



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# UNDP PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENT 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

United Nations Development Programme



# CONTENTS

Global Work.....	03
Country Office Work .....	07
Afghanistan .....	07
Albania .....	
Algeria .....	
Belarus .....	
Bhutan.....	08
Cape Verde .....	
Chile .....	
China .....	
Colombia .....	09
Democratic Republic of Congo .....	
Dominican Republic .....	
Gabon .....	
Gambia .....	
Georgia .....	
Guinea-Bissau.....	10
Iraq.....	12
Kazakhstan.....	13
Kosovo .....	
Kyrgyzstan.....	14
Lebanon .....	
Madagascar .....	15
Maldives .....	
Mauritania.....	16
Moldova .....	
Myanmar .....	
Nepal .....	17
Pacific Islands.....	18
Rwanda .....	
Serbia .....	
Sierra Leone .....	19
Somalia .....	20
Sri Lanka .....	
Suriname .....	
Swaziland .....	21
Trinidad and Tobago .....	
Tunisia .....	
Turkmenistan .....	22
Uganda .....	
Ukraine.....	23
Uruguay .....	
Viet Nam .....	
Zimbabwe .....	

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Global Parliamentary Report: Parliament's power to hold government to account

In April 2012, UNDP and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) published the first-ever Global Parliamentary Report on “the changing nature of parliamentary representation” during the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly in Hanoi, Viet Nam. Work is now underway to produce a [second Global Parliamentary Report](#). “Parliament's power to hold government to account: Realities and perspectives” has been identified as the broad theme for the next report due to strong interest in the topic. The IPU and UNDP have hosted expert meetings in Geneva to provide advice on key issues to be addressed by the Report.

*Photo: Open consultation on the theme of the next Global Parliamentary Report during the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly in Hanoi, Viet Nam (28 March to 1 April 2015). From left to right, Andy Richardson (IPU), Hon David McGuinty (Canada), Suki Beavers (UNDP).*



### Endorsement of the Common Principles for Support to Parliament

UNDP and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) – the world organization of parliaments – along with other partners have developed a set of [Common Principles for Support to Parliaments](#) aimed at a more coherent and integrated support to National Parliaments as well as a strengthened framework for partnerships. A formal endorsement ceremony took place during the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly in Hanoi, Viet Nam (28 March to 1 April 2015), involving parliaments, donors, UN agencies and other organizations that provide support to parliaments. Nearly 80 national parliaments, parliamentary assemblies and partner organizations have now endorsed the ground-breaking Common Principles for Support to Parliament aimed at improving the quality of parliamentary development support.

*Photo: Launch ceremony of the Common Principles in Hanoi with Suki Beavers (UNDP IPP Policy Advisor)*



### Campaign Finance Reform

Trinidad and Tobago – May, 2015

A senate resolution for electoral campaign finance reform led to the formation of a Joint Select Committee (JSC) to make recommendations on a framework to be adopted on that matter. The IPP Team Leader, Charles Chauvel, was invited to a hearing of the Joint Select Committee (JSC), where he spoke on a ‘peer to peer’ basis about international best practices for campaign finance. There were enthusiastic exchanges during an informal session on the potential direction of the JSC's report, including the construction of a roadmap with each of the 8 senators and parliamentarians present, as well as with the Speaker of the House of Representatives (who chairs the JSC), the Clerk of the JSC, and the UNDP Country Office. The resulting recommendations were integrated in the [final report of the JSC to Parliament](#). Follow up support will focus on the adoption and implementation of the recommendations, as well as other initiatives to improve governance transparency in Trinidad & Tobago.

*Photo: Left to right: Stephen Boodhram (Trinidad and Tobago UNDP CO), Charles Chauvel (UNDP IPP Team Leader), Isele Robinson-Cooper (Trinidad and Tobago UNDO CO), during the exchange with the Joint Select Committee.*



## Strengthening Financial Accountability

Jamaica – June, 2015

The UNDP and World Bank with support from other partner organizations including IADB and ParlAmericas, organized an International Conference on ‘Strengthening Legislative Oversight to Foster Accountability, Transparency, and Sustainable Development’, in Kingston, Jamaica on June 2-4, 2015. The conference, hosted by the Jamaican House of Parliament, had three main objectives for strengthening legislative oversight of public finances: capacity development of the Parliament, strengthening supreme audit institutions, and development of the public sector accounting standards.

## New MP Orientation Program

Sri Lanka – September, 2015

Sri Lanka’s unicameral Parliament powers to hold the government to account were extended in 2015 by the 19th amendment to the Constitution. In August, 63 new MPs were elected to the 225 member body. The Secretary-General of the Parliament invited UNDP, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to contribute international expertise to the orientation programme held for the new MPs. UNDP representative Charles Chauvel, Inclusive Political Processes

Team Leader, presented on the importance of the systematic incorporation of civic engagement into the work of parliament and suggested different ways in which MPs could make this occur, including in discharging the functions of representation, legislation, and oversight of government activity. He also presented on the role of MPs in carrying out legislative financial oversight while stressing the duty of all MPs and considering different ways that such oversight is carried out in the 70 or so countries where UNDP works to strengthen parliaments. The underlying theme of the presentations was how MPs can work effectively with civil society to monitor and encourage government to implement the new 2030 Development Agenda. This theme now underpins all of UNDP’s parliamentary strengthening work. Subsequent to Charles’ mission, the Speaker of Parliament sent a formal request to the Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka to begin a parliamentary strengthening programme there.



*Photo: Sri Lankan MPs at Orientation Program*

## Parliamentary Workshops on the SDGs

Mauritius and Lesotho – November, 2015



In November 2015, UNDP organized parliamentary workshops on the SDGs and the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Mauritius and Lesotho. The workshops provided an opportunity to raise awareness about the SDGs, consider the role of Parliament in attaining them, and develop an understanding of how the institutions can ensure the mainstreaming of the SDGs into national policies and development plans. The discussions also focused on the responsibilities of Members of Parliament with regard to legislating, overseeing policy development and implementation and

approving budgets. Marilyn Cham (BPPS, NY) shared information, knowledge and examples of international good practice, drawing on the lessons from the MDGs.

*Photo: Workshop with the National Assembly of Lesotho*

## Reinforcing Transparency in Public Accounts

Sao Tome et Principe – November, 2015

A three-day workshop was held jointly with the International Budget Partnership on 2-5 November 2015, in Sao Tome et Principe for ACP Lusophone MPs, parliamentary staff, civil society, and supreme audit institutions on reinforcing transparency in public accounts. The workshop was held under the UNDP Project for Strengthening technical and functional skills of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs), National Parliaments and Civil Society for the control of public finances in the PALOP and Timor-Leste (Pro PALOP-TL SAI). Eighty-six participants discussed budget transparency, the strength of legislative budget oversight independence, and the capacity for SAI external control. Capacity building occurred through discussion of comparative experiences, sharing of best practices, and accessing cutting-edge knowledge. The fourth day of the forum was a CSO only session that developed a 1 year integrated work plan starting January 2016. Actions were identified to foster budget transparency and external control of public finance management systems through public engagement and access to fiscal information. Charles Chauvel, Team Leader, Inclusive Political Processes, BPPS presented on good practices for budget transparency derived from UNDP's global parliamentary programming. Lotte Geunis, BPPS Parliamentary Development Officer based in Brussels, also presented on ways in which participants can make practical use of the Portuguese sections of the AGORA ([www.agora-parl.org](http://www.agora-parl.org)) portal, which are currently being developed and funded by the project.

