



Regional Seminar Report

Strengthening the Role of Parliaments in Crisis Prevention and Recovery in the Arab States Region 2- 4 November 2010, Amman, Jordan



December 2010

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIPU	Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPR	Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DGG	Democratic Governance Group
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GPSS	Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
KPI	Kurdistan Parliament of Iraq
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MP	Member of Parliament
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PDIAR	Parliamentary Development Initiative in the Arab Region
POGAR	Programme on Governance in the Arab Region
SSG/R	Security Sector Governance / Reform
SOWPA	Somali Women Parliamentarians' Association
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SuNDE	Sudanese Network for Democratic Elections
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YPW	Yemen Parliament Watch
YPC	Yemen Polling Center
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy

1. Executive Summary

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted in partnership with the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU) a regional seminar on *'Strengthening the Role of Parliaments in Crisis Prevention and Recovery in the Arab States Region'*, in Jordan (Amman) on November 03 and 04, 2010, on the basis of the *'UNDP Guidelines for the International Community on Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery'*

The regional seminar brought together **55 participants** representing **9 parliaments**¹ from the region, key international and regional organizations such as the AIPU, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), representatives from the European Commission and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Permanent Peace Movement together with representatives from national organizations such as the Lebanese Parliamentary Monitor and Yemen Parliamentary Watch, as well as UNDP colleagues from country offices in the region.

The regional seminar provided a great opportunity to reflect on the needs of Arab parliaments in the field of crisis prevention and recovery. Participants stressed that while Arab states differ, they face common challenges in terms of improving the performance of parliaments regarding conciliation, crisis prevention and recovery issues. The participants further agreed that emphasizing the work of parliamentary committees and strengthening the relation of the parliament with civil society/social groups are key steps for parliaments in the region to play a greater crisis prevention role.

At the **regional level**, participants recognized first that working at the regional level provides a great forum to address issues such as ethnic or religious tensions and State fragility. Participants recommended the creation of a regional working group to address parliamentary oversight of governmental activities on conflict prevention and resolution, and to boost this nucleus of champions by providing capacity development activities on drafting conflict sensitive laws in favor of tolerance, democracy, women's involvement - and advocate for a stronger oversight role on critical crisis prevention and recovery issues.

At the **national level**, participants noted that parliaments in the region often remain weak in relation to the Executive. They added that knowledge in terms of crisis prevention and recovery is very limited as well as qualified human resources. In terms of national priorities, participants identified the need to strengthen parliamentary oversight on crisis prevention and conflict resolution through questioning the Government in public hearings and plenary sessions, to reinforce the links between the parliament and civil society organizations, and to support parliamentary committees (standing committees as well as special and temporary committees) involved in a strategic action for peace.

Participants recommended strengthening the role of parliamentarians in the area of crisis prevention and recovery by reinforcing their knowledge and their skills in terms of legislation related to mediation and conciliation. They also highlighted the importance of sharing experiences and expertise as one of the main means to improve their skills and knowledge. They also recommended

¹ Algeria, Djibouti, Lebanon, Morocco, oPt (occupied Palestinian territories), Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Sudan.

twining the committees to encourage sharing information and experiences at the regional and global levels through south-south cooperation.

The capacities and power of Arab parliaments to manage conflict resolution was also discussed and participants stressed the importance of involving the parliament in the conciliation process as parliaments represent various political and religious tendencies and are able to ensure security and peace for the communities of the region. They also agreed that Arab parliaments need to ensure their full independence and integrity as well as maintain and protect their prerogatives and legal power.

Sharing experiences, twining the committees and south-south cooperation

On the basis of the recommendations of the regional seminar, UNDP will share the findings with its country offices in the region to better integrate this conflict-sensitive approach in existing parliamentary development projects. The UNDP self-assessment tool on parliaments and crisis prevention will be piloted in two countries in the region in 2011 to support two parliaments to better address crisis prevention and recovery issues. UNDP will continue engaging parliamentarians and partners at the regional level to consolidate the network of parliamentarians and identify and pilot south-south solutions and recommendations. Finally, all knowledge and research available will be shared on-line in Arabic and English on AGORA: www.agora-parl.org and parliamentarians will be invited to continue the discussions and experience sharing on the trusted area of AGORA.

2. Workshop Rationale and Objectives

As stressed by the '**UNDP Guidelines for the International Community on Parliaments and Crisis Prevention and Recovery**²', parliaments constitute uniquely legitimate democratic institutions with a central role to play in dialogue and reconciliation processes. Parliament's contribution to conflict prevention and peace building is embodied in its everyday work of representing constituents through law-making, oversight of government action and process of political contest. Elected parliaments provide mediation and space for various social groups. They are key institutions for **dialogue, national reconciliation and conflict resolution**.

During the last decades crises and conflicts have become a major concern in the Arab region. The region has witnessed a steep rise in violent conflicts leading to numerous humanitarian crises of dramatic scale and intensity. Crises are widespread in the region, ranging from decades of unresolved **Palestinian-Israeli conflict** to the protracted wars in **Somalia** and **Sudan**, and the most recent conflicts in **Iraq, Gaza, and Lebanon**. These crises have devastating effects, ranging from massive displacement, deprivation, poverty and systematic human rights violations directed at entire populations³. Besides conflicts, poverty, economic vulnerability, insecurity of labor markets, increasing social exclusion among vulnerable groups and gender equality remain the key challenges of the region. Ongoing conflicts have prevented parliaments from functioning effectively; their powers remain limited in a context of fragile security and democracy.

² <http://www.agora-parl.org/node/1117> ('UNDP Guidelines for the international community on Parliament, Crisis Prevention and Recovery').

³ http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/ff_arab_states_aug09.pdf: (UNDP Fast Facts BCPR in the Arab States region, 2009).

In an effort to assist and support the parliaments of the region, and following the success of the Parliamentary Development Initiative in the Arab Region (**PDIAR**) and the UNDP Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (**POGAR**), UNDP is launching a **new project in the Arab States region** within the framework of the partnership between the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy (**BDP**) – Democratic Governance Group (**DGG**), the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (**GPPS**) and the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (**BCPR**). The new project aims at building the capacity of national parliaments to prevent conflict and armed violence and to restore the security of communities.



This **new Arab States region project** will be closely linked to similar UNDP efforts focusing on developing initiatives that promote more effective action towards empowering parliaments as actors in conflict and violence prevention and post-conflict reconstruction in **Central America** and **West Africa**. In these three regions, a new dedicated project has been launched as part of the UNDP GPPS programme with the following **objectives**:

- Inform the role that national parliaments can play in supporting the prevention of conflict and of violence and the restoration of community security through research and case studies;
- Promote the involvement of national parliaments in conflict prevention and armed violence reduction with a view to influence policy changes;
- Build the capacity of regional organizations and of national parliaments on conflict prevention and armed violence reduction related issues;
- Foster parliamentary coordination on violence and conflict prevention and recovery with a first thematic window on armed violence and community security related issues at the international, regional and national levels.

In the framework of the above mentioned initiative, UNDP hosted a **regional seminar** in partnership with AIPU: *'Towards Strengthening the Role of Parliaments in Crisis Prevention and Recovery in the Arab States Region'*, on 03 and 04 November 2010 in Amman (**Jordan**) with the support of **UNDP Iraq** and the **Jordan office**. The regional seminar provided an opportunity for parliamentarians to identify best practices within the region, share experiences and provide feedback on key activities implemented by partners in the region. The sessions were dynamic and enabled active participation and feedback from participants

A **13 minutes film** focusing on Iraqi women parliamentarians was produced for the seminar in order to address the gender dimensions of conflict and peace building. Through field interviews, the film identified the key challenges faced by women parliamentarians in **Iraq**, and how these women address crisis prevention and recovery issues. The film illustrated their efforts to promote human security and dialogue in **Iraq**.

Two **draft research papers** were also commissioned by UNDP in preparation of the seminar, to allow participants to discuss challenges lying ahead in terms of political and armed violence, crisis prevention and recovery; usefulness of past activities; and how regional partners can further support

the work of parliamentarians in the region. The first paper focuses on the role of parliaments in conciliation and identifies the types of conciliation committees, commissions or structures established within the parliaments of the Arab region, especially in conflict or post conflict countries, such as the *Reconciliation Committee* within the **Parliament of Iraq** or the *Committee of Peace and Unity* within the **Parliament of Sudan**. The second paper focuses on the existing regional organizations which prevent conflict in the Arab region, and more specifically the impact of these organizations on the parliamentary work and process.

A draft self-assessment tool for parliamentary performance with regards to crisis prevention and recovery was also presented to discuss its relevance and applicability in the region, together with the identification of two national case studies to be conducted in 2011.

The **objectives** of the regional seminar were:

- To identify priority issues that parliamentarians want to address to empower parliaments in conflict and post conflict countries through setting up working groups including parliamentarians, civil society organizations (**CSOs**) and partners working on parliamentary development;
- To present, review and discuss the suggested draft research work to develop dialogue on critical challenges and priorities and identify best practices within the region and share experiences;
- To initiate networking among Members of Parliament (**MPs**), international and national organizations working on parliamentary development and explore effective collaboration;
- To present a draft self-assessment tool on parliamentary performance on crisis prevention and recovery, ascertain its relevance and identify 2 national case studies where it can be piloted and tested.

The identified priorities are now being included in the **work plan for 2011**. Lessons learned have been captured, listed and taken into account in the programming activities of the project in the Arab States region. Information and knowledge created as well as key documents are being shared, including on AGORA.

In line with existing activities and mandates in the region, the following **partners** were identified to participate in the regional seminar to share experiences and explore more effective collaboration in terms of supporting parliaments in crisis prevention and recovery in the region:

- **Main partner:** Arab Inter-parliamentary Union (**AIPU**) - the regional seminar was organized in partnership with AIPU as the organization representing Arab parliaments.
- **International partners:** the National Democratic Institute (**NDI**), the European Commission, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (**IDEA**), the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (**DCAF**), the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (**WFD**) and the United States Agency for International Development (**USAID**).
- **National partners:** Yemen Parliament Watch (**YPW**) and the Lebanese Parliamentary Monitor (**Lebanon**).

