

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



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Directorate-General External Policies

**Policy Unit**

**NOTE ON**

**Parliamentary Structures of ACP Regional Associations**

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# ACP Regional Associations with Parliamentary Structures

## ***The African Union - AU (Formerly the Organisation of African Unity)***

### **Background**

Support for Pan-Africanism ran high in the 1950s. The debates over union versus association continued to rage and were taken up again at the second Conference of Independent African States in 1960. In 1963 a compromise was reached between the two opposing camps, known as the Casablanca and Monrovia groups, with the creation of the Organisation of African Unity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

By the late 1990s however, it had become clear that a new paradigm was in order if the continental African organisation was to remain relevant at a time when Europe, Asia and the Americans were forming economic blocs with an eye toward political union. At the African Heads of State Extraordinary OAU Summit in Sirte, Libya, in March, 2001, the African Union was declared established. The African Union was officially inaugurated in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa, with one year to complete its structure.

The African Union is the regional organisation for economic and political co-ordination for the continent's 54 nations. These are: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sahrawi, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

### **Parliamentary Organ**

#### The Pan-African Parliament

The origin of the Pan-African Parliament can be traced to the Abuja Treaty which was signed by African leaders in Abuja, Nigeria, in June, 1991 and which came into force in May, 1994.

The Pan-African Parliament, which is mandated by the Union Act that established the African Union, came into existence in July 2002. From July 2002, the parliament will function as a consultative and advisory body without any legislative powers for a 5 year period. In March 2004, the Parliament was inaugurated by the AU but only has consultative and advisory powers. 202 legislators from 41 of the Member States of the AU have already been sworn in. In 2007 the parliament will become a legislative assembly.

The parliament will consist of elected representatives nominated from the five regions of Africa - North, East, West Central and South - and will ensure civil society participation in the African Union process. Each Member State will be represented by five members and at least two of these must be a woman. The parliament will be bicameral with a first chamber and a second chamber. The majority of its members will be elected through proportional representation.

The Pan-African Parliament will meet at least twice a year and decisions are made by consensus, or a two-thirds majority. In 2004 it elected the MP Mrs. Getrude Mongela from Tanzania as President.

## **Organisational Structure**

The AU formal structure, which is still being put in place, consists of the following organs:

### The Assembly of Heads of State and Government

The Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the African Union and will consist of the heads of state and government of all member countries. The Assembly determines the common policies of the Union. The Assembly will meet at least once a year and decisions made by it are through consensus, or a two-thirds majority. If the vote deals with a procedural matter, only a simple majority is needed. The current Chairman of the AU is President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria.

### The Executive Council

The Executive Council is responsible to the Assembly and will monitor the implementation of policies. It will consist of the ministers of foreign affairs of member states and will make decisions on foreign trade, social security, food, agriculture and communications. The Council will meet at least twice a year and decisions will be made by consensus, or a two-thirds majority.

### The Permanent Representatives Committee

The Committee is composed of ambassadors to the African Union and is responsible for preparing the work for the Executive Council. The role of the Committee is to prepare the work of the Executive Council

### The Commission

The Commission forms the secretariat of the African Union and consists of a chair, a deputy chair and eight other commissioners. The Commission also deals with administrative issues and implements the decisions of the African Union. The current Chairman of the Commission is Alpha Oumar Konare.

### The Court of Justice

The court will rule on human rights abuses in Africa using a common legal framework.

### The Peace and Security Council

This body will have 15 members responsible for monitoring and intervening in conflicts, using an early warning system regarding threats on the continent. The council will include a peace fund and will be advised by a council of elders. It will also have an African military force at its disposal.

### The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)

ECOSOCC will be an advisory organ composed of different social and professional groups of the Member States of the Union.

### The Specialised Technical Committees

A list of Specialised Technical Committees are meant to address sectoral issues and are at Ministerial Level. They are:

- The Committee on Rural Economy and Agricultural Matters;
- The Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs;
- The Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters;

- The Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment;
- The Committee on Transport, Communications and Tourism;
- The Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs; and
- The Committee on Education, Culture and Human Resources.

