Pan-African Parliament (PAP)

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) is recognised as one of the organs of the AU under the Constitutive Act, though its detailed legal basis is a protocol to the 1991 Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. The PAP has its secretariat in Midrand, South Africa, where it holds its regular sessions in November and March each year. It first met in March 2004.

According to the protocol, PAP is expected to exercise advisory and consultative functions. These functions are to be reviewed after five years of its existence, with a view to giving it stronger powers, including to pass legislation. In January 2009, the Assembly authorised the AU Commission to initiate this review process. PAP reports to the Assembly and its budget is processed through the policy organs of the AU. It is presided over by a Bureau headed by a Chairperson and four Vice Chairpersons. It has ten permanent committees responsible for different thematic issues and the management of the parliament’s business.

Each of the Member States that have ratified the PAP is entitled to five representatives to its meetings, selected from national parliaments or other deliberative bodies, at least one of whom must be a woman. As of August 2009, all AU Member States except Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Guinea, Somalia, and São Tomé and Príncipe had ratified the PAP protocol.