

## **Parliamentary Strengthening**

### **1. Objectives**

The objectives of the parliamentary strengthening program are twofold:

- a) To strengthen parliament as a critical institution of governance, with a particular focus on financial oversight and government accountability and, to a lesser extent, participation and voice (particularly for “Parliaments and the PRSP Process”).
- b) To support networks of parliamentarians in support of objective (a) above, relating to parliamentary oversight (e.g. the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption, GOPAC) and the linking of such networks with other networks, such as the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions and the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB).

### **2. Context : Parliaments and Governance (Universal Issue)**

It is generally recognized that Parliament is a vital institution in promoting good governance. Noting that parliament does not operate in isolation from the Executive, the Judiciary and the wider society, it is the relations among these institutions that provide the overall governance framework of a given country. That said, these relations are not always in balance as some institutions are of greater or lesser strength within a given society – and in many countries, there is what has been termed “Executive dominance”.

With the recognition that good governance is important for development generally, there has been a growing realization that parliaments, too, are important actors in the development process. Governance goals of greater accountability, transparency and participation are directly related to the **primary functions of parliament – making policies and laws** (as representative bodies for collective decision-making, they work with the executive branch of government to deliberate policies and make laws), **overseeing the executive** (they oversee policy implementation by the executive branch by scrutinizing its work and holding it accountable) **and representing citizens** (by giving voice to individual citizens, civil society organizations and business groups and representing the needs of local constituents in policymaking).

While these three functions of parliaments are, to a greater or lesser extent, universal, their relative importance varies considerably from country-to-country, some common dimensions do emerge according to the **structure** of parliament and its relations with the other branches of government. In “parliamentary systems”, parliament not only oversees the executive branch, but also helps form it, with some or all of the ministers (including the prime minister) being first elected as members of parliament. By contrast, in presidential systems, parliament and the executive are separate branches of government; presidents are elected for fixed terms (separately from parliamentary elections) and ministers are appointed by the president (although often subject to parliamentary ratification).

A key function of parliament in terms of its role in promoting greater (executive branch of) government accountability is its financial oversight function, particularly relevant in parliament's role in ex-ante and ex-post budget review. Parliaments approve the annual budget and oversee government spending, thereby assisting in holding the executive accountable for the use of public funds. (As a good example of “strategy follows structure”, parliamentary systems tend to emphasize parliament's role in the budget cycle ex-post, with an emphasis on financial scrutiny and, in a growing number of countries, value-for-money and performance audits, while in presidential systems parliaments tend to play a greater role in budget formulation).

Related to ensuring greater financial accountability is parliament's role in ensuring greater transparency in decision making. Whether it is committees questioning senior policy makers or Ministers or Members putting issues before government in Question Period, parliament has the power and responsibility to question how and when government decisions are made, thereby ensuring greater deliberation, debate and ultimately greater transparency of the policy making process.

Parliaments also play an important role in the review, proposing and enactment of legislation that is necessary to support reform and development. Legislative scrutiny of bills and deliberation by committees – especially where committees engage in public consultation - provide a counter balance to Executive dominance. This not only reinforces greater accountability and transparency, but also enables legislation to be more reflective of collective interests. While policy-making is generally left to the Executive, parliament, as a representative institution, can help ensure that government policies and reforms take into account national, as opposed to partisan, needs and priorities.

Historically, parliaments have been established to represent the interests of, and to give voice to, citizens and thus can provide opportunities for more open and participatory governance. This can be facilitated at the constituency level, through improved relations between parliamentarians and the electorate, and by opening committee meetings to the public and media. Viewed in this context, parliament serves not as a window on government, but as a bridge between the state and wider society.

### **3. Context : Parliaments and the Bank**

In recent years, the Bank has sought greater interaction with parliaments. Several factors have contributed to this. First, as the Bank has sought to encourage “national ownership” of Country Assistance Strategies and has launched the CDF and PRSP initiatives, it has realized the necessity of including parliaments in its national dialogue on country priority setting and programming. Related is the fact that, as parliaments exert their independence from the executive arm of government, so *not* including parliaments in such dialogue results in the risk that Bank projects or

programs agreed to with the executive may be seen as partisan and thus run the risk of not being ratified by parliament<sup>1</sup>.

