

## **PGA's Work in the Islamic World 1998-2007**

### **Recent Activity:**

**10-12 June 2007**

**Working Group on the Universality of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Middle East and the Mediterranean (MEMED), The Hague, The Netherlands**

The meeting of the MEMED Working Group on the Universality of the ICC led to a renewed and stronger commitment of MPs from Bahrain, Morocco and Lebanon to remove the obstacles facing ratification of the Rome Statute. Among the items discussed were the status of ratification/accession to the Rome Statute of the ICC in the Middle-East and Mediterranean region, and a review of developments on international justice. This was the third time the Working Group met. In February 2005, the Peoples' Assembly of Egypt hosted PGA regional conference on the protection of civilians and the Rule of Law. A *Parliamentarians' Roundtable Discussion on the ICC* was then held in Beirut, Lebanon, in May 2006.

### *Sustainable Development, Health and Population*

#### **Activities in South Asia:**

**14-15 January 2005**

**First Sub-regional Parliamentary Seminar on HIV/AIDS in South Asia, Islamabad, Pakistan**

Approximately 70 parliamentarians, including the Prime Minister of Pakistan, high-level Ministers and Chairs of Health and Women's Affairs Committees from their respective parliaments from all over the world engaged in heated discussions regarding the need to combat the pandemic worldwide. The seminar was the first public policy discussion on HIV/AIDS in Pakistan and it succeeded in generating attention towards the problem of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Pakistan and other countries of the region.

The seminar, hosted by PGA members Dr. Noor Jehan Panezai, MP (Pakistan) and Mr. Naveed Qamar, MP (Pakistan) in Islamabad, Pakistan and was organized jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNAIDS, Aga Khan University (AKU), and with support from the Australian, British, Canadian, and Swiss Governments as well as from UNFPA and the UN Foundation.

**26-27 January 2006**

**Sub-Regional Parliamentary Seminar on HIV/AIDS in South Asia, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The seminar received the full backing of both the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and the Leader of the Opposition. The united commitment of the Bangladeshi MPs to work together was a hopeful sign for improving the lives of people living with HIV & AIDS and increasing prevention efforts at all levels. This seminar demonstrated the highest level of commitment from the government and the legislators to put the issue of HIV/AIDS high in the agenda, above partisan politics.

Participants discussed the best practices for preventing HIV/AIDS, the need to reduce stigma surrounding the virus, and next steps for improving the care and treatment of people living with HIV. The seminar re-assessed the commitments made by legislators in the Islamabad Declaration of Action, the outcome document of PGA's January 2005 Sub-Regional Parliamentary Seminar on HIV/AIDS in South Asia.

**30-31 January 2006**

**Provincial Parliamentary Seminar on HIV/AIDS Policy in Sindh (Lahore), Pakistan**

PGA facilitated its first provincial parliamentary seminar on HIV and AIDS policy with over 160 participants. It was the first time in three years that members of the four Provincial Assemblies had met together and also the first time ever that national and provincial parliamentarians from all political parties across the left to right spectrum jointly discussed aligning provincial and national efforts to prevent the spread of HIV in Pakistan.

Beyond peer-to-peer exchanges, the panel discussions were designed to trigger immediate action by policy-makers to prepare bills and other legislation and allocate funds for the prevention of HIV & AIDS and to support the treatment, care, and anti-discrimination measures for People Living with HIV & AIDS (PLWHA).

**9-11 April 2007**

**Provincial Parliamentary Seminar on HIV/AIDS Policy in Peshawar (NWFP), Pakistan**

The third provincial seminar took place in Peshawar, the capital of the Northwest Frontier Province in April 2007. This seminar presented near-term results-based strategies and policies for the long-run to address both vulnerable and high-risk groups in the general population such as women, youth and migrant workers and gave an even greater role to the religious leadership in addressing HIV/AIDS. The agenda discussions about co-infections included Malaria, in addition to TB and Hepatitis and recognized the aggressive efforts put forth by the Health Ministry in the NWFP against these diseases.

Activities in Africa:

1998-2004

Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Program in Ghana, Senegal, Mali, Nigeria

In many respects, PGA's innovative JPO structure allowed for the accomplishment of many great successes throughout the course of the program. As a result of PGA's first-hand presence in the parliaments of Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal, parliamentary awareness was vastly improved around the critical population, human rights and sustainable development issues facing each country. Through focused workshops and information-sharing campaigns, parliamentary capacity and political will to address these issues was vastly increased. Further, as a result of the JPOs' work to bring NGOs and MPs together, government/community collaborations were fostered and networks were formed.

Many of these partnerships have long outlasted the duration of the JPO contract, and these networks continue to address the critical needs in their constituencies. Lastly, PGA's unique position as a multi-party NGO network of MPs has fostered institutional stability, accountability, legislative transparency and inter-agency coordination through bilateral and international exchange. While mobilizing political commitment around population issues, PGA has also played a significant role in the success of important democratic processes, such as elections and political party transition.

**24-25 February 2004**

**Parliamentary Workshop on Human Trafficking in West Africa, Abuja, Nigeria**

The workshop convened parliamentarians from West Africa to 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 provided participants with the information necessary to understand the roots of the problem and how to effectively legislate against human trafficking.

The seminar produced a parliamentary resolution committing participating parliamentarians to ratify and domesticate international conventions at the national level; establish program of assistance for women and children victims and prevention programs; provide financial and human resources through budgetary measures; sensitize the public and create public support; and promote international cooperation against trafficking.

