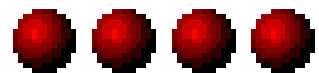




**The General Secretariat of the House of Representatives
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

**STRATEGY OF
THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF JORDAN
2008–2011**





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Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

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Executive Summary

This document, entitled “*Strategy of the General Secretariat of the Jordanian House of Representatives*”, is a strategic outline of the institutional development objectives targeted by the General Secretariat of the Lower House of Parliament. It maps out how the General Secretariat will organize itself, what objectives it will pursue and how development initiatives will be prioritized and implemented during the four coming years.

The process of drafting this Strategy was initiated, under the guidance of H.E Mr. Speaker Al Majali, by the Secretary General of the House of Representatives, Mr. Fayez Shawabkeh. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided support for the achievement of this Strategy through its Project in Support to the Secretariat of the Lower House. The process was motivated by the beginning of the new 15th Legislature of Jordan, launched in December 2007.

The Strategy was prepared through a series of consultations carried out with former and current Members of the House of Representatives, concerned Ministers, the Secretary General, Directors and staff of the Lower House, Human rights and women’s National institutions, Civil Society Organizations, International organizations, as well as few candidates running for elections. It takes account of the findings, lessons learned and recommendations provided by several development initiatives carried out by the General Secretariat in the recent years.

Through this strategic outline, the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives aims at maintaining consistency in its modernization efforts, increasing previous achievements, and responding to both remaining and new challenges. The General Secretariat draws on this Strategy to develop as well a collective understanding of its mission, values and objectives among the Members of the House, the parliamentary staff and, more broadly among citizens.

The Mission and values of the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives, as adopted by the Secretary General and the board of executive officers, are as follows:



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To be an effective and efficient modern institution bringing together its functions with the needs and constitutional responsibilities of its Members with accurate attention to the National development objectives and at all times acting with high values of probity, integrity, neutrality and belonging to the institution of Parliament.



To fulfil this stimulating mission, the General Secretariat is determined to strengthen both its organization and management processes and its capacities to assist the Members in addressing significant National issues tackled by the House of Representatives.

On 2 December 2007, at the Opening of the first Session of the 15th Legislature, His Majesty King Abdullah II stated the targeted political and legislative orientations for the coming four years before the Parliament. At the forefront of the targets come out the protection and promotion of human rights and the implementation of the National development plans. The Parliament was incited to exercise its functions to ensure the achievement of both the reforms included in the National Agenda and the enforcement of the International Commitments made by Jordan.

The House of Representatives performs legislative, oversight and representative functions. It works on the legislative outlines which are necessary to implement the reforms included in the political agenda. It works on harmonizing the national legislative frameworks with the International Conventions ratified by Jordan. It oversees the enforcement of the laws it has adopted and the policies carried out by the Government. It adopts the national budget and monitors its implementation. It ensures that the needs of the citizens are channelled in legislation and policies.

This thorough connection between the parliamentary functions and the National development objectives, leads the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives to envision:





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A House of Representatives playing a key role in favour of National development assisted with efficiency and visibility by its General Secretariat.



The political and legislative agenda requires the General Secretariat to enhance specific capacities in development issues. It entails as well an optimized organization, management and work procedures in the parliamentary administration. The General Secretariat needs also to improve the cooperation between the House of Representatives, the Government, and the concerned National institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)¹ and other International organizations.

To face the challenges, the General Secretariat has identified four Strategic Objectives and a series of main outputs which are:

- ***Objective 1: Mainstream the capacities in addressing National development objectives and Human rights*** by (a) providing support to the Members in development issues and Human rights, and (b) creating a Space for dialogue with representatives of women, youth and marginalized groups.
- ***Objective 2: Professionalize its structures and human resources*** by (a) enforcing its organization and the management of human resources, (b) mainstreaming the knowledge of the staff on the parliamentary functions and (c) promoting constructive interactions between the members and the staff.
- ***Objective 3: Modernize its procedures*** by (a) improving the rules of functioning, (b) setting up a Work flow system and (c) designing an e-parliament strategy.
- ***Objective 4: Reinforce cooperation and information*** by (a) increasing the collaboration in cooperation programs, (b) enhancing the cooperation with CSOs and (c) creating new information materials.

¹ Including trade unions, media organizations, NGOs, and professional associations...



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To achieve the outputs and attain its four Strategic Objectives, the General Secretariat will implement the following main initiatives:

- Series of Forums, Seminars, Round tables and meetings;
- Series of Studies, Reports, and publications;
- Functional Review;
- Human Resources Management and Development Plan;
- Training programmes;
- Reform of the Organizational Structure;
- Setting up of new entities;
- Proposal for reforming the Rules of Procedures;
- Automation of processes;
- Framework of assistance;
- Internship Program for university students and graduates...

This Strategy encloses the priority objectives and activities of the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives. It gives priority to the initiatives which can benefit to a larger number of achievements as well as to the greater number of Members and staff of the Lower House.

This document consists of the Vision, the Mission and the four Strategic Objectives of the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives. It analyses the challenges of the parliamentary administration and the means of facing them. It describes the initiatives and highlights the approaches for implementing them. It encloses a Strategic workplan which underlines the objectives, the expected outputs and activities as well as key indicators for their performance.

To be implemented, the Strategy requires a multifaceted support from National and International organizations and institutions. The needed support includes technical cooperation, the provision of expertise and information, as well as the funding of the initiatives foreseen by this Strategy.

The implementation of the Strategy will be monitored and a final evaluation will be undertaken in 2011.



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Introduction

The General Secretariat of the House of Representatives, based on its fundamental goals– to assist the Members to fulfil their parliamentary functions– intends to uphold the quality and effectiveness of its work.

This Strategy is a comprehensive statement of the institutional development objectives of the General Secretariat of the Jordanian House of Representatives. It aims at helping the General Secretariat to maintain consistency in its modernization efforts. It seeks ultimately to help the General Secretariat in enhancing its effectiveness.

The Strategy was prepared based on the conviction that upholding the quality and effectiveness of the work of the General Secretariat cannot focus just on the processes and institution–building. The approach contained in this document combines institutional and process–strengthening with support on issues that the House of Representatives will face.

The Strategy maps out how the General Secretariat will organize itself, what objectives it will pursue and how initiatives will be prioritized and

implemented. It was elaborated for the four coming years. It is based on the priority objectives which have been identified with the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives. Priority was given to the initiatives which can benefit to a larger number of achievements as well as to the greater number of Members and staff.

Background

In recent years, Jordan has embarked on a series of strategic reforms which aim at achieving social, economic and political development. The major reforms intend to enforce basic rights and freedoms, stimulate economic development, improve social welfare and security and provide services and infrastructure.

Parliament is the place where policies are discussed, laws shaped, budgetary allocations decided and interests of citizens represented. It has a key role to play in the way to development. For this reason, among the development efforts undertaken in the recent decades, the role and functions of the Parliament have strongly improved in Jordan. Important



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mechanisms instituting checks and balances of power were applied. Major improvements were made in lawmaking, oversight and representation.

The bicameral legislative branch is composed of an appointed upper House—the Senate, and an elected Lower House—the House of Representatives. Both Houses may initiate debates, submit bills, and vote on legislation. The House of Representatives alone has the right to cast a vote of confidence against the cabinet. At the representative level, the Elections Law, issued in 2001, raised the number of seats in the House of Representatives from 80 to 104. It increased the number of constituencies from 21 to 44, redistributed parliamentary seats, and lowered the voting age from 19 to 18. In 2003, six additional seats were allocated to women, making the number of seats 110. Seats are reserved for Christians, Circassians and Bedouins.

