake Tanganyika, which is home to a variety of fisheries. It produces an estimated 15,000 tons of fish per year. The traditional fishing system still contributes 90% of fish production, part of which is consumed locally while the surplus is exported abroad.

Burundi has massive reserves of various minerals, including nickel, copper, cobalt, platinum, iron ore, and gold. It also has deposits of phosphate, carbonate, kaolin, and limestone, in addition to precious stones which are of high value on international markets.

### Federal Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Burundi:

Burundi has liberalized its economy, including by eliminating trade restrictions, pricing, and adopt-



ing negotiations with the private sector.

The Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burundi (CFCIB) is the umbrella organization for the federations of businessmen representing the private sector.

The CFCIB consists of ten chambers and two sectorial chambers as follows:

- Chamber of traders
- Chamber of mining
- Chamber of industry
- Chamber of crafts.
- Transport chamber







- Chamber of professionals and construction workers.
- Chamber of banks and insurance companies.
- Chamber of services and new technologies.
- Chamber of agriculture and business.
- Chamber of Tourism

#### **The CFCIB has several functions as follows:**

- Strengthening relations among economic actors as well as social and administrative partners.
- Implementing initiatives to support professionals in such a way that enables them develop their skills and abilities.
- Ensure full participation of professionals involved in the management of economic sectors.

#### **Investment laws:**

According to Burundi's investment law, it is not necessary that Burundian nationals own shares in foreign investment. Nor should technology be introduced into Burundian business institutions during the investment period; investment capital should not be reduced with time as is the case in some countries. Besides, no compensations are claimed upon entry of imported commodities, and foreign importers are not bound to invest in commodities available in the country.

Burundi does not set conditions for investment licensing, except for companies that apply for special incentives, such as tax benefits set forth in the investment law. The Government of Burundi does not impose restrictions on the construction of businesses, and investors are not bound to disclose confidential information to the government in the regulatory process.

Further, the government neither forces foreign investors to obtain discriminatory and/or burden-

some residence visa and work permits, nor imposes any tariff barriers reminiscent of discriminatory or preferential policies towards exports and imports.

### **Exports and imports**

#### **Imports**

##### **Burundi's key imports are:**

- Food items.
- Oil products.
- Machinery, boilers, etc..
- Vehicles other than railway



- Pharmaceuticals
- Electrical and Electronic appliances
- Salt, sulfur, stones, lime and cement.

#### **Exports:**

The country exports:

- Pearls, precious stones, and metals,... etc.
- Coffee, tea and spices.
- ores, slag and volcanic ash
- leather and clay.

#### **Investment areas:**

Burundi's investment areas include agriculture, tourism, mining, services, energy, transport, food and beverage manufacturing, financial services, real estate, health, and infrastructure.

#### **Tourism in Burundi:**

Burundi occupies a strategic location, as it lies at the heart of key regional groupings, including the economic grouping of central African countries, the economic grouping of the Great Lakes countries, the Common Market of southeast African countries, and the East African countries' economic bloc.



The country is a vital business and tourist hub due to its lush, picturesque scenery, and fascinating hills, in addition to the hospitality of the Burundian people, who are very friendly and amicable.

Burundi's strategic location gives easy access to the most awe-inspiring tourist attractions. One can just take a two-hour flight to such places, including Sirinjiti sanctuary and Zinzibar coasts.

### Tourist attractions:

Burundi has a plenty of tourist attractions, including sprawling sandy and sunny beaches, where



visitors can comfortably exercise marine sports, especially in Tanganyika lake.

Other tourist places include the springs of River Nile in Rutufu city, sulphuric water in Mahuiza, Stanely and Livension rock, and Kariara river waterfall.

### Kingdom of Swaziland

According to July 2011 estimates, the Population of the Kingdom of Swaziland stands at 1,370,424 settling on an area of about 17,363 sq km.

Agriculture accounts for 8.3% of Swaziland's GDP; the key products are sugarcane, corn, citrus, livestock, wood, pineapples, tobacco, rice and peanuts.

Further, manufacturing, which forms 28.2% of the country's GDP, involves sugar refining, light manufactured goods, wood pulp, textiles, processed food, and consumer goods.

Swaziland has abundant natural resources, such as coal, quarry stone, wood, and talc.



### Exports and Imports:

Swaziland exports sugar, pulp, and cotton yarns to many African countries. However, the major markets for the country's export products are South Africa (80%), the European Union (10%), Mozambique (10%). The Kingdom imports chemicals, clothing, food, machinery, automobiles, and petroleum products.

### Investment opportunities:

Many investment opportunities are available to foreign investors seeking to set up ventures in Swaziland, particularly in the following areas:

- Energy and Electricity
- Telecommunications
- Agriculture
- Horticulture
- Roads and bridges







- Forestry and timber
- Industry and production
- Mining
- Tourism
- Food processing and Agro-business.
- Value Addition to Timber, Sugar and other locally available inputs.
- Bio-Energy and Energy
- Light engineering (including Automotive components)
- Pharmaceuticals
- Biotechnology
- Mining investments
- White goods (refrigerators, washing machine, micro wave ovens, etc)
- Tourism infrastructure development.

### **Federation of Swaziland Employers and Chamber of Commerce**

The Federation of Swaziland Employers and Chamber of Commerce (FSE & CC) is an employer and business organization that is recognized by businesses, organized labour, government and the international community. As the voice of business in Swaziland, the objectives of the organization are to promote and protect the interests of its members and to encourage industrial harmony, productivity and prosperity for all. Founded in 2003 as a result of a merger, the Federation of Swaziland Employers and Chamber of Commerce offers a wide range of products and services specifically designed to deliver sophisticated business development solutions to corporate Swaziland.

