

Parliamentary Strengthening and the Paris Principles

Ghana case study

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AFRIMAP	Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AWEPA	European Parliamentarians for Africa
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPP	Convention People's Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFID	Department for International Development
ESP	Enhanced Strategic Plan (of Parliament)
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy/Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NPP	National Patriotic Party
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SUNY	State University of New York
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive summary

Introduction

In theory, parliaments are one of the key institutions of democracy, playing an important role in terms of legislation, oversight and representation. Regrettably, in many developing countries – as well as in many developed countries – parliaments are weak, ineffective and marginalised.

Parliamentary strengthening aims to enhance the effectiveness of parliaments through institutional development, through building the capacity of parliamentary staff, MPs and committees, and through putting in place the nuts and bolts of infrastructure and equipment. However, there is little systematic research or analysis about the effectiveness of parliaments or about the effectiveness of parliamentary strengthening. This makes it difficult for those considering whether and how to spend resources on parliamentary strengthening to make well-informed decisions. It is local politics rather than the actions of Development Partners that play the major role in shaping the effectiveness of a country's Parliament, but Development Partners can make a difference and have a responsibility to ensure that their engagement is as effective as possible.

This report is one component of a research project on “Parliamentary strengthening and the Paris Principles”. The overall aim of the project is to generate better evidence about parliamentary strengthening, in order to inform decisions about whether and how to provide support to parliaments in developing countries. The project – a collaboration between ODI and the Parliamentary Centre, with funding provided by DFID and CIDA – has involved four country case studies; Cambodia, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda. The vantage point taken for our analysis is that of the Paris Principles on Aid Effectiveness.

The Paris Principles and parliamentary strengthening

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is an international agreement between donors and recipients of aid to make aid more effective. At its core are five inter-locking principles, adherence to which is expected to make aid more effective; ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability. The Paris Principles provide a potentially useful vantage point from which to map the landscape of parliamentary strengthening and could – if they were applied in this sphere – enhance the effectiveness of parliaments and parliamentary strengthening. The intention is not to assess whether parliamentary strengthening activities have been influenced by the Paris Declaration; it would be too soon to make such an assessment. Rather, it is to use the Paris Principles as a vantage point for examining the landscape of parliamentary strengthening.

Ownership: Parliamentary strengthening would be consistent with this principle were a parliament to exercise effective leadership over efforts to improve its capacity and performance, for instance through having a clear strategy for parliamentary development that is respected by donors, along with a programme to put it into action. Ownership in parliamentary strengthening implies that it is demand-led and responsive to the needs of the parliament.

Alignment: Parliamentary strengthening would be consistent with this principle if donors' support to parliaments were based on the parliament's own development strategy, if such support made use of parliament's own systems for managing resources and if support was provided in a predictable and timely manner that fits well with parliamentary and political timetables.

Harmonisation: Parliamentary strengthening would be consistent with this principle if donors coordinated their support to parliaments, using common arrangements and procedures, with each donor focussing on its areas of expertise rather than duplicating their efforts. At the very least,

harmonisation in parliamentary strengthening implies that donors begin with a clear map of the landscape of parliamentary strengthening before thinking about how they can best add value.

Managing for Results: Parliamentary strengthening would be consistent with this principle if the work of donors and parliaments were driven by a focus on increasing parliamentary effectiveness. This would imply putting in place and making use of frameworks for monitoring and evaluating progress on parliamentary strengthening and making decisions about future activities on the basis of such monitoring and evaluation.

Mutual Accountability: Parliamentary strengthening would be consistent with this principle if donors and parliaments conducted joint assessments of progress on parliamentary strengthening, with parliaments sharing information with their other stakeholders and donors making available information about their parliamentary strengthening activities.

Politics, democracy and parliament

Parliaments do not operate in a vacuum; their functioning and effectiveness is shaped very much by the context – and particularly the political context – of which they are part. Having endured years of military and quasi-military rule since independence in 1957, Ghana has – since the new Constitution of 1992 – seen a series of relatively free and fair elections, with power transferred peacefully from one regime to another in 2000 and in 2008. In the most recent elections, in December 2008, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) won the most parliamentary seats; 114 as against 107 for the New Patriotic Party (NPP). In a closely fought Presidential election which went to a second round of voting, the NDC's Professor Atta Mills was victorious, securing 50.23% of the vote, with a turnout of 72.9%. Competition was lively and at times heated, but largely peaceful.

Politics in Ghana as elsewhere is also about the interplay between formal and informal politics; the challenges faced by MPs whose constituents expect them – in their role as “big men” – to deliver development for them rather than demanding that they play an effective role in terms of legislation and oversight. As some commentators have suggested, a truly independent Parliament would challenge the networks of patronage that constitute much of Ghanaian politics.

Ghana's Parliament operates in a challenging context. It is dependent on the Executive for its institutional resources, its independence is compromised by the fact that the majority of Ministers are drawn from Parliament and appointed by the President, and its legislative and budget powers are limited by the Constitution. Assessing the performance of the Parliament of Ghana is, as in many other countries, extremely challenging. This is because neither Parliament itself nor its Development Partners have put sufficient effort into establishing frameworks for performance assessment or into collecting data on performance.

The available evidence indicates that the Parliament – working within the constraints set by executive dominance – has some impact in terms of legislation, is rather ineffective in terms of representation and is increasingly active in terms of oversight, with, for instance, parliamentary inputs into the budget process and into policy processes on poverty reduction gradually increasing. Despite increased levels of funding, the Parliament of Ghana remains weak. However, in comparison with other developing countries and with its own performance prior to the last two Parliaments, in the 4th Parliament, from 2004-08, there were some encouraging signs of progress.

The landscape of parliamentary strengthening

A number of Development Partners have – since 1993 – provided support for parliamentary strengthening in Ghana. Key players have been CIDA and the World Bank Institute, working

together and through the Parliamentary Centre, the African Development Bank, Germany's GTZ, UNDP, USAID, DANIDA, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and DFID. Support has been provided in a wide variety of ways: through the provision of basic office equipment and infrastructure; by training MPs and parliamentary staff; by strengthening the Parliamentary Service and helping to produce strategic plans for parliamentary development; by supporting the work of particular parliamentary committees; through supporting programmes of parliamentary outreach and civic engagement; and, most recently, and not before time, by supporting efforts to develop frameworks to monitor and assess parliamentary performance.

Mapping the landscape of parliamentary strengthening from the perspective of the Paris Principles generates a number of insights. As regards **ownership**, in the early years of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana activities were supply-led with Development Partners taking the lead. The development of a Strategic Plan and an Enhanced Strategic Plan have been important steps toward establishing parliamentary ownership of its own development, but there are question marks about whether Parliament is exercising the leadership needed for their implementation. For ownership to become real, Parliament needs to exercise greater leadership, taking control of its own development agenda. Development partners for their part need – while engaging in close dialogue with Parliament – to respect Parliament's plans. Establishing project steering committees that engage both the technical and political wings of Parliament can be useful, but it is only the first step toward real parliamentary ownership. The setting up of a parliamentary unit with responsibility for liaising with Development Partners, along the lines of Uganda's Parliamentary Development and Coordination Office, could do much to enhance the effectiveness of parliamentary strengthening.

As regards **alignment** too, there is some evidence that Development Partners are taking seriously the importance of ensuring that their activities support Parliament's plans for its own development as set out in the Enhanced Strategic Plan. However, very few Development Partners go so far as to provide resources directly to Parliament or to making use of Parliament's own financial and administrative systems. Development partners should consider whether there is scope to provide resources directly to Parliament and/or through Parliament's own systems. Where this is not currently possible, Development Partners should work with Parliament to strengthen those systems so that they can be utilised in future. A further issue as regards alignment relates to the synchronisation of parliamentary strengthening activities with the parliamentary timetable. Parliament's timetable will always be subject to change, but Development Partners should nevertheless seek to ensure that their activities are planned – with sufficient flexibility included – to fit the schedule of Parliament itself.

On **harmonisation**, Development Partners have – particularly since the start of the 4th Parliament in 2005 – expressed a strong desire to harmonise and coordinate their parliamentary strengthening activities, and to build on the experience that Development Partners such as CIDA and the World Bank Institute have had in working together, and through the Parliamentary Centre, for a number of years. There have been some improvements in recent years, but progress on harmonisation is hampered by Development Partners' failure to share information about their activities and their tendency to want to protect their own resources so that they can clearly point to their own activities. There are however signs of progress in three areas. First, the Enhanced Strategic Plan provides a useful framework for harmonisation. Second, moves to make CIDA the lead development partner for parliamentary strengthening (in what amounts to a division of labour exercise for parliamentary strengthening) provide grounds for optimism. And third, an initiative to establish a unit that will act as the interface with all Development Partners and implementing agencies is very welcome. These initiatives should be actively encouraged as they hold out the promise of reducing the duplication, confusion and high transactions costs associated with a complex landscape of parliamentary strengthening and enhancing its effectiveness.

Of the five Paris Principles, parliamentary strengthening in Ghana is weakest in terms of **managing for results**. This remains the case even though recent and welcome commitments

have been made, by CIDA, to undertake joint evaluations that might usefully be conducted under the framework provided by the Enhanced Strategic Plan. Development Partners intend that their activities will lead to particular results in terms of parliamentary performance, but in the absence of effective systems for monitoring, evaluation and learning, their intentions do not amount to well-formulated plans. This problem is not unique to Ghana. Worldwide, despite the enthusiasm for parliamentary strengthening, neither Development Partners nor parliaments have put sufficient effort into ways of assessing effectiveness. If the flow of resources to parliamentary strengthening is to be sustained, then the parliamentary strengthening community needs to up its game in terms of monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability.

On **mutual accountability** too, the picture in Ghana is disappointing. Development Partners and Parliament have not conducted joint evaluations and there is considerable room for improvement in terms of sharing information amongst Development Partners and between Development Partners and Parliament. For improvement to take place, progress must be made on establishing a framework and process for monitoring, evaluation and assessment. As with managing for results, the Enhanced Strategic Plan could, alongside an annual reporting mechanism, play an important role in building the mutual accountability which is essential if parliamentary strengthening is to become increasingly effective. Putting mutual accountability into practice will require Parliaments and Development Partners to work together, recognising that accountability is about learning and improving performance.