3. Main Elements of Discussion

Introductory Session

The discussion started with a **tour de table** – participants were invited to introduce themselves and also express their expectations as to what they hoped to accomplish during the regional seminar, namely:

- ✓ Exchange experiences regarding conflict resolution;
- ✓ Enhance cooperation between Arab MPs as well as between Arab parliaments and regional organizations;
- ✓ Contribute to a common vision regarding conflict resolution or at least make constructive suggestions to solve conflicts;
- ✓ Present Arab initiatives in the region; and
- ✓ Identify Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR) mechanisms, opportunities and priorities for Arab parliaments.



M. Kevin Deveaux

Despite the fact that the political regimes are considerably different in each Arab country, participants still emphasized the value added in sharing insights and feedback. Participants acknowledged that parliaments, when strengthened and effective are more than qualified to prevent conflicts and get involved in recovery issues. They noted that, in most Arab countries, parliaments tend to play the role of passive observers when a crisis breaks out. They stressed the need to mobilize, enhance and activate the role of parliaments so that they could become proactive initiators in CPR.



M. Mac Harb

Session 1: Parliaments and Conciliation

The first session was devoted to presenting, reviewing and discussing the findings of the **draft research paper** related to parliaments and conciliation, develop dialogue on critical challenges and priorities with a particular focus on committee work and identify best practices within the region.

Mr. Mac Harb, UNDP Consultant, first provided a general background of the **challenges** parliaments face when it comes to conciliation. According to Mr. Harb, conflict resolution and reconciliation doesn't take place at the parliamentary level.

Most of the time, Arab parliaments, such as in **Iraq** and **Sudan**, are purposely left out of the mediation and conciliation process to limit parliaments' control and stop negotiations from being exposed to the public domain. Parliaments in general start to get involved only once an agreement has been reached between belligerent parties by ratifying treaties and passing laws.

According to M. Harb, the limitations of parliaments are partly due to the lack of coordination and assistance of international donors which tend to channel most of their support to governments.

Equally important and also dependent on the lack of support: the constrained ability of MPs to perform their tasks due to the lack of human/technical/material/financial means; Most MPs don't have adequate offices to work in, or qualified staff/office support/constituency offices to conduct research and reports or assist committees, etc. Furthermore, the Lack of standard and proper rules of procedures for parliaments and committees creates inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the performance of their roles. The role of parliamentary committees are often limited (inability to call in ministers as witnesses in **Iraq** for example) or vague and they tend to end up providing services and getting involved in issues outside of their mandates.

That being said, Mr. Harb stressed the importance of **committee work** in mediation and reconciliation and called for greater support to committees in the Arab states region, listing **Sudan** and **Iraq** as examples of good practices. Although parliaments are the main forum to approve laws which favor reconciliation, parliamentary committees are the ones which look at the details and amend these laws, and report to Parliament on their findings. In **Sudan**, the *Committee of Peace and Unity* for Darfur provides a useful example of the role and impact that committees can play in establishing and maintaining peace. It has been credited with reporting on conflict zones, gaining support from local leaders, assisting with the ending of violence, contributing to the signature of peace agreements among some tribes, the signing of a tribal covenant for the resolution of various local disagreements, and returning displaced persons to their villages or protected areas. In **Iraq**, the multiple parliamentary committees (such as the *Reconciliation Committee*, the *Human Rights Committee*, the *Martyrs and political Prisoners Committee*, the *Refugees, Displaced and Immigrants Committee*) played a substantial role in terms of establishing dialogue between belligerents in the "hot zones".



Hon. Ala Al-Talabani, Mr Nourddine Bouchkouj, Hon. Ramadan Hassan Lako

Hon. Ala Al-Talabani, Member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, further developed the **case of the Iraqi Parliament regarding the reconciliation process**. The Iraqi Government had initiated the national conciliation process but had achieved little progress due to the exclusion of the parliament, the lack of participation of CSOs, and the detachment of the process from the transitional justice. The Parliament's first step towards peace, reconciliation and reconstruction followed the 2005 election, when the *Constitutional*

Committee undertook the drafting of a new constitution. While there was controversy over the content and the role (or lack of role) that the *Constitutional Committee* and the *Constitutional Review Committee* played in the process, the constitution ultimately made positive steps towards a non-partisan resolution. The Parliament was therefore very active in terms of reducing violence between various sectarian/ethnic groups by passing legislation based on principles of justice and fairness. Moreover, the trends demonstrated a significant correlation between the well functioning of the Parliament and the maintenance of peace within the country. Every time, the Parliament reached a consensus, violence was mitigated (i.e.: elections in **Kirkuk**). On the other hand, the lack of consensus in Parliament often results in the escalation of violence at the community level. The Parliament held many meetings in areas prone to conflict and tensions as well as within the **Iraqi Parliament**. MPs also agreed on enhancing the concept of citizenship for Iraqis, to resolve certain imbalances and promote equal treatment with the objective of containing and reducing ethnic / sectarian violence.

Hon. Ramadan Hassan Lako, Member of the National Assembly of Sudan and Chairman of the Peace Committee, provided an overview of the **Darfur crisis** and the **contribution of the Parliament in terms of peace building, reconciliation and dialogue**. The role of Parliament and committees in the peace and reconciliation process in **Sudan** began in 2005, following a cease-fire agreement and the granting of amnesty to those involved in the conflict. In January of 2005, a *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* was reached between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (**SPLM/A**) and the Sudanese Parliament was mandated to implement the outcome of the peace agreement as it entailed the amendment and adoption of laws. A *Technical Committee* was

established by the Parliament which had the responsibility of drafting the constitution and submitting it to the Commission for authorization. The *approval Committee* was supported by a host of sub-committees that analyzed specific aspects of the constitution and submitted these findings back to the *Technical Committee*. This process established the draft constitution. Once the constitution had been presented to the National Assembly, six committees were created, each one to study a set of specific issues. For example, one committee dealt with issues of state, general guidelines and rights, while another examined the distribution of national assets. These committees played a necessary and significant role in the creation and formulation of Sudan's new constitution through the committee role of researching, creating non-partisan dialogue, amending and drafting. The Parliament also worked closely with various partners to facilitate and organize dialogue and discussions. Committees in particular played an important role by involving the various

“Committees in particular played an important role in the peace by involving the various tribes in the process.”

tribes and parties in the peace process. The *Peace and Conciliation Committee for Darfur* (later replaced by the *Peace and Unity Committee*) struggled to bring opinions closer between the conflicting parties and enhance dialogue between the government and belligerents. Other committees arranged field visits to South Sudan to promote unity and the referendum which is being organized. On the difficulties related to the role of

the Parliament in conciliation, Hon. Lako mentioned the tendency of MPs' work to focus on the interest of their political party rather than commit themselves to the interests of the Parliament as a whole. He also criticized the limited human and material resources of parliamentary committees stating that parliamentary action is often hindered by the insufficiency of funds.

The presentation and comments of the two respondents were followed by **general discussions on the following issues:**

- The creation or activation of specific parliamentary committees, combined with a legislation which takes into account the diverse expectations of political partners, could be decisive to create a political environment which favours national dialogue for conciliation and consolidates the legitimacy of the parliament;

Parliamentary committees are important in mediation and reconciliation and supporting them is crucial in the Arab states region, listing Sudan and Iraq as examples of good practices. Although parliaments are the main forum to approve laws which favours reconciliation



- The need for the committees to have access to the resources needed in terms of staffing and material in order to be able to do their work effectively;
- The essential role of permanent committees and ad-hoc committees and the importance of having permanent committees devoted to reconciliation and peace;
- The need to involve civil society in the conciliation process as well as the role that the civil society should play in conciliation;
- The limited prerogatives of parliamentary committees in the region;
- The limited skills of MPs in terms of drafting and suggesting plans and strategies on reconciliation;
- The lack of knowledge of democratic concepts among MPs and the lack of understanding of the role of parliaments among citizens.
- When parliaments engage in conflict prevention issues, by adopting conflict sensitive laws, they create a conducive political environment which favours peace talks, national dialogue, and reconciliation.
- Political choices should be made by parliaments, because progress on conflict prevention and reconciliation requires passing specific laws on penal, civil, social or energy issues.

Session 2: Parliaments and Arab Regional Organizations in Conflict Prevention

The second session was devoted to presenting, reviewing and discussing the findings of Mr. Zaid Al-Ali's **research paper** related to the work of Arab regional organizations with parliaments and more specifically, the challenges regional organizations face in facilitating conflict prevention, dialogue and conciliation in the Arab states region; the factors which prevent parliaments from collaborating with regional organizations and vice versa; and how to improve the collaboration between Arab parliaments and regional organizations.



Mr. Zaid Al-Ali, Mrs Noha El-Makawi, Hon. Nawel Al-Faouri

Regarding the methodology, Mr. Zaid Al-Ali noted that it was the first study ever driven on this specific issue, with information gathered from interviews and other interactions with civil society, parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, as well as officials from various regional organizations.

According to Mr. Zaid Al-Ali, one of the most sensitive and key points for international organizations to successfully work with MPs in the Arab region is to appear as neutral partners for cooperation. The recent support of AIPU to **Iraq**, the contribution of the Arab League to the elaboration of the *Taef Agreements* in **Lebanon**, and the negotiations that have been held under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (**IGAD**) in **Sudan** - illustrate the necessity for regional

organizations to adopt an impartial stance in order to gain legitimacy in the eyes of national parliaments.