Second, as the Bank began to include good governance in its thematic programming, so the importance of parliaments as an oversight institution through which the executive arm of government is held accountable to the electorate began to be recognized – with the result that an increasing number of governance loans and credits make explicit provision for support to parliament<sup>2</sup>. Related has been the trend towards direct budget support by Bank Operations, which raises the question of the Bank’s fiduciary risk – and the need to strengthen both supreme audit institutions and parliaments.

And third, as the Bank seeks to give a “voice to the poor” and encourage civic participation in governance, so there is a growing realization that, given parliament’s representative function, it is an important vehicle through which these goals can be achieved.

## **4. Parliaments and WBI**

### ***4.1 Background***

WBI was the first part of the Bank to systematically engage parliaments and parliamentarians and has been seen as one of the, if not the, the principal source(s) of knowledge regarding parliaments in the Bank.<sup>3</sup>

Over the past decade some 4,000 parliamentarians have attended WBI workshops and seminars. At first, WBI’s interventions focused on “training” individual parliamentarians in such topics as economic reform, curbing corruption and environmental issues. Over the past five years, however, the emphasis has shifted away from simply “training parliamentarians” towards enhancing the capacity of parliament as an institution by working with parliamentary structures (e.g. committees) and permanent staff and in this way helping to ensure sustainability and impact. Thus, for example, instead of organizing a seminar, say, on “The Role of Parliaments in Curbing Corruption” for two dozen parliamentarians, WBI would now more likely develop a multi-year program of workshops or seminars with members of the Public Accounts Committee, to help that committee develop more effective means of overseeing government spending.

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<sup>1</sup> In a review of some 4000 OED Project Completion and Implementation Reports, Evaluation Memoranda and Performance Audits over the period 1990-2000, 35 made reference to project delays, reduced impact and, in six cases, due to the lack of parliamentary involvement in the loan process.

<sup>2</sup> An illustrative list of countries with such credits (and/or supporting IDF grants) either approved or planned : Chile, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Tanzania, Malawi, Sri Lanka and Zambia

<sup>3</sup> WBI has provided advice, guidance and support to parliamentary outreach and strengthening activities undertaken by PRMPS, PRMPR, OCPFM, AFTPR, AFTPM, AFTPX, SASPR, SASPM, EASPR, MNAVP and EURVP.

WBI's current work with parliaments has been shaped by two related activities : a Strategic Evaluation of WBI's work with Parliamentarians (by WBIEG) and a subsequent Planning Session with parliamentarians, Bank staff and representatives from existing and potential partner agencies as well as ongoing assessment/evaluation by WBIEG (the QER on Parliamentary Staff Training) and the ESSD Network, who are using the parliamentary program as a case study in their "sustainability of learning" project.

The Strategic Evaluation, undertaken in 1999, noted, on the one hand, a growing demand for parliamentary programs, both from within the Bank and directly from parliaments, but on the other, a lack of clear strategy within WBI in meeting this demand. It recommended that WBI adopt a systematic and coordinated approach for the program, which should be cross-cutting and synergistic with the Bank's growing interaction with parliaments.

To better achieve this, in 2000, WBI subsequently convened a four-day planning session with representatives from existing and potential partner institutions, parliamentarians from client countries, donor representatives and Bank staff. It was found that, despite a number of organizations, such as the National Democratic Institute and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, none had a truly global perspective (most having less than a dozen comprehensive country-specific programs) and none were particularly focusing on parliamentary oversight and the role of parliaments in holding governments to account. It was suggested that an obvious niche for the WBI's parliamentary strengthening program was strengthening the role of parliament in the budget process (both ex-ante (formulation) and ex-post (oversight), with a particular focus on the "money" (Budget, Finance and Public Accounts) committees and the nexus between these committees and oversight institutions such as supreme audit institutions and Ombudsmen. In addition, it was suggested that WBI should also focus on the role of parliament in high-priority issues for the Bank – such as poverty and growth, macro-economic policy and debt.