Other services provided include consultation and advice on industrial relations and other legal



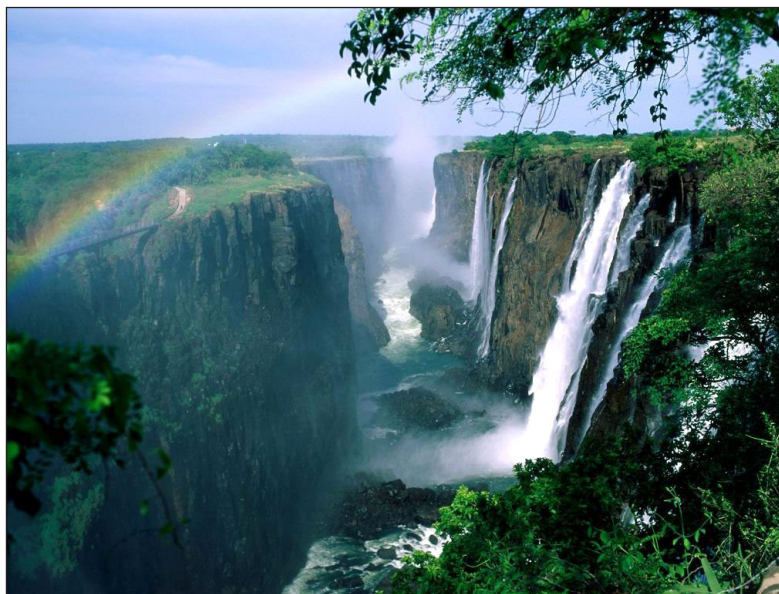
matters, employment issues, trade facilitation, training, occupational health and safety, publications and research, and representation on statutory and non-statutory bodies. The organisation has been quite successful in the delivery of training and development solutions to a wide array of companies and organisations, and in developing applied business research solutions in the fields of marketing, human resource management and strategic management.



### **Investment Regulations:**

Incentives on investing in Swaziland can be deemed to be comprehensive, in that they address almost every aspect of the investment process. Most importantly, issues of taxation are given due consideration. The corporate tax rate is 30% for all companies. There is also a provision for loss cover. In that regard, the unlimited loss-carry forward allows a company to carry forward its loss (given that it incurs a loss in the year of assessment), and set it off against future assessable income.

Investment inducements in Swaziland with re-



gards to additional productive capacity are given by way of special deductions allowed in respect of new industrial buildings and of new plant and machinery brought into use in a process of manufacture, and any other similar process, or the hotel industry. The special deductions also apply in respect of second-hand machinery which has not been previously used in Swaziland and also, to leased plant.

The Government of Swaziland has identified specific areas to bolster investment (either local



or foreign direct investment), and for such areas there exist a special corporate tax incentive. In investments such as; manufacturing, mining, agribusiness, tourism and international financial

services; the Minister of Finance has the prerogative to nominate a certain investing company as crucial for the development of Swaziland, and thus with Cabinet approval afford it a minimum tax rate of 10% for a period of ten (10) years on withholding taxes.

Capital goods imported into the country for productive investments are exempt from import duties.

Investors who manufacture/process for the export markets can obtain funds from local banks to process their orders. The Government of

Swaziland, through the Central Bank of Swaziland, guarantees loans raised for this purpose.

The liberalized foreign exchange mechanisms also allow full repatriation of profits and dividends of enterprises operating in the country. Repatriation is also allowed for salaries of expatriate and capital repayments.

Investments in Swaziland are protected from undue expropriation. Moreover, Swaziland is a Member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) of the World Bank which provides for added legal protection of investments

### Tourism:

Swaziland, which is originally a small country in comparison to other African countries, is known for modernity and innovation. Tourists visiting this country always savour the hospitality and friendliness accorded them by the Swazi people.

Tourist attractions in Swaziland include sanctuaries, wildlife and breath-taking landscapes, let alone rare wild animals such as the white rhinoceros, lions, antelopes. There are several medicines such as Isoluini and Mulikirns.





## Arab Republic of Egypt

The population of the Arab Republic of Egypt amounted to 81. 395,000 at the start of 2012, an increase of 2 million people from the previous year, which was 79, 617,000.

Egypt ranked 16th in the world population and the third in Africa after Nigeria and Ethiopia. It also ranks 24th in the world in population density, thus becoming the most populous Arab country.

### Liberalization Policy

The Egyptian economy is a diversified one, and has passed through several phases and many patterns; the pattern of open market is the feature of Egypt's economy that led to the increase of foreign investments.

The country's economy depends mainly on agriculture, tourism, and money remittances from expatriates abroad, in addition to oil, petrochemical industries, media and revenues from Suez Canal. It is considered to be one of the Middle East's diverse economies.

The Egyptian economy is the second largest in Arab countries, after that of Saudi Arabia; however, it is the largest non-oil-dependent economy in the region.

It ranks 11th in the Middle East in terms of per capita income. In Africa, the economy of Egypt is only second to that of South Africa in terms of GDP.

Egypt's Gross Domestic product (GDP) amounts to 200 billion. The country is a member of Group 15, which brought together the countries that apply economic development programs.

Moreover, Egypt is classified as an emerging market that is characterized by a dynamic and diverse economy as its population is incessantly swelling while the number of youth is on the rise.

