

# TOWARDS ENHANCED PARLIAMENTARY ACTION TO COMBAT THE TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN FOR PURPOSES OF LABOUR EXPLOITATION IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

Regional Conference organized jointly by the National Assembly of Benin, the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC/OECD) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

**Cotonou, 26-28 May 2010**

*International Conference Centre (ICC)*



Geneva, 15 April 2010

Dear Madam,  
Dear Sir,

It is our pleasure to invite you to the Regional Conference on the theme *Towards enhanced parliamentary action to combat the trafficking of children for purposes of labour exploitation in West and Central Africa*, which will take place in Cotonou, Benin, from 26 to 28 May 2010.

The magnitude of trafficking in children for labour exploitation is such that it has become a cause for concern at the international level. In addition to the grave children's rights violations it entails, this practice seriously jeopardizes the future of the countries that suffer from this scourge. Having entered the labour market at an early age often for a long period and with a total disregard for international and regional labour standards, the victims of this type of trafficking - children - lose all opportunities to get the education or training they need to enable them to make a contribution to the future development of their country.

Following the example of the international community, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has made efforts to combat this scourge a priority of its programme of action for its Members. To this end, it has developed, in collaboration with the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC/OECD), a two-year project aimed at enhancing parliamentary action in West and Central African countries to combat this practice by harmonizing national strategies with a view to better regional coordination.

The Cotonou Regional Conference is the first in a series of activities under this project. Its purpose is to heighten awareness among the parliamentarians of the region of the consequences of trafficking in children for labour exploitation, review anti-trafficking laws and practices with a view to developing a road map to guide future action and establish a discussion forum to follow up such action. The Conference will seek to explore the possibilities of collaboration between parliament and other stakeholders (government agencies and international organizations, the judiciary, civil society and the media) as a means of joining efforts in order to achieve the best results.

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Please find attached the registration form, which should be completed and returned to us no later than **14 May 2010**.

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that, in keeping with usual IPU practice, all matters relating to visas, hotel reservations and transportation are to be handled by the participants themselves. To facilitate hotel reservations, we have attached a hotel reservation form that participants can use if they wish to.

Your commitment to help eradicate this scourge and allow children to attain self-fulfilment in full compliance with their rights is important. It is our hope, therefore, that your parliament will take an active part in this Conference and contribute meaningfully to its success.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. Mathurin Coffi Nago  
Speaker of the National  
Assembly of Benin



Mr. François-Xavier de  
Donna  
President of the Sahel and  
West Africa Club  
(SWAC-OECD)



Anders B. Johnsson  
Secretary General of the  
Inter-Parliamentary Union

enc.: Information note  
Provisional programme  
General information  
Registration form and Hotel reservation form