Parliamentary Development
UNDP Strategy Note

CONTENTS

Acronyms and abbreviations

The following are among the most common acronyms and abbreviations in this publication:

BDP =   Bureau for Development Policy
CPA =   Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
DEX =   Direct execution
IDEA =   International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IT =   Information technology
MDG =   Millennium Development Goal
MoU =   Memorandum of understanding
NDI =   National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NEX =   National execution
NGO =   Non-governmental organization
UNIFEM =   United Nations Development Fund for Women
GPPS =   Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening
IPU =   Inter-Parliamentary Union
CSO =   Civil society organization
MP =   Member of Parliament
DGG =   Democratic Governance Group
LNA =   Legislative needs assessment
UNDP =   United Nations Development Programme

I.   Introduction

The presence of an effective parliamentary institution is strongly correlated with the existence of a viable democracy and an open society[1]. Such institutions are critical to the establishment and consolidation of democracy because they empower ordinary people to participate in the policies that shape their lives. Parliaments[2] are fundamental to establishing the rule of law, protecting human rights, overseeing transparent governance processes, and ensuring national compliance with international obligations.

UNDP currently supports one in four parliaments globally[3]. It does so primarily in recognition of parliamentary institutions' important role in democracy and development, but also because the existence of effective democratic oversight institutions is essential in light of many donors' shift toward budget support as a vehicle for development assistance. Consequently, parliamentary development is an integral component of UNDP services in democratic governance, with activities aimed at enhancing the representative, legislative or oversight capacity of parliamentary institutions in the governance process. This was confirmed in the UNDP 2008-2011 Strategic Plan, which further emphasizes the importance of representative institutions at local, national and regional levels and the need to strengthen mechanisms of responsiveness and public accountability. When strong and effective, such mechanisms are particularly useful in ensuring that the concerns and interests of poor people, women and other marginalized groups are recognized and responded to adequately[4].

More governments today are chosen via free and fair elections than at any time in history[5]. At the same time, though, as the 2002 UNDP Human Development Report makes clear, the results of this democratic transition are mixed[6]. Most notably, the number of illiberal democracies has increased. In those nations, elected governments rule through authoritarian practices, deprive citizens of human rights and ignore constitutional limits on power. UNDP seeks to respond to the challenges associated with sustaining real democratic practices with programmes that focus on strengthening democratic institutions, such as parliaments, judiciaries and electoral bodies.

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[1] Fish, Steven M. (2006), 'Stronger Legislatures: Stronger Democracies', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 5? 20.
[2] In this document the term "parliament" is used primarily, but it is interchangeable with "congress", "assembly" or "legislature".
[3] As per the UNDP Annual Report 2007. Counting relatively small programmes, the number is closer to one in three.
[4] UNDP 2008?2011 Strategic Plan, 'Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development', p.18.
[5] According to Freedom House, the number of countries in which elections are competitive and meet minimum standards of freedom and fairness reached a high point in 2003, with 121 of the world's 192 governments qualifying as "electoral democracies".
[6] The title of the report is 'Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World'. It notes that even as the number of countries with competitive elections has increased over the past decade or so, governance institutions in many democracies have weakened.

UNDP programmes in democratic governance now account for over 45 percent of the overall portfolio of the organization. UNDP defines governance as "the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels … [comprising] the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations"[7]. Democratic governance is, <u>inter alia</u>, "participatory, transparent and accountable. It is effective, equitable and promotes the rule of law". Parliaments as the representative institution of government therefore have central roles in ensuring the participatory, transparent and accountable workings of government. If strong and effective, they protect the rights of minorities and inject the interests of a wide range of societal groups into government policy-making, thereby helping build support for democratic development among the broad citizenship. They also serve as a check on executive power: for example, if the executive branch of governments are strengthened but are not accountable to the people, then the governance process may become essentially undemocratic, benefiting the few, but not the many.

UNDP's role in parliamentary development has grown significantly in the past decade. In 1994? 1995, only six countries had projects for parliamentary strengthening. By 2007, UNDP was supporting parliaments in some 65 countries. Since parliamentarians represent an important segment of political leaders, low-cost programmes can have a large impact. For example, in 2005 parliamentary development represented 11 percent of the UNDP governance agenda but only 2 percent of the budget. UNDP also implements multi-layered parliamentary support programmes through the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (GPPS), which provides limited resources to global, regional and national level parliamentary programmes.

This update of the 2003 practice note on parliamentary development was prepared by the Democratic Governance Group (DGG), Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) of UNDP. It draws on UNDP's new experiences and expertise available throughout its network of 166 Country Offices as well as on the GPPS, which has an important knowledge development agenda. Current plans are to update the practice note again in a couple of years to incorporate new learning and policy advice. Contributions to enhancing the information provided in this note may be made by email to DGG, at parldev@undp.org.

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[7] Glossary of key terms from 'Governance for Sustainable Human Development: A UNDP Policy Document'. Online: mirror.undp.org/magnet/policy/glossary.htm.

II UNDP's Niche and Entry Points

A. UNDP niche

UNDP's network of 166 Country Offices and its confirmed status as a non-partisan agency provide a strong framework for UNDP parliamentary programmes. The high level of trust it enjoys among UN Member States is crucial to its success in developing programmes that have the potential to be politically sensitive. In countries in transition, UNDP is often regarded by the international community and national parliaments as a partner capable of coordinating donor support to institutions that emerge from UN-coordinated or supported elections.

UNDP resources devoted to parliamentary development remain small in comparison with those supporting strengthening of the executive branch and elections. This imbalance runs the risk of hampering democratic development as parliaments lag behind executive branches in resources and capacity because, for instance, inadequate resources are available to ensure that a successful election is followed by longer-term support to the institution and parliamentarians. As one of the largest actors engaged in parliamentary development, UNDP activities work to address this imbalance with projects that can range from low-cost, one-time activities to large-scale institutional support over several years. UNDP's comparative advantage in parliamentary development is reflected in the large and growing number of parliamentary development programmes under its purview: Over 65 UNDP Country Offices are currently engaged in parliamentary development activities.

Box 1. Mainstreaming parliamentary development

UNDP implements a large number of programmes with executive branches of government, civil society and the media that focus on specific human development issues important to economic and political development. It is important that these sectoral programmes recognize the vital role of parliaments in all national governance processes. For example, programmes that seek to improve government action on HIV/AIDS or involve civil society in setting poverty-reduction strategy targets also need to involve the parliament as an integral component. Bypassing or ignoring the legislature in these processes contributes to democratic deficits in emerging democracies and can reinforce any public perceptions that the parliament is of limited political importance.

In many countries, the executive branch's dominance over parliament is a common phenomenon and sectoral programmes aimed at increasing the executive's ability to govern can, if poorly designed, help to exacerbate the asymmetry of power at the expense of parliaments. Where there is a training programme for the health ministry, for example, representatives from the parliament's health committee should be invited to participate as a means of enhancing or enacting a national HIV/AIDS policy. Joint executive and parliamentary programmes also build important informal networks between the two branches on such issues.

UNDP programmes can also support the creation and ongoing work of a parliamentary committee on sectoral issues. Some examples of areas where parliamentary committees or parliamentary secretariats should be involved include:

- budgeting and economic planning,
- security sector reform,
- health and HIV/AIDS,
- decentralization,
- children and youth policies, and
- gender-related issues.

A key common by-product of mainstreaming sectoral assistance is an empowered parliament capable of reviewing important legislation and holding the executive accountable to the people on critical policy issues.

As key symbols and institutions of representative government, parliaments are also important actors in conflict resolution and mediation. In many countries, UNDP support for electoral reform, constitutional reform and capacity-strengthening helps ensure that parliaments do in fact build trust across society and address issues of conflict. In difficult circumstances, the UNDP Resident Representative, in his/her capacity as UN Resident Coordinator, is often the only partner with the convening power to bring diverse political actors to the table. These efforts subsequently can continue through the parliamentary development programme.

UNDP's programmes are often implemented in sensitive political contexts. Parliamentary programmes might meet resistance from a government that is reluctant to support strengthening the oversight capacity of its legislature. The programmes therefore can require careful negotiation involving the government and key parliamentary partners such as ministries, political parties, NGOs and the media. The executive must sometimes be convinced that parliamentary strengthening is not a zero-sum game for the executive branch of government; instead, it should be emphasized that the overall effectiveness and legitimacy of a state will be increased through parliamentary strengthening. Similarly, programmes' effectiveness is likely be enhanced if, when negotiating with parliamentary partners, efforts are made to engage with and have input from all main political parties represented in the institution, not just the speaker.

B.   Entry points

Parliament's role and functions cut across all areas of policy development and democratic governance. As such there is a wide range of areas where UNDP can engage, as noted in Table 1.

Table 1. Entry points for UNDP parliamentary development

	Type of area	Description
Institutional and legal framework	Constitutional reform	Constitutional laws have a profound effect on the short- and long-term functioning of parliamentary institutions. Structural factors such as power-sharing arrangements and electoral design shape the political incentives for parliamentarians to undertake their work. UNDP programmes targeting constitutional reform issues include: • procedural, research and technical support to representative institutions (constituent assemblies, parliaments, constitutional committees) that establish and affect a country's constitution and the powers of the parliament; and • sharing experiences on existing laws and constitutional processes within the region, or from other regions.
	Rules of procedure and framework laws	The legal frameworks of a parliament have a significant impact in shaping the institution's role in legislative and governance processes. For example, a process that does not allow sufficient time for a committee to consider a draft law can weaken the parliament's influence on the legislative output. Legal framework laws can include: • rules of procedure, • budget laws that outline the budget consideration and adoption processes, and • freedom of information laws that govern transparency and access to information. UNDP programmes can support the drafting of new laws to meet such needs or revising existing rules of procedure that provide the legal structure for the legislative process.

| | Institutional development plans | Assisting parliaments and parliamentary staff in identifying their strategies and plans for institutional development is a useful step in building cross-party institutional ownership of parliamentary strengthening. In many cases UNDP can help establish or support a multi-party reform committee to agree on a long-term agenda and activities for the overall strengthening process. UNDP can also assist in developing parliamentarians' awareness of the institution's needs through activities that foster learning from other parliaments. UNDP's activities in this area include:

- organizing a study tour to inspire the development aims of the parliament;
- conducting surveys among parliamentarians about what they perceive as their development needs (surveys on citizens' views on parliament can also be a useful tool, but can be occasionally be extremely sensitive politically); and
- organizing retreats with all key parliamentary actors to brainstorm and draft a parliamentary development plan.

Such assistance is often best administered early in the life of a particular parliament to ensure sufficient time to implement the plan with the current make-up of the institution. Note that the existence of institutional development plans are an indicator in the development results framework for UNDP's 2008?2011 Strategic Plan. |
| *Legislative role* | Legislation review and drafting | The powers of parliamentarians to propose new laws vary across political systems. Even where parliamentarians do not commonly initiate their own legislation, the drafting and harmonizing of amendments is a key component of the legislative process. Activities that UNDP undertakes in this area include:

- establishing a legislative drafting office and training its staff;
- supporting the legal capacity of secretariat staff;
- supporting the legislative drafting and interpretation capacity of parliamentarians and their legislative staff; and
- establishing investigative or participatory legislative review processes, often in collaboration with parliamentary committees. |

	Parliament's role in economic development	Capable and vibrant parliaments are essential to the development process; as such, they are important stakeholders in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and economic development aims. Programmes that develop the parliament's role in poverty-reduction planning can promote more comprehensive societal participation in economic development. UNDP can target particular development areas that require legal reform and work with both government and parliament to develop political will to enact legislation. UNDP activities in this area include: • developing parliamentary awareness of the MDGs; • assisting in research, expertise and drafting of laws related to human development; and • establishing informational links between the parliament and relevant ministries working on development issues.
	Policy analysis and research capacity	Informed legislative decision-making relies on strong policy analysis and research capacity. With such capacity parliamentarians have the information to analyze and make legislative decisions and grapple with the long-term social and economic consequences of proposed legislation. UNDP activities in this area include: • supporting the establishment of an independent research centre; • developing parliamentary libraries; • establishing an internship programme that provides parliament with a pool of research and policy analysis expertise; and • assisting parliament in establishing links with civil society organizations that have specific expertise and research capacity.
	Supporting the committee system	The committee system provides the most detailed examination of proposed legislation and allows for parliamentarians to develop expertise and perform more thorough investigations of legislation, policy and implementation. Committees are often called the workhorses of parliament—and the management of their meetings, the documents they must consider, their hearings and often their travel can be a time-intensive task. In this area, UNDP can support: • developing a committee secretariat and supporting research and committee management skill development; • assisting in the establishment of committee hearings or public forums; and • assisting the committee with assessment missions and research trips.