Conclusions

Mapping the landscape of parliamentary strengthening from the perspective of the Paris Principles has revealed a number of useful insights about how Parliament and parliamentary strengthening might be made more effective. Available evidence suggests that if parliamentary strengthening were conducted in a manner that were more in line with the Paris Principles, then it would be more effective.

The Paris Principles are a useful framework for mapping the landscape of parliamentary strengthening and for moving towards more effective partnerships. But as with aid effectiveness more generally, progress depends very much on politics. Donors may be reluctant to engage in parliamentary strengthening in an explicitly political manner, but there is no doubt that parliamentary strengthening requires a good understanding of the political terrain. Otherwise, the effort put into supporting the production of plans such as the Parliament of Ghana's Enhanced Strategic Plan, will be wasted and progress towards Parliament's vision will remain little more than an aspiration.

1. Introduction

1. In theory, parliament is one of the key institutions of democracy, playing an important role in terms of legislation, oversight and representation. Regrettably, in many developing countries – as well as in many developed countries – parliaments are weak and ineffective.
2. Parliamentary strengthening, supported by a range of bilateral and multilateral donors, aims to enhance the effectiveness of parliaments. However, there is little systematic research or analysis about the effectiveness of parliaments or about the effectiveness of parliamentary strengthening. This makes it difficult for those considering whether and how to spend resources on parliamentary strengthening to make well-informed decisions. It is local politics rather than the actions of Development Partners that play the major role in shaping the effectiveness of a country's Parliament, but Development Partners can make a difference and have a responsibility to ensure that their engagement is as effective as possible.
3. This report is one component of a research project on "Parliamentary strengthening and the Paris Principles". The aim of the research project is to generate better evidence about parliamentary strengthening, to inform policy and practice. Emphasising the ways in which a country's political context shapes its experience of parliamentary strengthening, the project explores the landscape of parliamentary strengthening, taking the Paris Principles on aid effectiveness as a vantage point.¹
4. The Overseas Development Institute has led the research project, with the Parliamentary Centre leading on data collection and analysis for the country case studies. This report is one of four country case studies; the others concern Cambodia, Tanzania and Uganda.² The report proceeds as follows:
 - Chapter two provides an introduction to the role of parliament in theory and practice, to the field of parliamentary strengthening and to the particular angle – the Paris Principles – taken by this research project;
 - Chapter three provides an introduction to politics and democracy in Ghana, putting the Ghanaian parliament in context and outlining its key characteristics;
 - Chapter four examines the performance of the Ghanaian parliament;
 - Chapter five maps out the landscape of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana;
 - Chapter six examines the landscape of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana from the vantage point of the Paris Principles; and,
 - Chapter seven sets out a series of conclusions and recommendations.

¹ The intention is not to assess whether parliamentary strengthening activities have been influenced by the Paris Declaration; it would be too soon to make such an assessment. Rather, it is to use the Paris Principles as a vantage point for examining the landscape of parliamentary strengthening.

² See Annex A for a note on selection of country case studies.

2. Parliaments and parliamentary strengthening

Parliaments in theory and practice

5. Traditionally, parliaments are seen as having three primary roles: legislation, oversight and representation. Legislation concerns passing the laws that make up a country's legal framework. Oversight is about keeping an eye on the activities of the executive and holding the executive to account on behalf of the country's citizens. And representation is about collecting, aggregating and expressing the concerns, opinions and preferences of the country's citizens, through the political process.
6. Parliaments can play an important role in delivering governance that is good for poverty reduction. Good governance requires that there is a state that is capable, accountable and responsive (DFID, 2006). Assuming that poverty reduction is the goal, a capable state is one that is able to formulate and implement policies that are effective for poverty reduction. An accountable state is one that answers to its citizens, particularly in the event that it fails to live up to its promises. A responsive state is one that seeks to identify and meet the needs of its citizens.

Figure 1: Governance and Parliaments: Elements and Roles

Effective governance	Parliamentary roles
State capability	Legislation
Accountability	Oversight
Responsiveness	Representation

Source: Hudson, 2007

7. Mapping the roles of parliaments onto the elements of good governance (see figure 1) illustrates the contribution that parliaments can make to the delivery of good governance. Legislation is part of state capability, with law-making an important means through which capable states formulate and implement policies. Oversight can contribute to ensuring that the state is accountable to its citizens. And representation – of citizens' views to the government – is key to responsiveness.
8. In practice, parliaments in many developing countries are weak and ineffective and contribute little to good governance and poverty reduction. For instance, the African Governance Report for 2005 found that: "In terms of enacting laws, debating national issues, checking the activities of the government and in general promoting the welfare of the people, these duties and obligations are rarely performed with efficiency and effectiveness" (UNECA, 2005).
9. There are a number of reasons for the ineffectiveness of parliaments in developing countries. First, parliaments are in a weak position in many political systems, where they are marginalised by the executive and constrained by a constitution that fails to provide for parliamentary independence. Second, parliaments often lack institutional capacity and resources and are dependent on the executive for access to resources. Third, parliaments are often by-passed in the policy process, both by dominant executives and by bilateral and multilateral donors that deal with executive rather than Parliament. Fourth, MPs often lack knowledge, experience, skills and resources. And fifth, voters – as a result of social and cultural norms – are often more concerned that their MPs provide them and their constituencies with school and hospital fees,

funeral expenses, roads and electricity, than that they legislate, oversee and represent their interests effectively in Parliament (see Hudson and Wren, 2007).

Parliamentary strengthening

10. In recent years an increasing number of organisations have become involved in efforts to strengthen and support parliaments in developing countries, in effect seeking to narrow the gap between parliaments' potential contribution to good governance and poverty reduction and their performance in practice. Donors' interest in parliaments is informed by a renewed emphasis on country ownership and domestic accountability, and by donors' enthusiasm to ensure that spending decisions are scrutinized and that aid is spent effectively.
11. In terms of bilateral donors, USAID, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) are particularly active, alongside Austria, Belgium, Denmark and Germany. In terms of multilateral organisations, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Inter-American Development Bank and the European Union are prominent. In addition, there are a number of national and international parliamentary organisations and networks including the Parliamentary Centre, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB) and the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC). Parliamentary strengthening activities range from training individual MPs, to working with parliament as an institution, to engaging with the wider political system within which parliament operates.
12. The wisdom of investing resources in parliamentary strengthening depends on the difference that parliamentary strengthening makes, to parliamentary effectiveness and ultimately to development outcomes. Regrettably, donors have made little headway with generating systematic evidence or analysis about the effectiveness of parliamentary strengthening (although see Hubli and Schmidt, 2005), or about the effectiveness of parliaments themselves (Hudson and Wren, 2007, p.16). The World Bank Institute, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and others are working to establish frameworks for assessing parliamentary effectiveness and a number of useful initiatives to shed light on the functioning of parliaments in developing countries are underway, including the work of the African Legislatures Project. Nevertheless, the absence of evidence and analysis remains a serious problem for those tasked with making decisions about whether and how to spend resources on parliamentary strengthening.

Parliamentary strengthening and the Paris Principles: The research project

13. The overall aim of this research project is to generate better evidence about parliamentary strengthening, in order to inform decisions – made by donors and others – about whether and how to provide support to parliaments in developing countries. The vantage point taken for our analysis is that of the Paris Principles on aid effectiveness; ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability.³ Support provided by donors for parliamentary strengthening is a minor component of aid, but using the Paris Principles as a vantage point or analytical lens can, we believe, generate useful and relevant insights (see figure 2).⁴

³ The initial ambition of this research project was to examine the extent to which consistency with the Paris Principles made for more effective parliamentary strengthening. As the project progressed, methodological challenges and data availability made it prudent to scale back the project's ambitions.

⁴ The DFID-UNDP-World Bank Institute donor consultation on parliamentary strengthening which took place in May 2007 identified the development of good practice principles for donor support to parliamentary strengthening as one of the ways of moving the parliamentary strengthening agenda forward, specifically

Figure 2: The Paris Principles and Parliamentary Strengthening

The Paris Principles on aid effectiveness

The Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness is an international agreement by donors and recipients of aid to make aid more effective. At its core are five inter-locking principles, adherence to which is expected to make aid more effective. First is the principle of ownership; that aid is used most effectively when developing countries – governments, in consultation with parliament and civil society – take charge of their own development plans and use aid in a coordinated manner to implement those plans. Second is the principle of alignment; that aid should be provided and spent in a manner that supports a country's development plans. Third is the principle of harmonisation; that donors should coordinate their support to particular developing countries to reduce duplication and transaction costs. Fourth is managing for results; that aid management and planning should be driven by a focus on results. And fifth, is mutual accountability; that donors and recipients of aid should be accountable to each other, in a transparent manner, for aid effectiveness.⁵

The relevance of the Paris Principles to parliamentary strengthening

Ownership: Parliamentary strengthening would be consistent with this principle were a parliament to exercise effective leadership over efforts to improve its capacity and performance, for instance through having a clear strategy for parliamentary development that is respected by donors, along with a programme to put it into action. Ownership in parliamentary strengthening implies that it is demand-led and responsive to the needs of the parliament.

Alignment: Parliamentary strengthening would be consistent with this principle if donors' support to parliaments was based on the parliament's development strategy, if such support made use of parliament's own systems for managing resources and if support was provided in a predictable and timely manner that fits well with parliamentary and political timetables.

Harmonisation: Parliamentary strengthening would be consistent with this principle if donors coordinated their support to parliaments, using common arrangements and procedures, with each donor focussing on its areas of expertise rather than duplicating their efforts. At the very least, harmonisation in parliamentary strengthening implies that donors begin with a clear map of the landscape of parliamentary strengthening before thinking about how they can best add value.

Managing for Results: Parliamentary strengthening would be consistent with this principle if the work of donors and parliaments were driven by a focus on increasing parliamentary effectiveness. This would imply putting in place and making use of frameworks for monitoring and evaluating progress on parliamentary strengthening and making decisions about future activities on the basis of such monitoring and evaluation.

Mutual Accountability: Parliamentary strengthening would be consistent with this principle if donors and parliaments conducted joint assessments of progress on parliamentary strengthening, with parliaments sharing information with their other stakeholders and donors making available information about their parliamentary strengthening activities.