The latest legislative elections took place in November 2007. The new 15th Legislature of Jordan was launched in December 2007. At its opening, a series of political and legislative priorities have been highlighted and identified as the core work of the new House.

The beginning of the new Legislature provides an opportunity for the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives to engage in a roadmap for its development during the coming four years.

The opportunity to implement change and development is provided also by a clear set of National development objectives of Jordan as stated mainly in the National Agenda which identifies the quality and effectiveness of structures, functions, and management as well as the capacity and motivation of public servants themselves as key in good governance and social, economic and political empowerment.

Purpose

During the past years, several development initiatives, projects, needs assessments studies, and organizational reviews were carried out for the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives. This Strategy takes account of the findings, lessons learned and recommendations which were provided by previous development initiatives. It articulates a strategic framework to face the remaining challenges.



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The strategy is guided by international parliamentary standards and best practices tailored to Jordan's realities and relevant in regard to the requirements and possibilities of the House of Representatives. It has been shaped with a thorough inclusion of the National development objectives.

Methodology

The Strategy was elaborated in a participatory approach implemented through consultations.

The Strategy was prepared in three phases. One first phase was intended to collect and analyze previous studies, reports and data. National reports and development plans also served as sources of information². Several stakeholders' were interviewed and their opinions on the development priorities and needs of the General Secretariat were collected.

Interview meetings were carried out with former Members of the 14th Parliament, concerned Ministers, the Secretary General, Directors and staff of the House of Representatives, Human rights and

women's National institutions, Civil Society Organizations, International organizations, as well as few candidates running for elections.

After review of the data and information, a first set of strategic alternatives were generated as a result of a SWOT analysis.

The second phase of the preparation process was intended to discuss the strategic objectives were identified with the Secretary General and Directors of the House of Representatives. A general decision meeting was organized to review, discuss and adopt a document consisting of a common vision, a mission statement, and the current situation analysis as well as the strategic objectives for the next four years. Other meetings were carried out with the stakeholders met during phase one.

The last phase of the preparation process resulted in a final document named "Strategy of the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives". The Strategy was presented, discussed and adopted in its final version by the Speaker, the Secretary General and Directors of the House of Representatives.

² See Bibliography



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The Strategy was launched from the House of Representatives at the beginning of the 15th Legislature.

Structure

This document consists of the Vision and the Missions of the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives. It includes the Strategic objectives of the General secretariat for the coming four years, which are to:

- Mainstream the capacities in addressing National development objectives and Human rights;
- Professionalize structures and human resources;
- Modernize procedures;
- Reinforce cooperation and information.

A Strategic workplan underlines the objectives, the expected outputs and activities as well as key indicators for their implementation.



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Vision

**A House of Representatives
playing a key role in favour of National development
assisted with efficiency and visibility by its General Secretariat**

Mission and Values

**The mission of
the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives
is to be an effective and efficient modern institution
bringing together its functions
with the needs and constitutional responsibilities of its Members
with accurate attention to the National development objectives
and at all times acting with high values of probity, integrity, neutrality
and belonging to the institution of Parliament.**

Strategic Objectives (2008-2011)

To fulfil its mission, the General Secretariat intends to uphold the quality and effectiveness of its work by strengthening both its processes as well as its capacities in development issues. The objectives of the General Secretariat are to:

- **Mainstream the capacities in addressing National development objectives and Human rights;**
- **Professionalize the structures and human resources;**



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- **Modernize the procedures;**
- **Reinforce cooperation and information.**



Mainstreamed capacities in addressing National development objectives and Human rights

OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

Enhanced support in addressing National development objectives and challenges

Parliamentary Forum on the national development objectives

Round tables on development objectives and challenges

Study on the Millennium Development Goals

Presentation of Jordan's National report on the state of implementation of the MDGs

Series of studies on development issues

Enhanced support in addressing Human rights

Parliamentary Forum on Human rights

Treaties Presentation of the latest national reports before International bodies

Information workshops on the 6 Human rights International conventions ratified by Jordan

Series of studies

Internship Program

Human rights Center in the parliamentary Library

Human Rights documentation for MPS and staff

Space for dialogue with representatives of youth, women and marginalized groups

Seminars on bills under discussion

Seminars on National policies and legislations

Legislative elections took place in Jordan in November 2007. The new House held its first plenary session in December. On 2 December 2007, in his opening speech of the first ordinary session of the 15th Parliament, HM King Abdullah II stated the targeted political and legislative orientations for the coming 4 years.

HM confirmed the continuation of the process of political, economic and social building, reform and modernization, seeking the ultimate goal of improving citizens' standard of living and providing the means for a decent life to every Jordanian family.

The following legislative priorities were clearly highlighted:

- Protection and promotion of human rights;
- Protection and promotion of the rights of women, children and the youth;
- Investment and tax reform;
- Landlords and Tenants Law;
- Freedom of the press and information.



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The Parliament was incited to exercise its oversight function to ensure that the Government implements the National Agenda and achieves the enforcement of human rights.

The National Agenda was developed as a mean to address the challenges facing Jordan. It is shaped to improve the quality of life, build a strong economy, guarantee basic freedoms and human rights and strengthen democracy and cultural and political pluralism.

The main policy initiatives which were developed through the National Agenda include a series of reforms intended to (1) stimulate economic development and improve social welfare and security; (2) enforce basic rights and freedoms; (3) provide services and infrastructure.

Whereas the Government is primarily responsible of the initiatives which are foreseen by the National Agenda, the House of Representatives has a key role to play at different levels of their implementation.

The House will work on the legislative frameworks which are necessary to the initiatives foreseen by the national political agenda. It will oversee the

enforcement of the laws it has adopted and will monitor the implementation of the policies. The policies foreseen by the Government will have a direct impact on the national budget which will be adopted by the Parliament. The House of Representatives specifically will have to ensure that people's needs are channelled in the political, economical and social initiatives.

Enhanced support in addressing National development objectives

The political agenda put emphasis on main legislative priorities among which are legislations on the protection and promotion of human rights, rights of women, children and the youth, freedom of the press and information, the landlords and tenants law, the investment and tax reform.

More specifically, the Governmental Statement made before the Parliament at the Opening of the current Legislature, underlined a series of legislative priorities which are necessary for the achievement of the National development objectives:

- Law on political activity
- Public Association Law
- Media Law



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- Legislation on Civil society institutions
- Revisions of discriminatory provisions against women in legislations
- Election Law
- Rights of the disabled law
- Investment and tax reform
- Landlords and Tenants Law
- The Judicial authority Law
- Laws on business activities
- Legislative frameworks of the financial services sector
- Revision of laws and legislation on the educational bodies and councils
- Legislations on new technologies and convergence of media and telecommunications
- Legislations for environmental sustainability

At a broader level, Jordan was among the 189 member states that signed the Millennium Declaration and is committed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs aim at eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing maternal and child mortality, combating HIV/Aids, malaria and tuberculosis, ensuring environmental sustainability, and building a global partnership for development.

Challenges

The development objectives pursued in Jordan are related to political and socio-economic development. These objectives include environment, Human rights, economy and finance, new technologies...

The House of Representatives has a key role to play in the implementation and enforcement of the targeted legislations and policies through its law-making, oversight and representation responsibilities.

At the legislative level, the Members of the House draft and examine legislation thus securing it enforces the National development objectives as well as broader development frameworks such as the one provided by the Millennium Development Goals.

In terms of oversight, the Members advance and monitor socio-economic development through oversight of the enforcement of laws, the execution of the budget and the monitoring of policies and programs.

At the representation level, the House of Representatives is expected to channel



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the needs of citizens into legislation and national policies.