The **cooperation between regional organizations and parliaments** often remains too weak in the Arab States region because it is based on individual relationships, instead of institutional ones. This trend, which has been observed both in **Iraq** and **Lebanon**, does not lead to global/ formal discussions and sustainable approaches. These processes could even reduce the legitimacy and credibility of parliaments when the talks happen outside of the parliamentary institution.

Another issue emphasized was the **insufficient funding** which limits the financial and technical capacities of regional organizations thereby also affecting their ability to play a useful role of mediation when it comes to providing support to national parliaments (this was the case between the African Union and Sudan for instance).

A challenge for cooperation initiatives among the Arab parliaments is to focus not only on general issues, but also on peace process and reconciliation efforts in the region. The **institutionalization of relations** between Arab national parliaments and regional organizations is also required, through the discussion and respect of policies and procedures, in order to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of these relations.

Hon. Michel Moussa, Chairman of the Human Rights Parliamentary Committee in the Lebanese National Assembly, reviewed the different types of existing conflicts in the Arab countries (social, ethnical, racial, sectarian and religious conflicts), reflecting the complexity of these societies and also the regional influence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

However, Arab parliaments dispose of many **tools to address the increasing number of conflicts** in the region by: Supporting peace efforts and safeguarding civil peace; enacting legislation that preserves national unity and prevents the domination of a socio-economic group over another; and enhancing the principle of citizenship, etc. Because national reconciliation cannot be effectively reached through external interventions, the Arab parliaments themselves need to be engaged on civil peace issues.



In **Lebanon**, the parliamentary oversight of the government's activities allows the Parliament to check how the legislation is really implemented. The Lebanese Parliament has also conducted internal dialogue activities and conciliation initiatives; for instance, the President of the Lebanese Parliament invited all the political parties to participate in a round table, in order to reduce the internal division and differences of opinion on the main national issues. After the civil war, the Lebanese Parliament strongly supported the peace

process by creating a national committee dedicated to eliminating sectarianism, and by passing laws which fostered national conciliation such as the law for general amnesty, the return of Lebanese refugees, social rights for former prisoners liberated by Israel, etc.

Hon. Nawel Al-Faouri, Member of the Arab Parliament of the League of Arab States, and also a member of the Jordan Parliament stressed that the **involvement of CSOs and the creation of specific parliamentary committees** may help the efforts of Arab Parliaments to support national dialogue and peacebuilding. This has been useful at the regional level (through the Arab Council for Peace and Security, or within AIPU which worked on Human rights and Palestinians urgent needs), as well as at the national level (for instance in **Iraq**).

The **main challenges** faced by the Arab parliaments, according to Hon. Nawel Al-Faouri, to strengthen their effectiveness in conflict prevention and peacebuilding are linked to the weakness of their structures, the executive intervention in the running of their affairs, and the necessity of a higher participation of women. Parliaments should receive more information and studies regarding the preventive process of conflicts.

Hon. Nawel Al-Faouri insisted on the need to build and strengthen the **institutional capacities of Parliaments** and enhance **common strategies or joint action plans** between regional organizations and Arab parliaments thereby leading to better coordination / cooperation with regard to conflict prevention.

Participants further **discussed the following issues**:

- Some NGOs are too politicized to play a role in conflict prevention, for instance in **Sudan** or **Iraq**;
- The neutrality and impartiality of regional organizations and the difficulty to define these notions;
- The proliferation of regional organizations in the Arab region prevent them from being really effective due to insufficient coordination and lack of funds, especially in the oPt;
- The representation of regional organizations in the Arab parliaments and role of parliamentary peace committees should be clarified;
- In the case of **Sudan**, the lack of support to parliamentary peace efforts from the League of Arab States and the Arab Parliament of the League of Arab States; this can be explained, in the case of **Lebanon** or **Iraq**, by discordant political analysis among members of regional organizations;
- The tendency for Arab governments to monopolize crisis prevention issues as they fear that enhancing the powers of parliaments in this domain and strengthening their legitimacy and role would undermine their own authority and control;
- The initiative to support conflict prevention and reconciliation should come first from the Arab parliaments, and then be supported by regional organizations.

The Lebanese Parliament strongly supported the peace process by creating a national committee dedicated to eliminating sectarianism, and by passing laws which fostered national conciliation such as the law for general amnesty, the return of Lebanese refugees, social rights for former prisoners liberated by Israel, etc

Session 3: Gender Sensitivities and Conflict



Mrs. Noha El-Mikawy, Mrs Karima El Korri, Hon Um Koulthum Hamdan

The third session covered the **role of women MPs in conflict prevention and recovery**. Participants were called to share experiences and best practices on how their respective parliaments have been able to engage women MPs in crisis prevention and recovery strategies. Participants also brought up the main bottlenecks faced by women MPs and made recommendations on how to surpass these obstacles. During this session, a film on the contribution of

Iraqi women MPs to recovery and reconstruction was also presented to the participants⁴.

Mrs. Noha El-Mikawy, UNDP Governance Practice Leader for the Arab States Region, provided a general background of the various international **measures and instruments dedicated to improving women's protection and empowerment** especially in conflict and post-conflict situations [i.e. UN Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1889, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (**CEDAW**)]. The above-mentioned measures incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations and promote women's full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security. They address the manner in which conflict affects women and girls differently from men and boys, and acknowledge the crucial link between peace, women's participation in decision-making, and the recognition of women's life experiences throughout the conflict cycle. As such, these measures call for enhanced participation of women in all mechanisms to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts, and for attention to the special needs of women and girls during resettlement, disarmament, reintegration, and other post-conflict processes.

Mrs. Noha El-Mikawy also recalled the '**Eight Point Agenda**' endorsed by UNDP in 2007:

1. Strengthen women's security in crisis: Stop violence against women.
2. Advance gender justice: Provide justice and security for women.
3. Expand women's citizenship, participation and leadership: Advance women as decision-makers.
4. Build peace with and for women: Involve women in all peace processes.
5. Promote gender equality in disaster risk reduction: Support women and men to build back better.
6. Ensure gender-responsive recovery: Promote women as leaders of recovery.
7. Transform government to deliver for women: Include women's issues on the national agenda.
8. Develop capacities for social change: Work together to transform society.



⁴ The movie can be found at: <https://agora.trustedarea.net/groups/49/home>

One of the main **challenges** highlighted by Mrs. Noha El-Mikawy regarding women's participation in crisis prevention is the political and social mindset of Arab countries. Women are often just seen as victims of conflicts – their security and integrity are affected especially at the local/community level. However since women are part of conflicts, they should also be part of the solutions. There is a great need to raise awareness on the effective role women can play in peace and reconciliation processes.

Hon Um Koulthum Hamdan Ahmed Hamdan shared the experience of the **women in Sudan**. The awareness of the importance of women has progressively increased within the community. The current vice-president of the Parliament for example is a woman. **Sudan** ratified a comprehensive treaty to reduce discriminations against women and enacted laws to foster equality and preserve the rights of women such as the electoral law allocating a quota and guaranteeing a number of seats in Parliament to women. Women are becoming active contributors to conflict resolution through their participation in negotiations, committee work (i.e.: referendum committee) and law drafting.

The Film on the contribution of Iraqi women MPs in conflict prevention and recovery: 13 minutes film was projected during the session as an advocacy piece that can be used in promoting a larger role for women Members of Parliaments as leaders of recovery and conflict resolution in line with UNDP's Eight Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Crisis Prevention and Recovery. The film captured the great ethic and religious diversity in Iraq by interviewing four Iraqi women parliamentarians. The stories of women parliamentarians representing different regions and ethnic/religious groups in Iraq highlighted their experiences and efforts in the areas of post-conflict recovery and reconstruction, fostering national dialogue and peace-building and preventing future conflicts. Women parliamentarians narrated their stories in their words and reported their achievements, challenges and hopes.

At the plenary level, participants brought up the following points:

- The importance to raise the legal awareness of women regarding their rights;
- The need for Arab parliaments to promote the role of women in peacekeeping, national reconciliation, and more globally, in politics and decision-making; women can help different political views in parliament to reach a consensus. **This was the case in Iraq for example where the women caucus succeeded in helping the Parliament reach an agreement.**
- The necessity for parliaments to amend existing discriminatory laws against women, carry out gender sensitive budgeting and gender mainstreaming policies especially in law drafting;
- The notion of representativeness: if parliaments fully represent all the socio-economic entities of a nation (including women), the risk of an outbreak or escalation of conflict and violence decreases;
- The importance of building a culture of peace, dialogue and equity in societies where men and women are equal partners and collaborate together;



- The relevance and efficiency of the quota system – as a temporary measure and an important step towards a more democratic society to balance inequalities;
- A brief statistical overview of the political participation of women in Arab countries: Despite the application of quotas in Arab countries, the numbers are still under 10 %. The global rate equals 19 % (**Tunisia**: 26 %, **Sudan**: 25%, **Palestine**: 12.5%, **Algeria**: 7.7, **Somalia**: 6.8%, **Jordan**: 6.4%, **Lebanon**: 3.5%).

Session 4: Working Groups

During session 4, participants were divided into **three groups** and invited to discuss the topics of the previous presentations (parliament and conciliation; parliaments and Arab regional organizations in conflict prevention; gender sensitivities and conflict). Participants shared experiences, good practices, and challenges from their respective countries regarding these issues.

The **main ideas developed** are summarized below:

✓ Group A: Parliament and Conciliation

Participants noted that the representative role of parliaments, when effective, enables the institution to serve a forum for dialogue, mediation, and national conciliation. **Conciliation committees** in particular play a major role. When convened, conciliation committees, manage to bring together all the actors concerned by the conflict in equal number of representatives, and conduct negotiations until a compromise is reached.

The legislative function of parliaments is also a tool for conciliation. By amending or enacting laws which are based on social fairness, justice and equity (such as laws which favor the equal distribution of resources, for example), parliaments are creating an environment which is favorable to social harmony, thereby national unity and conciliation.

