



Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa

The Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) is an international non-governmental organisation that supports parliaments in Africa and works to keep Africa high on the political agenda in Europe. It has some 1500 current and former parliamentarians as members from the European Parliament and almost all EU member states, plus Norway and Switzerland.

With its roots in the campaign to end apartheid in South Africa, AWEPA now works in Africa from a development perspective to strengthen the core functions of parliaments: oversight, representation and legislation. It believes that strong parliaments are essential prerequisites for Africa's development. They contribute to peace, stability and prosperity on the continent. In Europe, AWEPA members improve the understanding and commitment among parliamentarians and other political leaders towards important issues in Africa.

With more than 20 years of experience, AWEPA has been a catalyst for change and has made an important contribution towards the growth of parliamentary capacity and democracy in Africa.

As a non-partisan organization, AWEPA has members from the whole political spectrum. It has Special Consultative Status at the UN Economic and Social Council and is on the list of ODA eligible organizations of the OECD/DAC.

Action is undertaken for human resource development with parliamentarians and other elected representatives and institutional capacity building within parliaments and decentralised authorities.

This includes attention to:

- the key role of parliaments with regards to democracy, human rights, peaceful conflict management, poverty reduction and sustainable development;
- the attainment of gender equality at all levels of political decision-making;
- African-European sharing of parliamentary experience;
- building parliamentary networks at national, regional and inter-regional levels as fora for political and non-governmental interaction.

AWEPA also informs and mobilises European parliamentarians on policy issues in African-European relations, development cooperation and democratisation in Africa.

AWEPA's Headquarters is based in The Netherlands, and another European office is located in Belgium. In Africa there are two regional offices: in Kenya and South-Africa, and six local offices: in Burundi, DRC, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

AWEPA enjoys a broad funding base. Its donors include the European Commission and European governments such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, The

Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. It also receives funding from UN agencies such as UNICEF, as well as from various foundations.

OVC Programme

AWEPA is cooperating with UNICEF in a 5 years campaign to mobilise parliamentarians on OVC.

AWEPA has launched in 2004 a multi-year campaign on Children and AIDS, in cooperation with UNICEF, the North-South Center of the Council of Europe, the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and others, to scale up the parliamentary efforts for Children and AIDS.

The first preparations of this campaign began in September 2004, with the Parliamentary Consultation on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Cape Town. This consultation resulted in the Cape Town Declaration, which contained guidelines on how parliamentarians make an unique contribution to scaling up efforts on behalf of orphans and vulnerable children.

UNICEF and AWEPA have organised jointly in 2005 and 2006 a series of regional seminars in East and Southern Africa. In 2008 and 2009 these are followed by national workshops in each parliament concerned. In addition, UNICEF and AWEPA will monitor parliamentary action through the "Parliamentary Performance Tracking Mechanism". In 17 African countries information will be collected on parliamentary activities regarding children and AIDS.

The campaign also takes place in Europe, by organising activities on the issue of children and AIDS in European parliaments, together with the National Committees of UNICEF.