

PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

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Pan African and European Parliaments Hold Joint Talks

Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa - Parliamentarians representing the Pan African and European Parliaments held talks here in Midrand, South Africa today ahead of the EU-Africa Summit, which is scheduled to take place in Lisbon next December.

In a joint press conference, Hon. Marwick Khumalo, the Chairperson of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Relations with the European Parliament and Mr. Michael Gahler, the Head of the European Parliament delegation stressed the need for a strong parliamentary dimension when it comes to decisions and policies.

A five-Member delegation of European Parliamentarians led by Mr. Michael Gahler is in South Africa visiting the Pan African Parliament (PAP) during its Eighth Ordinary Session. "The paper we have drafted focuses not only on the issues of development, but also on specific issue of the influence of parliament and its role in the future as democratic representatives of the people" said Mr. Gahler. The paper also includes issues of migration, terrorism, brain drain and arms control.

A twenty-five Member strong delegation of MEPs will hold a pre-summit meeting with an equal number of Pan-African Parliamentarians in Lisbon where a joint declaration by both Parliaments is likely to be adopted, which will then be presented to the Heads of State and Government at the Summit.

The Pan African Parliament, through its President Hon. Gertrude Mongella, voiced its position on the issue of the attendance of President Mugabe of Zimbabwe at the EU-Africa Summit. "This issue of dictating who should be coming from Africa, as matter of principle, is unacceptable," She said.

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Mr Gahler said that the European Parliament has been clear on its position on President Mugabe's policies and conduct, but has chosen not to exercise its black listing against him for the sake of politics and higher agenda. "We won't let him take this Summit hostage" he said.

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