

AGORA, Portal for
Parliamentary Development



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You will be able to explore numerous tools and features and interact with the online parliamentary development community of practice.



Welcome to the third AGORA Bulletin!

AGORA, the Portal for Parliamentary development, is proud to present its third bulletin.

AGORA is a multilateral initiative of the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, the **World Bank Institute (WBI)**, the **National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)**, the **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)**, and the **European Commission**. The Portal was successfully launched in March 2010 in Paris, marking the birth of the first virtual platform for knowledge sharing on parliamentary development.

This biannual bulletin presents the latest information, knowledge and activities in the field of parliamentary development, and keeps you informed of recent activities in this expanding field. For more information, we invite you to consult AGORA at www.agora-parl.org, or visit our partner institutions.

If you want to contribute or have any questions, please mail to:
newsletter@agora-parl.org

Parliamentary digest

To find out what has happened these past months, [click here](#).

Recent Resources

To consult the latest and upcoming resources in our library, [click here](#).

Calendar

To view the complete calendar of upcoming events, [click here](#).

Area of Expertise



UNICEF: Supporting Parliaments to promote the Rights of Children.

“Parliaments throughout the world are uniquely positioned to create real and lasting change for children. They can allocate resources for national budgets, shape and enforce laws that promote the rights of children, hold governments and civil society accountable, and represent the interests and voices of children to send the message that the well-being of children is the responsibility of all society....” [Click here to read more](#)

Chronicle



Sir Graham Watson, Chair of Climate Parliament. “Climate Parliament is an organisation that brings together legislators and experts from around the world to generate solutions to the problems presented by climate change. We use the medium of the Internet to help good policy ideas travel more quickly across borders. Our staff, stationed in political capitals around the world, help members and the 20,000 MPs we currently have on our database to put them into practice...” [Click here to read more](#)

Special Report

Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea



“Aid effectiveness is about ensuring maximum impact of development aid to improve lives, cut poverty and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Increasing the effectiveness of aid...”

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Welcome to the third edition of the AGORA bulletin. This bulletin will once again provide you with the latest news, developments, activities and experiences in the field of parliamentary development.

In doing so it will build on the success of the Portal in recent months, reflecting the increased diversity in AGORA's scope and embracing the opportunities offered by its expanding partnership and network.

Recent statistics illustrate the success of the Portal and the growing general interest in parliamentary development. AGORA now counts close to 200,000 visits; its private platform, the Trusted Area, has close to 600 members, with parliamentarians and parliamentary staff making for a steadily rising percentage of membership. In addition to these numbers, the available tools are widely used and feedback from both partners and members is highly encouraging.

"It is a great resource and a source of news and information. Through it I discovered the online training by the World Bank, and I am currently participating on the module on Parliament and the Budget."

Lam Dang, Legislative Counsel, Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia

Finally, AGORA lies at the heart of a true, growing partnership of the key players in parliamentary development, facilitating the harmonization and coordination of parliamentary development activities on the ground. Today, it counts 26 partners and affiliated institutions.

The broad multilateral partnership, which encompasses not only international organizations but also parliamentary institutions from multiple traditions, makes AGORA an appealing global network for potential partners and members.

Boosted by requests from global and regional organisations active in parliamentary development, the AGORA partnership continues to grow. We are proud to welcome

the Parliamentary Centre as our newest partner; as well we expect to finalize several other requests within the coming months.

"AGORA has very good information which can empower legislature on what is happening in other areas and what to be done for their improvements. It also provides easy means for harmonization of various norms and standards. For example on the issue of benchmarks for democratic parliaments, but also on what others have done to improve gender balance in the parliaments. It also provides easy access of information among the members"

Hon. Stella Manyanya, Member of Parliament of Tanzania

The positive results recorded so far have emboldened AGORA to embark on an ambitious programme for the future, which will render AGORA even more visible, more accessible and more active on the ground.

In addition to expanding and further improving its existing tools, AGORA will soon be launching "Atlas" that will provide reliable and up to date information on all national parliaments and parliamentary institutions worldwide, as well as a series of e-Learning modules on thematic issues in parliamentary development.

To accommodate the increased traffic to the site and to meet some of our members' requests, AGORA will be launching its new website this coming September. This new design, which includes a revamped library, a revised home page and an improved search tool among others, will help visitors make the most of the extensive and growing amount of resources available on the portal.

By expertly merging new technologies with essential knowledge management tools, expertise in parliamentary development, and all the features and functions of a global network, AGORA has become the leading portal on

- ▶ parliamentary development and a flagship of multilateral cooperation.

“I will be searching more on the AGORA Internet platform [...] in order to know better and learn on how to participate in conferences; discussions; and join groups; consolidate my knowledge and expertise and... etc”

Sarah El Yafi, Admin and Finance Assistant, Lebanese Parliament

As always, this bulletin brings you a calendar of events, overview of past events and recap of important improvements in parliamentary development around the world.

In addition, our feature pieces include an interview with Chairman of Climate Parliament, Mr. Graham Watson, a presentation of the AGORA pages on parliaments and children’s rights in cooperation with UNICEF, a review of AGORA’s first e-Discussion on the topic of women’s caucuses, together with a brief description of the second one on the topic of representative assemblies and constitution-drafting, and a special report on the upcoming High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea later this year.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to welcoming you again on AGORA.

Enjoy your reading!

The AGORA team

Second e-Discussion on AGORA: The Role of Representative Assemblies in Constitution-Drafting



AGORA hosted an open **e-Discussion** on the **role of representative assemblies in constitution-drafting processes**. This **e-Discussion** was open to both AGORA members and the public. To follow the outcome of the discussion, visit our dedicated webpage [here](#). To read the background document for this discussion, click [here](#).

Launch Message

In democratic transitions, constitution-drafting processes are at the core of political and institutional transformations. The constitution-drafting process consists not only of an exercise in drafting and adopting the basic charter of the State, but also offers a unique opportunity for national dialogue around the core values of the nation.

Assemblies, playing an essential role in the constitution-drafting process, often have the crucial responsibility to define and oversee the nation's new social contract.

This AGORA virtual discussion seeks to launch a debate on specific aspects of the role of representative assemblies in constitution-drafting processes and, a fortiori, in democratic transition. It aims to collect good practices, identify potential pitfalls and constraints, and underline opportunities.

The guiding questions are structured around the three pillars that frame the role of assemblies in constitution-drafting processes:

Representation: What methods can be used to ensure ad hoc representation in these assemblies? What are the advantages and disadvantages of including civil society actors, political parties, and ethnic or other minority groups?