#### The Financial Institutions

They will include:

- The African Central Bank;
- The African Monetary Fund;
- The African Investment Bank

### **Programmes of the Union**

As part of the transition process, the African Union has adopted two important programmes to address the key challenges confronting the continent and speed up the attainment of its objectives in various fields. These are the Conference on Stability, Security, Development and Co-operation In Africa (CSSDCA) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

#### The Conference on Stability, Security, Development and Co-operation In Africa (CSSDCA)

The CSSDCA is a policy development forum for forging and sustaining common values as well as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for ensuring the actual implementation of collective decisions taken by the Union. As one of its main functions, the programme has the responsibility for linking with and bringing civil society into the mainstream of decision-making in the Union.

#### New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

NEPAD embodies a plan of action for the political and economic renaissance of the continent that is designed to give a new momentum to development efforts on the continent. Within the NePAD framework there is a partnership between governments and the economic operators on the one hand and between Africa and the International Community, particularly developed countries on the other.

Both CSSDCA and NEPAD are programmes of the Union, deriving legislative authority from the Union and are expected to reside in the Union.

### **General Information**

#### Financial Provisions

The budget is approved by the Council and is funded by Member State contributions.

#### Official Languages

The working languages of the Union and its institutions will be all African languages if possible, Arabic, English, French and Portuguese.

## ***The Caribbean Community and Common Market - CARICOM***

### **Background**

CARICOM was formally established by the Treaty of Chaguaramas in August 1973 to fulfil the hope of regional integration between Member countries: It currently has 14 Member States, these are: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

Since its inception, CARICOM had attempted to focus its efforts upon economic co-operation through the Caribbean Common Market; co-ordination of foreign policy among the independent Member States and common services and co-operation in functional matters such as health, education and culture, communications and industrial relations.

### **Parliamentary Organ**

#### Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians (ACCP)

The concept of the ACCP was first enunciated in 1987. In 1989 the principle of the ACCP was accepted at the Tenth Meeting of the Conference in Grenada. The formal establishment of the Assembly was completed when the Inter-Governmental Agreement creating that body was duly signed and ratified by the relevant number of Member States in August 1994. The inaugural meeting of the Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians (ACCP), took place in Barbados in May 1996.

The Assembly is a deliberative and consultative body that consists of representatives of Member States and Associate Members elected by their Parliaments. Each Member State is entitled to not more than four representatives at meetings of the Assembly and Associate Members not more than two representatives. The Assembly consists of a Speaker, a Clerk and Parliamentarians generally reflecting the composition of the Parliaments of the Member States.

The ACCP is the deliberative and consultative body of CARICOM and is designed to stimulate greater public awareness and understanding of developments relating to the integration movement. The Assembly also provides a forum for more frequent contact to monitor and enhance the co-ordination of foreign policies and encourage the formation of common policies on economic, social, cultural and legal matters.

The Assembly meets at least once a year.

### **Organisational Structure**

CARICOM is divided into two major bodies: The Conference of Heads of Government commonly called "The Conference" and The Community Council of Ministers commonly called "The Council".

#### The Conference

The Conference of Heads of Government is the supreme authority of the community. It determines its policy and is responsible for relations between the community and international organisations and states. A common market council of ministers is responsible for the

development and operation of the common market. Decisions made in the Conference are generally taken unanimously.

The Bureau of Heads of Government, created in October 1992, initiates proposals and secures implementation. The Bureau consists of the current Chairman of the Conference as well as the incoming and outgoing Chairmen of the Conference and the Secretary-General in the capacity of the Chief Executive Officer.

#### The Community Council of Ministers

The Council is the second highest Organ in CARICOM. It is responsible for the development of Community strategic planning and co-ordination in the areas of economic integration, functional co-operation and external relations.

The Community Council of Ministers is responsible for formulating policies and performing functions in relation to co-operation in services such as: Education, Health, Labour Matters and Foreign Policies. Each member state is represented on each Council by a Minister of Government.

#### Secretariat

CARICOM is serviced by a secretariat, based in Georgetown, Guyana. The office of secretariat consists of the current Secretary-General, Mr Edwin Carrington, his Deputy Secretary-General, and the office of general counsel. The current chairman of CARICOM is Dr. Runaldo Venetiaan, the President of Suriname.

## ***The Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa - CEMAC***

### **Background**

The Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), which replaced the Union Douanière des Etats d'Afrique Centrale (UDEAC), was established in 1994. CEMAC is made up of the Union Economique de l'Afrique Centrale (UEAC) and the Union Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale (UMAC).

