



unicef  guide to working with parliaments

unite for
children

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was developed by Stephen Hanmer, Specialist, Civil Society and Parliamentary Engagement, Programmes; and David Ponet, Consultant, Programmes; with support from Liza Barrie, Chief, Civil Society Partnerships; and under the overall guidance of Dr. Nicholas Alipui, Director of Programmes. Mark Young, Senior Health Specialist, provided direction on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 section in the appendix. Editorial support was provided by David Grosz and Karen Dukess as well as Catherine Rutgers. Certain sections of this guide have been excerpted/adapted from the 2004 IPU-UNESCO publication “A Guide to Parliamentary Practice: A Handbook.”

Earlier versions of the guide were shared for feedback with all UNICEF country, regional and headquarters offices. There are more than 70 examples from UNICEF offices included throughout the publication, which could not have been developed without their support and input. Particular thanks goes to the following country and regional offices: Angola, Azerbaijan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States Regional Office (CEE/CIS), China, Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), Ecuador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, The Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office (TACRO), Turkey, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Uruguay, Yemen and Zambia. Feedback was also provided by headquarters — in particular Programmes; Policy and Practice; Private Fundraising and Partnerships; and the Innocenti Research Centre — and UNICEF Brussels. UNICEF National Committees also provided input. Extensive feedback was provided by external partners, especially the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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November 2009

United Nations Children’s Fund
Programmes
3 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA
Website: www.unicef.org

Design: Suazion, Inc. (NY, suazion.com)
Production: Total Concept

foreword

We are 44,098 parliamentarians globally. Can't we do something individually and collectively that can change the lives of mothers and children? We have the power. We have the voice. Do we have the courage?

Dr. Gertrude Mongella
President, Pan-African Parliament



Parliaments throughout the world have the power to create real and lasting change for children. They can allocate resources from national budgets, establish strong policy directions, and debate, shape and enforce laws that protect children. They can ask tough questions, demand answers and hold governments, industries and civil society accountable. When parliaments speak on behalf of children, their voices resonate. Parliaments are uniquely positioned to send the message that the well-being of children is the responsibility not just of people who work with children, but of all society.

Parliament is the central institution through which the will of the people is expressed, laws are passed and government is held accountable. It is essential that UNICEF engage

national parliaments to achieve sustainable results for children, whether related to education, health, protection, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, or water and sanitation.

Parliamentary work is a relatively new yet rapidly expanding area of focus for UNICEF. Until recently, UNICEF, along with other UN bodies and international organizations, worked almost exclusively with representatives of the executive branch of government and government ministries.

On a global level, UNICEF works with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the international organization of parliaments, to develop guidance for national parliaments. UNICEF and the IPU publish joint handbooks and organize regional workshops for parliamentarians on key children's rights issues, such as violence against children, juvenile justice, and child and adolescent participation. The majority of UNICEF's parliamentary engagement is at the country level, where UNICEF supports parliaments in their law-making, oversight, budgeting and representation capacities to promote the rights of children. UNICEF's parliamentary activities span diverse geographical, political and social contexts on all key children's rights issues.

Effective parliamentary engagement is a long-term process that needs to be integrated into existing programming. UNICEF staff need to be aware of the role and working methods of parliament, communicate effectively and identify entry points for cooperation, and understand how to navigate complex political environments in order to mobilize broad-based political support. Parliaments, in turn, need to be aware of the many benefits of partnering with UNICEF.

This guide serves as an introduction to parliamentary practice and provides key resources for effective parliamentary engagement. It is designed to ensure that parliamentary support is integrated within country programming and that children's rights remain a top priority within national development processes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Alipui', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Nicholas Alipui
Director of Programmes
UNICEF

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executive summary

This guide serves as an introduction to parliamentary practice and provides examples of how UNICEF has successfully engaged parliaments to promote the rights of children. The guide also provides a list of resources for further information on parliamentary engagement as well as an appendix that includes a focus on parliamentary support for achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 and parliamentary engagement by UNICEF National Committees.

The guide is divided into three main sections. The first, “Introduction to Parliamentary Practice,” provides an overview of the four major parliamentary functions (law-making, oversight, budgeting and representation), and explains their relevance to UNICEF’s mandate. The second section, “Framework for Parliamentary Engagement,” outlines key challenges and strategies for engagement with parliaments. This section features guideposts for parliamentary engagement that include the importance of understanding legislative and political structures and contexts, the various potential entry points available to UNICEF staff, and suggestions for how UNICEF can leverage its comparative advantages—non-partisanship, technical and field expertise, and convening power.

The third section of this guide, “Key Resources,” provides further information on parliaments and their involvement with issues pertinent to children’s rights (e.g., juvenile justice, child marriage, HIV/AIDS). Included here are an annotated bibliography of useful publications,

hyperlinks to the websites of national parliaments and key parliamentary actors, and an overview of UNICEF's partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNDP's parliamentary development work.

The appendix contains information on child survival and maternal health — MDGs 4 and 5 — and provides recommendations and strategies for how UNICEF can help mobilize parliamentarians to address these issues with respect to each of the four major parliamentary functions noted above. It also includes a section on parliamentary engagement by UNICEF National Committees.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT BY CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS (CSP)

Civil Society Partnerships, Programmes, serves as UNICEF's focal point on parliamentary engagement. CSP provides guidance and support at Country, Regional and Headquarters levels (with a specific focus on country-level support). A main goal of CSP is to bring together key actors within UNICEF (e.g., country and regional offices, Programmes, Policy and Practice, Innocenti Research Centre, and Private Fundraising and Partnerships) working on parliamentary-related issues to share expertise and experience. The aim is also to link UNICEF to parliamentary organizations and relevant UN and multilateral bodies.

Although UNICEF's parliamentary-related work falls within CSP, parliaments are not considered civil society. Parliaments are part of government and, as such, parliamentary-related work within CSP is kept separate from other civil society-related initiatives. However, where relevant, connections are made between parliaments and civil society.

For more information or to share relevant experiences, please contact Stephen Hanmer (Specialist, Civil Society and Parliamentary Engagement), the parliamentary focal point within CSP at shanmer@unicef.org or (+1-212) 326-7488.

A. introduction to parliamentary practice

I. INTRODUCTION TO PARLIAMENT

a) What is the division of power in a State?¹

Traditionally, power in a State is exercised by three separate branches that are and should be independent of one another. This division of powers is intended to curb the excesses that could occur if all powers were concentrated in the hands of a single individual or institution.

- **Legislative power** is exercised by a parliament, a deliberative body that debates and shapes policy, adopts and formulates laws, provides resources to the executive for the implementation of this legislation and monitors its implementation.
- **Executive power** is exercised by a Head of State with the assistance of a government responsible for formulating and implementing policies.
- **Judicial power** is exercised by the courts, which are responsible for ensuring that the laws are implemented properly and that any misconduct is punished appropriately.

¹ Parts of this section have been excerpted/adapted from the 2004 IPU-UNESCO publication “A Guide to Parliamentary Practice: A Handbook.”

b) What is a parliament?²

A **parliament** is a representative body of individuals to whom the people have entrusted the responsibility of laying down the legal framework within which society will be governed. A parliament is also tasked with ensuring that these legal conditions are implemented in a responsible manner by the executive branch.

c) How are parliaments formed?

Most parliaments are assembled through regular elections. In some countries, especially those that have a bicameral system (in which parliament is divided into two legislative chambers), membership in one of the chambers may be appointed. Most parliaments contain multiple political parties; this means that there is, on the one hand, a party or group of parties that constitutes the governing majority and supports the government and, on the other hand, a party or group of parties that constitutes the opposition.

d) How are parliaments structured?

Parliaments usually have a two-tier management structure:

- 1) **Political** — This structure, usually representative of the political configuration of parliament and presided over by a speaker, president or chairperson, is responsible for making decisions regarding political issues before parliament. Parliaments perform their work mainly through committees (standing, select, portfolio) that are entrusted with responsibility for a specific policy sector. The membership of each committee usually reflects the political configuration of the parliament.
- 2) **Administrative** — This structure is typically non-partisan and is charged with providing logistical support for the political decision-making process of parliament. A secretariat, headed by a Secretary General/Clerk, works

under the authority of the speaker and the political leadership, providing administrative and other support services to parliamentarians. The secretariat is usually staffed by persons independent of the political authorities and is required to provide services to all Members of Parliament (MPs) irrespective of their political affiliations.

e) What are the functions of parliaments?

As the principal representative institution in a state, parliament is responsible for representing the interests of all sectors of society, articulating these interests into relevant policies and ensuring

In acknowledgement of the centrality of parliament's role, the **Accra Declaration of 2008** — which came out of the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and contains signatories from more than 100 donor and developing countries as well as multilateral institutions — notes the “critical role and responsibility of parliaments in ensuring country ownership of development processes” and mandates that “developing country governments will work more closely with parliaments” to effectively prepare, implement and monitor national development policies and plans.³



2 The term “parliament” is here used generically to encompass national parliaments, national assemblies, senates, other elected legislative chambers, provincial and state assemblies, transitional national councils and constituent assemblies. Parliament comes under different appellations in different countries. For example, in the United States, parliament is known as the Congress, in Japan the Diet, in Cameroon the National Assembly, in China the National People's Congress, and in Israel the Knesset. In some countries, particularly those with a federal structure, there is a national parliament as well as sub-national parliaments.

3 Accra Agenda for Action, 2008. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ACCRAEXT/Resources/4700790-1217425866038/ACCRA_4_SEPTMBER_FINAL_16h00.pdf.

that these policies are implemented efficiently. Parliaments typically accept, amend or reject all laws; insert the voices of constituents into parliamentary discussion and debate; monitor budgets and approve taxation policies; and hold the executive branch accountable by making sure it adheres to its policies, commitments and laws in a manner that serves the public interest.

f) What are the basic requirements of a democratic parliament?

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has identified five key principles that need to be present in a democratic parliament:⁴

- 1) **Representation** — A democratic parliament should be socially and politically representative of the diversity of the people and ensure equal protections and opportunities for all its constituents.
- 2) **Transparency** — A democratic parliament should conduct its business transparently and be accessible and open to the public.
- 3) **Accessibility** — A democratic parliament should engage the public and civil society.

4) **Accountability** — A democratic parliament should be accountable to its constituents for its performance in office and the integrity of its conduct.

5) **Effectiveness** — A democratic parliament should carry out its legislative and oversight roles effectively, in accordance with democratic values and in a manner that reflects the needs of the whole population (at local and national levels).

g) What is the role of parliaments to promote the rights of children?⁵

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) understands children's rights as an aspect of human rights, thereby transforming children from passive subjects of rights to active agents of rights. The Convention establishes a mutual relationship between rights holders (children) and dutybearers (parliamentarians) and accordingly recognizes parliament's role as protector of children's rights. Thus, parliamentarians have a primary obligation to support and uphold children's rights and are accountable both to their citizens, including children, and to international norms, treaties and standards such as the CRC.



4 Inter-Parliamentary Union 2006, "Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: A Guide to Good Practice."

5 For more information on rights-based approaches to policymaking, please contact UNICEF's Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement (GRACE), within Policy and Practice.

II. KEY FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY PARLIAMENT AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO PROMOTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Parliaments perform four main functions that have relevance to the promotion of children's rights. While this guide treats these functions as separate and discrete, they often are interconnected, as can be seen in the many case studies of UNICEF's parliamentary engagement that are interspersed throughout the guide. The four functions are:

- a) **Law-making** —adopting laws that govern society in a structured manner.
- b) **Oversight** — monitoring government performance and spending to ensure that the executive branch performs in a responsible and accountable manner.
- c) **Budgeting** — approving and allocating the revenue that the executive branch requires to implement its policies; overseeing and monitoring government spending to make sure expenditures are used properly.
- d) **Representation** — representing the interests of the people by acting as opinion leaders to influence local communities and voicing constituent interests in parliamentary chambers.



a) Law-making⁶

In most countries the bulk of laws are initiated by the executive branch of government. The role of parliament in such countries is to scrutinize draft laws and ensure that they are consistent with international standards and requirements for the well-being of the people. Most constitutions give Parliament the right to reject and/or amend draft laws that do not meet these requirements.

What can parliaments and parliamentarians do to promote the rights of children?

- **Ratify international instruments.** While responsibility for the negotiation and adoption of international instruments lies with the executive branch, it often falls to parliaments to ratify these international agreements (in some countries ratification is carried out by the

government but only after parliament has conferred the authority to do so). Members of Parliament (MPs) can therefore play an important role in the ratification of international treaties relevant to children's rights. In countries where MPs ratify instruments, MPs can bring about early ratification and speedy implementation of these instruments; in countries where MPs do not ratify, they can seek information from the executive on unratified treaties and attempt to prompt executive action.

- **Harmonize national laws with international legislation/instruments/commitments.** After ratification of international instruments, provisions have to be incorporated into national law for implementation. In some cases, new laws have to be adopted; in others, existing laws need to be reviewed and amended.

EXAMPLES OF HARMONIZING NATIONAL LAWS WITH THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)

Uruguay Congress Revises Child Code: UNICEF played a critical role in Uruguay's adoption of a revised child code. UNICEF marshalled information on the CRC, underscored areas of non-compliance, convened meetings with parliamentarians, spearheaded a communication campaign and brought the opinions of well-known figures to bear in the successful campaign to revise the code.

Nigeria Passes Domestic Version of the CRC: UNICEF partnered with Nigeria's Senate and House Committee on Women and Children's Affairs in the drafting and passage of the Child Rights Act, a domestic version of the CRC. Prior to UNICEF's involvement, the bill had failed to pass three times. In order to make sure that it did not fail a fourth time, UNICEF Nigeria helped draft the bill, prepared analytical information for Congress, participated in public hearings, spurred media engagement and solicited public input through advocacy meetings at the national and sub-national levels.

South Africa Adopts Two Bills Promoting Children's Rights: The first comprehensive post-apartheid legislation pertaining to children's rights was passed by the South African Parliament in 2008, following almost 12 years of intensive debate, during which time UNICEF provided constant financial and technical support. The new bills, the Children's Act and the Child Justice Bill, provide a framework for child protection and for fulfilling the post-apartheid promise of social justice for children. The bills acknowledge children's rights as defined in section 28 of the Constitution, in particular the rights to social services; family, parental or appropriate alternative care; and protection from maltreatment, neglect and abuse. Earlier versions of the bills had previously stalled, but a concerted push got them through the legislative process in 2008.

