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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

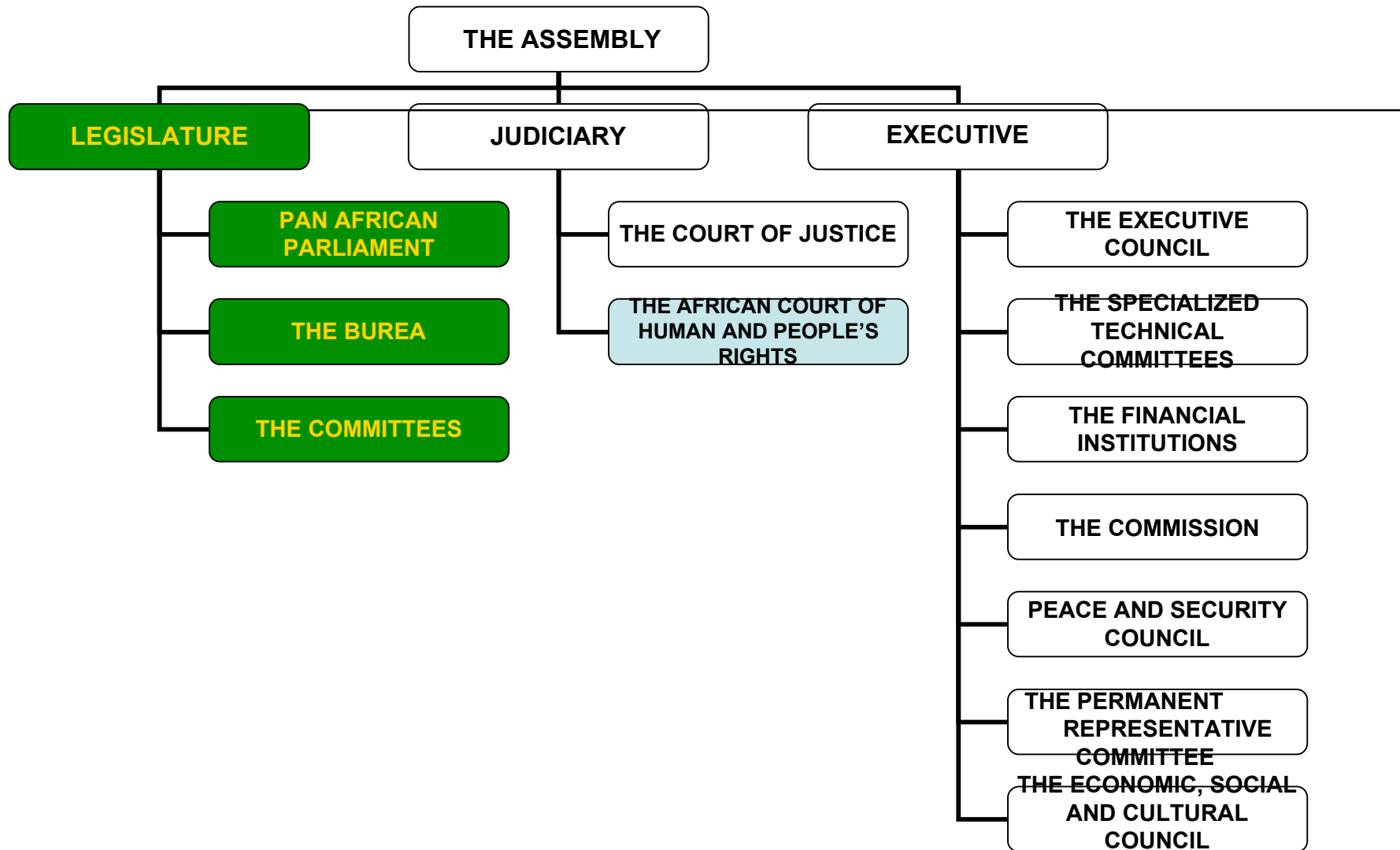
- ❑ **National Parliaments**
- ❑ **Regional parliaments;**
 - **SADDC Parliamentary Forum;**
 - **ECOWAS Parliament;**
 - **the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA);**
and
- ❑ **Continental Parliament**
 - **Pan African Parliament**



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