14. In Ghana, the research process was led by the Parliamentary Centre's Accra-based Africa office, with a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with representatives from the key stakeholders in the field of parliamentary strengthening. These included representatives from bilateral and multilateral Development Partners (donors), the parliamentary staff, civil society

indicating that such principles should build on the Paris principles on aid effectiveness as well as on the OECD-DAC's capacity building principles. See <http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parlis>

⁵ While the focus of this research project is not on the role of parliaments in aid effectiveness, it is worth noting that under the Paris Declaration developing countries are committed to "strengthen as appropriate the parliamentary role in national development strategies and/or budgets" (para 48 of Paris Declaration).

organisations (CSOs) and a number of MPs including the chairs of committees with key roles as regards oversight and accountability (see Annex B for a list of interviewees). In addition to these research interviews, a number of documentary sources were reviewed. On the Parliament side these included Hansard, Votes and Proceedings and Order Papers. On the Development Partners' side these included a number of project documents and reports. Prior to the in-country phase of the research those Development Partners that have been active in parliamentary strengthening in Ghana were invited to provide documentation – including evaluations – of their activities. A number of Development Partners provided useful information. The research was conducted during the first half of 2008 with the report finalised shortly after the elections of December 2008.

3. Politics, democracy and parliament

15. Parliaments do not operate in a vacuum; their functioning and effectiveness is shaped very much by the country context and in particular the political context (Hudson and Wren, 2007). This chapter outlines the context within which the Parliament of Ghana operates, outlining: the country's post-independence political history; the emergence of constitutional democracy; the financing and administration of the Parliament itself; elections and the evolution of parliamentary democracy; and, issues of turnover, gender and patterns of regional and ethnic representation.

From independence to the emergence of constitutional democracy

16. Ghana, a former British colony, gained its independence from the UK on 6th March 1957 with the fledgling Parliament – the Legislative Council – playing an important role in the process. Led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah – a strong supporter of Pan-African unity – Ghana was the first sub-Saharan African country to gain its independence. The euphoria of independence gradually disappeared as the extent of the country's economic and political challenges became clear. In 1960 Ghana became a Republic, with Nkrumah installed as President. In 1964, with Nkrumah becoming increasingly authoritarian, Ghana became a one-party state. And in 1966, President Nkrumah and the First Republic were overthrown in a military coup.

17. From the time of the military coup of 1966 to the onset of the Fourth Republic in January 1993, Ghana endured a series of military governments, with parliamentary democracy operating only intermittently, for fewer than five years in total. Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings came to power in a military coup in 1979 and – with the exception of two years from September 1979 to December 1981 when he passed power to an elected government – remained at the helm, unelected, until 1993. Bowing to calls for political reform, and following a referendum, the Rawlings regime introduced a new Constitution in 1992. This ushered in the Fourth Republic and a new era of multi-party democracy.

18. The 1992 Constitution provided for a President, elected every four years, and for a Parliament elected at the same time, but separately, under a multi-party system. Under the Constitution, the Parliament has a single chamber and consists of not less than 140 members representing single-member constituencies. MPs are not permitted to cross the floor to join a party other than the one on whose ticket they contested and won their seat (AfriMAP et al, 2007b, p.88). The National Electoral Commission set the number of MPs at 200 for the first three parliaments of the Fourth Republic, increasing that number to 230 in time for the elections of 2004.

19. Under the Constitution, the President appoints Ministers of State to the Executive, with the requirement that more than fifty percent come from the ranks of MPs.⁶ This produces a hybrid political system, with elements of both presidential and parliamentary governance; a characteristic that institutionalises executive dominance and which is of great significance for understanding the role and functioning of Parliament. The term of office for the President and for MPs is set at 4 years, with Presidents permitted to serve for only two consecutive terms. In contrast to some other countries in Africa, Presidents have not sought to relax or remove the term limits for their appointment.

20. The practice of democracy, with increasingly free and fair elections at its core, has been steadily consolidated in Ghana since 1992. As the Country Review Report of the African Peer Review Mechanism put it: "Since the return to democratic rule in 1992, Ghana has moved increasingly towards consolidating and strengthening liberal democratic principles, structures

⁶ The Constitution stipulates that all Ministerial appointments are subject to prior approval of Parliament.

and processes. Its progress in this historic development has been remarkable, albeit fragile in some respects” (APRM, 2005, p.xii).

21. The Constitution – despite its flaws – has “provided a solid foundation for stability, as well as creating potential for deepening democracy and good political governance in Ghana” (APRM, 2005, p.xii). Democracy remains the preferred form of government for three-quarters of Ghanaians, with 82% rejecting one-party rule, 83% rejecting military rule, 85% rejecting one-man Presidential rule, and 90% agreeing that leaders should be chosen through regular, open and honest elections (Afrobarometer, 2005a).

Figure 3: Key dates in Ghana’s post-independence political history

- 1957 – Ghana becomes independent with Kwame Nkrumah as Prime Minister, leading the Convention People’s Party (CPP) in Government.
- 1960 – Ghana becomes a Republic with Kwame Nkrumah as President
- 1966 – President Nkrumah overthrown in a military coup by General J. Ankrah.
- 1969 – Transfer of power to a civilian government – the Second Republic – led by Kofia Busia and the Progress Party.
- 1972 – President Busia overthrown in a military coup by Colonel Ignatius Acheampong
- 1978 – Colonel Acheampong forced to resign; power passes to General Frederick Akuffo
- 1979 – Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings seizes power in a military coup. He then hands power to an elected President, Hilla Limann and the People’s National Party (Third Republic)
- 1981 – Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings seizes power in a military coup and commences implementation of conservative economic policies – privatisation, devaluation, abolition of subsidies and price controls – as part of IMF-inspired Structural Adjustment Programme.
- 1992 – Referendum approves new Constitution and return to multi-party system. Jerry Rawlings elected President, alongside New Democratic Congress (NDC) Government (Fourth Republic)
- 1996 – Rawlings and NDC re-elected, with NDC winning 66% of parliamentary seats.
- 2000 – John Kufuor elected President, alongside New Patriotic Party (NPP) Government with 50% of parliamentary seats.
- 2004 – President Kufuor re-elected, alongside NPP Government with 56% of parliamentary seats.
- 2008 – President Atta Mills (NDC) elected with just over half (50.23%) of votes, alongside NDC Government with 50% of parliamentary seats.

The financing and administration of Parliament

22. The effectiveness of Parliament is shaped in part by the resources available to Parliament; to pay MPs and parliamentary staff, to provide infrastructure, and to give MPs access to information. Parliament is dependent on the Executive for its institutional resources. Parliament itself has a role in considering and reporting on the proposed annual allocation of funds to Parliament, but does not have the power to revise the allocation upwards. As such, an

Executive that wishes to limit the effectiveness of Parliament is able to do so. In practice, the Ghanaian Parliament tends to receive fewer resources than it requests, with the release of funds from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning sometimes delayed (AfriMAP et al, 2007b, p.106). Indeed the Government's own Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy notes that, "Resource disparity also appears to be undermining the roles of different arms of government, particularly Parliament" (Republic of Ghana, 2005b, p.61). It should however be noted that a recent Joint Review of the independent governance institutions reported that there has in recent years been a very substantial increase in the volume of resources provided to Parliament by the Government of Ghana (Joint Review, 2007, p.17).

23. The Parliament is headed by the Speaker and two Deputy Speakers, all of whom are elected by the Members of Parliament. The Speaker is leader of the House and third ranking officer in the hierarchy of precedence after the President and Vice-President. This makes the Speaker a critical link between the Legislative branch and the Executive. But the functional leadership of Parliament is represented by the Majority and Minority Leaders, and their associated Majority and Minority Chief Whips. The position of the Majority Leader has been designated as Minister for Parliamentary Affairs since 2001, further strengthening the link between Parliament and the Executive or – seen differently – weakening the independence of Parliament.
24. The Speaker is assisted by a Parliamentary Service that provides services to Parliament and is headed by the Clerk of Parliament. With nearly 500 permanent employees and scores of national service personnel, the mandate of the Parliamentary Service is to render quality services to facilitate the work of Parliament. The Parliamentary Service has a six member governing council, the Parliamentary Service Board, comprising the Speaker as chair, the Clerk of Parliament and four other members (the Majority Leader, the Minority Leader, a backbench MP who is usually a woman and an ex-MP).
25. Parliament performs its legislative role by considering and approving or rejecting legislative proposals brought by the Executive. Once Parliament has approved a proposal, Presidential assent is required before the bill becomes law. Legislative proposals are considered first by the Parliament as a whole, before being considered in greater detail by the relevant committee, prior to their being approved or rejected by Parliament sitting in plenary. Article 108 of the Constitution stipulates that Parliament can not debate any bill that has financial implications unless it has been introduced by the President (AfriMAP et al, 2007b, p.95). This, and the fact that no Private Members Bills have been introduced into the Ghanaian Parliament, severely restricts Parliament's legislative role (SAIIA, 2005, citing Prempeh 2003).
26. Parliament performs its oversight role primarily through the work of Committees. Standing Committees are constituted at the first meeting of Parliament (after the election of the Speaker) to facilitate the on-going concerns of the House while Select committees have the task of overseeing the policies and practices of Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government. In addition, ad-hoc committees, which are appointed by the House to investigate matters of public interest that do not come under the jurisdiction of any particular select committee.⁷

Elections and the evolution of parliamentary politics

27. Doubts about the probity of the 1992 Presidential elections led to a boycott of the Parliamentary elections by the opposition party and a Parliament dominated overwhelmingly by the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC). With a political make-up loyal to the President, Parliament had little incentive to exercise effective oversight or to play a strong role in the legislative process.

⁷ In the 3rd Parliament the Special Committee on Poverty Reduction was an ad hoc committee but became a Select Committee in the 4th Parliament.

