



**Report on 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Parliamentary Network for Food Security in Africa and Arab  
World & International Seminar on "Parliaments and Food Security Challenges"**

**Held at the House of Counselors, Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco**

**30 October-1 November 2019**

Under the patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, and in partnership with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Moroccan House of Counselors and the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA) organized the first meeting of the Parliamentary Network on Food Security in Africa and the Arab World Wednesday, October 30, 2019. They also organized the international Seminar: "Parliaments and Food Security Challenges" on 31 October - 1 November 2019 at the headquarters of the House of Counselors in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco.

Delegations from member states and non-ASSECAA states, attended the events. The following Councils were represented:

- Shoora Council of Saudi Arabia
- The Senate of Lesotho
- Shoora Council of Bahrain
- The House of Federation of Ethiopia
- National Assembly of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- Senate of the Republic of Burundi
- Senate of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Senate of Ivory Coast
- House of Counselors of Morocco
- Supreme Council of State in Libya
- Senate of Kenya
- Senate of the Republic of Madagascar

The Seminar was also attended by representatives of the following regional and international parliamentary associations and unions:

- President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Chairman of the African Parliamentary Union
- Chairman of the Arab Maghreb Union
- President of the Arab Parliamentary Union, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Speaker of ECOWAS Parliament
- President of the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean
- President of the Andean Parliament



- Speaker of the Pan-African Parliament
- President of the Central American Parliament
- Secretary-General of the Arab Parliament
- Director of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development
- FAO Assistant-Director-General for Program Support (Rome)

The seminar was also attended by representative of HE President of Niger.

In addition, the seminar was attended by several ambassadors and representatives of diplomatic missions accredited in the Kingdom of Morocco, and several Moroccan ministers and MPs as well as journalists.

At the inaugural session, Speaker of the House of Counselors of Morocco and ASSECAA Chairman, Mr. Abdelhakim Ben Chamach delivered the welcome speech. He welcomed participants and expressed his happiness to inaugurate the meeting. He affirms that officially launching the Parliamentary Network for Food Security constitutes a vital step reflecting ASSECAA's role in strengthening cooperation among countries of the region. It also demonstrates the association's role in exerting more effective efforts towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG2 to end hunger by 2030, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

He stated that this occasion is a key station to assume responsibilities to face obstacles to achieving required growth in terms of food production, for several reasons, especially climate change in countries of the South, particularly Africa and the Arab World. He states that those challenges were deeply addressed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI in HM's speech before the African Summit in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2017, where HM said, "As we all know, neither gas nor oil can meet basic food needs. Isn't food security the most serious challenge facing the African continent? This is the kernel of the initiative to adapt African agriculture to climate change, the so-called 'Triple A' Initiative that we launched on the occasion of the COP22 climate summit. It constitutes a very concrete and unprecedented response to face common challenges posed by climate change."

For his part, ASSECAA Secretary-General stated that food insecurity was a war that we should fight and win, and we should focus on providing food instead of making lethal weapons, and develop investment systems in the field of agriculture, and that parliaments should enact laws ensuring achievement of food security.

Ms. Florence Rolle, FAO Representative in Morocco, explained that 826 million people in the world suffer from hunger, 246.4 million of whom live in Africa. She also stated that the establishment of the Parliamentary Network for Food Security stems from the belief in the role of Parliament in achieving food security and from collective responsibility to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, building on new approaches and creating an effective institutional framework for impact.

Following the inaugural session, a closed session was held to complete the organizational structure of the Network. The Foundational meeting of the Parliament Network in Africa and the Arab World, held on 17-18 January 2019 had approved the Foundational Charter and the election of Mr. Abdelhakim Ben Chamach, Speaker of the Moroccan House of Counselors and ASSECAA President - as Chairman of the Network for a period of two years, renewable once. Thus, this session was devoted to completion of formation of the Network Executive Office. After deliberations, the meeting approved election of the following:

- Dr. Jihad Abdullah Al-Fadhil, Member of the Shura Council, Kingdom of Bahrain, as Vice-Chairman



- Mr. Khoabane, Senator of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Network Rapporteur for African States
- Mr. Bashir Al-Hosh, Member of the Supreme Council of State in Libya, Network Rapporteur for Arab States
- ASSECAA General Secretariat, Network secretary

A number of important papers were then presented by FAO, focusing on the following themes:

- The role of parliamentary networks in achieving SDG2
- Overall objectives of the Guidelines for Responsible Land Tenure Governance
- Principles of rational investment in agriculture and food systems
- Lessons learned and future prospects towards food security through the Parliamentary Network for Food Security in Africa and the Arab World

At 2:30 pm on Thursday, 31 October 2019, the International Symposium on “Parliaments and Food Security Challenges” was inaugurated. Heads of Delegations delivered important speeches, stressing the importance of convening this symposium underscoring the need that parliamentarians shall play their role and contribute to achievement of food security. They also underscored the need to establish security, peace and conflict resolution as the basis and prerequisites of success of any national, regional or international strategy to achieve food security for all peoples. In addition, they stressed the need to move forward in addressing the issue of climate change, which affected the balance of food distribution and provision.

To enrich the discussions and parliamentary consultations on food security issues and to put forth proposals and recommendations that would contribute to paving the way for joint parliamentary action alongside efforts exerted by governments and the various sectors concerned, several presentations were made, focusing on the following themes:

- Status of Food Security and Nutrition in the World in 2019
- Global experiences of parliamentary networks on food security and their role in achieving SDG2 (A review of the experiments of Latin America and the Caribbean, Central America and the Caribbean, the Mediterranean and the Andean Parliament)
- Impact of conflict on food security and nutrition
- Climate change and food security.

The seminar was enriched with several interventions, in which participants stressed the importance of taking bolder measures to address food security and face challenges posed by climate change, as well as the importance of security and stability, and that parliamentarians should play their role of enacting laws that ensure achieving food security.

Following extensive discussions and deliberations, participants underscored the following:

- The importance of facilitating exchange of information among parliaments in the first place and among parliaments and the various parties on the issue of food security
- To strengthen dialogue among parliamentarians at the national, regional and international levels to exchange experiences to achieve SDG2 and to realize the right to adequate and healthy nutrition
- To strengthen joint action by governments, parliaments and the private sector to address the issue of food security
- To encourage the private sector to invest in agriculture
- To enact laws that support the right to food, the optimal use of natural resources, adaptation to climate change and risk management.



At the end of the Seminar, participants presented a cable of thanks to HM King Mohammed VI, expressing their sincere thanks and gratitude for hospitality. Participants also thanked the House of Counselors, the government and people of Morocco for the warm welcome and good organization of this important event.

**ASSECAA General Secretariat**  
**Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco**  
**1 November 2019**