Democracy and efficiency: What are the key elements and provisions of the Rules of Procedure? How can a democratic, multi-party and inclusive constitutional process within the Assembly be best ensured?

Inclusive participation and transparency: How can assemblies maximize inclusive civic participation and transparency in constitution-making processes?

5 February 2011: Westminster Foundation for Democracy - Montenegro Parliamentary Strengthening Programme (Podgorico, Montenegro)



Twenty Members of the Montenegro Parliament attended a cross-party workshop aimed at sharing experiences with United Kingdom MPs. The various sessions were led by Peter Wishart MP, Willie Rennie MP, Michael Fallon MP, and Andrew Denney from the National Audit Office. There was much debate amongst the participants about whether ministers were questioned often enough and whether the current arrangements of three sets of extended questions to the Prime Minister each year were sufficient. MPs discussed the way forward and the new procedures that need to be put in place to ensure better parliamentary accountability.

[Read more...](#)

19-23 February 2011: WBI, CPA and the West Africa Association of Public Accounts Committees (WAAPAC) - Accountability Conference Meeting (Lomé, Togo)



The World Bank Institute (WBI) in partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Parliamentary Centre and the West Africa Association of Public Accounts Committees (WAAPAC) organized the 2nd WAAPAC Annual Conference, which took place in Lomé, Togo from February 19-23. The event, bringing together participants from Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo and Gambia, centered around "Breaking regional and state barriers in enhancing transparency and accountability - The role of public accounts committees".

[Read more...](#)

23 February 2011: UN WOMEN and IPU - The Role of Parliaments in Promoting Access and Participation of Women and Girls to Education, Training, Science and Technology (New York, United States)



During the 55th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), whose priority theme this year is the Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), are organising a parliamentary event entitled The Role of Parliaments in promoting access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology.

[Read more...](#)

28 February-25 March 2011: l'Assemblée nationale - Training Course in l'Ecole nationale d'administration (Paris, France)



For the 17th consecutive year, l'Assemblée and le Sénate, a specialised international course in Public Administration on "Parliamentary Work Organisation" that took place from February 28th to March 25th. 37 civil servants, mainly from parliamentary administrations from 18 countries had the opportunity to study the organisation and working methods of both Assemblies as well as the legislative process in France (ranging from text drafting to reviewing conformity with constitutional law) and exchanged their respective national experiences.

[Read more...](#)

11 March 2011: Parliamentary Centre - African Parliamentary Strengthening Program, Project Steering Committee meeting (Dakar, Senegal)



Participants included representatives from the partner parliaments of Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, as well as representatives of the program funder, CIDA. The meeting was an opportunity for the Parliamentary Centre to present an update on the activities and results from the program's second year, i.e. from April 2010 – March 2011. In keeping to its core principles of participation, transparency and accountability, the forum also discussed the work plan and budget for the third year of the project covering the period April 1, 2011 – March 31, 2012.

[Read more...](#)

12 April 2011: National Democratic Institute – Discussion With Mu Sochua: A Global Voice for Women in Politics (Washington DC, United States)



Cambodian parliamentarian and former cabinet minister, Mu Sochua, is an unrelenting advocate for women's rights and democracy. As Minister of Women's Affairs, Sochua negotiated a landmark agreement with Thailand to protect the rights of Cambodian women trafficked as sex workers. As a legislator, she drafted and secured passages of Cambodia's domestic violence law. Sochua launched a campaign to bring non-governmental organizations, law enforcement officials and women in rural areas into a national dialogue to protect women and girls victimized by trafficking and boost prevention efforts nationwide.

[Read more...](#)

28-29 April 2011: OECD – 3rd Annual Meeting of Parliamentary Budget Officials (Stockholm, Sweden)



This meeting, organized by the OECD Working Party of Senior Budget Officials (SBO), was attended by officials from 25 parliaments. Issues addressed included the role of parliament in the approval and oversight of fiscal stimulus packages and strategies to reduce fiscal deficits; committee structures for budget approval and oversight; repairing the budget contract: balancing high expectations and low trust; parliamentary budget offices and fiscal councils: new institutions and challenges; the impact of parliamentary budget offices; and interim reporting practices and legislative oversight in OECD countries

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3-5 May 2011: AWEPA and SADC – Regional Parliamentary Seminar on Parliamentary Engagement in Making Aid More Effective (Maputo, Mozambique)



This seminar served to highlight and further explore the role of parliaments in assuring that development aid is used most effectively to reduce poverty and create an environment suitable for sustained social and economic development. The results of the seminar are incorporated into the preparatory process for the upcoming Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, to be held in South Korea in November this year.

[Special Report](#)
[Read more...](#)

3-6 May 2011: World Bank Institute (WBI) – The Annual Accountability Conference of the Eastern and Southern African Associations of Public Accounts Committees (PAC) (Arusha, Tanzania)



This Annual Accountability Conference of the Eastern African Association of Public Accounts Committees (EAAPAC) and Southern Africa Development Community Organization of Public Accounts Committees (SADCOPAC) took place in Arusha, Tanzania from 3-6 May 2011 in partnership with WBI and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The Conference explored the relationship between PACs and Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in strengthening the accountability process.

[Read more...](#)

13 May 2011: UNDP and the Kawakibi Centre - Conference on Legislations and Political Party Funding (Tunis, Tunisia)



The Kawakibi centre for the Transition to Democracy and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organised this conference on "Legislations and Political Party Funding in Tunisia: Comparative Approaches".

Discussions focused on regulation laws, party activity organisation, and public and private funding laws, as well as, state follow-up and monitoring mechanisms towards the parties, without actually affecting their right to freedom of political action.

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17-19 May 2011: WBI and CPA – Small Island and Developing States Study Group on the Role of Parliament in Climate Change (Zanzibar, Tanzania)



This Study Group, facilitated by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the World Bank Institute (WBI) was hosted by the Parliament of Zanzibar from May 17-19, 2011. Participants included Members of Parliament from Small Island and Developing States (SIDS) across the globe and aimed to provide a platform for South-South exchange focusing on how SIDS parliaments, taking into consideration their specific capacity constraints, can perform their parliamentary functions in an innovative fashion in order to address the challenges of climate change.

[Read more...](#)

18-20 May 2011: OSCE – Human Dimension Seminar: Political Parties' Role in the Political Process (Warsaw, Poland)



The OSCE held its annual Human Dimension Seminar (HDS) in Warsaw on 18-20 May 2011. This year, the Seminar was devoted to "the role of political parties in the political process."

The HDS is an annual meeting where OSCE participating States discuss the most topical issues of the "human dimension" of security - those related to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Participants included representatives (delegations) of the participating states, as well as experts, international organizations, and NGOs.

