

Parliamentary strengthening in developing countries

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AAPPG	Africa All-Party Parliamentary Group
AWEPA	European Parliamentarians for Africa
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CPA-UK	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, UK
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GOPAC	Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption
GSDRC	Governance and Sustainable Development Resource Centre
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Cooperation)
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IFES	formerly, International Foundation for Election Systems
I-IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IPU-BG	Inter-Parliamentary Union, British Group
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
PNoWB	Parliamentary Network on the World Bank
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
WBI	World Bank Institute
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Executive Summary

Governance and parliaments in theory and practice

Governance is key to development. In seeking to improve governance in developing countries, donors have tended to work primarily with the executive, or with civil society organisations (CSOs). This is beginning to change as donors, including DFID, increasingly recognize that parliaments – and other agents of political society – can have an important role to play in delivering governance which is effective both in reducing poverty and building democracy (Hilary Benn, DEMOS Speech). Enabling parliaments to perform more effectively is a challenge, but it is a challenge which is worth taking up. The aim of this report is to help DFID to make informed decisions about how it can best contribute to strengthening parliaments in developing countries.

Parliaments are an important component of national governance systems. The key functions of parliaments are legislation, oversight and representation. By playing these roles effectively, parliaments can contribute to the elements of effective governance: state capability, accountability and responsiveness.

In practice parliaments in many developing countries are ineffective. The African Governance Report for 2005 found that: “In terms of enacting laws, debating national issues, checking the activities of the government and in general promoting the welfare of the people, these duties and obligations are rarely performed with efficiency and effectiveness in many African parliaments” (UNECA, 2005, p.127).

There are various reasons for poor parliamentary performance. Often, parliamentarians lack the knowledge and skills to do their jobs effectively, may be more concerned with retaining their seat than with holding the executive to account, or – if they do seek to vigorously hold the executive to account – may find that they lose their seat before long. And parliaments themselves lack the institutional capacity and resources which they need. Fundamentally, parliaments receive insufficient finance to be effective.

Parliamentary performance is also shaped by context. Political systems, including electoral rules, constitutions and the nature of political parties may not facilitate strong parliaments, whilst in many countries parliaments can find themselves dominated and marginalized by the executive. The wider social and cultural environment, including citizens’ expectations of their representatives, may not foster effective parliaments. And donors’ aid relationships with developing countries – conducted on an executive-executive basis – can also serve to marginalize parliaments. Parliamentary strengthening must take account of these various reasons for poor parliamentary performance.

Parliamentary strengthening: Organisations based outside the UK

A large number of organisations are involved in parliamentary strengthening. They range from bilateral donors such as USAID, CIDA, Sida and DFID, to multilateral organisations including UNDP and the World Bank, to parliamentary networks, political party foundations such as the National Democratic Institute, and an assortment of research and capacity-building organisations such as the Canadian Parliamentary Centre, think tanks, not-for-profits and private sector organisations. The approaches taken to parliamentary strengthening vary from those which are focused on parliamentarians themselves, to those which are focused on parliament as an institution, to those such as International-IDEA which deal with aspects of the wider political system within which parliaments operate.

Efforts to assess the impacts of the parliamentary strengthening activities of these organisations have been extremely limited. This makes the task of identifying what works, and learning lessons, extremely problematic. Some guidelines for effective parliamentary strengthening can however be gleaned from the information, and small number of reviews – including Sida’s excellent 2005 review – that are available.

Guidelines for effective parliamentary strengthening

- Respond to demand: Parliamentary strengthening should be demand-led, and responsive to local needs, rather than externally-driven.
- Address causes: Parliamentary strengthening should seek to address the causes of poor parliamentary performance, rather than addressing solely the symptoms.
- Take account of context: Parliamentary strengthening must take full account of the local context – including the political context – within which parliaments function.
- Involve recipients: Parliamentary strengthening should involve a range of local organizations, and interest groups, including opposition MPs and parties as well as members of the government.
- Focus on issues: Parliamentary strengthening should use particular issues such as budget oversight, anti-corruption, HIV/AIDS and poverty reduction as vehicles to improve parliamentary performance, rather than focusing solely on parliamentary procedures.
- Coordinate and deliver appropriate activities: Agencies involved in parliamentary strengthening must do more to coordinate their work, and to ensure that their activities are appropriate to the objectives of parliamentary strengthening. Think twice before setting up or supporting study visits and seminars.
- Provide long-term sustainable support.

