

„Kampala Declaration on Fighting Corruption, Illicit Financial Flows and Managing Debt”

We, the delegates of the African Organisation of Public Accounts Committees (AFROPAC) member countries assembled for the 3rd AFROPAC General Meeting in Kampala, Uganda, on 21st and 22nd of November 2018. On this occasion and in light of the insights gained from the preceding high-level Conference we express our serious concern about the levels of Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows as well as rising debt obligations in African States. Each of these threats to our continent's future are major risks for sound and developmental Public Finance Management. As representatives of African National Parliaments and their Public Accounts Committees (PACs) and Committees with similar function, together with representatives from the Pan African Parliament and other stakeholders, we express our will to address these challenges and to do everything possible under our mandate to fight corruption wherever it arises, to stop Illicit Financial Flows and to use our Parliamentary oversight power to establish strong accountability on sovereign debt.

We observe

- That the people of our countries are losing confidence in Governments and that it is one of the paramount responsibilities of Parliaments to hold Governments accountable to restore the trust of the people in the representative institutions of democracy.
- That the variety of propositions on how to fight corruption and Illicit Financial Flows (IFF) and on how to improve the oversight and accountability for public debt from African regional institutions, like the African Union (AU) and its Organs, the African Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI), the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF), and the Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative (CABRI), and international organisations like the United Nations (UN), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) need to be seriously considered and adopted for immediate implementation.

We build on

- The increased awareness throughout the Continent that Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows as well as rising public debts are serious threats to Africa's development.
- The goals in the AU Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030), in particular Goal No 16 on building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- The commitments made in the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action (AAAA).
- The principles laid out in the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) and in the UN Declaration Against Corruption (UNCAC).

- The AU Declaration on the “2018 - African Anti-Corruption Year”.
- The Yaoundé Declaration on Curbing Illicit Financial Flows through Good Financial Governance.

We recognize the persisting harmful impact of Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows to Africa’s Sustainable Economic and Social Development and Good Financial Governance and underline in particular

- That African countries are losing more financial resources because of corruption and IFF than they receive from Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- That corruption deprives people of public goods and services, and is extremely harmful to democracy as it erodes trust in state institutions, including Parliaments.
- This leads to bad investment climate and undermines the principles of the Rule of Law and Good Governance.
- That corruption and IFF reinforce each other and thus any efforts undertaken should coherently address the drivers of both corruption and IFF.

We recognize the risks of rising levels of debt in Africa and underline in particular

- That a high public debt burden can lead to distress and harmful consequences for the economy of any country.
- That Parliaments together with other accountability stakeholders like Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs), Civil Society, Private Sector and Media have a crucial role to play in assuring transparency and accountability.

We commonly believe

- That Parliaments representing the People of our countries share the common goal to promote transparency and accountability of the African Governments regarding the management of public finances.
- That unreasonable, excessive and unlimited tax incentives are jeopardizing state revenues and that any tax holidays must not be granted without prior approval by Parliaments.
- That Parliaments need to be consulted prior to borrowing by the Government with any financial institution.

Considering Challenges of Corruption and IFF, we in particular commit to

- Ensuring that necessary instruments, effective policies and legislation are in place to fight corruption in all spheres of the public and the private sector for sound and efficient use of public resources.
- Filling existing gaps by implementing policies that prevent the laundering of the proceeds of corruption and IFF.

- Following up on the actions as recommended by the Supreme Audit Institutions and other monitoring institutions in a regular and timely manner.
- Considering innovative methodologies and reporting processes to increase budget oversight of PACs and similar Committees.
- Reporting the main achievements of anti-corruption and anti-IFF activities in the AFROPAC General Meetings.
- Communicating the progress of anti-corruption and anti-IFF with mandated agencies and stakeholders regionally and internationally.
- Lobbying together with AU Organs internationally to follow through with their commitment on stopping IFF and money laundering and corruptive behaviour i.e. in the context of investment and procurement.
- Promoting legislation on public disclosure of assets.

Considering Challenges of Debt Management, we commit to

- Promoting the mobilization of domestic resources in order to reduce the need for external debt i.e. considering economic impact of public investments and utilization of natural resources and related increase of revenues.
- Strengthening Parliamentary oversight on public debt by monitoring current debt obligations and the debt strategy of Governments - including conditions of borrowing (instalments, interest rates etc.), quantitative aspects (Gross Domestic Debt ratio, income from exports) and the utilization and management of borrowed money.
- Ensuring timely auditing of the debt situation by the SAIs including assessments of performance and encouraging public transparency in the utilization of borrowed finances.
- Promoting the implementation of the ‘African Borrowing Charter’ by AFRODAD, prioritizing the steps that need to be taken to strengthen accountability in debt management.