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26-27 May 2011: Climate Parliament Forum – The Multiplier Effect: How Can a Modest Amount of Public Funding Trigger a Surge of Investment in New Grids and Clean Energy? (Brussels, Belgium)



The conference united legislators from all over Europe, the US, India, and Japan with business representatives from major producers of renewable energy technology (ranging from Denmark, Spain and Germany to the US and Taiwan), private investors, NGOs and others. The focus of the meeting was on how to finance a large scale transition to renewable energy and to discuss how a limited amount of public funds can trigger private investment in renewable energy and new transmission grids.

[Chronicle](#)

[Read more...](#)

14-16 June 2011: UNICEF and IPU – Regional Seminar for Parliaments of the CEE-CIS Region on Making Child Rights a Reality for the Most Vulnerable Children (Yerevan, Armenia)



This regional seminar was organized by UNICEF and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and hosted by the National Assembly of Armenia in Yerevan. The seminar aimed to facilitate debate on ways and mechanisms of addressing the needs of the most vulnerable children, reaching out to them, supporting their well-being and development, and ensuring respect for their rights.

[Area of Expertise](#)

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29 June - 1 July 2011: Parliamentary Forum – Community of Democracies High Level Meeting & Parliamentary Forum Meeting (Vilnius, Lithuania)



Within the last two years, the Lithuanian Presidency of the Community of Democracies (CoD) established the Parliamentary Forum, the parliamentary component of the CoD in which parliamentarians from around the world can meet to discuss policies to support democratic development. At the margins of the recent Vilnius Ministerial Conference of the CoD on June 30, 2011, the Parliamentary Forum (PF) held its meeting, entitled, "The Road to Democracy: the Role of the Community of Democracies Parliamentary Forum".

[Read more...](#)

Virtual Discussion: Women's Caucuses



A

GORA recently held a joint e-Discussion together with iKNOW Politics (IKP), the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics, on the topic of “Women’s Parliamentary Caucuses”.

During this two-week discussion, both networks managed to build on their existing knowledge on this subject and welcomed the contributions of many members, visitors and partners. Contributions came from MPs and staff from Asian, African and American parliaments, as well as other specialists from all over the world, providing for a varied and highly personal discussion. Below you can find the executive summary, compiling the key issues tackled in this debate. To read the full summary, please visit our [website](#).

Women’s Parliamentary Caucuses: Executive Summary

The key question tackled in this e-Discussion is if and how women’s caucuses weigh on a parliament’s legislative output. Do caucuses push issues onto the legislative agenda that otherwise would not have found their way there? Is there a noticeable difference with respect to the gender-sensitivity of the legislation produced, and what effects does this have on national development strategies? In short, are women’s caucuses effective? The general response to this question appears to be largely positive, although virtually all participants had some reservations. In terms of a women’s caucus’ tangible impact on legislation, some success stories present themselves (Rwanda being the main one), but in the majority of cases (Indonesia, the US, Nepal, Ghana and so forth) ~~the concrete benefits derived from having a women’s~~

Their perception as relatively “weak” organs is one of the unique institutional traits of a caucus

caucus remain somewhat limited. This does not mean that women’s caucuses in these countries are not effective, or have not in one way or another helped shape more gender-sensitive legislation. Rather, experience indicates that women’s caucuses just largely operate on the sidelines, not in the limelight – they help channel legislation, but they are not (yet) in a position to shape the legislative agenda.

To an extent, this apparent weakness is intentional. Their



perception as relatively “weak” organs is one of the unique institutional traits of a caucus: their soft positioning is exactly why parliamentarians view them as a safe venue for cross-party legislation drafting. As the views shared in this discussion illustrate, a women’s caucus offers the kind of supportive and welcoming environment that fosters the creation of cross-party allegiances and cooperation. At the same time, however, the soft nature of these caucuses does come with its limitations: to date, few if any women’s caucuses have managed to firmly steer their parliament towards gender equality law-making.

What can be done to overcome this? When discussing the difficulties women’s caucuses face in impacting legislation, participants largely pinpointed three vital issues: (1) the low numbers of women parliamentarians in most parliaments, leaving the women’s caucus as too small an organ to enact



- ▶ significant change; (2) the inherent difficulty in working across party lines and the pervasive presence of party loyalties, making it hard to find common ground on which to join forces; and (3) the organisational aspect, in particular the leadership issue and the additional workload that comes with establishing or joining a women’s caucus.

“Women’s caucuses are important and effective mechanisms through which to easily make an impact in decision-making”

*Juliana Katengwa,
MP (Rwanda)*

None of these issues are easily fixed, but none are insurmountable. The increase in implementation of gender quota for parliamentarians means that the number of women parliamentarians is on the rise – this should help, in the coming years and decades, to bring to parliaments that much-needed “critical mass” of women legislators that can carry these caucuses forward successfully.

In terms of practical organization and leadership, running a caucus is a process of trial and error. Experiences from Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Nepal illustrate that, with a strong commitment from a large enough group initial barriers can be overcome and sound compromises can be found.

Addressing the complex dynamics of “party vs. caucus” relationship within a parliamentary setting is perhaps the most challenging task, but it is arguably also the most fruitful one. It can be helpful to define a very narrow “must be achieved” agenda on which all parties agree; if this proves

“[...] the women’s caucus is not simply a forum for coordination and alliances within the legislature, but develops relationships with other women in public office, as well as territorial and sub-regional organizations to channel their demands and proposals”.

Susan Markham, Director of Women’s Participation, NDI

successful, wider fields can be tackled and cooperation can be broadened. Ultimately, however, cross-party law making



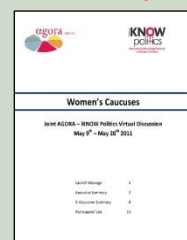
AGORA Gender Workshop, National Assembly of Mauritania (July 2011)

remains a difficult balancing act for all involved.

Provided enough women are engaged in these efforts, and supported by an efficient organization, successes can be booked. From there, it is a relatively small step to extrapolate these positive experiences to the parliament as a whole, and use the established allegiances and working relationships for law-making beyond the caucus.

Finally, a view shared by a large number of participants is that a women’s caucus can only be truly effective when it branches out and is able to embrace male parliamentarians, ministries, regional and local organizations, civil society and others who share their interest in furthering gender equality. A women’s caucus is an ideal focal point for the promotion of gender-sensitive legislation, but without input from outside the caucus a lot of potential, power and ideas will be lost. Similarly, a women’s caucus should make a priority of communicating its goals, efforts and achievements – only by keeping the lines of communication open, in both directions, can a women’s caucus be truly effective.