CEMAC brings together six central African countries. These are: Cameroon, Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad. The aims of CEMAC are to forge greater solidarity between the citizens of the Member States, promote trade by eliminating restrictions and barriers and ultimately form a genuine common market.

### **Parliamentary Organ**

#### Community Parliament

According to additional act: no. 3/99-CEMAC-CEE of 25 June 1999, the Community Parliament is based in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

On 14 May 2002 the Executive Secretary was mandated to sign a contract for the construction for a parliament building in Malabo.

The Community Parliament has a predominantly supervisory role.

### **Structure**

Several institutions contribute to the operation of CEMAC.

#### Conference of Heads of State

The Conference is the supreme organ of the Community. It defines the general orientation of CEMAC and determines Community policy. The Conference also directs the functioning of the Council of Ministers of both the UEAC and the UMAC.

#### Council of Ministers

The Council is made up of 3 ministers per member state and is responsible for directing the Community and for running each of the two unions.

#### Executive Secretariat

The Secretariat is the main executive body of the Community. It co-ordinates, controls and carries out decisions and regulations of the Conference and the Council. The Executive Secretary of CEMAC is currently Mr Jean Nkuete from Cameroon.

#### Inter-State Committee

The Committee is primarily responsible for preparing the deliberations for the Council of Ministers.

#### Community Court of Justice

As with the Parliament, the Court also has a predominantly supervisory role.



## ***Economic Community of West African States - ECOWAS***

### **Background**

ECOWAS was established in May 1975 to promote trade, co-operation and self-reliance in West Africa. It has 16 Member States, these are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

### **Parliamentary Organ**

#### Community Parliament

A Parliament of the Community was established in the Treaty of ECOWAS signed in July 1993..

The ECOWAS Parliament is composed of 120 members. and was inaugurated during a 2-day session held between 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2000 in Bamako, Mali. The inaugural session was convened by the then ECOWAS Chairman, President Alpha Konare of Mali.

The treaty for the Parliament came into force on March 14, 2000 after it was signed by the mandatory 9 Member States including Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Heads of State and Government signed the protocol for parliament on August 6, 1994. As representatives of the people, the Parliament is entitled to discuss issues concerning the welfare of the citizens of the sub-region in furtherance of the objective of integration. It provides a forum for dialogue, consultation and consensus, particularly on issues concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The ECOWAS Parliament has an ad-hoc committee, comprising 2 members from each Member State, to produce the rules and procedures for the Parliament. The Committee also prepares the budget for the Parliament. The ad-hoc committee is sub-divided into two parts, one consisting of members with a legal background to propose the rules and procedures and the other to produce the budget.

Membership of the Parliament is through elections by direct adult suffrage. Each of the 16 Member States has a guaranteed minimum of five seats in the parliament with the remaining 40 seats allocated on the basis of population. Nigeria has 35 members followed by Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire have 8 and 7 respectively. Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Senegal have six members each while Benin, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Sierra Leone and Togo have five members each in the Parliament. Members of the Parliament serve for five years.

In January 2001 the maiden plenary session was held in Abuja, Nigeria. During this session a Bureau was elected comprising the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, Treasurers and Parliamentary Secretaries.

### **Organisational Structure**

#### Conference of Heads of State and Government

The organisational structure of ECOWAS revolves around the Conference of Heads of State and Government. The Conference is the supreme authority of the organisation and is responsible

for the general direction, policy and control of the Community. It meets once a year. Depending on the subject matter, decisions are made by either unanimity, consensus or a two-thirds majority. Its chairman is drawn from the member states in turn. The current chairman is S.E. Kufuor of Ghana

#### Council of Ministers

The Council consists of two representatives from each country and is responsible for the functioning and development of the community. The composition and competence of the tribunal is determined by the Authority of Heads of State and Government. It interprets the provisions of the treaty and settles disputes between member states that are referred to it. The Council meets twice a year and decisions are made by consensus.