28. The 1996 elections saw Rawlings re-elected as President, alongside his NDC, but with the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) establishing a significant parliamentary presence with 30% of the seats. This changed the balance of power in Parliament and introduced an element of competitive politics. The NPP was determined to use the powers of parliament to challenge what they regarded as the successor to Rawlings' military regime. The NDC, for its part, was determined to maintain the political dominance it had established over the NPP. This rivalry was one of the push factors that helped Parliament to embark on the search for its autonomy, and which, in turn, led a number of Development Partners to identify the potential of Ghana's Parliament and begin to provide support for parliamentary strengthening.
29. The 2000 elections saw the first democratic transfer of power in Ghana's post-independence history with John Kufuor elected President with 57% of the vote and his NPP winning – just – the battle for parliamentary seats. The fact that the NDC had just left power, coupled with the slim NPP majority, made for a particularly eventful 3rd Parliament. Indeed, many observers of the political landscape see this Parliament as having played a key role in the emergence of parliamentary democracy. In part this reflects the fact that the substantial NDC opposition was able to bring their considerable executive experience and familiarity with the rules of engagement in Parliament to bear on the business of the House. The situation resulted in effective oversight of executive action from Parliament and the strengthening of parliamentary committees.
30. The 2004 elections saw President Kufuor and the NPP re-elected, albeit by a narrower margin and with a reduced parliamentary majority, on a turnout of 80%. The 4th Parliament made some progress with consolidating its functions. Parliamentary committees for instance built on their experiences and learning from the 3rd Parliament and began to collaborate more effectively with CSOs that were able to provide critical inputs into the legislative and policy review process. In the most recent elections, in December 2008, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) won the most parliamentary seats; 114 as against 107 for the New Patriotic Party (NPP). In a closely fought Presidential election which went to a second round of voting, the NDC's Professor Atta Mills was victorious, securing 50.23% of the vote, with a turnout of 72.9%.
31. In terms of relations between the Executive and Parliament, there is a mixed picture. On the one hand, Parliamentary Committees have often worked by consensus, to the advantage of the legislative and policy process. On the other hand, the NPP in Parliament has worked closely with the Executive to pass controversial laws such as that relating to the ability of Ghanaians living overseas to vote in elections, and to secure parliamentary approval of controversial loan agreements. The 4th Parliament has been described as being prone to the politics of ultra-majoritarianism by which the executive has aggressively employed its constitutional powers as well as its majority in Parliament to drive the legislative process to achieve its policy goals regardless of contrary views in and outside Parliament, and in spite of its implications for the democratic order (IDEG, 2007).

Turnover, gender and voting patterns

32. Beyond the distribution of MPs amongst the parties, and the balance of powers between the Executive and the Legislature, Parliament has a range of other characteristics that influence the way it works. These include issues of turnover, the representation of different social groups and the gender balance of Parliament.
33. Parliament has a high turnover of MPs, with close to 45% of MPs in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Parliaments of the Fourth Republic new entrants to parliament. This adversely affects the development and performance of Parliament as valuable institutional memory and experience is quickly lost. In the 2004 elections for instance, a number of leading MPs from both main political parties, including a number of MPs that were active at the Committee level, lost their seats, with a clear impact on the effectiveness of the Committees' work (AfriMAP et al, 2007b,

p.91). New MPs have to learn the rules of the game and there is no guarantee that they will be retained at the next general elections. On the positive side, the rapid turnover of MPs brings in people with new energies and ideas, from diverse backgrounds (IDEG, 2007).

34. Politics is not as divided on ethnic lines as it is in much of sub-Saharan Africa, but there are distinct geographical patterns. NDC MPs representing constituencies in the Volta Region and the three Northern Regions consider their seats as safe seats for the party. Similarly, NPP MPs from constituencies in Ashanti Region consider their constituencies as safe seats for their party. As a result the swing votes originate from the Greater Accra and Central Regions. The geo-political alliances have their history dating to the independence struggle and the First Republic. But they are also influenced by the distribution of development projects and the perception of which party or parties have attempted to bridge the development gap between the relatively rich coastal regions and the poor northern regions. The Constitution – by demanding development and representation at the Executive level that is regionally balanced – seeks to prevent politics becoming split by ethnicity or geography.
35. The work of Parliament is informed by a Committee on Women and Children and a strong Women's Caucus that advocates for issues of gender mainstreaming in the internal organization and management of Parliament, as an institution. Donors too – such as CIDA (working through the Parliamentary Centre) and UNDP – have also sought to strengthen gender awareness. Despite this, and the considerable efforts of CSOs to increase the proportion of female MPs, little progress has been made. In the 4th Parliament, only 11% of MPs were women, a figure which represented only a slight improvement on the average of 8% recorded for the first three parliaments of the Fourth Republic, and which fell well short of the Government's target of 30% (AfriMAP et al, 2007b, p.88).

4. Parliamentary performance

36. The Parliament of Ghana operates in a challenging context. It is dependent on the Executive for its institutional resources. Its independence is compromised by the fact that the majority of Ministers are drawn from Parliament and appointed by the President. Its legislative and budget powers are limited by the Constitution. And it lacks adequate infrastructure, including rooms for MPs and committee meetings. If one's comparison is with the ideal of a truly independent parliament, performing its legislative, representative and oversight functions effectively, then Ghana's Parliament performs rather poorly. However, if one's comparison is with the majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa or with the situation in Ghana from 1966 to 1992, or if one's assessment takes full account of the political, financial and constitutional constraints within which the Parliament operates, one may conclude that Ghana's Parliament is performing reasonably well.
37. With this health-warning in mind, this chapter provides a brief outline of the performance of Ghana's Parliament, organised in terms of its three primary roles; legislation, representation and oversight. The purpose of this chapter is to further set the scene for our exploration of parliamentary strengthening. It is based on three sets of data: first, a series of research interviews with experts on the Parliament of Ghana, including individuals that have worked in the Parliament, either as staff or as MPs; second, published reports about the effectiveness of Parliament; and third, where possible, quantitatively verifiable indicators collected from official parliamentary documentation including Hansard, the Votes and Proceedings, and Committee Reports as captured in the Hansard.
38. It should however be noted that neither Development Partners nor the Parliament of Ghana have made much progress in terms of assessing the performance of Parliament. Our in-country research has produced some additional information about parliamentary performance but nevertheless the absence of systematic performance data puts limits on what can be said with confidence, and particularly with quantitative data, about parliamentary performance.

Legislation

39. Parliament is active in terms of legislation, passing an average of 24 laws per session. All of the laws passed by Parliament have originated from the Executive. As such, perhaps the best way of assessing parliamentary performance is to examine the depth of review of these laws in Parliament. The evidence suggests that most legislative proposals are not debated effectively in Parliament (see Warren, 2005). However, on occasions when the purpose of a piece of legislation has been unclear, opposition MPs have gone to great lengths to identify gaps in the legislation and in some cases have boycotted Parliament in protest at the passage of a particular piece of legislation.
40. In addition, in a number of cases parliamentary debate has led to substantial amendments being made to bills before they became law. This was the case for the National Reconciliation Commission Act 2002 (Act 611), the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651), the Public Procurement Act 2003 (Act 663) and the Civil Aviation Act 2004 (Act 678). It is perhaps noteworthy that all these examples are from the 3rd Parliament of the Fourth Republic, a Parliament in which – as chapter 3 notes – many opposition MPs from the recently ousted NDC were able to bring their experience to bear on parliamentary matters. In this respect it is clear that the Ghanaian Parliament has moved beyond being a rubber-stamp institution. Less positively, it remains the case that only one Private Members Bill, introduced by Parliament itself, has been passed into law.

Representation

41. Parliamentary performance in the area of representation remains weak. Individual MPs are overwhelmed with demands from constituents to provide resources for the welfare of individuals and services that ought to be provided through local government. As a result many MPs from rural constituencies shy away from visiting their constituencies. Nevertheless, public approval of the performance of MPs stood at 65% in the 2005 round of Afrobarometer surveys, putting the country's MPs on a par with those of Botswana (68%), Uganda (63%) and South Africa (58%) (Afrobarometer, 2005b, p.5). There is no contradiction between reasonably high public approval ratings and the assessment that MPs and Parliament are weak in terms of representation. Public approval ratings are based on public expectations; in Ghana and many African countries the public expects MPs to provide "development" and physical infrastructure for their constituencies rather than to represent interests.
42. The establishment of the MPs' Common Fund – similar to the Constituency Development Fund in Kenya – aims to provide MPs with additional resources to provide for their constituents' needs. It sets aside 5% of the District Assembly Common Fund for development work by MPs. However this may serve only to encourage constituents to demand more resources from their MPs. A more direct attempt to address the issue of voters' expectations has been an outreach programme to educate the public on the role of Parliament. This annual event was first held in 1994 and has now expanded to include 10 regional outreach programmes, taking Parliament to all of the regional capitals to explain its functions to the citizens.
43. The representational role of Parliament is often obscured by its rules and procedures. As per Standing Order 199 of Parliament, Committee meetings are held away from the public (strangers) unless the Chairman of the Committee decides otherwise. The Chair of a committee must also be prepared to revert a public meeting to a close meeting when he or she deems it fit. Prior to the public hearings held by the Public Accounts Committee in October 2007, the only Committee meetings that had been held in public were those of the Appointment Committee of Parliament.
44. Parliament as a body performs rather poorly in terms of raising issues of public concern. Parliament has made use of expert inputs from CSOs during the legislative process, but such use has been somewhat limited. Reports produced by organisations such as HIPC Watch and the Ghana Integrity Initiative are read by individual MPs but are rarely taken up in Committees or the plenary of Parliament for further investigation.

Oversight

45. Oversight is about monitoring and reviewing the actions of the executive organs of government including holding the Executive accountable for the legality of all actions, policy consistency, and effective targeting of segments of the of the population. Oversight of government, and particularly of the executive, is one of parliament's most important functions. It feeds into the other two main roles of legislatures – representation and law making – by enabling MPs to monitor the impact and effectiveness of previous legislation.
46. Parliament discharges its oversight function in a variety of ways. One is through the scrutiny of the Executive's nominees for public and ministerial appointments, to ensure that inappropriate individuals are not appointed. In the early years of its existence the Appointments Committee was more of an exercise in window-dressing than an effective oversight procedure. But in more recent years, particularly since 2005, it has taken its mandate seriously, by asking substantive questions and even going so far as to reject Presidential nominees (AfriMAP et al, 2007a, p.11). This is currently very much the exception but it seems likely that the possibility of parliamentary rejection of a Presidential nominee, the failure of nominees to adequately answer questions asked by Parliament, and the revelation of potentially damaging evidence, have at

times led to the withdrawal of particular candidates, demonstrating that Parliament does have some power in this regard.

