



Senate
The Kingdom of Eswatini



The 10th Retreat meeting of the Association of Senates & Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA) , Kingdom of Eswatini
May 11th -12th , 2023

Final Communiqué

The world today is facing escalating crises caused by various factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic that has had a profound impact on the global economy and led to significant economic crises. These included a substantial increase in public and private debt, rising inflation rates, increased costs of energy, minerals, food, and supply chain disruptions. Just as the world was recovering from the pandemic's devastating economic effects, the Russian-Ukrainian war broke out, worsening the world's economic conditions. It caused a global economic downturn, heightened international tensions, increased levels of uncertainty, and deepened the crisis in energy, food, and mineral prices and raised concerns about their supplies. The crisis has dealt a severe blow to the global economy. Due to these successive crises, the world has witnessed a wave of global inflation and unprecedented levels of inflation not seen since the end of World War II. The banking crisis and bankruptcy of some banks due to high-interest rates also emerged as a major issue.

These crises have had tangible effects on the lives and livelihoods of citizens in Africa and the Arab world. These effects continue to worsen, and there is no indication that these regions will recover in the near to medium term, particularly in some resource-poor African countries where millions of people have lost their jobs and sources of income. Governments are still struggling to find appropriate solutions to address these serious effects. To this end, the international community has already shifted to the green economy that creates a sustainable low-emission world beneficial to both human societies and the planet. It involves a sustainable development that guarantees GDP increase and at the same time preserves and protects nature and secures human and social well-being.

To shed light on the nature of the existing problems and crises, and to exchange ideas, views and experiences in a way that could help legislators and decision-makers in adopting solutions to these crises in Africa and the Arab world, the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World(ASSECAA) held its 10th Retreat in collaboration with the Senate of the Kingdom of Eswatini from May 11th to 12th, 2023.



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It was attended by the following Senates and Shoora councils:

- **Shoora Council of the Kingdom of Bahrain**
- **Senate of Republic of Botswana**
- **Senate of Republic of Burundi**
- **Senate of the Republic of the Democratic Republic of Congo**
- **Senate of the Kingdom of Eswatini**
- **House of Federation of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia**
- **Senate of Republic of Gabon**
- **Senate of Republic of Equatorial Guinea**
- **Senate of Republic of Ivory Coast**
- **House of Dignitaries of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**
- **Senate of Republic of Kenya**
- **Senate of Kingdom of Lesotho**
- **House of Councillors of Kingdom of Morocco**
- **Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**
- **Senate of Republic of Rwanda**
- **Senate of Republic of South Sudan**
- **The Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates**
- **Shoora Council of Republic of Yemen**
- **Senate of Republic of Zimbabwe**

It was as well attended by representatives from regional and international parliamentary organizations and unions.

The opening ceremony of the Retreat took place at 9:30 am, in the presence of both the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini, H.E Cleopas Siphon Dlamini, and H.E Na'am Mayara, Speaker of House of Councillors of Morocco, Chairman of ASSECAA.

The President of the Senate of the Kingdom of Eswatini, H.E Madam Dlamini Lindiwe, gave a speech in which she welcomed the participating delegations and representatives of local, regional, and international organizations and institutions, expressing her sincere gratitude for their attendance at this important event. She indicated that in line with its noble founding principles, ASSECAA has become a crucial platform for dialogue as well as socio-economic and political cooperation between Africa and the Arab world.



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She added that ASSECAA has evolved into a formidable crucible for ideas and new thinking that inspires Africa and the Arab world to harness their potential for the benefit of peoples of Africa and the Arab world. She stated that, "we are proud to note that in ancient times, the middle east , North Africa and the African continent at large were a melting pot for pioneering civilizations and ASSECAA is the confluence where our civilizations can once again connect so that we can collectively fashion a new era for our peoples".