Participants also insisted on the importance of including all concerned actors in the conciliation process, namely CSOs, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), media, political parties, etc. in order to build a national debate, reach a broad political consensus and obtain public opinion's support.

✓ Group B: Parliaments and Arab Regional Organizations in Conflict Prevention



Participants discussed different ways to activate the relation and cooperation between parliaments and Arab regional organizations.

They emphasized the need to institutionalize these relations through the establishment of professional and neutral/impartial administrations to ensure sustainable and formal collaborations

which continue to function even after a legislative election. The establishment of clear and transparent channels of communication (instead of individual and informal interactions) was also

stressed as a way to enhance solid and reliable cooperation between parliaments and regional organizations.

Furthermore, given the general lack of knowledge of MPs regarding the existence and activities of most regional organizations, participants insisted on the utility of having a categorization and classification of all the Arab regional organizations with a particular focus on the types of projects they implement, their specializations, and more importantly, the kind of assistance and support parliaments can benefit from. This requires conducting information and advocacy campaigns to raise the awareness of MPs as to what types of cooperation are possible.

Moreover, participants indicated that parliamentary support demands should always come from parliaments, in order to ensure a high level of national ownership, especially regarding security issues which are among the most sensitive and where international contributions are easily suspected of partiality.

✓ Group C: Gender Sensitivities and Conflict

Participants collected feedback on the **movie on the Iraqi women parliamentarians** and shared information about the **role of women in conflict prevention and recovery** at the national level, the challenges they are facing in peace building and the support they are expecting from international organizations.



Participants noted that women parliamentarians have made substantial achievements in the Arab region when it comes to effectively contributing to peace processes and the promotion of human rights. In the **Palestinian territories**, their strong links with CSOs and involvement in various associations helped them obtain a higher representation within the Legislative Council (women parliamentarians have more than 20

percent of seats). In **Sudan**, women MPs' involvement in the reconciliation process between the North and the South was crucial as they enabled the population to better understand, accept and thereby take part in the referendum. Women have reached strategic / decision-making positions within the Sudanese Parliament, such as head of the Legislative Committee or Judicial Committee. More generally, Sudanese women MPs support dialogue, tolerance, human rights and reconciliation through oversight and legislative activities, including working groups and meetings with ministers.

Furthermore, participants indicated that women MPs in the Arab region face common **social, cultural and political challenges**. The influence of social traditions and stereotypes and the conservatism of most political parties constitute a major halt for women's political participation.

In **Sudan** and **Iraq**, many women MPs are reluctant to get involved in crisis prevention and recovery activities due to the force of traditional customs and stereotypes of women in these societies. Men MPs and political parties still tend to consider women as mothers and wives rather than political leaders. The situation in **Yemen** is drastic - there is only 1 women MP out of 300 parliamentarians. Despite the country's commitment to give half of the seats in Parliament to women following the

last referendum regarding the constitutional reform, Yemeni political parties constantly attempt to reduce this proportion, arguing that women candidates wouldn't be able to win elections.

Participants recommended enhancing the involvement of women MPs in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction through **specific trainings** to improve their knowledge of parliamentary work, as well as **additional funding, human resources and material** for their parliamentary office. Trainings could be provided by a regional institute. Moreover, participants agreed once again that women should be given a minimal access to parliamentary representation. On this issue, both at the national and the local level, participants reiterated the temporary use of **gender quotas** as a way to reduce the patriarchal trends which usually prevail.

Session 5: National Parliaments and conflict prevention and recovery efforts - Perspectives of national organizations working on parliamentary development

The objective of the 5th Session was to initiate networking among MPs and national organizations working on parliamentary projects and to explore effective collaboration between both in terms of conflict prevention and recovery through the presentations of two national case studies: Yemen and Lebanon.

✓ The Yemen Parliament Watch (YPW)⁵

Mr. Hafez Albukari, President and Executive Manager of the Yemen Polling Center (YPC) reviewed **the major conflicts and crises Yemen** is currently undergoing (the Sa'dah war, the Southern conflict, the Al Qaeda threat, local disputes over land, etc.) and pointed out the passive and disengaged



Mrs. Sahar Frangieh, M. Mohamed El ghannam, Mr. Hafez Albukari

position of the Parliament, partly because of the concentration of power in the hands of the executive which purposely limits the leeway of the Parliament. Mr. Hafez Albukari also provided an overview of the Yemen Parliament Watch Project and its **activities regarding the Yemeni Parliament**.

The initiative aims to enhance the capacity of Yemen's Parliament by providing a central hub of informational and training resources for MPs, civil society stakeholders, journalists, and the general public. The project, implemented by YPC with funding from the European Union, has as its ultimate goal a strong Parliament serving an informed constituency. Furthermore, the project strives to empower CSOs to pursue democratic and human rights, as well as foster an independent, free, and fair press. YPC began the project in December 2009 and will continue to implement the different activities during a total period of 18 months.

A central component of the YPWatch project is the construction and regular updating of the Yemen Parliament Watch Project website (YPWatch.org). This homepage is intended to provide MPs, civil

⁵ www.yemenpolling.org

society activists, journalists, and the interested public with a means of informing themselves thoroughly about the contents and processes of the work of parliament, about its members, about laws and draft laws and important issues currently under discussion. Also, the website will provide the public with their MPs contact information to allow for direct communication. It is the intention of this activity to lead to enhanced knowledge of MPs on their rights and duties. Also, the website will contribute to increase reporting about the work of parliament by journalists thus contributing to its monitoring and control. Furthermore, the website will be a resource for civil society organizations of how to lobby effectively for changes. The website will increase public knowledge of the work of parliament and its role in the Yemeni society, thus contributing to its monitoring and control as well as to a strengthening of the democratic process.

The website will contribute to increase reporting about the work of parliament by journalists thus contributing to its monitoring and control

The YPWatch project also includes compiling regular special **reports** on the performance and work of the parliament. Additionally, several **workshops** for members of CSOs and journalists of various media organizations (newspapers, radio, and TV) will be conducted throughout the duration of the project. The workshops aspire to strengthen the capacities of CSOs in lobbying parliamentarians on issues pertaining to democracy and human rights, and to enhance the capacities of journalists in monitoring and reporting on the work of parliament.

The three main **objectives of YPW** regarding the Yemen Parliament are as follows:

- To enhance the level of public knowledge in regard to the work of Parliament, the performance of MPs, and ultimately the role of Parliament in Yemeni politics;
- To enhance the political participation of women and support advocacy of women's political rights;
- To encourage MPs to enhance their performance and to strengthen MPs efforts in order to enhance the standing of Parliament in Yemeni politics.

✓ The Lebanese Parliamentary Monitor⁶

Mrs. Sahar Frangieh, Project Manager at the Lebanese Parliamentary Monitor presented the **work objectives, methodology and activities** of the observatory she works for. The Lebanese observatory seeks:

To promote and strengthen the awareness of Lebanese voters and citizens (especially the youth) by conducting extensive researches, publishing topics, covering the news, diffusing information on the role and activities carried out by the Parliament. For example, the Lebanese Parliamentary Monitor conducted an electoral campaign entitled "check before you vote" which consisted in ensuring citizens had enough information on each MPs before voting;

- To support and encourage citizens, especially youth, to take part in politics and contribute or influence the decision-making process by voting;
- To monitor the performance of Parliament and hold MPs accountable, thereby indirectly encouraging them to improve their work;

⁶ www.lpmonitor.org

- To reduce the gap between citizens and MPs by facilitating continuous dialogue and discussions between MPs, CSOs, and other concerned actors, and giving MPs the opportunity to present the priorities they are working on.

Session 6: International organizations working on parliamentary development and crisis prevention: Success stories and lessons learned

In session 6, representatives from **3 regional organizations** (the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the National Democratic Institute, and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces) presented their **activities, initiatives and efforts** regarding regional crisis prevention work with parliaments in the Arab States region with a particular focus on success stories, lessons learned, bottlenecks and challenges.

✓ Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)⁷

Mrs. Dina Melhem, Head of the Middle East and North Africa (**MENA**) Programmes at the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (**WFD**), first gave some background information regarding the **status and work of WFD**: Founded in 1992, WFD is an independent political foundation sponsored by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It specialises in parliamentary strengthening and political party development especially in East Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. In the Arab States region, WFD's work has been concentrated mainly in **Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, and Jordan**, in addition to regional projects which cover several countries in the region. The focus of WFD's work in MENA takes into consideration the interface between democratisation issues, conflict resolution and peace building.

Mrs. Dina Melhem then presented the **objectives and activities of WFD**: WFD conducted a series of projects on national dialogue and conflict resolution that provided opportunities for practitioners, Women, MPs and scholars in the peace building fields to learn from other experiences and best practices with the aim to encourage debate and capture lessons learned.



Mr. Roland Friedrich, Mrs Lisa Mac Lean, Mrs Eugenia Piza Lopez, Mrs. Dina Melhem

For example, WFD facilitated an exchange of experience between members of Parliaments from **Lebanon** and the **Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly** by organizing visits, meetings and seminars on conflict resolution for Lebanese parliamentarians in **Northern Ireland**, and initiating a dialogue with UK political parties and civil society.

Mrs. Dina Melhem highlighted the various **lessons learned from the Irish peace process experience** regarding the role of MPs in managing conflict and reconciliation:

- “Time and Talking” are critical to reach a compromise (several months of continuous and intense negotiations are required);

⁷ www.wfd.org

- The possibility to “park” apparently non-resolvable issues for later is key for reaching an agreement. This allows for negotiations to continue despite apparently non-resolvable issues as they are “parked” to be dealt with later.
- The need to adopt an inclusive dialogue (a broad participation of political parties and CSOs);
- The need to include provisions on Human Rights, law and justice;
- The need to find a common ground based on establishing a common vocabulary, language, and understanding.