*Peace & Democracy*

Activities in Africa:

**16-18 February 2002**

**Sub-Regional Parliamentary Seminar on Integration, Immigration and Naturalization, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire**

In response to the deteriorating situation in Côte d'Ivoire, PGA organized a *Sub-Regional Parliamentary Seminar on Immigration, Naturalization and Integration* in Côte d'Ivoire. The goals of this seminar were to bring together legislators from diverse social, political, linguistic and legal backgrounds, to share experiences and to work towards ultimately formulating an internationally acceptable code out of which parliamentarians in the sub-region may draw guidance as they review or enact legislation relevant to immigration, naturalization and integration.

The emphasis was placed on democratic dialogue to deter increased ethnic and political tensions. The exchange of dialogue by national policymakers, along with the willingness of the Parliament of Côte d'Ivoire to host the meeting, demonstrated the recognition that these concerns are critical to ensuring stability in the region.

**27-28 February 2002**

**Brahimi Series: Regional Seminar on Strengthening United Nations Peace Operations-  
International Parliamentary Input, Cairo, Egypt**

PGA held the second seminar in its series on parliamentary input in peace operations, in Cairo, Egypt on February 27-28, 2002. The seminar was successful as it ensured strong parliamentary support for the Report-based reforms to the development and structure of peace operations. The parliamentarians agreed to take additional efforts to educate their respective parliaments on the issues discussed at the conference. The briefing also provided comprehensive information on the current nature of peace operations to elected representatives from countries throughout the region and beyond.

**14-15 October 2004**

**Regional Seminar on Security Sector Reform, Kampala, Uganda**

The meeting provided legislators from Eastern, Central and Southern Africa with the opportunity to discuss the improvement of parliamentary processes addressing national security policy. Over 60 legislators participated in the seminar including the Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament, chairs of parliamentary budget, foreign affairs and defense committees and other concerned legislators from Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

**27 February 27 – 1 March 2006**

**Regional Parliamentary Seminar on Small Arms Conflict Prevention, and Transitional Democracy and Justice in Africa, Dakar, Senegal**

This unique and important regional event, held shortly after the UN Preparatory Committee meetings in January 2006 and in advance of the UN Review Conference was attended by prominent parliamentarians from over 40 African, European, North American and Asian countries, representatives from the World Bank, UNDP and UNOWA as well as representatives from civil society.

Activities in the Caucasus:

**October 2002-January 2002**

**Water Management Dialogues between Legislators from Armenia and Azerbaijan**

PGA began a series of dialogues in 2002 between Armenian and Azeri parliamentarians to address the link between conflict management and sustainable development through discussions on shared water resources. The two parliamentary delegations convened three times and agreed on a number of initiatives that will constitute the basis for a strategy to improve the cooperation and relations of the two countries. During their subsequent meetings in Johannesburg, South Africa (August 2002) and Vienna, Austria (October 2002) the delegations

developed a tentative water and environmental vision for the two countries, which includes the relation of the environmental problems to regional stability and development.

### *International Law and Human Rights*

#### Activities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA):

**9-10 February 2005**

#### **The Rule of Law and the Protection of Civilians: The Role of Legislators, Cairo, Egypt**

The conference was hosted by the People's Assembly of Egypt in cooperation with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs. The conference on the Rule of Law and the Protection of Civilians attracted over 80 participants, including 40 legislators from the parliaments of Arab States, Africa, Europe, and North America as well as judges, diplomats, leading experts on international law and human rights, and representatives of civil society and international organizations.

The focus was on strengthening national legal systems as a conflict prevention tool, as well as to establish or restore justice and the rule of law in post-conflict societies. As the conference progressed, issues that came to the forefront included, the importance of international humanitarian and human rights treaties, focusing in particular on the role of the International Criminal Court in ending impunity for gross violations of human rights. Most importantly, however, the strategy sessions generated considerable interest in the Court, leading to the creation of an informal working group on the ICC.

**19-22 May 2006**

#### **Parliamentarian Round-Table Discussion on the ICC in Lebanon, Bahrain, Jordan and Morocco and participation of a delegation of legislators to the Conference on the Accession of Lebanon to the Rome Statute of the ICC, Beirut, Lebanon**

PGA organized the Parliamentarian Round-Table in Lebanon where participants discussed accession to the Rome Statute in as well as the ICC processes in Bahrain, Morocco and Jordan. Participants to the Round Table included parliamentarians from Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, The Netherlands.

#### Activities in the Mediterranean:

**May 2-5, 2006**

#### **Visit of Legislators from Turkey to the International Criminal Court and other institutions in The Hague, the Netherlands**

PGA organized a successful delegation of high level MPs to visit the President, Prosecutor and Registrar of the ICC and other institutions in The Hague. The Delegation was comprised of 5 Parliamentarians – drawn from both Governing and Opposition Party legislators. Following the visit, a formal intervention/presentation in a plenary session of the Turkish Parliament was made strongly supporting Turkey's early accession to the ICC.

**October/November 2005**

#### **Briefings and Consultations on the ICC to the Parliament of Malaysia, Parliament of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur**

Following meetings and consultations that began at the *III Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the ICC & the Rule of Law* a PGA Member from Malaysia) organized various meetings with MPs of all major political parties (opposition and majority) to promote the ICC in the Malaysian Parliament.