Unemployment in Egypt doesn't exceed 9.1%.



### Federation of Egypt chambers of commerce

The Federation of Egypt's Chambers of Commerce and Industry, which is headquartered in Cairo, was formed by the chambers of commerce in order to ca-



ter for their interests and coordinate their efforts.

The Union works for the betterment of the country by supporting its economic institutions in



achieving social and economic development in its capacity as the official representative of all Egyptian business institutions.

**It seek to achieve the following objectives:**

- To Contribute to the development of internal trade and its schemes, and provide all necessary economic information.
- To support the trade sector in terms of meeting the challenges facing local and international markets.
- To spread awareness of the importance of business community and its contribution to the country's socio-economic development.
- To promote the competitiveness of commercial enterprises, particularly the small and medium businesses, and to train human resources in managing such enterprises..
- To promote the status of chambers of commerce before government agencies, and enhance their participation in formulating all economic laws and regulations enacted by the country's competent authorities.

The Union, which has its own legal status, is the supreme business body that coordinates efforts of all chambers of commerce, businessmen and entrepreneurs. Therefore, it is the only legitimate representative of chambers of commerce and all business organizations to public authorities as well as the regional and international organizations.

**Investment legislation:**

Egypt's investment laws and regulations provide for many incentives that attract foreign investors. The most prominent areas of investment are:

- 1- Industry:** All industrial activities are allowed; they include manufacturing, configuration, mineral exploration, and food industries, among others.
- 2-Technology and software programs:** These involve designing and producing computer programs and applications, in addition to the creation and management of technological areas.
- 3- Infrastructure:** This includes the establishment and management of drinking water stations, sanitations, power generation, roads and telecommunications.

**4- Agriculture:** Investors can engage in the reclamation of agricultural lands, and exportation of agricultural products as well as the establishment and management of fish farms, among others.

**5-Construction of residential areas:** This is a promising investment field, as ventures can be set up in modern industrial areas, such as the East of Tafreah and northwest of Suez Gulf. Investors can engage in the construction of industrial cities, including facilities and infrastructure projects.

**-Tourism:** Egypt has a favorable climate during both summer and winter, which attracts foreign investors. Tourism offers several investment opportunities, such as hotel and tourist village construction,



and transport projects, among others.

**- Oil products:** Investors can get opportunities in oil exploration, drilling and maintenance of oil wells and riggings.







### Investment Opportunities:

The investment law has been enacted in order to attract foreign investors, so it is applicable to specified numbers of activities as follows:

- Cultivation of desert and arid lands.
- Livestock farming, poultry and fish.
- Industry and mining.
- Construction and development of industrial areas.
- Hotel and tourist village construction.
- Tourist transport.
- Air transport and direct services associated with it.
- Overseas maritime transport.
- Oil Services, including drilling, exploration, transportation and delivery of natural gas.
- Residential compounds that are rented for housing purpose.
- Infrastructure, including potable water network, sanitation, electricity, roads and telecommunications.
- Production of computer systems and softwares.

### Tourism:

Below is the most important tourist attractions in Egypt:

- **South Sinai:** It is one of the areas that attracts visitors most.
- **Sharm El Sheikh:** Sharm el-Sheikh is the most tourist beach destinations on the Red Sea coast at all times; it is the favorite destination of the major-

ity of tourists who are fond of beach tourism involving diving activity.

Further, the city is famous for natural reserves rich in eco-systems and bio-diversity, in addition to the nearby islands of Tiran and Sanafir.

#### - Dahab

This town is second to Sharm el-Sheikh in respect of its importance as a tourist attraction as well as the number of tourists streaming into it. It is known for its most beautiful diving areas, as well as some ancient monuments.

Moreover, the township's opportune climate and attractive ambiance allow the exercise of water sports such as sailboat riding which is unique to this area.

#### - Nuweiba:

The town of Nuweiba is one of Egypt's a tourist beach destinations renowned for ancient antiquities, including Pharaoh's Island, Salahu Eddin fortress and Nuweiba citadel.

#### - Taba:

The city of Taba is marked by its charming landscapes, especially as its beach is surrounded by mountains. Its coastline is traversed by several bays, a strait and an island,

The easy access to this city helps to promote tourism, as visitors can get here by land or by air through its international airport.

#### - Ras Sidr:

The city of Ras Sidr is a marvelous tourist destina-





tion for those interested in eco-tourism and water sports such as sailing. It is also noted for its healthy sulfur resorts, and biodiversity, including fauna and flora.

#### - **Sant Catherine:**

The city of Sant Catherine is one of Sinai's most picturesque cities in terms of its high terrains; It is also surrounded by a range of mountains, including Catherine mount and Moussa mountain, a sanctuary abounding with a variety of plant and animal species.

#### - **Arish:**

The city of Arish is featured by palm orchards running along its coastline. Also, there lies close to the city the Zaranik reserve, which is home to 224 bird species, and receives more than 270 migrant birds heading to Africa from across Asia and Europe. This sanctuary was placed on Ramsar world list.

#### - **Al-Ardaqah**

Al-Ardaqah is marked by its moderate climate all year round, in addition to its historic archaeological sites and milestones, most important of which are:

- Aquatic organisms Museum, which is located to the north of Al-Ardaqah.
- Al-Hamamat valley
- Santa Pola and Anba Antonious abbey.
- Mausoleum and mosque of Abu Hassan Alshathely.
- Red Sea Islets (24 islets)

#### **Ain Sokhna:**

It is one of Egypt's most important tourist destinations.