## Temporary Special Measures to Increase Women's Political Participation

Papua New Guinea – November, 2015

UNDP convened a Pacific Regional Workshop on Temporary Special Measures to Increase Women's Political Participation in Port Moresby on 23-24 November, 2015. The workshop, which was organized by UNDP in Suva, in collaboration with UNDP Papua New Guinea, UNWomen, AUSAID, and the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, hosted a conference of MPs, CSOs, and electoral bodies in PNG, followed by a PNG-specific workshop. UNDP undertook to provide ongoing support to any jurisdiction that decided to propose temporary special measures (TSM) legislation. Charles Chauvel, IPP Team Leader, BPPS, presented/facilitated 5 sessions at the conference and launched a BPPS knowledge product – Inclusive Electoral Processes: A [Guide for Electoral Management Bodies on Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Participation](#), which was also the basis of one of the substantive presentations.

## First Global Inclusive Political Processes (IPP) Community of Practice Meeting

New York, USA – November/December, 2015



*Photo: First Global IPP Community of Practice Meeting* Between the 30th of November and the 1st December, 2015 the Department of Political Affairs, together with UNDP and DPKO, hosted a global meeting for Chief Technical Advisors of Electoral Assistance Projects and Senior Electoral Advisors of Special Political and Peacekeeping Missions to discuss current trends

and challenges in the field of Electoral Assistance. Aligned with this meeting, the Governance and Peacebuilding's Inclusive Political Processes Team organized the first ever global IPP Community of Practice meeting (2nd - 3rd December) in New York. The meeting brought together CTAs working on Constitutions, Elections and Parliaments, as well as Gender and Civil Society Advisors who focused on strengthening UNDP's IPP approach, as well as creating synergies throughout project design and implementation.

## GLOBAL WORK

A follow up meeting specifically focused on parliamentary development work was held on Friday 4th December. The meeting provided an opportunity to: (1) present UNDP's global support to parliamentary development; (2) review corporate indicators and reporting requirements for parliamentary development; (3) identify good practices, entry points and recommendations for engaging parliaments in the SDGs from a programmatic perspective; (4) discuss trends and opportunities for UNDP's parliamentary work (including IT as a powerful tool for opening up parliaments and engaging citizens); (5) share information on knowledge sharing platforms (AGORA, iKNOW Politics) and knowledge products that are in the pipeline.

### AFGHANISTAN

In 2015, UNDP supported the leadership of the Parliament of Afghanistan through completing a self-assessment of the secretariat performance towards meeting international benchmarks. The technical assistance was provided in partnership with the IPU. UNDP also developed a draft Parliamentary Service Act in order to provide the Parliament with the sustainable human resource base required for institutional development. It also re-established a parliamentary development partner coordination mechanism ensuring partner support is coordinated and aligned with the Parliament's priorities, and agreed on a list of procedural changes required for increased transparency as well as adoption of practices consistent with democratic norms. The Afghan Parliament led all processes, and the UNDP's support role was specifically to advise, guide and broker agreement.

The 2016 goals to support the leadership include:

1. Agreeing on and finalizing the Reform Action Plan (which will also serve as the framework for coordinating all development partner support to the Parliament);
2. Finalizing a Parliamentary Service Act draft appropriate to the Afghan context;
3. Implementing the Secretariat Reform Action Plan, including support for making MP voting and attendance records as well as Order Papers (in advance) available to the public et al.
4. Holding regular coordination meetings, including with ALBA.

### ALBANIA

UNDP supported women in local councils through women NGOs and the Women's Alliance in the adoption of the gender quota in local elections. Consequently, political parties ran on tickets whereby they alternated male and female candidates, resulting in women claiming 35% of the local councilor (up from %12.2).

### ALGERIA

UNDP's advocacy efforts in strengthening the role of women in the implementation of the recommendations of the Algiers Declaration of 2013 (UNDP / UN women / Parliament) were crowned by the creation of the first forum of women parliamentarians in Algeria in the framework of the international meeting held in June 2015.

### BELARUS

The Belarus House of Representatives took part in the UNDP Study on Parliamentary and Sub-national Governance Structures for Gender Equality upon the request of the UNDP in Belarus. The House of Representatives provided information on the achievement of gender equality in Belarus and noted the importance of the international events organized under the aegis of the UNDP. These events provided a good platform for communication, networking and exchange of experience among women parliamentarians, members of governments and political parties, civil society organizations in order to expand the role and participation of women in political life.

UN in Belarus prepared a joint work plan in cooperation with the Parliament on a wide range of thematic issues, including promoting public private partnerships, energy efficiency and environmental responsibility, public health agenda, fighting corruption, tackling issues related to the death penalty, undertaking a systematic study on the creation of a national human rights institution in Belarus, promoting the rights and protections of people living with disabilities, women and child rights, and a legislative framework to stop domestic violence. This collaborative initiative will be operationalized through the works of a joint Working Group, created by UN agencies and the National Assembly to engage in a substantive way on a range of thematic issues of mutual interest. The joint Working Group is a starting ground for the elaboration of a parliamentary strategic development plan, including a functional review and institutional capacity assessment, which will underline areas where assistance is most needed in terms of staff capacity building for research, legislative drafting and scrutiny, human resource management, and information management.

### BHUTAN

With UNDP support, the Parliament developed and launched the Five Year Strategic Plan. Moreover, UNDP and UNICEF jointly facilitated the launch of Bhutan's first Children's Parliament and Constitution as a platform for youth democratic and civic participation. As a result, the Election Commission conducted the first Children's Parliament Election in 2015.

### CAPE VERDE

The capacity of the Parliament have been improved in terms of external control of public finances. Thus, the Parliament could lead effectively over 5 control initiatives from the institutions responsible for the provision of basic services (education, health and social protection) and the use of public resources.

### CHILE

The main focus of the project between UNDP CO Chile and the National Congress in 2015 focused on promoting an integrity and anticorruption agenda and supporting the work of the Bicameral Ethics Commission, both with respect to internal legislative issues as well as regional and international networks to promote legislative transparency and connections with civil society.

On an international level, UNDP has supported the work of the Bicameral Group of Transparency in the exchange of experiences, knowledge and good practices with legislators and intergovernmental organizations, and supported the Legislative Openness Working Group of the Open Government Partnership and the Open Parliament Network of ParlAmericas.

UNDP supported this agenda by providing the Bicameral Group with technical assistance on a variety of issues included in a package of legislative reform. Issues addressed included background support for proposing changes to the current Organic Law of Congress, data on diagnosis of current legislative processes and challenges faced in Chile, international best practices to improve standards and procedures regarding management of conflict of interests, internal legislative Ethics Offices and an integrity system for Parliament. In this line of work, UNDP produced a comparative report of good practices of transparency, probity, ethics and citizen participation in Parliaments, which was released in the Sixth Meeting of Latin American Parliament Presidents, held in Santiago.

Given the results thus far, the cooperation framework between UNDP and the National Chilean Congress was renewed for a two-year period. For the current year, the focus of the collaboration will be placed in improving levels of participation and communication between Congress and civil society. UNDP is conducting an in-depth assessment and elaborating recommendations to strengthen and expand the participation of civil society in the legislative process.