The House of Representatives can promote better achievements of the Millennium Development Goals throughout the bill-drafting process and in reviewing the implementation of programmes aimed at meeting the targets in health, education, gender and economic development.

To assist the Members with efficiency to perform their parliamentary action for the enforcement of the National development issues and objectives, the General Secretariat needs to facilitate the access to information and expertise in the development challenges and objectives to both Members and staff.

Goals

The parliamentary administration has a major role to play in providing the opportunities to the Members to consider the development objectives and the means to attain them. One significant way to do so is to facilitate the access to information on development issues, challenges and objectives.

The General Secretariat will provide assistance to the Members of the House of Representatives in addressing national development objectives and challenges in order to enhance the role of the House in their enforcement.

Initiatives

While sensitizing the Members and the Staff, of the House of Representatives, a special attention will be given to the development of the relations between Parliament, Government, CSOs, academics and concerned UN and other International organizations, which are all major players and information stakeholders in the development fields. The initiatives which are foreseen tackle the larger number of MPs and staff.

A **parliamentary Forum** will bring together MPs and staff, Government, national institutions, International organizations and CSOs to debate and exchange information on the national development objectives of Jordan.

The Forum will provide a space for dialogue on the development commitments. It will provide information to the Members and staff of the House of Representatives on the Millennium



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Development Goals and other International commitments made by Jordan.

It will particularly debate on the means to achieve the development objectives and on the role of the House of Representatives at this level. It will also help Members to prioritize the development issues which have to be tackled by the House of Representatives.

This event will give visibility to the role and action of the House of Representatives in dealing with the National development objectives. At the same time, the emphasis on the development issues will be channelled nationally through the media.

Other initiatives aim at helping the House of Representatives to align its legislative activities with broader development objectives. The targets are to promote the understanding of the Members and the parliamentary administration on such objectives.

Parliamentary round tables on the development objectives and challenges will be carried out regularly. They will bring together MPs, Governmental officials, representatives of CSOs and

International organizations, experts and academics.

The topics of the round tables will be identified based on priority legislations on: Environment, decentralization, poverty, social security, elections, media etc...

The round tables will achieve an exchange of information and views among the concerned stakeholders. They will help the House of Representatives to better impact on the achievement of the legislative priorities.

The approach also consists in providing background information on the development objectives to the Members of the House of Representatives.

The General Secretariat will make an extensive use of experts to work with the researchers of the Secretariat within the Directorate of Studies and information.

Providing information will be based on the principles of transparency and participation as described hereafter:

Transparency is enforced when the information is made available while bearing in mind that Members must be aware it exists and must know how they



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have access to it in relevant and appropriate mechanisms.

Active participation is facilitated by the setting up of meetings, seminars, committees' meetings, forums, roundtables, focus groups, citizen advisory groups, surveys... which purposes are to access, analyze and exchange views on the information.

A series of studies on Jordan's development challenges will provide information to the Members of the House of Representatives on the challenges faced by the social, economical, environmental, industrial, security, and other sectors... A special focus will be made on the relation between the challenges faced and the International commitments made by Jordan.

The studies will provide information on the International commitments made by Jordan and their implementation in national legislations and policies.

The studies will align their contents on the information obtained through the development round tables carried out in the House of Representatives.

A study on the Millennium Development Goals will provide information on the

MDGs, the state of progress achieved globally as well as at the National level. It will highlight the remaining challenges. It will particularly focus on the role of the House of Representatives in legislating, overseeing the implementation of governmental policies and programmes and in representing the citizens for the achievement of the MDGs.

The latest **National report of Jordan on the state of implementation of the MDGs** will be presented before the House of Representatives. The Members will be informed on its contents with a special emphasis on the mechanisms to enhance parliamentary inputs for achieving the MDGs.

Enhanced support in addressing Human rights

The principles followed by the reform processes in Jordan are based on both the principles stated in the Constitution and those stated in the International Human rights Treaties which have been ratified by Jordan.

The national development plans emphasize on the promotion and protection of Human rights. They focus



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as well on the enhancement of a culture of Human rights.

Jordan has acceded to six of the seven major United Nations conventions concerned with human rights. In 2006, the Government has published 5 of them in the Official Gazette making them part of the Jordanian legal system:

- the Two International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1975),
- the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1974),
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1992),
- the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1991),
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and its two Optional Protocols (2000).

Jordan has also acceded to seven of the eight International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions concerned with human rights. It has ratified the Convention (98) on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining (1968), Conventions (29) and (105) on Forced or Compulsory Labour, Convention (100) on Equal Remuneration

for Men and Women, Convention (111) on the prevention of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, Convention (138) on the minimum age for admission to employment and the Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour.

At the regional level, Jordan has agreed to the "Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam" (1990) and to the "Arab Charter of Human Rights/Amended" (2004).

At the National level, a National Center for Human Rights was established in 2002. It aims at enhancing human rights principles and strengthening human rights culture.

At the parliamentary level, the House of Representatives has a committee for freedoms and citizen rights.

Challenges

The House of Representatives has a significant responsibility for promoting, protecting and realizing human rights. The human rights values and principles should guide and direct the work of the House and its Members in their law-



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making, oversight and representation responsibilities.

The implementation of the human rights Treaties into the national legislation is a central mission of the House. The Members examine the means of implementing and protecting the economic, social, political, civil and cultural rights through the revision and analysis of legislation.

Goals

An enhanced parliamentary knowledge of Human rights will enhance the contribution of the House of Representatives, its administration, its bodies and its members to human rights through parliamentary processes.

The House of Representatives can provide better support to the National Human rights protection frameworks and promote the culture of Human rights which is targeted by the national development plans.

The main objectives aim at incorporating human rights standards contained in international human rights instruments into national laws. This can take the form of ensuring that human rights standards

are applied to national issues such as gender equality, the rights of minorities, the disabled, the aged, youth...

Several Conventions have mechanisms to monitor their implementation at the national level. The House of Representatives is essential for the follow-up and implementation of the recommendations made by such mechanisms, especially when they relate to legislation and national policies and programmes.

The House of Representatives needs to be informed on the contents of the reports submitted by Jordan to the CEDAW Committee and others. It has also to be informed of the recommendations made by the International bodies.

Initiatives

The Human Rights Institute can be a key partner in the implementation of the initiatives. A special attention should be given to the development of the relations between Parliament, Government, CSOs, academics and concerned UN and other International organizations, which main field of work is related to human rights. Although the House of Representatives has a committee for freedoms and citizen



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rights, the importance given to Human rights in the National development plans justifies that all the Members and the maximum number of staff be targeted by the following initiatives.

In order to uphold the support which can be provided by the House of Representatives to Jordan's Human rights commitments, the initiatives aim at upholding the understanding of the Members and the parliamentary administration of Human rights principles and Treaties.

A **parliamentary Forum** will provide background information on Human rights Treaties to all MPs. The Forum will emphasize on the main contents of the Human rights treaties ratified by Jordan. It will particularly help in identifying the role of the House of Representatives in their implementation and promotion at the national level.

The Forum will bring together MPs, parliamentary staff, concerned Governmental institutions, national and International organizations, experts, academics and CSOs.

A series of **Information workshops on the 6 International conventions** ratified by Jordan will identify the challenges,

achievements and the legislations and policies which are needed to implement them at the National level. They will help the House of Representatives to better impact on the promotion and protection of Human political, civil, social, economic, and cultural rights through its legislative, oversight and representative functions.

The workshops will bring together MPs, Governmental officials, representatives of CSOs, International organizations, experts and academics.

The House of Representatives will also organize **seminars on the National reports** which have been or will be submitted before the International mechanisms in charge of monitoring the state of implementation of International Conventions. The House of Representatives will be informed on the contents of the reports and on the recommendations made. It will identify the means of implementing the recommendations and the follow-up legislative, oversight and representative actions.

