



**DRAFT**  
**Terms of Reference**  
**EU Presidency Seminar on Africa**  
**23-24 November 2006**  
**Helsinki, Finland**

**1. Introduction**

The Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) organizes twice a year international parliamentary seminars under the auspices of the rotating EU Presidency. The main objectives of these seminars are:

- To keep African priorities, in the context of NEPAD/MDGs, on the political agenda of the EU and the EU member states
- To promote partnerships between European and African (members of) parliaments to strengthen strong parliamentary democracies
- To promote dialogue and networking for parliamentarians from Africa with each other and with their colleagues from Europe to stimulate action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

In October 2005, during the UK's chairmanship of the EU and financed by the UK, AWEPA in cooperation with other parliamentary organizations organized in London the EU Presidency Seminar on "*Partnership Beyond 2005: The Role of Parliamentarians in Implementing NEPAD Commitments*". The seminar, taking place after the G8 Summit in Scotland and the UN Millennium Review Summit, looked at the issue of *international partnership* and monitoring of progress in Africa on NEPAD priorities, and progress in Europe and G8 countries on fulfilment of commitments. It focussed on the crucial role of parliaments and parliamentarians as a bridge between civil society and government and scrutinisers of government legislation, accounts and commitments. It also looked at how best to support the capacity of parliamentarians as they try to fulfil these roles. The seminar agreed on a statement identifying priorities for action. The statement called on parliamentarians and parliamentary networks to ensure they fulfil their roles in holding governments to account on the commitments made to development in Africa or in their respective countries. It also called for a report back involving parliamentarians on progress made.

AWEPA and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe organised an EU Presidency seminar in May 2006, financed by the Austrian Government during Austria's EU chairmanship. The seminar provided a platform to promote dialogue and partnerships between African parliamentarians and their colleagues from the EU member states, particularly new member states. The new EU Strategy for Africa was discussed and welcomed as a coherent and long-term framework for the relations between Europe and Africa as a whole, based on common priorities and values, and focused on achieving the MDGs. The participants agreed on a declaration with recommendations for action (see enclosure). The declaration called on parliamentarians to reaffirm support to NEPAD and African initiatives which aim to strengthen good governance, democracy, human rights and peace as they are key elements in improving living standards. The declaration asserted that parliamentarians have a crucial role to play in holding governments to account for the expenditure of Official Development Assistance. It also called for a parliamentary monitoring mechanism with equal representation from Africa and Europe for the implementation of the new EU Strategy.

After consultations in Helsinki between AWEPA and the Parliament of Finland and representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, it was agreed that AWEPA would design a Terms of Reference for a EU Presidency Seminar in Helsinki in November 2006, when Finland holds the EU chairmanship.

## **2. Focus of the Seminar**

The seminar in Helsinki will focus on three key thematic areas of parliamentary responsibility:

- Economic Empowerment of Women: Finland's centennial anniversary of 'Fighting for Women's Rights' and state of affairs in selected African countries
- Economic development in the framework of NEPAD, and the attainment of the MDGs: parliamentary action for an improved investment climate
- The Global Campaign on Children and AIDS: 'Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS': mobilizing parliamentarians in Europe and Africa to scale up their efforts for Children Orphaned by AIDS

AWEPA addresses and promotes these themes on a parliamentary level as part of its Memoranda of Understanding with NEPAD, UNDP, UNICEF and UNIFEM.

## **3. Seminar Participants**

The Seminar will offer a platform for approximately 40 African and 40 European participants consisting of representatives from the following:

- Parliamentarians from Finland
- Parliamentarians from the other Nordic countries: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, plus representatives from the Nordic Council
- Parliamentarians from the Baltic countries: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, plus representatives from the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Assembly, including Russia, Poland and Germany
- Parliamentarians from the following African countries: Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Namibia, as well as members from the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), SADC Parliamentary Forum and Pan African Parliament
- AWEPA Executive Committee and staff
- Representatives from private sector partners and civil society organisations

## **4. Seminar Organisation**

The Seminar will be a two-day event and take place in Helsinki on 23 and 24 November 2006, with time available in addition for African delegations to interact with Finnish and other European parliamentarians, partners and development NGOs. The seminar will start on 23 November after lunch, and end on 24 November in the afternoon. The Seminar will be organised by AWEPA in cooperation with the Finnish parliament with assistance from AWEPA's section in the Finnish parliament.