### CHINA

UNDP China's project with the National People's Congress, "Promoting innovative participatory approaches in law-making in China" began implementation in November 2015, with a number of major activities planned for 2016. This flagship programme aims to strengthen the legislative capacity of the National People's Congress by first, helping the Legislative Affairs Commission of the National People's Congress (LACNPC) establish public participation mechanisms, such as public hearings and holding bills open for public comments. As a result, the LACNPC standardized public participation mechanisms in legislative process in the new Law on Legislation in 2015.

Secondly, the programme introduced international best practices on maintaining legislative consistency by establishing a legislative review and filing system. Since China does not have a constitutional review system, this is an alternative to ensure new laws drafted do not contradict existing laws.

Moreover, UNDP worked closely with the General Office of the LACNPC to build the capacity of the legislative officials, and supervised the joint drafting process of a yearly work plan for legislative official training. The training theme in 2015 was on public participation mechanisms in legislation, and domestic seminars and international study tours on the same topic were organized.

The overall objective of the flagship project is to promote innovative participatory approaches in law-making. This is in line with the new orientation provided by the Decision of the Fourth Plenary Session of the Eighteenth Chinese Communist Party Central Committee as well as the NPC Standing Committee (NPCSC) 2015 Work Report, and builds upon accomplishments from prior UNDP work.



### COLOMBIA

In efforts to fulfill the fifth SDG on ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life, the UNDP CO participated in a national advocacy strategy during 2014 and 2015. Colombian congresswomen along with civil society organizations worked on providing constitutional status to the principles of parity, alternation and universality to women in political participation. This bill was approved in the first debate by the House of Representatives and UNDP is supporting its final adoption to law.

UNDP also provided technical support to the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the National System of Youth (Colombia Joven) regarding the legislative reforms needed to create Municipal Youth Councils in over 1,000 municipalities around the country. The aim of creating these councils is to strengthen the participation of young people in local governance, particularly with relation to local budgets. The bill to establish these councils was approved in its second debate in the House of Representatives, and UNDP is supporting its final adoption to law. UNDP also supported the Office of the National System of Youth and the House of Representatives in developing a bill to create a permanent Youth Commission in Congress. The bill is awaiting its first debate.

In 2016, through a strategic partnership with the IADB, UNDP will execute a pilot of a Congressional Budget Office. This office will produce analysis of budgetary and economic issues to support the Senate and the House of Representatives budgetary and economic Commissions with matters under their jurisdiction. The performance and evaluation of the pilot will lead to the proposal of a bill that would institutionalize this office.

### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Thanks to UNDP support to parliamentary committees, the national legal framework was strengthened in 2015 with the votes of the laws relating to (i) the establishment of the institutions provided for in the Constitution, including the Supreme Court, (ii) the measures implementing the freedom of public protests and (iii) the election and the decentralization process. UNDP support to civil society has improved transparency and accountability, particularly through the conduct of public finance follow-up and production analysis report of the Finance Act 2016 which dissemination supported the parliamentary debate on increasing the share of the budget in 2016.

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

In 2015, an important event was held between the Chamber of Accounts and the representatives of Congress, where new and innovative mechanisms for civil society control were presented. UNDP continues to provide technical assistance to parliamentarians on a variety of matters, such as citizen security, gun control, and reform of the National Policy Department.

### GABON

In the field of the protection of vulnerable groups, UNDP contributed to the challenge of stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV (40 000) by supporting Gabon in conducting a strategic review of the legal response to HIV to strengthen the regulatory and legal framework.

### GAMBIA

In relation to promotion of governance and Human Rights (HR), significant achievement has been made in addressing women and girls health through the revision of the Women Act (2010) that UNDP support to legislate the banning of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

### GEORGIA

Funded by the European Union and the Government of Georgia, the UNDP Project "Strengthening the System of Parliament Democracy in Georgia" aims at establishing the Georgian Parliament as a credible institution with an essentially greater role in national policy-making and European integration. In 2015, the project achieved remarkable progress in supporting the Parliament in promoting greater transparency through engaging in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Initiative. In July 2015, the Parliament adopted the Parliamentary Openness Action Plan to further accountability, transparency, access to information and citizen engagement in legislative processes. Comprised of 18 commitments, the Action Plan promotes: (1) Public involvement, including for opportunities to comment on draft bills, present legislative proposals and attend plenary sessions; (2) Access to

## COUNTRY OFFICE WORK

information, including for publishing draft bills in an editable format so that anyone can comment and adapting the Parliament's web resources to the needs of people with disabilities; (3) Technology and innovation to make access to the published documents as easy as possible; (4) Accountability, including for establishing a permanent Parliamentary Council on Openness and Transparency and active cooperation with civil society.

Georgia became the first country in Europe with such an extensive openness action plan designed as a result of a highly consultative and participatory process between the Parliament and the civil society. As an acknowledgement of the Parliament's commitment to openness and effective cooperation with the civil society, the Parliament was awarded with the OGP Government Champions Award at the OGP Global Summit in Mexico in October 2015. With the support from UNDP and other international partners, the Parliament was also successful in hosting the OGP Legislative Openness Working Group (LOWG) Conference in the frames of the Global Legislative Openness Week (GLOW) in September 2015.

To raise public awareness and promote the idea of open parliament among the youth, a student contest – Open Parliament – Voice of Youth, was organized.

In 2015, Parliament's policy making and oversight capacities were considerably increased through intensive capacity building activities, including trainings, coaching and study visits. But most importantly, successful implementation by the sectoral committees (Human Rights, Health and Social issues, Agriculture, Environment) of their action plans (developed with the Project support in 2014) facilitated a structured approach to committee work and assisted in effective and efficient performance of their legislative, oversight and representative functions.

The capacities of select parliamentary departments were also strengthened. The Public Relations Department was assisted in developing its Communications Strategy and Action Plan. The International Relations Department's mandate was revised to expand its role in parliamentary diplomacy with the new Department Charter to be adopted in first half of 2016. Finally, the Parliament's role in European integration was also increased. EU law harmonization capacities of parliamentary staff were developed as a result of targeted and practical training sessions throughout the year. Parliament's communication on EU integration has improved through launching public outreach activities.

## GUINEA-BISSAU

UNDP supported the National Assembly's specialized Standing Committee for Women and Children to disseminate the law against domestic violence in 7 regions. This contributed to increasing awareness and ownership of the law. Actors who participated in the dissemination sessions included MPs, judges, regional administrative authorities, defense and security forces, civil society, youth organizations, women's organizations, traditional and religious leaders and student associations. A commitment document on promoting the law and its implementation and integration in the workplans of national institutions and organizations that defend vulnerable groups (women and children in particular) was produced. This document will be finalized and signed in all the regions of the country in 2016.



*Photo: Opening of the dissemination sessions on the law against domestic violence with: Ms. Na Bloni Tanba Nhasse - Minister of Women, Family and social cohesion; Mr. Gabriel Dalva - Deputy Representative of UNDP; Mr. Sola NQuilin Na Bitchita – MP, Chairman of the Committee on women and children; Mr. Higino Cardoso – MP, Chairman of the Standing Committee on legal and constitutional affairs, human rights and public administration; Mr. Carlitos Barai – MP, Chairman of the Committee on Social Affairs; Ms. Maria Emilia Barros Sá. - President of the Children and Women Institute.*

## COUNTRY OFFICE WORK



*Photo: dissemination sessions on the law against domestic violence*

UNDP strengthened the capacities of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of Guinea-Bissau in gender budget analysis.