Brazil is First Country to Adopt All CRC Principles: Following a mobilization that was aided by UNICEF and included representatives from various social movements, civil society organizations and legal groups in Brazil, more than 1 million signatures were collected (including from children and adolescents) and the national Congress adopted the Child and Adolescent National Statute.



6 "Law-making" is often referred to as "legislation." This guide will use the term "law-making" to ensure clarity, given that legislation can also refer to the totality of functions performed by parliament. Parts of this section have been excerpted/edited from the 2004 IPU-UNESCO publication "A Guide to Parliamentary Practice: A Handbook."

EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION ON NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION

UNICEF and Zambian Parliamentarians Collaborate on Nation Plan of Action: In 2004 Zambia was part of a 17-country, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-UNICEF National Plan of Action meeting intended to assess the situation of orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC). Zambia sent a parliamentary delegation consisting of three committees to this meeting, and afterwards, UNICEF provided a one-week training course, which included field visits for 18 MPs so that they could see, first-hand, local efforts on community mobilization for OVC care. The outcome was enhanced attention to the concerns of orphans and other vulnerable children, which Zambia built upon to contribute to the development of a National Plan of Action for Children with a focus on vulnerable children.

UNICEF Sudan Helps Develop WASH Policy: UNICEF has been supporting the development of a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) policy for Northern Sudan through a comprehensive participatory approach. A draft policy document was prepared in 2008, and four regional workshops were held with state-level ministers, parliamentarians and senior government officials from all relevant ministries. These workshops created a high level of awareness among parliamentarians that will help in the implementation of national and state-level WASH policies. A national workshop to finalize the document was planned for late 2009. Once finalized, the document will be submitted to the Legislative Council at the national level for its endorsement.

Responsibility for ensuring that this happens lies squarely with the parliament.

- **Assist in drawing up national plans of action.** Parliamentarians maintain close contact with their constituents and are fully aware of the problems and issues facing them. By participating in the preparation of action plans meant to fulfil the country's obligations under international and national law, parliamentarians can ensure that these plans are adequately resourced and reflect the needs and concerns of the people.
- **Assist in fulfilling national reporting obligations.** Many international instruments require each nation to submit periodic reports on actions taken to implement the instrument. MPs can participate in preparing such reports, examine recommendations made by the relevant UN treaty bodies and ensure adequate follow-up.
- **Help draft child-friendly legislation and/or amendments to legislation; concurrently, engage the media and members of civil society to build a broad coalition of support.**

EXAMPLES OF DRAFTING AND ADVOCACY SUPPORT FOR LAW-MAKING

Kyrgyzstan Adopts Law on Breastfeeding and Marketing of Milk Substitutes: This law was approved by Parliament and signed by the Kyrgyz President in 2008. UNICEF was deeply involved in drafting the law; promoting and maintaining close ties with its earliest supporters in Parliament; providing technical expertise; and supplying Members of Parliament and other stakeholders with relevant evidence-based information. UNICEF also provided assistance for public hearings on a draft of the law in the capital of Bishkek and at provincial levels. During the public debate, national experts, well-known academicians, community leaders, MPs and the media all played significant roles. Participants in this debate benefited from a presentation on a marketing strategy for breast milk substitutes in Kyrgyzstan, funded in part by UNICEF. Throughout the process, UNICEF worked with the media, resulting in more than 120 published or aired stories in Kyrgyzstan between April 2008, when the aggressive public campaign commenced, and December 2008.



UNICEF Assists with Revision of Chinese Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities: In order to align Chinese national legislation with international standards on disabilities, the People's Republic of China started a process in 2006 to revise the Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities (originally formulated in 1990). In close collaboration with the China Disabled Persons Federation, UNICEF conducted an in-depth analysis of Chinese laws related to children with disabilities, identifying key gaps between the existing Chinese legal framework and new international standards, and formulating key recommendations to revise the existing law. UNICEF's strong advocacy and technical support helped China's National People's Congress include new provisions on children with disabilities in the revised law, which was put into effect in 2008.

EXAMPLES OF DRAFTING AND ADVOCACY SUPPORT FOR LAW-MAKING

UNICEF Works with Republic of Congo to Establish Legal Framework for Child Protection: The adoption of a legal framework for child protection in the Republic of Congo came after a special parliamentary session for children in 2009, which was also attended by the Minister of Health, Social Affairs and Family, representatives of the Children’s Parliament, UN agencies, diplomatic corps and civil society. This session allowed the Deputies and Senators to analyse the situation of child protection and the barriers to the realization of children’s rights — particularly through the publication and dissemination of the initial report and recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF was part of a process that brought together parliamentarians and government officials and established partnerships with civil society to produce sufficient pressure to get this framework passed.

UNICEF Peru Helps Revise Children’s Code: In 2007, pursuant to persistent advocacy efforts by UNICEF, the minimum age for penal responsibility was raised in Peru’s new Children’s Code.

UNICEF Philippines Advocates for Child Justice and Welfare Law: After years of intensive advocacy campaigns supported by UNICEF and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Philippine Congress passed the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006. The new law adopts the principle of rehabilitative justice; is consistent with the UN standards on juvenile justice; prohibits the detention of children in jails; enumerates the rights of children in conflict with the law; raises the age of criminal responsibility from 9 to 15; provides for juvenile delinquency prevention programmes at the local level; introduces community-based programmes for children who commit non-serious offences; provides for alternative disposition measures for children who commit serious offences; strengthens rehabilitation, reintegration and aftercare programmes; creates the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council; and provides for the retroactive application of the beneficial provisions of the law.



b) Oversight⁷

Parliament is responsible for holding the executive branch to account by scrutinizing its work, ensuring that it does not infringe on the rights of citizens or waste state resources, and ensuring that it acts in accordance with the public interest. Parliament performs this oversight role in a number of ways: receiving regular reports from the executive on its

EXAMPLE OF OMBUDSPERSON

Mauritius Children’s Ombudsperson Works with Parliamentarians:⁸ The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children in Mauritius, established in 2003, has been a strong advocate for preventing violence against children. The ombudsperson’s annual reports to Parliament have helped create awareness of the issue of violence against children and other violations of children’s rights, allowing MPs to call attention to these issues through parliamentary questions, motions and debate. The ombudsperson has advocated for stronger legislation to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation and child trafficking and is involved in discussions with the Ministry of Education on ending corporal punishment in schools. In 2004, the ombudsperson launched a national campaign on preventing violence against children; he involved members of the national assembly and garnered pledges by the Prime Minister, other government ministers and the opposition leader to do their utmost to prevent violence against children.

activities, putting questions to members of the government, setting up special commissions, organizing field visits to enquire into executive conduct and propose remedial action, and auditing national accounts.

What can parliaments and parliamentarians do to help promote the rights of children?

- **Ensure compliance by the executive branch with international standards.** Parliaments and their members can bring pressure to bear on the executive branch to make sure that its actions comply with the State’s obligations under international law.
- **Push for the establishment of a parliamentary commissioner or ombudsperson.** An ombudsperson (or ombud) is the head of a constitutional or statutory public institution that handles complaints from the public regarding the decisions, actions or omissions of the public administration. Ombuds generally report findings to parliament and are appointed by the chamber. Some countries have ombuds that focus exclusively on children’s rights.⁹
- **Participate in the audit and/or assessment of the executive branch’s performance in areas of relevance to children,** such as the health sector. Parliaments can thereby promote policy reforms favourable to these sectors.

EXAMPLES OF INCREASING SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE PERFORMANCE

Nigeria Parliamentarians Seek Greater Oversight Tools: The Nigerian Congress’s MDG Committee is tasked with overseeing the Government’s MDG office. In response to a request for assistance in exercising oversight, UNICEF Nigeria is working with the Chair of the committee to provide training on results-based evaluation so that members can monitor the use of MDG and debt-relief funds with respect to children’s issues.

UNICEF Jordan Helps Parliamentarians with Oversight Role: UNICEF’s partnership with the Jordanian Parliament dates back to 2004, with a conference jointly organized by the Jordan Country Office, UNICEF’s regional office, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) on child protection. The conference took place in Amman, where the UNICEF Jordan Country Office made a presentation and introduced a booklet on the role of parliamentarians in child protection and called for the establishment of a child rights monitoring unit within Parliament. Following the conference, UNICEF conducted several studies and worked through the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) to identify gaps in the existing law and suggest new laws. The joint work with NCFA contributed to the establishment of the Family Committee in the Senate and the Bureau for Social Institutions in the Lower House. Since 2004, several laws have been amended to further protect children from violence.

7 Parts of this section have been excerpted/adapted from the 2004 IPU-UNESCO publication “A Guide to Parliamentary Practice: A Handbook.”

8 Example excerpted from 2004 IPU-UNICEF publication “Child Protection: A Handbook for Parliamentarians.”

9 UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre leads UNICEF’s work on ombuds to advance children’s rights. For more information, see p. 33 of this guide as well as http://www.unicef-irc.org/knowledge_pages/resource_pages/ombuds/

- **Promote parliamentary debate on issues of relevance to children.** MPs can use their constitutional powers to question members of the executive branch on issues of relevance to the well-being of children and urge necessary action to correct deficiencies.
- **Encourage relevant parliamentary committees to conduct on-site enquiries and to summon government officials, civil society stakeholders and other relevant parties to appear before them.**
- **Establish or support a children’s committee or caucus.** Such parliamentary bodies can be an effective way to mainstream children’s rights. A children’s rights committee is a specialized committee that examines the impact of all policies, laws and budgets on children’s rights. Rather than focusing on a particular policy area or on a single government department, a committee devoted to children’s rights can cut across all policies, budgets and legislation and scrutinize them from a children’s

EXAMPLE OF PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY

Brazilian MPs Act to End Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Collaboration between Brazil’s Parliamentary Group for Children and civil society was the starting point in 2003 for a parliamentary enquiry into the commercial sexual exploitation of children. During the course of the investigation, the commission received more than 800 complaints, visited 22 of the 27 Brazilian states, heard from 280 people and analysed nearly 1,000 documents. The investigation’s final report called for the indictment of more than 200 people, made public policy recommendations and proposed five new bills to bolster existing national legislation. A follow-up commission has been established and plans to monitor implementation of the recommendations through annual progress reports. Several of the proposed bills were ultimately adopted, and the parliamentary group has since taken part in national campaigns to raise public awareness of commercial sexual exploitation and violence against children.¹⁰

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN ASSESSING A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE’S OVERSIGHT ROLE¹¹

1. What is the name of the parliamentary committee dealing with the status of children?
2. Which chamber does the committee relate to? A single chamber or lower chamber? The upper chamber? Or both chambers?
5. When and how was the committee created? Was it established by a formal decision of parliament, and does it deal with the status of children as its exclusive subject or does it cover the status of children among other issues or as part of an ad hoc arrangement? If no formal decision was rendered by parliament, is it an informal oversight body?
6. What is the mandate of the committee with respect to the status of children? Does it supervise compliance with relevant national and international standards? Prepare legislative proposals? Examine policies and budgets? Advise the government? Examine individual complaints? Disseminate information and discuss the status of children at home and abroad?
7. What is the composition of the committee? How many members are there? How are they selected?
8. What are the working methods of the committee? How are items placed on the agenda? Are proceedings public? Can the committee summon government officials and organize on-site enquiries? Does the committee issue public reports?
10. What is the relationship with other parliamentary bodies (in particular with respect to reporting and information-sharing)?
11. What is the relationship with external bodies including government, the ombudsman, NGOs and others?
12. How does the committee liaise and work with children? Are there mechanisms for including children in its work?
13. What does the committee do to mainstream children’s rights in the work of parliament as a whole?
14. How does the committee communicate its views and interact with the public outside parliament? Does it partner with the media?

10 Excerpted from 2007 IPU-UNICEF publication “Eliminating Violence against Children.”

11 Adapted/excerpted from the IPU’s “Questionnaire on Parliamentary Bodies Dealing with the Status of Women and Gender Equality.”

EXAMPLES OF CHILDREN'S CAUCUS/COMMITTEE

Zambian Parliament Forms Parliamentary Caucus on Children: Following the 2008 conference, "Countdown to 2015: Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival," parliamentarians and UNICEF collaborated in the establishment of the Zambian Parliamentary Caucus of Children. Open to all parliamentarians, the Caucus aims to influence relevant national institutions to place issues related to children, particularly orphans and other vulnerable children, at the top of the government's political and development agenda. The Caucus advocates for and supports initiatives such as the Countdown Conference, which is aimed at reducing child mortality and improving maternal health (MDGs 4 and 5). The Caucus also serves as a forum to strengthen the capacity of Zambia's MPs on issues of children's rights at both national and constituency levels. The Caucus has formed a 10-person working group to develop a work plan to implement its goals.



UNICEF Works with Turkish Parliament to Create a Children's Rights Monitoring Committee: UNICEF Turkey has worked with MPs and the Speaker of Parliament to establish a Children's Rights Committee that elevated children's rights and health issues to the top of the parliamentary agenda. The Committee, formed in 2009, will ensure that Parliament responds effectively to the rights of children. It will serve as the central resource/mechanism for children's issues within Parliament and connect the various parliamentary commissions, committees and individual parliamentarians focusing on children's issues to each other. It will create a bridge between Parliament and key external actors (e.g., children, adolescents and civil society) and review all pertinent legislation and budgets.

Parliamentary Committee for Children in Mauritania: UNICEF Mauritania helped create a parliamentary committee for children that was instrumental in enacting legislation and harmonizing domestic law with the CRC. UNICEF trained parliamentarians in the human rights-based approach and advocated for the adoption of child-friendly legislation and the establishment of a juvenile court. As part of the roll-out, a special programme called "Parliamentary Days" was organized in each of the country's 13 regions; MPs used the occasion to meet with and sensitize their constituencies to the CRC components. In addition, the parliamentary committee was instrumental in organizing a formal dialogue between the recently created Children's Parliament and relevant government ministers and in "coaching" the young parliamentarians.

rights perspective. A caucus or other informal grouping can also do this, but lacks formal committee powers such as the ability to compel government testimony and/or submission

to enquiries. An advantage of a caucus or other informal grouping, however, is that membership is open to all legislators, which can enhance its cross-cutting reach.

c) Budgeting¹²

In most countries, the national budget must be approved by the parliament. While UNICEF's role in the budget process will vary from country to country, it usually will involve four common areas of work: conducting baseline analysis of the budget and its process; making the process more transparent and participatory; influencing budget allocations in favour of children; and improving implementation through the creation of monitoring and oversight mechanisms to ensure that all expenditures are as effective as possible.¹³ In order for parliament to exercise its budgetary function effectively, it needs the technical capacity to scrutinize budgets; there also must be sufficient time and opportunity for MPs to bring "pre-budget" contributions to the process.

