



*National Assembly of
Burkina Faso*

Seminar for Central and West African Parliaments

Taking legislative action to end violence against women and girls
Ouagadougou, 30 March - 1st April 2011

*Organized by
The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the National Assembly of Burkina Faso*



*Inter-Parliamentary
Union*

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Background and purpose of the Seminar**

Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation and an extreme form of gender-based discrimination. It is rampant both in the public and private spheres and jeopardizes rights, freedom, health, the quality of life and even the very life of women, irrespective of their nationality, age and social status. This form of violence has an enormous human, social and economic cost and reduces significantly women's contribution to development, peace and security.

Several Central African and West African countries have shown their willingness to eliminate this scourge. Strengthening the legislative framework - a responsibility that falls first and foremost to parliamentarians - is, therefore, crucial to providing an effective response. No coordinated action to halt the violence to which women and girls fall victim is possible without a comprehensive legislative framework that encompasses prevention, protection and care for victims, cracking down on perpetrators and fighting impunity.

This seminar seeks to provide men and women parliamentarians of the region with the elements of a comprehensive and multisectoral response to violence against women and familiarize them with the major regional and international instruments in the field. It also seeks to shed light on the underlying causes and consequences of various forms of gender-based violence and obstacles encountered in putting an end to them.

Through the seminar, parliamentarians will be able to exchange experiences and take stock of the situation in the region, express their opinions and compare the experiences of different countries in the region in combating violence against women and girls. During the course of the seminar, it is hoped that parliamentarians will be able to identify appropriate parliamentary action required to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of women and girls and their right to a life free of violence.

2. **Venue and date**

The seminar will be held from 30 March to 1st April 2011, at the Ouaga 2000 Conference Centre, in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

3. **Participation**

The seminar is open to parliamentary delegations from the following Central and West African countries:

Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

Parliaments are invited to send delegations not exceeding four members and composed of both sexes.

4. Provisional programme

The provisional programme of the seminar is attached.

5. Languages

The discussions will be held in English and French. Simultaneous interpreting will be provided in these two languages for the duration of the meeting.

6. Organization of proceedings

Parliamentarians and/or experts and representatives of international organizations will present the themes on the agenda. Emphasis will be placed on debate and every effort will be made to allocate sufficient time for an open exchange of views.

In keeping with IPU practice, all participants will have the same speaking rights. To ensure that the debates are fruitful and lively, the following measures will be put in place:

- a) There will be no speakers' list. Once an agenda item is introduced by a presenter, the floor will be given to the participants for questions or comments.
- b) Experience has shown that prepared speeches are ill-suited to this type of meeting. At the discretion of the moderator, oral statements may be permitted, but should not exceed three minutes. Participants may, however, take the floor more than once for each theme and respond to statements made by other participants.
- c) The IPU Secretariat will circulate the seminar report to participants, IPU governing bodies and interested organizations.

7. Documents

A hard copy of the presentations made by the presenters will be provided to participants as they become available.

To the extent possible and for information, the IPU will make available reference documents on the questions addressed during the seminar. Participants wishing to distribute documentation relevant to the seminar may do so, in sufficient quantities, on the table made available for that purpose.

8. Registration

Invited parliaments are requested to indicate the composition of their delegation as soon as possible and no later than 4 March 2011 by way of the attached registration form, duly completed and sent to:

National Assembly of Burkina Faso

Address: 01 BP 6482
Ouagadougou 01
e-mail: an@assemblee.gov.bf
Tel.: +226 50314449; +226 50314684/85
Fax: + 226 50 31 45 90; +226 50 31 80 14

Copy to:

Mr. Dieudonné KERE
Director, International Cooperation
Secretary, National Group
e-mail: djekere@msn.com
Tel.: +226 50 30 68 70
Mobile: +226 76 40 86 55

With copy to: Inter-Parliamentary Union

Address: 5, chemin du Pommier
case postale 330
1218 Grand-Saconnex
Geneva, Switzerland
e-mail: postbox@mail.ipu.org
Tel.: +41 22 919 41 50
Fax: +41 22 919 41 60

Accommodation

Participants are kindly requested to complete the hotel registration form and return it as soon as possible and no later than 4 March 2011.

Reservations received after this date cannot be guaranteed and will be subject to availability. Reservations will be dealt with on a first-come first-serve basis. Participants are asked to settle their bill directly with the hotel.

9. Travel

Parliaments participating in the seminar are kindly asked to make their own travel arrangements. They will have to bear the travel costs and the costs related to their delegates' participation.

10. Arrival and departure

In order to facilitate the welcome service at the Ouagadougou International Airport, all participants are asked to indicate their arrival and departure details (date, time and flight no.) on the hotel reservation form.

The competent services of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso will welcome delegates upon their arrival at Ouagadougou International Airport, and arrange their ground transfers to and from the airport. They will also provide transfers for delegates between their hotels and official seminar events.

11. Visas

The National Assembly of Burkina Faso will take the necessary measures to ensure that the competent national authorities facilitate the issuance of a visa to all persons invited to the seminar. For persons residing in countries where there is no Burkina Faso diplomatic mission, the National Assembly will, to the extent possible, see to it that a visa is issued exceptionally upon arrival in Ouagadougou. To that end, such persons are required to indicate this as soon as possible. They are also requested to submit a photocopy of their passport and their arrival details.