



ASSOCIATION DES SENATS, SHOORA ET CONSEILS  
EQUIVALENTS D'AFRIQUE ET DU MONDE ARABE

**8<sup>th</sup> Conference and 9<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting of ASSECAA**

**African Union Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

**Final Communiqué**

Following the kind invitation of the Speaker of the House of Federation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference and 9<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA) was held at the African Union Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2014. It was graced by the presence of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia **H. E Ato Hailemariam Dessalegn** who was also the special guest of honour.

The Occasion was also used by members to celebrate ten years of the establishment of the Association following its naming and election of its first Officers in April 2004, in Sana'a, Yemen. It was therefore an opportunity to reflect on Afro-Arab economic, political, social and cultural cooperation through the efforts of parliamentarians as embedded in the objectives of the Association.

Participants from the following member councils attended this important meeting.

1. Shoora Council of Saudi Arabia
2. Shoora Council of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

- 3-The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- 4-The Senate of the Republic of Burundi
- 5-The Council of the Nation of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.
- 6-Council of States of the Republic of Sudan.
- 7-The House of Federation of the Democratic Federal Republic of Ethiopia.
- 8-Shoora Council of the Republic of Yemen.
- 9-The House of Counselors of Morocco.
- 10-The Shoora Council of Qatar.
- 11-The Senate of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.
- 12-The Senate of the Republic of Gabon.
- 13-The Senate of the Republic of Congo Brazzaville.
- 14- The House of Dignitaries of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
- 15-The Senate of the Republic of Cameroon (an observer delegation).

Also in attendance were Ambassadors of different countries resident in Addis Ababa, International and Regional Organizations and Ethiopian government officials.

In a speech to welcome the participants with pleasure to the ever growing and beautiful city of Addis Ababa, the Speaker of the House of the Federation of the Republic of Ethiopia H.E Ato Kassa Teklebirhan stated that the House of the Federation has marched long in its effort to be part and parcel of all endeavors exerted by ASSECAA to consolidate our desire to have our two regions peaceful and stable and to realize fast economic development that brings about prosperity to our peoples. This explains the interest exhibited any time the country is called upon to organize an ASSECAA event.





He also reaffirmed Ethiopia's dedication to support ASSECAA and work with our friends in Africa and the Arab World so as to achieve the required mutual benefit in all social, political, economic and other spheres of cooperation.

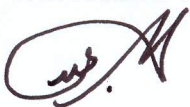
In another welcome address, the Secretary General of ASSECAA Mr. Abdulwasie Yusuf Ali thanked participants for their positive response to the invitations and unflinching support to the General Secretariat since its establishment.

He said that it is an established fact that our two regions are blessed with what we need for our development considering the abundant human resources and great wealth of natural resources for which we are accountable. It is no longer news that Africa and the Arab World share so many things in common. The similarities in our historical background, our culture, and the resemblance of our heritage which have been clearly exposed during the different activities of ASSECAA are testimonies of our need to be together.

The Chairman of ASSECAA and speaker of the Shoora Council of Bahrain H.E Ali Bin Saleh Al saleh - represented by Dr.Khalid Aal Khalifah , head of Bahraini delegation - expressed immense gratitude and appreciation to the friendly Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia , its government, parliament and people for the generous hospitality and warm reception reminiscent of the good feelings of brotherhood bringing together our countries.

He also enumerated several achievements which ASSECAA has accomplished especially the encouragement and promotion of cooperation between the Arab and African nations at the political, cultural, social and economic levels which were attained by supporting the activities of the association, and pushing ahead with the execution of the recommendations that emanated from our previous meetings.

In a key-note address, the special guest of Honour H.E Ato Hailemariam Dessalegn, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, who attended the conference as the guest of honor, delivered a speech in which he welcomed the delegates, and expressed pleasure that Addis Ababa is hosting this



meeting which is marked by the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of ASSECAA's establishment.

He confirmed that Arabs and Africans have common history, culture and legacy, which necessitates mobilizing economic and political resources in order to achieve comprehensive development.

He added that the time has come for Arabs and Africans to work together to attain such ambitions, as the Middle East countries are endowed with financial resources while Africa is rich in fertile lands and diverse potential.

