

FAST FACTS

United Nations Development Programme



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STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENTS AS INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNANCE

For over ten years, UNDP has been leading the way to stronger, more effective and democratic legislatures, supported by a network of 166 Country Offices and the high level of trust and respect it has earned as a result of its proven neutrality.

AFRICA

- In **Mauritania**, UNDP's support has contributed to a gradual evolution towards an electronically administrated Parliament, through the digitization and archiving of legal documents, including the report of proceedings. UNDP created an online database with featured videos and audio options that includes data relating to the work of the previous parliament (2007-2012). This database is accessible to all Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff who received specific training on the use of these new technologies which help support the Documentation Center of the National Assembly and contribute to retaining institutional knowledge.
- In **Nigeria**, UNDP assisted the Parliament in ensuring a participatory, and nationally driven approach for the amendment of the constitution. Peoples public hearing sessions were held in all 360 federal constituencies simultaneously enabling different groups and stakeholders (i.e.: political parties, women groups, PWDs, CSOs and Media groups) to present their viewpoints to members of the Senate Committee on the Constitution Amendment process. UNDP supported the House of Representatives ad hoc Committee in charge of the review of the Constitution, to classify, and analyse all the questionnaires and inputs that were gathered. UNDP also analysed critical constitutional dispositions with the view of identifying areas that need to be reviewed by the Committee as well as supported the drafting of constitutional provisions where required and requested.

UNDP SUPPORT

- 68 active parliamentary projects and activities around the world
- Total budget: \$ 127,088,008 in 2012

Sub Areas of Work

- Build the capacity of technical staff and legislators to effectively carry out their three chief functions (legislative, representation and oversight);
- Strengthen parliaments' relationships with the executive and judiciary branches of government and with civil society;
- Promote institutional reform through the development of parliamentary Strategic Plans (i.e.: Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Moldova, Somalia, and Trinidad and Tobago - setting up the parameters of a modernization process);
- Cross-cutting issues: Support aims to identify necessary reforms and structural adjustments to strengthen parliaments' capacities, functioning, and level of engagement in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), inclusive, consultative and participatory processes, anti-corruption, gender mainstreaming, national dialogue and reconciliation, and crisis prevention and recovery, as well as sensitize parliamentarians to human rights, and the risks of climate change;
- Development of knowledge products i.e.: handbooks for parliamentarians, training modules, and toolkits that draw on lessons learned in the field of parliamentary development;
- To increase access to parliamentary knowledge, UNDP supports two cutting edge web-based platforms: The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (www.iknowpolitics.org) and AGORA (www.agora-parl.org).

ARAB STATES

- **Iraq:** Support to several Committees in the form of needs assessments and structural reviews was provided. As a result, the Human Rights Committee produced its workplan on the basis of the findings of these assessments. The Women's Committee benefitted from training on law-drafting and legal reviews. The CSO Committee hosted a 'Grant Guidelines' workshop for pre-qualified CSOs and study tours were also organized for the Research and Defense Committee.
- **Lebanon** is moving forward with its legislative reforms with the support of UNDP: Two noteworthy achievements are the adoption of the draft law on Food Safety by the Public Health, Labor and Social Affairs Committee; and of the National Human Rights Action Plan by the Human Rights Parliamentary Committee. UNDP is also supporting the work of the Public Health, Labor and Social Affairs Parliamentary Committee and Health Parliamentary Committee with regards to the Draft Law Proposal for People living with HIV (PLHIV), as well as the Woman and Child Parliamentary Committee in conducting a gender legal review of all current Lebanese legislation to set forth a list of new laws to be drafted or current laws to be amended for the promotion of gender equality.

ASIA and the PACIFIC

- **Myanmar:** In recognition of the centrality of the Union Assembly (elected in 2012) and sub-national parliaments in consolidating the peace and reform process, UNDP is strengthening the Union and state/regional parliaments' human resource by enhancing the capacity of MPs, parliamentary committees and administrative and support staff. The institutional capacity is being boosted by supporting strategic management, rules and procedures, libraries, research capacities, and communications systems. Issues related to gender responsiveness, marginalized groups, people living with or affected by HIV and disabled people are being addressed at all levels. UNDP is also promoting mechanisms for constructive engagement between the Parliaments and civil society, also by ensuring CSOs and media more aware and empowered to participate in democratic political processes.
- A major success achieved by UNDP's support project in **Pakistan** is the establishment of the Women's Caucus which has become a powerful platform that cuts across party lines, allowing to build consensus on priority issues concerning

women and ensure that gender concerns are addressed through legislation, policies and programs.