She affirmed that this meeting is held at an opportune time when the regions are facing unprecedented global crisis on multiple fronts, and applauded the astute leadership of ASSECAA for convening this meeting in order to collectively address the challenges and opportunities that confront the two regions as a result of the evolving multipolar global world order. She, in conclusion, said that there is a need to play a more prominent role in the Fourth Industrial Revolution to harness it for transforming Afro-Arab economies , and that some African and Middle Eastern countries are emerging as a force to reckon with in digital technology, innovation and resources technology; therefore the industrial edge that the middle east and north African countries hold in technology , innovation can be effectively blended with the diverse natural resources and food production capacity possessed by African countries so as to forge new forms of modernity that enable the two regions promote trade and human development.

Meanwhile, ASSECAA's Secretary-General, H.E Abdulwasie Yusuf Ali, delivered a speech in which he touched on both the establishment of the Association 21 years ago, and its objectives, including promoting Afro-Arab cooperation in all economic, political, and social- cultural fields for the benefit of the peoples of both regions. He confirmed that ASSECAA has become a strong platform that brings together the two regions of Africa and the Arab world. With regard to the challenges facing the world, as well as the successive economic crises affecting Arab and African regions in particular, he underlined that the two regions should not surrender to the current circumstances and that all must join hands to find appropriate solutions to such crises. He also stressed the importance of transitioning to a green economy to support sustainable development in Africa and the Arab world.

For his part, H.E Cleopas Siphon Dlamini, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini, delivered the inaugural address in which he welcomed the participants on behalf of His Majesty the King of Eswatini . He expressed his pleasure at the choice of the Kingdom of Eswatini to host this important meeting, which debated important topics carefully chosen



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due to their relevance to the current challenges, which have negatively impacted the global economy.

He stated that the topics discussed at this meeting are of utmost concern to the Arab and African regions, and require concerted efforts in order for their economies to recover. He maintained that Parliaments are the major institutions capable of leading these efforts by working towards enacting appropriate legislation to address these challenges. He indicated that through close cooperation, parliaments can formulate strategies that will provide the necessary solutions to common challenges, noting that this meeting offers an opportunity to exchange views and experiences on how to continue cooperation to ensure achieving global peace and sustainable poverty reduction.

Mr. George H. Wachira, the Chief Coordinator of the United Nations, also gave a speech in which he thanked ASSECAA for its role as a platform to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy and cooperation in economic, political, social, cultural, peace, and human rights issues in Africa and the Arab world.

He pointed out that the gap between the rich and poor, which is increasingly widening, has been exacerbated by global inflation and rising debt, affecting the ability of many countries to respond to these crises and recover from them.

The Speaker of the House of Councillors of the Kingdom of Morocco, Chairman of ASSECAA, H.E Na'am Mayara also delivered a speech in which he expressed his deep appreciation to the Kingdom of Eswatini, its government, parliament, and people, for the warm reception and generous hospitality accorded delegates.

He expressed his happiness for the opportunity of holding this important meeting, which provides a veritable platform for heads of member councils to exchange ideas and views on various issues of common concern to ASSECAA's member countries and the world at large. These issues are closely related to the missions and roles of ASSECAA member councils in their endeavor to serve the national interests of their countries. He confirmed that this meeting is particularly significant and viable, taking place in a global and regional context characterized by a set of challenges, including economic, social, developmental, environmental, and geopolitical challenges, which have direct repercussions on the requirements of a decent life for peoples. He also stated that it is no exaggeration to say that the world is experiencing situations that have not been witnessed for four decades ago. The



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global economy has faced a series of challenges since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted lives and economies.

He noted that the restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the Covid19 epidemic have had devastating impacts on economic growth.

He affirmed that just as the world was beginning to emerge from the challenge of this crisis and its aftermath and then return to the "new normal," the Russian-Ukrainian war erupted, resulting in the most severe energy crisis not witnessed by advanced economies since the 1970. This crisis caused unprecedented inflation, put enormous pressures on both developed and developing countries, and created a trend towards tightening monetary policies by major central banks.