47. A second way in which Parliament performs its oversight function is through the work of Parliamentary Committees. In terms of the sheer number of committees – 31 – it would seem that Parliament takes its oversight functions seriously, with committees covering a wide range of subject areas. These committees meet on average once a week when Parliament is in session. However, the reports of these committee meetings are not accessible due to the weak human and material resource base of the committees and it is at the very least questionable as to whether the reports that they produce have much influence. Committees endeavour to reach consensus in their work, but if the issue they are addressing is politically important to the Executive, then debates about the Committee's report become very partisan. In such circumstances, little reference will be made to the Committee's report and the influence of the Committee's work will be diminished.
48. There are however some notable exceptions; the Finance Committee for instance has played an important role in challenging foreign loan agreements, either on suspicion of fraud or because the proposed loans did not seem to be in line with Ghana's national interests (AfriMAP et al, 2007a, p.11 and AfriMAP et al, 2007b, pp.98-9). In addition, Parliamentary Committees have successfully drawn attention to inadequacies of financial administration, leading to a number of bills being introduced to address these inadequacies (AfriMAP et al, 2007b, p.100). While the most recent 4th Parliament performed "creditably" as regards oversight as compared with the 1st and 2nd Parliaments of the Fourth Republic (AfriMAP et al, 2007a, p.11), respondents in and outside Parliament suggested that there is much room for improvement (see also APRM, p.29).

Budget involvement

49. Oversight of the budget – the so-called "power of the purse" – is one of the most important and fundamental functions of Parliament. In Ghana, a dedicated Finance Select Committee has the role of scrutinizing the budget in detail before Parliament can then approve the budget in plenary. The evidence available suggests that Ghana's Parliament fails to engage effectively with the budget process (European Commission, 2006, pp.27-8; Langdon and Draman, 2005; SAlIA, 2005), both because of a lack of parliamentary capacity and because of other weaknesses in the budget process such as the failure of the Executive to provide Parliament with budgetary information in a timely manner.
50. MPs interviewed emphasized that Parliament has limited powers in the budget process; for instance, Parliament cannot overturn the budget. However, Parliament has affected the revenue side significantly in the determination of the effective tax rates. There is increasing parliamentary enthusiasm for getting involved in the budget process (see chapter 5). The establishment of a dedicated Parliamentary Budget Office to support the work of MPs and committees could do much to improve Parliament's engagement in the budget process.

Poverty reduction

51. Closely linked to the budget process is the medium term development programme outlined in Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I) and Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II). Parliament has not played a pro-active role in the shaping of public policies and frameworks for economic governance as detailed in the GPRS. In a long debate about the role of Parliament in the development of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I and II), the House was divided on whether or not Parliament should have a direct role.
52. Under GPRS I, Parliament's role as defined by the strategy was to establish a Committee to monitor the performance of the GPRS, as it does of other public policy initiatives and programmes. Under GPRS II, the agenda is to strengthen parliament by establishing a

constitutional commission to make recommendations on a number of constitutional arrangements that appear to weaken Parliament and also address the resource disparity between Parliament and the executive arm of government (Republic of Ghana, 2005b, 61). The risk is that the Government is not being held to account in delivering the GPRS objectives. A committee on the GPRS has been established in Parliament, but it remains the case that there is little real scrutiny from Parliament either because it is by-passed in the policy formulation process or because Parliament lacks the capacity for effective advocacy (DFID, 2003, p.9).

Performing reasonably well, given the circumstances

53. Any assessment of the performance of Ghana's Parliament must take full account of the serious financial, technical, constitutional and political constraints under which it operates. A recent amendment of the Parliamentary Service Act is a milestone in terms of providing Ghana's Parliament with the ability to shape its own budget, but as in many other developing countries Parliament is not independent of the Executive, financially or constitutionally.
54. On legislation, Parliament's role is limited by the constitution. But on representation and oversight, Parliament could – even by working within the existing constraints – be more effective (Joint Review, 2007, pp.24-25). There are however some signs of increased parliamentary assertiveness and effectiveness. A 2005 report by Afrobarometer noted that Parliament has “gained considerable prominence in the new democratic constitutional order” (Afrobarometer, 2005b, p.1) an assessment that was echoed by AFRIMAP in 2007 (AfriMAP et al, 2007a, p.11). Parliamentary strengthening – supported by bilateral and multilateral donors – aims to build on the recent signs of improvement, and forms the subject of the following chapter.

5. Parliamentary strengthening in Ghana

Parliamentary strengthening: Supply and demand

55. The Parliament of Ghana has been marginalised and excluded from the country's governance arrangements for most of the period since Independence, most starkly during the military regimes when Parliament was proscribed. This history has left Parliament weak, creating a weakness too in the wider governance system. Parliament's inability and failure to perform its functions of legislation, oversight and representation effectively, has in turn compromised the capability, accountability and responsiveness of the state.
56. When Ghana turned to multi-party electoral democracy in the early-to-mid 1990s a number of bilateral and multilateral donors identified the opportunity to provide support to strengthen Ghana's Parliament so that it could play a stronger role in the country's governance. Parliamentary strengthening programmes may focus on individual MPs, on parliamentary staff and the wider parliamentary service, on the work of Committees, on parliamentary rules and procedures, or on the nuts and bolts of parliamentary infrastructure such as office space, furniture, libraries and access to the internet. Whatever the approach taken, the ultimate objective of parliamentary strengthening is to help parliament to improve its capacity as a law making body that represents citizens' interests by passing appropriate legislation and exercising effective oversight over executive actions and the budget.
57. This chapter outlines the landscape of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana looking at which Development Partners are active, setting out the sorts of activities that they engage in, and setting out a number of stories of what are regarded as successful examples of parliamentary strengthening.

The landscape of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana

58. A number of Development Partners – bilateral and multilaterals – have been active in providing support for parliamentary strengthening in Ghana, often working alongside local civil society and capacity building organisations such as the Parliamentary Centre. On the bilateral side, the key players have been Denmark's DANIDA, Canada's CIDA, Germany's GTZ, the USA's USAID and the UK's DFID. On the multilateral side, the key players have been UNDP, the World Bank Institute and the African Development Fund. Smaller players have included the Italian Chamber of Deputies, working alongside the UN's Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the State University of New York (SUNY).
59. One of the early entrants to the field of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana's latest period of multi-party electoral democracy was the FES.⁸ Their project began in 1993 and aimed to strengthen the legislative, deliberative and oversight functions of parliament by holding a series of "policy dialogue" workshops for parliamentary committees and CSOs. Since 2004, the FES has expanded the scope of its activities to include a series of Regional Public Fora about Parliament's functioning, something that was particularly important in the early years of the Fourth Republic.

A story of success: The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung's support for parliamentary outreach

⁸ The Joint Review of the independent governance institutions provides a useful, if inevitably patchy, summary of Development Partners' support to Parliament (Joint Review, 2007, pp.20-22 and 84-102).

The outreach work supported by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung is regarded – particularly by MPs themselves – as being particularly successful. This may be in part because it has improved their public image and indirectly promoted their chances of re-election.

60. During the 2nd Parliament, a number of other parliamentary strengthening programmes got underway, with UNDP – as part of Ghana’s first National Governance Programme – working to improve the institutional and resource capacity of parliament, including through helping to put in place a strategic plan, and improving the IT infrastructure and access to computers. The 2nd Parliament also saw the commencement of a joint CIDA-World Bank Institute project, delivered primarily by the Parliamentary Centre; the Ghana Parliamentary Committee Support Project, Phase 1. The aim of this project was to increase the capacity of six key Parliamentary Committees to enable their more effective participation in national decision-making about economic policy, resource allocation and poverty reduction. Beyond its collaboration with the World Bank Institute, CIDA has been a major player on the landscape of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana, providing support continuously since 1994.

A story of success: CIDA and the World Bank Institute make a long-term commitment

The CIDA/World Bank Institute parliamentary strengthening project, delivered by the Parliamentary Centre, is regarded as one of the more successful initiatives. Its focus was on Parliament as an institution and in particular on its role in the budget process. Its success is attributed to the fact that it has run for a number of years and – while having a clear focus in terms of strengthening particular Committees – has included a wide range of activities from training for MPs and parliamentary staff, to delivering specific technical support on budget analysis, to facilitating outreach, to providing office space and equipment.

As well as demonstrating the value of parliamentary committees engaging with international organizations such as the World Bank Institute and the Parliamentary Centre, the experience of the World Bank Institute and the Parliamentary Centre generated a number of lessons including the need for strong domestic political support; the importance of parliamentary strengthening activities complementing broader governance reform efforts; the value of integrating training activities into broader parliamentary capacity-building initiatives and ensuring that they reflect the evolving parliamentary agenda; the importance of a non-partisan approach; and, the need to ensure that activities connect with the administrative structure of Parliament (See Stapenhurst, 2004).

61. The 3rd Parliament saw extensions to existing projects and the entry of new Development Partners into the landscape of parliamentary strengthening. UNDP’s work with Parliament evolved into a programme of work – aligned closely with Ghana’s second National Governance Programme – on Consolidating Democratic Governance. This phase of work focused on institutional capacity building, to enhance Parliament’s managerial and administrative capacities, to strengthen the professional capacity of MPs, and to build the knowledge and skills of MPs and staff in the use of Information Technology. The African Development Fund commenced its programme of work on Institutional Support for Governance and Poverty Reduction. This programme was 85% training, including short-term training for parliamentary staff, and 15% equipment, including office equipment, computers, IT equipment and library automation.

62. The 3rd Parliament also saw USAID increase its support for parliamentary strengthening, working through the Legal Resources Foundation, the Centre for Democratic Development and the Parliamentary Centre on a range of activities intended to: improve the effectiveness of efficiency of legislative processes and procedures; increase Parliament’s engagement with civil society; strengthen Parliament’s capacity to review and analyse the budget; develop a system for measuring parliamentary performance; and, strengthen various parliamentary committees. In

addition, USAID provided focused support for parliamentary engagement with the private sector (Joint Review, 2007, p.97).

A story of success: The African Development Bank gets technical

The parliamentary strengthening work of the African Development Bank in Ghana is considered relatively successful in its own terms in that it accomplished its objectives in a short space of time. This was possible because it was focused on technical issues rather than issues that explicitly engaged with the politics of Parliament.