Representative role	Supporting the participation of women and minorities in parliament	Increasing the political participation and engagement of women and minorities is a key aim of UNDP's democratic governance programme. Parliaments are uniquely positioned to promote gender equality and women's empowerment because, if effective, they represent a cross-section of members of plural societies. UNDP can assist in this area by working with legislative caucuses to promote the role of minorities and women in parliament or by supporting the development of cross-party minority and women's caucuses. UNDP can also engage in developing women and minority leaders' public outreach strategies or by strengthening parliamentarians' capacity to engage with their constituencies on minority and gender issues. Such activities should be linked to the electoral cycle, with long-term capacity-development activities established to enable newly elected women to have an impact on gender-sensitive legislation.
	Parliamentary institutional outreach and civic education	UNDP undertakes activities that aim to increase public awareness on the role of the parliament and the rights of citizens in a democracy, thereby strengthening a parliament's legitimacy. Legislative outreach could include: ● developing education packages for schools on the role of parliaments, ● developing parliamentary Web sites, ● producing substantive publications on the parliament's work, ● develop visitor information centres, ● working with journalists to improve their understanding of parliament's role, ● develop parliament's media relations skills, and ● organizing youth parliaments (parliamentary simulation exercises).
	Supporting constituency relations	The representative function of parliament can be improved by working with parliamentarians to develop their capacities to conduct constituency work. In some cases, it might be appropriate to support the establishment of constituency offices that can be open for multi-party use or to develop links between parliamentarians and local leaders. A key focus of developing this representative role is to highlight the importance of working with civil society and the media so that citizens can advocate their views and needs effectively to parliamentarians. UNDP activities in this area include: ● helping develop facilities for meetings with constituents, ● helping civil society understand and interact with parliament, ● training citizens' organizations and advisory groups to interact with parliament, and ● helping prepare citizens and civil society groups to participate in public hearings.

Parliament-government relations and oversight	Improving parliament's role in ensuring financial accountability	Financial accountability mechanisms are crucial to effective development processes, especially now that donors are increasing their budget support programmes. Therefore, improving parliament's ability to investigate, debate and pass sound budgets should be a key part of parliamentary development programmes. To that end, UNDP often works with budgetary, audit or public accounts committee members and staff to determine how to best improve the budgetary understanding of all parliamentarians and staff. Establishing a non-partisan economic review unit within the secretariat can also be part of UNDP activities on budgetary oversight. Other components of UNDP programmes in this area include activities to: • simplify budget formats, • assist in getting parliamentary access, through information technology, to view government budget data, and • support budget hearings and mechanisms for inputs on the budget process.
	Building government-parliament relations	Parliaments weakened by executive dominance often lack understanding of their proper oversight role. Oversight relies on active parliamentarians willing to engage with and criticize the government. UNDP programmes in this area include: • training for new parliamentarians to address any knowledge deficits in regard to their oversight role and responsibilities in a democracy; • working with multi-party committees to determine how they can inquire about and investigate the implementation of government policies and legislation; • strengthening the committee secretariat's ability to hold inquiries; and • developing relations and procedures for parliament to work with audit institutions, such as an auditor-general's office and ombudsman's office.

	Working with party caucuses	Parliamentary party caucuses provide an avenue for working with political parties through an institutional setting and can be a less sensitive method of engaging with political parties. UNDP can work with party caucuses to promote them as forums for debate and policy consideration, rather than simply vehicles for the imposition of voting arrangements. UNDP activities can aim to: • develop transparent and participatory structures for decision-making; • develop awareness of issues relevant to human development; • foster conciliatory approaches that are more inclined to prioritize conflict mediation and resolution; • support the structuring of parliamentary groups to enhance their roles in pubic consultation, oversight and consideration of draft laws; and • establish cross-party caucuses on sectoral issues of national importance. This effort helps build trust and confidence among competing political interests.
Administration	Parliamentary infrastructure	UNDP can assist in infrastructure support that strengthens the internal organization and functioning of parliament. Such support could involve modernizing facilities and improving information technology systems. Specific activities in this area could involve: • developing the parliaments IT and computer network; • creating, improving or updating parliamentary libraries (i.e., by providing resources such as new software); • assisting in increasing the office space of parliamentary staff; and • establishing training centres for parliamentarians and staff.
	Secretariat staff organization and management	Parliamentary secretariats require the ability to recruit, manage and retain staff, independent of the executive branch or of political parties. UNDP can assist in the establishment of recruitment and management procedures for the parliament's administration.

Parliamentary information management	In the interests of transparency, a function of the parliamentary secretariat is the ability to document the activities of parliament and also disseminate information about upcoming matters to be considered in parliament. This involves recording parliamentary proceedings and also making sure that committee agendas, background papers and proposed laws are disseminated to parliamentarians well in advance of their consideration. UNDP works to smooth information-management processes to improve the efficiency and transparency of parliament's work. These activities include: • assisting parliamentary staff to provide adequate notice of meetings; • developing bill status systems; • improving the quality, distribution and timeliness of legislative records; and • drafting manuals of administrative procedure.

III. Themes and Trends in Parliamentary Development

The importance of parliamentary development has achieved significantly greater recognition over the last decade. Initially, many parliamentary support programmes focused on infrastructure, parliamentary libraries, equipment and information technology. However, from the 1990s onwards, with the burst of democratization, international approaches began to recognize parliaments as political institutions. As this political context took precedence, programme implementers realized that provision of support to parliaments differs in many respects from the provision of technical support to a ministry or other parts of government.

The growing work in the parliamentary development field also led to the publication and dissemination of a large body of literature and commentary evaluating specific programmes and identifying recommended operational and thematic approaches to parliamentary development. Parliamentarians across regions and globally started coming together more frequently to share their experiences with respect to institutional development. An emerging international consensus on the norms and standards shared by democratic parliaments arose from such developments. These international and regional norms and standards provide useful benchmarks for UNDP in two respects: first in assessing the needs of a particular parliamentary institution, and second in devising targets for parliamentary programmes.

Parliamentary development has become even more crucial in many countries as international systems become more integrated and the challenges states face in the global economy increase. Decentralization, outsourcing and privatization have increased the number of private-sector and local-authority stakeholders, thereby making chains of accountability more diffuse. Citizens place ever higher demands on governments and parliamentarians, with many now expecting the state to act as a buffer against rapidly changing international economic and political circumstances. With the heightened complexity, challenges and expectations facing parliaments, there is a commensurate need to scale up assistance to parliaments and target this assistance effectively.

As the normative agenda in parliamentary development continues to be consolidated, UNDP needs to align its support to these agreed principles. Moreover, as the field of parliamentary development has matured, there are a number of trends that should be recognized in designing and implementing UNDP programmes. Several of these trends are discussed through the rest of this section.

A. International norms, standards and benchmarks

Unlike certain other areas of democratic governance, such as human rights or electoral processes, parliamentary development has not traditionally used a rights-based or standards-based approach. However, international consensus is gradually emerging on norms and standards for democratic parliaments. Donors now focus on supporting their parliamentary partners to meet elements of this international consensus, rather than on implementing a particular donor's vision of what a democratic parliament should look like. At the same time, there is increasing recognition that democratic elections, even if they meet international standards, are meaningless if a parliament lacks the power to be more than a rubber-stamp institution or itself functions undemocratically.

UNDP has sought to facilitate dialogue at the regional and international levels on these emerging norms and standards for democratic parliaments. At the international level, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) produced a guide to good practice in 2006. Developed with significant contribution from UNDP, it establishes a framework for understanding the contribution by parliaments to democracy that draws on the experiences of its member parliaments. It was part of the discussions of the parliamentary pillar of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in Doha, Qatar in 2006. Through this framework, the document outlines key democratic values to be realized by parliamentary institutions. The document establishes the basic objectives of government and identifies five key principles that underpin UNDP's conception of appropriate and democratic parliamentary institutions:

- Representative parliament
- Transparent parliament
- Accessible parliament
- Accountable parliament
- Effective parliament (at all levels: national, international and local)

In each of these areas, the IPU best practice guide sets forth examples of good practice.

UNDP has also supported efforts by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in codifying a set of recommended benchmarks for democratic legislatures. These benchmarks elaborate, at a very concrete level of detail, the characteristics of democratic parliaments. For example, under the legislative function, principle 6.1.2 states: "Only the Legislature shall be empowered to determine and approve the budget of the Legislature." On parliament's relations with the media, principle 9.1.3 states, "The Legislature shall have a non-partisan media relations facility." Other organizations, such as the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, have also embarked on efforts to articulate norms and standards for their member parliaments. Reference to relevant benchmarks and norms can be important in providing a normative framework for UNDP's work on parliamentary development.

Tips for implementers to consider

The adoption of standards or benchmarks can be of great assistance to UNDP in its work with parliaments. The definition of such standards can provide an objective measurement of the effectiveness of any given parliament. Using the standards to assess a parliament (e.g., self-assessment by a parliament, a donor assessment, or an assessment by a national or international civil society organization [CSO]) can help in establishing a baseline for the work with a parliament and assist in developing a road map for future support.

It is therefore recommended that benchmarks be used to work with a parliament, donor or CSO to assess the work of the parliament. The more collaborative the process, the better it is, as to allow for a frank discussion and a consensus as to what must be done to support the parliament in the future.

B.   Political contextualization

Parliamentary programmes cannot be divorced from the political system that shapes the operating environment for the institutions. Some systems create disincentives for political parties to criticize the government because it damages their chances to join a governing coalition. Other systems are highly adversarial and would benefit from multi-party activities that build trust across political cleavages and develop opportunities for building workable compromises. Political corruption can influence incentive structures in many systems, in both developed and developing countries.

Parliamentary development programmes that are not politically contextualized can do as much harm as good. In some countries, paying Members of Parliament (MPs) daily subsistence allowances or stipends to participate in donor-led in-country workshops or to travel to international workshops or seminars may create incentives for MPs to spend less time in their constituencies or effectively recognize and respond to constituents' needs. Effective parliamentary development can be weakened if the parliamentary administration reports solely to the ruling party or fails to provide services to all parties represented. Lastly, donor support for parliament can remove pressure for the government to fully fund parliament out of the national budget, and, in extreme cases, cause a parliament to function more like a donor-funded NGO than a sovereign institution.

The local political context also dictates the appropriate timing and sequencing of parliamentary programmes, the results of which can define or hinder their success. The electoral cycle impacts many of the timing considerations; therefore, parliamentary strengthening efforts must take into account the expected dates of elections to the fullest extent possible. This is important because elections can be a significant distraction from

long-term political, economic and institutional development, including programmes targeted at broader skills and process development.

