



AWEPA works in cooperation with African Parliaments to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Africa, to keep Africa high on the political agenda in Europe and to facilitate African-European Parliamentary dialogue.

For almost 30 years, AWEPA has been a pioneer in implementing parliamentary capacity building programmes in Africa. The ideology of this organisation, established for and by parliamentarians, is rooted in the struggle against apartheid.

In 1984 the 'Association of West-European Parliamentarians for Action against Apartheid' (AWEPA) was founded by Dr. Jan Nico Scholten (NL), Hon. Donald Anderson (UK) and Treasurer Pär Granstedt (Sweden). This first Executive Committee's goal was to mobilise politicians in democratically elected European parliaments to end apartheid. The organisation grew quickly from a small group of members in 16 national parliaments and in the European Parliament in September 1985, to some 1000 members by the early 1990s. Parliamentarians passed laws that facilitated effective sanction policies, monitored the implementation of these laws by enforcing accountability. AWEPA's involvement contributed to the elimination of apartheid and the occupation of Namibia.

After the apartheid regime was overthrown in South Africa, AWEPA shifted its focus. With advice from its African partners, AWEPA focused more on promoting democracy, peace, human rights and democratic governance in many African regions. In 1993, AWEPA was renamed 'The Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa' (AWEPA) and grew to some 1500 members.

The year 2010 saw AWEPA change its name again, from the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa to the Association of European Parliamentarians *with* Africa.

Objectives

AWEPA's overall objective is to support the realisation of human rights and development in Africa via strengthening democratic institutions. With the help of parliamentarians and elected officials worldwide, AWEPA actively supports human resource development and institutional capacity building within parliaments made up of decentralised authorities. AWEPA concentrates on:

- The key role of parliaments in facilitating democracy, human rights, peaceful conflict management, poverty reduction and sustainable development
- The attainment of gender equality at all levels of political decision-making
- The common interests of African-European parliamentarians
- Building parliamentary networks and experience sharing at national, regional and inter-regional levels

It aims to achieve this objective by promoting:

- Parliamentary competency and authority
- Good governance based on separation of powers
- Increased participation of women in decision-making (increased participation)
- Participation of civil society in the political process
- Independent and qualified media

Priorities for 2012-2016 include the following:

Membership: expand membership across Europe, especially in new EU members

Partnerships: strengthen bonds with regional parliaments and women's caucuses

Programmes: support institutional capacity, thematic competence and oversight

Methodology: renew assessment, monitoring, evaluation and quality processes

Donor Relations: deepen our dialogue with donors and broaden the funding base

Achieving AWEPA's core objective of strong, fully transformative, fully democratising African parliaments will depend upon being better equipped with core resources to invest in our membership sections in Europe, in our staff, and in our African partnerships. AWEPA appeals to our donors to provide institutional support. This is essential to maintain within AWEPA the required high levels of quality and professionalism, and to building on our peer learning partnerships and networks.