

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY

INTRODUCTION

On the 15th day of July 2021, the 8th Executive Committee meeting of the Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities in Africa (AAACA) took place. Given the current health crisis in the world, the meeting was held virtually.

Attending the meeting were:

- Mr Emmanuel Ollita ONDONGO President;
- Mrs Seynabou NDIAYE DIAKHATE, first Vice President;
- Mrs Rose Mary NKONDE, second Vice-President;
- Prof. Augustin MWENDAMBALI, member;
- Dr.Gnl. Mahmoud Farouk, member
- Mrs Neema MPEMBE MWAKALYELYE, member
- Mr Jean Claude BIZIMANA, Secretary General of AAACA;
- Mr Christophe NIYONKURU, Finance Officer
- Mrs Rose NIZISHEMEYE, Administrative Assistant

Invited guests were:

- Mr Laza Eric Donat ANDRIANIRINA Director General BIANCO Madagascar ;
- CP Roger NDIKUMANA, Commissioner General of the Special Anti-Corruption Brigade/Burundi

Were unable to attend:

The Representative of the Inspectorate General/Uganda.

1. Opening remarks

In his speech, Mr Emmanuel OLLITA ONDONGO, President of AAACA. He first thanked the members for having responded to the invitation and pointed out that the eighth meeting of the AAACA Executive Committee, which is a prelude to the fifth (5th) Annual General Assembly, is being held virtually for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This explained the delay, he said. He also thanked the Government of Burundi for its material and financial support, which enabled the Secretariat to become operational.

He further recalled that AAACA, as the only continental platform in the fight against corruption, is a privileged framework in the fight against this scourge in Africa, and is well equipped to fight against it.

He also welcomed the fact that, despite the existence of the pandemic, AAACA has achieved a lot. These include the creation of a partnership with national and international institutions with the same objectives as AAACA such as the Egyptian Administrative Control Authority in the area of capacity building of staff of National Anti-Corruption Agencies that are members of AAACA.

There is also the existence of memoranda, one of which is in the process of being signed with the African Union Advisory Council on Corruption and the other still in the process.

Reminding members of the recommendations of the first African Anti-Corruption Forum held in Sharm El Sheikh in June 2019, he called on each member to make an effort in implementing the recommendations of this forum.

He also invited the members of the Executive Committee to see how to have a strategic plan for the association and encourage the efforts of the staff of the Secretariat that have enabled its effective operationalization despite the challenges they face.

2. Presentation of the Secretariat's activities

The Secretary General of AAACA, Mr Jean Claude BIZIMANA, also thanked the members of the Executive Committee for having responded to the invitation of the 8th meeting which was held in a difficult context due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

He also said that despite the health crisis, progress has been made in the operationalisation of the Secretariat.

He then outlined the achievements of the Secretariat since its appointment in 2019 by the Executive Committee. In addition, these are articulated on:

➤ The collaboration of the Secretariat with the host country

This is evidenced by the commitment of the host country to support the Secretariat by providing it with an office and facilitating its work through the legal recognition of the Association which is underway.

➤ Collaboration with AAACA members

The Secretary General informed the Executive Committee of the implication of the members in the payment of their dues and that they are regularly informed of the activities carried out by the Secretariat via the Association's website or electronically.

In this regard, the Secretary General appreciated the collaboration of the members of the Association with the Secretariat in the exchange of information such as the celebration of the International Anti-Corruption Day, the mechanisms taken in the fight against corruption in the management of the Covid-19 funds, etc. This allows the members to be informed and to have access to the information they need. This makes it possible to be informed and to have the best practices in the fight against this scourge because the information received by the Secretariat is published on the website www.aaaca-africa.org

➤ **Collaboration with partners**

The Secretary General also informed the Executive Committee of the intention of the partners to collaborate with AAACA.

➤ **Coordination of activities carried out by partner institutions**

The Secretary General also informed the Executive Committee that in its role of coordinating the activities carried out by the Partner Institutions, the Secretariat has facilitated the training of the staff of the AAACA Member Institutions as well as the organisation of meetings.

➤ **Need for equipment**

The Secretary General informed the Executive Committee of the current situation of the equipment granted by the Government of Burundi to the AAACA Secretariat and that due to its obsolescence, it was necessary for members to support the Secretariat with new computer equipment.

➤ **Need to set up a Research Unit within the Association**

Aware of the negative impacts of corruption on the African continent and given that the tools used to measure the corruption index often do not fit with African realities, there is a need for AAACA as the only continental platform in the fight against corruption to establish a Corruption Research Unit. This will allow for research into the causes and consequences of corruption and propose solutions that can help to root out corruption on the African continent and recover stolen assets.