EUROPE and the COMMONWEALTH of INDEPENDENT STATES (CIS)

- **Kyrgyzstan:** Technical assistance was provided to the Parliament in aligning the priority laws with the new constitution as well as national and international commitments. In total, UNDP provided technical expertise for 29 laws, 23 of which have been adopted by the parliament (including the law on political parties, the law on authorities of the President, the law against torture, the Criminal Procedure Codes, the Civil Procedure Codes, the law on foreign policy). These laws laid the foundation for deep political and structural changes in the country and are sensitive to gender, human rights, anti-corruption and environmental issues. UNDP contributed to increasing the quality of laws by introducing reliable legislative procedures and standards of expertise and perfecting its Rules of Procedure (RoP).
- In **Serbia**, where Public expenditures are reaching maximum limits, UNDP has been strengthening the oversight/scrutiny function of the National Assembly in the area of State budget expenditures. UNDP took the lead in piloting an innovative e-tool which is a model of best practice in the region. The innovative instrument is connected to the existing database of the Ministry of Finance and provides real-time data on State budget expenditures to MPs.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- Parliament's role in public safety, crime prevention and national security was significantly enhanced in the **Dominican Republic**. The Chamber of Deputies and the Standing Committee on Interior in particular have been very active in this field, producing - with the technical support of UNDP, a draft law on the regulation and control of firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials; a draft law to create an emergency 911 system; and a draft law to modernize the National Police.
- **El Salvador:** UNDP supported the development of a comprehensive legal framework against gender-based violence. Particular support was provided to the Women's Parliamentary Group in its effort to develop its Agenda for 2012-2015, mainstream gender in the National Budget (UNDP helped draft the Gender Guideline Proposal for the 2013 Budget Development

presented to the Ministry of Finance), and promote legislative reforms and new normative frameworks in favor of women's rights (UNDP helped draft the Action Protocol on Acts of Discrimination and Violence against Women). Support was also provided to the creation of the first Parliamentary Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, and the development of its work agenda. The new Political Parties Law passed on February 14, 2013 mandates that 30% of a party's candidates for municipal councils, the national legislature and the Central American Parliament be women.

GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

Parliamentary Action on Renewable Energy (PARE) Project

The PARE project is using cross-party parliamentary groups to promote renewable energy, new grids and other steps to ensure access to sustainable energy. This entry point for effective development work has proven to be a very successful pilot strategy to promote the issue. The groups have been trained on renewable energy and provided technical assistance and specific knowledge when required to make a policy change or push for legislative reform.

- The cross party **India** group of MPs has played the lead role in more than doubling the country's 2020 renewable energy target from 6% to 15% of electricity, and more than doubling the national renewable energy budget from 0.3% to 0.7% of the national budget through asking over a dozen parliamentary questions in 2013 alone, writing open letters to senior Ministers in the Energy and Environment Ministries, and meeting with the Prime Minister of India to urge greater government support for India's renewable energy industry.
- **Jordan:** The Climate Parliament Group in the Jordanian Parliament requested technical support on the cost of renewable energy in Jordan to prepare for the 2013 budget session in parliament to convince fellow MPs that renewable energy is a price-competitive method of responding to growing demands for electricity in Jordan.
- A cross-party group of MPs has been created in **Tanzania** to consider and drive parliamentary interventions related to energy access, renewable energy, climate change policy, renewable energy policy, renewable energy budgetary allocations and the creation of a favourable investment climate for renewable energy in Tanzania, and participate in building community awareness for action on climate change and renewable energy.

Inclusive and Participative Political Institutions (IPPI) Project

In the post-revolutionary context of the Arab region, UNDP is supporting the political reforms and democratic transitions by promoting inclusive and participative parliaments and political parties and ensuring they have the structure, legal framework and capacity to engage all citizens - particularly youth and women - in the political process.

