

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

(a) **REGIONAL SEMINAR ON *JOINING THE INITIATIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING AND LABOUR***

Child trafficking and labour, which run counter to the best interests of children, must be addressed by harmonizing the strategies of the various stakeholders involved as part of overall efforts to overcome this problem.

The IPU, in keeping with its programme to build the capacity of its Members, jointly launched with the Sahel and West Africa Club-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (SWAC-OECD) an initiative on *Child labour on cocoa plantations* in May 2010. This initiative, which was expanded to cover other forms of economic exploitation of children, seeks to involve parliaments in efforts to combat child trafficking and labour at the national level and enable them to play a leading role in joining efforts at the regional level to counter this problem.

The last in a series of activities under this initiative - implemented in four phases over a two-year period - the regional seminar held in Abuja from 12 to 14 June 2012 facilitated an exchange of good practices in accordance with the general guidelines established at the launch of the initiative in 2010 at the Cotonou Conference.

The seminar concluded with the adoption of a number of recommendations, namely:

- develop a model law on preventing and combating child trafficking and labour;
- harmonize national laws on the prevention and suppression of child trafficking and labour based on the model law;
- ensure systematic and mandatory birth registration;
- set up a unit within the ECOWAS Commission to deal with questions related to the protection of children; and
- devise a mechanism to follow up/evaluate the ECOWAS policy on children's rights, which will also be entrusted with formulating recommendations for States on implementation of a regional plan on registration of civil acts, in particular births.

The seminar participants subscribed to the following declaration:

JOINING THE INITIATIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING AND LABOUR



JOINING THE INITIATIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS FOR AN
EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING AND LABOUR



**JOINT DECLARATION BY THE PARLIAMENT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN
STATES (ECOWAS) AND THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) ON COMBATING CHILD
TRAFFICKING AND LABOUR**

Abuja, 12-14 June 2012

Combating child trafficking and labour requires the collaboration of all stakeholders in order to ensure coordinated and concerted action that will lead to the elimination of these scourges. In this regard, the contribution of parliament remains crucial to the establishment of an enabling legal environment for promoting children's rights. It is within this context that we, the participants at the regional seminar organized jointly by the ECOWAS Parliament, the Sahel and West Africa Club-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (SWAC-OECD) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Considering that children are the future of the society and the driving force of today and thus, nothing should prevent them from fully enjoying their rights,

Considering the magnitude and complexity of child trafficking and labour as well as their adverse effects on the biological, physical and intellectual development of the child victims of trafficking,

Considering the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment and ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour and, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the ECOWAS child policy and 2009–2013 Strategic Action Plan, the Regional Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children in West and Central Africa of 6 July 2006,

Considering the Roadmap of the Hague Global Child Labour Conference of May 2010, Towards a world without child labour – Mapping the road to 2016,

Considering the Cotonou Declaration, adopted at the Cotonou Regional Conference organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Sahel and West Africa Club, in collaboration with the National Assembly of Benin, from 24 to 26 May 2012, whose guidelines spurred national parliaments into taking action to effectively manage child trafficking and labour and ensuring that children's are effectively taken into account and henceforth, included in parliament's priority actions.

Strongly condemn child trafficking and labour and call for renewed vigilance and mobilization for more effective action,

Reaffirm the need to ensure that children's rights are effectively respected and actively promoted in accordance with regional and international standards, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment, ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour and all other texts relating to the promotion of children's rights,

Invite the parliaments of Member States that have not yet to do so to ensure that the texts are ratified and transposed into their national legislations and enforced within the framework of overseeing executive actions,

Urge the parliamentarians of Member States to consider measures aimed at achieving this very important goal and advocate for the resources needed to implement the actions identified to this end,

Reiterate the need to scale up efforts with a view to reducing poverty in Member States,

Subscribe to the Roadmap of the Hague Global Child Labour Conference on the to step up action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2016,

Adhere, in this respect, to the guidelines of the Cotonou Declaration, whose provisions ensure a parliamentary contribution to the objectives of the Hague Conference, and **welcome** actions already taken in this context by certain parliaments,

Invite other parliaments to undertake similar actions,

Appeal for widespread implementation of the guidelines of the Cotonou Declaration and to this end, **recommend** the contribution of the ECOWAS Parliament during the off-site meetings of its Committees,

Pledge to propose the establishment of a common legal environment for combating child trafficking and labour and supporting, reintegrating and rehabilitating victims of trafficking,

Undertake to submit this issue for consideration to the Plenary of the ECOWAS Parliament in accordance with its procedures,

Encourage collaboration between regional parliaments, in particular those of West and Central Africa, as part of efforts to effectively combat child trafficking and labour,

Invite the Inter-Parliamentary Union to support the Parliament's actions of combating child trafficking and labour,

Reiterate the hope that the joint IPU/SWAC initiative will be renewed so that it can support the actions of our regional parliaments, in particular regarding the establishment of a common legal environment and monitoring the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken by the States at both the international and regional levels related to combating child trafficking and labour.

Done in Abuja on this 14th day of June 2012
The Seminar