What can parliaments and parliamentarians do to promote the rights of children?

- **Probe and monitor national budgets from a children's rights perspective and pressure the executive branch to ensure that substantial resources are allocated to sectors of relevance to children.** By exercising its budgetary oversight powers and bringing transparency to the process, parliament can bring greater accountability and help reallocate funds within the overall budget. In addition, some parliaments have the right to propose amendments to the draft national budget during the budgeting process. MPs can thus make sure that adequate resources are allocated to sectors of relevance to children.
- **Build independent research capacity to analyse information presented by government.** By levelling the information asymmetry that often characterizes parliament-executive relations, MPs can ensure that they have the technical capacity necessary to play an effective role in the budget process.

- **Advocate for increased budget allocation for sectors and institutions providing services for children.** These could include organizations involved in social welfare, social protection in post-conflict situations, education and health.
- **Monitor the implementation of the budget.** In many developing and transitional countries, budget implementation diverges significantly from approved budgets, leading to ineffective and inefficient expenditure. Parliamentary efforts should focus on securing timely information so MPs can increase their budgetary oversight role.

EXAMPLES OF ALLOCATIONS TO CHILD-RELEVANT SECTORS

Chile's Child-Friendly Budget: In Chile, Congress considered a modification of the budget law that would ensure a 24 percent increase in allocations to support institutions devoted to child protection, as well as a constitutional amendment that would extend compulsory free education to 12 years.¹⁴

Ecuador Increases Funding for Children: In 1999, UNICEF

Ecuador became involved in reviewing and monitoring the budget to increase the focus on areas such as education, health and social investments that help enforce the rights of children. A key feature of this initiative was a public communication strategy that raised awareness of the budget debate and facilitated social mobilization around the issue. In order to advocate for increase in spending for children, UNICEF deployed an easy-to-understand analysis of the budget; using a series of simple schemes and concrete proposals, UNICEF succeeded in influencing the National Congress to dedicate more funds to children's services and issues.



12 Parts of this section have been excerpted/adapted from the 2004 IPU-UNESCO publication "A Guide to Parliamentary Practice: A Handbook." Policy and Practice leads UNICEF's Social Budgeting work. For more information, see p. 33 of this guide or go to social budgeting Intranet site: <http://intranet.unicef.org/dpp/PolicyAdvocacy.nsf/Site%20Pages/Page030202>

13 This passage was adapted from UNICEF's "Budgeting for Children's Rights" Intranet site, <http://intranet.unicef.org/dpp/PolicyAdvocacy.nsf/Site%20Pages/Page030202>

14 This example comes from the 2004 UNICEF-IPU publication, "Child Protection: A Handbook for Parliamentarians."

EXAMPLES OF BUDGET PROBE



UNICEF Azerbaijan Works with MPs to Improve Allocations for Children's Programmes: A conference on "Budget Policies and Investments for Children" was organized at the Azerbaijani Parliament within the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UNICEF. The conference, chaired by the Deputy Speaker, represented an important first step in involving the Azerbaijani legislature in monitoring budgetary allocations for children.

UNICEF Mozambique Develops and Shares Budget Briefs with MPs: A series of Budget Briefs developed by UNICEF and the Community Development Foundation (FDC) provided a comprehensive analysis of how the allocation of public resources in the 2009 State Budget Proposal will affect the realization of children's rights. The Briefs, which were shared with

parliamentarians and disseminated through the media raised the following key issues: (i) there are inequitable budget allocations to the most disadvantaged provinces in terms of child development, with the poorest provinces receiving proportionally fewer resources per capita; (ii) there is a continued high level of aid dependency, particularly in the key sectors related to child development; and (iii) there is an urgent need to increase the budget allocation to programmes dedicated to the reduction of childhood poverty, particularly among the most vulnerable children.

UNICEF China Works towards Increased Budgeting for Children: UNICEF China has contributed to initiatives led by the Budget Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress and the Ministry of Finance on budget transparency, fiscal risk management and social budgeting. UNICEF's support played a role in the promulgation of a 2008 government circular to enhance budget disclosure and transparency in the fiscal reporting to the National People's Congress. Accordingly, the 2009 National Budget Report provides details on government spending in key social sectors and represents a step towards greater budget transparency. Overall, UNICEF's strategic partnership with the Ministry of Finance and engagement with the National People's Congress Budget Affairs Committee has facilitated higher spending on essential social services, better managing of fiscal risks and opening the budget process to increased parliamentary oversight and citizen participation.

UNICEF Morocco Helps Sensitize MPs to Budget's Impact on Children: On the occasion of the celebration of Morocco's National Day of Children in 2009, UNICEF presented studies on public budgets and their impact on children to a high-level forum that included Members of Parliament. UNICEF focused its presentation on the effects of transfers on children and poverty, and aims to follow up these efforts in 2010 with the establishment of a network of parliamentarians dedicated to children's rights. UNICEF plans to use the new network to focus MPs on the relationship between budgets and children's issues.

d) Representation¹⁵

A body of elected representatives hailing from multiple parties and/or various districts, parliament is closely tied to its constituents and tasked with representing the multiple interests of a diverse citizenry. The relationship between parliamentarians and their districts or constituencies means that MPs

are uniquely positioned to advocate on behalf of their constituents, including children, and to enjoy a special kind of legitimacy when professing their views. Constituents, in turn, can interact directly with their district or party representatives and make their concerns known. MPs are thus both the people's representative to the parliament and parliament's representative to the people.

EXAMPLES OF CHILD-FRIENDLY ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

UNICEF Kenya Launches Campaign for Children in Context of Parliamentary Campaign: UNICEF led the “Look Out for Leaders Who Look Out for Children” campaign to collect signatures from parliamentary candidates who pledged to invest in children's issues if elected to Parliament in the December 2007 elections. The UNICEF campaign outlined three key action areas for candidate signatories: child survival, quality education and social protection for children. The campaign also provided a framework for the systematic promotion of favourable policies and budget allocation for children throughout the next Parliament. To create awareness of the campaign, UNICEF relied on diverse channels: print and electronic media, billboards, T-shirts, leaflets and a children's parade in the Kenyan capital. A list of the signatory candidates was published in national newspapers alongside a call to Kenyans to ensure that their preferred candidate was a leader who “Looks Out For Children.” Ultimately, 562 candidates signed onto the campaign; of those, 100 were elected to Parliament, almost half of the body's 222 members. UNICEF Kenya had planned to follow up the campaign with the publication of an “Annual Leadership for Children Report,” which would track key indicators in social policy, including overall budget allocations to social service ministries, specific expenditures made by these ministries and key parliamentary votes on matters that affect children; unfortunately, post-election violence upended these plans (however, follow-up meetings with the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly have been held).

UNICEF Malawi Urges Candidates for Parliament to Sign Up for a “Call for Action:” UNICEF used Malawi's general elections in 2009 as an occasion to get candidates to sign the “Call for Action” — a set of child-centred “actions” that the signatories pledged to fulfil once elected to office. These actions committed candidates to properly funding areas that benefit children (such as education, health and protection) and called on candidates to make sure that their constituents availed themselves of health centres to reduce child illness and that schools would be adequately staffed (including with enough female teachers to serve as role models for young girls) and have safe water, hygiene and sanitation facilities.

National Brazilian Campaign for Children's Rights: In celebration of the 18th anniversary of Brazil's Children and Adolescent Rights Statute in 2008, a countrywide campaign was launched to get the national Congress as well as candidates running for election to the State Legislative Houses and Local Municipal Councils to commit to the approval and implementation of 18 pending projects that would help guarantee rights for children and adolescents. Examples of these projects include: expanding maternity and paternity leave to six months and one month, respectively; strengthening the definition of sexual exploitation in the current national legislation; regulating the application of remedial measures for adolescents in conflict with the law; instituting the rights of children to give special testimony on crimes of sexual abuse; establishing a national programme to protect adolescents who have been threatened with death; and preventing private businesses that exploit child labour directly or in their production chains from establishing contracts in Brazil.



15 This section includes edited excerpts from the 2004 IPU-UNESCO publication “A Guide to Parliamentary Practice: A Handbook,” and the 2007 Draft “UNDP Parliamentary Practice Note.” UNICEF's Civil Society Partnerships (CSP) and Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) are partnering with the Inter-Parliamentary Union to develop guidance on effective child and adolescent participation within parliamentary processes.

EXAMPLES OF CHILD PARTICIPATION AND ENHANCED REPRESENTATION

UNICEF Nepal Supports Ongoing Child Participation in the Constitution-Making Process: Prior to Nepal's national elections in 2008, UNICEF collaborated with a network of children's rights organizations on extensive national and district-level consultations, including a nationwide "girl-child" initiative. Recommendations from the child participants laid the foundations for an expert submission on children's rights in the new constitution and advocacy aimed to reach Constituent Assembly members, media and political parties. UNICEF and its partners also developed a booklet on the constitution-making process and how children can actively participate in it. When members of the Constituent Assembly held civil society consultations in their districts, several youth clubs and children participated in the consultations and presented their thoughts and concerns on the new constitution. Several child clubs also presented position papers and suggestions to the Constituent Assembly members and obtained commitments to children's rights by the members.



Consultations in China Lead to Revision of Child Protection

Laws: In 2006, UNICEF supported a broad consultative process involving children, officials and experts that resulted in a series of proposals for a revised Law on the Protection of Minors,

bringing the law into closer conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The key problems and challenges identified in the consultation's final report included: low overall levels of government expenditure on education and health, high fees that unfairly burden the poor and migrants, and large disparities in expenditure between urban and rural areas and between and within regions due to the high degree of fiscal decentralization. The children's feedback played a key role in the revision of the law.

UNICEF Nigeria Gives Children a Voice in Congressional Proceedings: Child participation played a significant role in the passage of Nigeria's Children's Rights Act. During the public hearing on the draft bill, members of the Children's Parliament made a special presentation titled "Voices of Nigerian Children — Children Are an Investment and Not an Expenditure." The children made their views known in their own language and urged parliamentarians to pass the legislation in order to improve the situation of Nigerian children. Following the public hearing, the child parliamentarians paid courtesy calls to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, urging the parliamentary leaders to ensure the prompt passage of the bill. The children were invited to sit in the galleries of both houses during the debate and consideration of the provisions of the bill.

UNICEF Partners with South African Parliamentarians to Prioritize Children's Issues: UNICEF South Africa has focused its work on providing support to Parliament and its institutions as well as strategic national and provincial institutions. At a roundtable convened with parliamentarians, young people and civil society, MPs and children discussed how institutional arrangements could enhance children's understanding and participation in parliamentary processes. UNICEF agreed to support the drafting of a manual on how MPs can advocate for children's rights.

UNICEF Serbia Seeks to Establish Links between Young Constituents and Parliament: UNICEF Serbia is helping to link MPs to local officials, districts and municipalities so that MPs can report back to Parliament. UNICEF facilitates meetings between MPs and children so that their voices are heard and to help build their trust in Parliament, which in turn contributes to building a culture of democracy. UNICEF Serbia also ensures parliamentarians have access to reports on the state of children.

Parliamentarians are also opinion leaders who wield considerable influence as a function of their office and as members of national political parties. In many countries, especially in the developing world, in addition to performing purely legislative functions, MPs are often called upon to play diverse roles as community leaders and development agents. This sort of active leadership responsibility is another aspect of the parliamentarian's representation function.

What can parliaments and parliamentarians do to promote the rights of children?

- **Initiate and implement community-based projects.** Since they maintain close contact with the people, MPs are well versed in their constituents' needs and interests and can advise on what type of projects to initiate. In many countries, there are Constituency Development Funds that MPs can spend on community-



EXAMPLE OF POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORT

UNICEF Nepal Secures Commitment from Political Parties: As part of the national elections in 2008, UNICEF Nepal worked with a consortium of more than 70 international and national children’s rights organizations to prepare a pre-election “manifesto,” subsequently named the “Joint Declaration of Commitment to Children.” This nine-point manifesto states that the signatories will work towards and promote the realization of children’s rights in the new constitution. UNICEF took the lead in drafting the Joint Declaration, with input from other children’s rights organizations, and in organizing bilateral meetings with key political parties. Thirty-five Nepalese political parties signed the Declaration, a rare example of political consensus in a post-conflict nation. The Declaration has since been used as an entry point when engaging members of the Constitutional Assembly in other initiatives, and it will be used to ensure that the political parties are held accountable for their commitments to children.

EXAMPLES OF STRENGTHENING CONSTITUENCY RELATIONS

Constituency Development Fund in Malawi: Malawi, like many countries in southern Africa, has a constituency development fund for MPs to deploy; however, the fund is channelled through a government mechanism — a constituency development committee — such that the funding is not subject to a single MP’s discretion. UNICEF has worked at the national level and, subsequently, through district partners and community-based organizations to advocate for children’s issues to be taken into account.

UNICEF Zambia Plans Constituency Outreach Pilot to Link MPs with Constituents: UNICEF Zambia plans to work with UNDP and other UN agencies as well as cooperating partners to provide a framework for constituency development initiatives that support issues related to children and women. As a pilot, UNICEF will target 10 constituency offices and conduct a data-gathering study to help mobilize communities and national-level stakeholders in favour of greater commitment to issues of child survival and development. This data will help MPs utilize more effectively their Constituency Development Fund and to mobilize additional resources for their constituencies in relation to children’s rights.

level projects in their constituencies. MPs can be encouraged to invest a substantial portion of these resources in such sectors as education and social protection that are important to children.

- **Organize campaigns to mobilize community support for child-related activities.** MPs can carry messages to local communities on issues such as child welfare and rights; they can also convey the needs and interests of these communities to other parliamentarians, members of civil society and UN agencies.
- **Ensure and support child participation. MPs can ensure that children and youth have a space to participate within the parliamentary process.** Parliamentarians can conduct regular and structured consultations with children at constituency-based offices at the district/provincial level as well as at the national level; invite children to speak in committee hearings and proceedings; and increase children's awareness of the role of parliament by strengthening school curricula tied to civic education.
- **Strengthen constituency relations.** The representation function of parliament can be improved by working with MPs to strengthen their capacities to conduct constituency work

as it relates to children's rights; in some cases, constituency offices have been opened for multiparty use or with the aim of developing links between MPs and local leaders. It is also important to work with civil society and the media to develop citizens' ability to advocate their views and needs effectively. UNICEF activities in this area can include: helping civil society interact with parliament; training youth organizations and child-focused NGOs to interact with parliament; and supporting civil society, including children, to participate in public hearings, consultations and parliamentary committee hearings.