Although Mrs. Dina Melhem defended the inherent value of the experience sharing approach, the fact that each conflict has its own dynamics remains a challenge when learning from foreign experiences. Caution must be exercised in applying the experience of conflict management from one place to another.

Other **WFD projects** focused on: capacity building for NGOs to support peace and democracy in the Bekaa Valley; support to Iraqi Women in their role in peace building, reconciliation and accountability (by presenting women’s group and MPs experiences from numerous conflict and post conflict societies in promoting accountability and reconciliation); enhancing the role of Media in peacebuilding and reconciliation (in partnership with UNDP).

To conclude, Mrs. Dina Melhem made the following **recommendations** to better support parliaments dealing with crisis prevention issues in the Arab States region:

- Long term engagement in order to achieve impact;
- Flexibility in programme delivery;
- Couple a top down approach with a bottom up approach. I.e.: engage also with civil society and academia;
- Engage with the Media and strengthen its capacity in reporting appropriately on the peace process;
- Regarding the exchange of experiences: the need to bring a relevant experience with apparent similarities and common challenges.

✓ National Democratic Institute (NDI)⁸

Mrs. Lisa C. McLean, Iraq Country Director for the National Democratic Institute (NDI) - presented NDI as a nonprofit, nonpartisan and nongovernmental organization that supports democratic institutions and practices worldwide.

She outlined **NDI’s approach of parliamentary development** in the Arab States which seeks to improve the balance of power between the legislative and the executive by empowering the fundamentals of parliaments: legal framework; staff training; and the internal administrative structure. NDI’s support addresses more specifically the three main functions of parliaments:



⁸ www.ndi.org

representation (support to committees, hearings, constituent offices, policy making process and public opinion research); *legislation* (support to legislative drafting, the budget processes and the role of committees); and *oversight* (support to oversight hearings, the development of oversight laws, anti-corruption work and budget implementation).

Mrs. Lisa C. McLean gave several examples of **successful initiatives** led by NDI with Arab parliaments:

- In **Iraq**, NDI has been holding consultations with the Council of Representatives to improve the quality of legislation, develop disciplined and responsive legislative processes, and finalize rules of procedure governing parliamentary practice. Additionally, NDI developed a comprehensive and practical guide about parliamentary roles and responsibilities for use during ongoing consultations with members of the Kurdistan Parliament of Iraq (**KPI**) regarding their work as legislators, constituent representatives, and party advocates. Through capacity-building trainings, consultations with parliamentary and legislative experts, and study missions to other parliaments, NDI assists Iraqi MPs and staff in understanding new approaches, structures, and strategies for conducting legislative work.
- In **Yemen**, NDI's programs are geared towards strengthening the institution of Parliament with a focus on building the capacity of parliamentary committees to exercise their oversight authority by drafting, analyzing and effectively amending legislation and actively engaging civil society and public stakeholders to support legislative goals. The Institute managed to ensure public officials respect the procedures regarding the *Declaration of Assets* and is working to build relationships between civil society and MPs by developing their ability to implement participatory budgeting and encouraging mutual engagement to prioritize community needs.
- In **Mauritania**, NDI provided technical assistance on the drafting of parliamentary rules of procedure and continues to provide ongoing support to the National Assembly as it strives to become a more efficient, cohesive, and accountable legislature. NDI assists MPs to engage citizens by organizing "*Mobile Parliament*" roundtables around the country that gather together the current MPs from a specific district, CSOs and community leaders to discuss key issues of local concern. The Institute also strengthens links between elected officials and Mauritanian youth by conducting a parliamentary internship program. Through the program, young people have the opportunity to engage in politics and develop legislative and leadership skills, while MPs and caucuses get extra help conducting their daily operations.
- In **Somalia**, NDI had fostered a better understanding of the separation of powers by helping Somali politicians differentiate their roles and responsibilities between the executive and legislative branches of government, through the organization of trainings and consultations with Somalis on the principles of democracy, practices of good governance, roles and responsibilities of branches of government, executive-legislative relations, etc. NDI also promoted interaction and better cooperation between the executive and the legislative branches, and more specifically between ministries and their corresponding parliamentary committees. For example, the Ministries of Commerce, Education and Information have submitted annual reports to the Office of the Speaker that reflect their work over the past year. Additionally, the Ministries of Interior and National Security have both attended hearings with the Committee on Security and the Committee on Internal Affairs for formal briefings on their activities.
- In the interest of promoting parliamentary accountability in **Lebanon**, NDI has provided technical assistance to Nahwa Muwatiniya⁹ on its Lebanese Parliamentary Monitor (LPMonitor) project in

⁹ Nahwa Muwatiniya: Non-profit CSO which seeks to promote good governance and empower and mobilize citizens towards active participation in governance.

terms of developing monitoring criteria, establishing a systematic research strategy and publishing statistics about parliamentary activity. The Institute also provided communications and media training to members of the team who conduct interviews and hold public meetings.

According to Mrs. Lisa C. McLean, the main **challenges** in this region remain the strength of the executive power, the weakness of the opposition, the excessive influence of local considerations in politics, the insufficient professional capacities of civil services, the lack of political will for change and the lack of access to information for parliamentarians. In the future, the priorities of international organizations should focus on strengthening **parliamentary independence**, improving their **legal framework**, providing support to **policy development** and **skills building**.

✓ [Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces \(DCAF\)](#)¹⁰



Mr. Roland Friedrich, Head of Office of the Palestinian Territories at the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), reviewed **DCAF's work and approach** for building the capacity of Arab parliaments in the oversight of the security sector and in post-conflict reconstruction and peace building:

- Promote understanding for concepts such as good governance and security sector governance / reform (SSG/R);
- Encourage national assessments of the security sector (through studies and national working groups);
- Provide assistance, training and tools tailored on needs assessment (for all the stakeholders: executive authorities, parliaments, civil society, police, army, security forces);
- Establish regional networks for learning and exchange of best practices.

At the **regional level**, Mr. Roland Friedrich pointed out that DCAF has worked in close cooperation with UNDP (through POGAR) to support a parliamentary working group on security sector governance which brought together MPs of the Arab region on several occasions in Beirut, Montreux and Brussels from 2006 to 2008. DCAF has also published tools and handbooks in Arabic, based on best practices, which have become references for parliamentary oversight in the security sector.

Mr. Roland Friedrich gave further examples of **DCAF's work at the national level**:

- In the **oPt**, DCAF has been providing advisory and consultative services as well as supporting a capacity-building process for staff and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council by delivering tailor-made training and advice services (on SSG/SSR, parliamentary oversight, financial oversight, budgeting, national security policy making, legislative drafting, etc.).
- In **Iraq**, action has been taken to strengthen parliamentary oversight of the security sector and over intelligence agencies in particular since 2009, including a workshop on intelligence oversight for Iraqi MPs and staff of the Iraqi National Security Council which took place in Beirut in July 2010.

¹⁰ www.decaf.ch

- Efforts were also made to assist the parliaments of **Lebanon** and **Morocco** in strengthening their oversight capacity of the security sector, through the organization of conferences or workshops [i.e.: the '*Role of Parliament in Developing National Security Policies*' for Lebanese members MPs (Montreux, 2007)] and the publication of relevant legislation for the Lebanese and Moroccan security sector.

Session 7: Presentation of UNDP's new project on parliamentary development and crisis prevention and the draft self-assessment tool on parliamentary performance and crisis prevention and recovery

During Session 7, Ms. Soulef Guessoum - UNDP Regional Project Manager (Arab States Region) , and Ms. Diane Sheinberg – UNDP DGG/BDP Programme Specialist on Parliamentary Development, presented **UNDP's parliamentary strengthening programme**.

Among the chief vehicles for UNDP support to parliaments is the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (**GPPS**). The GPPS has been supporting the parliamentary development agenda over the past **11 years** at the global, regional and national levels. UNDP currently provides technical assistance to more than **60 parliaments** in the world (1/3 of worldwide parliaments).

UNDP has implemented around **14 parliamentary projects** in the Arab States region. Nine of them are ongoing in **Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Somalia** and **UAE**. The projects have been successful in reinforcing and supporting the administration and MPs. Achievements were noted in terms of supporting parliaments in the implementation of strategies and providing parliaments with research work and dedicated thematic publications.

UNDP has launched a **new project** on strengthening the role of parliaments in crisis prevention and recovery. The project is a joint initiative led by the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) through the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening – GPPS III and the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), and is implemented at the global, regional and national levels with a regional focus on **Central America, West Africa** and the **Arab States region**. The main **objectives** are to:

- Inform the role that national parliaments can play in supporting the prevention of conflict and of violence and the restoration of community security through research and case studies;
- Promote the involvement of national parliaments in conflict prevention and armed violence reduction with a view to influence policy changes;
- Build the capacity of regional organizations and of national parliaments on conflict prevention and armed violence reduction related issues;
- Foster parliamentary coordination on conflict prevention and recovery with a first thematic window on armed violence and community security related issues at the international, regional and national levels by creating a global knowledge management hub and sub-regional parliamentary networks.

At the **global level**, UNDP fosters knowledge development and advocacy through:

- **AGORA** - a virtual platform for global exchanges on parliamentary development and the dissemination of information on the role of parliaments in supporting the restoration of community security (www.agora-parl.org);
- Programming Tool on parliaments and crisis prevention;

- Research papers and comparative studies.

At the **regional level (West Africa, Central America and the Arab region)**, UNDP supports regional parliamentary organizations and regional parliamentary working groups to promote sharing of experiences and South/South and North/South cooperation and exchange of information, challenges, best practices, recommendations, and lessons learned.



At the **national level**, UNDP often conducts joint missions with partners, pays attention to emerging needs, and implements regular programmes on CPR, peacebuilding and parliamentary development (capacity-building of MPs, support to parliamentary committees, etc.).