AGORA IKP e-Discussion on Women’s Caucuses:
[Click here for Full Summary](#)





Sir Graham Watson is chairman of Climate Parliament. The organisation was established in 2009, building on the work of the e-Parliament on climate and energy. Building regional action networks and assisting legislators in taking climate action, Climate Parliament, among its other activities, develops parliamentary toolkits, organises international parliamentary committee hearings and field trips for legislators, and reaches out through the Internet to national and state legislators worldwide.

Beyond Climate Parliament, Sir Graham Watson has been a Member of the European Parliament since 1994. Currently, he chairs the European Parliament's delegation for relations with India, and sits on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

By means of an introduction, could you – in your capacity as chairman of the Climate Parliament – give us a brief introduction on the work and ambitions of Climate Parliament?

Climate Parliament is an organisation that brings together legislators and experts from around the world to generate solutions to the problems presented by climate change.

We use the medium of the Internet to help good policy ideas travel more quickly across borders. Our staff stationed in political capitals around the world, help members and the 20,000 MPs we currently have on our database to put them into practice.

This is what makes us unique; our members are the legislators and officials who make policy. We are not just another lobbying group.

And we have had a number of high-profile successes. Our members were behind the agreement signed by President Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in October 2010, which created a joint US-India solar research programme.

In Africa we persuaded the South African government to introduce a feed-in tariff scheme, and through the East African Legislative Assembly, the network drafted a soon to be adopted law to improve the cross-border management of vital eco-systems such as the Serengeti, Lake Victoria and coastal coral reefs.

As a Member of the European Parliament you are known for your work on climate change, renewable energy technologies, and environmental issues in general. What role, in your experience, can parliaments and individual parliamentarians play in furthering these issues? What advice would you offer to parliamentarians working in institutions where these issues are not yet high on the agenda?

Parliamentarians can have huge influence. We often have the final say over budgets and legislation, which offers tremendous opportunities for small groups of individuals, working closely together, to directly influence policy. I am working with other MEPs to secure specific commitments in the EU budget to research and development of low carbon

technologies, large-scale renewable energy installations, and support for renewable energy in developing countries.

In addition to this, Parliaments offer a space to develop ideas that revolutionise policy. For example, the European Union is now on the path to building a Europe-wide energy super-grid, which

will enable us to harness the power of renewable energy from across the continent. It was MEPs who put this on the political agenda and who continue to drive forward the idea.

None of this is easy or straightforward. But the Climate Parliament produces Parliamentary Tool Kits that share the lessons of successful campaigns around the world. These can be found at www.climateparl.org and tailored advice is available from our Secretariat.



- ***Most parliaments continue to struggle when it comes to providing “hard” legislation on issues such as climate change, renewable energy technologies, the reduction of carbon emissions and so forth. What, in your experience, are the main stumbling blocks keeping them from committing more strongly? Do you feel that this lack of a strong, global commitment on this subject impacts other fields of legislative work, such as the Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction Strategies?***

It is true that not all parliaments and governments are alive to the threat of climate change and our dependency on fossil fuels. However, climate change is not just an environmental issue; it is central to many security and development issues.

For example, it is estimated that the number of climate refugees fleeing desertification, water pollution and famine, could reach 1 billion by 2050. And we could see a 30-40% drop in rice, maize and wheat yields in the tropics if global temperature increases continue.

By highlighting these challenges and linkages at every possible opportunity, not just in environmental legislation, Climate Parliament members can prompt real action on climate change and at the same time keep us on track to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals.

An often heard complaint from parliamentarians concerning the drafting of legislation on these kind of issues is the overload of information, largely of a highly technical and scientific nature, making it difficult for them to understand what kind of legislation would make most environmental, economic and financial sense for their particular situation. Do you have any advice on how parliamentarians can go about better understanding the complexities of these subjects?

This is where our Climate Parliament forums and hearings are useful. One of the main aims of these events is to allow experts from industry and science to brief members face-to-face, in a way that is accessible and interactive.

Our field trips to places like Andasol Solar Thermal Power Plant in Spain also enable Climate Parliament members to see first hand how renewable energy projects work in practice and hear about the regulatory challenges they face. They can then take away these ideas and, working with our programme officers, produce proposals, which work for their particular country. Politicians are expected to be experts in every field. The Climate Parliament understands that this is impossible, and instead seeks to connect policy experts with experts in policy-making.

“ Climate change is not just an environmental issue; it is central to many security and development

Finally, a draining difficulty whenever renewable technologies are concerned is financing. What, in your experience, are the most effective ways for parliamentarians to secure funding for environment-related projects and legislation?

This was the subject of the recent Climate Parliament Forum, held in the European Parliament, Brussels and attended by MPs, government representatives and NGOs from around the world.

Industry experts and scientists consistently make clear that the technology and funds are available to revolutionise our energy supply chain.

What is needed is for governments and public bodies to make modest but strategic investments and pass laws, which show a long-term commitment to renewable energy.

These small steps can provide potential investors with the certainty they need and trigger a surge of private investment. It is estimated that every €1 of public money committed to renewable energy will attract €20 of private investment. If parliamentarians can help provide this legislative certainty, we can secure major investment with minimal risk to the public purse.

UNICEF: Supporting Parliaments to Promote the Rights of Children

Parliaments throughout the world are uniquely positioned to create real and lasting change for children. They can allocate resources for national budgets, shape and enforce laws that promote the rights of children, hold governments and civil society accountable, and represent the interests and voices of children to send the message that the well-being of children is the responsibility of all society. Parliaments have an obligation to support and uphold children's rights as articulated in many of their respective national laws as well as in international instruments.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 and entered into force in 1990, is the most comprehensive legal instrument for the promotion of children's rights and has been ratified more widely than any other human rights instrument. It understands children's rights as an aspect of

human rights, thereby transforming children from passive subjects of rights to active agents of their own rights.

The CRC also establishes a mutual relationship between rights holders (children) and duty bearers (parliamentarians), and recognizes Parliament's role as protector of children's rights accordingly.

Thus, parliamentarians



Role of Parliament in fulfilling the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Statement by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children. [Click here](#)



UNICEF is the driving force that helps build a world where the rights of every child are realized. It has the global authority to influence decision-makers, and the variety of partners at grassroots level to turn the most innovative ideas into reality. That makes UNICEF unique among world organizations, and unique among those working with the young.

Parliament is the central institution through which the will of the people is expressed, laws are passed and government is held accountable. Parliamentary work is a relatively new, yet rapidly expanding area of focus for UNICEF. UNICEF's parliamentary activities span diverse geographical, political and social contexts on all key children's rights issues.

have a primary obligation to support and uphold children's rights and are accountable both to their citizens, including children, and to international norms, treaties and standards such as the CRC.