#### Executive Secretariat

The Executive Secretariat is the chief executive organ of the Community, executing the decisions taken by the Conference and applying the regulations of the Council. The Secretariat is headed by an Executive Secretary who is elected for a four-year term which may be renewed once only. There are five commissions falling under the scope of the Secretariat, unamely, Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary and Payments; Industry, Agriculture and Natural Resources; Transport, Communications and Energy; Social and Cultural Affairs; and Administration and Finance. The current Executive Secretary is Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas of Ghana.

### **General Information**

#### Financing of ECOWAS

The budget is approved by the Council which can also determine other sources of funding. Until a Community Levy comes into force, the budget will be funded by Member State annual contributions. The Community Levy will be a percentage of the total value of import duty on goods imported from third countries.

#### Language

The official languages of the Community are all West African languages designated by the Authority as well as English, French and Portuguese.

## ***Southern African Development Community - SADC***

### **Background**

The Southern African Development community (SADC) was established in August 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia to promote economic and social development and collective self-reliance. The establishment of SADC was the culmination of a long process of regional negotiations which began in the late 1970s. In 1980 the forerunner of SADC, the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference, was founded. This provided the cornerstone on which SADC is now based.

Current SADC objectives include harmonisation and rationalisation of policies and strategies for sustainable development in all areas, as well as the successful implementation of the SADC Trade Protocol (Protocol). The Protocol, which calls for an 85% reduction of internal trade barriers, went into effect on September 1, 2000. The full implementation of the Protocol is on track and the region hopes to attain a free trade area by 2008.

SADC is comprised of the following members: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

In March 2001 the SADC Heads of State and Government met in Windhoek, Namibia, to approve a 'Report on the Restructuring of SADC Institutions'. The report set out a more detailed Common Agenda, detailing a number of principles such as development orientation; subsidiarity; market integration and development and facilitation and promotion of trade and investment.

The report also created two new institutions. These are the Integrated Committee of Ministers (ICM) and the SADC National Committees. These will be explained in more detail below.

### **Parliamentary Organ**

#### SADC Parliamentary Forum

The first consultative meeting on the formation of a SADC Parliamentary Body took place in Windhoek in October, 1993. The Second Consultative Meeting in May, 1995 concretised the formation of a SADC Parliamentary Body. The first sitting of the Forum took place in Windhoek, Namibia in July 1996.

Membership to the SADC Parliamentary Forum is open to Parliaments whose countries are members of SADC. The SADC Parliamentary Forum is composed of three representatives from each member Parliament nominated to the SADC Parliamentary Forum by each Parliament. In the nomination of the three representatives to the SADC Parliamentary Forum, each Parliament must ensure equal representation at the SADC Parliamentary Forum of the political parties that are represented in that Parliament.

Representatives of the SADC Parliamentary Forum serve for a period of five years from the date of nomination to the SADC Parliamentary Forum. The Executive Secretary of SADC is an ex-officio Member of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, although he/she may not vote. The Forum meets twice a year.

The SADC Parliamentary Forum has 4 main bodies, these are:

- Plenary Assembly
- Executive Committee
- Secretariat
- Standing Committees.

## **Organisational Structure**

### The Summit

The organisational structure of SADC revolves around the Summit which is the supreme policy-making organ in SADC. The Summit is responsible for the overall policy direction and control of the functions of SADC. The Summit consists of the Heads of States or Governments of all Member States. The decisions of the Summit are made by consensus and are binding. The Summit elects a Chairman from among its members for an agreed period and meets at least once a year. The current Chairman is the President of Angola, Jose Dos Santos.

At the same level of the Summit is the Troika, The Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, The Council and the Standing Committee of Senior Officials.

### The Troika

The Troika, consisting of the Chairperson, incoming Chairperson and outgoing Chairperson of SADC, functions as a steering committee to ensure speedy decision-making and facilitate the implementation of decisions. It also provides policy direction to SADC institutions in between regular SADC meetings.

### The Organ on Politics, Defence and Security

The Organ works on a Troika basis and reports to the Chairman of SADC. The Chairman of the Organ runs on a rotation basis for a duration of one year.

### Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers is responsible to and reports to the Summit. It oversees the functioning and development of SADC and the implementation of SADC policies and programmes. The Council advises the Summit on overall policy matters. It also directs and approves policies, strategies and work programmes. The Council meets at least 4 times a year and decisions are made by consensus.