#### - **Plain of Hasheesh:**

This is one of the largest tourist investment areas

in the Red Sea. Egypt is planning to turn this township into a tourist attraction destined for wealthy visitors. It is well-known for Golf courts, Pharaonic city, which is the first of its kind in terms of Diving tourism, and Marina yacht tourism, which is one of the most exorbitant kinds of tourism in the world.

#### **Marsa Matruh city:**

This city is featured by its limpid water, fascinating colors and soft sands. It also has a wide range of historic milestones, including the Coptic Church, Rommel hideout and Cleopatra's bath. Besides, there are many natural reserves in the vicinity of the city, such as Um Algozlan and Al-Ameed.

#### - **Luxor:**

Luxor is one of the most important historical cities in Egypt, as well as a favorite destination for antiquities and cultural tourism enthusiasts. Indeed, it is brimful of historical heritage that constitutes about one third of the world's historic legacy, in addition to being the greatest evidence of Pharaonic civilization.

The key archeological sites in Luxor, include Luxor Temple, the Temple of Karnak and the Temple of Hatshepsut, Luxor Museum, King Valley graveyards, Queens' Valley, funerary temples, Dandara Temple, and Alashraf cemeteries.

#### - **Aswan:**

Aswan is characterized by the fascinating view of River Nile, the widest part of which lies in this city. It has a variety of ancient landmarks such as Philah Temple, Temples of old Nubia, Kalabsha temple, Temple of Kom Ombo, Edfu Temple, Obelisks and Aga Khan sepulcher.

## **The Islamic Republic of Mauritania**

The Population of Mauritania is 3,069,000 as per 2005 census; its surface area amounts to 1,030,700 sq km.

#### **Economy:**

Fishing is the sinew of Mauritanian economy. Mauritania has natural features that made it one of fish producing countries. It is endowed with a 650 km-long beach on Atlantic Ocean, where hot and





warm currents converged together in its territorial waters. This triggers sustained fish migration into Mauritanian waters from other areas. The country's fish exports soared from one billion Ounces in 1978 to 30 billion Ounces in 1986, which accounts for 70 % of overall export value. Since then, fisheries have become one of the most vital sectors for the country's development.

Huge quantities of fish are annually exported to all parts of the world.

### Minerals:

Mauritania has a variety of minerals, such as iron, copper, gypsum and phosphate, etc ...

The opulent natural resources contribute immensely to the creation of national capitals and the advancement of the country, including by solving social problems such as unemployment, and bringing hard currency into the country.

Mauritania's iron production reaches 12 million tons; copper and gold production hit the highest record in 1970 when it amounted to 2,870 tons.

Further, the country has a considerable reserve of gold, as it has 8 major gold mines.



### Agriculture:

The agricultural sector is still the most important economic activity involving a considerable part of population that crosses 53% of the country's manpower.

### Investment opportunities:

Mauritania has recently adopted the policy of liberalization through the development of the private and mixed sectors. The country has an investment-friendly environment thanks to peace, justice and political stability reigning in its territories.

Moreover, Mauritania has seen an entire economic



stability that attracts investors, and this is ascribed to the laws that protect investments, including the constitution as well as investment and trade rules and regulations. Such legislation provides for the following guarantees:

- Freedom of entrepreneurship.
- Freedom of transfer (remittance) of capitals and profits.
- Access to raw material.
- Equality between the foreign and local investors.
- Right to intellectual property.

- Arbitration in case of investment-related disputes.
- Exemption from taxes and customs.
- The possibility of establishing private economic zones.

Moreover, Mauritania, which is a member of the world organization for Investment Insurance (MIGA), has started developing the infrastructure necessary for investments, such as electricity, roads, transport, telecommunications, education and health.

It has concluded bilateral agreements on the promotion and protection of investments with many countries, including Yemen.

More importantly, Mauritania is located to the northwest of Africa and overlooks the Atlantic Ocean, meaning that it is close to the European markets. It provides lots of incentives to attract investors and to facilitate their access to Mauritanian markets as follows:

- Establishment of investment authority.
- Setting up a legal framework to protect investors.
- Adoption of streamlined tax scheme involving tax reductions and breaks.

The investment law provides for setting up more liberal banking sector, as well as microfinance enterprises.

### Investment opportunities

Many investment opportunities are available to foreign investors in Mauritania as follows:

- Exploration for minerals and gold.
- Exploration for oil.
- Fishing.
- Construction

### Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Mauritania:

The chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture was established in 1991 under an agreement between the government of Mauritania and the French government, represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Cooperation.

The chamber, which later became a specialized business agency, undertook its functions after the signing of a partnership agreement between



France and Mauritania in 2004.

Since then, the chamber seeks to achieve its mission of providing, producing and disseminating business information to local and foreign economic actors.

### In addition, the business outfit performs the following functions:

- Searching for, collecting and disseminating economic and technical information to economic actors on the local and international levels.
- Preparation of studies on the country's economic and investment environment.
- Setting up technical database.



- Participating in funding and conducting studies or procedures to meet the needs of economist actors at the local and international levels.
- Participating in financing and supporting local and foreign economic actors in order to ensure the success of their businesses.
- Supporting the private initiatives and developing companies in Mauritania.





## Imports and exports:

### Exports:

Mauritania exports fish, agricultural products, iron and steel, animals, sugar and grains.

### Imports:

The country imports petroleum, wheat, rice, machinery, equipment and consumer products.

### Tourism:

The authority in charge of tourism is the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Handicrafts and Tourism.