*Photo: Opening of the training session with:  
Mrs. Dan Yala – MP, Second Secretary of the National People's Assembly of Guinea - Bissau  
Maria do Valle Ribeiro - UNDP Resident Representative  
Ms. Suzi MP Barbosa – MP, Chairwoman of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of Guinea - Bissau  
Ms. Graça Sanches – MP, Chairwoman of the Network of Women Parliamentarians Network of Cape Verde*

## COUNTRY OFFICE WORK



*Photo: Training session of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of Guinea-Bissau*

UNDP also supported the development of the People's National Assembly Strategic Plan (2015-2019) and Code of Ethics.



*Photo: Hon Cipriano Cassama – President of the People's National Assembly – presenting the Strategic Plan*

## IRAQ



Funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), UNDP supported the enrollment of 25 representatives of the Iraqi NGO Directorate, Parliamentary Civil Society Committee and civil society from various Governorates in Iraq in a Master Training of Trainers, on 3-8 November in Erbil.

*Photo: Participants in the Training of Trainers in Erbil @ UNDP/Iraq 2015*

15 to 20 trainers were capacitated and further supported to conduct a series of trainings targeting civil society organizations (CSOs) at the Governorate level.

## COUNTRY OFFICE WORK

They will substantively contribute to the development of the three curricula, which will be used to direct trainings and enhance the capacity of the CSOs and communities in engaging in legislative and oversight processes.

As part of UNDP's efforts to promote participatory and accountable governance in Iraq, the training aimed at building local training capacities for NGOs through targeting NGOs' activists and staff within criteria set jointly by UNDP and the Directorate. Since developing respective capacities is amongst the Directorate's strategic plan, the training also targeted designated staff members.

This programme provides technical assistance to the Secretariat of the Parliament, as well as parliamentarians and parliamentary committees and key departments. It also provides law drafting and review expertise to the Presidency Council and key legislative committees. Further to this, the programme enables the NGO Directorate to provide enhanced capacity building expertise for CSOs through a training and certification programme to promote international standards of project management and the mainstreaming of gender approaches. Support is also provided to the establishment of institutionalized mechanisms for CSOs, ethnic minorities, vulnerable groups' participation, consultation and input into laws and policies under consideration by the PCs and the CoR.

### KAZAKHSTAN

The 2015 was unprecedented for the Parliament as it reviewed more than 400 national legislations in order to streamline them with the new realities of the economic recession, WTO accession, and OECD standards. The legislative reviews have targeted the following main areas: a) create conditions for the open and transparent governance; b) reduce transaction costs, by simplifying the business procedures, and c) privatize the state enterprises and transform small and medium enterprises. Based on the discussions with the Parliamentary Working Group leaders and Vice Ministers, UNDP assisted the Parliament and respective line ministries in updating or developing various laws and acts pertaining to the above objectives, through the provision of technical expertise, participation in public hearings, and facilitation of dialogues with civil society and citizens.

### KOSOVO

In 2015 UNDP Kosovo responded to the Assembly of Kosovo's (AoK) request for an assessment of donor assistance with the aim of establishing a baseline of donor support for AoK, and identifying the future direction and approach needed to ensure for further effective capacity development. The specific objectives of the evaluation were to: identify main challenges and achievements in relation to the donor resource invested; monitor progress towards achieving outcomes; assess institutional ownership and the prospect for further institutionalization of capacity development efforts towards strengthening of administrative structure of the AoK.

UNDP also supported AoK in developing the Strategic Plan (2016-2020) for improving AoK's overall framework for emerging as a democratic, accountable, transparent, effective, responsive and people-centered institution. The Strategic Plan will serve as the main reference document for all structures of the Assembly in the parliamentary development processes during the period 2016-2020, in parallel with the Law on Assembly and the Rules of Procedure. Through this strategic document, the AoK has declared its ambition to become an important player in the process of implementing the SDGs in Kosovo.

A Letter of Agreement was also signed between UNDP and the AoK to jointly establish the AoK's Parliamentary Internship Programme. Twelve interns were recruited and sat in all parliamentary committee offices, and UNDP experts provided on-the-job trainings and mentorship over a six-month period. Trainings and mentorship focused on drafting the IT based research design for parliamentary monitoring of law implementation, and on writing of parliamentary reports.

A parliamentary needs assessment for engagement in anti corruption was carried out using the GOPAC-UNDP "Anti-Corruption Assessment Tool for MPs". The needs assessment covered the following areas: parliamentary anti-corruption planning and monitoring; financial oversight; standards of conduct; and parliamentary accessibility and outreach. Preliminary consultations with AoK's relevant bodies and GOPAC representatives have taken place for a potential establishment of a GOPAC Chapter in Kosovo.

Planned priorities and activities for 2016 include:

1. Providing preliminary support to the relevant committees in advancing parliamentary action on public administration, anti-corruption aspects, and SDGs 10 and 16 in Kosovo
2. Supporting relevant parliamentary committees in the oversight of Kosovo's Anti-corruption Agency
3. Assisting the Women Caucus in introducing anti-corruption and transparency initiatives in their annual work plan in line with SDG 5
4. Supporting the Parliamentary Committee on Public Administration on proactive engagement with the Ministry of Public Administration on the UNDP PAR Project process

### KYRGYZSTAN

UNDP in Kyrgyzstan is starting a process that will engage a comprehensive awareness raising campaign among national partners to ensure full ownership. The project is planning a number of sensitization workshops for different groups, including state agencies, Parliament, civil society, academia and private sector. Parliament will also be playing the leading role in coordination and monitoring of SDGs implementation. "Widening access to justice for legal empowerment project" of MFA Finland and UNDP Kyrgyzstan CO supported monitoring of the courthouses for accessibility of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) conducted jointly by the Parliament's Committee on human rights and constitutional law and civil society representatives within the framework of parliamentary control over the implementation of the Law "On the rights and guarantees of PwDs".

Four court buildings were selected as a pilot by the project to make them accessible for people with disabilities. Equipped and reconstructed pilot courthouses served a good example for all government agencies how to create barrier-free environment for PwDs in their existing buildings with the existing infrastructure and to create equal opportunities for all.



*Photos: The building of Oktyabrsky district court in Bishkek made accessible to people with disabilities*

After the announcement of the Parliamentary elections results (4 October 2015) in the Kyrgyz Republic, UNDP electoral project organized a three-day orientation on the roles and functions of the Parliament for newly elected Members of Parliament. During the training 37 MPs received practical and useful information on their roles within the legislature which helped them better understand and perform their new responsibilities.

Technical assistance to the Parliament's Committee on Judiciary and Legal Affairs in conducting public hearings for the package of laws within the ongoing judiciary reform process. The laws include the Criminal, Criminal procedure, Criminal executive, Civil procedural code, Code on administrative offences, laws on "Enforcement procedures and status of court bailiffs," "Guaranteed state legal aid," as well as laws on improving accountability of the judges". Public hearings took place in both Bishkek and Osh, on April 20-21 and on April 13-14 respectively. Both of the hearings were attended by MPs, Members of the Government, civil society representatives as well as representatives from the international donor community and was a platform to jointly reflect on the suggested laws, provide recommendations and set further plans of action.

