



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE GAMBIA
SIXTH LEGISLATURE**

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**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER,
FABAKARY TOMBONG JATTA
AT THE DELOCALIZE MEETING OF THE ECOWAS
PARLIAMENT JOINT COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL
AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY AND THE APRM/
LEGAL AFFAIRS AND HUMAN RIGHTS/ SOCIAL
AFFAIRS, GENDER, AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

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THEME:

***COMMUNITY TEXTS ON PEACE, SECURITY AND GOOD
GOVERNANCE: CHALLENGES IN THEIR
IMPLEMENTATION AND THE OVERSIGHT ROLE OF THE
ECOWAS PARLIAMENT'***

20TH AUGUST 2020, BANJUL, THE GAMBIA

- Honorable First Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS parliament,
- Honourable Ministers here present,
- Honourable members of the ECOWAS parliament,
- Representatives from the various Directorates of the ECOWAS Commission,
- Permanent Secretaries and government officials here present,
- Clerk and staff of the National Assembly here present
- Invited guest
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The National Assembly of The Gambia is honored to host the ECOWAS Parliament for the delocalized meeting of the Joint Committee on Political Affairs, Peace and Security and the APRM/ Legal Affairs and Human Rights/ Social Affairs, Gender and Women Empowerment.

On behalf of His Excellency the President of the Republic, Mr Adama Barrow, the government and people of The Gambia, I welcome you all to the 'smiling coast' of Africa.

The theme of this convergence, 'Community texts on Peace, Security and Good Governance: Challenges in their implementation and the Oversight Role of the ECOWAS Parliament' cannot have come at a much better time than now, when the values of democracy are being undermined in our republics, violent extremism is threatening the very fabric of our societies and rising cost of living is posing significant challenges to safeguarding peace in virtually all our member states. And the success of ECOWAS as a regional body in addressing issues of peace and security largely depend on the commitment of the member states. While it is on record that the regional

experience yielded positive result, there is still the need for a more committed and proactive intervention.

Peace and Security is the bedrock on which all development efforts are anchored. This is obvious because without peace and security, our member states will not be able to implement effective economic policies, enforce the rule of law, attract business investments, and deliver public infrastructure and services. However, to achieve peace and security require first and foremost justice. This implies that our governments must be transparent in the way and manner they manage the affairs of the people, deliver governance in accordance with the dictates of the principles of democracy and rule of law and above all be accountable to the people. Parliamentarians are the gatekeepers of this accountability through their legislative and oversight functions.

This joint committee meeting to assess the challenges in the application of the texts that seek to safeguard peace and security within the ECOWAS community therefore illustrates the commitment of the Community Parliament to ensure that member states are compliant with community legislation and denotes a fulfillment of the mandate of the ECOWAS Parliament as the key oversight organ of the intuitions of the ECOWAS community.

Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is obvious that Parliament has a special role in the promotion and protection of peace and security, good governance and Human Rights, a responsibility it shares with the Executive and the Judiciary. In spite of this shared responsibility and owing to its role in law-making, the Parliament is the institution that is best placed to give effect to upholding Human Rights, promote peace and security, enhance and ensure good governance, take practical measures to empower women, and to ensure that law

provides practical means through which remedies can be sought for challenges that confront our societies.

Suffice it to say, Members of Parliaments represent the masses, shape laws and exercise oversight over the Executive. This delocalized meeting is therefore an indication that our community Parliament is taking concrete steps to monitor and respond to the needs of the citizens of the ECOWAS community with a view to passing legislation capable of ensuring critical scrutiny and serving as a vehicle for improving standards of probity, efficiency, and responsiveness in the administration of essential elements of ensuring good governance.

In fact, it is self-evident that Parliament is the key institution in Democracy, the apex organization that can safeguard the basic rights of citizens. I am optimistic that the outcome of this delocalized committee meeting will proffer tangible guidelines to the ECOWAS Parliament to be able to monitor policy implementation programmes at national levels, address the needs and concerns of Member States, and act as a catalyst in the realization of the fundamental objectives of ECOWAS.

Hon. Members, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Here in The Gambia, the Government of President Adama Barrow has demonstrated strong political will and commitment to peace, security, human rights, youth and women empowerment. The space for civil and political liberties have been expanded, a security sector reform is ongoing, a National Human Rights Commission has been established and there is also no shortage of legislation to guarantee the rights of women and recognize the need for their empowerment to take part in decision making; although challenges still exist in achieving gender parity and equity.

As you therefore deliberate, I wish to encourage Hon. Members to take reflections from the key success stories of Member States and frankly discuss the challenges encountered to arrive at informed conclusions on the way forward.

On that note, I wish to declare this meeting officially open and wish you the best in your deliberations. And please do not forget to explore the beauties of the Smiling Coast during your stay in Banjul.

Thank you all once again.