(In so doing, WBI thus decided **not** to focus on the lawmaking or representative functions of parliament, except as they pertain specifically to the money committees, nor the myriad of policy issues that parliaments consider, ranging from education, health and social services, to transportation, industrial policy and agriculture. That is not to suggest that these issues are unimportant, but rather that limited WBI resources should be focused on those areas which are being emphasized in Bank Operations).

An "**external reference group**", comprised of principal partners and WBI alumni plus UNDP was formed to assist WBI in the development and implementation of its parliamentary strengthening program and to facilitate greater sharing of information and collaboration across institutions (see Annex One).

WBIEG drew on this reference group in 2003, when they brought together Bank staff, donors and outside experts in a Quality Enhancement Review of the Parliamentary Staff training course.

## **4.2. Current Program**

As a result of the initiatives and trends noted above, WBI's program has:

- been re-oriented, away from training individual parliamentarians (although this still takes place, on occasion) to the **institution building of parliaments**, to both better oversee public finance and to play a role in the policy process. It does this by enhancing the capacity of the money committees, by encouraging the committee Chairs to adopt “good practice” (e.g. holding public hearings, developing working relationships with key stakeholders outside of parliament) and by providing committee members with analyses that can help them in their deliberations (e.g. discussions on key issues surrounding the budget) – thus directly linking to the drivers behind the World Bank's greater interface with and support to parliaments<sup>4</sup>. In addition, the program includes a **broader participant base** : most seminars and workshops now include parliamentary staff, senior officials and representatives from the executive arm of government, independent agencies and civil society as well as parliamentarians.
- Been refocused to include **multiyear activities in single countries**, where parliamentary strengthening is specifically noted in the CAS as a priority and/or where parliamentary strengthening is a component of approved or planned “governance, accountability and transparency” loans and credits.

### *4.2.1 Parliamentary Oversight of the Budget*

These workshops and seminars are designed primarily for members of the Public Accounts and Finance/Budget Committees and their staff, together with representatives from Supreme Audit Institutions and other watchdog agencies, the Executive and civil society. The objective is to improve government accountability through parliamentary oversight , principally (but not exclusively) through parliaments' involvement in the budget process, both ex-ante and ex-post. A particular focus is on understanding key issues in external financial accountability, the budget cycle and the role of parliament therein and the identification of emerging “good practice”, such as the development of closer links with senior officials from the Auditor General's Office, and the adaptation and adoption of such practice. An additional focus is how parliaments can better represent the views of the electorate in the budget process – e.g. by holding public hearings prior to the presentation of the budget in parliament.

### *4.2.2 Parliaments, Governance and Poverty Reduction (PRSP)*

These national and regional workshops are intended for Chairs and senior members of key Parliamentary Committees, together with the Parliamentary Leadership (e.g. Speaker, Clerk) and representatives from the national PRSP teams and leading civil society groups, from PRSP countries. The primary objective is to raise the awareness of parliamentarians of the PRSP and to help participants identify roles for their parliaments in the formulation and execution of PRSPs. A secondary objective is to help create coalitions between

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<sup>4</sup> In addition, there has been a focus on parliament's role in creating an enabling environment for the media, but this will be considered in the Governance and Information Concept Note

parliamentarians, civil society leaders and civil servants to promote poverty reduction objectives.

#### *4.2.3 Network Creation*

Supporting these two main program areas, WBI has supported the creation of parliamentary networks such as the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC) and the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) to facilitate information exchange among parliamentarians. For example, WBI is collaborating with the GOPAC secretariat to produce a Handbook, CDROM and Reference Book for parliamentarians on the issues of parliamentary oversight and curbing corruption.

In addition, support is given to Bank Operations in Africa and Asia, where associations of Public Accounts Committees have been created and also to EURVP, which has supported the creation of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB).