Parliaments perform the following four main functions that have relevance to the promotion of children's rights:

Law-making: adopting laws that govern society in a structured manner.

UNICEF works with parliaments worldwide in order to harmonise national law with international legislations / instruments / commitments, and promote the rights of children.

UNICEF partnered with Nigeria's Senate and House Committee on Women and Children's Affairs in the drafting



► and passage of the Child's Rights Act, a domestic implementation of the CRC. It played a critical role in Uruguay's adoption of a revised children's code. The South African Parliament passed the first comprehensive post-apartheid legislation pertaining to children's rights in 2008, following almost 12 years of intensive debate, during which UNICEF provided constant financial and technical support.

Parliaments can also ratify international instruments, assist in fulfilling national reporting obligations and assist in drawing up national plans of action. This was the case in Zambia, for example, where parliamentarians contributed to the development of a National Plan of Action for Children with a focus on vulnerable children.

In order to promote the rights of children, parliaments can help draft child-friendly legislation and/or amendments to legislation; concurrently, they can engage the media and members of civil society to build a broad coalition of support.

For example, the adoption of a legal framework for child protection in the Democratic Republic of Congo came after a special parliamentary session for children in 2009.

Oversight: monitoring government performance and spending to ensure that the executive branch performs in a responsible and accountable manner.

Earlier this year, the European Parliament launched a new, informal and cross-party "Alliance for Children" in partnership with UNICEF and a group of international NGOs, in order to establish or support a children's committee or

caucus. The Alliance for Children aims to create synergy across committees and incorporate children's rights into the mainstream work of the legislative body (For more information [click here](#)).

As the principal representatives of their constituents, parliamentarians are uniquely placed to give the views of children – especially those who are the most deprived and most vulnerable – a platform in their work.

In order to promote the rights of children, parliamentarians can also push for the establishment of a parliamentary commissioner or ombudsperson. The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children in Mauritius, established in 2003, has been a strong advocate for preventing violence against children. The ombudsperson's annual reports to Parliament have helped create awareness of the issue of violence

against children and other violations of children's rights, allowing MPs to call attention to these issues through parliamentary questions, motions and debate.

Parliaments and parliamentarians can encourage relevant parliamentary committees to conduct on-site enquiries. Collaboration between Brazil's Parliamentary Group for Children and civil society was the starting point in 2003 for a parliamentary enquiry into the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The investigation's final report called for the indictment of more than 200 people, made public policy recommendations, and proposed five new bills to bolster existing national legislation.

Finally, regarding the parliament's function of oversight, in order to promote children's rights, parliamentarians should ensure compliance by the executive branch with international standards. They can also participate in the audit and/or assessment of the executive branch's performance in areas of relevance to children, such as the health sector and promote parliamentary debate on issues of relevance to children. ►►

"Children are entitled to be involved in the wide range of issues that affect them, and as they grow and develop their opportunities for participation should expand from private to public spaces, from local to global influence. However, while children are starting to come into their own as active rights holders who can serve as agents of change, the voices of many of the world's young citizens remain unheard, their interests forgotten or ignored"

- UNICEF -

- **Budgeting:** approving and allocating the revenue that the executive branch requires to implement its policies; overseeing and monitoring government spending to make sure expenditures are used properly.

It should be among parliamentarians' activities to monitor the implementation of the budget and to probe and monitor national budgets from a children's rights perspective.

In 1999, UNICEF Ecuador became involved in reviewing and monitoring the budget to increase the focus on areas such as education, health, and social investments that help enforce the rights of children. In doing so, it succeeded in influencing the National Congress to dedicate more funds to children's services and issues.



Finally, parliamentarians should build independent research capacity to analyse information presented by government. In Chile, Congress considered a modification of the

budget law that would ensure a 24 percent increase in allocations to support institutions devoted to child protection, as well as a constitutional amendment that would extend compulsory free education to 12 years.

Representation: acting as opinion leaders to influence local communities and voicing constituent interests in parliamentary chambers.

One of the activities that parliamentarians can do to advance the rights of children is to organise campaigns to mobilize community support for child-related activities. For example, in 2010, UNICEF organised the Eastern and Southern Africa Parliamentary Regional parliamentary workshop in Namibia focusing on the role of parliaments in scaling up child-sensitive social protection, especially for children and

families affected by HIV/AIDS (For more information [click here](#)).

Parliamentarians can carry out activities in strengthening constituency relations that include: helping civil society interact with parliament and supporting civil society, including children, to participate in public hearings, consultations and parliamentary committee hearings.

Listening to children and allowing them to contribute to decision-making processes results in better decisions being made. It leads to policies that are actually – not just

Parliamentarians must ensure and support child participation. They should also initiate and implement community-based projects. In this sense, in 2011, in the framework of the 124th IPU assembly in

Panama, UNICEF organised field visits for MPs to see UNICEF supported projects in and around Panama City (For more information [click here](#)).

Finally, regarding the parliament's function of representation, parliamentarians should take advantage of electoral campaigns to promote children's rights on the parliamentary agenda.

In celebration of the 18th anniversary of Brazil's Children and Adolescent Rights Statute in 2008, a countrywide campaign was launched to get the national Congress as well as candidates running for election to the State Legislative Houses and Local Municipal Councils to commit to the approval and implementation of 18 pending projects that would help guarantee rights for children and adolescents.



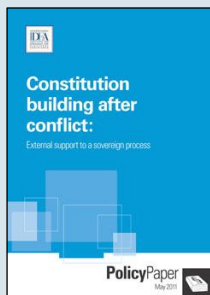
UNICEF – Guide to Working With Parliaments [Click here.](#)

Parliamentary Centre – 6th Global Parliamentarians' Summit: Conference Report

In June 2010, the Parliamentary Centre was actively involved in supporting The Sixth Annual Global Parliamentarians' Summit which brought together more than a hundred parliamentarians from Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, Africa, and the Americas to discuss maternal health and more specifically the role of parliamentarians in advancing MDG 1 (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), MDG 5 (Improve maternal health) and MDG 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases). The Summit participants adopted a parliamentary appeal calling for action by world governments to sustain efforts to meet all MDGs by 2015 with special attention given to women's rights, well-being, and health. [Click here to read more](#)

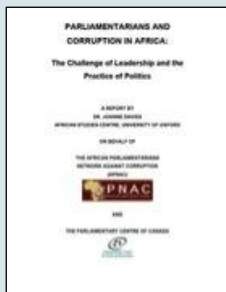
The Westminster Consortium for Parliaments and Democracy (TWC) – Human Rights and Parliaments: Handbook for Members and Staff

