



INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Press Release No: Date: 15 May 2023

Venue: Midrand, South Africa

<u>For Africa to develop, peace and stability must prevail - AU Chairperson</u> addresses Pan-African Parliament.



The President of the Union of Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union (AU), **President Azali Assoumani** has pledged support for the realisation of the mandate of the Pan-African Parliament as the legislative arm of the AU. He was speaking as a Guest of Honour at the opening of the Second Ordinary Session of the Sixth Parliament, which is currently underway in Midrand, South Africa, under the AU theme for 2023, "Accelerating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)".

"I am aware of your commitment and your determination to work in favor of the defense of the interests of the African peoples as our continental legislators. I would like to assure all of you here present, of my firm determination to work in close collaboration with African governments and other AU institutions, including the Pan-African Parliament, for more peace and progress in our continent. Our common duty, as you all know, is to help our organisation achieve the objectives it has set out in its Agenda 2063", he stated.

H.E. Assoumani further encouraged African legislators to help establish appropriate conditions to promote socio-economic development in the continent.





"Our continent is indeed full of many natural resources with the potential to become one of the largest markets in the world in the years to come, if we create, right now, the appropriate conditions, to promote socio-economic development for a sustainable economy. We have succeeded to set up the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and it has become our continental priority. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of our Union gave me the mandate to prioritise mechanisms to accelerate the implementation of this important free trade agreement," he added.

Meanwhile, **H.E Assoumani** also underscored that for Africa to develop and grow, peace and stability must prevail. "It is clear that in addition to terrorist threats, unconstitutional changes of Government, the war in Sudan has worsened the situation. Not only does this war create chaos in this brotherly country, but it risks destabilising an already fragile region, with all the consequences this may have on the people.

"We must then, on this aspect too, unite our efforts, and agree on the actions to be implemented, to convince the warring parties to reach a ceasefire and to favor the negotiations, for a happy and rapid outcome of this crisis. I am in contact with the warring parties across our continent and I expect to be able to convince them to favor negotiations," he added encouraging Africans to work together in order to achieve a common desire for peace, stability and development.

On his part, Pan-African Parliament President, **Hon. Chief Fortune Charumbira** noted that Parliament has in the past eleven months made significant strides in the fulfilment of its mandate. He further emphasised on the need for the AU to reconnect with the African citizenry. "Linking to grassroots in Africa is even more imperative for the PAP which was undoubtedly established with this very objective in mind. A Parliament is not a Parliament if it is remote and inaccessible to the people. A Parliament is not a Parliament if its agenda does not respond to the people's hopes, ideals and aspirations."

"I am pleased to report that this was one of the major outcomes of the Strategic Reorientation Workshop that we convened last year. The workshop refocused the PAP's attention on impactful deliverables that affect our citizens. We agreed that whatever we do as a continental Parliament ought to be for the greater good of our people," he added.

Also addressing the Plenary, South Africa's Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation **Hon. Candith Mashego-Dhlamini** disclosed that her government is encouraged by the deliberations of the PAP on the implementation of the AfCFTA and its specific focus on the significant role that the African Parliamentarians could play in its acceleration.

"You may recall that during the Summit held on 19-20 February this year, the Heads of State adopted three Protocols to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, namely, on Competition Policy, Investment as well as on Intellectual Property Rights. We look up to the PAP to facilitate the ratification of these protocols





so that they may be integrated into national legislation, thus providing a legal basis to underpin an effective single market for Africa, and meaningful market access across the AfCFTA for the private sector, especially the SMMEs led by women and young entrepreneurs," she said.

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