Using IPU Self-Assessment Toolkit for Parliaments

Evaluation of the National Assembly of Pakistan

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IPU Self-Assessment Toolkit for Parliaments

- Introduced in 2008 by the IPU
- Objectives:
  - Evaluate Parliament against an international criteria
  - Identify priorities & means to strengthen Parliament
- Based on 48 Questions grouped under 6 Topics
- Each Question to be graded on a five-point scale
Scenarios of Evaluation & Pakistan Scenario

- IPU Toolkit mentions 6 fictional scenarios of evaluation
- Pakistan Evaluation follows one of the scenarios
- Scenario 6: Assessment of Parliament by an NGO
- Evaluation undertaken by a prominent independent Pakistani Think Tank: PILDAT: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency (www.pildat.org) working closely with Parliamentarians
PILDAT – An Overview

www.pildat.org

- An independent non-profit Research & Training organization formed in 2001

- Stated Mission: To Strengthen Democracy & Democratic Institutions

- Parliamentary Strengthening & Parliamentary Performance Monitoring are 2 key Programmes of PILDAT
Participants in the Evaluation Process

- 28 – member group assembled to evaluate
- 14 Parliamentarians from 5 political parties or groups
- 2 veteran parliamentary reporters;
- 3 senior academics;
- 2 senior journalists;
- 2 lawyers;
- 1 former military commander
- 2 PILDAT staff
PILDAT initiated the process by taking Assembly leadership into confidence & requesting me to be a part of the evaluation group.

- Broad-based participation due to Multi-party legislators
1. Representativeness of the National Assembly

- Total Questions: 9
- Overall Score by the participants: 55%
- Weakest Aspect: Near impossibility of a person of average means to get elected to the Parliament: 28%
- Strongest Aspect: Composition of the National Assembly is representative of Women: 71% (76 or 22% women)
Evaluation Results

2. Parliamentary Oversight over Executive

- Total Questions: 8
- Overall Score by the participants: 49 %
- Weakest Aspect: Inability to scrutinise executive appointments: 35 %
- Strongest Aspect: Autonomy of National Assembly: 64 %
Evaluation Results

3. Parliament’s Legislative Capacity

- Total Questions: 7
- Overall Score by the participants: 53%
- Weakest Aspect: Weak process to consult various interest groups over legislation: 44%
- Strongest Aspect: Satisfactory Parliamentary Procedures for Full and Open Debate on Legislation in the Assembly: 56%
4. Transparency & Accessibility of Assembly

- Total Questions: 7
- Overall Score by the participants: 55 %
- Weakest Aspect: Very little Opportunity to citizens’ direct involvement in legislation through citizens’ initiatives: 37 %
- Strongest Aspect: Ample freedom to journalists in reporting on the Assembly & its members: 55 %
Evaluation Results

5. Accountability of the National Assembly

- Total Questions: 7
- Overall Score by the participants: 42 % (Second Lowest)
- Weakest Aspects: a) Transparency of procedures to prevent conflict of interest; b) Oversight of funding to candidates & parties: 39 % score each
- Strongest Aspect: Observance of agreed Code of Conduct by members: 49 % Score
Evaluation Results

6. Parliament’s involvement in International Policy

- Total Questions: 10
- Overall Score by the participants: 37% (Lowest)
- Weakest Aspect: Weak or non-existent parliamentary oversight of deployment of country’s armed forces abroad: 30% score
- Strongest Aspect: Effectiveness in inter-parliamentary cooperation: 48% Score
Overall Assessment: 48 %

Evaluation of the Parliament

- Overall Percentage: 48%
- Effectiveness of National Assembly’s Involvement in Foreign Policy: 37%
- The Accountability: 42%
- The Transparency and Accessibility: 55%
- Legislative Capacity: 53%
- Effectiveness of Parliamentary Oversight over Executive: 49%
- The Representativeness of the National Assembly: 55%
Total 11 Recommendations

Recommendations on Various Aspects:

- Representativeness of the Assembly: 1
- Parliamentary Oversight over Executive: 3
- Legislative Capacity: 3
- Accountability of National Assembly: 3
- Assembly’s Involvement in Foreign Policy: 1
Recommendations

1. Election Spending Limits be strictly enforced
2. Make Parliament’s role effective in Budget Process
3. Parliament should scrutinise key appointments
4. Provide adequate and non-partisan research service
5. Institute system of public consultation
6. Attract young people to work in the Parliament
Recommendations (...Contd.)

7. Involve citizens in legislative process
8. Institute a system to check members’ conflict of interest
9. Adequate oversight on funding to parties & candidates
10. Institute a system to monitor levels of public confidence
11. Parliamentary Committees on Foreign Affairs be more pro-active
More Details....

- Please see www.pildat.org
- A limited number of copies of the Evaluation Report are available

Thank You!