### LEBANON

In 2015, UNDP conducted a project to provide technical support to the Lebanese Parliament. The first output of the project was strengthening the legislative functions of Parliamentary committees and staff, through which a working paper was drafted for the Woman and Child Parliamentary Committee (WCPC). The working paper introduced legislative reforms to lift discrimination against women. This took place on the International Women's Day event, organized by the National Commission for Lebanese Women on the 6th of March at the Lebanese American University (LAU). In support of the WCPC, the project participated in preparing for Lebanon's CEDAW official periodic report. The project also expanded an e-library database of legislation experts and consultants to support MPs and the Parliamentary administration.

The second output focused on providing support to enhance inclusive participation in public policy and in the legislative process provided. The Lebanese Parliamentary Internship Programme (LPIP) was expanded to accept nine new interns enrolled with various entities within the Lebanese Parliament, including the National Economy, Trade, Industry and Planning Parliamentary Committee, the Director General Consultant, Public Works, Transport, Energy and Water Parliamentary Committee, the Directorate of Foreign Affairs and the Directorate of Studies and Information.

## COUNTRY OFFICE WORK



*Photo: Left: "Temporary Special Measures to Enhance Women's Political Representation through Electoral Laws" organized under the patronage of the Speaker, with the support of the UNDP-Lebanese Electoral Assistance Project Right: International Women Day at Lebanese American University (LAU).*

A study on the role of Parliament in women's participation in political parties and parliamentary elections was finalized to enhance women's participation in public policy and raise awareness among MPs of the WCPC and women in political parties on women's political participation rights.

The project also participated in the establishment of a coalition entitled "Women in Parliament" and drafted a strategy to include the women quota in the upcoming electoral law and lobby for its adoption. The Speaker of Parliament granted the coalition approval to attend relevant quota meetings of the Administration and Justice to enhance internal lobbying. H.E also agreed that the project organizes a national conference on the quota in partnership with the coalition and the Parliament and promised that no electoral law will be adopted without a 30% women quota.

A national conference on "Temporary Special Measures to Enhance Women's Political Representation through Electoral Laws" was organized under the patronage of the Speaker, with the support of the UNDP-Lebanese Electoral Assistance Project targeting all MPs, especially those of the Electoral law committee.

The conference's timing had a great impact as it established a partnership between CSOs and MPs to enable organizations to attend committee meetings and lobby for a quota from the inside of the committee.

The third output aimed to support the adoption and implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) and to mainstream human rights in parliamentary work, through which a partnership with the Arab NGO Network for Development and UN-OHCHR was established to organize the 2015 UPR Human Rights Reports Conference. This conference took place on Human Rights Day, and was attended relevant MPs, CSOs, IOs and other experts. Awareness was raised on the recommendations of the UPR working group for Lebanon and on the urgency for the government to develop a mechanism to implement these recommendations.

### MADAGASCAR

Despite political challenges that the National Assembly of Madagascar faced in 2015, there were some significant accomplishments. An organisational audit of the National Assembly was conducted, and the parliamentary guidebook was distributed in French and Malagasy. UNDP also supported the National Assembly in finalizing their strategic plan, developing a gender and election strategy, and advised in the preparation of the senatorial elections.

Moving forward in 2016, there are preliminary plans to: Engage with the newly elected Senate and organise and induction training for senators; Support accountability activities at the central and local level; Support communications initiative such as reviving the regular information bulletin of the National Assembly; Provide capacity strengthening activities for MPs and staff of specific committees, such as the justice committee, in order to build synergies and support anti-corruption activities.

### MALDIVES

Programming for 2016 includes participatory law making components. The aim is to provide a platform for civil society and communities to better engage with the legislative process, and ensure that their voices are heard by governing institutions in the policy-design process.

### MAURITANIA

Capacity building and knowledge of parliamentarians on various development issues (gender mainstreaming, human rights) have led to better awareness of citizen needs by parliamentarians. With the support of UNDP, the parliamentary control over government action has improved significantly for substantial discussions on the relevance of the allocation and management of state resources and taking into account the needs of the poorest and vulnerable population. This was achieved through the reduction of time of review of legislation, substantial amendments to the budget law, increasing the number of hearing members of the Government, the number of oral and written questions and Innovation in 2015 of legislative proposals (2) on the initiative of parliamentarians.

### MOLDOVA

The project parliamentary assistance project in Moldova has three on-going Outputs:

1. Strengthen legislative and oversight functions of parliament.
2. Improve representation function and outreach of parliament.
3. Modernise parliamentary services to meet demands of members and committees.

During 2015, the UNDP Moldova Democracy Programme focused on providing support and technical assistance to Parliamentary Committees, MPs and the Secretariat on promoting gender and human rights considerations in domestic legislation, as well as assessed the Parliament's capacities to contribute to effective combatting of corruption.

With the Programme's assistance, women MPs established the cross party women caucus – the Women MPs Platform and assisted them in preparing a Strategic Plan. The Programme assisted women MPs to facilitate better participation of women in decision-making, and initiated regular policy consultations with underrepresented women. This was achieved through 5 Regional Forums that debated issues pertinent to the SDGs framework, where over 200 women largely from vulnerable groups received the opportunity to address their concerns directly with decision-makers for the first time. The forums were organised in partnership with the joint UNDP/UN Women programme "Women in Politics". The latter also helped to develop a gender-mainstreamed catalogue of services to be provided by the Parliament's Regional Offices. The Programme supported a Gender Audit of Parliament and the elaboration of a follow-up Parliament's Gender Equality Action Plan.

The Programme's advocacy efforts towards strengthening the role of the Parliament in national anticorruption efforts resulted the development of the draft Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2015-2018 and code of conduct.

The Programme plans to continue supporting the Parliament through July, 2016 by providing workshops and trainings on a number of areas including: The role of parliament in the EU integration process; Training on analysis of conformity to draft laws with EU acquis ; The human rights based approach in drafting legislation; Best practices for drafting reports on the annual state budget ; Training on gender responsive budgeting ; Investigative committees and parliamentary inquiries ; Trainings for MPs and staffers on communication, advocacy, and media relations skills

### MYANMAR

The first term of the Myanmar Parliament has seen marked progress in terms of strengthening of its institutional capacity to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities of law-making, oversight and representation. This has been supported by UNDP in partnership with the IPU by assisting the Myanmar Parliament with developing their own Strategic Plan. In 2015 this work focused further on the change management processes to allow the Myanmar Parliament to achieve its own vision set in the Strategic Plan and support the transition into the 2nd Myanmar Parliament in 2016. UNDP continued to implement the "roadmap" of priority activities identified in the Strategic Plan, and the involvement, participation, and leadership by the Hluttaw administration in implementing these activities continued to strengthen.

To support this process, strategic development plans was developed by the Myanmar Parliament in such key areas as Committees, ICT, Research, and implementation of a Learning Centre. Work plans in each area addresses the priority needs identified. 2015 witnessed also stronger focus on how to strengthen and improve services available to MPs. This was in particular seen as a priority in order to ensure that the MPs can better undertake their duties in the plenary, in committees and in their constituencies effectively.



