



Hon. Christian Mejdahl
Speaker of the Parliament
Denmark
Email: folketinget@folketinget.dk

Amsterdam, 13 March 2007

**RE: Invitation to Regional Parliamentary Seminar for the Great Lakes Region:
Towards Universal Access to HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment, Care and
Support
89/07-JNS/LBL**

Honourable Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you about the regional seminar for Central and Eastern Africa (Great Lakes Region) taking place on **Wednesday 18 and Thursday 19 April 2007**, in Nairobi, Kenya, entitled:

**Towards Universal Access
to HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support**

This regional seminar is a follow up to regional seminars on Children and AIDS AWEPA organised in Nairobi, November 2005 and Cape Town, May 2006. Please refer to our website: www.awepa.org, for the publications of these two previous activities. AWEPA is organising this regional parliamentary seminar also in the framework of the parliamentary support programme "Mobilising Parliaments for NEPAD" (MPN)¹.

On behalf of AWEPA, I have the pleasure to invite you to designate a delegation of your parliament to attend this seminar. The objective of the seminar is to bring together Members of Parliament from Eastern and Central Africa (Great Lakes Region) and experts, as well as European parliamentarians, to further outline parliamentary action towards universal access to HIV

¹ The programme is a result of a NEPAD Secretariat and AWEPA Memorandum of Understanding and was approved by main African parliamentary fora: the NEPAD Secretariat, the Pan-African Parliament, the African Parliamentarians Forum on NEPAD, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the ECOWAS Parliament, the NEPAD Contact Group of African parliamentarians (NCGAP), and SADC-Parliamentary Forum.

and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support. Important part of those kind of seminars is that it offers a platform for an exchange of views on HIV/AIDS issues between African and European parliamentarians.

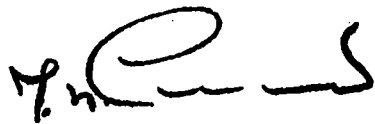
This exchange will lead to an increased awareness about the HIV/AIDS situation in Africa among European parliamentarians, who will use this into their parliamentary work in Europe.

During the seminar the African delegations will analyse respective legislation around HIV/AIDS by developing HIV/AIDS score cards (how do their parliament perform in terms of HIV/AIDS legislation, oversight, budget and representation). Besides, they will revise their National Parliamentary Plans of Action for OVC, developed at former regional seminars, while experts will develop an African Parliamentary Plan of Action for HIV/AIDS based on the 2006 Abuja Action Plan².

Please find attached for your information, the draft programme and terms of reference, together with a participation form. I would be grateful if the participation forms could be returned before 23 March 2007 to the AWEPA office in Amsterdam at the following fax number: +31 20 6220130 or by email to: amsterdam@awepa.org.

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

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Jan Nico Scholten
Executive President

Enclosures: Terms of Reference
 Draft Agenda
 Participation Form

² The May 2006 Abuja Special Summit of African Union on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria calls for all African countries to implement the 2006 Abuja Action Plan.



**Regional Parliamentary Seminar for the Great Lakes Region:
Towards Universal Access to HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment, Care and
Support**

Nairobi, Kenya, 18 - 19 April 2007

Draft agenda¹

Wednesday 18 April 2007

09.00 Registration and coffee

9.30-10.30 Opening Session

Chair: Dr. Jan Nico Scholten, Executive President of AWEPA

Mrs Lucy Kibaki, First Lady of the Republic of Kenya, Vice-President representing Eastern Africa of the Organisation of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA)

Prof. Firmino Mucavele, Executive Head of the NEPAD Secretariat

Member of Parliament, Kenya

Representative of EALA

Group Photograph

10.30 Break

11.00-12.30 Session I: Identifying Parliamentary Action for HIV/AIDS within African Union Legal Instruments²

Chair: [tbd]

Representative of African Union

Dr. Khauhelo Raditapole, Chair of the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs, Pan African Parliament

Representative of RFPAC

¹ not all presenters have confirmed yet

² Documents reviewed during this session are the "African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child" and "the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa"

Discussion

12.30 Lunch

14.00-15.30 Session II: the Role of Parliamentarians in strengthening HIV/AIDS Prevention

Chair: [tbd]

Dr. David Alnwick, Regional Advisor HIV/AIDS, UNICEF ESARO

Dr. Samuel Kalibala, Regional Representative, Kenya, International Aids Vaccine Initiative (IAVI)