UNDP's operating environment in implementing parliamentary programmes is also politically sensitive. Governments might not comprehend or accept the incentive for programmes that build parliamentary capacity to oversee government operations. Parliamentary programmes that involve, for example, a partnership with the minister of foreign affairs or with the majority leader of a parliamentary chamber can suffer from limited political will to address oversight or opposition party weaknesses in the parliamentary structure. Multi-party initiatives are the best way to bring in opposition political parties in a non-discriminatory manner. Such initiatives also can be a way to ensure opposition input into discussions on agendas and issues that are potentially (or actually) politically sensitive.

In order to ensure political neutrality, many UNDP programmes are designed with the secretariat of the parliament as the national implementing partner. However, even with this partner there are often challenges. In the majority of countries in which UNDP works, the secretariat is a neutral body and an excellent partner in delivering outcomes and activities to a parliament. But in a small number of countries the secretariat is a highly politicized institution and care must be taken to understand how it is perceived among all parliamentary groups prior to agreeing to work with the institution as a partner.

Tips for implementers to consider
Draw on the political knowledge and connections of UNDP's national staff to understand the operating environment for parliamentary programmes, and ensure that the staff are respected by all political tendencies and, where relevant, all ethnicities.
Develop and use multi-party bodies to provide input on programme needs and objectives, as a way of ensuring that programmes are perceived as not favouring any political tendency.
Take heed of the political electoral cycle in designing parliamentary programmes. Two key points deserve special consideration in this regard: • the opening of a new parliament can be an opportunity to introduce new procedures or bring new mechanisms into force (provided there was adequate planning for them prior to the election); and • the run-up to an election changes the political incentives. Certain types of programming (such as support for constituency relations) may become too politically sensitive during this time.

C. Developing local political ownership and engagement in parliamentary development

Programme sustainability, particularly in political environments, requires local ownership and engagement in parliamentary strengthening. It is important to understand as well that in some contexts, there can be a difference between national ownership (as expressed by a multi-party body of parliament) and government ownership. Potential problems regarding all of these ownership issues can often be avoided by emphasizing international standards. That strategy can help avoid criticism that a particular donor is imposing its own priorities on a parliamentary institution. It can also be useful when a parliament has announced its support over time for international or regional benchmarks.

A second approach is to support parliaments in developing their own institutional development plan or forming a multi-party parliamentary reform committee. Such committees can be an extremely useful mechanism for a parliament to decide on and institutionalize its own priorities for development. They also provide UNDP with an institutionalized multi-party interlocutor, thus ensuring opposition input and support for the parliament's development aims. Other benefits of multi-party parliamentary reform committees are that they can i) improve transparency by providing information about parliamentary development activities to all the main political parties, and ii) help promote a degree of donor coordination.

Regional programmes can prove useful for increasing engagement on parliamentary development factors. Linking local parliamentary development goals to regional programmes can help increase national awareness of institutional challenges and weaknesses facing a parliament. For example, the Parliamentary Development Initiative in the Arab region (initiated under GPPS), includes a series of parliamentary working groups composed of parliamentarians from the region. The groups deal with fairly sensitive issues, including political party legislation, parliamentary oversight of the security sector and internal governance of parliaments. MPs from the region set the agenda for these working group sessions; help define the research to be commissioned in these areas; and build region specific guidelines and standards on those topics.

Tips for implementers to consider: Local ownership of parliamentary development

- Encourage awareness and discussion of emerging international standards for parliaments as a way of increasing local engagement and ownership of parliamentary development issues.
- Support the establishment and work of multi-party reform committees to draft institutional development plans for parliament.
- Create linkages between national parliamentary development and regional programmes to increase awareness of common institutional challenges and weaknesses.

D. Parliament and aid effectiveness

Mutual accountability for aid effectiveness and country ownership are increasingly central elements of the agenda for international assistance; this trend was supported by the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the more recent Accra Declaration that was endorsed by over 100 governments. Corresponding with this emphasis on national ownership is an increasing use of direct budget support for aid disbursement. Also increasing as a result is the pressure on governments for transparent budget processes to account for the disbursal of direct budget support. This international pressure for budget accountability places heightened demands on parliaments' oversight functions to ensure the efficacy and transparency of government expenditures.

The success of any economic development strategy depends on accountable and responsive institutions. As governments develop their own development agendas, it is important that parliaments play a key role in shaping their country's economic and development strategies. Parliaments are the highest representative institutions; as such, they can i) ensure that the interests of a broad spectrum of society are included in debates on a country's economic future, and ii) manage the debate on contentious issues through institutionalized committee processes.

Tips for implementers to consider:

Aid coordination is always a good idea, for no other reason than to avoid overlaps in programming. Depending on the country context, UNDP may find itself in the position of taking the lead in coordinating agencies, donors and organizations supporting the parliament.

It is recommended that implementers start by mapping which donor or development agency is currently supporting the parliament. Once this is completed a first meeting of those actors and representatives of the parliament (i.e., the secretariat, parliamentary groups) should be organized.

Keeping two levels of aid coordination is also recommended; this would include quarterly coordination meetings with high-level individuals from the organizations and monthly meetings of technical advisers. Such a strategy allows for broader, macro issues and technical concerns to be discussed at the appropriate levels.

E.   Knowledge sharing and South-South cooperation

UNDP's global, national and regional activities have played a significant role in generating greater understanding of parliamentary development over the past several years. National level parliamentary programmes can draw from the agency's accumulated experiences and resources and also feed into broader knowledge-sharing structures. Arab parliaments, for example, can become part of regional knowledge sharing through the UNDP-supported Web site www.arabparliaments.org, where Arabic-language materials on parliamentary development (including studies and policy guidance) are posted. UNDP also developed the iKNOW Politics (International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics) Web site (www.iknowpolitics.org), which provides access to a large online library and an important network of experts about women's political involvement and facilitates discussion and sharing of experiences on the advancement of women in politics among its members. The site is a useful knowledge development tool for women parliamentarians.

UNDP programmes have supported and sustained these knowledge-sharing networks through their experiences and programme evaluations. UNDP Country Offices can work with the DGG parliamentary team to facilitate knowledge sharing and contribute to improved policy understanding of parliamentary development. .

Because UNDP works in some 160 countries, there are vast opportunities for a parliament that works with the agency to draw on expertise, experience and examples from other countries in which UNDP works. However, to be effective at delivering this advantage and providing consistent, high-quality support, UNDP must maintain strong regional and global networks of programme and technical staff. DGG can play a role, along with the democratic focal points in each regional centre, in ensuring knowledge is being shared and opportunities for synergy are identified.

To go even a step further, within UNDP there are many thematic issues that can benefit from engagement with a parliament. Where support for a parliament is inherently process-driven (i.e., public consultations, constituency relations and oversight), parliamentarians often receive invaluable information on substantive issues of major interest to their constituents—such as climate change, minority rights, and corruption. The success of UNDP's parliamentary development programme in any given country is therefore enhanced when its work is teamed with activities supported by UNDP in many other sectors and focus areas.

Moreover, with the recent initiatives to promote One UN, all opportunities to work with other UN agencies in parliamentary development should be seized. For example, where a parliament is reviewing legislation on health care, it makes basic sense to seek cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO). Similarly, if a parliamentary committee is conducting hearings on the rights of children, then collaborating with UNICEF can only bolster the committee's likely success.

Of course, another key priority should be to ensure that such efforts and strategies involve sharing information and expertise among countries that have had to address similar development issues. South-South support, particularly regional support, is well-received in most countries and often provides real solutions that have been tested in similar situations.

But in the end, external assistance only goes so far: Support for a parliament must be driven by demand within the institution or among citizens and CSOs in the country. Far too many programmes have been designed by well-intentioned institutions and individuals with less than effective input from local groups and staff. For UNDP parliamentary programmes to be effective and results-oriented, the focus or outcomes of a programme must be based on nationally identified objectives. DGG can provide technical expertise and resources to ensure any formulation process seeks broad consultation and the outcomes of the programme reflect national ownership.

Tips for implementers to consider

UNDP is making efforts to facilitate knowledge sharing among staff and country offices throughout the world. Through the use of DGNet, the Parliamentary Community of Practice and Regional Bureaux, there are numerous options and opportunities to request information and exchange information.

When engaging with other UN agencies, multilateral institutions and NGOs, it is important to determine i) what advantage or skills UNDP can bring to a partnership, and ii) which organization is best able to fill the "gaps" in UNDP's capacity.

IV. Designing and Implementing a Parliamentary Development Programme

Parliamentary assistance cannot be designed and implemented in isolation from other thematic areas of support for democratic governance. As noted previously, it is important that parliamentary engagement is mainstreamed across programmes. For example, many UNDP Country Offices (and other UN agencies) are providing support for constitutional reform, electoral institutions, devolution processes, judicial reform and strengthening of civil society and the media. It is important to integrate parliamentary strengthening with other interventions to ensure they work in concert to build and support democracies. In particular, parliamentary assistance should be considered when designing constitutional reform and electoral reform programmes, both because the final shape of constitutional and electoral frameworks will in turn shape the parliament and also because a stronger parliament will likely be required to sustain the democratic gains of free and fair elections.

A.   Conceptualisation and planning

(i)   Does supporting a parliament make sense?

Beginning a parliamentary programme is a political decision that can involve UNDP in balancing political sensitivities. In some instances, for example, a UNDP parliamentary programme can be read as an endorsement of the legitimacy of a non-democratic parliament. A thorough assessment of the political context within which a parliament operates is therefore necessary to ensure that UNDP is in fact strengthening a weakened legislature and not assisting a rubber-stamp institution to simply be more efficient. Such evaluations are particularly important where UNDP is considering a request from the executive for parliamentary assistance. In those cases, UNDP must first assess whether parliamentary assistance should be delivered at all and, if so, how to most effectively target assistance at the parliament's institutional and capacity weaknesses[8].

An important initial step in assessing the appropriateness of commencing a parliamentary programme is understanding the political power balances that may shape or constrain UNDP's parliamentary development efforts. Given that a broad spectrum of political views is represented in most parliaments, it is useful in advance to identify change agents, likely champions and potential blockages to parliamentary assistance. In some cases, UNDP may be viewed as a neutral actor that can engage all sides and parties in a discussion on reform issues. In other cases, internal national political complexities may undermine the likelihood of UNDP support contributing to sustainable parliamentary improvements. For instance, it might be that only the opposition parties support

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[8] It is important to note that although UNDP electoral programmes require clearance from the Electoral Assistance Division in the Division of Political Affairs, no such clearance is required from the Department of Political Affairs for parliamentary programmes. Even so, there are similar sensitivities influencing decisions and assessments regarding both types of programmes.

parliamentary development reform in a particular country. In such situations the UNDP Country Office might need to reconsider whether it is appropriate to attempt to support parliamentary development; there may be other interventions in support of democratic governance that would be more viable.

(ii)   Which key stakeholders should be involved?

Support to legislatures provides an unusual context for UNDP engagement. That is because whereas the agency primarily engages through government (i.e., the executive), the legislature represents an independent and separate branch of government that should be respected as such. It is therefore important to recognise that the speaker or presiding officer of the legislature will be a key partner and driver of assistance, in addition to UNDP's more standard government partners (e.g., the ministry of foreign affairs or aid coordination unit). At an early stage in planning, it can also be important to get a sense of the commitment of the actual members of the legislature and/or key political party representatives. For example, a project may face resistance at a later stage if the speaker is keen for assistance but members are resistant.

Given the political sensitivities of working with the legislative branch—which usually contains the most visible representatives of government opposition—establishing a relationship with government on parliamentary issues early in the design and implementation of a programme can avoid later complications for UNDP and the parliament. This is particularly useful when the request comes from the parliamentary secretariat or a parliament that often challenges the government. UNDP should always be in dialogue with the government to investigate ways of integrating the parliament into broader nationally executed policy-planning activities to help build government support for these activities.