❖ **Action taken:**

- Follow up on the legal recognition process of the Association by the host country
- Address correspondence to all members reminding them of their obligations to pay their membership fees regularly;
- Strengthen cooperation with partners through the signing of memoranda of understanding between partners;
- See how to establish a Corruption Research Unit within AAACA;

- Maintain the AAACA website for the visibility of the Association;
- Make the AAACA website a research tool on corruption;
- Send a formal request to the members of the association to support the Secretariat materially, indicating the expression of needs;

3. Progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the 1st African Forum on Corruption

Despite the health crisis that is affecting the world, the Executive Committee was informed that the recommendations of the forum had been implemented by some countries. This is notably the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has instituted the celebration of the African Anti-Corruption Day.

Senegal, which, in addition to a week dedicated to the fight against corruption, has strengthened cooperation with countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso in the fight against corruption, and has revised the Criminal Code for an effective fight against corruption.

Egypt has also strengthened cooperation by offering training scholarships to 250 officers from AAACA member agencies and intends to continue this programme.

❖ Actions taken

- To request member institutions to inform the Secretariat of actions already taken to implement the recommendations of the first Africa Anti-Corruption Forum.

4. Preparation and organisation of the fifth Annual General Assembly

This Annual General Assembly should be held in September 2020 in Madagascar. However, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, it did not take place.

In addition, the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption, which had agreed to host this General Assembly, is currently unable to do so due to the limited resources at its disposal.

In view of all these challenges, many questions are currently being raised, including the availability of resources to organise this Assembly and the form it would take in the current health situation.

In addition, after a year's delay in holding this Annual General Meeting, many issues concerning the life of the association remain unresolved. These include:

- The approval of the Secretary General;
- The vote of the Association's budget;
- Approval of the strategic plan and the constitution of the Association;

- Approval of the partnership between IAACA and AAACA;
- The election of the members of the Executive Board;
- The choice of the country to host the sixth AGM;
- The exploration of other sources of funding for the association.

After this brief presentation, the Director General of the Independent Anti-Corruption Bureau/Madagascar, which should host the 5th Annual General Assembly of AAACA, was invited to bring clarity on the health situation in Madagascar and whether it would allow the organisation of the Annual General Assembly or not.

In his briefing he informed the Executive Committee that the health conditions in Madagascar were still fragile and that the country was still protecting itself from the arrival of Covid 19, delta version and that therefore Madagascar remained closed at the borders and that for the time being, it was impossible to host the 5th Annual General Assembly if only virtually.

After being informed about the health situation in the Republic of Madagascar, the Executive Committee discussed this issue and concluded that it was not possible to organise an Annual General Assembly physically, as no country was ready to host the AGM at the time.

Analysing the option of organising this Annual General Assembly virtually, the Executive Committee, while being unanimous on this option, is however confronted with the practicalities of organising the elections during the virtual General Assembly as an elective General Assembly must require certain prerequisites including the campaigning of candidates, the backroom negotiations etc.

While respecting the democratic principles and good governance that should characterise the institutions of AAACA, the Executive Committee realises that it is impossible to convene an Annual General Assembly in a physical setting under the current conditions.

Furthermore, for some members of the Executive Committee, given that it is not possible to predict when the pandemic will end, it is imperative to hold the virtual AGM and for the members of the Association to decide whether to hold elections for the new bureau. This is to preserve the legitimacy of the Association's bodies, because, they point out, given that we do not know how the pandemic will evolve, we will have to deal with it by adopting the option of holding meetings virtually.

This issue of the virtual election modalities was subject to a long discussion and it was noted that the Executive Committee is faced with a force majeure, which obliges it to give itself an observation period to see the evolution of the health situation in order to convene an elective General Assembly.

Therefore, the Executive Committee recommends to the Secretary General to analyse the practical modalities of organising a General Assembly and the modalities of elections at a favourable date. This AGM will take into account the high number of participants. The Secretary General will communicate the feasibility of this to the members of the Executive Committee in order to be able to convene a General Assembly.

❖ **Actions taken**

- Organise a virtual meeting;
- Recommend to the Secretariat to analyse the modalities of organising an elective General Assembly at a convenient time.

5. Any other business

The question of membership fees was raised in the other business and it was recommended to the Secretary General to send an official letter to all members reminding them of their obligations to pay their fees regularly.

6. Closing

The President expressed his thanks to the members of the Executive Committee for facilitating the holding of the eighth AGM. This was a sign of the Executive Committee's commitment to the promotion of the Association. He concluded by inviting the members of the Bureau to always work in synergy.

The meeting, which lasted four hours and forty-one minutes, ended in a friendly spirit.

Jean Claude BIZIMANA

Acting Secretary General of AAACA