### Functions of the ministry include the following:

- Studying and evaluating national tourist potentials in order to make them valuable;
- Preparation and implementation of laws relating to the tourist sector;
- Preparing and proposing the means necessary to reclaim areas of tourism value, and in consultation with the relevant partners;
- Collection, use and dissemination of statistics related to tourism;
- Inclusion and co-option of economic actors as well as social and professional organizations of the sector;
- Ensuring development at the sectoral level;
- Ensuring that tourism activities are harmonious with laws and regulations;
- Development, follow-up, and coordination of the activities of partners in the field of tourism;
- Ensuring consultation with the sector professional bodies;
- Ensuring the integration of tourism activities into the anti-poverty strategy and national policy to upgrade traditional industry.

### The most important tourist areas are as follows:

#### -Nouakchott, the Capital:

Nouakchott is the administrative and commercial center of the country. The meaning of its name is "the well of shells". All means of transportation and telecommunications technology, facilities, hotels, markets, are available in the city. Its houses are characterized by their special urban style coupled with an elaborate decoration and precious wood doors.

The city was founded in 1958; it has an airport,



an important seaport and a commercial museum that contains important historical holdings. It manufactures carpets and ornate rugs; it has a large market run by women.

### Wadian

It is situated in the desert, 120 km to the northeast of Chinguetti. The city was built 800 years ago on hillside and was a center for camel caravans which were carrying gold, salt, and dates.

Among the most prominent landmarks is the old mosque and a mansion known as Alqlala Palace whose architectural style is featured by its colors derived from the local environment.

### Targit

It is regarded as one of the most attractive places for visitors in the Adrar area, which is a small oasis, where there are many springs with hot and cold water that can be visited all year round. These springs feed water into irrigation canals surrounded by bushes, thus reflecting a spectacular sight and a very favorable atmosphere.

### Annua Athibo or Baer al-Tha'aleb:

Baer al-Tha'aleb is located to the north-west of the country, 525 km away from the capital; it is considered as the economic capital of Mauritania.

It is characterized by breathtaking nature; it extends along a Peninsula in the form of a fiord in the sea, which is heading south parallel to the mainland. The ships carrying vast quantities of fish and iron dock at its seaport.



### Atar

Atar is situated in a beautiful oasis, 451 km to the north-west of the capital.

It is the center of Adrar state and is famous for dates picking season, where celebrations are held in the summer especially punctuated by dancing and singing.

The bustling city is a commercial center for the surrounding areas. Of its landmarks is Blacksmiths market and is characterized by narrow alleyways and a French castle dating back to the Second World war. The city is also surrounded by orchards that attract foreign visitors.

### Walata

Walata is located to the south-east of Mauritania and is regarded as one of its most beautiful cities. Viable tourism and tourist services are available in the city though an access to it through the desert requires a travel by air due to lack of paved roads. Its decorated houses overlaid with copper attract tourists as their wood doors are inlaid with copper and colors derived from natural materials available in the area. The industry of crockery is thriving there.

The city also has a famous religious school, and there are many scripts kept in its libraries, which are of priceless scientific and historic value.

## Republic of Namibia

The Population of Namibia amounted to 2.3 millions, with an average growth rate of 1.8%, according to 2010 estimates. The country's area stands at 824.292 sq km.

Namibia is heavily dependent on the extraction and processing of minerals for export. Taxes and royalties from mining account for 25% of its revenue. Rich alluvial diamond deposits make Namibia a primary source for gem-quality diamonds. Namibia is the fourth-largest exporter of nonfuel minerals in Africa, the world's fifth-largest producer of uranium, and the producer of large quantities of lead, zinc, tin, silver, and tungsten. The mining sector employs only about 3% of the population while about half of the population



depends on subsistence agriculture for its livelihood. Namibia normally imports about 50% of its cereal requirements; in drought years food shortages are a major problem in rural areas.

Namibia is seeking to diversify its trading relationships away from its heavy dependence on South African goods and services. Europe has become a leading market for Namibian fish and meat, while mining concerns in Namibia have purchased heavy equipment and machinery from Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. The Government of Namibia is making efforts to take advantage of the American-led African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which will provide preferential access to American markets for a long list of products. In the short term, Namibia is likely to see growth in the apparel manufacturing industry as a result of AGOA.

In 2003, Namibia signed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). It is also a member of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and has acceded to the European Union's Lomé Convention.

Natural resources: Mining forms 8.8% of GDP; the key minerals are diamonds, uranium, zinc, gold, copper, lead, tin, fluor spar, salt, fisheries and wildlife.







Agriculture accounts for 4.1% of GDP; the key Products include livestock, meat products, agricultural crops and forests.

Fishing and processing constitutes 2.7% of GDP.

The country's major exportable items are diamonds, minerals manufactures, lead, uranium, copper, fish, cattle and beef.

Major importable commodities of the country are food, fuel and energy, capital goods, crude oil and petroleum products.

### Investment opportunities:

There are various investment opportunities in Namibia as follows:

- Transport infrastructure
- Housing and sanitation.
- Agriculture and Agro-industry
- Mining and Energy
- Manufacturing
- Good prospects for oil and gas exploration and processing.
- Fisheries
- Tourism
- Manufacturing of pharmaceutical products
- Cement manufacturing
- Steel manufacturing
- Textiles and garments manufacturing
- Manufacturing of automotive components
- Manufacturing of building materials
- Furniture assembly

### Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry:

The Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(NCCI) assumes the following

#### primary responsibilities:

- To represent the general interest of the business community.
- To cooperate, through dialogue, with the country's various private and public sector bodies
- To play an advisory role when engaging with the government and other stakeholders
- To promote economic development
- To provide market information and economic statistics.
- To encourage domestic and foreign investment.