The specific type of a country's governance structure also plays a role. For example, UNDP should consider the extent to which a country's parliamentary systems are decentralized if the nation has a federal system of government. In some federal systems, working with sub-national parliaments or local government assemblies may be the most effective means of addressing the governance challenges facing that country. If the majority of the *de facto* or de jure power within a country lies with provinces/states, then it would likely make more sense to work with these institutions in addressing issues of concern.

(iii)   How early can donors be brought into the planning and design process?

Whether responding to a parliament's request for assistance or developing a UNDP-initiated programme, an understanding of the activities and priorities of other development partners and donors will shape entry points for the agency. UNDP can often take on a donor coordination role—as is the case in Afghanistan and Viet Nam when providing parliamentary assistance—in recognition of its role as a neutral partner. UNDP can also assist a parliament in developing its own capacity to coordinate donors. Understanding the activities of other donors and implementing partners engaged in

parliamentary development avoids a situation where UNDP's support is leveraged by parliament against the assistance of other donors.

> **Box 2. The planning cycle for parliamentary programmes**
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> It is often useful to be opportunistic in identifying openings for UNDP to engage with parliaments. For example, as noted in Section III.B of this practice note, election cycles can often shape the parameters of parliamentary programmes. As elections near, the focus of parliamentarians inevitably shifts to campaigning, and engagement in longer-term institutional change management activities can be low. Additionally, if there is a likely to be a major turnover of MPs in an election, it can ultimately be fruitless to build support with stakeholders who will shortly be out of power and unable to follow through. Even activities that engage only with the parliamentary secretariat can be disrupted during an election campaign, given the changing demands on the institution made by parliamentarians.
>
> In some cases, however, the pre-election period can be a key time to engage because parties may be willing to make a political commitment to parliamentary reform to be initiated after the elections. There is no guarantee that they will follow through, of course, especially if their only priority was to increase public support to get elected. But even so, encouraging parties to include parliamentary strengthening in their election manifestoes at least means that the issue has been discussed and publicized, which may make it more difficult for legislators to ignore the issue.
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> A new post-election parliament can be an opportunity for UNDP to establish strong relationships within a new parliament, which can be built upon over time. For example, UNDP can support induction training sessions for new parliamentarians or the initiation of a new project or new phase of a project at this time, in advance of larger-scale parliamentary reform programmes

B.   Designing parliamentary programmes

(i)   Assessing parliamentary capacity: The parliamentary needs assessment

Different constitutional and legal frameworks, political systems, societal norms and incentives structures set the context for the operations of a parliament. When considering the design of a parliamentary programme, it is therefore important to assess the context in which the parliament operates; this should include analysing the existing strengths of a parliamentary institution as well as its weak points. Any such assessment is very much a context-specific exercise. Undertaking a needs assessment provides useful information on how best to target parliamentary development initiatives.

UNDP produced a guide on 'How to Conduct a Legislative Needs Assessment' in 1999. That guide remains useful, but considerable research and analysis has been undertaken since its publication to refine the methodology suggested. Most notably, as discussed previously, it is now clear that international standards and benchmarks can provide a

useful framework to identify the minimum characteristics of a democratic parliament during an assessment phase.

Benchmarking tools can be utilised to guide the questions asked during a legislative needs assessment (LNA). In particular, the recommended benchmarks of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), which were developed with UNDP support, provide detailed criteria for powers of democratic parliament. More recently, IPU developed a self-assessment toolkit for parliaments[9] that also provides a useful framework that could be integrated into any LNA activity.

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[9] Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008), 'Evaluating Parliament: A Self-assessment Toolkit for Parliaments'. Online: www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/self-e.pdf.

Box 3. Examples of diagnostics questions for parliaments

1. Assessing parliamentary powers

What are the parliament's lawmaking powers? Are members entitled to introduce legislation? How much authority does the executive have to introduce and influence the course of legislation? Does the parliament have an independent research capacity to support parliamentarians' policy analysis? What are the executive's veto powers? Can the legislative override an executive veto—and if so, how? Can the executive rule by decree? How much influence do parliamentary committees have? Do committees consider every law?

What are the parliament's budget powers? Must appropriations be legislated before the government can spend money? How detailed must the budget be? Can the parliament amend the budget? What role does the parliament play in taxing the populace: is tax legislation necessary, etc?

What oversight powers does the parliament possess? Are there regular sessions when the parliament questions the government? Does the parliament have the right to compel the executive to produce information about government operations? If so, what is the scope of those powers? What power does the parliament have to call to account and remove executive officials?

Other key questions. How independent is the administration of parliament? Does the parliament have its own budget? Does the parliament have professional staff? Are they politically appointed? Are computer information and research systems sufficient to assist parliamentarians in their work?

The actual policy-making power of a parliament gives little indication of the public perception and legitimacy that the institution enjoys among constituents. Surveys on the parliament's perception by the public therefore can be a useful tool in setting an agenda for reform that is recognized and supported by the public.

A parliament's legitimacy and effectiveness may also be analyzed through a self-assessment toolkit developed by IPU. This toolkit invites parliaments to evaluate their democratic performance against a set of criteria based on universal values that they should all aspire to and which retain their validity whatever the system of government.

And finally, institutional legitimacy can be built through individual parliamentarians developing strong reputations with their constituencies and/or by the parliament conducting its own public relations and outreach campaign. A needs assessment should consider the parliament's legitimacy and standing within the country, addressing questions beyond the institution's formal law-making powers.

2. Parliamentary capacity to represent citizens

Does the parliament conduct institutional outreach? Is the parliament involved in civic education? Does the parliament have a Web site? Does the parliament accept public visits? Does the parliament have a media office? Is information about proceedings in parliament readily available to the public?

What capacity do parliamentarians have to fulfil their representative function? Do parliamentarians have constituency offices? Are they able to travel to their constituencies—and if so, how often? Is there a strong media or civil society that can assist parliamentarians understand the concerns of their constituency?

The working style of a parliament is also commonly used as an indication of its strength in the political system. An arena legislature is one in which debates take place primarily if not exclusively in the main chamber. This occurs when a parliament has a limited committee structure and its work is centred on plenary debates. Meanwhile, a parliament is said to be transformative when it places a strong emphasis on committee work and decisions are mainly agreed upon in committees, thereby limiting occurrences of confrontational grandstanding in the plenary. Evidence around the world indicates that laws produced by a transformative parliament are more likely to be implemented because they bring greater political consensus.

3. Parliament's transformative powers

Does parliament have a functioning committee structure? Does the parliament have key standing committees with defined areas of responsibility? Are opposition party members included on the key committees? Do committees regularly meet to consider proposed laws or investigate the implementation of laws?

4. Parliament's conflict management capacity

Strong parliaments have vital contributions to make to peacebuilding. As the representative body of government, parliaments have the potential to be extremely effective institutions of conflict management. They can manage disputes in the political space, thus avoiding violent conflict. Transformative parliamentary structures are more effective in this regard because parliaments organized to conduct negotiation and compromise processes in small groups like committees tend to manage conflicts more successfully. Committees or other legislative sub-structures can allow conflicting parties to build relationships in less public settings. Parliaments with strong committee structures of this sort can move away from political grandstanding to produce concrete outcomes.

Similarly, parliamentary committees can deal in detail with key issues confronting a post-conflict or fragile state. For example, in the aftermath of conflict, parliament's involvement in the security sector is crucial for achieving democratic, civilian oversight of security forces—particularly in developing security sector reform and addressing critical security-related issues (such as small arms, DDR [disarmament,

demobilization and re-integration], demining and gender-based violence).

Together with several partners, UNDP undertook a year-long research project that found that parliaments are often marginalized by peacebuilding endeavours, usually to the detriment of democratization. At the same time, parliaments, MPs and parliamentary forums have, in many situations, played a crucial role in conflict prevention and resolution. UNDP subsequently drafted guidelines specifically for donors and programme officers working with parliaments to achieve crisis prevention and recovery. These guidelines[10] elucidate the key principles and recommendations for parliaments in the peacebuilding process—such as emphasizing support for constitutional assemblies and committees of parliament and support for parliamentary oversight committees.

Does parliament address the key issues and concerns that challenge peace and stability? Does parliamentary debate reach a consensus? Are there parliamentary sub-structures or committees that can debate issues in smaller groups? Do the committees work to build confidence between political factions to a conflict? How are power-sharing arrangements affecting the ability of the parliament to reach compromise? Is there parliamentary oversight of the security sector?

Comprehensive parliamentary needs assessment missions are generally undertaken once a Country Office has decided that it can provide added value by supporting a request for parliamentary development support. Such assessments require considerable time and resource commitments by both UNDP and the parliament—and thus generally raise a parliament's expectations for follow-up support. Consequently, it is recommended that LNAs not be used as an initial diagnostic tool to assess country-level interest in pursuing a request for parliamentary assistance unless there is a reasonably high degree of certainty that an environment conducive to follow-up support exists. (Guarantees are impossible, of course: In some cases, Country Offices may decide, based on the outcome of the assessment mission, that they do not want to proceed with follow-up support.)

The composition of the delegation is an important consideration when conducting a formal assessment mission. An appropriate balance between local and international expertise can help ensure sufficient local understanding of political sensitivities and general understanding of parliamentary development trends and frameworks. Some knowledge and experience of UNDP is also valuable on the delegation so that participants can adequately determine the feasibility of proposed programmes and draw connections to other UNDP programmes. The DGG parliamentary team and advisors in Regional Centres can be a potential resource for consultants with expertise in parliamentary development assessment missions.

Once an LNA is completed, it is important that there is buy-in from the stakeholders who will be involved in the process of agreeing to and/or implementing any parliamentary support programme. One useful strategy is to hold a validation workshop with legislators

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[10] 'Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery: Guidelines for the International Community'. Online: www.parlcpr.undp.org/docs/GPPS_Guidelines.pdf.

and parliamentary staff to discuss the LNA's recommendations, in particular to identify priority areas for support.

(ii)   Integrating cross-cutting development issues

In recognition of UNDP's fundamental commitment to poverty reduction and development, it is imperative for programmes to be based on the understanding that legislatures have a crucial role to play in national and local development activities. This priority has been accorded even greater weight in recent years as more development donors and partners recognize that legislatures should be included in development activities as equal partners with the executive branch. Parliaments' law-making, oversight and representative functions give them the responsibility and ability to actively engage in the development and implementation of a wide range of pro-poor laws and policies. Three of the most notable engagement opportunities are integration of the MDGs, mainstreaming gender issues, and integration of human rights. Each is described below.

Integration of MDGs

Most of the countries in the world have endorsed the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. In support of this commitment, UNDP's activities are directed at poverty reduction in line with the MDGs. Support to parliamentary development can be effective in supporting the achievement of the MDGs because MPs represent the very constituents who are supposed to benefit from them. Democratically elected legislators understand their communities and can be supported to represent their interests, thereby helping make development more equitable and effective. At a very basic level, projects can i) provide training on the essentials of the MDGs, including what achievement actually means; ii) facilitate comparative understanding of how other parliaments have promoted the MDGs; and iii) offer direct support to parliamentary secretariats, including relevant secretariat staff, so they know what to do if and when MPs asks for such information.

A more results-oriented parliament could be supported in analysing the poverty-alleviation implications of all bills and regulations proposed to the parliament. The parliament can also be urged to consider analysis of the impacts of budget choices and proposed bills and policies to be an integral component of its oversight work.

Mainstreaming gender issues

UNDP's 2008?2011 Gender Equality Strategy specifically recognises that "UNDP will contribute to expanded understanding and acceptance that governance structures which do not result in the equal participation of men and women, or their equal enjoyment of benefits from state interventions, are by definition neither inclusive nor democratic." This clearly applies to parliaments directly. The Strategy specifically identifies two key objectives for gender mainstreaming in democratic governance:

- **Working to support gender parity in the executive and legislative branches**. In this context, it is notable that while there has been some success in a few countries in increasing the representation of women in parliaments, there has been less success in establishing a common understanding among all

parliamentarians of the role that gender equality plays in national development. In a number of countries, UNDP is working on activities to support greater gender balance in parliaments.

