



62ND SESSION OF THE OACPS  
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AND  
INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS OF THE ACP-EU  
JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

In Brussels, Belgium from 25th February to 2nd March 2023

Presented by Hon.  
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# **62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE OACPS PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AND ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS) Parliamentary Assembly was held at the OACPS Secretariat offices in Brussels on 25 February - 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. OACPS Secretariat provided the Head of delegation for each country with flight tickets and subsistence allowance covering accommodation and meals. This Assembly is composed of Members of Parliament from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific States. The Assembly's current President is Hon. Ana Rita Sithole, Member of Parliament of the Republic of Mozambique.

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Intersessional Meetings were also held to prepare for the 43<sup>rd</sup> ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (ACP-EU JPA), which will be held in June 2023. These were held at the OACPS Secretariat on March 1<sup>st</sup> and at the EU Parliament on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Hon. Mamokete Ntšekhe, MP, participated in this Session as a new Member of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly and a representative of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Lesotho. Ambassador Dr. Pontšo Matumelo Sekatle and First Secretary Mr Mohlomi Sello, the Lesotho-Brussels Mission, accompanied Hon Ntšekhe.

Two special sessions were held on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of February, 2023. These were:

- Orientation for new members of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly
- Briefing on the New OACPS-EU Partnership Agreement

### **1.1 ORIENTATION FOR NEW MEMBERS OF THE OACPS PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

Mr Lawrence Chilimboyi, former Expert Parliamentary Institutions, presented a paper titled **“Understanding the Functioning and Procedures of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly and ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.”**

The presentation covered the following areas:

- Composition of the JPA.  
The JPA comprises an equal number of elected Members of Parliament (MPs) from the ACP states and Members of the European Parliament.
- Institutional Differences between the EU Parliament and OACPS Parliamentary Assembly.

The European Parliament is composed of members elected directly from their countries. Its Members do not represent their National Parliaments but are elected directly from their countries as Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The OACPS Parliamentary Assembly, on the other hand, is composed of members representing their National Parliaments. The European Parliament's legal status is derived from the EU institutional architecture, while the OACPS legal framework is derived from the Revised Georgetown Agreement.

- **Organs of the JPA**  
The main organ of the JPA is the Bureau, composed of  
Two (2) Co-Presidents and Twenty-four (24) Vice-Presidents  
Three Standing Committees: (i) Committee on Political Affairs; (ii) Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade; (iii) Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment.
  
- **Main activities of the JPA**  
The main activities of the JPA are Plenary Sessions, Inter-Sessional Meetings, Fact-finding Missions, and Election Observation.
  
- **The process of adopting Resolutions**  
The process entails Five (5) stages
  - (i) Hearing with Experts
  - (ii) Draft Report
  - (iii) Draft Resolution
  - (iv) Amendments to Resolutions
  - (v) Adoption in plenary

The resolutions of the JPA are advisory and not binding, but they act as a guide to OACPS and EU Executive organs.

The consensus from deliberations was that it is crucial to enhance the visibility of the OACPS on the international stage. To achieve this, OACPS MPs should understand the process, get organised according to regions, shadow the EU, and be strategic in the execution of their mandate, including voting at the JPA. Members observed that while their counterparts from the EU work together daily, they, on other hand, meet only twice a year.

It is also important to mention the discussions made on OACPS member states on which sanctions were imposed by the EU. The negative effects of the sanctions on the economies of such countries were presented as detrimental. The OACPS member

states therefore such would be echoed in relevant joint committee sitting with EU counter parts.

## **1.2 BRIEFING ON THE NEW OACPS-EU PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

The briefing of Members on the New OACPS-EU Partnership Agreement was led by: Hon. Joseph Owona Kono, former President of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly and Chair of the Parliamentary Assembly Working Group on the Post Cotonou; and H.E. Mr. Robert Dussey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Togolese Abroad – Chief Negotiator of the New OACPS-EU Partnership Agreement.

The New OACPS-EU Partnership Agreement (NPA):

- Introduces Regional Parliamentary Assemblies (RPA): The Africa-EU JPA, Caribbean-EU JPA and Pacific-EU JPA. The OACPS-EU will meet once in three years. Some OACPS member countries raised concerns over this ‘Regional Assemblies’ stating unclear rationale for separation of regions.
- Recognises the importance of multilateralism, and as such, the OACPS may enter into agreements with other organisations other than the EU.
- Does not have a dedicated fund. The EU has phased out the European Development Fund (EDF) and established the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). NDICI merges the previous EU financing instruments and aims at eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable development, prosperity, peace and stability.

The NPA was initialled on 15 April 2021. This marked the conclusion of negotiations. The agreement is expected to be signed in Samoa in June 2023.

