



Parliamentarians for Global Action

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PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR GLOBAL ACTION (PGA) HOSTS PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR WEST AFRICA

ECOWAS SECRETARIAT
FEBRUARY 24-25, 2004

(New York/Abuja; February 6, 2004) - Human trafficking is one of the most pressing and complex emergencies in the development and human rights issues in the world today. In contemporary West Africa there are two main types of trafficking: trafficking in children for the purpose of slave labor and domestic work; and trafficking in women and children destined for prostitution abroad. UNICEF has estimated that about 200,000 children are trafficked every year from the West and Central African Sub-region.¹ Human Trafficking reaches across borders to affect nearly every country in the northern and southern hemisphere and has unique implications in the social, economic and cultural sectors. Human trafficking is a crime under international law, which is affecting in such a severe and dynamic way the West African region that no single country can deal with the problem alone. To fight a complex problem such as human trafficking, countries need a multifaceted approach and plan. Only a well-coordinated effort by all ECOWAS states can put an end to the problem. National legislation is crucial in combating human trafficking. Many countries in the West African sub-region do not have any specific legislation to address the problem of human trafficking.

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) will convene a *Parliamentary Workshop on Human Trafficking in West Africa*, in collaboration with the **ECOWAS Secretariat** and **Parliament**. The workshop will be held in the ECOWAS Secretariat Headquarters, in Abuja, Nigeria. Parliamentarians from West Africa will present case studies from their home countries and discuss how they have dealt with the problem of human trafficking. Leading experts on social, economic, political and international law and transitional cooperation will provide participants with the information necessary to understand the roots of the problem and how to effect legislation to combat human trafficking.

As a result of the workshop, participating MPs will be better equipped to adopt laws criminalizing human trafficking and build the necessary administrative structures to address and prevent the phenomena. They will also discuss the necessity of developing public awareness campaigns aimed at potential victims of trafficking, using both traditional channels of information as well as the mass media.

PGA is a unique network of over 1,350 Members of Parliament from 111 countries around the world, engaged in a range of action-oriented initiatives promoting democracy, peace and development in the world. PGA works with parliamentarians at the international level as peer advisors to other parliamentarians.

¹ UNICEF, Child Trafficking Update, <http://www.unicefusa.org/trafficking/background.html>