#### *4.2.4 Empirical and Analytical Work*

Reflecting the fact that the area of strengthening parliaments is new, both for the Bank and the development community at large, there is a paucity of analytical and empirical work. To support the two programmatic areas noted above, a series of empirical and analytical studies have been undertaken, including :

- a survey of 180 national parliaments, with (inter alia) a focus on budget oversight, undertaken in partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- a Commonwealth-wide study group on Public Accounts Committee (PAC) practices, including a focus on the Parliamentary-Auditor General relationship; undertaken in partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
- a survey of PAC practices in South Asia; undertaken in partnership with SARFM
- a survey of oversight practices in Anglophone and Francophone Africa; undertaken in partnership with AFTFM
- a series of Discussion Papers and articles<sup>5</sup>.

This work is then incorporated into the design of activities and used as resource material.

#### *4.2.5 Other*

WBIPR is often asked to provide input into other courses offered by WBI, the PREM Public Sector group and the Financial Management group. Examples of recent modules/presentations include:

- Video Conference on e\*Parliaments
- Parliamentary Oversight and Supreme Audit Institutions
- Parliament and the Budget Process

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<sup>5</sup> Articles published or at an advanced stage of preparation deal with parliament and the budget, e\*Parliament, Parliament + the PRSP, Parliament + the Media, Parliamentary Ethics and Codes of Conduct, Parliamentary Information and Oversight Methods. Areas for future work include Parliamentary Budgets and MP Salaries.

- Legislative Ethics in Latin America

In addition, WBIPR is collaborating with PRMPR in developing and delivering a series of short seminars (some via video conference) for Bank staff on the topic “The Role of Parliament in the PRSP Process”.

## **5. Program Content and Mode of Delivery**

Program content for any particular activity draws upon both core materials (see Annex Two) and country-specific materials, with relatively more core material being used in the regional and initial country-focus workshops and more tailored material used in follow-on country-focus activities.

### *5.1 Parliamentary Oversight of the Budget*

Core topics include:

- Parliamentary Democracy : Different Models of Oversight (being developed)
- The Budget Cycle and Parliament : Key Concepts and Issues
- Oversight by Parliament : Concept, Framework and Mechanisms
- The Relationship between the Auditor General and Parliament : Audit Independence, Transparency and Accountability
- Public Accounts Committee : Comparative Practices
- Parliament + the Executive : Follow-Up and Implementation of PAC Recommendations
- Committee Practices : Public Hearings and Media Relations
- Information Exchange + Parliamentary Networks : GOPAC and APNAC

Principal resource materials are presented in Annex Two.

### *5.2 Parliaments, Governance and Poverty Reduction (PRSP)*

Core topics include:

- Parliamentary Democracy : Different Models of Oversight (being developed)
- Parliament, Governance and Poverty Reduction
- Parliamentary Involvement in the PRSP
- Roles of Parliament in the PRSP
- Parliament and Civil Society Relations
- The Budget, Monitoring/Evaluation and National Audit

In the past, *country specific* presentations have included:

- Constituency, Local Action and Poverty Reduction (Ethiopia)
- Strengthening the Links Between the National Assembly and the Pre-Communes on PRSP Implementation and Monitoring (Niger)

Key materials are listed in Annex Two.

Mode of delivery for both activity areas is face-to-face for the regional and most of the national workshops; distance learning (video conference) is used for the remaining national workshops and also to complement the face-to-face activities.

Because of the large turnover of parliamentarians in many countries at election time, WBI also focuses on the “institutional memory” of parliaments : parliamentary staff. Parliamentary staff are part of the targeted participant groups in the above seminars. In addition, a series of specialized modules for a web-based parliamentary staff training program<sup>6</sup> is being developed jointly with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for delivery both globally and especially in those countries where the Bank has targeted such staff training in the CAS. Drawing on the above – and other - materials, the following specialized modules are under development:

- Parliamentary Democracy (already developed by the CPA)
- The Budget and Parliamentary Oversight
- Parliament and Gender
- Parliamentary Ethics

## 6. Quality Control and Peer Review

Several mechanisms are used to ensure quality control and rigorous peer review.

First, the **external reference group**, noted in Section 4.1 on page 3, reviews and comments on draft program design, publications and other materials, and also receives copies of end-of-seminar reports. This has been particularly helpful, for example, in the design of the *Parliament and PRSP program* as well as for peer review of Discussion Papers, articles and related materials. A list of members of this external advisory group is attached in Annex One.