### **LESOTHO HAS NOT RATIFIED THE NEW OACPS-EU PARTNERSHIP.**

## **2. THE CONFERENCE ITSELF**

### **2.1 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE OACPS PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (OACPS PA)**

The 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly was officially opened by the President, Hon Ana Rita Sithole, on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> February. In her opening remarks, the President welcomed Members to the Session and thanked her predecessor for successfully leading the OACPS despite the Covid-19 challenges. She thanked the Secretary-General for his leadership of the organisation OACPS. Finally, she shared priority areas that will be the focus of her Presidency: (a) Visibility of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly and ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly; (b) strengthening of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly; (c) Engaging with strategic assemblies; and (d) Financial stability of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly. Finally, she proposed that the Assembly should move to paperless meetings.

On behalf of the Secretary General of the OACPS Secretariat, H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti also thanked the President for successful sessions and the Members for attendance and participation. He urged OACPS member states to remain united in ensuring economic development, peace, and stability in OACPS states. He stated the concerns over delays in signing the post Cotonou agreement and all related delays. He then proceeded to explain the importance of contributions by member states and the negative impact on the Secretariat as members fail to pay their contributions on time. He further announced Maldives as a new Member of OACPS and the exit of South Africa from OACPS was also mentioned. He concluded by outlining important events and summits in which OACPS member states can participate.

This Session discussed and approved the draft summary Record of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session held in October 2022 in Maputo, Mozambique. In addition, the Session discussed the reports of Committees and the Draft Rules of Procedure. Lesotho serves on the Committee on Political Affairs. Therefore, this report focuses on this Committee.

- **Committee on Political Affairs**

Lesotho serves on the Committee on Political Affairs. The Committee tabled the political situation in some member states, including Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Togo and Zambia. Furthermore, the Committee presented the current situation in Haiti and a request for the OACPS to seek EU support for efforts towards establishing peace and stability. Lesotho presented the current political situation including the recent national elections outcomes and the new Government's vision to change the economic, social and governance climate for the better.

The Committee further presented the Report on consideration of the amendments to the resolution on enhancing cooperation on maritime security and promoting the rule of law on the oceans.

The Committee further stated that the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Intersessional Meeting would discuss hybrid threats in ACP and EU countries.

- **Draft Rules of Procedure for the OACPS-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly**

The Draft Rules of Procedure for the Joint OACPS-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly are intended to be operational under the New Partnership Agreement. The OACPS-EU JPA will comprise the Members of three Regional Parliamentary Assemblies: Africa-EU, Caribbean-EU and Pacific-EU. The Draft Rules of Procedure document is divided into four parts: the overarching Rules of Procedure that will govern the OACPS-EU JPA and three parts that will govern the regional assemblies. Each Section contains about 31 Rules.

The 62<sup>nd</sup> Assembly did not make sufficient progress due to time constraints and **resolved** that a special meeting be convened to deliberate on the Rules of Procedure. Mention must be made that the Assembly decided that the principle of women's representation should be observed.

## **2.2 ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS**

Intersessional Meetings took place in two stages. The first meeting was held at the OACPS Secretariat, while the second meeting was voting which took place at the EU Parliament.

## **2.3 ACP-EU JPA Committee on Political Affairs**

A paper was presented on hybrid threats in ACP and EU countries. The Committee agreed that hybrid threats cause instability and threaten peace. These threats include cyber-attacks, targeting critical infrastructure, drones used as surveillance tools and weapons, propaganda, conspiracy theories and artificial intelligence. Africa was stated as the most susceptible region for these attacks due to lack of counter measures, state fragility, ongoing conflicts, disinformation and competing policy priorities in some countries. It was agreed that countries must devise countermeasures which can be achieved through capacity building, establishing common strategies to show resistance, situation awareness and sharing best practices. The EU side stated that Russia currently uses these threats to discourage countries from supporting Ukraine by weaponising commodities.

The Committee on Political Affairs voted on the document entitled: The Report on Consideration of the amendments to the resolution on enhancing cooperation on maritime security and promoting the rule of law on the oceans. This voting process at the EU Parliament marked the conclusion of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Intersessional Meetings.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Lesotho still needs to ratify the New Partnership Agreement (NPA). ACP countries initialled the NPA in April 2021. Signing will take place in Samoa in June 2023. After this date, countries that have not ratified the Agreement will assume observer status. The Government of Lesotho is urged to deposit instruments of ratification at the OACPS Secretariat before June 2023.
- Lesotho is in arrears with contributions to the OACPS. Therefore, the Government of Lesotho is urged to fulfil its obligations and pay contributions.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- Gratitude goes to the National Assembly of Lesotho for arrangements to attend this August body meeting this time after failing to attend two consecutive meetings.
- Thanks to the OACPS for funding the expenses relating to the meeting
- Thanks to the Embassy of the Kingdom of Lesotho in Brussels for warm welcome and for attending the session