



CHEMIN DU POMMIER 5
CASE POSTALE 330
1218 LE GRAND-SACONNEX / GENEVE (SUISSE)

TELEPHONE (41.22) 919 41 50
FAX (41.22) 919 41 60
E-MAIL postbox@mail.ipu.org

Law and justice: The case for parliamentary scrutiny

Seminar for members of parliamentary human rights bodies

Geneva, 25-27 September 2006

Geneva, 19 June 2006

Dear Madam President,

Dear Mr. President,

As part of its efforts to strengthen the capacity of parliaments to promote and protect human rights, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has been organizing since 2004 a yearly seminar for chairpersons and members of parliamentary human rights committees. These seminars have now become part of the regular activities of the IPU.

Through this letter, I would like to draw your attention to this year's seminar for members of parliamentary human rights bodies. It will take place from 25 to 27 September 2006 at IPU Headquarters in Geneva and will address the question of due administration of justice and the contribution parliaments can make in this respect.

The question of due administration of justice is a major human rights issue, which has taken on particular significance in the context of the fight against terrorism. It covers subjects such as the administration of prisons, the organization of the Judiciary and the rights of accused, detainees and prisoners. The seminar will deal with the international norms that govern detention and the right to a fair trial. It will examine what contribution parliaments and their members can make to ensure that these norms are implemented and to guarantee the independence of the Judiciary, a pillar of democracy. The detailed programme for this three-day event will be sent to you before the end of June 2006.

The seminar will be organized in collaboration with two specialized agencies in this field, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT). It will be open to members of parliamentary committees specializing in human rights, justice and/or internal affairs. The topics on the agenda will be introduced by members of parliament and/or experts and representatives of international and/or regional human rights bodies. As in the past, the emphasis will be on discussion, and everything will be done to leave ample time for a free exchange of views. Arabic, English, French and Spanish interpretation will be provided.

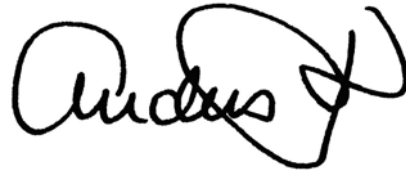
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Please find enclosed an IPU registration form, which I invite you kindly to return to our Secretariat no later than 31 July 2006. In this regard, I should inform you that the conference room at IPU Headquarters has only limited seating capacity, which is why I kindly request you to limit any delegation from your parliament to a maximum of three persons (including advisers and secretaries).

Lastly, I would like to point out that all matters relating to visas, hotel accommodation and transportation of participants should be taken care of by the participants. To facilitate hotel bookings, I am enclosing a reservation form which participants may wish to use. Please note that both forms, along with the provisional programme of the seminar and other relevant documents, will be posted as of July 2006 on the IPU web site.

I look forward to the participation of your parliament at the Seminar.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anders B. Johansson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anders B. Johansson
Secretary General

Annex: Registration form
Hotel reservation form