### Standing Committee of Senior Officials

The Standing Committee consists of one Permanent Secretary from a SADC National Contact point of each member state. The Committee is a technical advisory committee to the Council to which it is responsible and reports to. The Committee meets at least 4 times a year and decisions are made by consensus.

### Integrated Committee of Ministers

The Integrated Committee of Ministers was established to ensure proper policy guidance, co-ordination and harmonisation of cross-sectoral activities. The ICM is comprised of at least 2 ministers from each member state and is responsible to the Council. Its functions include overseeing the four core areas of integration. These are:

- Trade , Industry, Finance and Investment
- Infrastructure and Services
- Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Social and Human development and Special programmes

### SADC National Committees

The National Committees are composed of key stakeholders, notably government, private and civil society in member states. Their role is to provide inputs in the formulation of regional policies and strategies and oversee the implementation of programmes at the member state level.

### The Secretariat

The Secretariat is the principle executive institution of SADC and is responsible for the planning and management of SADC programmes and the implementation of Summit and Council decisions. The Secretariat also deals with the financial and general administrative needs of SADC.

### The Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary heads the Secretariat and is responsible to the Council. The Executive Secretary is charged with consulting and co-ordinating with the Governments and other institutions of member states and promoting the objectives of SADC. The Executive Secretary is appointed for a maximum of 8 years (two terms). The currently Executive Secretary is Dr. Prega Ramsamy.

## **General Information**

### Financing of SADC

SADC is financed through Member State contributions. The proportions of these contributions are decided upon by the Council. The Council may also determine other sources of financing.

### Language

The working languages of SADC are English and Portuguese. Other languages determined by the Council may be used.

## ***West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) / Union Economique et Monetaire de l'ouest Africaine (UEMOA)***

### **Background**

Formerly known as the West African Monetary Union (WAMU/UMOA), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) was founded on 10 January 1994 in response to the devaluation of the common currency, the CFA Franc, on 11 January 1994. The Treaty establishing UEMOA (the Dakar Treaty of 10 January 1994) theoretically came into effect on 1 August 1994 after ratification by the seven member countries, thereby also replacing the dissolved West African Economic Union (WAEU/CEAO).

This new regional economic organisation was, to a large extent, the brainchild of Mr Charles Konan Banny, Governor of the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO). Because of its important role in the initial phases of the establishment of the new Union, this Bank, as well as the West African Development Bank (BOAD), are inextricably linked to the UEMOA.

### **Parliamentary Organ**

#### Pan-African Parliament

The Pan-African Parliament was established to ensure that the peoples of the Member States are fully involved in the economic development and integration of the region.

The Parliament currently plays a consultative role, although it aims to be a fully-fledged parliament in the future. It expresses itself through reports and resolutions and is charged with exercising democratic control over the organs of the Union. The Parliament has 40 members and meets once a year. The president of the Parliament is Mr. Abdoulaye-Faye. The seat of the Parliament is Bamako, Mali

### **Organisational Structure**

#### The Assembly of Heads of State and Government

The Assembly is the supreme organ of the Community. It is responsible for implementing the objectives of the Community, determining general policy and co-ordinating and directing the economic, scientific, technical, cultural and social policies of Member States. The Assembly meets once a year and decisions are adopted by consensus or by a two-thirds majority of Member States.

#### Council of Ministers

The Council is responsible for the functioning and development of the Community. The Council meets twice a year and regulations are reached by consensus or a two-thirds majority of Member States.

#### General Secretariat

The Secretariat is the main executive organ of the UEMOA. Its role is to ensure the implementation of Assembly decisions and apply Council regulations.

### The Court of Justice

This chamber assures the correct implementation of the treaty within member states. It is made up of eight members who are named by heads of state and government for six-year renewable terms. The members elect their president for a 3-year term. The court can direct member states to take action to rectify any failure to comply with treaty obligations.

The UEMOA Council of Ministers met in Ouagadougou on 6 August 1999, focusing on the economic situation within member states and trade relations between the union and other countries. The UEMOA Inter-Parliamentary Committee adopted a draft treaty on the creation of a regional parliament in August 1999.

The UEMOA Summit convened in Lomé in December 1999, immediately prior to the ECOWAS Summit, and announced the take off of their common monetary zone in January 2000.