These guidelines are distilled from the literature on parliamentary strengthening and a number of expert interviews.

Parliamentary strengthening by UK-based organisations

There are a variety of UK-based organisations involved in parliamentary strengthening too. An important cluster is found around the UK Parliament; the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK, the Inter-Parliamentary Union UK, and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. Each of these organisations has excellent access to UK parliamentarians, and organizes a number of conferences, seminars and study visits which enable parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to exchange information and ideas about the work of their parliaments, including their role in promoting good governance and poverty reduction. These activities already go well beyond “parliamentary tourism”, but continued efforts are needed to ensure that they are tailored to the needs of developing countries. The FCO works closely with a number of these organizations, as well as having considerable on-the-ground experience and expertise with seeking to understand the political systems within which parliaments operate.

DFID itself is increasingly active in the field of parliamentary strengthening. Its records show that since 1998, around 30 distinct projects have been, or are planned to be, conducted. Half are in Africa (Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia), and half are elsewhere (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Central Asia, Pakistan, Russia, the Slovak Republic, Sri Lanka and the West Bank/Gaza).

DFID's parliamentary strengthening work ranges from projects with a narrow focus, short time-frame and a small budget, to projects such as one planned in the DRC which encompasses multiple aspects of political governance, over a period of several years, and with a budget – alongside other donors – of tens of millions of pounds. The smaller projects include ones focused on building the capacity of federal and regional parliaments in Ethiopia, enhancing the effectiveness of parliament and its committees in Kenya and in South Africa through the provision of information, research and legal services, developing the capacity of parliament to oversee public resource management in Zambia, supporting the Public Accounts Committee in Ghana, and building a library for the Palestinian Legislative Council.

The majority of DFID's work is focused on Parliament as an institution, rather than on training individual MPs, or on the wider political system. More specifically, strengthening key parliamentary committees (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania), and/or helping parliaments to develop their own plans for parliamentary development (Malawi, Uganda), seem to be the most-used approaches. Beyond parliaments themselves, projects in Afghanistan, Malawi and Mozambique have focused or will focus on civic education and parliament-civil society engagement.

The information held by DFID about its in-country parliamentary strengthening work is patchy, in part because documentation is held in country offices. Information about impacts is particularly lacking. In such circumstances,

learning about what works is a challenge. Nevertheless, some failures and some successes can be identified. Work in Bangladesh, with UNDP in the lead, was delayed, hindered by divergent understandings of the nature of the project, and had little impact. In Sierra Leone too, progress was poor, in this instance because key players in the parliament had little appetite for reform. And, in Tanzania, there was substantial resistance to an outside implementing agency, before DFID and other donors revised their approach.

More positively, parliamentary strengthening in Malawi, in Pakistan and in Uganda has enjoyed some success. In Malawi, an evolving programme of work has helped to strengthen CSOs' engagement with parliament and supported the design of a Strategic Plan for parliamentary development. In Pakistan, despite a complex political context, donors have worked well together, with a carefully-selected local implementing agency. And, in Uganda, while the new multi-party environment raises fresh challenges for parliament's effectiveness, donors have worked together to assist the parliament in producing its own development plan, with which they are now aligning their support.

The projects which DFID has supported reveal the same sorts of lessons as do those of non-UK agencies; projects which are demand-led, take full account of local context, involve harmonisation and coordination between donors, and are sustained, are the most likely to succeed. In contrast, supply-driven, short-term projects which duplicate and undermine existing projects are likely to fail.

Issues and recommendations for DFID

Strengthening parliaments is an important element of work to foster capable, accountable and responsive governance in developing countries. Parliamentary strengthening is of course not the only way of improving governance and accountability, but effective parliaments are an essential component of democratic governance.

