



Hon. Christian Mejdahl
Speaker of the Danish Parliament
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Amsterdam, 4 March 2005

**RE: Conference on Parliamentary Democracy and Peace in the Great Lakes Region,
Nairobi, 14-16 April 2005.**

05/19-jns/gh/nl

Honourable Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that AWEPA, the North South Centre and the AMANI Forum are organising a Conference, entitled

**Parliamentary Democracy and Peace
in the Great Lakes Region
14-16 April 2005, Nairobi, Kenya**

While prospects for peace are improving in the Great Lakes Region, its inhabitants are still suffering the serious effects of ongoing conflicts. These conflicts undermine the political stability and weaken the capacity of political leaders to combat poverty and protect human rights. Parliamentarians have the power to help break the cycle of violence and faltering development.

In November 2004, under auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, the first summit of Heads of State of the *International Conference on the Great Lakes Region* took place in Dar es Salaam. It was concluded with a declaration which called upon political leaders to 'individually and collectively work towards reconstruction and development of the region and to promote a future of peace, stability and prosperity' and to build cooperation in the areas of Peace and Security, Democracy and Good Governance, Economic Development and Regional Integration and Humanitarian and Social Issues.

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International

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This Parliamentary Conference is a follow up to this call for political cooperation. Another main focus of the conference will be the harmonisation of legislation to reduce small arms. The role of women in the promotion of Parliamentary democracy and peace in the Great Lakes Region will be discussed as well. Furthermore, the role of parliament as an instrument for peace in general will be discussed.

The conference is intended for parliamentary consultation aimed at dealing with the regional security and developmental issues in the Great Lakes region in a concerted manner.

On behalf of AWEPA, I have the pleasure to invite you to designate a delegation from your Parliament to attend this Conference. Where possible, please ensure that your delegation is gender- and political party-balanced.

For your information, the draft programme and terms of reference are attached, together with a participation form. We would be grateful if you would fill in the participation form, one for each member of your delegation, and return them as soon as possible to the AWEPA office in Amsterdam at the following fax number: +31.20.6220130, or by email to: amsterdam@awepa.org

AWEPA is making arrangements for hotel rooms for participants, at the special rate of USD 105 per night, including accommodation and breakfast. If you wish to benefit from this special rate, please send the enclosed booking form, dully filled in, to the AWEPA office in Amsterdam.

We hope to welcome your delegation in Nairobi and we look forward to your early reply.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Jan Nico Scholten
President of AWEPA

Enclosures: Draft programme
 Terms of reference
 Participation form
 Booking form

Cc: Hon. Jeppe Kofod, MP

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