63. Elections in 2004 ushered in the 4th Parliament and a new wave of support for parliamentary strengthening, with programmes of work based more clearly on Parliament's plans for its own development and Development Partners making greater efforts to coordinate their activities. DANIDA's Good Governance and Human Rights Programme, backed by substantial resources, aimed to deliver a range of outputs and outcomes, including better workspaces for key parliamentary committees, enhanced professional capacities, along with work on parliamentary outreach and civic interaction. DANIDA, working alongside UNDP, also helped to finance technical inputs from PriceWaterhouseCoopers into the development of Parliament's Enhanced Strategic Plan for 2006-09, a document that would play an increasingly prominent role in ensuring that donor support for parliamentary strengthening responds to the Parliament's own demands. From 2005, the joint CIDA/World Bank Institute Ghana Parliamentary Committee Support Project entered a second phase, with a major investment of funds being made by CIDA.

A story of success: DANIDA provides funds directly to Parliament

DANIDA's work with parliament is regarded as being relatively successful because, by providing financial resources directly to Parliament, it provides a significant degree of flexibility to Parliament to direct its own development.

64. UNDP's work was further extended from 2006, with support provided to the Government of Ghana's Programme Action Plan, an agreement entered into between the Government and UNDP. This work focused on enhancing the capacity of MPs to introduce Private Members' Bills, public engagement in Parliament's law-making function, the introduction of legislative tracking and – in a very welcome addition to the portfolio of parliamentary strengthening support in Ghana – efforts to develop a system for measuring parliamentary performance. UNDP's clear intention is that other Development Partners will coordinate their efforts with UNDP and in some cases provide support and funding through UNDP.

A story of success: UNDP works alongside the National Governance Programme

UNDP's work alongside the National Governance Programme led to a three-fold rise in the circulation of Hansard, provided the public with better information about the work of Parliament and generated a substantial increase in the demand for information and in requests for visits to Parliament by public interest groups.

65. Also in 2006, USAID began to support a programme of work aimed at improving the effectiveness of legislative processes and procedures, particularly focused on the promotion of Parliament's capacity to support Private Members Bills. USAID's programme also aims to give Parliament better access to informational and research inputs from civil society, to strengthen

Parliament's capacity to engage with the budget and issues of public finance, and to develop a system for measuring parliamentary performance. Most recently, from 2007, a DFID-supported Financial Scrutiny Project, delivered through the Parliamentary Centre, aims to strengthen the Public Accounts Committee and its role in the budgetary process, in particular by facilitating public scrutiny of the Auditor General's Reports.

A story of success: DFID supports improved financial scrutiny

The Parliamentary Centre has led the DFID-funded Financial Scrutiny Project. This project is part of DFID's wider effort to help developing countries to build their capacities in Public Financial Management, to enhance transparency, to improve accountability and to deepen their democratic practices. The specific focus of the project is to support improvements in the oversight capacity of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), and particularly its capacity to engage with the reports of the Auditor General. The project also aims to build public support for the work of the Committee and Parliament by enabling the PAC to hold its meetings in public.

The first public meeting of the PAC under the project took place from 16-29 October 2007 to deliberate on the Auditor General's Report on the Ministries, Departments and Agencies for 2004 and 2005. The Ghanaian public overwhelmingly approved of the decision of the PAC to conduct its business of reviewing the Auditor General's Report in public. Citizens and civil society groups point to the proceedings as providing ample evidence of endemic corruption in Ghana. Reports of the proceedings in the electronic and print media exposed the weaknesses that have plagued public financial management and the incompetence exhibited by some respondents as they confront the problems.

As a result of the public hearing process:

- By 8th November 2007 the Daily Graphic reported that 10 Ministries, Departments and Agencies approached the Internal Audit Agency to help them establish Audit Report Implementation Committees with many more making enquires on the subject.
- The Financial Administration (Amendment) Bill – including provision to establish a new Financial Administration Court – was presented and taken through first reading on Tuesday 4 December 2007.
- The Attorney General resumed the prosecution of officials of Controller and Accountant Generals Department who embezzled ₵5.5 billion.
- The Attorney General set up a special unit to prosecute cases recommended for prosecution prior to the establishment of the Financial Administration Tribunal (Court).

66. As this brief history of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana illustrates, support has been provided for a wide range of activities. These range from the provision of basic office equipment and infrastructure (UNDP and DANIDA), to the training of MPs and parliamentary staff (UNDP and African Development Fund), to strengthening the Parliamentary Service and its managerial and administrative capacities (UNDP and USAID) and producing an Enhanced Strategic Plan for Parliament (DANIDA and UNDP), to supporting the work of Committees focused on poverty reduction and/or budgets and finance (CIDA/World Bank Institute, USAID and DFID), to programmes of parliamentary outreach and civic engagement (DANIDA, USAID and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) and, latterly, to efforts to develop frameworks to assess parliamentary performance (UNDP and USAID).

6. Parliamentary strengthening and the Paris Principles in practice

67. This chapter examines the landscape of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana from the vantage point of the Paris Principles on aid effectiveness. The principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability are taken in turn, in order to generate insights about parliamentary strengthening and to throw some light on the extent to which parliamentary strengthening programmes have benefitted from consistency with the Paris Principles. In Ghana, the idea that such principles might be of relevance to Development Partners' support for governance and governance institutions is at least on the agenda, even though a great deal remains to be done (Joint Review, 2007).

Ownership

68. The first decade of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana was, it seems fair to say, primarily driven by Development Partners and their ideas about what was needed to strengthen the country's parliament. A first step towards greater ownership by Parliament of its own development was taken with the formulation of a Strategic Plan in 1998. This plan was to run from 1999 to 2009. A second step was taken with the establishment of an Enhanced Strategic Plan (ESP) for 2006-09, with consultancy inputs financed by DANIDA. Parliament itself had insisted that the initial Strategic Plan be revised and enhanced mid-term.

69. The ESP sets out five goals; three of which focus on Parliament's key functions, with the remaining two focusing on the systems and assets that Parliament requires to perform these functions. The goals are as follows:

- ESP Goal 1: Improve the performance and management of Parliament's legislative functions;
- ESP Goal 2: Enhance Parliament's representational functions by making it more relevant to the needs of the public;
- ESP Goal 3: Improve and strengthen Parliament's oversight of the Executive and other branches of government;
- ESP Goal 4: Strengthen systems for the delivery of services by Parliament and Parliamentary Service, develop human resources; and
- ESP Goal 5: Improve the physical, logistical and information technology assets of Parliament to sustain and transform service delivery.

70. Since the establishment of the ESP there is now a clearer sense of ownership, with Parliament having set out its vision and mission, and having detailed what is required in order to achieve its goals. Indeed in a recent joint review of independent governance institutions, Parliament was identified as the only governance institution with its own strategic plan (Joint Review, 2007, p.3). However, as with ownership as regards aid effectiveness in general, having a plan on paper is only the first step towards delivering real ownership. There is no doubt that all actors in the parliamentary strengthening process – perhaps particularly the Development Partners – make reference to the ESP. But, serious question marks remain as to whether Parliament is providing the leadership needed to see it implemented.

71. There are however some prospects for improvement with a number of Development Partners establishing Steering Committees to more fully involve Parliament in the management of parliamentary strengthening programmes. A “strategic” committee has been established to guide the CIDA-funded Ghana Parliamentary Committee Support project that is implemented through the Canadian Parliamentary Centre. The strategic committee includes the leadership of both Parliament (the Majority and Minority Leaders and selected Committee Chairs) and the Parliamentary Service (the Clerk) at the highest level, along with a CIDA representative.
72. A second example is provided by DANIDA’s Good Governance and Human Rights Programme which has established a large steering committee to assist with the management of its parliamentary strengthening component. If they are to get past the resistance of the executive and the ruling party to strengthening Parliament, such committees – and parliamentary strengthening more widely – must work with the Executive and members of the ruling party who may, understandably, but short-sightedly, not wish to see a more effective Parliament.
73. This innovation – setting up steering committees that involve representatives from the political and administrative wings of Parliament – is a useful first step on the road to ownership. But, as the Joint Review on independent governance institutions noted, it would be highly preferable if there were one steering committee – or even better, a parliamentary unit – acting as the interface between Parliament and its Development Partners (Joint Review, 2007, p.24).
74. The establishment of an Enhanced Strategic Plan – building on the initial strategic plan – is a key stepping stone towards real country ownership of Parliament’s development, providing a focus around which Development Partners can align their support and harmonise their activities. It provides too a good foundation for the development of better systems of monitoring and evaluation, and, in time, mutual accountability. It is clear too that while parliamentary strengthening can be conducted in an apparently technical manner, efforts to support Parliament in a sustainable manner need to generate a wider sense of ownership, working with key political players as well as the Parliamentary Service itself.

A story of success: Parliament taking control

The Parliamentary Centre has for some time held a post-budget workshop to help MPs to prepare for the debate on the budget. Parliament has signaled that when the Parliamentary Centre’s project comes to an end, it is ready to integrate the post budget workshop into the parliamentary calendar and fund the activity from its own resources. The Leadership of Parliament has also indicated that it is time to initiate action on the promulgation of the budget Act that will strengthen parliament’s oversight of the entire budget process.

Alignment

75. Many of the stakeholders in parliamentary strengthening acknowledge that Parliament should play the lead role in setting out its needs – for instance, in the form of the Enhanced Strategic Plan – and that Development Partners should then align their support with that plan. Prior to a plan having been established it would have been extremely difficult for Development Partners to align their support with Parliament’s requirements, but there is some evidence that the ESP has encouraged and enabled some degree of alignment. Programmes established or extended by UNDP, USAID and CIDA in the 4th Parliament, for example, are consistent with the five goals of the ESP. Taking a somewhat wider view of alignment, UNDP’s programmes of parliamentary strengthening have been aligned closely with Ghana’s National Governance Programmes.