Applying the Paris principles to parliamentary strengthening

Under the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, donors and partner countries undertook to enhance their respective accountability to their citizens and parliament for their development policies, strategies and performance. Donors and partners must live up to their Paris commitments and work to ensure that parliaments are brought into the policy process more fully. In addition, the Paris Declaration's principles can serve as a useful reminder to donors of a number of issues to bear in mind as they engage in parliamentary strengthening.

Ownership

Donors must ensure that parliamentary strengthening is demand-led, responding to the needs of developing countries and their parliaments, and with a strong sense of national ownership. Ensuring that ownership extends beyond parliaments

themselves will entail working with CSOs, the media and political parties, so that they too have a stake in parliamentary strengthening.

Alignment

Parliamentary strengthening should be aligned with the development plans of a country and of its parliament, and based upon a clear assessment of need. Supporting a parliament to develop its own strategic plan can be an important element of parliamentary strengthening.

Harmonisation

Donors should seek to harmonise and coordinate their parliamentary strengthening work, avoiding unnecessary duplication and reducing the burden placed on their developing country partners. Donors ought also to make good use of pooled funding arrangements.

Managing for results

There is very little systematic or comprehensive data on parliamentary strengthening and its impacts. This must change. Greater efforts must be put into developing and employing frameworks for assessing parliamentary performance, and systematically evaluating the impact of parliamentary strengthening.

Accountability

The purpose of parliamentary strengthening should be to enhance the democratic accountability of governments in developing countries to their citizens. In a time of rising aid flows, and increased budget support, parliaments have an important role to play in ensuring that aid is managed and spent effectively in support of poverty reduction. By strengthening parliaments in developing countries, donors will not only strengthen domestic accountability, but will also help to ensure that the aid that they provide is used effectively.

Given the importance of parliaments in good, poverty-reducing, governance, DFID should certainly increase its support for, and engagement with, parliaments in developing countries. However, DFID must think carefully about how best it can contribute to parliamentary strengthening. DFID and the UK's strengths are: its historical ties with many developing countries and the fact that many former colonies' parliaments have been established on the Westminster model; DFID's acknowledged leadership on governance issues; the detailed local knowledge of political systems which FCO and DFID staff in developing countries have; and, the enthusiasm of many UK representatives, at Westminster and beyond, to share their expertise and experience with their developing country counterparts. DFID and the UK Government more widely should capitalise on these strengths, engaging in demand-driven parliamentary strengthening, which sees parliaments as part of wider governance systems, and which is based on a sound understanding of local context. DFID's planned Governance and Transparency Fund could provide an ideal vehicle for supporting CSOs, the media and others to engage more effectively with parliaments.

At Westminster, DFID should work more closely with the CPA-UK, IPU-BG, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and the House of Commons

(and Lords) Overseas Office. These organisations play an important role, but DFID needs to engage more systematically with them, helping to ensure that their efforts are coordinated and make an effective contribution to building the capacity of parliaments and parliamentarians. DFID should take the lead in establishing regular meetings to exchange information about parliamentary strengthening activities, and – where possible and appropriate – to enable greater coordination of activities. Establishing an additional organisation to channel MPs’ enthusiasm for parliamentary strengthening would seem to be unnecessary. DFID should also ensure that its work with parliaments – in the UK and in developing countries – is coordinated with that of the Foreign Office.

Recommendations and next steps for DFID

Should DFID do more parliamentary strengthening?

- DFID should do more work on parliamentary strengthening.

What approach to parliamentary strengthening should DFID take?

- Ensure that DFID’s parliamentary strengthening work is demand-driven, addresses causes, is context-aware, involves recipients, focuses on substantive issues, is coordinated with that of other donors, is long-term, and includes systematic evaluation.
- Build on existing DFID and UK strengths in parliamentary development, and identify gaps in parliamentary strengthening work done by other agencies.
- Partner with non-UK-based organisations to ensure that their approaches to parliamentary strengthening are based on a vision which sees parliaments as part – an important part – of political society and national governance systems.
- Work more closely with Westminster-based organisations to enable them to play an effective role in strengthening parliaments’ role in governance for poverty reduction.

What should DFID do next as regards parliamentary strengthening?