- To facilitate local and international trade.

### Tourism:

Namibia is featured by its fascinating tourist attractions that lends a good deal of enjoyment, excitement and recreation. These include the following:

#### Namib Desert

The Namib Desert is often referred to as the world's oldest desert. Namibia gets its name from the Namib, so it should come as no surprise to discover that the entire western part of the country is comprised of the Namib. Of course, the Namib spreads beyond





the borders of Namibia and flows into southern Angola and the northern Cape Province of South Africa.

### **Brandberg Mountain**

Brandberg Mountain is Namibia's highest mountain, which is 2606 m high above sea level.

### **Sossusvlei:**

The Sossusvlei is perhaps the highest sand dunes in the world. Situated in Namibia, these dunes are as high as 300 meters. The Sossusvlei covers a great expanse of almost 500 square kilometres of the mighty Namib Desert, which is considered to be one of the oldest deserts by many geologists.

### **Swakopmund**

Namibia's premier seaside resort town, Swakopmund attracts fishermen and adventure enthusiasts from all over the world. The dunes are perfect for sand-boarding and quad-biking. The ocean is cold and wild, just the spot for some spectacular deep-sea fishing and beach angling. The German flavor of this little town is still palpable and very interesting for the visitor.

### **Etosha National Park**

In the vast arid space of Northern Namibia lies one of Southern Africa's best loved wildlife sanctuaries. Etosha National Park offers excellent game viewing in one of Africa's most accessible venues. Zebra and springbok are scattered across the endless horizon, while the many waterholes attract endangered black rhinoceros, lion, elephant and large numbers of antelope. Etosha, meaning 'place of dry water' which provides parched, silver-white backdrop of shimmering mirages to an area of semi-arid savannah grassland and thorn scrub.

### **Skeleton Coast**

Namibia's Skeleton Coast is one of our planet's most beautiful places and is now host to one of our finest safaris.

### **The Waterberg Plateau**

The Waterberg Plateau east of Otjiwarongo towers over the surrounding plains, being about 200 metres



higher. The 20 kilometre wide and 50 kilometer long table mountain massif consists of porous sandstone.

### **Fish River Canyon**

The Fish River Canyon is located in the south of Namibia. It is the second largest canyon in the world [1] and the largest in Africa, as well as the second most visited tourist attraction in Namibia. It features a gigantic ravine, in total about 100 miles (160 km) long, up to 27 km wide and in places almost 550 metres deep. The river flows intermittently, usually flooding in late summer.

### **Daan Viljoen Game Reserve**

Daan Viljoen Game Park is considered as Windhoek's Zoo.

### **Museums:**

- 1- Tsumeb Museum
- 2- Owela Museum
- 3- Transnamib Railway Museum
- 4 - Geological Survey Museum
- 5- National Marine Aquarium.

## **Republic of Congo Brazzaville**

The Population of Congo Brazzaville stands at 3,686,000 living over an area of 342,000 sq km. Rains fall all year round, especially during the solstice and equinox.

The key Congolese cities are Brazzaville, Kayes and Dolisie while the main seaports are Pointe-Noire and Nairi.





### Economy:

- Congo's total GDP reached \$17.108 billion, while the per capita income stands at \$4,426.
- In Congo, there is only one chamber of commerce called Brazzaville Chamber of Commerce, which works towards promoting economic development in the private sector, and contributes significantly to the improvement of business climate, in addition to stimulating overall economic growth in the country.

### Agriculture:

There are many agricultural crops in Congo, including subsistence crops such as cassava, rice, and maize. The export crops are sugar cane, cocoa, coffee, bananas, cotton, peanuts, product. The country remains largely dependent on food products imported from other countries.



fee, bananas, cotton, peanuts, product. The country remains largely dependent on food products imported from other countries.

- Congo produces offshore oil, which represents 90% of its exports. It also has

has natural resources, including potash, copper, diamonds and gold in addition to hydroelectric power. It exports tropical timber such as ebony and Akajo.

- Congo has strategic maritime transportation network, as Brazzaville is situated on the River Congo and Bwatoar lies on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. Industries are based on Manufacturing.



### Exports and imports:

Congo's main exports are oil, timber, coffee, cocoa, sugar, food diamonds. The imports include consumer goods, capital equipment, petroleum, cement, cigarettes, beverages, and sugar.

### Investment opportunities:

There are several investment opportunities in a number of sectors in Congo, including:

- Infrastructure.
- Roads and Transport.



- Energy.
- Agriculture.
- industry.
- food processing.
- tourism.
- medicines.
- services.

Investment laws provide for a number of incentives that encourage investment. These include:

- Full or partial exemption from certain taxes and capital profits in case of reinvestment.
- profits, which are part of assets, can be invested within three years and are not subject to income tax.
- In case of loss, Investors can deduct any loss incurred from the taxes payable during the



next three years. In addition, the investment law provides for five incentives investors interested in the following fields:

- The promotion of economic activity and employment.
- reinvestment of profits.
- research and innovation.
- export.
- investment in the less developed regions, the tax exemption period ranges from five to ten years.