The **different tools developed by UNDP** to better engage with parliaments and parliamentarians in crisis prevention and recovery include: the 2006 “UNDP Guidelines for the International Community on Parliaments and Crisis Prevention and Recovery”; and the 2010: Programming guide¹¹, designed to provide practitioners and parliaments with programmatic guidance on supporting parliament in addressing conflict.

Part of the guide comprises a **draft self-assessment tool** designed to identify how to support parliament in addressing crisis. The draft questionnaire is designed as both a self-assessment tool for MPs and staff, as well as a programming instrument for UNDP country staff and parliamentary development practitioners in general. The process of completing this questionnaire can be an integral step in the programme development process for UNDP practitioners but it is also critical in identifying parliament’s priority interests, and in helping to ensure ownership and sustainability.

The **objectives of the self-assessment tool** are:

- To better integrate a conflict-sensitive approach in existing parliamentary development projects and foster a greater understanding of what parliament can do to address crisis by providing a practical tool to identify how to provide such support;
- To understand the broad parameters of parliament (capacity, needs, mandate) and understand the factors that enable and inhibit parliament from addressing conflict;
- To understand parliament’s relationship to a conflict: parliament’s prior attempts to address the conflict; members’ individual and collective will to address the conflict; parliament’s relationship to the executive; and, parliament’s internal structures and procedures, as they relate to the conflict.

¹¹ The **guide** seeks to meet three objectives. First, to *inform* practitioners in the field of democratic governance on the role that parliament can play in addressing conflict, and why it has largely failed to do so. Second, to *guide* practitioners on how to approach programming in this emerging area of parliamentary development. Third, to *assist* practitioners in determining how to support parliament in addressing conflict. The guide has been developed on the basis of surveys completed by UNDP staff representing almost 20 countries, a two-day workshop on parliaments and conflict prevention and recovery held in *Paris* in December 2009, and discussion and analysis by UNDP’s Democratic Governance Group (DGG) and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR).

The methodology of the self-assessment tool recommends individual meetings between UNDP and the Secretary General and the President of parliament, parliamentary groups, and thematic commissions, as well as group discussions with representatives of majority / opposition – administration and elected MPs on past experiences on how the parliament dealt with crisis, the assessment of the parliamentary institution and its functions, and opportunities for the parliament to play an effective role in CPR. The application of the self-assessment tool should be linked to existing parliamentary development and CPR UNDP programmes / emerging needs and / or existing parliamentary development strategic plan.

In **West Africa**, the piloting exercises of the self-assessment tool led to the identification of the following **activities**:

- In **Togo**: support to the Human Rights and Defense parliamentary Committees to address small arms issues, and facilitate field visits of Committees (with opposition and majority representatives) to better inform legislative debate, including crisis analysis.
- In **Guinea-Bissau**: support to dissemination and dissemination of laws; support to the domestication of the ECOWAS Small Arms Convention and constituency outreach / work of committees.

In 2011, UNDP is planning to: **identify two countries in the Arab region** on the basis of a call for proposal to facilitate a self-assessment mission (aspects to take into account in the identification process are: a conducive political environment, electoral calendar, existence of a parliamentary development and / or CPR project).

Sessions 8 and 9: Round tables: Possible solutions, opportunities and workplan at the regional and national levels to collectively improve parliamentary performance in crisis prevention and recovery issues in the Arab States region

Proceedings of the day continued with discussions on **solutions, opportunities and work plans to improve parliamentary performance in crisis prevention and recovery issues**. **3 round tables** were set up for this purpose; two were dedicated to discussing parliamentary performance in crisis prevention and recovery at the **national level**, and one at the **regional level**. Participants were asked to adopt a **SWOT analysis approach** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).



Session 10: Presentation of round tables discussions

The round tables enabled participants to share a common analysis on the current situation in the Arab States region and underscore the main challenges, priorities and recommendations identified for future common work to strengthen the role of parliaments in conflict prevention and recovery. The **results of the round tables debates** were discussed in plenary during session 10 and are listed below.

✓ Group A and B: Weaknesses, strengths, threats, opportunities and priorities of Arab parliaments at the national level regarding CPR

Weaknesses

- Internal conflicts within a country (i.e.: fragmented government in **oPt**).
- Absence of coordination between the multiplicity of actors and institutions engaged in reconciliation (i.e.: **Iraq**: MPs, committees, CSOs, clergymen, international donors, etc.).
- Lack of independence and objectivity of the Media (this can exacerbate conflicts and tensions).
- Passive role of the opposition.
- Limited knowledge of MPs regarding CPR: no data/indicators available for MPs to prevent conflict.
- Lack of information concerning early warning systems.
- No or limited research capacity of parliaments.
- Lack of facilities to effectively meet with citizens.
- Lack of independence of parliament.
- Lack of independence of the judiciary.
- Insufficient staff to assist MPs and limited human resources available to manage conflict resolution.
- Limited skills and capacities of MPs and committees to do their job properly to address CPR.
- Weak parliamentary oversight.
- Lack of funding.
- Loopholes in laws: many are not discussed at the national level through a national debate in which all citizens participate and can recognize their interest.

Strengths

- Constitutional authority and legitimacy: parliaments are elected and represent the people. They have the ability to draft, vote and amend laws related to CPR.
- High voting rates which demonstrate popular support and respect of parliamentary work and (i.e.: **Lebanon**).
- All groups/blocs/forces are reflected and represented in parliaments (i.e.: **Syria** and **Lebanon**).
- Oversight role over the government – certain parliaments can ask ministers to appear before parliament for accountability, they can ask questions to the cabinet and require answers (in **Iraq**, vote of confidence used, Security Minister questioned in Parliament).
- Creation of ad-hoc parliamentary committees to deal with CPR (i.e.: **Iraq**: Justice and Conciliation Committee, Committee for Displaced, etc.).
- Fact finding committees.
- Parliamentary committees play an important role by organizing field visits and hearings relevant to reconciliation and the enactment of conflict-sensitive laws.
- Effective and independent parliamentary secretariats in some Arab countries.
- The capacity to influence budget.
- Parliament has the ability to provide a suitable and favorable environment for dialogue (i.e.: **oPt**: In 2006, the Parliament adopted an initiative to enhance national Palestinian dialogue and served as a forum for dialogue where key political leaders were able to engage in discussions; functional working groups actively engaged citizens on crisis issues).
- Parliament can play an important mediation/reconciliation role by serving as a venue for political parties to assemble and unite (i.e.: during a political crisis in **Algeria**, the Parliament played an effective role in bringing the points of views of different political parties together thereby fostering political unity and national reconciliation).

Challenges / threats

- Maintain the independence of the legislature.
- Find the adequate balance between executive – legislative.
- Personal security threat for parliamentarians and for women in particular who would like to run for parliament.
- Murder threats on the basis of political opinions.
- MPs should not give in to pressures / blackmails.
- Possibility for the executive to abuse the right to dissolve the parliament.

- Involvement/exacerbation of political parties in sub national / local conflicts.
- The tendency of parliamentarians to favor their own personal interest over the national public interest (need to better serve citizens and respond to the expectations of voters).
- Violation of the Constitution and lack of implementation of the decisions of the courts.
- Political parties' inconsistency and lack of professionalism / double standards.
- Lack of impartiality of parliament's position in some cases lead to its marginalization.

✓ **Group C: Regional level**

The work at the **regional level** is also pertinent because most Arab countries suffer from trans-border problems such as ethnic or religious tensions (**Sudan, Lebanon, Iraq**) and State fragility (**Yemen, Lebanon**). Many of them have also been affected in their stability or security by regional conflicts (**Palestinian territories, Lebanon**) or external interventions (**Iraq**).

-The **regional priority** for the Arab parliaments working on conflict prevention and peace-building should be to find an agreement on the Palestinian territories status, taking into account the UN resolutions that have been adopted regarding this central crisis.

-A strong political will from parliaments does not necessarily enable to make progress on crisis prevention and recovery, because the political environment, which depends on the circumstances, also has a major influence on the results.

-It remains crucial for Arab parliaments to work on human rights.

-Arab parliamentarians still need, at the regional level, to present their national experiences on crisis prevention and recovery, discuss this together and make national comparisons to identify best practices.

-The role of Arab regional organizations and their cooperation with national parliaments needs to be activated.



Conclusions and Recommendations

The presence of **strong, effective and legitimate parliaments is crucial for a greater parliamentary role in crisis prevention and recovery**. However the lack of resources and capacity within the Arab parliaments prevent MPs and the institution to play an effective role. This is made more difficult by a political culture in the Arab region that does not have a long tradition of parliamentary democracy (with the exception of Lebanon). The dominance of the executive branch of government is also a substantial factor. More direct roles in CPR by the parliament – oversight of the security sector, drafting of the legal framework for reconciliation, etc. – have not been utilized yet in the region leaving quite some room to make progress in the field of parliamentary involvement in CPR.

On the positive side, the group agreed that a parliament can play an important role in CPR just by ensuring all the key political actors are represented in the parliament and that the political leaders are setting an example of reconciliation by convening and addressing the political issues of the day through dialogue and not violence. This role of “parliament as the venue for statesmen and women” is an important role in the Arab Region.

UNDP will continue to engage with Arab parliaments, offer a neutral and open space for sharing information, create linkages and foster coordination and capacity-building. UNDP remains committed to strengthening collaborations and creating new forms of partnerships in order to reinforce and improve parliamentary support activities in the region. Moreover, UNDP urges parliamentarians and parliamentary development practitioners to make the necessary follow-up on the implementation and application of the various recommendations made during the seminar at the level of their respective parliaments.

The **key recommendations** for moving the work on parliamentary support in the area of crisis prevention and recovery forward are listed below:

✓ **The support of the international community is imperative**

Donors’ coordination is imperative for post conflict parliamentary assistance benefits to be tangible. Coordinated complementary assistance can provide technical expertise and financial aid to assist post conflict parliaments. Parliaments in the region can benefit from technical support in the field of legislative analysis to allow parliamentarians to effectively play their role in parliament and within parliamentary committees.