- **Ensure that children's rights are promoted by political parties.** MPs can ensure that UNICEF's messages filter through to all political parties. Individual party caucuses provide an avenue for working with parties and can be an effective way for UNICEF to promote children's rights. In addition, UNICEF can work to support the establishment of cross-party caucuses on child-related issues to build trust and confidence between competing political interests.
- **Take advantage of electoral campaigns to promote children's rights on the parliamentary agenda.**

B. framework for parliamentary engagement

Across UNICEF country offices, there are often multiple — and sometimes conflicting — conceptions of what are involved in working with parliament. Below is an organizing framework for parliamentary engagement (as it relates to law-making, budgeting, oversight and representation) built on three basic principles:

- I. Integrating parliamentary engagement into programming**
- II. Understanding how parliament works**
- III. Leveraging UNICEF’s comparative advantages** (non-partisanship, technical expertise/field presence and convening power)

Cost-Benefit Analysis: Because of the wide variance from one country to another, each country office should analyse the potential costs and benefits of parliamentary engagement to determine the scope and extent of involvement. For example, if a parliament wields comparatively little power, then engagement might not be a top priority, whereas a parliament with broad influence over such matters as budgets and laws will be especially suitable for engagement.

I. INTEGRATING PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT INTO PROGRAMMING

Parliamentary engagement is a long-term process that requires an integrated, systematic and coordinated approach.

- **Integrate parliamentary engagement into Country Programme Action Plans and Annual Work Plans.** Parliamentary engagement is cross-cutting and can apply to all medium-term strategic plan focus areas. Where relevant, parliamentary engagement should be integrated into all work plans — for example, a health initiative on child survival that includes a legislative component. It is also important to ensure coherency within each country’s United Nations Development Assistance Framework as well as each country’s National Development Plan.
- **An integrated approach begins with the Country Office Representative.** The political sensitivity and cross-cutting nature of parliamentary engagement, both within UNICEF and the broader UN community, necessitates active leadership. Evidence suggests leadership is most effective when led by the Country Office Representative. The Representative’s degree of involvement will vary depending on the context and programme priorities, but it is important that his/her office provide the overall direction in order to establish commitment internally, coordinate within the broader UN community through the United Nations Country Team and build an institutional relationship with parliament.
- **Each UNICEF country office should have a focal point for information exchange and cooperation with parliament.** Each Country

Office Representative should appoint a focal point to facilitate and coordinate the country office’s engagement with parliament. In order to ensure a consistent and structured partnership, the focal point should serve as the parliamentary point person within the office as well as a liaison between UNICEF and parliament. The focal point should work with respective sections to ensure that the country office engagement with parliament is coordinated, coherent and in line with the overall strategic goals of the office. Depending on the size and politics of the country, there might be a focal team comprised of parliamentary focal points from each section with a lead focal point to coordinate and drive the team’s work with parliament. Parliamentary engagement should be included in the Country Programme Action Plans and Annual Work Plans of the focal point and respective sections.

- **Parliamentary support is a long-term process that requires sustainable, ongoing and systematic engagement.** Establishing an institutional relationship takes time, because in order to build goodwill, credibility and trust, interactions with MPs and parliamentary staff must be frequent and consistent. Additionally, certain processes such as budgeting or bringing national laws into harmony with international standards such as the CRC and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) will only succeed with long-term planning and follow-up.

ENSURING ADEQUATE UNICEF COMPETENCIES¹⁶

UNICEF staff need adequate skills, knowledge and attitudes for effective parliamentary engagement. Staff capacity, knowledge networking and technical support for parliamentary engagement are critical to moving forward UNICEF's parliamentary work. Staff need to be clear on the specific and desired actions that parliament can undertake on behalf of children, and understand how parliament functions, know how to identify entry points for cooperation and understand how to navigate complex political environments in order to mobilize broad-based political support. Staff also need to be able to frame issues and present information in a user-friendly, accessible manner that responds to the needs of parliamentarians. Furthermore, UNICEF staff should have specific technical skill sets: for example, in the context of budgeting, they need the capacity to support MPs with tools to analyse and probe budgets and assess whether allocations and expenditures are properly channelled to children.

UNICEF as a whole should draw upon its collective experience of working with parliaments. While in many countries parliamentary engagement is relatively new and untested, there are many others in which UNICEF has already accumulated substantial experience in dealing with parliament. However, knowledge networking and peer review mechanisms for UNICEF's work with parliament are currently weakly instituted. While some offices have exchanged information on parliamentary engagement, there has been no coordinated effort to sound out ideas, vet analyses or share material and expertise. In addition to documenting knowledge about parliamentary activities, there should be channels for country offices to benefit from peer reviews and tap into the expertise of other country offices. Active and sustained dialogue across offices and with experts could help harness the full potential of UNICEF's parliamentary engagement.



16 Adapted from 2008 "Knowledge Mapping of Social Budgeting in UNICEF."

II. UNDERSTANDING HOW PARLIAMENT WORKS

In order to work effectively with parliament, UNICEF country offices must understand the political context of their respective countries, the working methods of parliament, and the level of parliamentary familiarity with children's rights and key child-related issues.

a) Understanding parliamentary and political structures

- **Parliamentary process and structure.** From one country to another, parliaments vary in a number of ways — for example, in the number of chambers, committee structure, party structure, budgetary powers and formal relationship to the executive branch. It is essential that UNICEF staff understand the particular parliamentary process in a given country. The sample questions on page 21 will help ascertain an individual parliament's process and structure.
- **Political context.** Beyond a parliament's process and structures, all of a parliament's actions take place within a particular political context. This context can affect such dynamics as the relationship between the branches of government, the interests animating politicians' behaviour, the nature of partisan dynamics and the power of political opposition to the ruling party. (For example, in some countries, the ruling party may be so powerful that dissenting views may be difficult to express. In other countries, party dynamics may be such that parliamentarians will only advance initiatives if they and their party get full credit.) Staff must be aware of these forces so as to navigate the terrain effectively.
- **Parliamentary calendars and turnover among parliamentarians.** Work plans must take into account the timing and impact of elections, post-election learning curves, legislative floor periods, legislative recesses and changes of political leadership. To maintain continuity despite regular turnover of elected officials, it is essential to also support key parliamentary

staff (such as clerks, administrators and committee secretaries), who tend to have greater permanence and institutional memory.

- **Parliament's relationship to the executive branch.** In many countries, the separation between parliament and the executive is not well defined; in others, it is so great that parliament is barely involved in policy debates and has little power to monitor government actions. Even in one-party States, it is important to note that multiple opinions generally exist within the ruling party and there may still be a role for UNICEF to make sure that the interests of children remain on the agenda.
- **Parliamentary awareness of children's rights and key child-related issues.** UNICEF staff should try to ascertain the level of parliamentary awareness of and sensitivity to children's rights and key child-related issues within their constituencies. This will inform what kinds of outreach, training and sensitization should be undertaken.

b) Identifying Strategic Entry Points¹⁷

It is important to identify specific entry points for cooperation with parliament and its members.

Potential entry points can include:

- **Parliamentary leadership.** The leadership of parliament, such as the Speaker of the House, is generally responsible for managing the affairs of parliament. The leadership generally determines the agenda of parliament, assigns the matters before parliament to the relevant committees and coordinates the proceedings. It is therefore useful to establish a channel of communication with the leadership to obtain institutional backing for UNICEF's programme activities and to ensure that, as a matter of priority, issues of relevance to UNICEF are placed on parliament's schedule of business. As part of this strategy, it may be effective to establish a formal link between the UNICEF

17 Parts of this section have been excerpted/adapted from the 2004 IPU-UNESCO publication "A Guide to Parliamentary Practice: A Handbook."

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO HELP ASSESS THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS AND CONTEXT¹⁸

Law-Making: Are MPs entitled to introduce legislation? Are they invited by the executive to participate in policy formulation and drafting of legislation? How much authority does the executive branch have to introduce and influence the course of legislation? Does parliament have an independent research capacity to support parliamentarians' policy analyses? What are the executive's veto powers? Can the legislature override an executive veto — and if so, how? Can the executive rule by decree? How much influence do parliamentary committees have? Do committees consider every law?

Oversight: Are there regular sessions where the parliament questions government? Does parliament have the right to require the executive to produce information about government operations — and if so, what is the scope of the powers? What power does parliament have to call to account and remove executive officials? Do parliamentary standing committees visit government facilities and inspect operations for which they have an oversight function?

Budgeting: Must appropriations be legislated before the government can spend money? How detailed must the budget be? Can parliament amend the budget? What role does parliament play in taxing the populace?

Representation: Does parliament conduct outreach to constituents? Is parliament involved in civic education? Does parliament have a website? Does parliament accept public visits? Does parliament have a media office? Is information about parliamentary proceedings readily available to the public?

What capacity do parliamentarians have to fulfil their representation function? Do parliamentarians have constituency offices and access to constituency development funds? Do they travel to their districts and how do they interact with constituents? Is there a strong media or civil society infrastructure that can assist MPs to understand the concerns of their constituency?

Country Office Representative and the parliamentary speaker. Some country offices have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UNICEF and parliament as a way to institutionalize the relationship.

EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT OF PARLIAMENTARIAN CAPACITY RELATED TO CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

UNICEF Viet Nam Helps Survey Elected Officials to Assess Awareness of Children's Rights: In 2008, the Human Rights Institute, together with the Committee for Culture, Education, Youth and Children of Viet Nam's National Assembly and UNICEF, conducted a survey to determine parliamentarians' and members of Provincial People's Councils' awareness of children's rights and relevant policies and laws. About two thirds of the survey respondents indicated that they had received no training in children's rights but had some knowledge of them; 90 percent of the respondents knew that Viet Nam had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, though only a third knew the age limit of children in the CRC is 18. More than 68 percent indicated they apply the CRC's principles in their work as elected officials; only a quarter of respondents were aware of the National Plan of Action for Children 2001–2010. The results from the survey will help guide UNICEF's future support activities for the National Assembly and Provincial People's Councils.



- **Parliamentary committees.** Most parliamentary work is done in committees, which may be standing or ad hoc committees. Generally, the most important decisions pertaining to pending legislation are made at the committee stage,

18 Excerpted/adapted from 2007 "UNDP Parliamentary Practice Note."

and the bills are then endorsed and formalized in a full, or plenary, session of parliament. The role of parliamentary committees is to scrutinize draft legislation, propose necessary amendments, ensure that the legislation is consistent with international standards and the interests of the people and evaluate government performance. Most parliaments have committees that deal with issues within the spheres of competence of UNICEF. Country offices should identify the relevant parliamentary committees and their leadership and establish cooperation with them. Generally, across country contexts, relevant committees are devoted to such issues as health, education, children, women, governance and human rights, and budget or public accounts.

- **Children's rights parliamentary committees.** Some parliaments have established or are establishing Children's Rights Committees, which constitute an obvious entry point.
- **Individual parliamentarians.** While it would be ideal if the entire membership of parliament were favourable to the views advocated by UNICEF, positive results can also be achieved by targeting individual MPs or groups of MPs. This strategy could mean identifying and supporting *individual champions* within parliament and urging them to advocate for children's rights;

or it could mean encouraging the creation of a *network of parliamentarians* on children's issues and providing them with relevant information. It is important to ensure a non-partisan approach when targeting individual MPs and, where possible, engage a representative number of parliamentarians from all political parties. This will avoid the identification of UNICEF with a particular political faction.

- **Parliamentary staff.** To maintain continuity despite the regular turnover of elected members in the election cycle, it is essential to support key parliamentary staff, such as clerks and administrators, who often have greater permanence and institutional memory than elected officials.
- **Political groups represented in parliament.** MPs usually form themselves into political groups or coalitions of groups in order to adopt a coordinated approach to specific issues. Many parliaments grant official recognition to these groups and give them certain privileges and facilities proportionate to their respective numerical strength. Some political groups have their own secretariats with research services, and some are also represented in the management structure of the parliament. Given UNICEF's non-partisan approach to relations with parliaments, it is important to deal with all the parliamentary groups and to refrain from targeting only some.

EXAMPLES OF OF WORKING WITH GROUPS OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

UNICEF Nepal Cultivates Group of Parliamentarians as Children's Rights Champions: As part of the strategic plan for engagement with Nepal's Constitutional Assembly, UNICEF, together with a network of more than 70 national and international children's rights organizations identified a core group of Constitutional Assembly members as children's rights advocates. The members were carefully selected to ensure that all major parties are equally represented and that there are Constitutional Assembly members from all relevant committees drafting the new constitution. These Constitutional Assembly members will receive training on children's rights issues and on how to make the constitution child-friendly. They will promote children's rights in the Constitutional Assembly and their respective parties and committees, aiming to ensure that these rights are enumerated in the new constitution, as well as in new legislation.



Members of Rajasthan State Legislative Assembly Pledge Commitment to Reduce Maternal Mortality as a Result of Increased Awareness: UNICEF India conducted sensitization workshops with elected officials, during which 65 Members of the Legislative Assembly took an oath pledging their commitment to formulating policies and programmes to reduce maternal mortality in the State. A copy of the oath was presented to each representative and each Member of the Legislative Assembly signed a banner on which the oath was written. The banner now hangs in the office of the Rajasthan State Women's Commission.

EXAMPLES OF MOBILIZING A NETWORK OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

UNICEF Senegal Mobilizes a Network of Parliamentarians: UNICEF and a network of Senegalese MPs have signed a protocol to support the mobilization and adoption of laws protecting children, including legislation tackling such issues as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), rape and child marriage; the protocol also calls for the harmonization of national legislation with the CRC and CEDAW. Together, UNICEF and these Members of Parliament have advocated for the abandonment of FGM/C by convening meetings, engaging the media and making public pronouncements. And on the Day of the African Child, the network organized a meeting between Parliament and the Children's Parliament to promote issues of child safety and survival as well as the sufficient allocation of budgetary resources for children.

Network of Brazilian Parliamentarians Helps Monitor Children's Rights: In Brazil, there has been an active Network of Parliamentarians for the Rights of the Child since 1993. Currently composed of 133 deputies and 25 senators, this group monitors executive power with respect to policy implementation and helps establish special investigatory committees on specific violations. Until 2005, the group met only at the national level, but that year, state and municipal assemblies were invited to establish similar initiatives, which were incorporated into the National Network of Parliamentarians. Today, the Network monitors budgets and legislation at national, state and municipal levels and works to establish partnerships with other organizations devoted to rights protection. In 2007, 488 legislative proposals were analysed and classified according to the interests of children and adolescents. This group (of state and federal parliamentarians with UNICEF support) keeps close watch on Congress's agenda to make sure children's rights are protected.

