

# Parliamentary Performance Indicators



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# Context and Entry Points



While there is no magic formula, or checklist for developing a democratic and effective legislature, there is emerging consensus that certain norms and standards regarding democratic legislatures transcend particular political or legislative systems. Such norms or standards can be used to:

- assist parliaments engaged in reform and modernization efforts, including greater independence and powers relative to the executive branch
- guide those providing parliamentary development assistance in establishing clear targets towards which to orient their support

Some entry points include:

- to help prepare the parliamentary budget and/or strategic plan
- to stimulate a parliamentary reform process
- to enable new members of parliament to discuss key issues
- to validate the findings of a needs-assessment mission

# Frameworks and Major Actors



## **Standards/ Benchmarks**

- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

## **Good Practice/ Self-Assessment**

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

## **Performance Indicators (Budget Process)**

- Parliamentary Centre

# Additional frameworks of interest



- International IDEA's State of Democracy Assessment Methodology
- Tools developed by CSOs (e.g. in Uganda, Pakistan and India)
- Congressional Capabilities Index (IDB),
- IFES State of the Parliament Report
- Indicators developed by UNDP (2001) and other donors such as USAID

# The process – past activities



## **2003**

- Parliamentary Centre/WBI develop Parliamentary Report Card and related indicators of parliamentary performance in the budget process

## **2004**

- September - panel discussion at CPA's Annual Conference
- December - WBI/CPA meeting on 'Parliamentary Standards for Democratic Legislatures'

## **2006**

- IPU publishes *Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century: A guide to Good Practice*
- October - CPA Parliamentary Study Group on *Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures*

# The process – past activities



## **2007**

- January – NDI publishes *International Standards for Democratic Legislatures* (first draft completed late 2006)
- May - Donor Consultation on Parliamentary Development and Financial Accountability
- November - SADC-PF begins their benchmarks process

## **2008**

- July - APF begins their benchmarks process
- September – IPU publishes *Self-Assessment Toolkit for Parliaments*; WBI/Griffith University *Workshop on Legislative Benchmarks and Indicators*; informal steering committee formed
- NDI develops first draft of Minimum Standards Assessment Survey (final draft published in 2009)
- October - IPU Assembly Workshop on Self-Assessment; 2008 Wilton Park Conference; and Donor Coordination Meeting on Parliamentary Development

# The process - current activities



## 2009

- APF (July) and SADC PF (November) to adopt their versions of the benchmarks and initiate follow-up
- CPA benchmarks workshops for Asia (August) and the Pacific (June/September)
- IPU/ASGP workshop on Evaluating parliament: objectives, methods, results and impact
- Ongoing promotion of a research agenda in which the different frameworks are piloted at the country level (in established, new, large, and small legislatures), if possible comparatively. *Ex. Parliamentary Assessment - An Analysis of Existing Frameworks and Application to Selected Countries*, MPA Capstone, London School of Economics and Political Science (prepared for the World Bank Institute)
- Invite other parliamentary organizations to develop their own benchmarks process from regional and other perspectives.

## 2010

- March – international conference on benchmarking planned to for broad group of organizations to take stock of work in this area and identify areas of consensus

# CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures



- Result of a CPA Study Group of parliamentarians in 2006
- 87 benchmarks developed around the following themes:
  - The Representative Aspects of Parliament
  - Ensuring the Independence, Effectiveness and Accountability of Parliament
  - Parliamentary Procedures
  - Public Accountability
  - The Parliamentary Service
  - Parliament and the Media
- Informed by Commonwealth Principles, previous CPA study groups' and conference recommendations, and NDI discussion paper on minimum standards
- Starting point for SADC-PF and APF benchmarks process



# NDI Minimum Standards Assessment Survey



- 2007 - *Toward the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures*
- 2008-9 – Minimum Standards Assessment Survey questionnaire turns 25 standards into questions which attempt to determine perceptions of the legislature’s (formal) authority, and of its performance (behavior in practice)
- Designed to be administered to parliamentarians themselves, parliamentary staff, and representatives of civil society – their perceptions are then compared.

No.	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I am not aware	Not Applicable
14a.	<b><u>Formal Power</u></b> Legally, only the legislature may determine and approve the budget of the legislature.						
14b.	<b><u>Practice</u></b> In practice, only the legislature determines and approves its own budget.						

# IPU Self-Assessment Toolkit



- 2006 - *Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice*
- Sept. 2008 – *Self-Assessment Toolkit for Parliaments* with 54 questions under six categories:
  - the representativeness of parliament;
  - parliamentary oversight over the executive; parliament's legislative capacity;
  - the transparency and accessibility of parliament; the accountability of parliament;
  - and parliament's involvement in international policy
- Uses a five point scale with 1 being very low/very poor and 5 being very high/very good to assess respondents judgements.

# Parliamentary Centre Report Card



		LEGISLATION	OVERSIGHT	REPRESENTATION	BUDGET
PERFORMANCE TESTS	LEVEL AND RANGE OF ACTIVITY				
	OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY				
	PARTICIPATION				
	ACCOUNTABILITY				
	POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPACT				

- First set of indicators developed on parliamentary performance in the budget process.
- Phrased as questions, with 37 in total.  
 Ex. Does parliament scrutinize the economic models used to develop medium term expenditure frameworks?  
 Does parliament review and debate the PRSP before final adoption by the government and presentation to international financial institutions?
- Uses a scale of 0-5. 0 means the performance indicator is not present at all, 5 means it is very strongly present and 2.5 means that it is somewhat present.

# Some conclusions



1. Work is still in its early phases, “works in progress”, plural approaches, now beginning to be applied/tested.
2. As with elections, we may never have one, universally agreed upon set of principles/ standards/ benchmarks/ indicators. Expect consensus building to be a long term-process.
3. There is significant overlap between the tools in terms of content, particularly the different versions of the benchmarks.
4. Frameworks are mainly designed to be used by parliaments/ parliamentarians themselves, as well as parliamentary staff and civil society groups.
5. Their use is voluntary – not imposed. And they are not an attempt to rank parliaments.
6. Important that donor support to parliaments reflect a shared international consensus on the nature of democratic parliaments - rather than donors consciously or unconsciously seeking to mold parliaments in program countries in their own image, or being perceived as seeking to do so.
7. Not focused on developing country parliaments – and many developed country parliaments fail to meet some of the standards (e.g. control over their own budget).
8. General agreement that while context matters (constitutional powers, electoral system, cultural), the debate generated during assessment will allow for context to be explored.



Thank you!