Second, **within the Bank**, there is a small but growing number of **parliamentary experts**, within Operations, PREM and the Financial Management group who are regularly asked for comments and feedback. This list is attached as Annex Three.

And finally, WBIEG has been asked to undertake evaluations and reviews, most recently a Quality Enhancement Review for Parliamentary Staff training, which brought together a selection of parliamentary experts selected from the external advisory group and the list of parliamentary experts within the Bank together with pedagogical experts within and outside the WBI. A complete list of WBI Evaluations is attached as Annex Four.

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<sup>6</sup> The modules are readily adaptable for use as a professional development program for MPs. While focused on Commonwealth practice, the modules will also be relevant to other countries.

## **7. Partnerships and Linkages**

Virtually every activity is delivered in partnership with outside organizations : some, like the Parliamentary Centre and NDI are able to bring substantial intellectual resources to activities, while others, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, are membership-based and have the power to convene. In many instances, these partners are able to contribute financial resources as well. Rather than constraining the scope of WBI's activities, these typically broaden and deepen what WBI could otherwise do.

Partnerships within the Bank are more limited. The “Parliament, Governance and Poverty Reduction” program is designed and delivered seamlessly with PRMPR (who are taking the lead on internal Bank training, on the same topic); the “Parliamentary Oversight” program is somewhat more tailored to country demand and country Operations – especially in the case of national activities<sup>7</sup>.

Within WBI, there is synergy between the “Parliament, Governance and Poverty Reduction” sub-theme and the Poverty and Growth program of WBIPR – where this sub-program can be seen as the introductory program for parliamentarians and the more in-depth and focused activities of the Poverty and Growth program are for those parliamentarians and staff requiring more detailed information and training. Similarly there is synergy between the parliamentary strengthening and governance/media and information themes within the Governance program, with parliaments being key players in the enactment of Access to Information laws and the repeal of archaic legislation hindering the flow of information. And finally, there is synergy between the “Parliamentary Oversight” sub-theme and the Public Expenditure/Financial Accountability program, with both being concerned with the financial accountability of governments.

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<sup>7</sup> Indeed, a key determining factor in country selection is whether a Bank loan or credit is planned to provide support to parliament and/or whether parliamentary strengthening is explicitly stated in the CAS as a priority. Thus, the national work in Ghana, Nigeria and Sri Lanka and planned for Jordan, Kenya and Thailand.

## ANNEX ONE : EXTERNAL REFERENCE GROUP

Carmen Lane	Senior Governance Specialist	Development Alternatives International
Elizabeth Marsh	Program Director – Africa	Westminster Foundation
Joel Barkan	Professor	University of Iowa
Steve Akorli, MP*	Former Minister; former Chair of Finance Committee	Parliament of Ghana
Guy Lindstrom*	Deputy Director	International Dept., Parliament of Finland
Raja Gomez*	Director of Planning	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
Martin Chungong*	Deputy Secretary General	Inter-Parliamentary Union
Steven Langdon*	Former Chair of the Finance Sub Committee (Canada) + Senior Director	Parliamentary Centre
John Bosley*	Former Speaker (Canada) + Senior Associate	Parliamentary Centre
Scott Hubli*	Senior Governance Advisor	National Democratic Institute
Keith Schulz*		USAID
Randi Davis*		UNDP
Bob Miller	Executive Director	Parliamentary Centre
Paul East, QC	Former Deputy Speaker (NZ); former Minister (NZ)	Parliamentary Expert
Meenakshi Dhar	Deputy Director of Planning	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
Dan Davis*	Governance Advisor	DFID
Johnson Nkuuhe, MP*	Member of Parliament	Parliament of Uganda
Charity Ngilu*	Minister of Education	Parliament of Kenya
Hon. Fasinro, MP*	Member of Parliament	National Assembly, Nigeria

\* Member of the initial Study Group

## **ANNEX TWO : CORE MATERIALS :**

### **a) Background**

Gerhard Loewenberg and Samuel C. Patterson, *Comparing Legislatures*, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1979 (selected chapters).