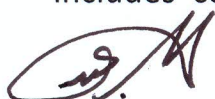
He indicated that a fruitful cooperation between the two regions could be achieved through investment, trade exchange, revitalization of tourism industry, highlighting that such aspirations cannot be fulfilled without maintaining peace and security, and fighting corruption and terrorism.

He, in conclusion, shed light on the achievements made by Ethiopia over the past 20 years during which the country achieved considerable economic growth, and created millions of job opportunities.

The Secretariat also presented awards for the "Enhancement of cooperation between Africa and the Arab World" to all member countries of the Association in commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Association. The shields were also to mark members' dedication and support to the Secretariat.

The afternoon session started with the presentation of the General Secretariat Report. It included the activities and achievements of the General Secretariat in 2013, audit report on its finances for the same year and the proposed programmes and budget for 2014 which forms the base of the Councils discussion during the meeting.

After this juncture, the conference entered into committee sessions to discuss the Report of the General Secretariat. There were in all four committees which includes committee on budget and finance, committee on administration, the





programmes committee and the women parliamentarians committee. Heads of delegations of member councils also had their meeting.

The following reports were obtained from the various committee meetings:

**1-Finance committee report:**

The committee approved the audit report on ASSECAA's 2013 accounts for 2013, as well as its 2014 budget. It further approved the allocation of \$ 95,000 for "Invest in Africa" program, provided that the procedure may not result in increasing either the Association's budget and/or or members' financial contributions.

**2-Administrative committee report:**

The committee approved the salary structure submitted by the General Secretariat, on the condition that the scheme may not affect the implementation of the programs that should be annually undertaken by the Association, or result in increasing annual budgetary allocations.

With respect to the income-tax due from ASSECAA's staff, the committee stated that it is not legally authorized to discuss legal matters that are closely related to the laws and regulations of the headquarter country, Yemen. The committee recommended that the General Secretariat continue raising the issue with the Yemeni government , as it is the case with other international organizations operating in Yemen. Heads of delegations discussed in their meeting this issue and recommended that the Shoora council of Yemen discuss the matter with Yemeni government to exempt the employees of the General Secretariat from income-tax as it is the norm in international organizations.

It further recommended that the General Secretariat improve its performance as well as the organization of, and preparations for the Association's conferences, seminars and meetings.



### 3-Program committee report:

The committee recommended that the General Secretariat proceed with holding women parliamentarians' meetings. Regarding the study visit exchange program, the committee approved the implementation of the program on the part of member councils, and recommended that the General Secretariat lay out mechanisms for the execution of same.

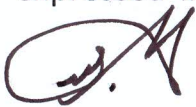
The committee resolved that the General Secretariat continue following up the implementation of the student exchange program. With respect to the program of " ASSECAA cup for Excellence " the committee approved the continuation of implementation of this activity and to expand it to other distinguished universities of member countries.

It also recommended that the General Secretariat continue holding the meeting of chambers of commerce and industry. With regard to ASSECAA's conference and retreat , the participants confirmed that in case no member country volunteers to host the two events, then they should be held based on the English alphabetical order of member states.

With respect to the meeting of women parliamentarians, the committee expressed appreciation to the General Secretariat for its keenness to include the recommendations from the meeting held in Khartoum in its report. It welcomed the decision of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques , King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, appointing 30 women to the Shoora Council, and urged member countries to increase women's quota in senates/councils to at least 30 percent. It also recommended that ASSECAA's annual budget include a provision for women parliamentarians' activities, and that member countries implement the resolutions from the meeting held in Sudan.

During its day 2 sessions, which started at 9 am, the conference debated committee reports and approved the recommendations stipulated therein. It then set up the final communiqué drafting committee.

Heads of delegations then resumed delivering their speeches in which they expressed immense gratitude to the government and people of the Democratic





Federal Republic of Ethiopia, represented by the House of Federation and its Speaker, H.E Kassa Teklebirhan , for hosting the Council meeting , as well as for the generous hospitality and warm reception accorded to members of delegations.