Specific interventions supporting the orientation and induction for the next parliament resulted in the Myanmar Parliament preparing a detailed plan for the arrival of new MPs, the arrangements for the first sitting weeks including the election of the Speakers and Deputy Speakers and the election of Vice Presidents and the President and the appointment of Ministers and the establishment of the Constitutional Committees, and the Induction of new MPs. The IPU helped facilitate the process for the Myanmar Parliament to develop their own Members Handbooks and Guidebook for new members. “Statement of Services” for each Department of the Myanmar Parliament has been prepared which will help guide new members in what services are available. More than 200 parliament staff was trained by UNDP in customer service as a preparation for the parliament’s own welcoming and orientation sessions for the new MPs. The production of a Members Survey allowed for definition of an induction and ongoing professional development programme for new MPs. This will see the participation of MPs from across the region as well as Australia and UK who will be sharing their experiences with the new MPs of Myanmar.

UNDP Administrator Helen Clark opened the UNDP-supported Learning Centre for the Myanmar Parliament in March 2015. The Centre took important steps in developing a professional development and capacity building programme for MPs and staff. The Centre has become an actively used resource by 12 national and international organizations who are actively providing skills development and capacity training for staff and MPs. Training of Trainers work commenced with committee staff which will help enhance sustainability of training, and steps were taken through coordination meetings and production of guidance documents to assist the Hluttaw to more effectively coordinate training by development partners.

Transformation towards the longer term objective of a digital parliament made significant progress during 2015 with the start of building a new ICT infrastructure including a Data Centre. This was accompanied by significant skills development of parliament staff to support the work required to centralize the management of information services across the parliament. The Data Centre is due for completion in the first quarter of 2016. By the time the new MPs arrive, the current infrastructure developments and capacity development will allow the parliament to share information with the MPs on an intranet, which will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. There will also be ICT support services available for staff and MPs to assist with user issues such as logging onto the network, printing problems and access to information sources.

UNDP also started the implementation of the Committee Development Plan, which focuses on strengthening the capacity and enhance the efficiency of the committees. The focus of the plan is to allow for improved consultation and outreach to the public and relevant stakeholders. An assessment of the committees’ resources, structures and procedures made it also possible to produce a set of immediate, medium and long term recommendations for changes and reforms which will help inform the new Parliament on potential areas for changes and reform and assist the committees in further developing.

## NEPAL

As an outcome of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the popularly elected Constituent Assembly (CA), adopted the Constitution of Nepal in September 2015 with a clear majority of the CA members. Declaration of the constitution by the CA was an agenda of the country for more than six decades. The Constitution provides for a federalized, proportionately inclusive and parliamentary form of governance.

In 2015, UNDP organized 11 workshops for women and other marginalized groups to enhance their technical knowledge and leadership skills, which helped them to give voice to their agenda in the CA. This contributed to proportionate inclusion as one of the core principles of the Constitution.

UNDP launched the Parliament Support Project (PSP) from 1 September 2015. The project aims at strengthening the Legislative Parliament as an institution in law making, oversight function, bridging the gaps between public and parliament, and fostering constitution building process. The project started with a nine months inception phase during which a more thorough needs assessment will be conducted for project outputs, and objectives and potential activities clarified and prioritized in consultation with the Parliament Secretariat as well as with potential partners and donors.

A mock Youth Parliament session was jointly organized by Cheers Nepal and PSP for 100 participants. This event brought together a diverse group of future leaders who debated, applauded and together created vision for a progressive and intellectual Nepali society. Similarly, PSP and Nepal Parliamentarian’s forum organized an orientation event for 22 Parliamentarians on evaluation before the “Global Evaluation Conclave 2015”. The event enhanced the capacity of Parliamentarians and they committed to use the evaluation system while doing their oversight functions. The project also contributed to organize Global Evaluation conclave 2015 event, where more than 70 countries parliament members, other relevant stakeholders, and representatives of government participated and exchanged experiences and ideas.

## COUNTRY OFFICE WORK

PSP conducted an interaction programme on the Role of Parliamentarians in Gender based Violence (GBV). Parliament members committed to review the policy and ensure the effective implementation of existing law and policies in order to end GBV.

Major priorities for 2016 include: Conducting a needs assessment; providing an orientation on SDGs to parliament committee chairs; providing orientation on parliamentary oversight functions.

### PACIFIC ISLANDS

In Marshall Islands, Fiji and Tonga, MPs training increased awareness on SDGs and human rights, and increased efficiency of parliamentary committees.

In Papua New Guinea, UNDP supported the participation of women in the parliamentary elections in Bougainville. Training was provided to 25 women candidates. In total, 32 women candidates took part in elections, including 11 standing in open seats and 21 contesting for 3 reserved seats for women. As a result, women fill 4 out of 33 seats of the House of Representatives, including 2 trained by UNDP (1 trainee winning through an open constituency and 1 contesting for reserved seats).

### RWANDA

Rwanda leads the world in women representation in Parliament. To further deepen women participation across the political spectrum and ensure political parties comply with the constitutional requirement for 30% women's representation in leadership organs, UNDP, working with the National Forum for Political Parties, supported 3 additional political parties to establish women political wings at provincial levels, bringing the number of political parties with active women's wings to 9 (initially 6) of 11 (81%). Women political wings are spaces which women use to encourage other women to join competitive politics and to galvanise their numbers during elections.

Following the celebration of International Day of Democracy with the theme "Engaging young people on democracy", senators and deputies held discussions on democracy with youth and organized a consultative meeting on integration of youth into national development programmes.

Members of parliament were trained on facts-based parliamentary debates and policy analysis. A sensitization seminar was also organized to inform Members of the Parliament on post 2015 development Agenda.

The parliament also conducted public outreach for citizen input into draft legislations e.g. 90% of the draft law on matrimonial regimes, family donations and successions was revised; and reviewed the application of gender related laws (GBV, Land laws, and Penal code).

### SERBIA

As a part of its endeavors to support parliamentary reforms, UNDP supported the institutionalization of public hearings and their further use as a regular parliamentary mechanism. Public hearings were first piloted at this time, as an informal mechanism, bringing the voice of civil society to Parliament. Gradually, efforts extended to other areas and addressed the functioning of the Parliament as an institution, with emphasis on strengthening its oversight role. EU praised the precipitous rise in public hearings, whereby over 40 were supported by UNDP, some being related to combating Violence against Women and implementation of international gender standards.



*Left: Signing of new four-year parliamentary program / Right: Launch of the Portal for monitoring public finance*

UNDP started strengthening the Parliament’s oversight role over the Executive. Despite the sensitivity of the issue, UNDP facilitated an agreement between the Parliament and the Treasury Department to develop a portal for monitoring public finance expenditure. In February 2015, the Committee on Finance, State Budget and Control of Public Spending adopted the Decision on the Establishment of the Working Group for the Introduction and Development of the Portal for Public Finance Supervision. The finalization of the portal in November was a major breakthrough for Parliament in exercising its scrutiny role over the public finances.