Developed by the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), the handbook is a reference tool designed to support MPs and parliamentary staff to ensure that legislation passed is aligned to international human rights conventions and norms. It provides best practices and practical guidance about how MPs and their staff can perform their crucial role in ensuring the legislature upholds the rule of law and human rights. The handbook draws on the experience gained from a series of training sessions undertaken by the IBAHRI, as part of the TWC, for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in Georgia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Uganda and Ukraine in 2009 and 2010. The handbook covers the complete range of human rights issues including extensive work on social and economic rights, which currently challenge many parliaments in formulating new legislation. [Click here to read more](#)

International IDEA – Constitution Building after Conflict: External Support to a Sovereign Process

Developed by International IDEA, this publication aims to contribute to an ongoing discussion of constitution building in two ways. The first is to expand this discussion beyond expert groups in order to include the views of practitioners, given that constitution building is a key South-South issue. Second, it is particularly targeted at providing external actors that want to offer meaningful assistance to constitution building with a better understanding of its political nuances and practical needs.

[Click here to read more](#)

Parliamentary Centre and the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption – Parliamentarians and Corruption in Africa: The Challenge of Leadership and the Practice of Politics

The Parliamentary Centre and the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC), with the assistance of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), has recently published a report on political corruption and the practice of politics in Africa.

This report reviews the role that parliaments, and parliamentarians, can play in the fight against corruption. The report underscores the urgency of strengthening the capacity of parliaments so that they effectively execute their oversight mandate and tackle corruption. It makes several other short- and medium-term recommendations, such as increasing public education about corruption, strengthening anti-corruption commissions, making corruption riskier, developing a strategy to regulate election financing, addressing socio-economic factors, strengthening the independence of the media, and improving locally dispersed funds while increasing oversight.

[Click here to read more](#)

International IDEA and Global Partners and Associates – The Challenges of Political Programming: International Assistance to Parties and Parliaments



This discussion paper looks at the way in which donor agencies and implementing organisations address the challenges of political programming. After an overview of international strategies for parliamentary and party assistance, the authors examine recent developments in project design, and the tension field between the strategic and specific levels. Four case studies are developed, namely the multi-donor deepening democracy programmes in Tanzania and Uganda, NIMD's work in Ghana, and the WDF's work in Macedonia.

The authors argue that greater effectiveness and integration in party and parliamentary support depends on an altered donor role, with a better translation of political analysis into project design, and a more flexible implementation practice. [To be released later this year](#)

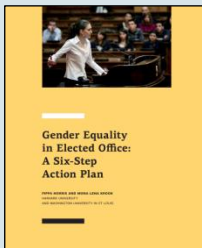
National Democratic Institute – Political Process Monitoring: Activist Tools and Techniques



NDI's citizen participation team has developed a new guide that explores the work that NDI and its partner groups have conducted across five types of political-process monitoring – legislative monitoring; budget monitoring, budget advocacy, and expenditure tracking; shadow reporting; monitoring government follow-through; and election campaign-related monitoring.

The guide is based upon qualitative research conducted over a one-year period that included a desk review of NDI program materials and interviews with select NDI staff members and local partners. The guide also benefited from research visits to Mexico and Georgia where the team conducted in-depth interviews with NDI country teams, local partners and program beneficiaries. [Click here to read more](#)

OSCE – Gender Equality in Elected Office: A Six-Step Action Plan



The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has released an ODIHR-commissioned study that explores trends in women's political participation across the OSCE region.

Professors Pippa Norris and Mona Lena Krook propose a comprehensive six-step plan to increase women's political participation as political party members, as political decision-makers and as candidates for public office. The Study forms the basis for a newly launched OSCE/ODIHR project on "Women in Political Parties" that aims to build the capacity of political parties to develop and implement different voluntary measures to enhance women's participation in political parties. [Click here to read more](#)

ECOWAS Parliament – Parliamentary Gender Strategy 2010 – 2020



This publication has been developed by the ECOWAS Parliament, in collaboration with the Parliamentary Centre and with the funding of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The 1st West African Women's Policy Forum held in Accra, Ghana on 2 to 3 December 2008 signalled the need for a comprehensive gender strategy for the implementation of key issues in the policy. The forum brought together over 50 participants from West Africa including women's groups, networks, women in government, gender machineries, and ECOWAS.

This document aims to highlight the parliament's crucial role in contributing to the development processes and addressing critical issues that affects its constituents. Parliament also has an important function in recognising and enforcing gender-based laws such as CEDAW, and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. By passing gender responsive laws, parliaments can ensure governments adopt policies that address the needs of both men and women. [Click here to read more](#)

Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness

29 Nov. - 1 Dec. 2011, Busan, South Korea

A

id effectiveness is about ensuring maximum impact of development aid to improve lives, cut poverty and help achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Increasing the effectiveness of aid means ensuring that aid helps developing countries to improve the welfare of their poorest populations.

On the 2002 United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development, participants adopted the Monterrey Consensus that served to back the MDGs, underlining the mutual responsibility between developed and developing countries to achieve these goals. At the same time, it was the prelude of a series of international commitments in the form of High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness organized by the OECD.

High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness

The First High Level Forum (Rome, 2002) marked the first occasion at which the principles for aid effectiveness were outlined in a concrete declaration.

The Second High Level Forum (Paris, 2005) marked the first time that donors and recipients agreed to commitments and to hold each other accountable for achieving these. It also specifically highlighted the importance of parliamentary

oversight. Without the oversight of parliaments and elected bodies at sub-national levels on the nature of policy engagement, aid is in danger of subverting domestic accountability oversight. In the Asia-Pacific region, for example, parliamentary committees in Sri Lanka have become increasingly vocal in demanding more transparency and accountability in the budget process to prevent the illicit transfer of development funds.



The Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Accra, Ghana, 2008) highlighted the important role that parliaments can play in promoting faster progress towards the MDGs by influencing national development strategies aligning resources behind them, and ensuring these resources are used effectively and in an accountable manner.

Significantly, in some countries, rather than waiting to legislate on specific sectorial issues, parliament has actually taken action to respond to the MDGs as a whole. Mongolia – along with other countries including Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines, Kenya and Nigeria – also provides a good example of a country where a specific Parliamentary Committee, sub-Committee, or caucus was established to scrutinise the policy process as it relates to the MDGs and poverty reduction and to act as a focal point for parliamentary engagement with poverty reduction (For more information [click here](#)). ▶

Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
(2005) [Click here](#)

Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)
(2008) [Click here](#)

Making Aid Work: Towards Better Development Results.
Practical guidance for parliamentarians [Click here](#)

- ▶ AGORA is an online reference centre and hub for knowledge sharing on parliamentary strengthening as the progressive force for development and democratic governance. It supports parliaments engaging with the MDGs in the most efficient, transparent and successful way possible by providing parliamentary institutions and their staff with the relevant knowledge. AGORA is therefore in line with the Paris Declaration, and with the Accra Agenda for Action ([click here](#) to visit AGORA).