The Chairman of ASSECAA also addressed the impact of these successive crises on the peoples of the world, particularly those in the African and Arab regions. He emphasized that such an impact was severe on the most vulnerable segments of society, with hundreds of millions of families already struggled with low incomes and high prices for energy and food; these crises exacerbated such families' suffering and threatened to increase inequality. For the first time in decades, inflation has become a clearly existing challenge for many countries around the world.

He further stressed the importance of encouraging a green economy as one of the solutions to address these economic crises. He pointed out that the international community has introduced the concept of the green economy as one of the means to overcome these crises by redirecting funds towards investment in green energy sectors. He stated that investing in the fossil fuel market is a losing bet, while renewable and clean energy is the optimal alternative and will be the key driver of profit and money-making in the future.

H.E Na'am Mayara concluded his speech by emphasizing the pivotal roles that parliamentarians can play as change-makers by contributing to addressing these economic crises, mitigating their effects and finding solutions to many issues. As essential partners in policies related to development and the economy, especially in light of the emerging economic challenges facing the world and their repercussions on the Arab and African regions and the world as a whole, parliamentarians must shoulder their responsibility towards their people.



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Several speeches were also delivered at the meeting, which emphasized the importance of the topics being discussed for all the peoples of Africa and the Arab world, given their significance and relevance, and the fact that they affect the lives of citizens and place extraordinary burdens on all countries and governments in terms of dealing with, and finding appropriate solutions to them. This is because the challenges being addressed by this meeting are still evolving and have not been definitively tackled yet.

The participants in this meeting deliberated upon both the repercussions of these successive crises and their complex effects on the global economy as a whole and the Arab and African economies in particular, as well as the remedies that have been implemented in response. They also proposed solutions to deal with the effects of these crises. Meanwhile, two work-papers were presented at the meeting. The first paper was titled "The Effects of Multi-Faceted International Crises on the Economies of Africa and the Arab World," while the second paper focused on "The Importance of Green Economy in Supporting Development in Africa and the Arab World."

The participants made significant interventions that affirmed importance of discussing such topics. They also stressed the need that governments must take more effective measures and procedures to address the serious effects and repercussions of these crises on the economies of countries, food, and energy, and to prioritize food security issues in legislative agendas to meet the needs and aspirations of African and Arab peoples.

The participants came up with the following proposals and recommendations:

- Arab and African governments should learn from the lessons of the current economic crises and establish strategic partnerships to face the challenges that their economies are experiencing. They should also utilize each other's potentials and opportunities to ensure food and energy security in Africa and the Arab world.



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- Arab and African governments should make more efforts to contain inflation and avoid causing economic recession through the measures taken by central banks to contain inflation. This requires coordinated policies.
- These emerging challenges require Arab and African countries to give greater importance to long-term strategic thinking in dealing with disasters, crises, and emergencies, as well as the urgent need for a comprehensive crisis management strategy to strengthen their resilience in facing crises. This kind of thinking can only be realized through collective and integrated approaches.
- The Arab and African regions face significant challenges that require everyone to work together and coordinate their positions. In the era of polarization and competition between major powers, regional blocs gain higher value and greater weight. Therefore, the Arab-African bloc, with the capabilities and capacities of its countries and its weight in the world, can create spaces for strategic independence by extending bridges with everyone and maintaining freedom of movement and decision-making.
- Arab and African countries are capable of effectively intervening to address crises and challenges if they mobilize their collective capabilities and potentials. This can be done in coordination with the international community that should fulfill its own responsibilities towards our nations; Arab and African countries need more than ever to strengthen their partnerships across the world.
- Policymakers must join efforts to combat inflation, especially by taking steps to strengthen global supply chains. These efforts include the following:
 - Easing restrictions on the labor market. Policy measures should help increase labor force participation and reduce price pressures. Labor market policies can facilitate the redeployment of laid-off workers.
 - Boosting global supplies of basic commodities. Indeed, global coordination can go a long way in increasing supplies of food and energy products. Regarding energy commodities, policy makers must accelerate the shift to low-carbon energy sources and take measures to curb energy consumption.
 - Strengthening global trade networks. Policy makers must work to alleviate bottlenecks in global supply chains. They should support a rules-based international