## ACP Regional Associations without Parliamentary Structures

### ***The Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States - CARIFORUM***

#### **Background**

The Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States (CARIFORUM) is a grouping of sixteen Caribbean States of which the majority signed the Cotonou Agreement. The Member States are: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

CARIFORUM was established in October 1992 and works alongside CARICOM, the Caribbean Community. It was a forum created to promote integration and co-operation in the Caribbean, including the DOMs and OCTs and to manage and co-ordinate policy dialogue and the allocation of resources between the Caribbean Region and European Union.

CARIFORUM also sets the policy framework for Caribbean regional co-operation and programming of regional EDF resources and manages the Caribbean side of regional programmes and the monitoring and evaluation of these programmes.

#### **Organisational Structure**

##### Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers is the highest decision-making body of the CARIFORUM. The Council of Ministers meets at least once a year to discuss and take decisions on policy and financial issues regarding regional co-operation.

Each Member State is represented at CARIFORUM Meetings by their representative, usually the Foreign Minister. The Chairperson of each Meeting of the Caribbean Forum shall be elected from among the representatives of the Member Countries, and shall hold office as Chairperson of the Forum until the election of another Chairperson at the next meeting of the Forum.

##### The Secretariat

The CARIFORUM Secretariat is the main executive, technical, administrative and co-ordinating body of CARIFORUM and comprises a Secretary-General (SG) and a Programming Unit (PU).

The Secretary-General, assisted by the Programming Unit, is responsible for the overall management of the Caribbean Regional Indicative Programme and serves as a channel of official communication between the Forum and the European Commission. The Secretary-General of the CARIFORUM is also the Secretary-General of CARICOM and serves as the Regional Authorising Officer (RAO) for regional projects financed by the EDF. The current Secretary General is Dr. Edwin Carrington.

The Programming Unit (PU) works under the direction of the SG and commenced operations in February 1993, with its office located in Georgetown, Guyana. The general objective of the PU is to accelerate and improve preparation and implementation of projects and programmes at the regional level. It also facilitates joint management of regional programmes among the fifteen ACP Caribbean States. The PU also benefits from functional linkages with and administrative support from the CARICOM Secretariat.



## ***Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa - COMESA***

### **Background**

The origins of the COMESA can be traced as far back as the mid-sixties. In 1965 a ministerial meeting of the then politically independent states of eastern and southern Africa took place to consider proposals for the establishment of a mechanism for the promotion of sub-regional economic integration. In May 1966 the Terms of Association to govern the interim arrangements before the signing of the formal Treaty were adopted and signed by Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, and Zambia.

In December 1981 the Treaty establishing the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA) was signed. The Treaty came into force in September 1982. The PTA Treaty envisaged its transformation into a Common Market and, as such, the Treaty establishing COMESA was signed in November 1993 in Kampala, Uganda and was ratified a year later in Lilongwe, Malawi. The next phase will involve the eventual establishment of an Economic Community.

COMESA Member States are: Angola, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

### **Organisational Structure**

There are four main organs of COMESA. These are:

#### The Authority of Heads of State and Government

The Authority of Heads of State and Government is the supreme Policy Organ of the Common Market and is responsible for the general policy, direction and control of the performance of the executive functions of the Common Market and the achievement of its aims and objectives. The decisions and directives of the Authority are by consensus and are binding on all subordinate institutions.

#### The Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers is the second highest Policy Organ of COMESA. It is composed of Ministers designated by the member States. The Council is responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of COMESA in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty. The Council takes policy decisions on the programmes and activities of the COMESA. Council decisions are made by consensus, failing which, by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Council.

#### The Secretariat

The Secretariat is headed by a Secretary General who is appointed by the Authority for a term of five years and is eligible for re-appointment for a further term of five years. The basic function of the Secretariat is to provide technical support and advisory services to the member States in the implementation of the Treaty. It undertakes research and studies as a basis for implementing the decisions adopted by the Policy Organs. The various activities of the Secretariat encompass: Agriculture; Transport and Communications; Industry and Energy; Trade and Customs; Monetary Co-operation; and Administration.