David M. Olson, *Democratic Legislative Institutions: A Comparative View*, Armonk, NY, Sharpe, 1994 (selected chapters).

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association *Parliamentary Democracy* Training Module, Athabasca University 2002

Handbook on Legislative Strengthening, Technical Publication Series, USAID February 2000

### **b) Parliamentary Oversight of the Budget**

David McGee, QC “The Overseers : Public Accounts Committees and Public Spending” (report from the CPA Study Group on Public Accounts Committees around the Commonwealth), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, 2003

Joachim Wehner “Principles and Patterns of Financial Security : Public Accounts Committees in the Commonwealth” forthcoming in Commonwealth and Comparative Politics

Joachim Wehner and Hon. Winnie Byanyima “Parliament and the Budget, including from a Gender Perspective” (a Handbook for Parliamentarians, prepared for WBI and the IPU; currently in penultimate draft)

Joachim Wehner : Back from the Sidelines? : Redefining the Contribution of Legislatures to the Budget Cycle” WBI Discussion Paper

Rick Stapenhurst and Nick Manning “Strengthening Oversight by Legislatures” PREMNote # 74

Ken Dye and Rick Stapenhurst : “Pillar of Integrity : The Role of the SAI in Curbing Corruption” WBI Discussion Paper

Rick Stapenhurst and Jack Titsworth “Features and Functions of Supreme Audit Institutions” PREMNote # 59

Rick Stapenhurst and Vinod Sahgal “A Comparative Study of Public Accounts Committees” (Forthcoming)

Rick Messick “Strengthening Legislatures : Implications from Industrial Countries”  
PREMNote # 63

Joel Barkan, Ladipo Adamolekun and Yongmei Zhou “Emerging Legislatures in Emerging African Democracies” World Bank Africa Region (forthcoming)

Rick Stapenhurst and Riccardo Pelizzo “Tools for Legislative Oversight” unpublished paper

Money and Politics Handbook : A Guide to Increasing Transparency in Emerging Democracies, Technical Publication Series, USAID January 2003

Rick Stapenhurst “The Legislature and the Budget” WBI Discussion Paper (forthcoming)

### **c) Parliaments, Governance and Poverty Reduction (PRSP)**

Parliamentary Centre “Handbook for Parliamentarians on Policies to Reduce Poverty”

Scott Hubli and Alicia Mandaville “Parliaments and the PRSP” (WBI Discussion Paper)

Frannie Leautier “Parliaments and Poverty” The Parliamentarian 2002, Issue 2 pp. 179-182

Rick Stapenhurst and Riccardo Pelizzo “A Bigger Role for Legislatures” Finance and Development, Dec 2002

Review of PRSP Approach : Main Findings World Bank March 15, 2002

Parliamentary Involvement in the PRSPs (JSA Note) DRAFT

Overview of Poverty Reduction Strategies PREM Poverty Net Web Page  
PRSP Sourcebook : Selected Chapters.

Steven Langdon “Parliament and the PRSP : the Case of G ”

Walter Eberlei and Heike Henn “Parliaments in Sub-Saharan Africa : Actors in Poverty Reduction?” GTZ, 2003

Walter Eberlei “Institutionalised Participation in Processes Beyond the PRSP” GTZ, 2001

NB key reading materials include national PRSP documents

## **ANNEX THREE : PARLIAMENTARY PEER REVIEWERS WITHIN THE BANK**

### PREM Public Sector Board

Ed Campos  
Poul Pedersen

### PREM Poverty Reduction Board

Jeni Klugman  
Katrina Sharkey

### Financial Management Sector Board

Mozammel Hoque  
Ann Modoloni

### Africa Region

Yongmei Zhou

### South Asia Region

Vinod Sahgal  
Julitta Rasiah

For further information, please contact Elizabeth Crespo (program assistant) at [ecrespo@worldbank.org](mailto:ecrespo@worldbank.org) or Frederik Stapenhurst (task manager) at [fstapenhurst@worldbank.org](mailto:fstapenhurst@worldbank.org).