- **Contributing to expanded capacity of both male and female government personnel to work in a gender-sensitive manner to ensure that women's perspectives are deliberately drawn into national policy dialogue and action**. In the legislative context, this could mean that socio-economic analyses of draft laws must include a gender impact assessment. Similarly, committee mandates could include a requirement that the gender impacts of proposed draft laws or budget items be analysed.

Integration of human rights

Box 4. Five dimensions of a human rights-based approach to parliamentary development

o Human rights values and principles that demonstrate and activate human rights include universality and indivisibility, equality and non-discrimination, participation and the inclusion of vulnerable groups, accountability and the rule of law.

o Human rights standards contained in international human rights instruments guide national development and should be adhered to and utilized by parliaments and legislators in their day-to-day work. Technical cooperation for parliamentary development can and should support human rights standard-setting. This would include ensuring that human rights standards are applied nationally in regards to issues such as gender equality and the rights of internally displaced persons, minorities, indigenous peoples, the disabled, the aged, and those affected by HIV/AIDS.

o Human rights claim holders refers to people as holders of rights that can be claimed through participation in parliamentary processes. The right to vote, the right to participate in public hearings, the ability of citizens and organizations to participate in the development of legislation and the role of the public in inputting to the national budget process all demonstrate how claim holders can participate in parliamentary processes and thus actively assert their rights[11].

o Duty-bearers refers to legislators as individuals and parliaments as governance institutions with responsibilities and obligations to respect protect, promote and realize human rights principles and standards through the legislative, oversight

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[11] Addressing issues of impunity and justice in post-conflict countries is one critical area where the application of human rights values, principles and standards can facilitate access to rights by claim holders. Another example is during peace negotiation and peace-building processes (including post-conflict constitution-making or constitutional revision processes), where the rights of all parties to a conflict can be accommodated through the active participation of representatives from all societal groups.

> and representational functions and through the execution of parliamentary procedures and practices. This can be demonstrated through the monitoring of adherence to human rights laws and of the progressive realization of human rights in the implementation of national laws. Investigating and monitoring allegations of human rights violations also underscore the obligations of legislators as duty-bearers. Parliaments can be active players in scrutinizing treaty reporting and the implementation by the executive of recommendations from treaty bodies.
>
> o Human rights remedies address the structural inequalities that prohibit or limit the realization of human rights[12].

Part V of the Millennium Declaration specifically commits governments to "spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms…" UNDP is also committed to implementing a human rights?based approach (HRBA) to development.

Given the crucial role parliaments can (and should) play in the promotion and protection of human rights, all UNDP projects should integrate HRBA into their design and implementation. This focus is based on the belief that parliaments have significant responsibility for recognizing and realizing human rights through their functions of law-making, oversight and representation.

(iii) Issue-based programming

Developing a strategy for a parliamentary programme involves linking and coordinating insights about a parliament's politics and its key change agents with UNDP's core human rights and pro-poor principles. Engendering political will to ensure the sustainability of parliamentary reforms is a key element of a successful programme. If, therefore, the UNDP's parliamentary programme is tied to issues that already foster political will, successful outcomes from UNDP's parliamentary programmes are more likely to endure.

Parliamentary development activities are likely to attract greater interest and support among legislators if they are tied to issues on the national political agenda or if they correlate with parliamentary development plans that have been drafted by the parliament itself. Planning for ownership of the parliamentary programme also increases the sustainability of programme impacts. Strategies to increase the parliament's contribution and management of the programme over time create long-term institutional adoption of UNDP activities.

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[12] UNDP's 'Primer on Parliaments and Human Rights', commissioned by the GPPS and HURIST programmes, explores further how UNDP can enhance the contribution that legislators, parliaments and parliamentary processes make towards the protection, promotion and realization of human rights. Online: www.undp.org/governance/docs/HR_Pub_Parlts&HR.pdf.

Trade-offs may be necessary when UNDP programmes are tied to parliamentary development programmes. Negotiation and compromise are likely to be necessary in situations where parliaments place a higher priority on study missions, infrastructure and equipment procurement than on improving parliamentary processes and ongoing reform. In such cases, a programme may only be accepted and ultimately successful if it contains a combination of infrastructure and process-targeted activities.

Tying parliamentary development to UNDP's pro-poor, anti-corruption[13], gender and human rights goals is one major priority for programme designers and implementers. They should also consider the following:

- Does the parliament have an existing development strategy that UNDP can work with? If not, should UNDP support the parliament in drafting a long-term development strategy?
- A small activity with parliamentarians, such as an induction programme or working with one committee, may be a useful way of building trust and key political contacts before undertaking long-term development activities.
- Can parliamentary strengthening be integrated into UNDP's existing project portfolios? And if so, how? A low-cost parliamentary strengthening activity might include supporting relevant parliamentary secretariat staff (e.g., committee staff) to participate in existing training programmes on health, gender or poverty reduction.
- Can a programme be linked with work in regional or global networks in parliamentary strengthening? For example, developing links to UNDP's Arab parliaments initiative and also with iKNOW politics could create strong regional knowledge sharing for parliamentary strengthening.
- Could work on emerging normative frameworks provide an entry point for institutional development, particularly where a parliament has already taken part in the drafting of guidelines (such as CPA's recommended benchmarks or IPU guidelines)?

C. Implementing parliamentary programmes

UNDP recognises that strengthening parliaments is a long-term and ongoing process. Because the agency is a development partner, it is important that implementation strategies are paced to take into account the highly political nature of some interventions. It is also important to recognise that sustainable capacity-building takes time in most contexts. In practice, therefore, many parliamentary programmes are undertaken in a phased approach, with each phase ensuring commitment from new parliamentary stakeholders.

(i)   Working with parliamentary implementation partners

Parliamentary institutions offer a range of partners with whom UNDP can work to undertake parliamentary development activities. Assessing the political context in which the parliament operates should be the first step in assessing the merits of any one

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[13] As per the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), adopted by the General Assembly in 2003.

partnership. Often, parliamentary programmes have looked to the speaker/presiding officer or secretary-general of the secretariat as the key counterpart. Those individuals are important stakeholders even in places where there is a tradition of non-partisan staff and a non-partisan speaker. However, care must be taken that working with them does not create impressions of bias in UNDP programming.

Often, the ideal partnership structure is to have a multi-party Steering Committee of MPs that represents a range of interests and/or political groupings. This Steering Committee can then discuss programming options and implementation approaches to reach consensus on major programme decisions. This approach encourages stronger local ownership of parliamentary development activities and can create a cross-party institutional identity, binding parliamentarians to the legitimacy of the parliament rather than only to their political parties.

UNDP may assist in establishing or working with a multi-party modernization or reform committee. Such a committee also provide donors with one point of contact, making it easier to determine priorities and coordinate efforts. For the sustainability of programmes beyond the election cycle, practice suggests that the head of the parliamentary secretariat (e.g., the chief clerk or secretary-general) should be a member of this committee and that the secretariat should provide overall administrative and leadership support. When a reform steering committee comprises senior political leadership, it is important that UNDP demonstrate an equivalent level of commitment by being represented by appropriately senior staff.

In politically fluid environments, it can be helpful to formalize partnerships through written agreements to moderate the effects of the turnover of key individuals in elections. Given the pressing needs of parliamentary business that compete for the attention of parliamentarians, it is often wise not to enter into arrangements with reform committees that require approvals for routine project activities. A relevant parliamentary committee should provide strategic guidance on the overall direction and plan of activities.

As stressed throughout this practice note, the political nature of parliaments should not be underestimated. There are likely to be times when high-level political figures express unhappiness with the direction or activities of a parliamentary programme. Therefore, it is often helpful to identify a group of senior figures or respected politicians who may be able to intervene and speak on behalf of UNDP's efforts, if necessary. Some programmes set up an advisory team comprising senior retired members of parliament, respected journalists and academics for that purpose. An added potential benefit is that members of the team can also be called on to provide advice on programme implementation.

Another notable point is that the recruitment of properly qualified staff is crucial for UNDP to navigate the local political situation. Local staff members with experience working for the parliamentary secretariat, as political advisers or as MPs, bring strong political networks, local political understanding and institutional knowledge to parliamentary programmes.

(ii)   Harnessing the skills of other expert partners

Considerable expertise is available, both within UNDP and more broadly, for providing technical support to parliaments. It is important that parliamentary programmes are designed to maximise local, regional and international expertise for the benefit of parliaments. For example, local CSOs often have considerable expertise on specific issues that can be utilised when training MPs. CSOs often also provide useful inputs on proposed bills and policies, and can thus be encouraged to work more closely with relevant sectoral parliamentary committees.

At the regional and global level, there are numerous organizations with specialized programmes for parliaments and legislators; support from some of these could be sought to achieve maximum impact. Parliamentary networks such as CPA and the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie have strong expertise and excellent parliamentary contacts that could be tapped to promote South-South cooperation in particular. Likewise, there are a range of academic institutions that work with parliaments. UN agencies other than UNDP can also be sources of expert advice.

(iii)   Developing a communications strategy for the programme

Parliamentary programmes target public figures from across the political spectrum and as such can elicit significant political interest. With this public profile, UNDP programmes can attract scrutiny that is more intense than many other technical programmes. It is important at an early stage to be clear on the description and reasoning of the programme that will be communicated to the public—for example, how will UNDP describe the programme publicly? Sometimes having a public launch or media release can increase the participation, attractiveness, political will and parliamentary enthusiasm for a programme. In other cases, low-key events are more likely to engage political participants. A core underlying assumption should be that any communications strategy must be based on the culture and political atmosphere of the country in which the programme is initiated.

(iv)   Modalities for implementation

National execution (NEX)

Many parliaments have never before been recipients of international assistance; in such cases, they are unlikely to have project execution or international assistance management capabilities. Where a parliament has a well-developed multi-party reform committee, structures are in place for NEX execution of long-term UNDP assistance. Many parliaments, however, already face such considerable obstacles—resource, capacity, technical and political—in executing their own core workload that execution of a strengthening programme might prove too great a burden.

Given the special sovereign status of a national parliament in the constitutional context of a country, an executing arrangement that relies heavily on external bodies is sometimes not politically acceptable. One way to overcome capacity constraints is to bring in an

external implementing agency to implement some of the more complex activities within the framework of the nationally executed project. Projects with a large aid-coordination or management component should work into the project objectives a capacity-building component of donor coordination.

Execution by the executive branch should be avoided because it potentially undermines the parliament's independence and the oversight functions. Similarly, any cost-sharing contribution by the executive branch to a NEX parliamentary development project should be secured well in advance to ensure that the executive does not use its contribution to influence the parliament. Depending on the political context in which the programme will be functioning, it is important to decide if the national executing partner should be the secretariat or the office of the speaker/president of the parliament.

Direct execution (DEX)

Direct execution of parliamentary programmes is becoming more common as UNDP's experience in parliamentary strengthening continues to build. DEX can be an attractive implementation modality because it vests executing responsibilities with actors fluent in the political dynamics of the programme, particularly how they relate to UNDP. It may also be the best way to manage comprehensive parliamentary programmes that work with civil society and the political leadership stakeholders, who otherwise have little experience working together.

Agency execution

Agency execution (e.g., by UNOPS) brings the benefit of a neutral, external implementer to the programme, a factor that could be particularly useful in moving reform projects forward. On the other hand, potentially negative considerations might include the executing agency's lack of proximity to the programme country and consequent lack of understanding of the political context and sensitivities involved in the programme. One weakness specific to parliamentary programming is the lack of a specialized technical agency for parliamentary development.