Network of Parliamentarians in Bolivia: After UNICEF developed long-lasting alliances with all political parties within Congress that helped lead to child-friendly legislation and a milestone in 2009 of a new constitution that acknowledges the best interest of the child, Bolivia's Parliamentary Network for Children and Youth was created in June 2009 with technical and financial support from UNICEF. The Network aims to increase parliament's ability to generate bills that promote the rights of children and youth and to monitor the Government's implementation of such laws. The Network was consolidated through an agreement between the UNICEF Country Office Representative and the President of Bolivia's House of Representatives. The Network will feature gender balance and the equal participation of political parties.



- **Parliamentary caucuses.** In many parliaments, caucuses devoted to children's issues, women's issues or human rights more generally are playing an increasing role. As informal groupings, caucus memberships tend to be open to all parliamentarians and constitute an important entry point for interaction with parliaments on children's issues.
- **New Members of Parliament.** New MPs may be particularly open and receptive to becoming involved in children's issues. New MPs are often looking for an area of work where they can make a personal contribution. UNICEF can orient new MPs to children's rights, provide them with a clear vision of the specific issues facing children in their country, outline concrete actions needed to address these issues, and commit to providing technical support to the MPs. In countries where there is formal induction training for new MPs, UNICEF can partner with parliament to include child-related issues within this training.
- **Parliamentary library, research and documentation services.** Parliaments generally have services to provide information that MPs require in their work as legislators. These services prepare notes and background papers and obtain other resource materials pertinent to legislation or issues on the parliamentary agenda, allowing MPs to make informed decisions. It is useful to be in contact with the staff who service these facilities and to make available to them relevant documentation on issues and legislation relevant to children.

EXAMPLES OF FORMAL MECHANISMS TO ENGAGE PARLIAMENT

UNICEF Uses MOU Mechanism to Cooperate with Parliament in Azerbaijan: UNICEF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Azerbaijani Parliament that outlines a general commitment to monitor budget allocations for health and children, consider the reform of existing laws pertaining to children and work broadly on behalf of children's issues. The MOU and concomitant data gathering and analysis performed by UNICEF in concert with Parliament marked the beginning of the oversight function. During the process, UNICEF gained another ally — the Economic Policy Committee — and brought the chairs of the Social Committee as well as the Economic Policy Committee to UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre for further training.

UNICEF Serbia Enters Long-Term Cooperation Agreement with Parliament: UNICEF Serbia and the National Assembly of Serbia signed a Memorandum of Understanding on long-term cooperation in 2008, a significant advance over UNICEF's earlier ad hoc relations with Parliament. The MOU, signed by the Parliamentary Speaker and the Area Representative, creates a formal framework for the cooperation between the two bodies and spells out UNICEF's support to Parliament in developing MPs' knowledge of and commitment to children's rights. This increased commitment will be relevant in three parliamentary functions: approving and initiating laws, overseeing policies and laws, and allocating resources to the Government.

In accordance with the MOU, a cross-sectoral and cross-partisan Working Group on Child Rights (formed in 2009), which will one day evolve into a full parliamentary committee, was established at the highest level. The Working Group, chaired by the Parliamentary Speaker, will focus on upgrading MPs' ability to analyse draft laws and budgets and monitor the implementation of relevant national policies from a children's rights perspective. The proposed methods include study-tours to expose MPs to good international practice; the organization of seminars, roundtables, public hearings and field visits; and the establishment of mechanisms for cooperation with municipal authorities.

- **Pending bills that resonate with UNICEF concerns.** In many countries, bills fester for years without passage. UNICEF can survey the legislative landscape, identify child-friendly bills already proposed, and use them as an entry point by pushing for their adoption by

EXAMPLES OF FORMAL/INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

UNICEF Turkey Works with MPs and Children to Bolster CRC Monitoring: UNICEF Turkey is providing technical and financial support to facilitate communication between members of the Child Rights Monitoring Committee and children in the field. A web portal and other forms of communication (efforts will be made to reach the most disadvantaged girls and boys who have limited or no access to technology) will allow parliamentarians to work closely with children in CRC monitoring.

Regular Meeting in Kenya to Ensure Systematic and Sustainable Oversight: After the 2008 IPU Annual Assembly meeting in South Africa, UNICEF Kenya held a meeting for Members of Parliament's Health Committee; also in attendance were members of the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Kenyan Ministry of Health and Sanitation. The meeting was an initial attempt to engage MPs and encourage advocacy and a larger budget for child and maternal health, as well as to promote support for community health initiatives and preventive care. The team agreed to meet every quarter as a way to establish systematic attention to these issues.

Institutionalized Collaboration with Parliament in India: In 2006, the Indian Ministry of Women and Child Development and UNICEF advocacy helped establish the Parliamentary Forum on Children. The purpose of the forum is to institutionalize interactions between Members of Parliament and specialized UN agencies such as UNICEF; to enhance parliamentary awareness of critical issues affecting children's well-being; to provide a platform for MPs to exchange experiences and expertise in children's issues; and to foster strategic partnerships between Parliament and civil society, the media and the corporate sector.

Parliament. In 2007, UNICEF South Africa, for example, identified bills, including The Child Justice Bill, which had already been proposed but awaited adoption. Owing in part to UNICEF efforts, some of these outstanding bills were adopted in 2008.

III. LEVERAGING UNICEF'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES (NON-PARTISANSHIP, TECHNICAL EXPERTISE/FIELD PRESENCE AND CONVENING POWER)

UNICEF's comparative advantages derive from three factors: its mandate as a non-partisan actor, its technical and field expertise, and its ability to convene stakeholders from government and civil society (including the media). UNICEF can use its non-partisan mandate as a strategic point of entry to help influence every stage of the legislative process (law-making, budgeting, oversight, representation). UNICEF can use its field and technical expertise to provide evidence-based information, expand parliamentarian capacity to enact measures pertaining to children's rights and influence parliamentary outcomes. And UNICEF can harness its convening power to forge strategic relationships and mobilize broad coalitions on behalf of children's rights.

a) UNICEF's non-partisan mandate

Parliaments are highly political and complex institutions that involve multiple actors seeking to achieve many and varying goals. In order to navigate this complex political environment, UNICEF should emphasize its neutral political affiliation and seek to engage key actors from all political parties. Broad-based political support is necessary for success in designing and implementing parliamentary initiatives. A non-partisan approach also ensures greater ownership of the issue by all stakeholders over the long term. UNICEF can leverage its neutrality to mobilize support from all political parties in its parliamentary activities and use its mandate to encourage all actors to champion children's rights.



EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION TOOLS

UNICEF South Africa Creates Publications for MPs: The 2007 booklet “In a Child’s Best Interests ... Parliamentarians, You Can Make a Difference” contains specific information about the status of children in South Africa, details the country’s progress in realizing the constitutional rights of children and raises pertinent issues affecting children, including HIV/AIDS and education. The booklet includes questions MPs can ask when engaging constituents and provides user-friendly data that can be brought to bear in the contexts of oversight and budgeting. UNICEF South Africa has also produced three pamphlets — on child protection, health and education — that were distributed to MPs. These documents provide information on these vital issues, contain suggestions for parliamentary action and list questions to ask at the constituency level.¹⁹

UNICEF Yemen Furnishes MPs with Actionable, Solid Data: In July 2008, UNICEF made a presentation on MDGs 4 and 5 to the Social and Health Committee in the Yemeni Parliament. UNICEF emphasized the danger of failing to meet these goals and urged the MPs to pressure the ministries. UNICEF developed a National Nutrition Survey and found that half of all children in Yemen are malnourished; there are plans to release similar data

for MDGs 4 and 5 by the end of 2009. UNICEF will provide this data to MPs as they advocate for relevant legislation.

UNICEF Malawi Develops Toolkit to Educate Parliamentarians and Constituents: In Malawi, following a request from parliamentarians for assistance, UNICEF developed a toolkit outlining strategies and recommendations to reduce malnutrition. The toolkit, in combination with the nutrition profiles created by the Department of Nutrition, enabled parliamentarians to educate their constituents on the issue.



b) UNICEF’s technical expertise and field presence

With its technical expertise and extensive field presence, UNICEF possesses the data and knowledge that parliamentarians need (but often lack) to make informed decisions. UNICEF can also use this expertise to advocate for children’s rights and key initiatives. Country offices should aim to obtain, package and communicate this information (for example, constituency-level disaggregated data) in the most effective manner and, when appropriate, organize parliamentary field visits to child-related projects that address children at risk or children whose rights have been violated.

Approaches for gathering information and developing communication plans include:

- **Providing MPs with relevant documentation and data in user-friendly formats.** Such documentation can be used by MPs within parliament as well as with constituents. It is essential to translate UNICEF’s expertise and evidence-based knowledge into messages that resonate with MPs and constituents. Creative means must be identified to articulate content in simple, understandable terms that will facilitate the buy-in of individual parliamentarians, parties and constituents. MPs will rarely adopt

¹⁹ Booklet available at http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/resources_3419.html

a cause if they don't have the messaging that will resonate with their party and constituents.

- **Obtaining constituency-level disaggregated data (or providing support to national institutes that collect data on children).** These key statistics, such as infant mortality rates in particular constituencies, can be deployed both to spur legislative activity and hold Members of Parliament to account.
- **Working with all political parties and parliamentary candidates to integrate children's rights into their political and electoral platforms.** In the context of political campaigns, UNICEF can marshal relevant information to emphasize the importance of children's rights and help secure commitments from candidates to include children's interests in their campaign platforms.
- **Helping to develop parliamentary documentation and research facilities.** This can help foster the free flow of information, knowledge and data, improving access to information related to children's rights.
- **Organizing briefing sessions and field trips.** Seminars, roundtables and lectures for MPs, committee staff and other parliamentary officials (including staff of parliamentary political groups) are effective ways to strengthen the understanding of children's rights and key issues related to children within a particular constituency. Field trips can be a particularly effective way to highlight critical issues for children and can serve as powerful advocacy tools when linked to specific initiatives needed for children.
- **Providing access to individual experts.** UNICEF can make highly qualified national or international technical experts available to parliament.

EXAMPLES OF BRIEFINGS AND FIELD TRIPS

UN Ghana Convenes Workshop to Sensitize Parliamentarians: In 2007, a UN-led workshop on MDGs 4 and 5 was held with the Ghanaian Parliament. In attendance were representatives of the UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA; several MPs, including Parliament's core leadership (from both the minority and majority, and relevant committees); representatives of the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs and the Ministry of Finance; and members of the media. The aim of the workshop was to sensitize parliamentarians to the issue of maternal mortality and provide information about the "three delays" that most often lead to it (decision-making in households, lack of transport and infrastructure, and paucity of emergency obstetric care). The workshop contributed to the provision of free maternal care during pregnancy and delivery—now available throughout Ghana. There is also an effort to create a UN Gender Team to review policies on gender and produce sex-disaggregated data, which can be marshalled for advocacy and oversight efforts.

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Uses Parliamentarian Field Trips to Promote Legislation: In 2008, UNICEF organized three joint field trips with Kyrgyz MPs. The first was to see how a provincial Local Child and Family Support Department works to prevent the institutionalization of children. This trip, which was also attended by national journalists, spawned a countrywide debate on deinstitutionalization and the creation of local services throughout the country to support families at risk of placing their children into institutions. The second trip was designed to strengthen the Draft Law on Breast-feeding by bringing MPs into contact with regional community leaders, specialists, civil society and medical workers. The third trip took MPs to the country's most isolated province so they could see how UNICEF Early Childhood Development and Education programmes are being implemented.



EXAMPLES OF UNICEF'S CONVENING POWER TO FORGE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

UNICEF Yemen Helps Mobilize Coalition for Child Marriage Bill: The Yemeni Parliament in 2009 adopted a bill that raises the minimum age for marriage, a victory in the effort to tackle MDGs 4 and 5. UNICEF organized a two-day workshop in Parliament as part of this effort, bringing together MPs, imams and local NGOs to mobilize support for the bill.

UNICEF Tanzania Engages Civil Society and Convenes High-Level Meeting to Learn About Best Practices: The United Republic of Tanzania remains one of the few countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa region that has yet to domesticate international commitments for children through the enactment of a national Children's Act. Earlier proposals to establish a comprehensive law on behalf of children were delayed by a 2008 cabinet decision to bring all existing legislation in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child rather than introduce a single Children's Act. To this end, UNICEF helped steer a network of national and local NGOs that was established in 2008 to formulate an advocacy strategy for the enactment of a Children's Act. A Task Team was created to coordinate these activities, and UNICEF supported a technical consultative meeting with participants from neighbouring countries Kenya and Uganda. A high-level meeting promoted greater understanding of children's rights and the importance of legal reform among parliamentarians and ministers. The cabinet subsequently reversed its earlier decision and instructed the Parliamentary Chief Draughtsman to draw up a single consolidated Children's Act.

Strategic Partnership in Kyrgyzstan: A strategic partnership in Kyrgyzstan to promote the Law on Breastfeeding brought together MPs, key decisionmakers from the Ministry of Health, researchers, academicians, specialists on breastfeeding and NGOs. The partnership allowed UNICEF Kyrgyzstan and the other actors to successfully confront Nestlé and other companies promoting milk formula. By partnering with all these actors and arming leading parliamentarians with strong arguments that could be used in public debates across the country, UNICEF was able to help garner wide support and get the law adopted.

c) UNICEF's convening power

UNICEF's global reputation as an organization dedicated to children, and its expertise and mandate as a non-partisan actor, furnish it with a breadth of relationships as well as the power to forge new partnerships around particular initiatives. UNICEF can play an important role by convening public and non-public stakeholders around children's issues at the global, regional and country levels.²⁰ Examples of UNICEF's convening power include:

- **Strategically partnering with civil society organizations (CSOs) and other key stakeholders.** By facilitating public dialogue and collective action among CSOs, such as national and international NGOs and faith-based organizations, UNICEF can strengthen these organizations' ability to effectively engage parliament. UNICEF can work with CSOs and other actors to share best practices and build momentum on key legislation. As constituents,

national CSOs can lobby parliament and communicate key messages in ways UNICEF cannot.