The Fourth High Level Forum, which will take place in Busan at the end of 2011 (HLF-4), will include a final round of monitoring, as well as a full evaluation of the impact of the Paris Declaration. Significantly, the event will also chart future directions for more effective development aid and contribute towards new international aid architecture.

The UN is closely involved in the preparations of HLF-4 and contributes to its design, agenda and outcomes. Particular emphasis will lie on ensuring linkages to relevant UN processes and developing a joint vision for the global development architecture beyond the Paris process, including the relationship with the OECD/DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.

AGORA has been actively involved and supports stakeholders in their preparations for the Fourth High-Level Forum. AGORA assists in the set-up of the HLF-4 web pages in collaboration with the OECD, the Government of the South Korea, and UNDP, guided by an Advisory Group of key stakeholders to the HLF-4 event.



Parliaments and Aid Effectiveness

Parliamentarians have key roles to play in national processes and systems of planning, budgeting, anti-corruption, and audit, among others. These processes influence the effectiveness and impact of all development resources, both aid and domestic resources. Therefore, they should be recognised as holding a key position in the field of aid effectiveness in general and in the Fourth High Level Forum in particular. Parliamentarians are able to contribute to key points in the policy cycle. In Tanzania, for example, parliamentarians have been involved in consultations with

The principles on aid effectiveness set out in the **Paris Declaration** and applied to the development of parliamentary support projects are:

- **Ownership:** key parliamentary members and staff will need to be active participants in the design and delivery of the project.
- **Alignment and Harmonisation:** the form and content of parliamentary support projects should be conditioned by the activity of other donors active in the country.
- **Result-based:** international parliamentary support projects should be built around clear and realistic objectives.
- **Mutual accountability:** key stakeholders will need to be responsible for specific parts of the parliamentary project and accountable for their role in its delivery.
- **Context-specific:** the limits to the effectiveness of the parliament will be to a significant extent determined by the interaction of political, economic, social and cultural factors that are specific to a country.
- **Realistic expectations:** an externally supported project cannot make parliament more effective.

The three major challenges for aid effectiveness identified in the **Accra Agenda for Action** are:

- Increasing country ownership.
- Building more effective and inclusive partnerships for development.
- Delivering and accounting for development results.

All of these, in turn, depend on active parliaments and their engagement with civil society.

- ▶ government bodies and donors to develop and set priorities for the National Strategy for Growth and the Reduction of Poverty. Similarly, Zambia provides an example of parliamentary engagement at the sectoral level, where parliamentarians work directly with donors to facilitate their engagement in consultation with the health sector.



Although parliaments may continue to find themselves excluded from engaging the executive and donors in inclusive consultations, they have the responsibility to demand greater consultation and engagement of parliamentarians in development

plans. In Ghana, Parliamentary committees, including the Parliamentary Committee on Poverty Reduction, have persistently demanded the right to engage with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC). As a result, Parliament was able to provide greater input into the production of Ghana's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II. Additionally, a number of mutual benefits arise from collaboration between parliaments and civil society organisations (CSOs). In the Philippines,

parliamentary engagement with the Centre for Legislative Development provided useful information, which helped Congress to assume greater responsibility in its dealings with the executive and in the process of policy formulation.

Furthermore, parliamentarians can play important roles as well in pushing for a greater focus on monitoring the impacts of aid and other development resources. This might mean pushing for fuller financial reporting and better financial information from both government and donors.

In conclusion, it is essential to recognise that parliaments not only play an essential role in policy cycle, but also that there is a huge potential for parliaments to play a bigger role in aid policy. As a consequence, HLF-4 should open the doors for proactive parliamentarians to make a difference in effective aid delivery.

Get the HLF-4 latest agenda [here](#) and get more information visiting the following websites:

www.aideffectiveness.org

www.agora-parl.org (Area of Expertise on Aid Effectiveness)

www.oecd.org



AWEPA's Aid Effectiveness Programme aims at strengthening the role of parliaments in overseeing aid flows, with a view to improving aid effectiveness in African countries, in line with the commitments of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. As the constitutionally mandated representatives of the people, parliaments must oversee all public funds, whether from domestic or foreign source. AWEPA engages with African and European parliamentarians on this issue through a range of activities, which cut across the national, regional and continental levels. These include capacity development activities with African

national and regional parliamentary bodies and networks, such as trainings, workshops and seminars; public hearings on donor-funded projects to strengthen parliamentary engagement with citizens and knowledge of their needs and priorities; and support to the establishment of Joint Official Development Assistance (ODA) Monitoring Teams comprised of European and African parliamentarians in order to foster inter alia more transparent oversight and accountability.

AWEPA also engages African and European MPs in international aid reform process and dialogue led by the OECD-DAC. In the run-up to HLF-4, AWEPA, in cooperation with the IPU and other parliamentary organizations, is coordinating a broad consultation process involving up to 150 MPs to gather parliamentary input. This has led to the production of the [Legislative Principles for Development Effectiveness](#) to be integrated in the Busan outcome document.

Examples of AWEPA activities are the following: in 2010 AWEPA organized national workshops in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Namibia and Uganda to raise parliamentary awareness on aid effectiveness, promote actions to improve aid effectiveness at the national level and facilitate parliamentary engagement in the aid reform process; in April 2010, AWEPA and the SADC Parliamentary Forum co-organized a regional seminar on aid effectiveness which resulted in the adoption of a SADC Regional Parliamentary Plan of Action on Aid Effectiveness. In May 2010, AWEPA and the Parliament of Mozambique held a regional seminar focused on collecting evidence on how parliaments can contribute in making aid more effective and the preparation of parliamentary inputs for HLF-4.



Afghan Women Take Seats in Parliament, Prepare for Road Ahead

9 February 2011

AFGHANISTAN: After several months of controversy and delays in the certification of election results, 249 members have taken their seats in Afghanistan's Wolesi Jirga or Lower House of Parliament. Among them are Farida Hamidi and Frishta Amini, two women who make up the entire delegation from Nimroz province in the far southwest corner of the country.