NGO execution

UNDP experience with NGO execution of parliamentary programmes remains limited. However, this approach does offer some advantages, particularly for discrete activities. NGO execution is one way to bring specialized technical capacity to a parliamentary programme without creating management layers. It can be an effective modality for small targeted programmes, specifically for those that work with civil society. It can be effective for political party programmes, assuming that the NGO involved is perceived by all parties to be nonpartisan.

D.   Monitoring and evaluation of parliamentary programmes

It is an essential part of any UNDP programme to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of UNDP's interventions. Within UNDP's development results framework for democratic governance, parliaments and their functions form one of the indicators in the development results framework of the 2008?2011 Strategic Plan. Establishing project indicators and monitoring systems from the start of programme formulation is the best way to ensure the accurate measurement of parliamentary development programme results. Monitoring can also be relatively cost-effective if it is integrated into technical cooperation strategies throughout the period of project implementation.

(i)   Identifying country-level indicators for parliamentary development

As with all programmes, indicators for parliamentary development should be closely tied to the programme aims. Agreed international guidelines and benchmarks such as those found in the CPA and IPU benchmarking tools can provide useful reference points for setting indicators or for conducting macro-level evaluations that study institutional and functional operations of a parliament. UNDP's previous experiences with implementing parliamentary programmes suggest that consideration be given to the following:

Tie the monitoring framework to a parliament-owned modernization plan. Where a parliament has agreed on its own development plan, indicators should be identified which link back to assessing achievement against the overall aims as expressed in the parliamentary development plan. Measuring results against a parliament-owned development plan can minimize criticisms that a programme is responding to externally driven priorities. The parliamentary development plan indicates and reinforces institutional ownership of parliamentary reform and, in some cases, can underscore a crucial level of political will to implement the programme thoroughly and effectively. Moreover, the parliamentary plan establishes nationally owned standards that provide direction for the programme.

Focus on process rather than quantifying outcomes. There has been considerable discussion in parliamentary development circles around whether indicators should focus on process or outcomes. In some respects, both approaches should ideally be accommodated. UNDP is an outcomes-focuses organization, so it is important to try to assess whether a parliament that is institutionally stronger is using its improved processes to more effectively govern in the interests of the public. However, quantitative indicators, by themselves, often do not provide sufficient information to analyze the interface between project achievements and the wider democratization context. It is indeed difficult for quantitative indicators to reflect aspects such as the climate of confidence that the project has fostered or improved collaboration between the executive and parliament. For example, measuring parliamentary performance by the number of laws passed could hide an ineffective parliament that is merely a rubber stamp and does not allow for genuine debate and consideration of legislation. A review of UNDP parliamentary development experience revealed that qualitative rather than quantitative monitoring indicators are most relevant in tracking trends in parliamentary performance and their influence on the broader democratization process.

(ii)   Assessing the baseline

In order to get a proper picture of progress over time, it is crucial to have a clear picture of the parliament situation at the beginning of a project—referred to as the baseline. This enables UNDP to more meaningfully measure the impact of the programme and to then adapt, if needed. Where an LNA is conducted at the outset of a programme, it may be that the information collected in the LNA can inform the baselines.

Undoubtedly, establishing project indicators and monitoring systems from the start of programme formulation is the best way to ensure the accurate measurement of parliamentary development programme results. Monitoring can also be relatively cost-effective if it is integrated into technical cooperation strategies throughout the period of project implementation. The UNDP ATLAS system already requires certain information (e.g., Risk and Issues) to be logged at the start of a project and over time. Monitoring information must likewise be established at the outset of an activity and kept updated.

(iii)   Monitoring over time

It is important when designing indicators to identify where or how the relevant information will be collected to track progress. Ideally, monitoring activities take existing data sources account so as to minimize the burden on programme implementation staff. Some data will already exist. For example, administrative data on the number of women and minority parliamentarians may already be collected. An analysis of legislation passed as a direct result of the programme would also be possible on the basis of existing data.

Sometimes indicators may actually be included as part of a new activity itself. For example, where an activity is focused on ensuring Hansards (printed transcripts of parliamentary debates) are produced in a timely fashion, the activity may itself require not only that reports be produced regularly, but that parliamentarians are informed of the time taken to produce the Hansard. This information is useful both for beneficiaries as well as for UNDP. Where library capacity is being built, it may useful to gather regular statistics on how often the parliamentary library is used and by whom.

Some information may need to be collected anew by the programme itself. In that context, recognising that capacity improvements are often hard to measure quantitatively, qualitative surveys of parliamentarians or participants in the programme may need to be used to collect specific feedback on activities. Focus groups and public opinion testing can be one methodology to define and measure qualitative changes in parliamentary performance.

(iv)   Evaluating performance

Most programmes are required to undertake an end-of-programme evaluation, the results of which often inform the design of a subsequent phase. Evaluations of parliamentary programmes require a good understanding of the nature of parliament's institutional and political functions that shape parliamentary development. This expertise can inform the

evaluation and produce recommendations valuable to UNDP. The DGG parliamentary team is able to provide Country Offices with names of consultants with parliamentary expertise.

Box 5. Examples of evaluations

Two notable evaluations of UNDP large-scale projects are available. They provide useful insight into the structure for evaluations and the type of recommendations that can result from evaluations:

- Released in early 2007, the GPPS II mid-term evaluation was conducted over six months and provides an extensive evaluation of the programme's global, regional and country-level activities. Online: http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls/docs/GPPS%20Mid-Term%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf.

- The evaluation of the Support to Establish the Afghan Legislature (SEAL) programme was conducted in 2006 and is an example of an evaluation of a large-scale, comprehensive programme that included several activities covering the different functions and areas of the parliament.

V.   Lessons Learned

A.   Principal focus areas for parliamentary support

Support for the institutional framework of parliament

UNDP technical assistance to reform the institutional set-up of parliaments has had demonstrated success in i) encouraging diverse political representation within multi-partisan committee structures; ii) creating transparent opportunities for public inputs to the legislative and oversight functions of parliaments; iii) ensuring non-partisan administrative services; and iv) formulating processes and mechanisms to enhance the independence of parliaments from their executive counterparts. Experience has further demonstrated that inattention to some of the key elements in institutional design can render other technical assistance efforts fruitless. When institutional frameworks do not adequately delineate the roles and responsibilities of the major political institutions, parliamentary stability and development remain elusive.

UNDP is particularly active in supporting the establishment of new parliaments established in post-conflict settings, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal, Rwanda and Timor-Leste. In these types of situations, technical assistance in drafting a new constitution, rules of procedure or designing new parliamentary processes is often a key entry point of international assistance. UNDP's experience supporting institutional set-up suggests that such assistance is most valued when it is neutral in nature.

Support for a parliament's law-making function

Two key factors have emerged as critical elements in the development of strategies to support the law-making process:

- In new and transitional parliaments, the law-making process could benefit from more comprehensive use of the committee system to ensure public interests and needs are adequately considered and addressed in legislation emanating from the executive branch. To represent the interests and serve the needs of the people, it is therefore necessary to engage public opinion and inputs, increase access to independent information and technical analysis, and improve committee structures and services to provide and utilize the information and analysis. Also of importance is the development of skills to cultivate policy expertise within the committees   themselves.

- Political constraints often limit the impact of technical cooperation interventions to increase legislative effectiveness. A purely technical approach will be ineffective when confronting these political obstacles.

Support for a parliament's oversight function

Increasingly, parliaments are requesting support to strengthen their oversight capacity. Requests from parliaments for training in the budget process and to strengthen independent research capabilities are on the rise. Such requests show that many parliaments are taking their oversight responsibilities extremely seriously, which is a good sign and one that should be supported.

Technical cooperation strategies to improve oversight need to consider the political factors influencing legislative-executive relations, the structure and dynamics of political parties within a parliament, and the level of development of committee systems. In particular, while the legal role of the parliament in the budget process can vary sharply in different systems, budgetary oversight and scrutiny can be an important component of efforts to deal with government abuse and corruption. Active and effective public accounts committees and legislative audit bodies can improve government fiscal accountability, as well as increase the "value for money? of government expenditures. The value of working within budget committees to tackle key institutional and political obstacles to oversight has been demonstrated through several UNDP interventions.

Support for a parliament's representation function

Experience suggests that legal and socio-political constraints to increased representation in newly democratizing countries can be overcome through carefully managed technical cooperation strategies, such as public consultation processes or public hearings, designed in collaboration with political party representatives. Activities in areas that promote greater awareness among the public of parliaments' work have also been successful in improving legislatures' image. Such activities include civic education, recording and publication of parliamentary proceedings and strengthening parliamentary information/media services.

A second form of representation concerns relations between parliamentarians and constituents. A constituency is a group of people based on geography (e.g., an electorate or district) or a common sector or focus area (e.g., agriculture, small businesses, confronting the trafficking of women). If parliamentarians are to do their jobs effectively, they must maintain contact with the citizens they represent. This can be accomplished by many means, including establishing constituency offices, conducting outreach sessions and improving communications efforts more broadly. UNDP has developed programmes that support these activities.

Support for parliamentary party groups and political parties

Political parties play a critical role in legislative consensus-building and can determine the pace of reforms. Experience has showed that the capacity and maturity of parties and parliamentary groups may reflect on how capable a parliament is at managing internal conflict, responding to tensions and disagreements with the executive branch, and mediating societal differences. Thus, attention needs to be given to the competencies of

parliamentary groups and the development of strategies and activities to help them better meet their responsibilities.

Support for the training of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff

A growing area of interest in parliamentary development is the development of national parliamentary training centres. This is an effective means of developing sustainable support to a parliament with limited financial resources. In a number of countries and programmes UNDP has supported parliaments in the creation of training centres, operated by national staff. These centres produce training courses and modules for use by MPs and their staff, from induction courses to advanced training on the role of a parliamentarian in overseeing the work of the executive branch. Of course, the training and support provided by these centres should be closely affiliated with other support that allows the newly developed skills to be applied in a real-world setting.

B.   Implementing the parliamentary programme

(i)   Capacity-building methodology

Based on previous experience, UNDP has developed several capacity-building methodologies for implementing the parliamentary support projects:

- *Long-term technical advisory services*. The necessity of long-term technical advisory support is emerging as one key lesson from UNDP parliamentary assistance to date. Overall experience suggests that while *ad hoc* technical advisory services are appropriate for seminars, workshops and training activities or institutional upgrading, long-term, consistent advisory support is critical for ensuring that the political and technical ramifications of parliamentary development can be properly addressed during project implementation. Advisory services have been one of the primary technical cooperation mechanisms utilized by UNDP and many other donors. One interesting trend emerging from UNDP's experiences is that many parliamentary personnel and parliamentarians have achieved a significant degree of credibility and have made excellent technical advisors for parliamentary programmes. Nevertheless, many parliamentary projects have also demonstrated the value of bringing non-parliamentary expertise.

- *Maintaining support*. As indicated previously, the building and expansion of a sense of ownership among parliamentary political and staff leaders is crucial to ensure a successful project. The following strategies to achieve viable ownership were observed:
  - o Orchestration: Start with activities that show fast results.
  - o Marketing: Develop signature activities by which projects become known and publicize achievements.
  - o Communication: Giving credit to political and administrative authorities and partner organizations.

- o Dedication of time: Building, widening and maintaining support is a critical goal of project operations and key to sustainability.

- *New member orientation.* The turnover within some parliaments is often very high. It is therefore crucial to develop efficient activities and systems to train and support new MPs. Such activities could include the organization of orientation seminars for newly elected members and the establishment of special workshops that discuss their constitutionally defined responsibilities.

