LECTURE BY DR. GERTRUDE MONGELLA (MP), PRESIDENT OF THE PAN AFRICAN PARLIAMENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY, TOKYO, JAPAN 16 OCTOBER 2006

“HOW TO KEEP GOVERNMENTS ACCOUNTABLE: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS”
Main pillars of the state management

- The Executive - The government
- The Judiciary – Courts of law & Tribunals
- The Legislative - Parliament
Focus of discussion

- General roles of parliaments
- Role of parliaments in government accountability
- Special reference to the role of the Pan African Parliament (PAP)
General roles of Parliaments

- Representational
- Legislative – law making
- Approval of taxation and expenditure
- Oversight of executive actions, policy and personnel - ACCOUNTABILITY
- Ratification of treaties and monitoring of their implementation
- Debating of issues of national and international interest
- Handling petitions and grievances
- Determining laws and policies
- Approving constitutional changes
Parliamentary oversight

- Through the parliamentary committees
- Through parliamentary questions
- Through special commissions of inquiry
- Through debates
Factors for parliamentary effectiveness

- Institutional capacity:
  - Staff with relevant skills and experience
  - Research and analysis units
  - Linkage with other parliaments, institutions and organisations including civil society organisations
  - Capacity to utilise technologies including ICTs
  - Budgetary resources-having alternative sources of funding for the parliament to ensure less government interference
Factors for parliamentary effectiveness

- Institutional capacity contd.:
  - Proper functioning committees
  - Code of conduct for Parliamentarians
  - Freedom of information
  - Parliamentary autonomy

- Accessibility and transparency
  - Proceedings open to public and media
  - Meetings of committees open to the public
Parliaments in Africa

- **National Parliaments**

- **Regional parliaments**;
  - SADDC Parliamentary Forum;
  - ECOWAS Parliament;
  - the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA);
  and

- **Continental Parliament**
  - Pan African Parliament
The Pan African Parliament (PAP)

- It is an organ of African Union (AU)
- Established by the Constitutive Act of the AU (Art. 17(1)) and the Protocol to the Treaty relating to the establishment of PAP (Art 5(1))
- Inaugurated March 18, 2004 in Addis Ababa - Ethiopia
- Membership comprises of 5 MPs reflecting gender, ideology and parties
- Currently 47 countries have ratified.
- Leadership of PAP Bureau: the President and four Vice Presidents represents the five regions of Africa - East, South, North, Central and West Africa
PAP within the AU structure
PAP Objectives

- Represent the voices of the African people on issues of Africa – men and women;
- Promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance:
- Advisory and legislative role;
- Policy shaping and influence;
- Oversight role;
- Setting an agenda for Africa;
- Establish cooperation with other similar national and international bodies;
- Dialogue and involvement of the civil society and the diaspora; and
- Peace and security
PAP mandate

- **Representing the peoples of Africa**
  - Identifying the needs of the African people and articulating their views

- **Playing consultative and advisory roles**
  - By raising issues and putting them on the continental agenda
  - Consulting with the other organs of the AU; regional and national parliaments
  - Making recommendations to the Heads of State and Government

- **Carrying out oversight functions**
  - Requesting reports from other AU bodies to see how far they’ve gone in implementing AU objectives and programmes and what could be done to speed up implementation
  - Scrutinising the budget of the Union – how the money can be raised and what it is ultimately used for
Parliaments’ achievements in Africa

- Response to citizens concerns
- Narrowed inequality
- Constitutional reforms on democratisation processes
- Advocacy for good governance
Challenges for Parliaments in Africa

- Autonomy
- Resources
- Mandates at different levels
- Relationships and linkages
- Democratic capacities to perform parliamentary functions
- Access to information and communication
Conclusion

- Establishment of regional parliaments and now a continental parliament in Africa sets platform for regional and continental accountability:
  - What measures can we put for a global accountability?
  - Can there be a United Nations (UN) parliamentary process to hold member states and governments accountable for the UN Decisions, Treaties, resolutions, and conventions adopted