The approach also consists in enhancing the capacities of the parliamentary administration to provide information on human rights.



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The General Secretariat will make an extensive use of experts and university students to work with the researchers of the Secretariat within the Directorate of Studies and information.

Providing information will be based on the principles of transparency and participation as described hereafter:

Transparency is enforced when the information is made available while bearing in mind that Members must be aware it exists and must know how they have access to it in relevant and appropriate mechanisms.

Active participation is facilitated by the setting up of meetings, seminars, committees' meetings, forums, roundtables, focus groups, citizen advisory groups, surveys... which purposes are to access, analyze and exchange views on the information.

The General Secretariat will use experts and university students to work with the researchers of the Secretariat to draft a series of 6 **background studies** on the 6 Human rights Conventions ratified by Jordan. The studies will be drafted to inform the Members on the contents of the Conventions and the means for their

implementation in the National legislation and policies.

In order to provide research facilities and draft the series of studies, the House of Representatives will establish an **Internship Program** for university students and graduates. They will help meet the research needs in the fields of Human rights. The university interns will work under the guidance of national consultants, academics or experts. The overall process of preparation of the studies will be supervised by the Directorate of studies and information of the House of Representatives.

To allow longer term facilities to access relevant information on Human Rights, a **Human rights Center** will be established in the parliamentary Library. The Center will gather publications and books on Human rights, including International and Arab Human rights Treaties. The United Nations system can provide the Center with relevant publications. It is essential to promote the Center among MPs- a formal launch and communication tools can be relevant to that end.

It is essential as well to distribute **documentation on Human Rights**, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Arab Charter on Human



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rights, to all MPs and concerned staff, in cooperation with the United Nations system.

Space for dialogue with representatives of women, youth and marginalized groups

Through its representative responsibility, the House of Representatives can make a key contribution to political, economic and social development.

Strengthening the knowledge of MPs and staff on Human rights and development objectives can use therefore a more direct dialogue with citizens.

The right to vote, the ability for citizens and organizations to participate in the development of legislation and the role for public inputs to the national budget process are some of the means for people to assert their rights.

Through its representative functions, the House of Representatives channels people's needs into legislation and national policies. Given the National objectives and priorities, it is expected to respond to the needs of women, youth and marginalized groups.

Challenges

The relation between the House of Representatives and the civil society in Jordan is weak. In the past, few attempts to encourage more interaction between the civil society and the parliament have revealed that individuals and groups in civil society misunderstand the role and functions of the legislature and that they are often unskilled in articulating their needs to legislators.

Goals

The House of Representatives can visibly reaffirm human rights values and principles through enabling better participation of the public and especially marginalized groups to the legislative process at the levels of bill drafting, or analysis of bills and amendments.

The interaction is especially relevant on issues related to economic, social and cultural rights. The House of Representatives can engage in policy debates and monitor social and economic performance through dialogue and engagement with citizens as claim holders.



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Committees offer important entry points for enabling the participation of claim holders in the legislative, oversight, and representative work.

Initiatives

The committee for freedoms and citizen rights of the House of Representatives is an important entry point for enhancing human rights. It provides a direct mechanism for the House of Representatives to closely interact with the National Institute for Human rights and with representatives of women, youth, marginalized and other claim holders' groups.

A **series of seminars** can launch the process of establishing a space for dialogue between MPs, especially the members of the freedoms and citizen rights Committee and representatives of women, youth, marginalized, as well as other concerned groups.

The main targets of the seminars are to provide a space to debate on bills under discussion in the House and on National policies and programmes directly with peoples' representatives.

In order for the concerned groups to get well prepared, it is essential that they participate in identifying the issues to be discussed in the seminars. It is as well important to provide them with explanatory notes on the role and functions of the House of Representatives and on the objectives pursued by the seminars before they take place.

The main expected outputs of the seminars are to provide the Members of the concerned committees of the House of Representatives with the opinions of women, youth, marginalized and other groups. The opinions will be related to bills under discussion in committees.

The process can lead other concerned committees to invite representatives of the concerned groups to directly hear them and in such provide them with the opportunity to impact on legislation.



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Professionalized structures and human resources

OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

Enhanced organization

Functional review
Reformed organizational structure
Guide book
Legislative entity for bill drafting and analysis
Human resources entity

Enforced human resources management

Human resources Committee
Human Resources Management and Development Plan

Mainstreamed knowledge of the staff on the parliamentary functions

Training program
International Forum for the staff on the role and functions of parliament
Information workshops
Handbook on the role and functions of parliament

Constructive interactions between Members and staff

Code of ethics
Workshop on the functioning of the House of Representatives

Representatives has evolved pragmatically by updating its organizational structure, creating new administrative entities, recruiting and redeploying staff.

In its development efforts, the General Secretariat benefits from the support of the political leadership of the House. According to the rule of procedures of the House of Representatives, the Speaker of the House is the head of its administration. The Speaker is implicated therefore in any organizational, personnel and administrative matters.

The General Secretariat is subject to the national Civil Service Regulations like all public sector institutions in Jordan. Nevertheless, measures have been taken to increase its budgetary and administrative independence.

In the recent years, the General Secretariat has carried out several capacity development initiatives. Among them, an organizational review was carried out by UNDP in 2005 which main findings and conclusions recommended change in the context, the organization,

In the recent years, the General Secretariat of the House of



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and the human resources of the General Secretariat.

At the contextual level, the review recommended the publication of Codes of ethics for parliamentarians and staff to tackle rights and obligations and institutional belonging.

At the organizational level, the review recommended to:

- Undertake a Strategy to plan ahead for the Parliament and the Secretariat;
- Divide the General Secretariat's structure into three major branches and reduce the number of directorates in the General Secretariat;
- Staff some key vacant positions while encouraging women representation in the General Secretariat;
- Produce organizational manuals;
- Adjust the imbalance in the staff between the directorates which perform parliamentary functions and those which perform administrative functions;
- Build up in House a pool of experts and consultants;

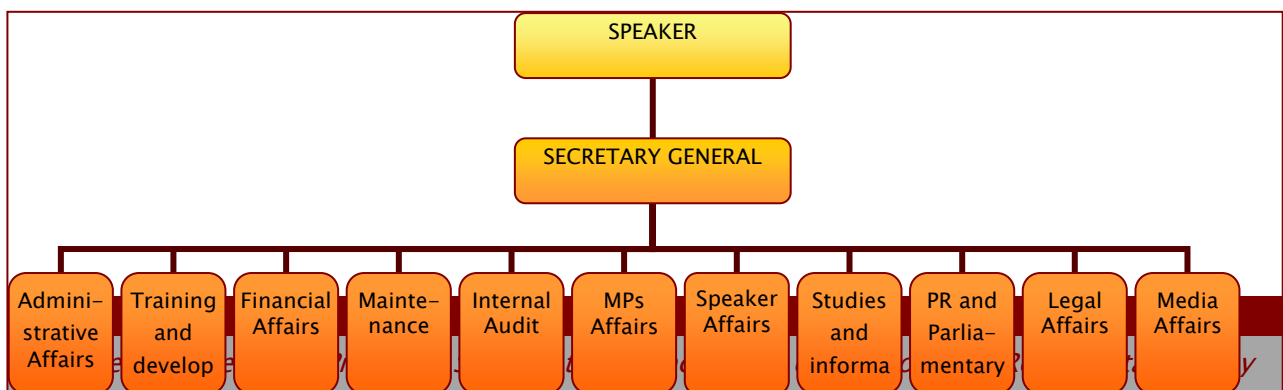
- Implement the principles of merit appointment, promotion, and development.