- *Study tours.* When applied to parliamentary development assistance, study tours and parliament-to-parliament exchanges have proven to be useful exercises in fostering relationships and breaking down barriers among political groups and between parliamentarians and staff. Parliamentary study tours are most effective when theory is combined with practical experience and when the tours are part of a broader strategy to specifically utilize what was learned during the tour.

- *Regional seminars.* Regional seminars have been cost-effective mechanisms to bring large numbers of parliamentarians and non-parliamentary actors together, while providing neutral forums to facilitate discussion around controversial issues or obstacles to greater parliamentary development. One of the main benefits of regional seminars is that they provide politicians with an opportunity to leave politics at home and to speak openly about their experiences. These forums provide opportunities for parliamentary colleagues to exchange experiences, for reform-minded MPs to meet in an informal setting, and for MPs and parliamentary staff to work together as joint delegations.

- *South-South learning.* Opportunities for South-South sharing of expertise and knowledge should also be supported. Such efforts could include i) staff from one parliamentary support project acting as consultants in the development of a new programme in another country, ii) a variety of regional learning forums and workshops, and iii) bilateral exchanges among parliaments in the global south. Activities of this sort have had very positive effects in supporting indigenous leadership capacity and challenging the notion expressed in some countries that democracy is something that is being imposed from outside.

(ii) Project management

Parliamentary development is, by definition, political in nature. This means that parliamentary development programmes need to be carefully developed and skilfully managed by UNDP Country Offices. In order for UNDP to champion its democratic governance goals, it must be skilled at operating in a politically charged environment, persuasive in the face of resistance and strategic in its operating style.

- *Role of UNDP Country Offices in parliamentary development programmes*. Parliamentary assistance programmes require the strongest commitment by senior management within UNDP Country Offices. When project steering committees, for example, are comprised of the most senior parliamentary leadership, UNDP needs to demonstrate equivalent commitment.

- *Political dynamics need to be understood and monitored*. Monitoring the political dimensions of transitions and being able to take calculated risks in technical assistance to address sensitive parliamentary issues or constraints can be an important factor in moving from project outputs to more substantive outcomes. Opportunities to effect significant changes in parliamentary norms, behaviours and practices require acknowledging political variables in parliamentary programming.

- *Benefits of project management presence*. Likewise, for a long-term parliamentary project, the value of having long-term project management staff to monitor and adjust project implementation strategies has been well proven through UNDP's experiences. This is particularly the case when working with parliaments because many legislators have limited experiences working with external development actors. The location of parliamentary support projects in the parliamentary precinct has undoubtedly helped them to develop close links with the key parliamentary interlocutors, thus permitting administrative details in the implementation of activities to be quickly resolved. As with project design, participatory approaches with parliamentary stakeholders on management and monitoring/evaluation are the only way to ensure ownership of project objectives. Inclusive practices and dialogue facilitation during needs assessments as well as during project implementation can foster consensus on project activities among fragile political entities and between the political and administrative branches of a parliament. Project management mechanisms that include political and administrative representation are also most advantageous as forums for information exchange with donors to ensure coordination and mitigate concerns about the political risks of parliamentary support activities

- *Utility of subcontracts or direct execution*. The political factors inherent in parliamentary assistance point to the necessity of reflecting on management arrangements in parliamentary projects. Many UNDP Country Offices favour national execution modalities, but these are just one avenue for project management. The experiences in a number of countries under the GPPS underscore the utility of sub-contractual or direct execution arrangements to limit the potential for executive interference and control at all stages of project implementation.

VI.   Resources

A.   UNDP documents

Guidelines and handbooks

- Leston-Bandeira, Cristina and Norton, Philip (2005), 'Parliamentary Institutions: Basic Concepts', UNDP, Viet Nam. Online: www.un.org.vn/undp/projects/vie02007/News2005/parliamentary_institutions.htm.
Provides a good overview of the theoretical understandings of the powers and roles of the parliament. This document was developed as part of a wider strategy of knowledge sharing and the promotion of self-learning initiatives involving Vietnamese parliamentarians and secretariat staff. It is a useful resource for parliamentary programmes.

- UNDP (2006), 'Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery: Guidelines for the International Community'. Online: www.parlcpr.undp.org/docs/GPPS_Guidelines.pdf.

- UNDP (2006), 'A Handbook on Working with Political Parties'. Online: www.undp.org/governance/docs/policy-pub-polpartieshandbook.pdf.

- National Democratic Institute and UNDP (2001), 'Guidebook on Strengthening the Representative Capacity of Parliaments'. Online: www.accessdemocracy.org/NDI/library/1321_gov_strengthlegis_undp_1020001.pdf.

Indicators for parliamentary development

- See UNDP Presentations at Brussels Meeting 2007 on Measuring Results. Online: http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls/presentations.html. For example, see Schulz, Keith, 'USAID experience on indicators', which reviews examples on objectives, indicators and data collection.

- UNDP (2006), 'Measuring Democratic Governance: A framework for selecting for selecting pro-poor and gender sensitive indicators'. Online: www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs06/Framework%20paper%20-%20entire%20paper.pdf.

- UNDP (1999), 'How to Conduct a Legislative Needs Assessment'. Online: http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/Docs/parliaments/How%20to%20conduct%20needs%20assessment.htm.

Evaluations of UNDP programmes

- Murphy, Jonathan and Alhada, Alkache (2007), 'Global Programme for Parliamentary Stengthening II: Mid-term Evaluation Report', UNDP. Online: http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls/docs/GPPS%20Mid-Term%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf.
An evaluation of UNDP's GPPS programme at the global, regional and country level. It is a particularly useful example of the type of questions and recommendations that can frame and result from an evaluation of parliamentary development.

Parliaments and economic development and poverty reduction

- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and UNDP (2004), 'Legislative-Executive Communication on Poverty Reduction Strategies'. Online: www.accessdemocracy.org/library/1682_gov_poverty_exec_050504.pdf.

- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and UNDP (2004), 'Legislative Public Outreach on Poverty Issues'. Online: www.accessdemocracy.org/library/1684_gov_poverty_public_050504.pdf.

- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and UNDP (2004), 'Parliamentary-Civic Collaboration for Monitoring Poverty Reduction Initiatives'. Online: www.accessdemocracy.org/library/1683_gov_poverty_civic_050504.pdf.

International agreements, guidelines and standards (drafted with UNDP support)

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (2006), 'Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: A Guide to Good Practice'. Online: http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls/docs/IPU%20Parliament%20and%20democracy_en.pdf.

- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (2006), 'Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures'. Online: http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls/docs/CPA%20Benchmarks%20Report%20-%20FINAL%20-033007.doc.

B. Academic commentary and non-UNDP parliamentary development resources

Glossary of terms useful for working with parliament

- Parliament of Canada, glossary of parliamentary terms. Online: www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/education/gloss-inter/index.asp?Language=E.

- UK Parliament, glossary of terms. Online: www.parliament.uk/glossary/glossary.cfm.

Key academic research on parliamentary development

- Fish, Steven M. (2006), 'Stronger Legislatures: Stronger Democracies', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 5? 20. Online: http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls/docs/Fish-17-1.pdf.
  Quantitative study illustrating that stronger parliament is correlated with more open societies and democracies. Case studies are largely from Eastern Europe.

- Mezey, Michael (1979), *Comparative Legislatures*, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press.
  One of the first and most cited pieces of developing the study of legislatures. This theoretical work outlines a classification system for understanding the power of legislatures, with particular attention paid to comparisons with the executive. This work forms the basis of much of the later analysis of legislatures' oversight and law-making roles in a democracy.

- Taylor, Andrew J. (2005), 'We are Not Asking You to Hug Each Other, But We Ask You to Co-exist: The Kosovo Assembly and the Politics of Co-existence', *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 11.
  Case study that illustrates the important role of parliament in representing and protecting the interests of minorities in post-conflict situations.

Parliaments, oversight and financial accountability

- Pelizzo, Riccardo and Stapenhurst, Rick (eds) (2004), 'Legislatures and Oversight', World Bank Institute. Online: http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/108306/Legislatures%5Fand%5FOversight.pdf.

- Wehner, Joachim (2007), 'Strengthening Legislative Financial Security in Developing Countries', DFID. Online: http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls/docs/DFID%20financial%20scrutiny%20report_final_16%20may%202007.pdf.

- Krafchik, Warren and Wehner, Joachim, 'The Role of Parliaments in the Budget Process', Institute for Democracy in South Africa. Online: www.undp.org/governance/eventsites/policy_dialogue/12_The_Role_of_Parliaments.pdf.

Useful evaluations

- Hubli, K. Scott and Schmidt, Martin (2005), 'Approaches to Parliamentary Strengthening: A Review of Sida's Support to Parliaments', Swedish International Development Agency. Online: www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=16313&language=en_US.

An overview of the parliamentary programmes undertaken by the Swedish government aid agency, Sida. It provides a useful analysis of trends in parliamentary development and provides examples of different types of interventions that can be undertaken as parliamentary development.

Situational and political contextual analysis

- Drivers of Change approach to situation analysis (used by DFID). Online: www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/DOC59.pdf.

- Swedish International Development Agency's Power Analysis Approach, as explained by Overseas Development Institute (ODI) paper. Online: www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Tools/Toolkits/Mapping_Political_Context/Power_analysis.html.

Representation

- UNDP's 'The Legislature and Constituency Relations' note. Online: www.undp.org/governance/docs/Parl-Pub-constrelat.htm.

C.   Parliamentary development actors

Inter-Parliamentary Union

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the international organization of parliaments of sovereign states. Established in 1889, it brings together representatives and secretariats from member parliaments to discuss topical and institutional issues.

IPU has no long-term field presence. Rather than being involved in developing parliamentary capacity, IPU is one of UNDP's preferred partners because it has an excellent convening role. It convenes the World Conferences of Speakers of Parliament, which are hosted at UN headquarters. IPU has a formalized cooperation structure with the UN; it was granted observer status in 2002 by the General Assembly. Online: www.ipu.org.

The World Bank

The World Bank's hub for global parliamentary outreach and activities is based in the European External Affairs Office and run by the Bank's Development Policy Dialogue Team. The Bank also works with parliamentarians through the World Bank Institute's capacity-building programmes and country teams. The World Bank Institute's programme:
- offers practical workshops and seminars for parliamentarians and staff, such as for public accounts committees;
- manages a programme to raise awareness among parliamentarians about the Poverty Reduction Strategy process;
- publishes analytical work on parliamentary capacity-building; and

- supports the establishment of thematic parliamentary networks such as the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) and the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC).