- **Mobilizing the media.** Media can help disseminate information, raise awareness, tackle opposition to child-friendly legislation or reform and garner support among parliamentarians, civil society and the public at-large.
- **Exploring opportunities for collaboration with key UN, multilateral and international organizations.** UNICEF can work with key actors involved in parliamentary engagement, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, UNDP and the World Bank (see pages 42 and 43 for more information on the IPU and UNDP). On specific thematic issues, it is also important to work with relevant UN agencies, such as UNAIDS, UNFPA and WHO.
- **Ensuring effective child and adolescent participation within parliamentary processes.**

²⁰ Depending on country context, UNICEF will want its work in this regard to be either visible or more behind the scenes; in some contexts, a highly visible UNICEF will be able to convene stakeholders effectively, while in others, a less visible UNICEF will prove more effective.

EXAMPLES OF MEDIA MOBILIZATION

Media in Kyrgyzstan Plays Critical Role in Adoption of New Laws: In Kyrgyzstan, the media played a critical role at every stage of the promotion and adoption of a law on Breastfeeding and Milk Substitute (see p. 6 of this guide). As the legislation was being written and debated, the media published some 59 articles on the law and on breastfeeding in general — a media blitz that silenced parliamentary opposition, whose only argument against the law was that there had not been sufficient public debate. Even the President of Kyrgyzstan felt compelled to acknowledge the media reports, arguing that the matter warranted a government response.



UNICEF Ecuador Creates Communication Strategy around the Budget: Since 1999, a series of key messages that were focused, capable of mobilizing audiences and constantly repeated started being disseminated in Ecuador around efforts to influence budget allocations related to children's issues. A communication strategy based on basic questions was drawn up: What is the budget? What is social investment? In what areas does it focus? How much is spent?

C. key resources

I. INTRODUCTION TO PARLIAMENT

a) Useful Terms

CANADIAN PARLIAMENT GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/education/gloss-inter/index.asp?Language=E>

UK PARLIAMENT GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<http://www.parliament.uk/glossary/glossary.cfm>

b) Guidance Tools

HANDBOOK: A GUIDE TO PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE (2004)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), UNESCO. (English, French, Spanish, Arabic)

<http://www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm#UNESCO>

This brief handbook, produced by IPU and UNESCO, is a practical guide to parliaments and their working methods. It is a tool for officials of international organizations who interact with parliaments to promote cooperation between these organizations and parliaments. It also provides useful information to Members of Parliament on the work of international organizations and how they can access the resources available in these organizations to help achieve their mandate.



PARLIAMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: A GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE (2006)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (Arabic, English, French, Spanish)
<http://www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm#democracy>

Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice provides a comprehensive and systematic account of the central role that parliament plays in a democracy. It identifies the five key objectives for a parliament: to be representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective. It then proceeds to give examples of how parliaments, in concrete terms, are seeking to fulfil those objectives. Drawing on submissions from more than 75 national parliaments, the guide provides clear evidence that democratic change is possible and offers practical illustrations of how it might be brought about.

II. KEY FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY PARLIAMENT

a) Law-Making

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

UNICEF Intranet.

<http://www.intranet.unicef.org/PD%5CChildProtection.nsf/Site%20Pages/Page0102>

This UNICEF Intranet resource created by the Child Protection Section lists child protection international legal frameworks, beginning with general legal frameworks (Universal Declaration of Human Rights; article 16 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights; United Nations Millennium Declaration; and Millennium Development Goals) followed by legal frameworks by topic (Children's and Women's Rights; Birth Registration; Justice for Children; Child Labour; Child Marriage; Child Trafficking; Children Associated with Armed Groups and Forces; Children with Disabilities; Children without Parental Care/Adoptions; Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children; Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting; Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW); Small Arms and Light Weapons; Unaccompanied and Separated Children; and Violence Against Children).



LAW REFORM AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (2008)

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (IRC)

(Arabic, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish)

http://www.unicef-irc.org/cgi-bin/unicef/title_down.sql?Title=L

This UNICEF IRC study reviews the legislation concerning the rights of children adopted by 52 States parties since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. With the goal of providing an overview of the scope and content of new legislation adopted since 1989 across the globe, the report covers 18 of the general principles and rights contained in the Convention. Three subjects that deserve further investigation are identified: the process of law reform, its place as part of a broad children's rights strategy, and the actual

impact of legislation of this kind on children.

b) Oversight

TOOLS FOR PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT (2008)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (English, French, Spanish)

<http://www.ipu.org/english/books.htm#oversight08>

Parliamentary oversight is a multifaceted activity. Tools for Parliamentary Oversight examines the mechanisms and processes used in oversight activities. It identifies and analyses the tools that are commonly found in plenary and committee work, where detailed scrutiny of governmental policies can often be carried out most effectively. By developing a catalogue of tools for parliamentary oversight, the study invites parliaments to examine their own practices. It also offers a range of examples from national parliaments that may be of wide interest.

INNOCENTI RESEARCH CENTRE (IRC) GLOBAL STUDY ON OMBUDS FOR CHILDREN

http://www.unicef-irc.org/research/resource_pages/ombuds/

The Innocenti Research Centre is currently undertaking a global study that analyses the role and impact of Independent Human Rights Institutions for Children across regions. The UNICEF IRC website includes information on the study, as well as useful information on the Global Network of Independent Human Rights Institutions for Children, International Standards, and prior UNICEF IRC ombuds-related publications. The website includes links to regional ombuds bodies in Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe.

c) Budgeting

THE BUDGETING FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PAGE

UNICEF Intranet.

<http://intranet.unicef.org/dpp/PolicyAdvocacy.nsf/Site%20Pages/Page030202>

This is a very helpful UNICEF Intranet site with resources on social budgeting (it is housed here on a temporary basis until a more comprehensive and organized intranet site to support the UNICEF Community of Practice on this topic is established). The available information includes: (1) a two-page outline of the rationale and main entry points for UNICEF's involvement in budget work; (2) selected UNICEF reference materials, including country-specific examples from China, Chad, Ecuador, India, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mozambique, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa and Suriname; (3) charts measuring the Incidence of Public Budgets on Children; (4) preparatory materials for a UNICEF Community of Practice on Budgets; (5) a guide to Learning Activities and Materials on Budget Work; (6) a list of CRC observations on budgets; and (7) reference materials from other organizations.



REFORMING CHILD LAW IN SOUTH AFRICA: BUDGETING AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING (2007)

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (IRC)

http://www.unicef.de/fileadmin/content_media/mediathek/AR_034_reformingchildlaw.pdf

This publication by the Innocenti Research Centre documents a rare attempt to assess all the steps involved in legal reform for the realization of children's rights and provides a detailed estimate of the costs of each step. The case studies address two attempts to enact extensive pieces of legislation in connection with these reforms: one for development of a child justice system, the other for a comprehensive Children's Act.



HANDBOOK: PARLIAMENT, THE BUDGET AND GENDER (2004)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), UNDP, UNIFEM, World Bank
(Arabic, English, French, Spanish)

<http://www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm#budget>

This handbook, jointly produced by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank Institute and the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), was inspired by a series of regional and national seminars on "Parliament and the Budgetary Process," including one from a gender perspective.

Intended as a reference tool, this handbook offers practical examples of parliament's active engagement in the budgetary process. It seeks to advance parliament's institutional capacity to make a positive impact on budgets, and to equip parliament, its members and parliamentary staff with the necessary tools to examine budgets from a gender perspective.

d) Representation

1) Civic Education Initiatives for Children

PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA CIVIC EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAMME

http://www.parliament.gov.za/live/content.php?Item_ID=444

The South African Parliament has developed a civic education training programme for young adults to show how Parliament functions, how laws are made and how the public can engage with the law-making process. The South African Parliament has also produced an award-winning comic book, A Day in Parliament, which has been distributed to every school in the country.

PARLIAMENT OF FINLAND “LEGISLATORS” ELECTRONIC GAME

<http://www.lainsaatajat.fi>

The Parliament of Finland has developed an electronic game called “Legislators,” which teaches children the legislative process and the role of Members of Parliament. The game allows children to play different roles and virtually enact legislation; it is available in Finnish and Swedish.

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF BRAZIL WEBSITE FOR CHILDREN

<http://www.plenarinho.gov.br/>

The Congress of Brazil has developed a website that teaches children about Congress’s functions and the legislative process. The website is interactive and includes several games.

2) Children’s Participation

CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES INITIATIVE (CFCI)

<http://www.childfriendlycities.org>

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) was launched in 1996 to ensure that cities, or any local system of governance, incorporate the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children as an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions. CFCI promotes children’s active involvement in issues that affect them and aims to solicit and take into account their views.

The CFCI website, managed by the Innocenti Research Centre, provides a powerful tool for exchanging information, sharing data and networking among partners globally. Website users can access information about the activities, objectives and methodologies of Child Friendly City projects; links with partners; and examples from Child Friendly Cities worldwide (the website is available in English, French and Spanish). The section of the website providing information on children’s participation initiatives, such as Children’s Parliaments, (http://www.childfriendlycities.org/resources/block_1.html) contains examples from Albania, Brazil, France, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

UNICEF TACRO and UNDP initiative

<http://www.infanciaygobernabilidad.org>

UNICEF and UNDP are partnering to develop a web portal to share experiences, tools and resources for local governance and children’s rights initiatives at the local/municipal/community level. The website includes examples of child participation and case studies from Argentina (Ciudad de Rosario. Ciudad de los Niños), Bolivia (Programa de Desarrollo Local Integrado), Brazil (Sello UNICEF- Municipio Aprobado), Colombia (Estrategia Municipios y Departamentos por la Infancia. Hechos y Derechos), Cuba (Programa de Desarrollo Humano Local Interagencial), El Salvador (Políticas Públicas Locales in en favor del niño), Dominican Republic (Municipios Amigos de la Niñez), Jamaica (Roving Caregivers Program) and Barbados. A current overview/mapping of the various experiences can be found at <http://www.infanciaygobernabilidad.org/red/images/mapa/>.

III. KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

a) Overall Legislative Reform



HANDBOOK ON LEGISLATIVE REFORM: REALISING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, VOLUME 1 (2008)

Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement Section, Policy and Practice, UNICEF

http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/LRIHandbook_-_final.pdf

The Handbook on Legislative Reform aims to support the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Handbook advocates for a human rights-based approach to legislative reform with gender equality at its core. It is inspired by the need for innovative processes and approaches to the establishment of a legal framework that effectively protects children (both girls and boys) and ensures the full realization of their rights. It is also motivated by the need to disseminate more widely the practical experiences of those attempting to bring rights-based approaches to legislative

reform initiatives in favour of children.



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON CONSOLIDATED CHILDREN'S RIGHTS STATUTES (2008)

Legislative Reform Initiative Paper Series. Policy and Practice, UNICEF

http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/postscript_Childrens_Codes_formatted_final.pdf

This study is inspired by "General Comment 5" (2003) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee), which deals with General Measures of Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Comment spells out the place of consolidated children's statutes within the overall context of legislative reforms. Global Perspectives examines the extent to which consolidated statutes have featured in the law reform efforts of States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



LEGISLATIVE REFORM RELATED TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN DIVERSE LEGAL SYSTEMS – NATIONAL CASE STUDIES: ARMENIA, BARBADOS AND GHANA (2008)

Legislative Reform Initiative Paper Series. Policy and Practice, UNICEF

http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/Formatted_-_Legislative_Reform.pdf

The objective of this paper is to provide a review of legislative reform in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in three different countries — Armenia, Barbados and Ghana. These three countries have unique legal and political backgrounds. Armenia, a newly independent State whose legal framework for democratic governance was put in place mostly during the past 12 years, inherited a civil law tradition from the first independent Armenian Republic at the beginning of the 20th century, as well as from the legal system of the Soviet Union. In contrast, Barbados is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of democracy that is modelled on the British Westminster system of government and a common law legal tradition. Ghana, meanwhile, is a democratically governed country with a mixed legal tradition. It has a written constitution; however, there is also immense influence from such traditional authority figures as Chiefs and Queen Mothers.

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS (2005)

Innocenti Insight, UNICEF

http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/ii_layingthefoundations.pdf

This study provides a critical and constructive analysis of how far the international community and individual States have come in their efforts to establish the normative, legal and institutional frameworks that are essential if the aspirations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are to be translated into reality. Within this context, the study seeks to achieve three objectives: (1) to draw up a balance sheet of some of the Convention's achievements and shortcomings in terms of laying the foundations for an effective Convention-based regime; (2) to provide a balanced perspective on the Convention's importance within the overall range of endeavours to improve the well-being of children in the world; and (3) to expose and examine some of the dilemmas and complexities that arise during efforts to promote and give effect to the Convention.



SUPPORTING THE REALIZATION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS THROUGH A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO LEGISLATIVE REFORM (January 2007)

Programming Guidance Paper Series. Policy and Practice, UNICEF

http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/Supporting_the_Realization_of_Childrens_Rights_Through_a_Rights_Based_Approach_To_Legislative_Reform.pdf

This document developed by Policy and Practice provides tools and information to facilitate the work of UNICEF regional and country offices in the area of legislative reform.



