

**WORKSHOPS TO STRENGTHEN LEGISLATURES
IN COMMONWEALTH WEST AFRICA**

NIGERIA
Sheraton Hotel, Abuja
19 – 22 OCTOBER 2004

KEY POINTS FOR ACTION

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND THE BUDGET PROCESS

- Members must take seriously their responsibility for oversight and authorisation of the Executive's Budget
- Members should receive briefings during the drafting process and there should be a formal consultation between the Executive and the National Assembly
- Parliamentarians should monitor execution of the Budget and should approve any additional appropriations
- The National Assembly should have a Budget Office accountable to the National Assembly Services Commission and equipped with full research capability
- There should be an organic Budget Law
- The National Assembly should consider streamlining and fully staffing the Committee structure

ASSEMBLY OVERSIGHT OF THE EXECUTIVE

- The National Assembly should vote itself funding independent of the Executive and should be exclusively responsible for the financial management of the National Assembly
- A mechanism should be developed for coordination between the National Assembly Services Commission and the Executive

THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE AND THE AUDITOR-GENERAL

- The Public Accounts Committees should review the budget of the Auditor-General's office to ensure that the Executive is providing adequate resources
- The National Assembly should encourage peer reviews of the Auditor-General's office
- All management letters from the Auditor-General, and responses, should be forwarded to the Public Accounts Committees
- The Auditor-General should be autonomous and must report to the National Assembly

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN COMBATING CORRUPTION

- Parliamentarians must take the lead in demonstrating the political will in the fight against corruption and must work together with the Executive, the Judiciary, political leaders, political parties, civil society, donors and the police
- The National Assembly should give prompt attention to the passage of the Fiscal Responsibility Bill, the Procurement Commission Bill and the Freedom of Information Bill
- The National Assembly should show leadership in legislating on political party and campaign finance through sponsorship of an all-party Bill
- Parliament should re-examine and, where necessary, amend the anti-corruption laws to reinforce the powers of anti-corruption agencies
- The National Assembly should pass a resolution calling on the International Community to support Nigeria's efforts to ensure repatriation of the proceeds of corrupt practices
- Parliamentarians stressed the strong linkage between poverty and corruption: poverty helps to entrench corruption and corruption deepens poverty

ENGAGING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (NEEDS)

- Standing Committees must monitor the budget allocations against NEEDS
- Parliamentarians must scrutinise existing legislation against NEEDS and enact new legislation to implement NEEDS
- The National Assembly will insist on debating the reports by the National Planning Commission on NEEDS progress
- The National Assembly must exercise oversight of all public bodies responsible for implementing NEEDS
- Parliamentarians will educate their constituents about NEEDS and encourage their active support
- Parliamentarians will play an active role in the oversight of the Executive and in providing feedback on NEEDS to policy-makers
- There must be continuous dialogue between the National Assembly and the National Planning Commission
- The National Assembly should investigate the possibility of grants for capacity-building from the World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Trust Fund