Regional parliaments and parliamentary associations

- Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie : http://apf.francophonie.org/ (in French only)
- Central American Parliament: http://parlacen.org
- Assembly of the West European Union: www.assembly-weu.org/en/index.php
- Baltic Assembly: www.baltasam.org/?CatID=84
- East African Legislative Assembly: www.eac.int/eala/
- Latin American Parliament: www.parlatino.org/ (in Spanish only)
- Andean Parliament (in Spanish): www.parlamentoandino.org/
- European Parliament: www.europarl.europa.eu/
- NATO Parliamentary Assembly: www.nato-pa.int/
- OSCE Parliamentary Assembly: www.oscepa.org/
- Pan-African Parliament: www.africa-union.org/organs/pan%20african%20parliament/home.htm
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: http://assembly.coe.int/
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association: www.cpahq.org/
- Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union: www.arab-ipu.org/ (in Arabic)
- Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum: www.appf.org.pe/
- Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World: www.assecaa.org/
- Southern African Development Committee (SADC) Parliamentary Forum: www.sadcpf.org/
- Parliamentary Conference of the Americas: www.copa.qc.ca/

Parliamentary networks

- Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa: www.awepa.org/
- Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNOWB): www.pnowb.org
- Global Organizations of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC): www.parlcent.ca/gopac/index_e.php
- International Association of Business and Parliament: www.iabp.org/
- Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament: www.gsinstitute.org/pnnd/
- African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC): www.apnacafrica.org/home_e.htm

NGOs and academic institutions

- The State University of New York, Center for International Development: www.cid.suny.edu/

- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA): www.idea.int/
- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs: www.ndi.org
- Parliamentarians for Global Action: www.pgaction.org/
- East West Parliamentary Practice Project: www.ewppp.org/index.php
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung: http://ghana.fes-international.de/index.htm
- Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom: www.fnst-freiheit.org
- Hanns-Seidel Stiftung: www.hss.de/homepage.shtml
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung: www.kas.de/
- Westminster Foundation for Democracy: www.wfd.org/pages/home.aspx?i_PageID=1811
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES): www.ifes.org

National parliaments and international cooperation

UNDP maintains relations with several national parliaments. The French legislature in particular hosted annual training for UNDP officers involved in parliamentary development. National parliaments are also often involved in parliamentary development through the provision of specific short-term or long term expertise, such as secondment programmes. These tend to be hosting visits and in general are aimed at building networks among parliamentarians rather than achieving specific development goals. The Swedish Parliament for example hosted a meeting of the International Conference of New and Restored Democracies. For more information:

- The French National Assembly: www.assemblee-nationale.fr/
- The French Senate: www.senat.fr/
- The Belgian Chamber of Representatives: www.lachambre.be/
- The Parliamentary Centre of Canada: www.parlcent.ca/
- The Swedish Parliament: www.riksdagen.se/default____56.aspx

ANNEX

The DGG parliamentary team: How we can help you in the field

The DGG parliamentary team offers a range of resources to support parliamentary development programming by UN country teams. The DGG parliamentary team manages the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (GPPS), which provides relatively limited resources at the global, regional and country level to support parliamentary development programmes. GPPS staff and consultants have expertise on a broad range of parliamentary development issues that can be leveraged in support of UN country team programmes. DGG maintains relationships with a number of developed and developing parliaments to facilitate exchange among MPs and parliamentary staff. DGG also maintains corporate-level relationships with all of the major actors in the field of parliamentary development and can be helpful in supporting partnerships between UN country teams and the larger parliamentary development community of practice. Collaboration with a number of partners has been formalized through memorandums of understanding (MoUs). Finally, DGG works with the parliamentary development focal points in each of the UNDP regional centres in support of parliamentary development programming.

In particular, the DGG parliamentary team:

- manages GPPS;
- provides advice on the design, implementation and evaluation of parliamentary development projects;
- develops knowledge products in the field of parliamentary development;
- supports the parliamentary development community of practice in UNDP by collecting and sharing information on parliamentary development within UNDP;
- represents UNDP in international forums and discussions on parliamentary development policy;
- manages corporate relationships with parliaments and with external implementers of parliamentary programmes, as well as maintains contacts with parliamentary development focal points in the donor community and within UNDP;
- assists in recruitment and recommends consultants with experience in specific aspects of parliamentary development, and seeks to serve as a central repository of information and feedback on consultants and experts in the field of parliamentary development; and
- helps provide additional professional training for UNDP parliamentary development programme officers.

The DGG parliamentary team welcomes feedback on how it can improve or expand the services provided.

A.   Managing the global programme on parliamentary strengthening

The DGG parliamentary team manages UNDP's global and cross-regional programmes, which are currently implemented under GPPS. That programme was launched in May 1999 and made possible through the generous support of the Government of Belgium. GPPS overall objectives are to strengthen the capacity of parliaments and improve the ability of elected officials to represent and be accountable to the will of the people.

GPPS is implemented at country, regional and global levels and is managed from the UNDP Brussels office by a dedicated programme manager. At the global level, the team implements GPPS by studying the key political variables that are critical to improving the understanding of how parliamentary democracy can be strengthened and impacted in developing countries. For example, one aspect of the team's study was an investigation of parliament's role as a venue for conflict mediation and resolution. From this project, UNDP developed the 'Guidelines for the International Community on Parliaments and Crisis Prevention and Recovery' (www.parlcpr.undp.org/docs/GPPS_Guidelines.pdf).

In the first phase (1999? 2003), GPPS activities involved training for members of parliament in budgetary processes as well as in 'gender budgeting', a process in which national budgets are analyzed from the perspective of their impact on women and men, girls and boys. Handbooks for MPs on the MDGs and poverty reduction strategies were developed, as were legislative drafting manuals in several languages. The programme supported national parliaments across regionally and politically diverse countries, including Benin, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Niger, Uganda and Uruguay.

In its second phase (2004? 2007), the programme focused on support to the Arab region and West Africa, in particular five pilot countries: Algeria, Benin, Lebanon, Morocco and Niger. At the regional level, the programme activities worked to promote knowledge sharing on thematic issues related to parliamentary strengthening. In the Arab region, GPPS is working with the UNDP Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR) to create and support thematic networks focused on improving parliamentary oversight and promoting transparency and accountability. More detailed information on the Arab work can be found online at www.arabparliaments.org.

The third phase (GPPS III), covered under the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008? 2011, has as an overall objective the strengthening of parliaments' capacity for deepening democracy and delivering human development. Particular emphasis will be put on parliaments' contribution to government effectiveness, achieving the MDGs and women's political empowerment. GPPS III continues to i) emphasize the linking of national, regional and global approaches; ii) provide leadership and advocacy in the field of parliamentary development at the global level; iii) ensure that expertise developed through GPPS III strengthens parliamentary development programming throughout UNDP and the UN system; iv) support South-South regional cooperation and promote regional knowledge development and exchanges, and v) support parliamentary development at the national level in Algeria, Benin, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda (and document and share those experiences).

B.   Advising on programme design, implementation and evaluation

The DGG parliamentary team is available to provide general advice and support to parliamentary development programmes on programme design, implementation and evaluation. Such support might include i) reviewing and commenting on draft project documents, ii) answering informal questions on programme implementation, iii) identifying consultants experienced in conducting formulation or evaluation missions for parliamentary programmes, and iv) participating in assessment, monitoring and evaluation missions as schedules permit. The team's global approach to parliamentary strengthening provides opportunities to draw on lessons learned from other parts of the world. The team collects examples of evaluations of parliamentary projects that present useful background information and recommendations for the design of new parliamentary programmes. It then can offer suggestions about programmes, practices and procedures that have successfully worked in similar parliamentary development programmes. Examples of recent evaluations include the GPPS II Mid-Term Evaluation, the SEAL programme in Afghanistan and the PSP evaluations in the Pacific Islands.

C.   Developing knowledge products

The DGG parliamentary team develops papers and briefings on a broad range of issues relevant to parliamentary development programmes. Many of these products are developed in partnership with other international organizations, which develop strong knowledge partnerships for UNDP. The following are examples of knowledge products developed by the DGG parliamentary team:

- *Toolkits and handbooks for MPs.* Examples include a handbook on 'Parliament, the Budget and Gender' (www.undp.org/governance/docs/ParlGuide_parlbudgen.pdf), which was published in partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the World Bank Institute and UNIFEM. UNDP also worked together with NDI to produce toolkits, such as one on 'Legislative-Executive Communication on Poverty Reduction Strategies' (www.undp.org/governance/docs/parl_other/handbooks/en/legexcomm.pdf). Also of note is the South African Development Community's 'MPs Orientation Manual' (www.undp.org/governance/docs/ParlGuide_mpsorient.pdf).

- *Web-based tools.* UNDP worked in partnership with the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) to design and launch iKNOW Politics (or the International Knowledge Network on Women in Politics). The online workspace (www.iknowpolitics.org), launched in 2007, provides women parliamentarians, activists, and candidates with access to online resources and also a forum for sharing experiences. The GPPS Arab regional programme has developed a Web site (www.arabparliaments.org), which brings together key resources on parliamentary development and shares information and

knowledge products from regional-level thematic parliamentary working groups on key issues for the region.

- *Advocacy materials.* The team has also worked with others to produce materials that advocate for elements of the parliamentary development agenda. For example, the team has recently supported the development of CPA's 'Benchmarks for democratic parliamentary performance' (www.cpahq.org/uploadedFiles/Information_Services/Publications/First_Reading/First%20Reading%2011.pdf), which seeks to strengthen international consensus on the normative framework underlying parliamentary development. The 'Guidelines for the International Community on Parliaments and Crisis Prevention and Recovery' (www.parlcpr.undp.org/docs/GPPS_Guidelines.pdf) also fall into this category.

D.   Supporting the UNDP Community of Practice

Engaging with the experiences of field officers and technical advisers working on parliamentary development is a central part of the DGG parliamentary team's work. A mapping exercise has been performed and is regularly updated in order to collate UNDP's collective experience in parliamentary strengthening and to provide a useful tool for analysis of the agency's innovations and achievements in parliamentary programmes. (Materials on this will be available over the coming months.) The team will gladly send articles, background briefs or international documents on relevant topics to interested officers in the field. Field officers and technical advisers can also request that the team compile research on functional or thematic areas related to parliamentary development.

E.   Representing UNDP with respect to parliamentary development

Parliamentary strengthening is gaining in profile as a recognized development field. Increasingly international and government development organizations engage in conferences and dialogues on parliamentary development. The DGG parliamentary team represents UNDP in the international dialogue on parliamentary strengthening. In 2007, UNDP co-hosted a meeting (with the World Bank Institute and the UK Department for International Development) on Parliamentary Development and Financial Accountability (see http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls). This meeting brought donors together to discuss approaches to developing financial accountability in parliament, including the budget process. The DGG team engages actively in donor exchanges to ensure the development and dissemination of parliamentary development experiences. A similar donor meeting was held to share experiences on the role of Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery (see www.parlcpr.undp.org/).

The DGG Parliamentary Policy Advisor often represents UNDP at international conferences and working groups relating to parliamentary strengthening. One such expert committee convened to advise on the IPU good practice guide: 'Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: A guide to good practice' (see www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/democracy_en.pdf).

F.   Managing corporate relationships

The DGG parliamentary team maintains a strong network of relationships with institutions involved in parliamentary development, as well as with parliamentary institutions from several regions and jurisdictions. In some cases where UNDP collaborates closely with partner institutions, the DGG team has worked to institutionalize the relationship through an MoU. The team has prepared MoUs or exchanges of letters with the French National Assembly and French Senate, CPA, IPU and the World Bank Institute. It is currently working on further expanding this. The team also maintains relationships with the headquarters of several organizations engaged in parliamentary development, including the Australasian Study of Parliament Group (ASGP), CPA, European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), IDEA, IPU, NDI, Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNOWB) UNIFEM, and the World Bank Institute. (See resources section for more information). Through this large web of connections, UNDP can also assist in mobilizing partnerships with donors or service providers who have experience in working with UNDP parliamentary development programmes.

G.   Assisting in recruitment of consultants and staff

With its network of professionals who work on parliamentary strengthening, the DGG parliamentary team is willing to assist field offices in identifying and mobilizing consultants and in disseminating information about staff positions. Currently, there are expert rosters maintained by several of the regional centres on parliamentary development, as well as a DGG expert roster. The DGG parliamentary team is currently working to update and expand the parliamentary development roster. The team welcomes suggestions and feedback on parliamentary development consultants. Such information can help UNDP better share its experiences and identify appropriate sources for assistance in the future.

H.   Supporting UNDP professional development

As part of its efforts to ensure knowledge sharing of key lessons in parliamentary development, the DGG parliamentary team is putting together a training module for parliamentary development programme managers working in the field. This will be available in the Virtual Development Academy for all field officers to access. In addition, the team has organized an annual training programme conducted and hosted by the French National Assembly that allows UNDP staff working in parliamentary development to get exposed to the functioning of a developed parliament and to discuss their respective experiences in supporting parliaments.