At the level of Human resources management and development, the review recommended to carry out an analysis of the needs and requirements of each directorate and division in order to plan staffing, redeployments and training. It also recommended establishing an overall management development plan and a comprehensive manpower policy.

Enhanced organization

The General Secretariat of the House of Representatives has created new directorates and units. It also has recruited and redeployed staff. The organizational structure has developed and changed over the recent years.

Currently, it comprises 11 directorates divided as bellow:





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Challenges

The National Agenda considers that economic, social and political improvements depend on the quality and effectiveness of Jordan's public administration through its structures, functions, management systems, working procedures and the capacity and motivation of public servants.

The role and functions of the Parliament have strongly improved in Jordan in the recent decades. Major improvements were made in lawmaking, oversight and representation. The organization of the House of Representatives therefore has to evolve as well from a least to a more complex structure, organization and systems capable of channeling the political development as well as new technologies, management and information systems.

Goals

The organizational structure needs to provide a framework to each entity³ as well as to the whole administration to better perform. It implicates that the

³ Division/ Section/ Unit/ Directorate or any other administrative body

structure illustrates the roles, missions and tasks of the different levels of the General Secretariat.

It needs to include a rational number of entities based on the elimination of redundant, duplicated or missing functions.

It is essential also that this frame for the administrative organization of the House facilitates horizontal coordination between the entities, especially for entities which have complimentary or dependent functions.

Finally, the structure of the General Secretariat misses currently two major entities which need to be established. First is a specialized entity for legislative assistance and facilities and second is a Human resources entity. Both are essential in regard to the objectives which are pursued by the General Secretariat.

Initiatives

An external specialized expertise (consultant) is needed to execute the initiatives which are described hereafter. It is essential to establish a restructuring committee formed of Members of



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parliament, the Secretary General, directors and staff. The expert will work closely with the restructuring committee all the way through the process. This approach will allow the beneficiaries to identify the needs, impact on the recommendations and ensure the implementation of the reformed structure.

Reforming the organizational structure of the General Secretariat can make the coordination among directorates easier, reflect better the main functions and reorganize the balance of powers.

This reform has to be based on an in-depth analysis of the existing structural problems. A **functional review** is the main tool of structural reform. It can provide the analytical basis and guide for the structural reform.

The functional review will identify:

- The roles, missions and tasks of the different levels of General Secretariat;
- The redundant functions, duplication between and within directorates at various levels, missing functions, and functions that could be merged;
- The potential inconsistencies in the levels of responsibilities;

- Areas for improving horizontal coordination between entities with complimentary or dependent functions;
- Potential areas for decentralization.

In the past, there was no comprehensive written public material describing the structures, functions, and internal administrative procedures of the General Secretariat. After the restructuring, it is essential that such material be prepared.

A **guide book** describing the functions and internal administrative procedures can be published and distributed among MPs and staff.

It will provide a common understanding of the functions and scales of responsibilities. It will also allow better information and knowledge on the role and the functioning of the Secretariat.

While reforming the organizational structures of the General Secretariat, it is essential to foresee the **establishment of a legislative entity** for bill drafting and analysis. Such an entity does not exist currently although Members need to have access to in-house efficient parliamentary services for bill drafting, legislative information and analysis. The unit will be staffed with specialized human resources.



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A **Human resources entity** has to be established as well. Currently, Human resources are managed within the directorate of administrative affairs. The concept of human resources management and development need to be enforced through a specialized administrative entity which functions will also include training and development.

Enforced Human resources management

Civil servants in Jordan are subject to the national Civil Service Regulations. The staff members of the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives are civil servants.

A series of principles of Human resources management applies in the Civil Service. First, Public Service is a responsibility and a moral commitment to be held on the basis of merit (Article 11). Second, except for the Higher/Upper Category jobs, it is not permissible to occupy any public office without holding competitive exams (Article 12). Third, jobs must be classified into groups, each containing the identical jobs with respect to the nature of activity, level of responsibility and duties, and qualifications required for occupying

them (Article 13). Fourth, jobs should be described in such a manner that each job must include a functional title, the authority pertaining to the job, general description of its responsibilities and duties, analytic description of its obligations and responsibilities, and qualifications, practical experiences, and skills required for holding it (Article 14). Fifth, all employees, except Upper Category, are subject to the annual evaluation process which should take into consideration the employee's competence, productivity, and behavior regarding superiors, colleagues, subordinates, and the public (Article 69). Sixth, promotion should be to a vacant job (Article 75). Besides, the first priority in promotion is the employee's competence as indicated in the last two years annual evaluation report and the academic qualification of the employee. Seniority comes next if the scores are equal on competence and qualification. In case of equal scores, competitive exams must be held to select the most eligible (Article 76).

A Civil Service Bureau observes the application of the Civil Service Regulations in the appointment and promotion of the staffs of the General Secretariat. It notifies the Speaker in case of violations. However, it has currently no



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role in enforcing human resources management based on merit and performance evaluation.

Challenges

The management principles which are stated by the Civil service regulations need to be enforced to reach a more effective and efficient Human resources management in the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives.

The recruitment and promotion systems fail currently to attract and promote qualified staff. A poor performance management is leading to inadequate incentives to perform well. There is as well a lack of common understanding of the staff in regard to the mission of the General Secretariat. Last but not least, the Members of the House tend to interfere in recruitments and promotions. All factors that result in hindering the efficient management of human resources.

A major concern is that political interferences– *wasta* in Arabic– often become an important source of new appointments, staff redeployment and promotions. Nevertheless, this reality cannot become an accepted mean of

managing human resources. It is not only contrary to the Civil Service Regulations, it is as well conflicting with the national policies which strive towards an enhanced public service and qualified civil servants. It is contrary as well to the values of the society which believes and invests in education.

Interferences encourage the staff to consider that qualifications, experience, capacities development, efforts, and commitment are not what counts in the workplace. They implement a vicious and time-consuming circle of “give and take”.

Goals

The goals are not to establish a new management system which would subtract the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives from the Civil Service.

The goals are to provide the General Secretariat with an effective means for enforcing a thorough implementation of the management principles provided by the Civil Service Regulations.

Initiatives



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An external specialized expertise (consultant) is needed to execute the initiative described hereafter. It is essential to establish a human resources committee formed of Members of parliament, the Secretary General, directors and staff as well as a representative of the Civil Service Bureau. The expert will work closely with the human resources committee all the way through the process. This approach will allow the beneficiaries to identify the needs, impact on the recommendations and ensure the implementation of the produced plan.

A **Human Resources Management and Development Plan** will provide the basis for enforcing the principles of the Civil Service Regulations in the General Secretariat.

The Management and development plan will describe the recruitment, hiring, termination and standard work rules for all staff. The Plan will also include all job descriptions including qualifications, duties, reporting relationships and key indicators. It will implement performance appraisals to be conducted and documented annually.

In all its contents, the Management and development plan will of course maintain

a high compliance with the Civil Service Regulations. It will constitute a policy which has to be published and broadly distributed to all the staff. Like all plans, it has to be regularly reviewed and updated.

It will provide as well the means to help the staff develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and abilities. For that, it will emphasize on trainings, career development, performance management and development, and organization development.

The Human resources management and development plan will hinder political interferences (wasta) by means of efficient checks and balances that limit the discretionary powers of politicians over recruitments and promotions. Any interference will have to be linked to merit selections.

Such a plan has also to benefit from the **establishment of a human resources Committee** which can be composed of some members of parliament, the Secretary General, a representative of the Civil Service, and a team of directors.



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Mainstreamed knowledge of the staff on the parliamentary functions

The human resources and management plan will concentrate on providing opportunities for professional development and training for the staff. It will assess the needs thoroughly to draw both on job skill areas and areas such as personal development.