UNICEF'S EXPERIENCE IN THE AREA OF LEGISLATIVE REFORM: A REVIEW OF SELECTED COUNTRIES (January 2007)

Legislative Reform Initiative Paper Series. Policy and Practice, UNICEF

http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/UNICEF_Experience_in_the_Area_of_Legislative_Reform.pdf

This document developed by Policy and Practice provides an overview of selected UNICEF country offices' experience in the area of legislative reform. Especially relevant are the findings on external and internal successes and challenges.

b) Violence Against Children



ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN (2007)

UNICEF, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (Arabic, English, French, Spanish)

http://www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm#V_children

Jointly produced by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNICEF, this handbook provides recommendations and examples of good practices to enable Members of Parliament to follow up on the United Nations Secretary- General's Study on Violence Against Children.

c) Child Protection

HANDBOOK: CHILD PROTECTION (2004)

UNICEF, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (English, French, Hindi)

<http://www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm#child-prot>

Jointly produced by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNICEF, this handbook covers a wide range of themes related to child protection, including trafficking of children, violence against children, female genital mutilation/cutting, the sexual exploitation of children, children and war, and juvenile justice. The handbook is a catalyst for action, providing concrete examples of ways and means of building a protective environment for children and for parliaments' responses to the challenges of child protection.

d) Child Domestic Labour



LEGISLATIVE REFORM ON CHILD DOMESTIC LABOUR: A GENDER ANALYSIS (January 2008)

Legislative Reform Initiative Paper Series. Policy and Practice, UNICEF

http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/Leg_Reform_on_Child_Domestic_Labour.pdf

This study commissioned by Policy and Practice adopts a gender perspective to look critically at the need for legislative reform in the area of child domestic labour. The paper argues that laws and policies developed to help protect and prevent child domestic labour cannot be developed in isolation from other laws that impact the issue. The paper analyses the need for a holistic approach to law-making in this area and sets out a methodology to create a legal policy and programme framework to regulate and protect the domestic child worker. The framework does not pretend to be exhaustive but examines some critical

elements that should be integral to law-making in the field of child domestic labour. The paper concludes that legislative reform to protect child domestic workers must not only consider the interrelatedness of issues affecting the social, economic and health ramifications of child domestic work but also address gender discrimination, making an anti-discrimination perspective critical to the examination of child domestic labour.

e) Child Marriage



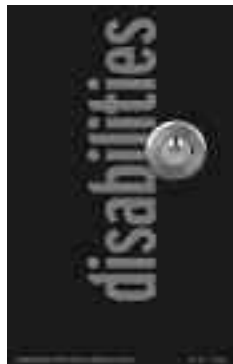
CHILD MARRIAGE AND THE LAW (January 2008)

Legislative Reform Initiative Paper Series. Policy and Practice, UNICEF

http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/Child_Marriage_and_the_Law.pdf

This paper commissioned by Policy and Practice analyses the different legal frameworks and human rights dimensions of child marriage within a feminist perspective. The paper highlights the interconnectivity between international human rights law, constitutional guarantees of gender equality and other gender-friendly laws in combating child marriage.

f) Disability



HANDBOOK FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS ON THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (2007)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (Arabic, English, French, Russian, Spanish)
<http://www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm#disabilities>

This handbook explains in practical terms the rationale and objectives of the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as its Optional Protocol. The handbook also delves into the ways in which parliaments can translate the rights and principles at the core of the Convention into tangible actions.

g) Female Genital Mutilation

PARLIAMENTARY CAMPAIGN TO STOP FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/fgm.htm>

These Inter-Parliamentary Union web resources contain information on the role of Members of Parliament to stop FGM. It includes examples of national legislation, a list of recently adopted international treaties and other instruments concerning female genital mutilation, and relevant documents adopted by selected international and regional organizations.

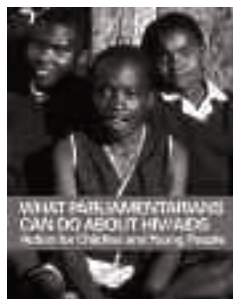
h) HIV/AIDS



TAKING ACTION AGAINST HIV (2007)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), UNDP, UNAIDS. (English, French, Spanish)
<http://www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm#aids07>

Jointly produced by IPU, UNDP and UNAIDS, this handbook is both a call to action for parliamentary leadership and a reference book to which Members of Parliament and their staffs may turn for information and guidance on specific issues of importance in response to HIV. It provides many illustrations of good practices by legislatures and gives examples of leadership by individual Members of Parliament. The handbook is designed to help parliaments and their members exercise fully their legislative, budgetary and oversight powers to tackle HIV in their communities and countries. The handbook was released in English at the First Global Parliamentary Meeting on HIV/AIDS (Philippines, November 2007).

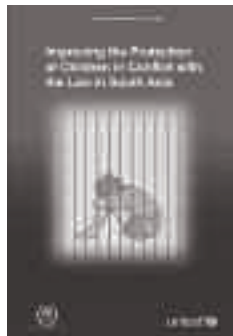


WHAT PARLIAMENTARIANS CAN DO ABOUT HIV/AIDS (2003)

UNICEF. (English, French)
http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_19021.html

This information kit, prepared by UNICEF and partners, calls on Members of Parliament to use their influence and resources in halting the spread of HIV/AIDS. Decisive action by political leaders has proved to be a common, critical factor in changing the course of the pandemic. Leadership by elected officials — whose actions must include breaking the silence, educating their constituencies and lobbying for AIDS legislation and budgetary allocations — is essential to controlling the disease.

i) Juvenile Justice



IMPROVING THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW IN SOUTH ASIA (2007)

UNICEF, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (English)
http://www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm#chil_law

This tool, produced by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNICEF, is designed specifically for Members of Parliament from South Asia. It focuses on the particular issues and challenges related to juvenile justice in the region. The regional guide is based on the results of a survey carried out by UNICEF and includes practical recommendations for parliamentary action.

j) MDGs and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process

STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENTARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PROCESS AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs) (2004)

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), UNDP. (English, French, Russian, Spanish)
http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/parl_other/Parl%20-%20Guides%20-%20parlthandbooks.htm

This series of handbooks was prepared by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) in partnership with UNDP and with support from the Government of Belgium. Based on the experiences of NDI and UNDP in conducting capacity-building activities with Members of Parliament and poverty reduction strategy process commissions in Malawi, Niger and Nigeria, and drawing on their experience in democratic development programming with legislatures around the world, the handbooks provide resources for MPs, parliamentary staff, civic leaders, social networks and the international community on legislative involvement in poverty reduction.

Toolkit 1: Legislative-Executive Communication on Poverty Reduction Strategies (2004)

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and UNDP
Legislative-Executive Communication on Poverty Reduction Strategies
http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/parl_other/handbooks/en/legexcomm.pdf

Toolkit 2: Parliamentary-Civic Collaboration for Monitoring Poverty Reduction Initiatives (2004)

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and UNDP
Parliamentary-Civic Collaboration for Monitoring Poverty Reduction Initiatives
http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/parl_other/handbooks/en/parlcivcol.pdf

Toolkit 3: Legislative Public Outreach on Poverty Issues (2004)

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and UNDP
Legislative Public Outreach on Poverty Issues
http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/parl_other/handbooks/en/puboutrech.pdf

k) Child Trafficking



HANDBOOK FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS: COMBATING CHILD TRAFFICKING (2005)

UNICEF, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (English, French, Spanish)
http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_33882.html

Jointly produced by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNICEF, this handbook focuses on concrete measures that Members of Parliament can take to combat child trafficking. The handbook serves as a catalyst for action, providing concrete examples of ways and means of building a protective environment for children and the role of Members of Parliament in this regard.

I) Women In Parliament

INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

<http://www.iknowpolitics.org/>

The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics) is an online workspace designed to serve the needs of elected officials, candidates, political party leaders and members, researchers, students and other practitioners interested in advancing women in politics. It is a joint project of UNDP, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), NDI, the IPU and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENTS WEB RESOURCE

Inter-Parliamentary Union

<http://www.ipu.org/iss-e/women.htm>

This resource by the Inter-Parliamentary Union provides information on the gender breakdown of parliaments as well as links to global and regional sites focused on women in politics.



RWANDA: THE IMPACT OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS ON POLICY OUTCOMES AFFECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (December 2006)

Policy and Practice, UNICEF

<http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/Rwanda.pdf>

Using Rwanda as a case study, this background paper by Policy and Practice shows the important and positive role women Members of Parliament can play in the lives of children and families.



FEMALE LEGISLATORS AND THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILY POLICIES IN LATIN AMERICA (December 2006)

Policy and Practice, UNICEF

http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/Female_Legislators_and_the_Promotion_of_Women_Children_and_Family_Policies_in_Latin_America.pdf

Using Argentina, Colombia and Costa Rica as case studies, this background paper by Policy and Practice focuses on the role of female Members of Parliament around women's, children's and family issues. The paper shows that the representation of women in legislative politics has an impact on policy, and that women tend to place higher priority and initiate more bills on both women's issues and those related to children and families.

IV. NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS AND KEY GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ACTORS

a) National Parliaments Database

<http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp>

The Inter-Parliamentary Union PARLINE database contains information on the structure and working methods of 265 parliamentary chambers across the globe, including at least one in all of the 189 countries where a national legislature exists. Information provided for each parliament includes: website, mandate, types of specialized bodies, number of Members of Parliament (including number of female MPs), political party breakdown and latest election results.

b) Parliamentary Organizations and Bodies

Global and Cross-Regional

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) <http://www.ipu.org>
- ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (Africa-Caribbean-Pacific-European Union) <http://www.europarl.eu.int/intcoop/acp/default.htm>
- Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie <http://apf.francophonie.org/>
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association <http://www.cpahq.org>
- Association of Senates, Shooras and Equivalent Councils of Africa and the Arab World <http://www.assecaa.org>
- NATO Parliamentary Assembly <http://www.nato-pa.int>
- OSCE Parliamentary Assembly <http://www.oscepa.org>

Europe and CEE/CIS

- European Parliament <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/>
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe <http://assembly.coe.int>
- Assembly of the West European Union <http://www.assembly-weu.org/en/index.php>
- Baltic Assembly <http://www.baltasam.org/?CatOD=84>

Africa

- Pan-African Parliament <http://www.pan-african-parliament.org>
- East-African Legislative Assembly (EALA) <http://www.eala.org/>
- Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) <http://www.parl.ecowas.int>
- Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC) <http://www.sadcpf.org>
- African Parliamentary Union <http://www.african-pu.org>
- West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) <http://www.uemoa.int>

Americas

- Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) <http://www.copa.gc.ca>
- Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) <http://www.e-fipa.org>
- Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) <http://www.parlatino.org>
- Central American Parliament (Parlacen) <http://www.parlacen.org.gt>
- Andean Parliament <http://www.parlamentoandino.org>

Asia

- Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum <http://www.appf.org.pe>
- ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) <http://www.aipasecretariat.org/>

Middle East

- Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation <http://www.medeas.be/>
- Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU) <http://www.arab-ipu.org/english>
- Parliamentary Union of the Islamic Conference Member States <http://www.copa.qc.ca>

c) Parliamentary Networks

- European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) <http://www.awepa.org>
- Parliamentary Network on the World Bank <http://www.pnowb.org>
- Global Organizations of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) <http://www.parlacent.ca.org/pnnd>
- African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC) http://www.apnacafrika.org/home_e.htm
- Parliamentarians for Global Action <http://www.pgaction.org/>

d) UN, NGOs and Academic Institutions

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the main UN agency focused on parliamentary work, with more than 65 UNDP country offices currently engaged in parliamentary development activities. UNDP's Democratic Governance Group (DGG) within the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) leads UNDP's Parliamentary work <http://www.undp.org/governance/sl-parliaments.htm>
- State University of New York, Center for International Development <http://www.cid.suny.edu/>
- IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) <http://www.idea.int/>
- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs <http://www.ndi.org>
- East West Parliamentary Practice Project <http://www.ewppp.org/index.php>
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung <http://ghana.fes-international.de/index.htm>
- Hanns-Seidel Stiftung <http://www.hss.de/homepage.shtml>
- Konrad Adenauer Stiftung <http://www.kas.de/>

REGIONAL PARLIAMENTS

Regional parliamentary assemblies can provide a key entry point to reach a wider group of parliamentarians and deliver results for children. There is a range of regional parliamentary assemblies around the world with whom UNICEF can work — for example, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the Pan African Parliament.

Just as there is a wide range of parliamentary assemblies, there is an equally wide range of competencies these assemblies can have. UNICEF staff should understand the powers that their regional parliamentary assemblies enjoy in order to determine what results can be achieved in working with specific assemblies. Regional parliaments may be able to adopt binding legislation for the region, allocate budgets or adopt programmes. This is the case for the Parliament of the European Union (the European Parliament), which has a wide range of powers to take action for children. The European Parliament can adopt legislation that binds the 27 European Union Member States, has oversight of the Union's vast external development and humanitarian cooperation operations (including some power to allocate funds directly to children's issues), and is a co-legislator in allocating the European Union budget, allowing it to make funding available to the United Nations.

EXAMPLE OF UNICEF ENGAGEMENT WITH A REGIONAL PARLIAMETARY BODY

European Parliament Prepares for an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child: Until fairly recently, the European Union (EU) did not have any policies directly addressing children's rights, though it did have policies on issues relevant to children, such as education, trafficking and families. Prompted in large part by pressure from the European Parliament, which was in turn responding to campaigns by civil society and interventions from UNICEF, in 2006, the EU adopted a policy setting out the basis for a more comprehensive strategy on children — an "EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child." Following the publication of policy documents from the European Commission (the Executive), the European Parliament initiated two separate and comprehensive reports on children's rights that involved inputs from parliamentary committees as well as experts, civil society and children. The UNICEF Brussels Office and Innocenti Research Centre provided extensive inputs on both reports, appeared at hearings in the European Parliament and advised on the direction and coverage of the reports.

V. INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION AND UNICEF PARTNERSHIP

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (<http://www.ipu.org>) is the world organization of parliaments. Established in 1889, it is the oldest multilateral political organization, bringing together more than 150 affiliated member parliaments and eight associated regional assemblies. The IPU works closely with the United Nations and cooperates with regional inter-parliamentary organizations as well as with inter-governmental organizations and NGOs. The Millennium Declaration highlighted the important role of the IPU, as did a recently adopted General Assembly resolution that reaffirmed the IPU's important contribution to the United Nations. The IPU enjoys observer status in the United Nations.²² The IPU works for the establishment of representative democracy through a range of programmes and activities:

- **Setting standards and guidelines** – The IPU plays a key role in setting generally accepted standards and guidelines relevant to democracy, elections and parliaments.
- **Strengthening representative institutions** – Through its technical assistance programme, the IPU provides advice, guidance and many forms of support to parliaments. The collective expertise of IPU members is an asset for the spread of sound democratic practice.
- **Promoting human rights and protecting Members of Parliament** – The IPU aims to assist parliaments in making human rights a reality for everyone. It helps ensure that parliamentarians understand these rights and make their promotion and protection a central part of parliamentary work.

- **Partnership between men and women in politics** – Although the situation is slowly improving, women still account for less than 20 percent of the world's parliamentarians. The IPU has taken the global lead on the involvement of women in the parliamentary process through its work on advocacy, research, statistics and training for female parliamentarians.
- **Promoting knowledge of parliaments** – The IPU uses its central position as the world organization of parliaments to collect and disseminate information about the powers, structure and working methods of representative institutions.

The IPU-UNICEF partnership, for which Civil Society Partnerships (CSP) is the UNICEF focal point, dates back many years, with the IPU having supported the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Over the past six years, joint activities have included:

- Special Child Protection Parliamentary Forum on the occasion of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Rights of the Child.
- Handbooks for parliamentarians on child protection, child trafficking, juvenile justice and violence against children, translated into various languages.
- Child-focused activities during IPU twice yearly assemblies that bring together more than 1,000 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and other key actors from more than 100 countries. Joint activities have included parliamentary field visits to UNICEF-supported projects and panel discussions on key children's issues.
- Regional Parliamentary Workshops (including the South-East Asia Regional Workshops on Child Protection and Juvenile Justice, the Pan-African Conference on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, and the CEE/CIS Regional Workshop on Child and Adolescent Sexual Exploitation).