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- economic system that avoids the risks of protectionist policies and fragmentation that may further disrupt trade networks.
- Policy makers in emerging market economies and developing economies should be prepared to manage the potential repercussions of simultaneous tightening of policies worldwide.
 - Central banks should clearly announce policy decisions while maintaining their independence. This may help stabilize inflation expectations and reduce the required degree of monetary policy tightening. In advanced economies, central banks should take into account cross-border indirect ramifications of policy tightening. In emerging market economies and developing economies, these banks should work to strengthen comprehensive regulatory frameworks and build foreign currency reserves.
 - Successive economic crises highlight the urgent need for Middle Eastern and African governments to establish, expand, or increase social protection systems so that every individual in the region can exercise their rights to a decent standard of living, including the right to food and social security.
 - Ensuring that basic necessities remain affordable to everyone.
 - Supporting joint economic cooperation between Arab and African regions to achieve open, resilient, sustainable, fair and transparent investment and economic growth , in addition to adopting participatory development approach to creating investment opportunities in new economic sectors, cross-border flow of money and commodities ; adopting innovation and modern digital technologies to promote trade and investment and ensuring it is flexible and sustainable operation.
 - Investing in research, first in the past and then in the future, to build an African and Arab world designed on the improved model of these two regions to avoid anything foreign that could hinder a better future.
 - Policy makers should develop reliable medium-term public finance plans and provide targeted assistance to the most needy and priority families.
 - Emphasizing the importance of the green economy as one of the means to overcome these crises by redirecting capital to invest in green energy sectors.
 - Arab and African governments should enact laws and regulations that facilitate the transition to green energy, encourage investment in green economy sectors and



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provide investors with attractive incentives such as tax incentives, credit facilities, and customs exemptions.

- Supporting research and innovation in clean technologies and sustainable practices.
- Encouraging private sector participation in green economy initiatives through incentives and regulatory frameworks, as well as developing green finance tools and mechanisms to mobilize investments for sustainable projects.
- Developing the necessary technologies to address climate challenges by working together within the diplomatic and parliamentary framework in order to enhance economic cooperation in all aspects to create innovative sustainable solutions.
- Increasing planting of trees, especially in Arab and African countries, which will contribute to reducing carbon emissions, and reducing the risk of climate change.
- Continuing to invest in development projects for carbon sequestration technologies, which is considered the basis for achieving a sustainable green economy that contributes to reducing the risk of climate change.
- Contributing to the commitment to zero carbon neutrality, by creating innovative qualitative opportunities in the national economy for its participants, whether they are producers or consumers, to define a lifestyle based on environmentally friendly and carbon-free practices.
- Continuing to develop renewable energy, motivating the private sector and raising energy efficiency to participate effectively in the transition from dependence on natural resources to dependence on renewable energy sources such as solar energy.
- Enhancing capacity building and technical assistance programs to develop green skills and entrepreneurship.
- Collaborating with international organizations, development partners, and civil society to support green economy initiatives and projects.
- There needs to be established a mechanism for cooperation and assistance among member states in the event of humanitarian crises.
- Reconsidering the cooperation policy adapted to the current global context and taking the initiative to improve diplomatic relations with powerful countries.
- Global economic crises can only be addressed through international cooperation. Therefore, the international community is required to mobilize investments and political will to collectively tackle the causes and consequences of escalating economic crises.



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- Redefining the concept of Afro-Arab security and adopting food security as one of its components.
- Taking a series of measures to deal with the consequences of the current global rise in prices of basic foodstuffs and fuel.
- Adopting an initiative to launch Afro-Arab platform to support renewable energy projects.

Finally, the participants forwarded a vote of thanks to His Majesty, the king of Eswatini for sponsoring this meeting, the Senate of Eswatini, represented by its President H.E. Lindiwe Dlamini, and the Eswatinian government and people for the warm reception and generous hospitality accorded them as well as for a very well organized meeting.

ASSECAA's tenth Retreat
Kingdom of Eswatini
May 12, 2023