Several capacity development programmes and activities have been carried out by the General Secretariat in cooperation with International organizations. Many capacities and skills have been enhanced. Nevertheless, capacity building is a multi-dimensional, long and continuous process in the parliamentary field.

Challenges

In any legislature, the parliamentary staff provides continuity, stability and historical knowledge. Most of the parliamentary staff deals directly with Members of parliament who expect support across the whole range of their parliamentary work.

From their side, the staff members rarely identify their functions as such. Generally, the Members and the staff have a different understanding on the missions, the goals and *raison d'être* of the administration of Parliament. It is particularly the case in the Jordanian House of Representatives.

As much as building the professional capacities and job skills of the staff, enhancing their cultural sensitivity in parliamentary matters and their background knowledge of the parliamentary functions are essential.

Goals

Enhancing the knowledge of the staff in parliamentary affairs and building a common conception of their missions, is an entry point to implement more aware means of working.

It will help the staff to be more perceptive of its functions and more responsive in regard to the means of performing them.

Initiatives

The training program has to be part of the Management and development Plan.



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It will have to be drawn and executed under the supervision of the newly established Human Resources management entity.

A training program for the staff on the parliamentary functions can support the knowledge, capacities and skills of the staff to provide official information, advisory, logistical and administrative services as well as in assisting in drafting legislation.

An **International Forum on the role and functions of parliament**, will bring together parliamentary staff from foreign parliaments and the staff of the Lower House of the Jordanian Parliament and will constitute the first initiative of this kind.

The main objectives of the Forum are to exchange experience and knowledge, discuss new working tools and good practices and to debate on the role played by the staff of parliament in providing assistance across the whole range of the parliamentary work.

Along with the Forum, **information workshops** on parliamentary committees, research and studies, inter-parliamentary relations, and communication can help

the staff to share experience and better visualize their roles in each specific parliamentary area.

It is essential to ensure follow-up to the Forum and the workshops. The directors of the General Secretariat can be entrusted with the mission of drafting a report of the Forum and the information workshops proceedings and conclusions. This report can be a **Handbook on the parliamentary functions** and on the role and functions of the parliamentary staff. This exercise can enable a more effective participation to the Forum and the workshops, an efficient follow-up and a better implementation of the recommendations.

Constructive interactions between Members and staff

The legislative elections took place in Jordan in November 2007. New Members of parliament were elected for the first time. Independents of various tendencies constitute 89% of the House and representatives of the opposition won 5,5% of the seats.

Challenges



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New members, either new or returning, constitute to a certain extent a challenge for any parliamentary administration. The members come from different professional backgrounds and different constituencies. They endorse different programs and agendas. They represent different interests and will defend different issues during their term of office.

Although this is usual in the political life, it can create a lack of institutional consciousness and belonging among the Members. Nevertheless, the power and development of the legislature strongly depends on the concern of its members.

Goals

It is essential that a culture of belonging to the legislature as an institution be well-established at least among a group of leading Members.

In the way to professionalizing the structures and human resources, a special attention should be given to the relations between the Members and the parliamentary staff.

The targets are to promote a better understanding of the actual functions of

the staff, easier relations between MPs and staff, and protection from political interferences in the administration of the General Secretariat.

Initiatives

A **Code of ethics** can help to promote, among both MPs and staff, the principles of responsibility, integrity, probity, respect, non interference as the core values of the General Secretariat. It needs to be acknowledged by MPs and the staff and broadly distributed.

The staff and the MPs also need to discuss, debate and adopt together the management principles of the General Secretariat. A **workshop on the functioning of the House of Representatives** can promote a common understanding of the principles which will be enforced through the management and development plan. It can as well allow to debate on the rights and obligations of both the Members and the staff.



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Modernized procedures

OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

Improved rules of functioning

Reform Committee
Proposal for reform of the rules of procedures
Guide book on legislative procedures

Workflow System

Review of the current procedures and processes
Workflow system
Legislative status system
Training on the legislative status system
Publication of all legislative documents on the web site

E-Parliament

E-parliament Strategy

information and tasks are still passed and performed manually.

Jordan has embarked in an e-Government initiative primarily dedicated to delivering services to people across society. It is seen as an integral element of the National Agenda, aligned with larger national priorities for socio-economic development and government transformation.

The e-Government aims at improving social development, enhancing the openness, effectiveness and efficiency of the Government, developing the skills of public sector employees, implementing more transparency and less bureaucracy.

The rules of procedure govern all aspects of the parliamentary management. They have a strong effect on the performance of the House of Representatives. They can hinder or help the work of the legislature help.

Although a parliamentary web site is available and the MPs and staff offices are equipped with computers, software and Internet, most documents,

Improved rules of functioning

The role and functions of the Parliament have strongly improved in the recent decades. The Parliament is required to perform on a wide range of legislative priorities. It has to oversee the implementation of major governmental policies and reforms. According to the national plans and to several policy



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statements, the parliamentary agenda will be particularly challenging.

Some of the internal procedures and processes of the Lower House seem to be no more suitable in regard of the performance it is required to achieve.

Challenges

The time of the parliamentary session in Jordan is four months. It is a short period that is further reduced by the election of the Speaker and the Office of the House, which is carried out annually.

The National Agenda recommends to extend the Parliament session to at least eight months in order to reinforce the participation of the Members of the Lower House in drafting legislation by giving them adequate time to examine and rule on issues pertaining to legislation.

In the past years, Members' attendance to committees was weak. Legal quorum in committees' meetings was often not reached. It resulted in rescheduling of meetings which contributed to further reduce the efficiency of the House during its short 4 months' sessions.

Goals

The current rules of procedures governing the House of Representatives need to be reviewed to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency to make them help, rather than hinder the legislature in conducting its work.

Initiatives

Reforming the rules of procedures is a process that should be inclusive and directed internally. A reform committee can lead the process together with an expert. The committee will help to build internal support, direct the reform process, and deal with all related matters. It can be formed of Members, the Secretary General, directors of the General Secretariat. If at all possible, it would be very beneficial that the Speaker of the House presides over the reform committee.

The **Reform Committee** will supervise the review of the current rules of procedures. With the expert, the committee will examine the gaps and evaluate the requirements and will decide of the relevance of reforming the rules. It will prepare a report on the main findings and conclusions.



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A proposal of **reform of the governing rules of procedures** will be drafted by a consultant under the supervision of the reform committee. The committee will carry out all the consultations required for its approval and implementation.

A **Guide book on legislative procedures and operations** will be drafted and broadly distributed. It will give more visibility to the reform and will promote knowledge on the functioning of the House of Representatives.

Workflow system

A major weakness in the internal procedures of the House of Representatives relates to the transcription and reporting of deliberations. The process is based on a manual transcription of voice records. The transcribed deliberations are then produced by an external publisher. The process takes months before delivering a report of the plenary deliberations. Taking into consideration that during a Parliamentary session of 4 months, the House of Representatives holds approximately 30 plenary sessions, the process appears to be particularly inefficient and time consuming.

Today, an electronic voting and recording system is available in the seat of the House of Representatives. The system was introduced by the SUNY program. Its efficiency is yet to be evaluated.

Challenges

Although a parliamentary web site is available and the MPs and staff offices are equipped with computers, software and Internet, most of the documents, information and tasks are still passed manually. The process therefore is time-consuming and error-prone.

The legislative drafting process is not automated and information on the bills before the House is electronically available neither to the Members nor to the public.

Goals

The whole administrative, financial and all other internal operations, procedures and processes need to be enhanced to become more efficient, speed the work and limit errors.