### Tourism:

The Republic of Congo is known for its historic heritage and awe-inspiring landscapes, including picturesque villages, beautiful beaches and religious legacy, in addition to wonderful traditional and national parks and natural reserves. The country's tourist attractions include:

- The beautiful sandy beaches of the city of Indian Abwant, which are surrounded by coconut trees.
- lakes and canals in the city of Diosso.
- Waterfalls in the City of Loufoulakari.
- **Rivers:** the River Croix Coma, River Kouilou and Djoué, among others.
- **Historical museums:** Cross Coma Museum and Kinkala Museum.

- Wildlife and national parks in Odzala, and Lefini.
  - folklore and art.
  - Warm and pleasant climate all year round.
- Congo has many luxury hotels that offer amenities and entertainment to the satisfaction of investors and businessmen.

Most hotels provide their customers with high-quality tourist services, such as delicious food, laundry, swimming pool, golf, club, massage, phone, fax, internet, computer, and others. Besides, some hotels provide customers with car rental service to facilitate their movement around the city.

### Tourist sites include:

- Lekoli-pandaka Wildlife Reserve, which lies to the north of Lekoli.
- Mount Fouari sanctuary and northern Nianga protectorate.
- Odzala National Park.
- Wildlife Reserve in Lefini.







# Appendix 1

## Summary Report on ASSECAA's Activities

The previous four chapters highlighted the role that ASSECAA keenly plays in exploring the prospects of Afro-Arab relations, and how conscious the Association is of the geographic and historical factors that constitute a strong driving force for a more fruitful cooperation and better ties between the two regions.

Politically speaking, ASSECAA has, since its creation in 2004, worked towards achieving its objectives, most important of which were the enhancement of bicameralism, consolidation of democracy, achievement of good governance and the empowerment of women, in addition to the strengthening of socio-economic, political and cultural cooperation between Africa and Arab world.

The kind of goals ASSECAA has laid out for itself reflects the significant role, which is being played by such a parliamentary body in opening up a unique avenue for restoring Afro-Arab ties, which had already sunk into oblivion, reprioritizing the two region ties to the whole world, and attracting attention to a constructive Afro-Arab partnership and cooperation.

Accordingly, the Association took the initiative of contriving feasible mechanisms to attain its objectives. Below is a review of such mechanisms:

### 1-ASSECAA's Conference and Council meetings:

The Association's Statute stipulates that ASSECAA shall hold an annual conference following or in coincidence with a Council meeting involving heads of member councils. The conference is veritable forum for debating and endorsing stances on various issues of interest to the Association, while the Council meeting deliberates upon and approves the administrative, financial and technical affairs, including annual budget, yearly activities and the election of the Association's leadership, which is conducted every three years.

ASSECAA's first conference was held in Sana'a, Yemen from 25 - 27 April 2004, during which time the Statute and Rules of Procedure were approved; the first Council meeting also took place in Sana'a from 27 - 28 September, 2004, during which the first Secretary General of ASSECAA and two assistant Secretaries General were elected.

Subsequently, ASSECAA's periodic conferences and council meetings were organized as follows:

The second council meeting was held in Sana'a from 9-10 November, 2005

The second conference was held in Sana'a from 29-31 May, 2007.

The third council meeting was held in Sana'a from 28-30 May, 2008.

The third conference and fourth council meeting was held in Khartoum, Sudan from 24 - 26 November, 2008.

The fourth conference and fifth council meeting was held in Rabat, Morocco from 12 - 13 November, 2009.

The fifth conference and sixth council meeting was held in Libreville, Gabon from 25 - 26 February, 2011.

The sixth conference and seventh council meeting was held in Bujumbura, Burundi from 22 - 23 March, 2012.

### 2-Retreat:

The retreat is a veritable forum for heads of member councils to deliberate upon the issues related to the Association's roles and responsibilities. It is one of the viable and workable activities that constitute a strong pillar for multi-pronged cooperation among member countries in a way that allows for the creation of sought-after political and economic groupings.

Furthermore, the retreat offers an invaluable opportunity for members to share views and seasoned opinions on a wide range of issues of both regional and the wider comity of nations. It affords the Association a rare event of listening to proposals from scholars, statesmen and public policy analysts on how ASSECAA can be strengthened to contribute to the betterment of Africa and Arab world and consequently achieve avowed objectives of the Association.

The topics usually debated during the retreats involve sustainable development, fighting poverty, the millennium development goals, political development, democracy and human rights, and the empowerment of women, among others.

### Since its inception, ASSECAA has held four retreats as follows:

-The first retreat was held in Abuja, Nigeria from 5 - 6 June, 2006.



The second retreat was held in Amman, Jordan from 21 - 22 October, 2007.

The third retreat was held in Nouakchott, Mauritania from 5 - 6 May, 2008.

The fourth retreat was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 24 - 25 September, 2011.

### **3- Meetings of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Africa and Arab world:**

The meetings of chambers of commerce and industry in Africa and Arab world are one of the mechanisms envisioned for enhancing Afro-Arab economic relations and exploring new prospects for mutual cooperation. Such meetings are wide-ranging by nature, bringing together ASSECAA's members and non-member countries. So far, ASSECAA has organized three such meetings as follows:

#### **First Meeting:**

The Association, in cooperation with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and Yemeni Bankers' Association, organized the first meeting of chambers of commerce and industry in Africa and Arab world in Cape Town, South Africa from 25 - 27 October, 2008.

It was attended by delegates representing the chambers of commerce and industry as well as business organizations in the two regions. British and American business moguls were also in attendance.