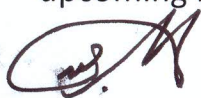
They affirmed the importance of enhancing ASSECAA's role and status in such a way that achieves the objectives for which it was established. They urged members to try to implement the recommendations from the Association's previous conference and council meetings in order for the Association to boost Afro-Arab cooperation on the economic, trade and political spheres . They touched upon the major challenges facing the two regions in the world of today that is marked by major regional economic groupings , which entails that the two regions and their leaders should speed up the pace of cooperation , as Africa and Arab world are endowed with huge financial and natural resources that enable them to achieve economic development.

At the end of its sessions, the conference approved the following recommendations and resolutions:

1-The participants express their profound gratitude to the government and people of the Democratic Federal Republic of Ethiopia, represented by the House of Federation and its Speaker, H.E Kassa Teklebrahan , for hosting the meeting, and for their genuine efforts that brought the event to full success.

2-They approved the recommendations from the four committees that emanated from the conference, including the 2014 budget; taking into account the recommendations mentioned in the committees' reports .

3-The conference urges the General Secretariat to rectify the flaws noticed in some previous meetings, and to improve its performance in such a way that befits the Association's high status as well as the resources allotted for the General Secretariat. It recommends that any improvement made in terms of the Secretariat's performance be gauged in order to overcome any deficiencies in upcoming meetings.




4-The Council approved the renewal of the Secretary General's term of office for another three years , taking into account the observations made during the conference discussions. It also approved the renewal of the two Assistant Secretaries General's tenure for a similar term, to be calculated since a year ago ; it resolved , also , that the term of office of the two Assistant Secretaries General is two terms only as it is the case of the Secretary General , taking into account the conditions of term of office ( tenure ) set out in the minutes of the council's meeting held on 5 April , 2014.

5-The conference urges member councils of the Association that have arrears in the payment of their contributions to pay the due amount as soon as possible; the conference assigned the General Secretariat to communicate with member countries to fulfill their obligations .

With regard to the contributions of new member councils , which are to join recently joined ASSECAA , the conference instructed the General Secretariat to propose an appropriate mechanism to determine the contributions of these councils .

6- With respect to the hosting of meetings of the Association and its annual conferences , the conference discussed what the General Secretariat noticed as some countries hesitate in hosting meetings ; accordingly , the conference approved the recommendation of the council that member countries host meetings according to English alphabetical order taking into account the circumstances of some countries that have elections or other prior engagements may be excluded from hosting meetings on the proposed time , and countries that follow them in alphabetical order should host the meetings .

7-The participants urged the adoption of an effective approach to the execution of the resolutions from ASSECAA's conferences and council meetings. They called for bridging the gap between what ASSECAA seeks to achieve as a legislative organization, and what the executive authorities should do , because they are





solely concerned with the veritable and creative implementation of the components of Afro-Arab cooperation.

8-the participants call upon the governments of member countries to speed up the pace of economic and trade cooperation , encourage businessmen to invest in Africa, which is endowed with huge investment opportunities and diverse natural resources , a matter that would result in the achievement of development on the continent, and , at the same time, benefit investors.

9-The participants urge member countries to give a special attention to women's participation in parliamentary and political life, and to afford them the opportunity to prove their efficiency and skills in serving society and achieving the purposes of sustainable development. They pay tribute to the grand step taken by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, pertaining to the appointment of 30 women to the Saudi Shoora Council.

10-The participants condemn all forms of violence, extremism and terrorism that have spread in many parts of the world, including our region. They express their full support and solidarity with the countries suffering from this abominable phenomenon that destabilized countries and sought to disrupt the march of their civilization and progress. A case in point is the situation, which is still being particularly experienced by the Republic of Yemen and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The participants condemn all forms of discrimination against minorities, particularly the annihilation and displacement of Muslims in the Central African Republic (C.A.R).

11-The participants affirmed the importance of enforcing the resolutions and recommendations that have already been adopted by the Association with the aim of finding fair solutions to the conflicts raging in Syria and Palestine in such a manner that establishes peace and security in such countries.

12-The conference expresses full support for the efforts that are still being exerted by Syria's neighboring countries , in particular the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan that has been bearing the heavy burden of hosting and caring for the Syrian refugees badly affected by the intractable conflict in their home country,



Syria. The conference also calls upon the international community to assume the responsibility of supporting the Syrian refugees and offering assistance to the countries hosting them, mainly the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Addis Ababa

6/4/ 2014

*Michael W. T.*