The automation improves the internal administrative processes by re-



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organizing and simplifying them. It is a means of co-ordinating all processes and ensuring that all operations are processed in a timely manner. It will allow documents, information and tasks to be passed according to a set of comprehensive procedural rules. It will prevent time-consuming and error-prone manual interventions.

For a transparent and efficient legislative drafting process, it is essential for the Members of the House, staff members and the public to know the status of any particular piece of legislation. Posting and publishing the status of the bills before the legislature may provide legislators and the public the information they need. This can be facilitated by the use of a legislative system. Such system has also other advantages for qualitative bill drafting and impact assessment.

Initiatives

It is essential that the Secretary General, directors and staff work closely with a specialized consultant to execute the initiative described hereafter. This approach will allow the beneficiaries to identify the needs and impact on the implementation of the new systems.

The first step in the process of automation is to carry out a thorough **review of the current management, administrative and financial procedures and processes** which are already in place, and how they are actually used.

After this review, a **workflow system** will be prepared. Workflow is defined as the automation of processes, in which documents, information and tasks are passed among persons or systems for action, according to a set of procedural rules.

Implementing a **legislative status system** allows tracking the bills as they pass through the various stages of review, amendment, and adoption.

The legislative status system can enforce the formal quality of laws and help assessing their impact. Members of parliament and citizens can use the system to read the text of legislation and to get its evolution through the legislative process. The system can also improve the participatory quality by providing the possibility for public input.

After the implementation of such a system, it is essential to carry out **training on the use of the system for the staff and MPs.**



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All legislative documents will be available on the web site of the House of Representatives together with the related explanatory and information notes.

E-Parliament

An ongoing e-governance initiative in Jordan is intended to play an important role in strengthening government responsiveness and accountability. An e-parliament initiative can play a similar role at the parliamentary level.

Challenges

In many cases, an e-parliament initiative can be a tool for improving the internal working of a parliament. However, it does not always fulfil this target and does not automatically result in re-organizing the internal processes and procedures. For this reason it was here separated from the implementation of a workflow system.

However, the e-parliament initiative is essential for the House of Representatives at another level, which is the relations between the House and the public – an area of priority in Jordan.

Goals

The e-parliament initiative aims at improving the interaction between the House of Representatives and citizens, providing legislative and parliamentary information to the public and contributing to the automation of the administrative and legislative processes.

Initiatives

An **e-parliament strategy**, which will focus on facilitating interaction and communication with citizens will have to be prepared. It can be done separately from the workflow system.



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Reinforced cooperation and information

OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

Collaboration in the cooperation programs

Framework of assistance
Coordination meetings

Cooperation with CSOs

Database of CSOs concerned with Human rights, women, the Youth and marginalized groups
Exchange of publications and information
Participation of CSOs' representatives in the forums and workshops organized by the House of Representatives

New information materials

Booklets on the role and functions of the House of Representatives
Annual report of activities
Parliamentary newsletter

Collaboration in the cooperation programs

The House of Representatives and its General Secretariat benefit from several assistance programs which are carried out by International partners. Three major development projects are

implemented currently by NDI, USAID, and UNDP.

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) has a program to support political parties, parliamentary blocs, and women's political participation. The program activities target the parliament by assisting parliamentarians in the development of reform legislation. It is also working to support Jordanian women's candidacy to parliament and to increase the visibility of women parliamentarians.

USAID is financially supporting the great majority of initiatives aiming parliamentary development. A broad legislative strengthening programme is implemented by SUNY. The program aims at increasing transparency and accountability in the legislative branch. Its overall goal is to increase public participation in the legislative process and to improve the image of the Parliament.

UNDP has implemented a project aiming at enhancing the skills of the parliamentary administration and those of the Members of Parliament. It carried



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out an organizational review, several needs assessments and training initiatives. In follow up to those initiatives, the project provided support to the preparation of this Strategy document.

Challenges

The General Secretariat would benefit from a more comprehensive assistance plan which brings together the programs and activities implemented by NDI, UNDP and USAID into one collaborative frame of work based on a multilateral approach in the support to the House of Representatives.

The fields of intervention of each programmes need to be identified to avoid overlaps and duplications. The particular target is to highlight any missing fields.

This also can allow the different partners to better shape their programs and better coordinate their action in accordance with the House of Representatives and particularly its General Secretariat towards one set of common objectives.

Goals

Having one joint framework, composed of the projects implemented by NDI, UNDP, SUNY and others and designed directly with the beneficiaries can better impact on the development efforts of the House of Representatives.

It is essential that this frame facilitates coordination especially in objectives and activities which are complimentary.

Initiatives

A framework of assistance can constitute a basis for the collaboration between the different partners in a transparent and inclusive manner.

The framework would include a clear set of common objectives and concerted activities. It will state mutual trust and commitment and will highlight the specific added value, the responsibilities and roles of each assistance programme. It will plan as well for monitoring and evaluation.

Regular **coordination meetings** will bring together the several representatives of the concerned organizations with representatives of the General Secretariat. The meetings will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the framework of



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assistance. They will also help identifying any gaps and needs.

Cooperation with CSOs

The Jordanian House of Representatives has the advantage of being an open institution. Citizens can access the building of Parliament and all the Members have building offices where they can meet with constituents. On the other hand, Members tend to be overloaded with citizen concerns which is time-consuming and hinders their other parliamentary responsibilities.

At the administrative level, a special Unit in charge of the relation with CSOs was established by the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives. The staff in charge of this Unit was trained and a database on NGOs and CSOs was established.

Few attempts to encourage the interaction between the civil society and the parliament showed that individuals and groups in civil society have a poor perception of the legislature. It is as well often that Members of Parliament do not understand the needs of CSOs.

Challenges

The parliament is expected to channel people's needs into the policies and laws. It is particularly expected, given the National objectives and priorities, to respond to the needs of women, youth and marginalized groups. CSOs are key intermediaries in such a process.

Goals

Although the relation between the legislative and the executive branches in Jordan is based on cooperation, the legislature has the responsibility for government oversight and for analyzing and amending on legislation and budgets.

Much of the information required for this comes currently from the executive. It is essential that the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives facilitates cooperation with CSOs as information stakeholders. This can enable greater sharing of information and provide access to specialist expertise and experience.

It is as well essential to develop the cooperation with CSOs through the institutional channels to help the



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Members in dealing with the civil society in the framework of their parliamentary legislative and representative responsibilities.

Initiatives

All the initiatives will be implemented by or under the supervision of the Unit in charge of the relations with CSOs. In all matters, the Unit will need to coordinate the initiatives with the other concerned entities in the General Secretariat and mainly the Committees secretariats and the Parliamentary Library.

A database on civil society organizations has been developed by the General Secretariat in cooperation with the SUNY Programme. This database currently needs to be updated.

It is relevant that the **CSOs dedicated to Human rights, women, youth and marginalized groups included in the database** form a special component in the database. The Members and the staff of the House can then identify directly those groups which are particularly targeted through the National development plans.

An **exchange of publications and information materials** with CSOs and other non-governmental information stakeholders can benefit to both the House of Representatives and the concerned CSOs.

The House of Representatives can disseminate its publications and information materials and receive on a regular basis, publications, reports, surveys and other general and specialized materials developed by CSOs.

As widely described in the objective of mainstreaming the capacities in addressing National development objectives and Human rights, the **Participation of CSOs' representatives in the forums and workshops organized by the House of Representatives** can contribute to both enhancing the participation of CSOs in the legislative process and providing relevant information to the Members.

New information materials

In the past years, the image of the House of Representatives experienced severe challenges. The relation with the media has undergone several conflicting situations. Some clashes occurred



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between Members and journalists. The 14th Legislature did not pass the law on media freedom.