✓ **Support parliamentary twinning**

To be an active participant in the recovery process, the parliamentary institution needs to be recognized, credible, empowered, encouraged and supported as an effective actor in early intervention to prevent and resolve conflict. Donors should assist Arab parliaments to twin (cooperate) with other parliaments to foster the use of best practices.

✓ **Focused assistance & strategic planning**

There’s a need for post conflict parliaments in the Arab region to develop strategic plans that respond to the need of their voters with a focus on recovery. Developing, debating and adopting legislation that addresses vital social justice and human rights concerns is a key component of a parliament’s mandate. Parliamentary support should ensure adequate meeting facilities and

access to information technology equipment; as well as access to adequate research and library facilities.

✓ **Targeted support for parliamentary staff and administration**

Staff support detaining appropriate qualifications is required for parliaments to properly engage in debates, deliberations, and other legislative practices – this is crucial for the development of good and effective legislations.

✓ **Encouraging dialogue between the parties involved in conflict**

Newly elected parliaments in the region and in post conflict countries are composed of different factions with different views. Parliaments should encourage, foster and support open dialogue that is inclusive, involves listening and having empathy for opposing viewpoints, and works to build bridges in order to find common ground amongst members.

✓ **Empowering Parliament to embrace civil society**

The active participation of civil society is crucial for parliaments to be effective, representative and responsive to the needs of their voters, in particular, marginalized groups, women, minorities and people with disabilities. Special efforts should focus on supporting parliaments in establishing procedures, practices and standards.

✓ **Supporting the auditing capacity of post conflict parliaments**

Accountability is fundamental to the achievement of reconciliation and peace. Measures should be put in place to monitor and evaluate the process and the progress of government and parliamentary activities. Parliaments can play a key role in approving laws, establishing investigative committees, publicly debating government authorities (keeping them accountable) and encouraging dialogue with constituencies.

✓ **Strengthen the media capacity and parliamentary information flow**

Improve parliamentary information flow; strengthen media capacity, awareness and engagement in reporting on post-conflict parliamentary proceedings, debates, reports and resolutions.

✓ **Review of international measures to promote peace and conciliation**

International donors should encourage parliaments in developed democracies to review the activities they implement to promote peace and conciliation and what can be done to assist post conflict parliaments. The finding of these reviews should be made available to post-conflict Arab parliaments in the interest of enhancing North/South inter-parliamentary cooperation.

✓ **Support parliamentary committees and permanent peace and conciliation committees in particular**

Parliamentary committees play a key role in the functioning of a parliament. Their role in the peace and reconciliation process needs to be supported and strengthened. This can be accomplished by providing appropriate training and properly utilizing committee staff, putting in place efficient and useful research tools, and supplying the resources and expertise required to effectively run these parliamentary committees. Parliamentary committees should be properly resourced especially in the technical, financial and knowledge based areas. Committees should have enough time to conduct thorough investigations and produce expert reports which should be taken seriously and used by parliament. Committees should be empowered to call on witnesses, to organize field visits, to hold public and private hearings and to report on its finding

as necessary and as needed. A code of conduct and rules of procedure for parliamentarians and committee work should be established.

Parliaments should particularly support the establishment of permanent parliamentary peace and conciliation committees and provide these committees with the necessary financial and political support needed. These committees can be mandated with the tasks of identifying potential crisis risks, promoting good policy measures to prevent crisis and keeping an eye on government policy.

Recommendations to strengthen committees:

- ✓ **Strengthening the role of the Committee Chair:** The committee chair plays an important role within the committee and should be supported. This role includes: establishing the agenda and procedures; representing the committee at parliamentary plenary meetings and at events; signing all outgoing correspondence and replying to requests on behalf of the committee; ensuring that there is a quorum at meetings; conducting fair meetings; and providing each member with an equal opportunity to participate. Additionally, when dealing with items such as legislation before a committee, the chair works with the committee secretary to organize the proceeding. This includes determining the order of speakers and taking care of logistical matters that are important for the smooth operation of the committee, the chair organizes the budget of the committee and submits it for approval to the relevant authority.
- ✓ **Strengthening the role of the Committee Secretariat:** The committee secretariat is a key position that is necessary for the committee to operate effectively. When empowered the secretariat can provide the logistical support for the committee; assist in the drafting of the agenda; distribute notices, log all documents, materials, correspondences, enquiries from the public, the media and administer the replies; provide the committee with legislative drafts and other materials relating to the passing of legislation; keep records of evidence taken by the committee and other background written materials relevant to the committee's inquiries; keep records of votes; offer procedural advice; and organize the appearance of witnesses.
- ✓ **Strengthening the Committee Research capacity:** Specific areas where research could be strengthened include: the identification of topics for discussion; the planning of inquiry programs; identifying potential witnesses; organizing hearings and background briefings; ensuring that the committee has relevant evidence; advising on the analysis of legislation, drafting clear and comprehensive reports for the committee; maintaining specialized knowledge in the relevant area; keeping the committee informed of developments in the issue area; creating links with pertinent organizations and academics; and contributing to the development of effective communication between specialists working for the committee and those working on other committees and elsewhere in the parliament.
- ✓ **Strengthening knowledge on conducting Committee Consultations and Hearings:** Consultations and hearings can serve as a powerful tool for committees and must be used in a responsible and effective manner. Committees should be empowered to: hold public information sessions, round tables, focus groups, and other forms of public hearings (unless the topic is an internal administrative issue or a sensitive national security issue). The committee should also be able to: establish agenda and procedures, including the time and dates allotted for the conduct of hearings. Furthermore, once a list of potential witnesses is prepared, the committee should be able to disseminate information on the issue through the media and other electronic outlets. The committee should also be able to send an invitation to the relevant minister to appear and answer any questions that committee members may have.

Annexes

Annex 1: Agenda

Tuesday 02 November, 2010

Outcomes:

- ✓ To initiate networking among MPs and international and national organizations working on parliamentary development and explore effective collaboration;
- ✓ To share information and knowledge.

04:00 pm – 06:00 pm	Registration: <i>Foyer Area (-2 floor)</i>
06:00 pm – 08:00 pm	Welcome cocktail reception + mini knowledge fair where partners can present their latest publications on crisis prevention and recovery and parliamentary development
<i>Foyer Area (-2 floor)</i>	Welcome Address by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mr. Peter Batchelor, Deputy Country Director, UNDP-Iraq. 2) Mr. Nouredine Bouchkouj, Secretary General, Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU) Agora Portal Presentation by: Ms. Diane Sheinberg, Programme Specialist, Parliamentary Development, DGG-BDP, UNDP

Wednesday 03 November, 2010

Outcomes:

- ✓ To present, review and discuss the draft research papers; develop dialogue on critical challenges and priorities; and identify best practices within the region;
- ✓ To share experiences, information and knowledge.

08:30 am – 09:00 am	Registration (for participants arriving after the Cocktail Reception) <i>Entrance of Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i>
09:00 am - 09:45 am	Introductory Session Tour de table – Introductions
<i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i>	Moderator: • Mr. Kevin Deveaux, Parliamentary Development Policy Advisor, DGG-BDP, UNDP
Session 1: Parliaments and Conciliation	
09:45 am – 10:45 am	Moderator: • Mr. Nouredine Bouchkouj, Secretary General, Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU)
<i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i>	Speaker: • Mr. Marc Harb, Expert - Presentation of the research paper related to parliaments

	<p>and conciliation (15 minutes)</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Ala Talabani, Member of the Council of Representatives, Iraq (5 minutes) • Hon. Ramadan Hassan Lako, Chairman of the Peace Committee, National Assembly of Sudan (5 minutes) <p>Questions and Answers: To collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region; comments to be integrated in the final version of the research paper.</p>
10:45 am – 11:00 am	<p>Coffee Break: <i>Foyer Area (-2 floor)</i></p>
<p>Session 2: Parliaments and Arab Regional Organizations in Conflict Prevention</p>	
11:00 am - 12:30 pm <i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i>	<p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Noha El-Mikawy, Governance Practice Leader for the Arab States Region, Regional Center in Cairo, UNDP <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Zaid Al-Ali, Expert - Presentation of the research paper related to parliaments and Arab regional organizations (15 minutes) <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Nawel Al-Faouri, Member of the Arab Parliament of the League of Arab States (5 minutes) • Hon. Michel Moussa, Chairman of the Human Rights Parliamentary Committee, Lebanese National Assembly (5 minutes) <p>Questions and Answers: To collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region; comments to be integrated in the final version of the research paper.</p>
12:30 pm – 02:00 pm	<p>Lunch: <i>Kempi Café Restaurant (ground floor)</i></p>
<p>Session 3: Gender Sensitivities and Conflict</p>	
02:00 pm - 03:10 pm <i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i>	<p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Karima El Korri, Regional Coordinator, Parliamentary Development Initiative in the Arab Region, UNDP <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Noha El-Mikawy, Governance Practice Leader for the Arab States Region, Regional Center in Cairo, UNDP - The role of women leaders and legislators in conflict prevention and recovery: general background (5 minutes) <p>Experience of Iraq: Presentation of the video: Contribution of Iraqi women parliamentarians in recovery and reconstruction (15 minutes)</p> <p>Experience of Sudan: Hon. Um Koulthum Hamdan Ahmed Hamdan, Member of the National Assembly of Sudan (10 minutes)</p> <p>Questions and Answers: To collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region; comments to be integrated in the final version of the research paper.</p>
03:10 pm - 03:30 pm	<p>Coffee Break: <i>Foyer Area (-2 floor)</i></p>
<p>Session 4: Working Groups</p>	
03:30 pm – 04:30 pm <i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i>	<p>Methodology for working group discussions: participants will be divided in three groups, and will discuss the two presentations and the film, share experiences, good practices and challenges from their respective countries.</p> <p>Group A: Parliament and Conciliation</p> <p>Facilitators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Mohammed Ghanam, Senior Programme Advisor, UNDP-Iraq • Mr. Kevin Deveaux, Parliamentary Development Policy Advisor, DGG-BDP, UNDP <p>Group B: Parliaments and Arab Regional Organizations in Conflict Prevention</p> <p>Facilitators:</p>