- In **Algeria**, the Project ensured greater dialogue between the Parliament and marginalized groups, through facilitation of an initial high level workshop between political leaders and representatives of youth. The workshop identified some key actions for promoting greater interaction between citizens and the Parliament, including the opening of committee hearings to the public. As a result of the workshop, the Parliament asked UNDP to conduct a study as to the merits of a change in its rules of procedure to allow open committee hearings, which will be produced for consideration and implementation in 2013.
- In **Jordan**, the new political parties law introduced new regulations for party financing and foreign funding. UNDP helped finalize the development of bylaws regulating party financing. UNDP facilitated dialogues and roundtables among political parties, civil society, youth and women organizations on election-related laws, and a dedicated network was established ahead of the January 2013 elections.
- UNDP's support to the General National Congress (GNC)— the interim assembly emerging from **Libya's** first free, multi-party parliamentary elections, in six decades – resulted in: the provision of draft by-laws for the inaugural session of the GNC; capacity development of newly elected members dealing with parliamentary duties for their very first time via an induction course and the production of three guides training them on a range of issues such as legislative powers in a political system, the structure of parliament, and the rights and duties of elected members; the set-up of the organizational structure of GNC Secretariat through the development of its organigram, website, and terms of references of key positions; training of 70 legal staff on new techniques for drafting laws; the drafting and adoption by the GNC of its Internal Regulations / Rules of Procedure; the establishment of a parliamentary library and research center to ensure newly elected members have access to solid, high quality information (over 700 legal books and guides on parliamentary work were procured) along with the production of a

number of knowledge products i.e.: Code of Conduct for members of GNC, papers on parliamentary communication, criteria and standards for determining financial compensation, etc. Furthermore, in advance of the General National Congress elections, UNDP promoted the political participation of women by training 180 women candidates in media skills and electoral campaign management.

- In **Somalia**, UNDP assisted with the process of electing the Speaker and President, and followed up with immediate support for a basic induction of Members and development of a Strategic Plan to guide the work of the NFP for the next 4 years. UNDP also supported a review of the Rules of Procedure to promote greater public participation. Support was provided for developing administrative priorities, strategic advice on the committee structure and establishing relations with the executive. UNDP also assisted the TFP in preparing the constitutional review plan, which was submitted to the Speaker for endorsement. Finally, UNDP supported an initial assessment of ICT capacity and needs, and the development of a strategy to improve parliamentary communications. It also provided strategic advice to parliament leadership on issues such as reconciliation, outreach and managing house business.
- UNDP is providing support to the new Constituent Assembly (CA) in **Tunisia** to fully play its mandate of Parliament: technical support was provided to draft new laws for political parties and NGOs; representatives from over 50 political parties were trained on constitutional processes in transition, and support was provided to women politicians in conducting successful electoral campaigns. The electronic voting system and the ICT infrastructure in the Assembly were updated and capacities of staff and MPs have been strengthened in that framework as well. UNDP is also supporting the Assembly to successfully lead the participative processes of dialogue and consensus-building around the constitution-making process.

iKNOW Politics

With more than 8000 members, 3500 visits a month, 16.498 visits and 50.047 page visits in 2013 (Jan-June), iKNOW Politics (<http://iknowpolitics.org/>) has proven to be a broad interactive platform for women in politics, academics, researchers, civil society members, international organizations to share experiences, resources, advices and collaborate on issues of interest.

AGORA

Since its launch in March 2010 AGORA, the Portal for Parliamentary Development (www.agora-parl.org), has successfully captured the growing need for knowledge and networking on parliamentary development. The Portal is available in English, French and Arabic and is centered on an active partnership of 28 institutions. AGORA is a cost-effective, flexible project that is able to provide need-based assistance on short notice: a key illustration of this is the recent launch of its Arab Portal (www.agora-parl.org/ar) envisioned to support parliamentary institutions in the Arab States region. Beyond this AGORA has delivered tailored capacity-building trainings and workshops in the field, has provided technical assistance to a range of projects and partners, and has built an innovative online platform with a unique collection of resources (1300 resources) and learning materials on parliamentary development.

Global Parliamentary Report

In 2012, UNDP launched the first ever Global Parliamentary Report (http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/parliamentary_development/the-global-parliamentary-report/), currently available in 6 languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian). The Report is a joint work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNDP, and draws on input from 73 parliaments. It analyzes changes in relations between parliaments and citizens, and suggests improvements to parliamentary strategies for meeting public expectations. It has been used as a basis to launch parliamentary debates and round table discussions in order to enhance parliamentary representation and outreach in a number of countries, including Algeria, Bangladesh, Chile, Ecuador, Morocco, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, as well as in the United States (New York and Washington DC).

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