Currently, a communication strategy is implemented by the General Secretariat in cooperation with the SUNY programme. It will help the House of Representatives to mainstream its capacities in communication and media relations.

Challenges

In Jordan, citizens generally have a weak understanding of the role and functions of the House of Representatives, the Members and the General Secretariat.

Members are often perceived primarily as a mean to get employment, education or healthcare services. The actual parliamentary functions are either unknown or misunderstood. This situation impacts negatively on the image of the institution of Parliament.

Goals

The General Secretariat need to disseminate information to citizens about the legislature, its purposes, activities and Members.

Initiatives

All the information materials described bellow have to be widely disseminated and user-friendly. The information can be prepared in-house or by a consultant who will work closely with Members, the Secretary General, directors and staff. All the information materials will be available on the web site of the House of Representatives.

A series of booklets on the role and functions of the House of Representatives will be developed and widely disseminated to provide information to citizens about the legislature, its role, activities and Members.

The series of Booklets will include:

- The electoral process;
- The organization of the House of Representatives: Speaker, Bureau, Committees, General Secretariat;
- The legislative process;
- The oversight function of the House;
- The representative function of the House;
- The involvement of the House of Representatives in regional and international affairs.



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The series includes several booklets which can be placed together to constitute a compilation.

An annual Report of activities can disseminate information on the performance of the House of Representatives. It will be broadly disseminated. It will provide background information on each field of the parliamentary activity before describing the achievements.

In doing so, the annual Report will attain two objectives which are to better inform

on the role and functions of the House of Representatives while reporting on its activities.

A **parliamentary newsletter** will provide information on the parliamentary activities monthly. The newsletter can help to disseminate information on the whole parliamentary activities. It will outline the legislative, oversight, representative, Arab and foreign parliamentary activities as well as the events and meetings organized by the House of Representatives.



The Strategic Workplan

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Mainstream the capacities in addressing National development objectives and Human rights

Key indicators

- Dissemination of information on development issues and on Human rights principles and Treaties
- Parliamentary debates on development issues and on Human rights
- Human rights legislations passed in the House of Representatives
- Meetings with representatives of women, youth and marginalized groups

OUTPUT	ACTIVITY	YEAR			
		1	2	3	4
Support to the Members in addressing National development objectives	Parliamentary Forum on the National development objectives for MPs and staff				
	Monthly parliamentary round table discussions on selected development objectives and challenges				
	Drafting of a series of studies on Jordan's development challenges by sector (environment, social, economical, security...)				
	Drafting of a study on the Millennium Development Goals				
	Presentation of Jordan's National report on the state of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals				



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OUTPUT	ACTIVITY	YEAR			
		1	2	3	4
Support to the Members in addressing Human rights	Parliamentary Forum on Human rights Treaties for MPs and staff				
	Presentation of the latest National reports before the International bodies on the state of implementation of International Conventions (CEDAW and others...)				
	Information workshops on the 6 International conventions ratified by Jordan and their implementation into national legislation for MPs and staff				
	Drafting of a series of 6 studies on the implementation of Human rights Conventions in the National legislation				
	Establishing of an Internship Program for university students and graduates				
	Opening of a Human rights Center in the parliamentary Library				
	Distribution of Human Rights documentation to all MPs and staff				
Space for dialogue with representatives of women, youth and marginalized groups	Setting up of a series of seminars for the Members of parliamentary Committee for Freedoms and Citizen rights				



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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Professionalized structures and human resources

Key indicators

- Implementation of a new organizational structure
- Report on functional review
- Implementation of a new human resources Management and Development plan
- Members and Staff debate on parliamentary functions
- The core values of the General secretariat are promoted

OUTPUT	ACTIVITY	YEAR			
		1	2	3	4
Enforced organization	Carrying out of a functional review				
	Reform of the organizational structure				
	Drafting and publication of a guide book describing the functions and internal administrative procedures				
	Establishment of a legislative entity for bill drafting and analysis				
	Establishment of a human resources entity				
Enforced Human resources management	Establishment of a human resources committee				
	Setting up of a Human Resources management and development plan				
Mainstreamed knowledge of the staff on the parliamentary functions	Training program for the staff on the parliamentary functions				
	Hosting of an International Forum on the role and functions of parliament with information workshops on parliamentary committees, research and studies, Inter-parliamentary relations,				



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	communication								
	Publication of a Handbook on the parliamentary functions and on the role and functions of the parliamentary staff								
Constructive interactions between MPs and staff	Publication of a Code of ethics								
	Workshop on the functioning of the House of representatives for Members and Staff								

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Modernized procedures

Key indicators

- Evaluation report on the current rules of procedures
- Evaluation report on the current management, administrative and financial procedures
- Use of new technologies in bill drafting and in internal written communications
- Legislative documents available on the web site

OUTPUT	ACTIVITY	YEAR			
		1	2	3	4
Improved rules of functioning	Establishment of a reform Committee				
	Proposal for reform of the rules of procedures				
	Drafting of a Guide book on legislative procedures and operations				
Work flow system	Review of the current management, administrative and financial procedures and processes				
	Implementation of a work flow system				
	Setting up of a legislative status system				
	Training of staff and MPs on the legislative status				



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	system								
	Web publication of all legislative documentation including explanatory notes								
E-Parliament	Preparation of an e-parliament strategy								



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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Reinforced cooperation and information

Key indicators

- Meetings on the cooperation programmes
- Monitoring and evaluation reports on the implementation of development programmes
- Publications on the House of Representatives and its activities
- Meetings with representatives of CSOs

OUTPUT	ACTIVITY	YEAR			
		1	2	3	4
Collaboration in the cooperation programs	Designing of a framework of assistance				
	Setting up of regular coordination meetings with UNDP, SUNY, NDI...				
Cooperation with CSOs	Creating a special component in the database on CSOs on CSOs concerned with Human rights, women, Youth and marginalized groups				
	Exchange of publications and information materials				
	Participation of CSOs' representatives in the forums and workshops organized by the House of Representatives				
New information materials	Publication of Booklets on the role and functions of the House of Representatives				
	Publication of Annual reports of activities				
	Publication of parliamentary monthly newsletter				



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Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

This Strategy is a parliament endorsed initiative which was requested by the Secretary General of the House of Representatives. It was prepared in a participatory approach which has been initiated from the beginning of the preparation process.

In its implementation, the Strategy involves the participation of Members, the Secretary General, Directors and staff of the House of Representatives. It involves also the partner International organizations which are providing support to the House of Representatives. Finally, several consultants will have to be identified for the setting up of a number of activities.

The fact that the Strategy involves several stakeholders in its implementation improves transparency and participation. The different stakeholders can provide information about the activities foreseen by the Strategy and facilitate its ownership among the Members and the staff.

Nevertheless, the Strategy can undergo challenges related to the nature of the parliamentary field which often requires a long-term vision and commitment. It is also often difficult to predict parliamentary schedules while the foreseen events are necessarily subordinated to the parliamentary agenda. This sometimes can result in the cancellation or delay of the foreseen events.

The first essential steps in the implementation process are (1) to establish terms of references and (2) to fund the activities foreseen by the strategy.

The following actions are necessary to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategy:

- Consider to have an agreement between the General Secretariat and UNDP for the implementation of the Strategy;



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- Create a monitoring committee including Members and staff of the House of Representatives and UNDP representatives to enforce the implementation of the Strategy, share information, interact and coordinate efforts.
- Prepare annual progress reports;
- Monitor the implementation of the Strategy and measure performance as compared to expected outputs and objectives;
- Identify causes behind any delay or failure or inefficiency in achieving the expected outputs and objectives;
- Propose corrective actions and relevant measures to deal with obstacles;
- Undertake a final evaluation in 2011 and prepare for a follow-up initiative.



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