<p><i>Venus Room (- 2 floor)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Amjad Alsharif, Programme Analyst, UNDP-oPt • Mrs. Karima El Korri, Coordinator, Parliamentary Development Initiative in the Arab Region, UNDP <p>Group C: Gender Sensitivities and Conflict</p> <p>Facilitators:</p>
<p><i>Jupiter Room (- 2 floor)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Noha El-Mikawy, Governance Practice Leader for the Arab States Region, Regional Center in Cairo, UNDP • Mr. Cedric Jurgensen, Parliamentary Development Advisor, UNDP
<p>04:30 pm – 05:30 pm <i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i></p>	<p>Presentation of findings of each group (5 minutes for each group)</p> <p>Wrap up and closing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Noha El-Mikawy, Governance Practice Leader for the Arab States Region, Regional Center in Cairo, UNDP

Thursday 04 November, 2010

Outcomes:

- ✓ To identify priority issues that parliamentarians want to address to empower parliaments in conflict and post-conflict countries through the set-up of working groups including MPs, civil organizations and partners working on parliamentary development.
- ✓ To present a draft self-assessment tool on parliamentary performance and crisis prevention and recovery;
- ✓ To initiate networking among MPs and international and national organizations working on parliamentary development and explore effective collaboration.

Session 5: National Parliaments and conflict prevention and recovery efforts / Perspectives of national organizations working on parliamentary development

<p>09:00 am - 09:45 am <i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i></p>	<p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Mohammed Ghanam, Senior Programme Advisor, UNDP-Iraq <p>Yemen case study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Hafez Albukari, President and Executive Manager, Yemen Parliament Watch (YPW) (10 minutes) <p>Lebanon case study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Sahar Frangieh, Project manager, Lebanese Parliamentary Monitor (10 minutes) <p>Questions and Answers: To collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region; comments to be integrated in the final version of the research paper.</p>
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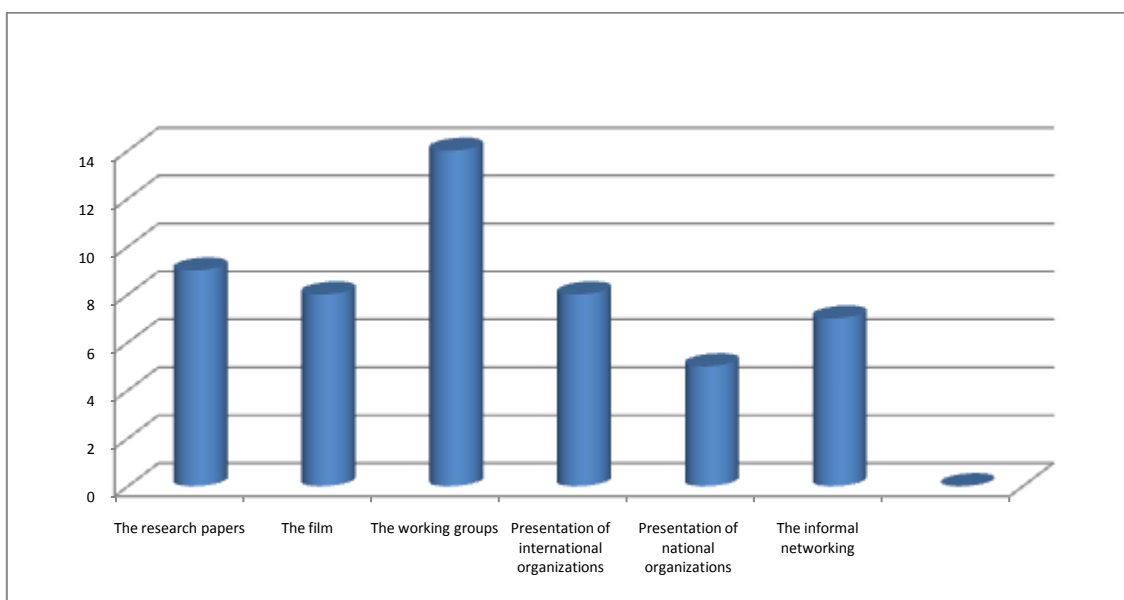
Session 6: International organizations working on parliamentary development and crisis prevention: Success stories and lessons learned

<p>09:45 am – 10:45 am <i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i></p>	<p>Presentations of four regional organizations on success stories, impact, bottlenecks and challenges (10 minutes per organization)</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Eugenia Piza-Lopez, Senior Recovery Advisor, Conflict and Governance, BCPR, UNDP <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Dina Melhem, Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) • Mrs. Lisa C. McLean, Country Director, National Democratic Institute (NDI), Iraq • Mr. Roland Friedrich, Head of Office of the Palestinian Territories, Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) <p>Questions and Answers: To collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region; comments to be integrated in the final version of the research paper.</p>
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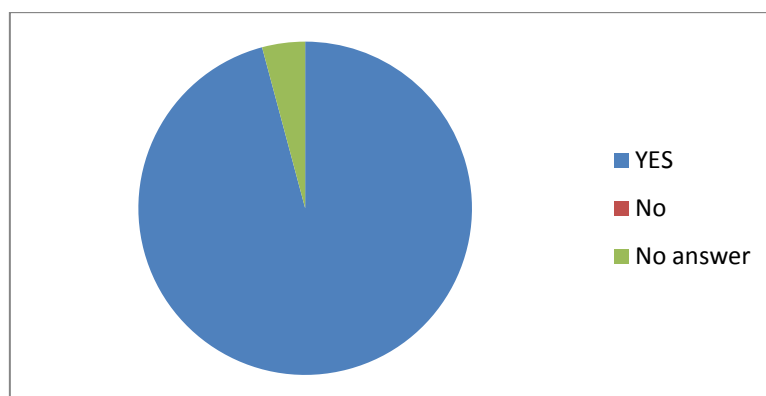
10:45 am - 11:00 am	Coffee Break: <i>Foyer Area (-2 floor)</i>
Session 7: Presentation of UNDP's new project on parliamentary development and crisis prevention and the draft self-assessment tool on parliamentary performance and crisis prevention and recovery	
11:00 am - 11:30 am <i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i>	Moderator: • Mr. Kevin Deveaux, Parliamentary Development Policy Advisor, DGG-BDP Speakers: • Ms. Soulef Guessoum, Regional Project Manager • Ms. Diane Sheinberg, Programme Specialist, Parliamentary Development, DGG-BDP, UNDP
Session 8: Round tables: Possible solutions, opportunities and workplan at the regional and national levels to collectively improve parliamentary performance in crisis prevention and recovery issues in the Arab States region	
11:30 am - 12:30 pm <i>Al Reem Ballroom (- 1 floor)</i> <i>Venus Room (- 2 floor)</i> <i>Jupiter Room (- 2 floor)</i>	Methodology for round tables: Three round table discussions (one discussion on regional issues / two discussions on national level). Two facilitators per table. Group A: National priorities Facilitators: • Mr. Kevin Deveaux, Parliamentary Development Policy Advisor, DGG-BDP • Mrs. Diane Sheinberg, Programme Specialist, Parliamentary Development, DGG-BDP, UNDP Group B: National priorities Facilitators: • Mr. Amjad Alsharif, Programme Analyst, UNDP-OPT • Mr. Zaid Al-Ali, Expert Group C: Regional priorities Facilitators: • Mrs. Eugenia Piza-Lopez, Senior Recovery Advisor, Conflict and Governance, BCPR, UNDP • Mr. Mohammed Ghanam, Senior Programme Advisor, UNDP-Iraq
12:30 pm – 02:00 pm	Lunch: <i>Kempi Café Restaurant (ground floor)</i>
Session 9: Round tables (continued)	
02:00 pm – 03:15 pm	Exercise: prioritization of priorities
03:15 pm - 03:30 pm	Coffee break: <i>Foyer Area (-2 floor)</i>
Session 10: Presentation of round tables discussions (15 minutes each)	
03:30 pm - 05:00 pm <i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i>	Plenary discussion Ways forward and recommendations on how to better work together: solutions identified and next steps
Session 11: Evaluation forms: Summary of the seminar and future steps	
05:00 pm – 05:30 pm <i>Al Reem Ballroom (-1 floor)</i>	Closing Session Moderators: • Mr. Kevin Deveaux, Parliamentary Development Policy Advisor, DGG-BDP • Mrs. Eugenia Piza-Lopez, Senior Recovery Advisor, Conflict and Governance, BCPR, UNDP

Annex 2: Expectations and Evaluation of the Regional Seminar

1. The most valuable and useful aspects of the seminar according to the participants



1. Perception of participants following the regional seminar regarding the role of parliaments in overcoming obstacles to effective parliamentary performance in conflict prevention



2. Expectations

- ✓ More information on the role of parliaments in conflict prevention and recovery
- ✓ Reinforcing staff and elected members of Parliaments
- ✓ Strengthening parliamentary committees of security, conciliation and peace including staff working within these committees
- ✓ Exchange of experiences with other conflict countries from the region

- ✓ Information on the role of international organizations in conflict prevention including the United Nations
- ✓ Study missions and exchange of experiences among committees
- ✓ Better understanding of the challenges faced by conflict countries in the Arab States Region such as Iraq, Sudan and Yemen
- ✓ Knowledge on preventive laws and identification of laws that cause conflicts
- ✓ Analyzing the causes of conflicts in the Arab States Region and how to deal with them (mainly tribal conflicts)

3. General evaluation of the seminar