76. There is however little alignment of parliamentary support in terms of the mode of delivery of financial assistance; that is, Development Partners make little use of Parliament's own financial and administrative systems. Most donors have their own bureaucracy for disbursing resources towards parliamentary strengthening despite the existence of detailed public financial management regulations to guide the financial operations of parliament. All funds coming directly to Parliament, including any direct financial support from Development Partners and the Government of Ghana are managed within the existing financial management regulations. The Spending Officer is the Clerk of Parliament to whom a memorandum to financially commit the Service is directed from any of the Directors for approval. The memo then moves to the Director of Finance who instructs the Accounting staff to raise the appropriate Payment Vouchers for the release of funds. The voucher goes for pre-audit before a cheque is signed by the Clerk and the Director of Finance.
77. Most Development Partners provide their financial support to Parliament through other mechanisms. CIDA and USAID make use of external project implementation agents that account to their principals using their own procurement and accounting procedures and regulations. The support provided by UNDP remains activity-based and managed directly by UNDP. Only DANIDA works through Parliament's financial system by providing funds directly to Parliament. All other Development Partners opt to use their own systems.
78. This situation makes it difficult for Parliament to know what resources are available, or spent, on parliamentary strengthening support. Indeed where a programme does not sign an explicit Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement with Parliament with respect to disclosure and financial reporting it is near impossible for Parliament to estimate the level of funding to such activities.⁹ NGOs acting as agents for particular Development Partners often indicate their level of programme support to Parliament without disclosing the details of the budget. Consequently, it is a major challenge for the Parliamentary Service to track and monitor expenditure on these projects and to provide data to establish the link between project implementation and resource utilization. This poses another challenge to efforts to establish the effectiveness of parliamentary strengthening.
79. Another area where alignment is often distorted is in the area of synchronising parliamentary strengthening activities with the parliamentary calendar. Many scheduled parliamentary strengthening activities slip because of the unpredictable nature of parliamentary business. To some extent Parliament has little control over this as its business is dictated in part by the Executive; for Development Partners to align with changing timetables would be extremely difficult. This problem is compounded by the fact that there are unpredictable periods of intense (and less intense) activity in Parliament, making it difficult for MPs in particular and Parliament in general to honour scheduled parliamentary strengthening activities such as capacity building and oversight visits at certain times. Postponements and cancellations of planned activities mean that resources may not be disbursed on schedule, making it appear as if Development Partners are failing to provide timely and predictable resources.

Harmonisation

80. The landscape of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana is populated by a large number of Development Partners. Most Development Partners engage in a wide range of activities, with rather fewer concentrating their efforts in particular areas. As is the case with aid effectiveness more widely, this risks duplication, confusion and unnecessarily high transactions costs, and raises important challenges as regards coordination and harmonisation.

⁹ This explains the reporting gaps observed in the table provided in Annex D, and the fact that our records do not match with those collected by the Joint Review of independent governance institutions, which, as that report notes, are subject to a great deal of doubt.

81. Particularly since the start of the 4th Parliament, Development Partners have expressed a strong desire to harmonise and coordinate their activities in parliamentary strengthening. However, progress on harmonisation is hampered by the fact that each development partner continues to protect its resources and does not disclose fully information about their planned activities and spending. That said, many of the stakeholders in parliamentary strengthening have consulted among themselves on how best to minimise duplication and harmonise their services to Parliament. This has resulted in such coordinated activities as the joint orientation programme for all MPs at the beginning of the 4th parliament.
82. A significant milestone in terms of harmonisation has been the active participation of Development Partners and implementing agencies in the production of the Enhanced Strategic Plan (ESP). The ESP provides a framework that Development Partners can use to see where their assistance fits in, and is beginning to foster greater coordination in the delivery of parliamentary strengthening programmes and financial support.
83. To deepen coordination among Development Partners, the six donors who jointly conducted a review of the independent governance institutions in June 2007 agreed that CIDA should take the lead in coordinating the support provided to Parliament by bilateral donors. Consequently, CIDA is in the process of conferring with DFID and USAID – both of which also provide resources to and through the Parliamentary Centre – to undertake a joint review of parliamentary strengthening programmes executed by PC. This, along with the ESP, will inform their joint thinking about future work. The challenge however, is that all the institutions continue to execute individual programmes in Parliament and it will require some time to achieve harmonised and coordinated action. But the Enhanced Strategic Plan and the derived work plans and budgets do provide a sound basis for alignment and harmonization.
84. Parliament is in the process of consulting all stakeholders, with a view to establishing a unit that will act as the interface with all Development Partners and programme implementing agencies in Parliament. The unit is also likely to serve as the clearing house for projects and programmes implemented under the ESP. If and when such a unit is established it could play a very important role in increasing the consistency of parliamentary strengthening with the Paris Principles, particularly as regards harmonisation and alignment and could – over time – do much to make parliamentary strengthening, and Parliament itself, more effective.¹⁰
85. Development partners have also made some progress on harmonisation through building bilateral linkages. CIDA and the World Bank Institute have worked together for many years, and similarly, CIDA has a long history of working with and through the Parliamentary Centre on the Africa-Canada Parliamentary Strengthening Programme. This programme extends beyond Ghana to include three networks of MPs and staff in 20 Parliaments covering poverty reduction, gender and anti-corruption. The Parliamentary Centre itself collaborated with the Institute for Policy Alternatives – an organisation based in Tamale, Northern Ghana – to train MPs in identifying benchmarks for poverty monitoring under the GPRS.
86. Finally, Development Partners have themselves made some progress with ensuring that their work on parliamentary strengthening is integrated with the work on political systems and governance more widely. DANIDA's work with Parliament and other key governance institutions is one component of their Good Governance and Human Rights Programme. Similarly, the parliamentary strengthening activities of USAID have been part of their Democracy and Governance Programme. Other donors including UNDP and the European Commission treat their work with Parliament as part of a wider programme of engagement around governance.

¹⁰ As this report was being finalised DANIDA announced that it would provide funding for six months to establish a coordination unit and to enhance the coordination of Development Partners' support to parliamentary strengthening.

Managing for results

87. Of the five Paris Principles, parliamentary strengthening in Ghana is weakest in terms of managing for results. There is no doubt that – particularly since the introduction of the Enhanced Strategic Plan – plans for parliamentary strengthening activities have set out what they aim to achieve. But very little has been achieved in terms of setting out clear benchmarks or establishing baselines against which to assess progress, establishing indicators for gauging progress, or measuring the impact of parliamentary strengthening activities (Joint Review, 2007, p.25). A workshop was held on performance monitoring and evaluation, but – despite Development Partners emphasising that future support for parliamentary strengthening would depend on evidence of impact – little was achieved.
88. Regrettably, this means that it is far from easy to say what works in terms of parliamentary strengthening or for Development Partners and Parliament to learn from their mistakes or from their successes. For instance, it is not clear how the targeting of individuals for capacity building, the provision of infrastructure, the development of systems, legal instruments, or procedures impact on parliamentary effectiveness. Neither is it clear whether the knowledge, skills or insight gained from workshops or study tours leads to behavioural changes that impact on parliamentary performance. And neither is it clear whether resources are best spent on building the capacities of MPs – a practice that is often considered problematic given the high turnover of MPs – or on parliamentary staff, who may not have the political power to effect real changes in the way in which parliament functions (Joint Review, 2007, p.5).
89. There are however some encouraging signs in Ghana. CIDA is currently leading an effort to undertake a joint evaluation of parliamentary strengthening activities undertaken by CIDA, DFID and USAID, with DANIDA's activities also likely to be considered. This evaluation will, it is hoped, provide useful information about how Development Partners can best provide support to parliamentary strengthening.

Mutual accountability

90. There is little mutual accountability – between Parliament and its Development Partners, or between those two sets of stakeholders and their own constituents – for parliamentary strengthening in Ghana. No joint evaluation of progress has been conducted, although the ESP would seem to provide a useful mechanism for jointly assessing progress. MPs, managers of the Parliamentary Service and implementing agencies outline the benefits of the various programmes targeted at improving the performance of Parliament, but there are very few measurable outcomes to back their assertions.
91. Mutual accountability is hampered by the way Parliament elects to communicate results of its work. This is done mainly through the Public Affairs Department, which focuses primarily on media and public relations products. It would be better to have an annual reporting mechanism, but for that to have any substance, further progress is required on monitoring and evaluation so that the results reported are regarded as credible and evidence-based. Development partners share the responsibility for the lack of mutual accountability; specifically for their failure to provide timely and comprehensive information to Parliament. For instance, many parliamentary strengthening projects described as on-going are better described as stalled as Parliament is not aware of the future plans of Development Partners and implementing agencies.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

A map of the landscape of parliamentary strengthening ...

92. This case study has explored the landscape of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana, taking the Paris Principles on aid effectiveness as a vantage point. The bedrock of the landscape is political. In Ghana this is about the gradual and faltering emergence of constitutional democracy and its consolidation since the start of the Fourth Republic in 1993. However it is also about continuing Executive dominance and the weakness of the legislature as a result of constitutional, political, financial and technical resource constraints. And finally it is also about the interplay between formal and informal politics, the challenges faced by MPs whose constituents expect them to deliver development for them rather than demanding that they play an effective role in terms of legislation and oversight, and the fact that a truly independent Parliament would challenge the networks of patronage that constitute much of Ghanaian politics (Joint Review, 2007, p.25).
93. Assessing the performance of the Parliament of Ghana is, as in many other countries, extremely challenging. This is because neither Parliament itself nor its Development Partners have put sufficient effort into establishing frameworks for performance assessment or into collecting data on performance. Nevertheless, the available evidence indicates that the Parliament – working within the constraints set by executive dominance – has some impact in terms of legislation, is rather ineffective in terms of representation and is increasingly active in terms of oversight, with, for instance, Parliamentary inputs into the budget process and into policy processes on poverty reduction gradually increasing. In summary, the Parliament of Ghana remains weak, but in comparison with other developing countries and with its own performance prior to the last two Parliaments, there are encouraging signs of progress.
94. A number of Development Partners have – since 1993 – provided support for parliamentary strengthening in Ghana. Key players have been CIDA and the World Bank Institute, working together and through the Parliamentary Centre, the African Development Bank, UNDP, USAID, DANIDA and DFID. Support has been provided in a wide variety of ways: through the provision of basic office equipment and infrastructure; by training MPs and parliamentary staff; by strengthening the Parliamentary Service and helping to produce strategic plans for parliamentary development; by supporting the work of particular parliamentary committees; through supporting programmes of parliamentary outreach and civic engagement; and, most recently, and not before time, by supporting efforts to develop frameworks to monitor and assess parliamentary performance.

