

## Annual General Meeting of APRN, October 22, 2009, Dakar, Senegal

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the African Parliamentary Poverty Reduction Network (APRN) was held on October 22, 2009. This followed a successful three-day conference of the APRN, where members of the old executive of the APRN were present. All the participants who took part in the conference were present for the annual general meeting.

The Director of African Programs, Dr. Rasheed Draman who was not able to be present during the APRN regional conference, took the opportunity in his opening remarks to apologise for his absence and thanked participants for making the conference a running success. Hon Anne Makinda, deputy speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania and former chair of the executive committee of the APRN chaired the meeting. She too was not present during the first two days of the regional APRN conference because of the other pressing engagements. She gave a brief overview of the African Parliamentary Poverty Reduction Network (APRN), it was created in 2003 and since then it has recorded some successes by providing a platform for members of parliament from different African countries to come together to dialogue on extant developmental issues on the continent, sharing experiences and learning best practices in the process. She also highlighted the fact that this year's general meeting was originally scheduled for September 2008, in relation to the APRN regional conference on ***Parliaments, Poverty Reduction and the Budget Process***. However, as this conference was postponed to October 19-21, 2009, the AGM was subsequently also postponed to October 22, 2009.

Mention was also made of the contributions made by the former executive committee members whose able stewardship witnessed the expansion of training activities for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. She indicated, for instance, the introduction of training programme designed for parliamentary staff, designing in-country training programmes for beneficiary parliaments, and the introduction of a new module titled ***Revenue Side of the Budgets and the Role of Parliament***. Additionally, she noted, executive committee members have over the past years deliberated upon ways to make the network sustainable. This was aimed at ensuring the network survives after funding from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) ends. Some of the suggestions of sustaining the network by members of the executive committee members included the following:

- PC should institutionalize and crystallize relations between network parliaments and parliamentary Centre. This should be underpinned with and MOU with member parliaments
- Organize in-country trainings, wider reach of target groups
- Publicize the activities of the network members and highlight palpable achievements
- Arrange a meeting with leadership of the various parliaments through seminars, regional conferences. This, it is believed would provide the platform for participants to interact and bond, develop strategies of collaboration and cooperation with sister parliaments, and above all, share best practices of parliaments' response to increased good governance.

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Senegal welcomed the fact the meeting was taking place in Dakar, Senegal, and urged incoming executive members to work diligently to advance the goals of the network. Hon Anne Makinda reminded members who were putting themselves up for election as executive committee members of the APRN about the fact that there were no financial rewards by virtue of being a member of executive committee of APRM. Self-sacrifice and dedication to duty are the abiding attributes that are required to effectively discharge these duties. Dr. Rasheed Draman recounted the selfless and dedicated service of Hon. Anne Makinda in advancing the objectives of the APRN and urged those aspiring to become executive committee members to emulate the selfless and tireless dedication devoted to achieving the objectives of the APRN by Hon. Anne Makinda over the years.

#### **4. Election of Executive Committee Members**

A criterion for electing the new executive members was elaborated to include the following:

1. Regional balance
2. Anglophone/Francophone consideration
3. Gender consideration
4. An abiding dedication to duty and self-sacrifice

Representatives from the regions which were made up of Southern Africa, Eastern Africa and West Africa were required to elect two (2) representatives each except for West Africa, which because of the relatively large size in terms of representations was required to elect three (3) representatives.

The following Members of Parliament were elected to serve a two-year term to steer the affairs of the African Parliamentary Poverty Reduction Network (APRN):

- 1. Hon. William Okecho (Uganda)- Chairman**
- 2. Hon. Koala Kabore K. Aline (Burkina Faso) -Vice Chairperson**
- 3. Hon. Clement Kofi Humado (Ghana) Member**
- 4. Hon. John Mbadi Ngongo (Kenya) Member**
- 5. Hon. Gaye Ndeye Cissé (Senegal) Member**
- 6. Hon. Agnes Penumlungu (Malawi) Member**
- 7. Hon. Emmanuel M. Hachipuka (Zambia) Member**

The work plan for 2009/2010 and the corresponding budget for the period under review were presented to the new executive committee members by Dr. Draman, and the members had the opportunity to ask questions seek clarifications. Dr. Draman reiterated the commitment of the

Austrian Government working through the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) in supporting the activities of the APRN for the next two years with 400, 000 Euros financial support.

## **5. Closing Remarks**

In his closing remarks, Dr. Rasheed Draman thanked the host country, especially the protocol staff for the warmth and matchless hospitality extended to participants, thanked participants for taking time off their busy schedule to attend the conference and participated actively in deliberating upon poverty reduction issues and coming out with cogent recommendations. This, Dr. Draman noted, will be captured in the Handbook on Poverty Reduction which Parliamentary Centre will be publishing shortly. He took the opportunity to also congratulate the newly elected executive committee members for being elected to serve the APRN for the next two years. He also noted with satisfaction the close and fruitful collaboration between Parliamentary Centre and the North South Institute (NSI) as well as the Independent Development Research Centre (IDRC); he thanked their representatives for participating and providing valuable insights into the discussions.

The former chairperson of the APRN executive committee, Hon. Anne Makinda presented gifts to all the executive committee members and Parliamentary Centre staff she worked with during her tenure as the chairperson of the APRN executive committee. Her kind gesture was acknowledged and greatly appreciated by all the recipients including Parliamentary Centre.

The deputy speaker of the National Assembly of Senegal, Hon. Aissatou Mbodj expressed her satisfaction for the successful conclusion of the conference, she urged participants to carry the message of the conference - abiding commitment of MPs to work assiduously towards the eradication of poverty in Africa to their various parliaments.

Hon. Hachipuka, MP from Zambia and member of the executive committee of the APRN gave the vote of thanks. He thanked the deputy speaker of the National Assembly of Senegal for gracing the occasion and being an active participant throughout the conference. He also thanked Hon. Makinda for her selfless and sterling service to the course of the APRN. Hon. Hachipuka also commended Dr. Draman and his team from Parliamentary Centre for their good work exemplified in the way they organized a near flawless conference. Proceedings of the meeting came to a close at about 12.30 pm local time.