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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Recognizing that Parliamentarians must be able to carry out their legislative and constitutional functions in accordance with their Constitution, free from unlawful interference and that legislatures should be served by a professional staff independent of the public service and dedicated to supporting parliamentarians in fulfilling their constitutional role the Members of Parliament gathered in Tunis make the following recommendations to their colleagues in legislatures throughout Africa:

THE BUDGET PROCESS

- The legislature should be formally consulted during the Budget preparation process.
- All oversight committees should be involved in scrutinizing the Estimates.
- The legislature shall have a reasonable period of time in which to review the proposed national Budget.
- Legislatures should have a budgetary research capacity.
- The legislature should routinely monitor the execution of the Budget and should approve any additional appropriations.

THE AUDITOR-GENERAL

- The Auditor-General should be independent and should report to the legislature.
- The entirety of the Executive should be audited, i.e. all ministries, departments, units, statutory authorities, public-owned companies and parastatals. The Auditor-General must also have the power to audit any public funds used by a private entity engaged by government for the delivery of public goods or services.
- The legislature should undertake a public audit of its own budget.
- Public Accounts Committees should review on at least an annual basis, in a public hearing, the resources of the Auditor-General's office to ensure that the Executive is providing adequate resources.

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES

- Committees dealing with the Estimates, Budget and other financial oversight matters should be established, where appropriate, or activated to work in collaboration with Public Accounts Committees.
- Oversight committees should routinely meet in public except for procedural meetings and in the case of national security.
- The oversight authority of the legislature shall include meaningful oversight of state owned enterprises.
- The Public Accounts Committee should be chaired by a member of an opposition party.
- Oversight committees shall have access to records of Executive accounts and related documentation sufficient to be able to meaningfully review the accuracy of Executive reporting on its revenues and expenditures.

PARLIAMENTARIANS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

- Parliamentarians must take the lead in the fight against corruption and must work with the Executive, the Judiciary, political leaders and parties, independent accountability institutions, civil society, donors and the media.
- Parliamentarians should maintain high standards of accountability, transparency and responsibility in the conduct of all public and parliamentary matters and ensure that there is an adequate and effective legal framework for fighting corruption.
- Parliamentarians should urge and encourage Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms.
- Parliamentarians should study and promote discussion on the Stolen Asset Recovery (STAR) initiative of the World Bank and UN Office on Drugs and Crime dealing with the repatriation of the proceeds of corrupt practices.

PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT OF THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

- Parliamentarians should develop their knowledge of the extractive industries by encouraging and supporting capacity development and peer to peer learning regarding all aspects of the legislature's role in exercising oversight of the extractive industries.
- Legislatures should cooperate on an international basis to increase understanding of their oversight role of the extractive industries.

MULTI-LATERAL INSTITUTIONS

- Capacity-building on the African Development Bank's Independent Review Mechanism should be provided for Parliamentarians.
- The legislature and the Executive should cooperate to increase transparency in dealings with multi-lateral institutions.