Member of Parliament, Uganda

Discussion

15.30 Break

16.00- 17.30 Session III: the Role of Parliamentarians in moving towards Universal Access to HIV/AIDS Treatment

Chair: [tbd]

Mr. Tenu Avafia, Intellectual Property Advisor, UNDP, South Africa

Mr. Peter Savosnick, Country Director, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, Kenya

Representative International Community of Women with HIV/AIDS (ICW)

Discussion

Thursday 19 April 2007

9.30-11.00 Session IV: Working Groups I

The Parliament Score Card on HIV/AIDS

Working Group 1: Kenya

Working Group 2: Uganda

Working Group 3: Tanzania

Working Group 4: Rwanda

Working Group 5: Burundi

Working Group 6: DRC

Working Group 7: RC

11.00 Break

11.30-13.00 Session V: Working Groups II

- The National Parliamentary Plans of Action (NPPA) for OVC
- African Parliamentary Plan of Action (APPA) for HIV/AIDS

13.00 Lunch

14.30-16.00 Session VI: Report back from Working Groups

Chair: [tbd]

Report back will be given by one of the members of each working group.

Discussion on African Parliamentary Plan of Action (APPA) for HIV/AIDS

Conclusions

16.00 Closing Remarks



Regional Parliamentary Seminar for the Great Lakes Region: Towards Universal Access to HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support

Nairobi, Kenya, 18-19 April 2007

Draft Terms of Reference

Background

African countries, inspired by the Millennium Declaration of 2000 and its Millennium Development Goals, the Abuja Declaration and Plan of Action of 2001, the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS of 2001, acted individually and collectively to fight HIV/AIDS. However, because of numerous challenges and obstacles, the course of the pandemic has not yet changed significantly. Africa still has a long way to go in the struggle against this disease.

The 2001 Abuja Declaration, resulting from the African Union Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases (ORID), stresses the need for government to allocate 15% of the annual budget to the improvement of the health sector. In 2006, a Continental Consultation in Brazzaville, organised by the AU Commission set out the "Commitment on Scaling Up Towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support in Africa by 2010" and specifically recommended that the Pan-African Parliament Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs provide advocacy, oversight and accountability for the implementation of the commitment towards universal access.

The facts show the urgency for action towards universal access. In 2006, for instance, only 1 in 10 pregnant women with HIV (in low-and middle-income countries) received antiretroviral (ARV) prophylaxis for preventing mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV. At the same time, an estimated 530.000 children were newly infected with HIV in 2006, mainly through MTCT and only 1 in 10 children needing antiretroviral treatment (ART) received it¹. These are global figures, but with more than 60% of the estimated HIV infected people in the world living in Sub-Saharan Africa², it is clear that action is needed, especially in Africa.

Full political engagement of parliamentarians is a pre-requisite for coordinated and sustained action towards achieving universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support.

This regional seminar provides an important follow up to the regional seminar "Scaling up Parliamentary Efforts for Children and AIDS in relation to the Poverty Reduction Strategies" which was held in Nairobi in November 2005 and the Cape Town "Pre-conference Meeting for Parliamentarians from the Great Lakes Region on HIV/AIDS" in May 2006. AWEPA is also organising this regional parliamentary seminar in the framework of the parliamentary support programme "Mobilising Parliaments for NEPAD"

¹ Children and AIDS, A stocktaking report 2006, UNICEF.

² Abuja Call for accelerated action towards universal access to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria services in Africa, May 2006

(MPN)³. The MPN programme is aimed at facilitating a greater involvement in the NEPAD process for African and European parliaments. One of the priority action areas concerns "Health and Development". The MPN programme partners called for a process involving an expert workshop, a regional seminar, and ultimately national level follow up action on the issue of Health and Development. This regional seminar will now take place in Nairobi, where national level workshops will review and revise the existing National Parliamentary Plans of Action, while a parallel experts workshop will develop an African Parliamentary Plan of Action for HIV/AIDS.

Objective

This regional seminar will bring together Members of Parliament from Eastern and Central Africa (Great Lakes Region) and experts to further outline parliamentary action towards universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support. The expert information given during the different plenary sessions will feed into two working group sessions. While the delegates will analyse the HIV/AIDS policies of their parliament by developing HIV/AIDS score cards (how do their parliament perform in terms of HIV/AIDS legislation, oversight, budget and representation) and revise the National Parliamentary Plans of Action (NPPA) for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), developed at former regional seminars, experts will develop an African Parliamentary Plan of Action (APPA) for HIV/AIDS based on the 2006 Abuja Action Plan⁴.