#### **Second Meeting:**

The second meeting of chambers of commerce and industry in Africa and Arab world was held in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, from 27 -28 October, 2010. It was attended by delegates from both regions. The meeting deliberated upon the mechanisms of enhancing Afro-Arab economic and trade cooperation.

#### **Third Meeting:**

ASSECAA, in collaboration with the Federation of Moroccan chambers of commerce, industry, and Services, as well as the House of Counselors of Morocco, organized the third meeting of chambers and commerce and industry in Africa and Arab world in Rabat, Morocco, from 29- 30 November, 2012.

### **4- Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee:**

The committee on Peace and Conflict Resolution is one the mechanisms laid down by ASSECAA with the aim of contributing to the regional and international efforts at the establishment of peace and the resolution of conflicts in Africa and Arab

world and the world at large, through parliamentary diplomacy and the utilization of member councils' expertise.

The panel comprises several member councils, and has held three meetings since its creation as follows:

#### **First Meeting:**

The first meeting of the committee was held in Abuja, Nigeria from 12 - 13 December, 2008, during which the functions of the panel were delineated.

#### **Second Meeting:**

The second meeting was held in Bujumbura, Burundi from 2- 3 March, 2009, during which several issues, including the conflict in the Great Lakes region, and the disputes in Somalia and Darfur, were considered.

#### **Third Meeting:**

The third meeting was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 23- 24 February, 2013. The event debated a variety of issues, including the Arab spring uprisings and the situation in Africa.

### **5- Meetings of Women Parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world:**

The Association used to organize the meetings of women parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world in order to achieve the fundamental objective of empowering women in the two regions. Such meetings afford members the opportunity of enhancing the contribution of women to development as well as public and political life within the framework of parliamentary diplomacy adopted by the Association.

ASSECAA has thus far organized two meetings for women parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world as follows:

#### **First Meeting:**

The first meeting was held in Abuja, Nigeria from 6- 7 October, 2009. The event deliberated upon a myriad of issues, all related to the empowerment of women, including by engaging them in political life, and enabling them assume leadership positions. It also stressed the importance of women's education and their participation in socio-economic development.

#### **Second Meeting:**

The second meeting was held in Khartoum, Sudan, from 18- 19 March 2012. It came up with several recommendations on the enhancement of





women's participation in political life, stemming domestic violence against them, and fighting gender discrimination.

### **6-Study Visit Exchange Programme:**

The Study Visit Exchange Programme was considered during the second conference of the Association held in Sana'a, Yemen from 9- 10 November, 2007 within a package of proposals from the House of Counselors of Morocco, the Shoor Council of Bahrain, and ASSECAA's General Secretariat.

#### **The proposals aimed to attain the Association's following objectives:**

- To strengthen parliamentary bicameral systems inside and outside Africa and Arab world.
- To bolster socio-economic, political, and cultural cooperation between Africa and Arab world and the world at large.
- To organize periodic meetings and discussions among members of senates, shoor and equivalent councils in Africa and Arab world, and adopt joint activities to facilitate cooperation, and exchange experiences.
- To coordinate the efforts of senates, shoor and equivalent councils of the two regions at regional and international organizations and forums.
- To make consultations on the issues of common interest in various national and international spheres, as well as necessary recommendations and/or resolutions thereon.
- To engage heavily in the dialogues destined for deepening democratic values and principles.
- To Boost participation in the discussions aimed at encouraging and protecting civil society organizations and human rights.
- To Build up a significant bridge of communication and cooperation between Africa and Arab world to enable the region harness its potentials and make best use of the international trends towards regional groupings.

Therefore, the said conference recommended that member councils reinforce mutual coordination, and that the General Secretariat propose a study visit exchange program, and encourage bilateral and multilateral meetings among member councils with an aim to hold consultations and coordinate positions.

Accordingly, the Council assigned the General Secretariat to adopt the program as a mechanism for coordinating and boosting communication

among member councils.

The General Secretariat noticed that member countries' response to the program was not up to its expectations, as they were understandably not able to undertake it for conditions beyond their control.

Furthermore, the second conference held in Sana'a, Yemen, from 7- 9 May, considered the reasons for member councils' inability to execute the scheme. In order to avoid a situation where some members undertake the program while others don't, the Council tasked the General Secretariat with the preparation of fixtures after ASSECAA's former Chairman, H.E late Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani, invited delegates to consider and approve the program for the year 2007. For this purpose, a panel called "The Program committee" was set up during the conference to consider the program and then refer it to the Council for approval. same

The scheme is in tandem with articles 33 and 37 of the Association's Rule of Procedure that stipulate "The Association shall convene joint meetings for member councils to enhance joint action, promote cooperation, and exchange experiences, in addition to discussing the issues of common interests at the local and international levels".

It is also meant to enable member councils share parliamentary experiences and compare notes on the demands of the work at the apex legislative or advisory institution and identify areas of cooperation and assistance.

Moreover, the Association's 2009 conference assigned the program committee to look into the reasons behind the drop in members' enthusiasm to engage actively in the program, which has been noticed since its approval in 2006. It also proposed that the fixtures be changed and the program undertaken every two years in such a way that best fits the legislative functions of member councils.

The procedure was meant to rejuvenate members to take part in the program in a manner that fits their legislative functions as stated in the General Secretariat's annual report submitted to the fifth conference held in Libreville, Gabon, from 25 -26 February, 2011.



## Appendix 2

### Contact information for Heads of ASSECAA Member Councils:

#### **People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**

H.E. Abdul Kader Bin Saleh, Speaker  
of the Council of the Nation of the People's  
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