



Assemblée nationale
du Liban



Union
interparlementaire



Union
interparlementaire arabe



UNITAR

CONVOCAATION

1. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), are organising a regional seminar for Arab parliaments on *Capacity-building for parliaments on the sustainable management of water resources*, at the invitation of the National Assembly of Lebanon. This seminar will be held in:

**Beirut
on 29 and 30 November 2005**

2. The Seminar will take place at the National Assembly of Lebanon.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

3. Objectives

The overall objective of the seminar is to contribute to a better functioning of parliaments by raising awareness of members and staff on a sensitive issue of shared importance, i.e., water management. It will help enhance awareness in the targeted parliaments of international environmental policy, goals and legislation related to water conservation and management. Also, it should lead to more effective participation of parliamentarians in international negotiations and processes related to water (through the channels defined by their respective national laws) and ensure better representation of citizens in respect of water issues on the global environmental agenda.

The seminar will aim to:

- enable parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from the Arab countries to gain a deeper understanding of water management activities and existing international agreements related to the main topic;
 - provide parliamentarians and parliamentary staff with tools and resources for performing their core tasks of developing sound national legislation and overseeing the government's activities related to the main theme of the seminar;
 - strengthen capacities of relevant parliamentary standing committees and reinforce their role and input in the legislative process;
 - familiarize participants with the transposition process of existing international agreements and international development objectives into national legislation, and ensure that new international agreements negotiated by the executive branch are representative of and responsive to national priorities as identified by the legislature;
 - provide an opportunity for members of parliament to exchange views and experiences among themselves and with competent authorities and experts.
-

RESOURCE PERSONS

4. The IPU and UNITAR will identify four or five resource persons on the various themes of the seminar. These will include independent experts from Arab countries and other regions.

PARTICIPATION

5. The seminar is open to members of parliament and parliamentary staff from the following national parliaments:

Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Each parliament shall be entitled to send up to five participants per parliamentary chamber. In line with the IPU's stated objective to promote partnership between men and women in political life, participating parliaments should aim to include 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 parliamentary staff members, if possible, from the parliamentary committees dealing with the environment.

ORGANIZATION OF PROCEEDINGS

6. The programme will include both joint and parallel working sessions for members of parliament and staff. 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, participants wishing to take the floor on the subject will be asked to notify the chair in writing of the specific matters they wish to address so that they may be given the floor in an order that is both logical and likely to promote a real exchange of opinions.
- (b) Experience has shown that this kind of meeting is not suitable for the reading of prepared statements. 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) As indicated in the annexed provisional agenda, on 30 November 2005, a rapporteur will be called upon to sum up the work of the seminar at its concluding session, taking into account the results of both parallel sessions.
- (d) UNITAR and the IPU will prepare a report on the seminar proceedings in the months following the event.

7. The debates will take place in Arabic, English and French.

DOCUMENTS

8. Written texts of the presentations by the resource persons will be distributed to participants as they become available.
9. To the extent possible and for the information of participants, the Secretariat of the seminar will make available background documentation relevant to the issues under discussion.
10. Participants wishing to distribute to their colleagues relevant documentation will be required to provide it in sufficient quantities and will have the opportunity to place it on a table set aside for that purpose.

REGISTRATION and ACCOMODATION OF PARTICIPANTS

11. The enclosed note entitled General Information contains information on conditions for entering Lebanon and participants' stay in Beirut, as well as seminar registration and hotel registration forms.
12. Delegates will have to pay their own accommodation charges directly to the hotel. Participants who would prefer accommodation in other hotels are kindly requested to inform the organizers accordingly.
13. Confirmation of participation should be sent directly to:

Secretariat of UNITAR
Mrs. Berta Pesti
Palais des Nations
1203 Geneva 10 / Switzerland
email : berta.pesti@unitar.org
Fax : +41 22 917 89 93

Secretariat of the AIPU
Mrs. Leyla Nachawati
B.P. 4130 Damascus / Syrian
Arab Republic
e-mail: info@arab-ipu.org
Fax: +96 311 613 02 24

Secretariat of the IPU
Ms. Norah Babic
5, chemin du Pommier
case postale 330
CH1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva / Switzerland
email:
postbox@mail.ipu.org;
nb@mail.ipu.org
Fax: +41 22 919 41 60

For practical reasons, the confirmation of participation and the composition of your parliament's delegation should be sent by 18 November 2005