

Developing a protective framework for children: the role of Parliaments

Regional parliamentary seminar hosted by the National Assembly of Viet Nam and organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Hanoi, Vietnam, 15 to 17 February 2006

CONCEPT PAPER

The Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNICEF will organise a regional seminar for parliaments of the Asia Pacific region and regional inter-parliamentary organizations on "*Developing a protective framework for children: the role of Parliaments*" at the invitation of the National Assembly of Viet Nam. This seminar will be held in:

Hanoi
from 15 to 17 February 2006

The seminar will take place at the Melia Hanoi Hotel.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

The seminar will aim at facilitating debate on ways and mechanisms of developing a protective framework for children, with a particular focus on parliamentary mechanisms.

The purpose of the seminar is to enable parliamentarians and the parliamentary staff involved in child protection issues to gain a deeper understanding of the tools at their disposal to develop a protective environment for children. The meeting will take the form of a discussion of practical experiences in various countries. It should more specifically provide orientation to members of parliament on best parliamentary practices for child protection legislation and implementation, and sensitize members of parliament to the need to develop a protective framework for children.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

The provisional programme of the Seminar is attached.

RESOURCE PERSONS

The IPU and UNICEF will identify resource persons from the region, who will make presentations and lead discussions on the various themes of the seminar.

PARTICIPATION

The seminar is open to members of parliament and parliamentary staff from national parliaments of the Asia Pacific region. Several regional inter-parliamentary organizations will also be invited by the host country. Each parliament shall be entitled to send up to 10 participants (MPs and staff). Parliaments are encouraged to send members of parliament that actively work on child protection issues. In line with the IPU's stated objective to

promote partnership between men and women in political life, participating parliaments should aim at including an equal number of men and women delegates. Delegations should further be representative of the political configuration of the respective parliaments and should also include a minimum number of 2 parliamentary staff members.

ORGANISATION OF PROCEEDINGS

In accordance with the IPU's practice, all participants will have equal speaking rights. So that the discussions can be as fruitful and enriching as possible, the following arrangements have been foreseen so far:

- (a) There will be no list of speakers on any agenda item. After an agenda item has been introduced by the resource persons, the floor will be open to participants for questions and comments.
- (b) Experience has shown that this kind of meeting is not suitable for pre-prepared statements to be read out. Subject to arrangements which the Chair may make to suit the circumstances, oral statements may not exceed three minutes. Participants may, however, speak several times on each item, particularly to respond to other statements.
- (c) A General Rapporteur will be called upon in the afternoon of the last day to sum up the work of the Seminar at its concluding session. Rapporteurs and Chairpersons for the two working group sessions will also be identified.
- (d) The Secretariat of the Union will prepare a publication on the proceedings of the Seminar, for distribution to the participating parliaments, the IPU governing bodies and interested organisations.

The debates will take place in English. Delegations who wish to have interpretation into their own language are kindly requested to inform the National Assembly Viet Nam, which will arrange for interpretation booths. The delegations concerned will be responsible for recruiting and covering the expenses of their interpreters.

DOCUMENTS

Written texts of the presentations by the resource persons will be distributed to participants as they become available.

To the extent possible and for the information of participants, the IPU Secretariat will make available background documentation relevant to the issues under discussion.

Participants wishing to distribute to their colleagues relevant documentation will be required to provide it in sufficient quantities and put it on a table set aside for that purpose.