[Read more...](#)



Jordanian Members of Parliament Head South to Monitor, Reach out and Skype

9 March 2011

JORDAN: Jordanian MPs concluded a 3-day session on media and outreach skills with a Skype session on utilising social media in public institutions. The workshop, organised by UNDP's project of support to the Parliament, comes as part of an annual plan developed by UNDP Jordan to support the two parliamentary committees on Environment and Health, and Public Freedoms and Citizens' Rights.

[Read more...](#)



El Salvador: Women in Parliament Unite on New Law Against Violence

21 March 2011

EL SALVADOR: A ground breaking law aimed at halting high levels of violence against women in El Salvador, the Central American country with one of the world's highest rates for murder of women, was officially made public by the overwhelming majority of members of the national legislative assembly.

[Read more...](#)



Ecuador Creates a Parliamentary Front Against Hunger

13 April 2011

ECUADOR: "Ecuador sin Hambre" is the slogan that mobilised 30 MPs to form a Parliamentary Front aimed at achieving a viable and applicable policy of alimentary sovereignty. One of the Parliamentary Front's objectives is the promotion of the production of natural products, free of contamination and that do not harm the earth, in order to preserve the primitives resources, such as the water and the vegetation.

[Read more...](#)



Mauretania: Parliamentarians, Business Leaders Work Together to Improve Economy

16 May 2011

MAURETANIA: For the first time in Mauritania's history, parliamentarians and business leaders have come together to discuss how to improve the economic and business climate of the North African country. The two groups agreed to submit an official report to the Mauritanian National Assembly detailing issues and recommendations, and they plan to establish a commission promoting ongoing collaboration between government and the private sector.

[Read more...](#)



France: A deontologist at the National Assembly to Combat Conflicts of Interest

7 July 2011

FRANCE: "Protect MPs against each other in conflicts of interest." This is the mission of Jean Gicquel, Emeritus Professor of constitutional law and renowned specialist on the institutions of the 5th republic, who was appointed as the first deontologist of the French National Assembly on June 15th. [Read more...](#)

To read the full articles and to stay updated on parliamentary news, join AGORA's Trusted Area. [Click here](#) to go to the Trusted Area.



1 – 26 August 2011: World Bank Institute – Parliaments and Climate Change e-Learning Course

This introductory course seeks to provide an examination of the impacts of climate change on social and environmental development and their direct correlation to the economic sustainability of a nation in the long-term. The Parliaments and Climate Change module covers the foundation of the science of climate change by introducing the concept of greenhouse gasses, improving the understanding of climate systems and encouraging more responsible environmental behaviour through fossil fuel, forestry and agricultural activities.

The course will allow participants to:

- Obtain an overview of the science of climate change through such concepts as greenhouse gasses;
- Better understand climate systems;
- Learn how to encourage more responsible environmental behaviour through fossil fuel, forestry and agricultural activities;
- Discuss what actions can be taken to minimize the harm and maximize the benefits within a community, country or region while also decreasing the amount of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere;
- Discuss climate change in the international political arena and the role for parliamentary institutions in reducing the impact and effect of climate change.

Places are limited. For more information, please contact Brooke Prater at parliamentarystrengthening@gmail.com.

[Read more...](#)



8 – 11 August 2011: National Conference of State Legislatures – Annual Legislative Summit (San Antonio, Texas, United States)

The annual Legislative Summit is the largest and most substantive meeting of its kind in the US. Each year more than 6,000 legislators, staff, and others interested in public policy attend informative sessions on critical problems to hear nationally renowned speakers, and to vote on policies to guide the advocacy efforts of the Conference.

Sessions for the 2011 conference included:

- Is technology transforming government?
- Growing Green: fertilizing job growth and local economies.
- Global perspectives on the legislative institution.

[Read more...](#)



6 – 9 September: Meeting of the XI General Assembly of COPA (Québec City, Québec, Canada)

Over this workshop, there is an opportunity to hear guest experts from the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to go further into the Parliamentary Democracy benchmarks. Also, there is occasion to discover some practical examples of research on the matter done by the Honorable Chamber of Senators of the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and another parliamentary organisation, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie (APF). Following, parliamentarians will have the opportunity to express their thoughts during a thorough discussion of the benchmarks and the adoption of a proposed complete document in prevision of the regular session of the Committee to be held on September 8th

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16 – 22 October 2011: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) – 9th Canadian Parliamentary Seminar “Strengthening Democracy and the Role of Parliamentarians: Challenges and Solutions” (Ottawa, Canada)

On an annual basis, the Canadian Branch of CPA and the CPA Secretariat co-host the Canadian Parliamentary Seminar. The Canadian Branch and the CPA Executive Committee see the Canadian Seminar as an excellent complement to the existing professional development programmes for parliamentarians and as a tool for sharing best practices throughout the Commonwealth. The seminar is designed to meet the needs of newly elected members and/or backbench parliamentarians. [Read more...](#)



19 – 20 October 2011: IPU, Monash University and the Australian Government Overseas Aid Agency (AusAID) – Parliamentary Conference: Assisting Parliamentarians to Develop their Capacities (Bern, Switzerland)

This conference brings together parliamentarians, parliamentary secretary-generals and staff, partner organisation personnel and parliamentary scholars from around the globe to discuss practices and research findings on capacity development for parliamentarians. Findings are aimed to be useful to members of parliaments, parliaments and partner organisations. The conference aims to cover any aspect of the development of knowledge skills and abilities (KSAs) needed by parliamentarians; the formal or informal learning undertaken by parliamentarians including training, professional development, mentoring or other learning activities; the sources of learning and; the review and evaluation of learning activities.

[Read more...](#)



14 – 17 November 2011: APF – XXIVth Session de l’Assemblée parlementaire de la Région Europe (Vilnius, Lithuania)

The Assembly meets for one plenary in the course of each session. It sets up the agenda taking account of the priorities set by the Summit and the activities of other bodies of the APF. The plenary session comprises delegations from member divisions and associate divisions. The Office establishes the maximum number of delegates entitled to participate in each division. Debates in the plenary are public, unless otherwise stated. Decisions taken are recorded and disseminated in the divisions and to the observers.

[Read more...](#)



23 – 25 November 2011: AWEPA – Training Course in Parliamentary Work (Maputo, Mozambique)

This module will examine what are the defining characteristics of a parliamentary service, what principles and values it should be based on and what services it should aim to provide. It will look at how those principles are translated into specific activities focusing on supporting the oversight and scrutiny responsibilities of parliaments, with particular emphasis on effective support for committee work. The programme will improve understanding of what is involved in working for a Parliament and of how the key functions of a Parliament can be supported and enabled by its staff.

The course is organized in partnership with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and will be facilitated by two Mozambican experts and two others from the United Kingdom.

[Read more...](#)