### The COMESA Court of Justice

The Court is the judicial organ of COMESA. Specifically, it ensures the proper interpretation and application of the provisions of the Treaty; and it adjudicates any disputes that may arise among the member States regarding the interpretation and application of the provisions of the Treaty. The decisions of the Court are binding and final and decisions of the Court on the interpretation of the provisions of the COMESA Treaty have precedence over decisions of national courts. The Court, when acting within its jurisdiction, is independent of the Authority and the Council. It is headed by a President and consists of six additional judges appointed by the Authority.

## **General Information**

### Financial Provisions

The budget is funded by Member State contributions and other sources approved by the Council. There is also a Common Market levy, which is determined by the Council.

### Official Languages

The official languages of the Common Market shall be English, French and Portuguese.

## ***Economic Community of Central African States - ECCAS/CEEAC***

### **Background**

In 1981 the leaders of the Central African States decided to form a wider economic community, which would replace the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC). The ECCAS/CEEAC was established in 1983. The aims of the Community were to achieve collective autonomy, promote economic stability and growth and ultimately establish a Central African Common Market.

ECCAS/CEEAC has 11 Member States. These are: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

The current Chairman of ECCAS/CEEAC is Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of Congo.

### **Organisational Structure**

#### The Conference of Heads of State and Government

The Conference is the supreme organ of the Community. The Conference is responsible for implementing the aims of the Community through defining general policy, directing socio-economic policies and overseeing the functioning of the Community. The Conference meets at least once a year. Decisions and directives are binding and are made by consensus.

#### The Council of Ministers

The Council is composed of economic or development ministers and is responsible for the functioning and the development of the Community. The Council acts by regulations, adopted by consensus, which are binding on the Member States. The Council meets at least twice a year.

#### The General Secretariat

The General Secretariat is the main executive organ of the Community. It is headed by the Secretary-General and its duties involve preparing and carrying out the decisions and directives of the Conference and regulations of the Council. The Secretary-General is appointed on a 4 year term, which can be renewed once.

#### The Court of Justice

The Court ensures the legality of decisions, directives and regulations of the Community and can decide on actions brought by Member States or the Conference. Decisions of the Court are binding on Member States and the institutions of the Community.

### **General Information**

#### Financial Provisions

Budget revenue comes from the annual contributions of Member States or other sources determined by the Conference. The contributions of Member States are determined by the budget adopted by the Conference.

#### Official Languages

The official languages of the Community are English, French, Portuguese and Spanish

## ***Southern African Customs Union - (SACU)***

### **Background**

The Southern African Customs Union came into existence on 11 December 1969 with the signature of the Customs Union Agreement between South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland. It entered into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1970. SACU meets annually to discuss matters related to the Agreement. Its aim is to maintain the free interchange of goods between member countries and provides for a common external tariff and a common excise tariff to operate in this common customs area.

Following the formation of the Government of National Unity in South Africa in April 1994, Member States decided that the Agreement should be renegotiated in order to democratise SACU and address the current needs of the SACU Member States more effectively.

The Ministers of Trade and Industry of the five member states met in Pretoria in November 1994 to discuss the renegotiation of the 1969 agreement. The Ministers appointed a Customs Union Task Team (CUTT) which was mandated to make recommendations to the Ministers. In Centurion, Pretoria in September 2000, the Ministers reached consensus on the principles of underpinning the institutional reform in the Southern African Customs Union. These reforms came into effect in June 2002.

### **Organisational Structure**

#### Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers is the supreme SACU decision-making body and meets on a quarterly basis. The decisions taken by this Council are made by consensus. The Council is supported by the Commission of Senior Officials, Technical Liaison Committees and a SACU Secretariat. A SACU Tariff Board will report directly to the Council and will formulate and implement tariff policy. Each Member State will have its own national institution to consider tariff applications and to administer rebates. An ad hoc tribunal will deal with disputes or any other matters referred to it by the Council.

#### Commission

The Commission is the administrative body of SACU and is comprised of Senior Officials, three Technical Liaison Committees and an established Agricultural Liaison Committee.

#### Tribunal

The Tribunal is an independent body of experts that reports directly to the Council of Ministers. The tribunal is responsible for tariff-setting and the Anti-dumping Mechanism.

#### Secretariat

The Secretariat is responsible for the day to day operations of the Customs Revenue pool. South Africa will continue to manage the revenue pool for a period of two years within which time the SACU Finance Ministers must agree on a long term management structure.

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