



123rd ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION AND RELATED MEETINGS

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Governing Council
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REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS

(a) REGIONAL SEMINAR ON PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT IN THE AREA OF SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA

(Dakar, Senegal, 21-22 September 2010)

1. The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), in cooperation with the National Assembly of Senegal and with the support of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament, organized on 21 and 22 September 2010 in Dakar a regional seminar on parliamentary oversight in West Africa in the area of security and defence. The event was part of ongoing, long-term joint efforts undertaken by DCAF and the IPU to bolster the contribution of parliaments, in particular their defence and security committees, to security sector governance around the world.
2. The regional seminar looked at general principles of parliamentary oversight and how they applied to the West African context. It focused on the following areas with a view to enhancing parliamentary performance:
 - ▶ Parliamentary ethics and transparency;
 - ▶ Gender mainstreaming;
 - ▶ Good practices for effective parliamentary committees (defence and security committees, budget committees, intelligence committees, etc.); and
 - ▶ Mechanisms and approaches for more effective budget oversight by parliament.
3. Members of the ECOWAS Parliament, including its Speaker, and members of the Parliaments of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, participated in the Seminar.
4. Following welcoming remarks made by representatives of the IPU and DCAF and Mr. Mamadou Bamba Ndiaye, Chairperson of the Committee on Defence and Security of the National Assembly of Senegal, the event was officially opened by the First Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Senegal, Mr. Iba der Thiam, and the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, Mr. Mahamane Ousmane.
5. Presentations were made on each of the above-mentioned four areas by parliamentarians from the region and representatives from expert institutions, such as the African Security Sector Network. Mr. Balado Manu, Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the ECOWAS Parliament, provided a regional perspective on the discussions. Mr. Sango Patekile Holomisa, a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum Standing Committee on Democracy and Governance, made a presentation on lessons learned in strengthening parliamentary oversight in southern Africa.

6. Mr. Mamadou Bamba Ndiaye, Chairperson of the Committee on Defence and Security of the National Assembly of Senegal, acted as Rapporteur for the Seminar. The meeting recommended inter alia the establishment of a consultation and cooperation mechanism for national parliamentary defence and security committees in West Africa and the strengthening of ties between those committees and the ECOWAS Parliament. Its conclusions underscored the need to better understand the contribution of individual parliaments in West Africa to the security agenda. The proposed comparative study on existing security legislation across West Africa and on the functioning and work of national parliamentary defence and security committees was designed to promote such understanding.