Mapping the landscape of parliamentary strengthening

Our research has revealed that even in a country such as Ghana where governance and administrative systems are relatively strong, and Development Partners have been active on parliamentary strengthening for a number of years, there is still a lack of information and knowledge sharing about parliamentary strengthening. There is considerable value in conducting – in any country where Development Partners are planning to support the emergence of an increasingly effective parliament – a simple process of mapping and sharing information about the parliamentary strengthening activities and plans of various Development Partners. Indeed we would go so far as to say that such a mapping exercise is crucial if parliamentary strengthening is to be made more effective. Without a map of the landscape of parliamentary strengthening, Development Partners and Parliament will be unable to navigate effectively.

... from the vantage point of the Paris Principles

95. Mapping the landscape of parliamentary strengthening from the perspective of the Paris Principles generates a number of insights. As regards ownership, in the early years of parliamentary strengthening in Ghana activities were supply-led with Development Partners taking the lead. However, the development of a Strategic Plan and an Enhanced Strategic Plan have been important steps toward establishing parliamentary ownership of its own development.
96. For ownership to become real, Parliament needs to exercise greater leadership, taking control of its own development agenda. Development partners for their part need – while engaging in close dialogue with Parliament – to respect Parliament’s plans. Establishing project steering committees that engage both the technical and political wings of Parliament can be useful, but it is only the first step toward real parliamentary ownership. The setting up of a parliamentary unit with responsibility for liaising with Development Partners, along the lines of Uganda’s Parliamentary Development and Coordination Office, could do much to enhance the effectiveness of parliamentary strengthening.
97. As regards alignment too, there is some evidence that Development Partners are taking seriously the importance of ensuring that their activities support Parliament’s plans for its own development as set out in the Enhanced Strategic Plan. However, very few Development Partners go so far as to provide resources directly to Parliament or to making use of Parliament’s own financial and administrative systems. Development partners should consider whether there is scope to provide resources directly to Parliament and/or through Parliament’s own systems. Where this is not currently possible, Development Partners should work with Parliament to strengthen those systems so that they can be utilised in future. A further issue as regards alignment relates to the synchronisation of parliamentary strengthening activities with the parliamentary timetable. Parliament’s timetable will always be subject to change, but Development Partners should nevertheless seek to ensure that their activities are planned – with sufficient flexibility included – to fit the schedule of Parliament itself.
98. On harmonisation, Development Partners have – particularly since the start of the 4th Parliament in 2005 – expressed a strong desire to harmonise and coordinate their parliamentary strengthening activities, and to build on the experience that Development Partners such as CIDA and the World Bank Institute have had in working together, and through the Parliamentary Centre, for a number of years. Despite some improvements in recent years, for instance in relation to the African Peer Review Mechanism and Consultative Group, progress on harmonisation has been hampered by Development Partners’ failure to share information about their activities and their tendency to want to protect their own resources so that they can clearly point to their own activities.
99. There are however signs of progress in three areas. First, the Enhanced Strategic Plan provides a useful framework for harmonisation. Second, moves to establish a lead development partner for parliamentary strengthening (in what amounts to a division of labour exercise for parliamentary strengthening), provide grounds for optimism. And third, an initiative to establish a unit that will act as the interface with all Development Partners and implementing agencies is very welcome. These initiatives should be actively encouraged as they hold out the promise of reducing the duplication, confusion and high transactions costs associated with a complex landscape of parliamentary strengthening and enhancing its effectiveness.
100. Of the five Paris Principles, parliamentary strengthening in Ghana is weakest in terms of managing for results. This remains the case even though recent and welcome commitments have been made to undertake joint evaluations, which might usefully be conducted under the framework provided by the Enhanced Strategic Plan. Development Partners intend that their activities will lead to particular results in terms of parliamentary performance, but in the absence

of effective systems for monitoring, evaluation and learning, their intentions are little more than hopes based on flimsy evidence and conjecture (Joint Review, 2007, p.26). This problem is not unique to Ghana. Worldwide, despite the enthusiasm for parliamentary strengthening, neither Development Partners nor parliaments have put much effort into ways of assessing effectiveness. If they are serious about the parliamentary strengthening agenda, this must be a priority. Otherwise, the flow of funds to parliamentary strengthening will surely dry up, with resources spent on other issues for which impact can be demonstrated more clearly.

101. On mutual accountability too, the picture in Ghana is disappointing. Development Partners and Parliament have not conducted joint evaluations and in terms of sharing information – amongst Development Partners and between Development Partners and Parliament – there is considerable room for improvement. For such improvement to take place, progress must be made on establishing a framework and process for monitoring, evaluation and assessment. As with managing for results, the Enhanced Strategic Plan could, alongside an annual reporting mechanism, play an important role in building the mutual accountability which is essential if parliamentary strengthening is to become increasingly effective.
102. To conclude, mapping the landscape of parliamentary strengthening from the perspective of the Paris Principles has revealed a number of useful insights about how Parliament and parliamentary strengthening might be made more effective. Available evidence suggests that if parliamentary strengthening were conducted in a manner that were more in line with the Paris Principles, then it would be more effective.
103. The Paris Principles are a useful framework for mapping the landscape of parliamentary strengthening and for moving towards more effective partnerships. But as with aid effectiveness more generally, progress depends very much on politics. Donors may be reluctant to engage in parliamentary strengthening in an explicitly political manner, but there is no doubt that parliamentary strengthening requires a good understanding of the political terrain. Otherwise, the effort put into supporting the production of plans such as the Parliament of Ghana's Enhanced Strategic Plan, will be wasted and progress towards Parliament's vision will remain little more than an aspiration.

Annexes

Annex A: Note on the selection of country case studies

8th November 2007

1. **This short note** brings together in one place our initial thinking on case study countries, alongside the various comments received from experts consulted. Its purpose is to provide the basis for a decision about which countries to work in.
2. **Our proposal to DFID** included a long list of countries: Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam. It stated that our case study countries would be drawn from the long-list, with the main criteria being that of DFID (and perhaps CIDA) involvement and interest in parliamentary strengthening. The proposal said that Cambodia, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Vietnam looked like good options, but noted too that conducting two case studies in Asia would stretch the resources available more than seems sensible. Our proposal also noted that DFID had not – and still has not – expressed any desire to include case studies from Eastern Europe or Latin America.
3. **Comments on our proposal**, and on our tentative selection of case studies, have been gratefully received from a number of experts on parliamentary strengthening, including: Jeff Balch (AWEPA), Joel Barkan (African Legislatures Project), Tom Bridle (NDI), Niklas Enander (Sida), Mitsuaki Furukawa (JICA) and Fred Matiangi (SUNY-Kenya).
4. It should also be noted that DFID is keen that our initiative fit well with the work of the **African Legislatures Project**. Careful attention to this will also, I believe, be of benefit to us as we move forward. The Parliamentary Centre is well-connected in many countries, but it is also worth noting, that Sida has offered the assistance of their advisor on democracy in East Africa, and that Alan has good links with Fred Matiangi who is well-connected across East Africa.
5. Comments provided by various experts are organized here, by country.
 - **Benin**: Would be good (Bridle)
 - **Cambodia**: Makes sense from Sida perspective and would be their choice (Enander); Might be challenging to really get at what's going on (Furukawa)
 - **Ethiopia**: Makes sense from Sida perspective, but would be challenging (Enander); Would be difficult (Matiangi)
 - **Ghana**: Very interesting (Balch); ALP will be working here soon (Barkan); Would be very interesting (Matiangi)
 - **Kenya**: Over-studied, would duplicate ALP work (Barkan); Makes sense from Sida perspective and would be their choice (Enander); Would be very interesting (Matiangi)
 - **Liberia**: Interesting post-conflict and not part of ALP plans (Barkan)
 - **Malawi**: ALP is about to start work here (Barkan); Not that helpful as there has been fairly limited donor activity in recent years (Matiangi)
 - **Mozambique**: Very interesting (Balch); ALP has started work here (Barkan)

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- **Nigeria:** having another bicameral as well as Cambodia might be good, and that there are interesting stories to tell re DFID-USAID collaboration (DFID-Nigeria).
 - **Sierra Leone:** Interesting post-conflict and not part of ALP plans (Barkan)
 - **Tanzania:** Interesting re harmonization and UNDP-guarded basket, and contrast with Uganda (Balch); ALP expects to be working here soon (Barkan); Makes sense from Sida perspective and would be their choice (Enander)
 - **Uganda:** Interesting re harmonization without a basket, and contrast with Tanzania (Balch); ALP expects to be working here soon (Barkan); would be good (Bridle); Makes sense from Sida perspective and would be their choice (Enander)
 - **Vietnam:** Might be challenging to really get at what's going on (Furukawa)
 - **Zambia:** ALP has done some work here (Barkan)
6. On the basis of the above, and on his knowledge of parliamentary strengthening, Alan's proposal is that the case study countries should be Cambodia and Ghana for the Parliamentary Centre, and Tanzania and Uganda for ODI. However, Alan is keen to discuss the above and his proposal with Rasheed and Tony at the Parliamentary Centre. And, even when we have had those discussions, the selection might be changed at the stage of the desk-based review if we discover that finding information about parliamentary strengthening in Tanzania and Uganda is too difficult.

Annex B: List of interviewees

Name	Role and organisation
Samuel Opoku Agyakwa	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Ghana Office
Cephas Amevor	Principal Assistant Clerk
Edward Tuinese Amuzu	Legal Resource Centre, Accra
Marilyn Aniwa	In-Country Coordinator, Parliamentary Centre
Robert Appodola	Deputy Clerk of Parliament
Kojo Pumpuni Asante	Research Officer (Governance & Legal Policy), CDD Ghana
Hon. Alban Bagbin	Minority Leader
Vida Affum Duti	Development Officer, CIDA Section, High Commission of Canada
Ebenezer Dzietror	Principal Assistant Clerk
Adams Fusheini	Information Resource Coordinator, Parliamentary Centre
Ted Lawrence	Democracy and Governance Officer, USAID Ghana
Hon. Nii Adu Daku Mante	Chairperson, Finance Committee
Mohammed, Hardi Nyagsi	Research Officer, Parliament
Hon. Esther Obeng-Dapaah	Chairperson, Gender & Children's Committee
Ozonia Ojielo	Senior Governance Advisor UNDP
Hon. Samuel Sallas-Mensah	Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee
Jake Tetteh	Department for International Development, Accra

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