22 UN General Assembly 61st Session Agenda Item 108 (k). Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union A/61/L.6.

VI. UNDP AND PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Development Programme is the main UN agency involved in parliamentary development. UNDP is currently working with more than 65 countries to strengthen the role of parliaments and make MPs more effective.

The primary vehicle for supporting UNDP's efforts in strengthening parliaments and building global knowledge in the field of parliamentary development has been the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (GPPS).

Over the past few years, UNDP has had parliamentary development projects primarily in Africa, Asia, the Arab region, the Pacific region and Eastern Europe. Some examples include:

- **Sierra Leone:** Domestication of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); promoting the three Gender Bills through awareness-raising campaigns, civic education, extension of gender awareness to the sub-national level and support to the Parliament.
- **Sudan:** Promoting the democratic process by strengthening the role of parliaments and political parties at the national and sub-national levels, supporting the electoral process and engaging civil society in building democratic governance through civic education.
- **Sri Lanka:** Enhancing the capacities of women by developing their leadership, negotiation, networking, planning and other relevant skills

in support of their participation in decision-making processes; sensitizing key stakeholder groups including political parties, the press, civil society and the general public on issues related to women's political empowerment; conducting a stocktaking exercise of the research and advocacy work undertaken by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Development.

- **Republic of Congo:** Increasing by 20 percent the number of women candidates for 2007 elections; developing a draft law on women's representation in decision-making.



- **Lesotho:** Developing the Women's Parliamentary Caucus; capacity building of media for effective advocacy and raising awareness on issues of gender equality in political leadership and decision-making.

appendix

I. PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICES RELATED TO SPECIFIC ISSUES — CHILD SURVIVAL AND MATERNAL HEALTH²³

Below is an example of parliamentary engagement related to child survival and maternal health — MDGs 4 and 5. The following tables divide the findings according to parliament’s four main functions. While these functions are treated as separate and discrete, they often are interconnected as reflected in the examples that follow.



²³ Many examples of parliamentary action are adapted from the “Parliamentarians Take Action for Maternal and Newborn Health” conference proceedings at The Hague, The Netherlands, 26–28 November 2008, organized by the WHO, IPU and the Parliament of the Netherlands. Interviews conducted with many UNICEF country offices also inform the Appendix.

LAW-MAKING EXAMPLE

Law of Flour Fortification in Kyrgyzstan: UNICEF provided technical assistance for the drafting of the law on flour fortification at all stages. In cooperation with MPs, the National Association of Mills, government officials and other stakeholders, UNICEF supported public hearings in southern and northern regions of the country in order to get a critical mass of public support for the law. UNICEF supplied members of the working group (MPs, National Association of Mills, and representatives of key ministries, international organizations and other stakeholders) with evidence-based information on the high levels of anaemia among young children and their mothers in Kyrgyzstan. Studies on nutrition, international data and the experience of other countries helped prepare parliamentarians for the debate at the plenary session. The law ultimately passed.

a) Law-Making

Examples of Parliamentary Action to Achieve MDGs 4 and 5

- Identify one or several parliamentary committees to take the lead on legislating or reviewing legislation to facilitate maternal and child health.
- Hold hearings with the government, civil society, private sector and other actors to identify legislative gaps, challenges and solutions.
- Initiate a review of existing laws to address gender discrimination and eliminate legal obstacles that limit women's and children's access to health care services.
- Adopt legislation supporting the work of midwives.
- Ensure that legislation complements existing legal instruments and that MDGs 4 and 5 concerns are adequately mainstreamed.
- Ensure that new members of parliament are educated and briefed on MDGs 4 and 5 and develop mentoring systems in order to pass on the knowledge.
- Ratify relevant international instruments.
- Assist in drawing up national plans of action.
- Assist in fulfilling national reporting obligations.



Types of Questions UNICEF Can Encourage MPs to Ask in Their Law-Making Capacity

- Has the State ratified all relevant international and regional instruments?
- Has the State reported its findings in a timely fashion according to the terms of those instruments?

b) Oversight

Examples of Parliamentary Action to Achieve MDGs 4 and 5

- Ensure compliance by the executive with international standards.
- Promote debate in parliament on issues of relevance to MDGs 4 and 5.
- Participate in the audit and/or assessment of the executive's performance in areas of relevance to children's health and promote policy reforms that are favourable.
- Work with the Court of Audits to monitor the implementation of legislation.
- Question government publicly about its commitment to MDGs 4 and 5 and call Ministers to account on their commitments.

OVERSIGHT/REPRESENTATION EXAMPLE

UNICEF Helps MPs in Ghana to Monitor MDG Progress and Forge Links with Constituents:

In 2008, a national consultative meeting was held in Ghana to address maternal mortality rates. The meeting included parliamentarians (particularly from the Committee on Health) and representatives from the Ministries of Transport, Employment, and Local

Government. Media awareness was part of this effort, and UNICEF used it as an opportunity to sensitize MPs, who were expected to listen to constituent concerns and encourage education on the issue. In preparation for the national consultation and an earlier workshop UNICEF held for MPs, UNICEF provided data on the Millennium Development Goals and prepared advocacy documents around MDGs 4 and 5. These workshops brought critical issues to the attention of parliamentarians and also furnished MPs with the data and analysis they needed to exercise effective oversight of the Government.

- Hold briefings and hearings in parliament to convince and engage MPs and political leaders.
- Organize field visits to facilities and projects in order to monitor the situation and evaluate initiatives.
- Use parliamentary oversight mechanisms (oral and written questions to government, enquiries, hearings, parliamentary committee work) to ensure accountability and meet health objectives.
- Ensure that health concerns are cross-cutting in parliamentary work and that different parliamentary committees cooperate.
- Initiate a debate in parliament on gender discrimination, especially harmful traditional practices.
- Use parliamentary oversight mechanisms to regularly monitor and evaluate government work on education, with a particular focus on education for women and girls.
- Initiate a debate on the mortality and morbidity rates of women and children.
- Initiate a parliamentary committee enquiry into the state of maternal and child health.
- Establish a parliamentary group to debate these issues (if none already exists).

c) Budgeting

Examples of Parliamentary Action to Achieve MDGs 4 and 5

- Liaise with the budget/finance committee to encourage a focus on health issues, including MDGs 4 and 5.
- Direct questions to government during the budget debate and make MDGs 4 and 5 a budgetary priority.
- Hold hearings with women and health associations on their needs and priorities prior to the budget debate.
- Ask that responsible ministers regularly report to parliament on use of funds for achieving MDGs 4 and 5.
- Ensure that national budgets are gender-sensitive and that the national budget process makes use of sex-disaggregated data.

BUDGETING EXAMPLE

UNICEF Zambia Mobilizes MPs for Budget Debate on MDGs 4 and 5: In August 2008, the Ministry of Health in Zambia convened a National Countdown Conference (attended by parliamentarians) at which UNICEF presented evidence on the situation of children and women in Zambia and urged MPs to support favourable policies and budget allocations for MDGs 4 and 5. The Zambia Countdown 2015 Conference will be an annual event to track MDG progress, and UNICEF Zambia hopes it will provide an opportunity to engage MPs on budgeting and legislation concerns.



- Organize a media event on MDGs 4 and 5 to raise awareness during the budget debate.
- Pay particular attention to health allocations during the budget debate; monitor allocated amounts and their effective use; use health statistics to question stipulated allocations.
- Support funding for independent national statistics institutes and liaise with the United Nations and other sources to access data.

d) Representation

Examples of Parliamentary Action to Achieve MDGs 4 and 5

- Invite leaders of local government to discuss children's and mothers' rights and existing protections and services.
- Organize a meeting with local government, community and religious leaders, non-governmental organizations and children to consider how to disseminate information and mobilize support.

REPRESENTATION EXAMPLE



UNICEF India Identifies Champion in Rajasthan State Legislative Assembly: As part of major maternal mortality advocacy efforts in 2006, UNICEF lobbied for the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly to become a 'spokesperson' for the issue of Safe Motherhood. Relevant materials were shared with the Speaker regularly, allowing her to address the media and spearhead the orientation of the Legislative Assembly members on the issue. UNICEF found that identifying and maintaining a champion within Parliament was an effective means to highlight the issue for other policy and decisionmakers and achieve favourable outcomes.

- Encourage MPs to speak to their constituents about MDGs 4 and 5.
- Engage the media to grow awareness.
- Increase awareness among political parties, which are often central to political decision-making.
- Speak out in parliament for MDGs 4 and 5 and identify parliamentary champions.
- Build cross-party coalitions.
- Adopt a motion in parliament on MDGs 4 and 5.
- Organize public events to sensitize the wider public and strengthen the national commitment.
- Liaise regularly with constituents on MDGs 4 and 5 and raise awareness about harmful traditional practices.
- Engage male parliamentarians on MDGs 4 and 5.
- Reach out to communities, grass-roots organizations and local partners.

II. PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT BY UNICEF NATIONAL COMMITTEES²⁴

National Committees are an integral part of UNICEF's work. Currently, there are 36 National Committees in the world, each established as an independent, local non-governmental organization. Serving as the public face and dedicated voice of UNICEF within their respective countries, National Committees can play an important role in mobilizing parliament on key children's rights issues and in securing development aid.

Examples of Parliamentary Engagement by National Committees

- **Australian Committee for UNICEF Advocates Parliament to Increase Development Aid and Support:** UNICEF Australia meets regularly with parliamentarians, through UNICEF Australia's Parliamentary Association, to raise their awareness of issues of relevance to children in the Asia-Pacific region and encourage continued and increased AusAID funding. In 2009, UNICEF briefed parliamentarians on maternal health in Asia and the Pacific, aid effectiveness and the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Austrian Committee for UNICEF Lobbies for Increased Development Aid Focusing on Children and AIDS:** In 2008, UNICEF Austria helped organize a conference on how parliamentarians in industrialized countries can support the HIV/AIDS-agenda in developing countries. Parliamentarians from industrialized and developing countries attended the conference and discussed the potential for cooperation. A coalition for people affected by HIV/AIDS (consisting of 40 organizations) regularly meets with Austrian parliamentarians to discuss how development aid should be directed to people affected by HIV/AIDS.
- **Belgian Committee for UNICEF Brings New Attention to Children's Rights:** In 2005, UNICEF Belgium and its partners successfully advocated to amend the Belgian law on international cooperation and add child rights as a fourth cross-cutting theme of Belgian development cooperation. In order to conduct further advocacy work, UNICEF Belgium and two partner organizations have created a platform for children's rights within development cooperation. In 2009, the Belgian Committee organized a conference on child survival, with a focus on Africa, in the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Senate. As a result, a resolution on child survival in developing countries passed unanimously in the Senate in 2009.
- **UNICEF Advocates for Vulnerable Children in Belgium:** UNICEF Belgium's "What do you think?" project seeks to promote child participation by collecting the ideas and proposals of the most vulnerable children in Belgium and passing them on to the politicians in charge and to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF Belgium regularly briefs parliamentarians who are sensitive to child rights issues. In 2009, a Resolution on a Plan of Action for hospitalized children was adopted unanimously by the Chamber of Deputies. This resolution is based, in part, on a "What do you think?" report containing recommendations by children in hospitals.
- **Canadian UNICEF Committee Advocates for the Creation of a Children's Commissioner:** UNICEF Canada appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights during its 2006–2007 review of Canada's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strongly advocated for the creation of a Children's Commissioner. The Canadian Committee used public awareness campaigns to pressure the Government, leading to the tabling of a private member's bill for a Children's Commissioner in 2009.
- **UNICEF Canada Improves Access to Medicines for Children in Developing Countries:** UNICEF Canada supports the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network advocacy campaign

24 Private Fundraising and Partnerships helped compile these examples; the Australia, Canada and United Kingdom National Committees provided valuable feedback.

to revise Canada's Access to Medicine's Regime (CAMR), which allows drugs under patent to be produced by generic drug companies for use in developing countries. The Legal Network, with UNICEF Canada's support, successfully lobbied parliamentarians to introduce legislation in both the Senate and House of Commons to simplify and improve CAMR.

- **Japan Committee for UNICEF Campaigns against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children:** Since 1996, the Japan Committee for UNICEF has conducted advocacy work against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, including campaigns calling for the introduction and revisions of relevant laws. For example, in consultation with key parliamentarians, the Japan Committee for UNICEF, together with partners, launched the "Say 'No' to Child Pornography" signature-collection campaign to call for banning the possession of child pornography. In 2009, more than 115,000 signatures were submitted to all political parties. The Japan Committee provided parliamentary technical committees with key information on international standards introduced in various other countries and contributed to drafting the revised law.
- **New Zealand Committee for UNICEF Combats HIV/AIDS in the Pacific Region:** In 2009, UNICEF New Zealand invited three MPs to speak on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV as part of the "Unite for Mothers Campaign." UNICEF also petitioned the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade to prioritize PMTCT in their response to HIV/AIDS in the Pacific.
- **United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF Uses Electoral Campaign as Opportunity to Get Children's Interests onto Parliamentary Agenda:** UNICEF UK developed a Manifesto for Children outlining 12 key areas of work

related to children that UK politicians should include in their personal political manifestos for the 2010 election.

- **UNICEF UK Supports Participation of Young People in the CRC Reporting Process:** In 2008, the United Kingdom reported on the progress it has made in implementing the CRC to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. In the lead-up to this meeting, the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF worked with partners to make sure children could interact directly with Members of Parliament, government officials and relevant staff so that their voices would be included in the process.
- **United States Fund for UNICEF Helps Increase US Government Contribution to UNICEF:** Through both direct engagement with Congressional offices and grass-roots advocacy, the United States Fund for UNICEF's Office of Public Policy and Advocacy helped secure a government voluntary contribution of US\$130 million for fiscal year 2009 — the largest-ever contribution from the Government of the United States to UNICEF's regular budget. As part of that effort, the US Fund organized the testimony of the UNICEF Senior Vice-President before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations and arranged for the UNICEF President-CEO to meet directly with several Members of Congress to discuss UNICEF's work and funding request.
- **UNICEF USA Promotes Child and Maternal Health:** The United States Fund for UNICEF has partnered with other NGOs in the US Coalition for Child Survival in support of legislation to improve the national strategy and funding for child and maternal health programmes. The Fund has shared UNICEF's perspectives and successes with congressional staff and asked constituents to pressure their Representatives to support legislation.

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