

Lawmakers from seven African countries began a three-day meeting in Kigali on Monday to discuss ways of strengthening parliamentary oversight of public finances and ensuring government resources are used more effectively.

The meeting brought together members of parliamentary committees responsible for monitoring public accounts from Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Benin, Ghana, Liberia and Malawi.

The lawmakers are examining how parliaments can improve scrutiny of government spending, strengthen cooperation with public audit institutions and work more closely with agencies under oversight, civil society organisations and anti-corruption bodies.

Beline Uwineza, deputy speaker of Rwanda's Chamber of Deputies in charge of parliamentary activities, said stronger oversight was increasingly important as African governments face growing demands to deliver services and development with limited resources.

"Our countries are required to do more while using fewer resources," Uwineza said. "It is therefore important that public resources are used properly and produce visible results in people's lives."

She said effective oversight could help prevent the misuse and waste of public resources while promoting accountable governance.

The meeting is being held under an African network that brings together parliamentary committees responsible for oversight of public finances.

Participants are also discussing ways to improve cooperation between parliamentary committees and institutions responsible for auditing and monitoring public spending.

Uwineza said public resources should be managed in ways that deliver tangible benefits to citizens.

"Public resources should not be wasted," she said. "We must do everything possible to ensure they are used productively and for the benefit of citizens."

The discussions also cover transparency, accountability and anti-corruption measures, with organisers saying stronger cooperation among oversight institutions

could improve the contribution of public financial management to Africa's long-term development.