UNDP supported the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia to develop the Portal for monitoring public finance. Each year the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (NARS) authorizes around RSD 900 million of public funds necessary for financing expenditures. The manner in which the Government plans and executes budgetary spending influences the effectiveness of policies to a great extent. The NARS, and in particular the Committee on Finance, State Budget and Control of Public Spending, has a crucial role to play in financial scrutiny by holding the Government accountable. Until recently, there were no regular and direct means of executing the particular control except through MPs’ Question Time, monthly excerpt reports from the Ministry of Finance, and, upon special request to the Ministry of Finance, reports from the Treasury Administration. Launching the Portal on 1 December 2015 made a paradigm shift in public finance oversight in Serbia.

Why is this portal innovative? The Serbian Portal is, in addition to collecting raw data from the Treasury Administration, going to cross-reference data in the next phase, with the State Audit Institution, Public Procurement Office and Public Debt Agency by absorbing their databases. Innovation in development needs to encompass making a difference, not only inventing. It underpins an urgent development challenge, the resolution of which can have a positive or improved impact on human development. In addition, effective cross-sectoral cooperation secured sustainability and ownership. Combining public budget expenditures, audit finding and public procurement data is spearheading initiative that will sort out public expenditure management and allow for higher savings as well as increase system efficiency.

The portal will on monthly basis provide both dynamic and static reports on direct budget users, budgetary execution by direct budget users, by source of funding, by source and functional classification, by its economic classification. This pioneering and highly politicized process was led for three years by the GOPAC Chapter Serbia, the Committee on Finance, State Budget and Control of Public Spending, namely its Working Group for the Introduction and Development of the Public Finance Monitoring Portal and technical group supported by the UNDP/SDC Project “Strengthening the Oversight Function and Transparency of the Parliament”. The Working Group for the Introduction and Development of the Public Finance Monitoring Portal was established on 18 February 2015 comprising all party whips and GOPAC Chapter. The Development of the Portal was envisioned by the Action plan for the implementation of the Republic of Serbia National Anti-Corruption Strategy for the period 2013–2018 and the UNDP/SDC project.

## SIERRA LEONE

Highlights of UNDP’s parliamentary development work in Sierra Leone include developing a Strategic Plan 2016-19 for Parliament, which was signed by the Clerk of Parliament, signifying parliamentary ownership of the document. A brief assessment of UNDP’s work with the Sierra Leone parliament between 2009-2015 was also conducted.

Sierra Leone witnessed the tragic outbreak of the Ebola virus in 2015. Helen Clark’s visit during this time was of great significance, as she addressed the parliament leadership and listened to their challenges during that critical time. In response to the EVD, the

## COUNTRY OFFICE WORK

Committee on Health and the Committee on Social Welfare were supported to go on oversight visits. The Committee on Health was supported to go to the District Referral Hospital and the adjoining Public Health Units on their EVD related work and to check on the Free Health Care Scheme of the government during the crisis.

Similarly, the Committee on Social Welfare went on an oversight visit to some of the districts to check on the rise of teenage pregnancies in the wake of Ebola. The committees tried a new method to reach out to communities through the radio. This took place the evening prior to beginning their oversight work at district headquarters. This proved to be very useful as more community members engaged in the discussions and follow up meetings.

In a similar vein, a radio programme was initiated on parliamentary activities through the Independent Radio Network (IRN), a group of community radios in Sierra Leone. It is expected to assist in improving the understanding in the community about the role and functions of MPs.

Other small capacity building activities were undertaken such as supporting an MP to attend the CPA-UNDP Conference on developing the Handbook on Energy held at Nairobi, and a staff member attended the parliamentary administration training at Accra, Ghana.

Technical support covered diverse areas such as the extension of the Public Emergency regulations by Parliament; streamlining the work of the legislative Department in 2015 for documentation and analysis of the legal and political dynamics surrounding the removal of the Vice-President of Sierra Leone and the appointment of the new one in 2015; technical advice on setting up of the Committee on Government Assurances among several others to the different departments of the newly set up Parliament service.

In addition, the Parliamentary Action Group on Water was set up, and a number of workshops were held in Parliament on different sections of the Constitution under the Constitutional Review Project of UNDP wherein the CTA, Parliament also made presentations and provided technical assistance. MPs participated in other aspects of the work of the CRC such as rules relating to referendum, new chapter on local councils, etc.

### SOMALIA

Significant support has been made to increase the technical support to the legislative mandate in 2015. UNDP supported the revision of 3 priority laws tabled: Procurement Law, Anti-Money Laundering Law, and Counter-Terrorism Law. Of these laws, two have been already adopted by the National Federal Parliament: Procurement Law and Anti-Money Laundering. Complementary is also the preparatory work being done to build and complete the legislative archive of the Somalia Legislation since 1955.

Inter-parliamentary cooperation between the National Federal Parliament and regional parliaments took place during the planning exercise for the mapping of needs and activities for 2016 with the support of UNDP. Support has also been extended to provide technical assistance to 2 newly formed parliaments of Galmudug and Jubaland, both at the technical and operational level.

Support was also extended to representative/outreach: the development of the first ever website of Puntland Parliament, and the development of the new National Federal Parliament website.

UNDP also supported the communication and outreach strategy of Somaliland HoR, and organized the Open Doors day for youth. The Young Graduates Programme of the Federal Parliament has proven to be a flagship programme in developing and safeguarding human capacity in this institution by supporting sustainable skill transfer as a pilot for cost-sharing efforts and incentive schemes between UNDP and the Somali Government, which has since been applied to other institutions. The Young Graduates were placed across all Committees and Departments of the Parliament. They are now transferring their knowledge also to emerging parliaments by training their peers, having detailed assignment missions to the emerging parliaments, supporting them in developing RoP, etc.

As foreseen in the initial design and planning of this programme, the Young Graduates will be embedded as civil servants in the NFP and be fully paid by Federal Government of Somalia as of 2016. Hence, UNDP funding support is now phased out completely and it will now be 100% responsibility of the State Budget.

### SRI LANKA

UNDP supported the drafting of the Right to Information Bill and organized a stakeholder consultation for civil society on the draft Bill, of which a compilation of the proceedings in the form of a report informed the drafters. Advisory support to the Parliament in Sri Lanka has led to the establishment of the first ever Parliamentary Committee on Women and Gender. Further support was provided to the Committee in developing the Terms of Reference, work planning and capacity development.

### SURINAME

UNDP embarked upon an awareness building initiative to promote the SDGs. This has resulted in a series of SDG symposia including a special session with the National Assembly and a special training workshop on SDGs with the Suriname National Youth Parliament.

### SWAZILAND

UNDP Swaziland provided normative guidance and technical support for the development of the first Parliament of Swaziland Strategic Plan 2015 - 2018 aimed at strengthening and transforming its oversight and legislative function. The Plan's strategic outcomes are fundamental in ensuring an effective Parliament, through strengthened governance and administration systems, joint-team undertaking, improved legislative capacity, enhanced use of Information and Technology, and improved representation.

Technical and financial support was also provided for the review of the Parliamentary Standing Orders to be seamless with the Constitution of Swaziland, international standards and current practice. This is the third review since 1967. It's envisaged that the new standing orders once adopted will facilitate the review of the current Portfolio Committees, incorporate the use of ICT and facilitate of e-parliament.

High advocacy was supported to the House of Senate for the adoption of the Parliament Service Bill 2015, which has now been enacted. The act legitimises the establishment of a Parliamentary Service Board, which will have total oversight function of the Parliament Administration previously under the Prime Minister who was also Head of the Executive.

The Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development Portfolio Committee was sensitized on the Tinkhundla and Administration Bill. Advocacy meetings were also held with the Gender and Children Portfolio Committee and Deputy Prime Ministers Portfolio committee for the enactment of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill 2015. The latter bill has taken over 10 years and being re-tabled for the 5th time in Parliament.

UNDP Swaziland 2016 priorities:

1. Development of an interactive Parliament of Swaziland website. As part of the first phase of the e- government initiative.
2. Support the Development of Parliament Communication Policy.
3. Technical and normative guidance provided for the adoption and rolling out of the new standing orders including orientation of all Parliamentarians.
4. Develop a proposal for the facilitation of an e-Parliament.

### TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

UNDP supported the enhancement of governance in Trinidad and Tobago through the development of a new comprehensive strategic development plan for the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. UNDP's intervention responded to a national concern for better governance and had the support of both the government and the opposition. The plan included recommendations on strengthening the legislative functioning of Parliament; recommendations on strengthening the outreach and communication of Parliament and a finalised draft Bill and roadmap to establish the functional autonomy of Parliament.

Another major outcome was the strengthening of transparency affected by the new measures governing budget debates in parliament]. In the past the Minister of Finance who prepares the budget also presided over the budget debate. It meant that there was no independent arbiter. The changed regulations require the Speaker to preside over the budget debates. This change was already put into effect in the October 2015 budget debates.

The Caribbean has one of the highest rates of incarceration per capita and the majority of the prison population is youth. UNDP has been pioneering the reform of the juvenile justice system in Trinidad and Tobago through the Juvenile Court Project which focuses on legislative review of the Children's Act, Children's Authority Act, Family and Children's Bill, to bring the country in line with the UN Conventions on the Rights of a Child. In 2015 draft judges rules, legislative documents, and a framework for school-based youth court (peer resolution) were developed.

### TUNISIA

On 15 April 2015, UNDP signed the "Consolidating the democratic transition in Tunisia: Support to the Tunisian Parliament" project document with the Assembly of the Representatives of the People (ARP), in yet another step in its support to the parliamentary development in the country. Key highlights of project results and project activities during 2015 include:

1. Increased capacity strengthening activities of around 270 MPs and members of Secretariat. Particular emphasis was given to the training of new MPs and the women deputies.
2. Institutionalization of parliamentary groups. As a consequence of UNDP capacity building activity on parliamentary groups, the president of ARP allocated a budget for three assistants for each parliamentary group.

## COUNTRY OFFICE WORK

3. Increased knowledge materials on parliamentary development including the development of a manual on parliamentary groups in French and a resource compendium.
4. Establishment of collaboration structures (Project Liaison Committee) has substantially improved the relationship of the project with the ARP in a way that all parts of the Assembly coordinate with the project.
5. Improved dialogue and coordination among partners and the Assembly. During 2015, the project established a coordination meeting among the international development partners working with the Assembly. The partners of the coordination meetings include representatives from European Union, National Democratic Institute, Carter Centre, UNDP Electoral assistance project, IDEA International, Westminster Foundation for Democracy and DCAF.
6. Improved access to international best practices in parliamentary development has been ensured by UNDP project throughout 2015 on various themes, including decentralization, parliamentary groups, financial bill, functions and roles of the Parliament etc. Particular emphasis was given to South-South cooperation.
7. Modernization of ICT infrastructure of the ARP has moved forward with the development of a series of web platforms and the purchase of laptops for the MPs.

Key activities for 2016 will include but will not be limited to capacity building activities on strategic planning, gender, implementation of constitutional provisions concerning human rights, gender, fight against corruption as well as providing support to the development of ARP strategic vision, peer exchange with IPU, European Parliament and other parliaments.



*Left: Gammarth, September 2015 – H.E. Mohamed Ennaceur, President of the ARP giving his opening speech at the international conference on parliamentary groups.*

*Right: Bardo, April 2015 – Signing ceremony of the project document "Consolidating the democratic transition in Tunisia: Support to the Tunisian Parliament" between the President of the Tunisian Assembly, H.E Mohamed Ennaceur and UNDP Resident Representative Mounir Tabet*

## TURKMENISTAN

In 2015 UNDP Turkmenistan assisted the Parliament (Mejlis) to conduct a Comprehensive Review of the system of local governance focusing on legal, administrative, and financial aspects. The Parliament in Turkmenistan is in charge of the local representative bodies and local self-governance bodies, although they are not directly subordinated to the Parliament. The system of the local representative bodies and local self-governance bodies is complex and cumbersome. The Review will serve as the basis for the list of recommendations that UNDP and the Parliament are planning to pilot in selected local self-governance units in 2016. The final purpose of the Review and the Pilots is to propose the revised model of the representative bodies and self-governance that will allow the population to take active part in the social-economic development of the regions.

In 2015 UNDP also assisted the Parliament in learning about the best practices on the offices of ombudsman and legislation regulating of such offices. Turkmenistan is currently developing legislation on ombudsman, which is expected to be approved in 2016. UNDP provided practical consultations to the parliamentarians directly involved in the development of the legislation on what models of ombudsman are used internationally and what model could be more appropriate for Turkmenistan. The parliamentarians also learned about different variants of regulation of the ombudsman offices in the legislation. UNDP further plans to support the Parliament in establishing of the office of ombudsman and strengthening its capacities in every possible way.

## UGANDA

Despite the backdrop on constitutional reforms, UNDP continued to support efforts for constitutional democracy and peace ahead of the 2016 elections. The parliament of Uganda was also supported to analyse critical bills such as the constitutional amendment bill 2015 and the Local Government amendment bill 2014, informing the direction of the electoral Reform.

### UKRAINE

With UNDP support and in close cooperation with civil society the fundamental legislative and regulatory package on anti-corruption at the national level was elaborated: Open data legislation was voted by the Parliament. The Parliament adopted a parliamentary Openness Action Plan to further accountability, transparency, access to information, and citizen engagement in legislative processes.

### URUGUAY

In a joint effort with UNWomen, UNDP implemented a training program for candidates of the four political parties and developed awareness-raising about the application of the quota law. UNDP also provided a methodology for assessing implementation and generated inputs for the drafting of parity law to be considered in the new legislature. As part of the modernization agenda of Parliament, UNDP contributed to the development of tools to improve the quality of the legislative process and incorporate the gender perspective in the parliamentary agenda.

### VIET NAM

Informed by disappointing progress in women's representation in elected office and research commissioned by UNDP analyzing implementation of election laws, UNDP helped secure statutory quotas for participation of women in the electoral process. This result was delivered by working with civil society in the CEDAW context, and advocating a more inclusive election process to National Assembly members and opinion formers at all levels. Consequently, the 2015 Election law set aside 35% of the candidate slots for positions for female candidates. This change is projected to secure a 52% increase in women's participation in the National Assembly after the 2016 poll.

### ZIMBABWE

UNDP provided support to Parliament of Zimbabwe (PoZ) to design a Parliamentary development programme in 2015. As a result, PoZ mobilized \$4.7 Million from the EU and Swedish Government to enhance the capacity of 25 Portfolio Committees to spearhead the oversight functions of Parliament and hold the executive to account. UNDP supported the design of tailored training modules on various themes – including conduct of public hearings and policy formulation. As a result of the trainings, 51 public hearings were convened by Portfolio committees generating 10 key recommendations from the public.