Output

- Members of Parliament in the Eastern and Central African region are briefed on HIV/AIDS issues, with special focus on the role that parliament can play towards achieving universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support, and while giving fair consideration to gender issues.
- Members of Parliament in the Eastern and Central African region are provided with information and update on the different African Union legal instruments on children and women.
- Parliament Score Cards on HIV/AIDS are developed and discussed
- The National Parliamentary Plan of Action for OVC already made by the delegations during previous regional seminars are reviewed and revised, based on the information gained at the seminar.
- An African Parliamentary Plan of Action for HIV/AIDS is prepared by experts during the seminar and discussed and endorsed at the seminar.

Midterm Outcome

- The discussions during this seminar and the seminar outputs, especially the Parliament Score Cards on HIV/AIDS, the revised National Parliamentary Plans of Action and the African Parliamentary Plan of Action for HIV/AIDS, leads to better awareness on the need for universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support, including gender issues, within the national parliaments in the Eastern and Central African region.
- The delegations take the African Parliamentary Plan of Action for HIV/AIDS into account during a national follow up process of this seminar, aimed at pushing for national level HIV/AIDS action planning and implementation.
- The increased information on HIV/AIDS assists the national parliaments to initiate the monitoring of parliamentary action nationally.

³ The programme is a result of a NEPAD Secretariat and AWEPA Memorandum of Understanding and was approved by main African parliamentary fora: the NEPAD Secretariat, the Pan-African Parliament, the African Parliamentarians Forum on NEPAD, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the ECOWAS Parliament, the NEPAD Contact Group of African parliamentarians (NCGAP), and SADC-Parliamentary Forum.

⁴ The May 2006 Abuja Special Summit of African Union on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria calls for all African countries to implement the 2006 Abuja Action Plan.

- The national parliaments have better informed debates on progress on universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support during Committee meetings and plenary sessions.
- The African Parliamentary Plan of Action for HIV/AIDS is tabled in the PAP Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs.

Issues to be addressed

With children's and women's issues in the foreground, the "*African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*" and the "*Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*" will be analysed and parliamentary action in these documents identified. Attention will be given to the role parliamentarians can play regarding actions needed to achieve the goal of universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support, with a focus on prevention and treatment. A renewed emphasis on HIV prevention is needed to prevent millions of new infections each year. For instance, access to services to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission must increase, as well as access to voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) and antiretroviral treatment, with special attention to the needs of children. Regarding antiretroviral treatment, the prospect of pooled regional procurement will also be addressed. There is a need to harmonise the regulatory systems of medicines across trading blocs, in order to facilitate exchange of pharmaceutical goods and services between countries in the region. Another issue which will be discussed during the seminar is the research on and development for drugs, microbicides and vaccines.

Seminar Participants

The seminar will offer a platform for approximately 60 African and European participants consisting of representatives from the following institutions:

- Parliamentarians from the following countries: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo and the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA);
- Parliamentarians invited from European countries;
- Experts from e.g. the NEPAD Secretariat, African Union, Pan-African Parliament and UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP and UNIFEM) and CSOs.

The participation policy is to strongly advocate the principles of gender-balance and multi-party democracy.

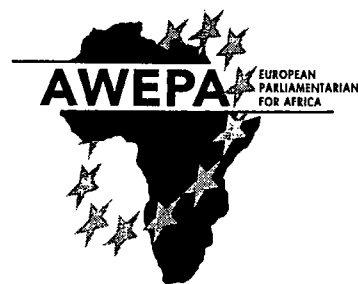
Date and Venue

The seminar takes place on 18 and 19 April in Nairobi, Kenya and will be coordinated from the AWEPA Headquarters and prepared and executed by the AWEPA Regional office in Nairobi.



PARTICIPATION FORM

**Regional Parliamentary Seminar
for the Great Lakes Region:
Towards Universal Access to
HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment,
Care and Support**



Nairobi, Kenya, 18 - 19 April 2007

(PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY: TYPE OR BLOCK LETTERS)

Mr./ Ms./ Mrs.

Full First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Cell phone: _____

Email: _____

Dietary

Requirements: _____

Please tick the appropriate answer:

Undersigned is available/not available on:

Yes/No Wednesday the 18th of April 2007

Yes/No Thursday, the 19th of April 2007

***Please return this form as soon as possible to the
AWEPA Office in Amsterdam fax +31 20 6220130 or by email to:
amsterdam@awepa.org***