- Hold a meeting with the Westminster-based organisations, organised with the FCO, to discuss how DFID and the FCO might work more closely with them to strengthen parliaments in developing countries.
- Organise an experts’ workshop on parliamentary strengthening, to map out who does what in more detail, so that DFID can accurately identify its comparative advantage.
- Conduct a series of case studies of parliamentary strengthening in a number of developing countries, to learn more lessons about what works and what does not.
- Engage with organisations such as USAID and the Canadian Parliamentary Centre to explore the feasibility and value of developing means of assessing parliamentary performance and the effectiveness of parliamentary strengthening.
- Develop a “how to” note on parliamentary strengthening, and ensure that parliaments and parliamentary performance are part of DFID’s Country Governance Analysis.

1: Introduction

1. Governance is key to development. In seeking to improve governance in developing countries, donors have tended to work primarily with the executive, or with civil society organisations (CSOs). This is beginning to change as donors including DFID increasingly recognize that parliaments have an important role to play in delivering governance which is effective both in reducing poverty and in building democracy (Hilary Benn, DEMOS Speech).
2. As donors, developing countries, and multilateral agencies have focused their attention on governance (Commission for Africa, 2005; DFID, 2006; European Commission, 2006; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2005; World Bank 2006), there has been a resurgence of interest in the role and potential of parliaments, and in what donors and others can do to strengthen parliaments. Parliamentarians themselves have also focused attention on the role and potential of parliaments in delivering good governance (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2006), and – working alongside civil society organisations through the International Parliamentarians’ Petition – have highlighted a number of constraints to parliamentary sovereignty.
3. The aim of this report is to help DFID to make informed decisions about how it can best contribute to strengthening parliaments in developing countries.¹ The process of producing this report has involved three major elements, each of which has entailed reviewing the literature and consulting with experts²:
 - a review of the current state of knowledge regarding the role which parliaments play in nurturing state capability, accountability and responsiveness in developing countries;
 - a review of the parliamentary strengthening work of organisations based outside the UK; and,
 - a review of the parliamentary strengthening work of organisations based in the UK, including DFID.
4. The timing for this piece of work has been helpful. The Africa All-Party Parliamentary Group (AAPPG) is currently undertaking an inquiry into parliamentary strengthening in Africa. The AAPPG’s initiative is in part a response to the enthusiasm of many British MPs to contribute to parliamentary strengthening in developing countries. Due for publication in late Spring 2007, the AAPPG’s report – examining parliamentary

¹ See Appendix A for the Terms of Reference.

² See Appendix B for the bibliography and C for a list of experts consulted.

strengthening in a number of African countries – should be read alongside this report. Meetings have been held with the Chair of the AAPPG and key staff members to ensure that their inquiry feeds into this piece of work, and vice-versa.

5. This report has the following structure. Chapter two outlines the theoretical relationship between parliaments and governance; what role might parliaments play in delivering effective governance? Chapter three examines the role which parliaments play in practice, identifying a number of factors which limit their contributions to effective governance. Chapters four and five outline the parliamentary strengthening work, first of organisations based outside the UK, and second of UK-based organisations. Chapter six begins by exploring the relevance of the Paris Agenda's principles on aid effectiveness to parliamentary strengthening. It then outlines a series of issues which DFID will need to consider in formulating its future strategy for parliamentary strengthening work, and makes a number of recommendations as to how DFID should move forward in this area.

2: Governance and parliaments in theory

Governance: Capability, accountability, responsiveness

6. The UK Government's recent White Paper on International Development focuses on governance. Governance refers to the system of actors, processes and rules through which decisions are made and authority is exercised in a society. As such, the nature of governance plays a major role in shaping the nature of a society. Relations between the state – the body which sets a society's formal rules – and its citizens are a particularly important aspect of governance. For DFID, good governance is governance which enables poverty reduction. Good governance is also about democracy.
7. For DFID, good governance requires state capability, accountability and responsiveness (DFID, 2006; Moore and Teskey, 2006). State capability concerns the ability of the state to formulate and implement policies that are effective in reducing poverty. Accountability concerns the relationships between those who make decisions and those on whose behalf such decisions are made (or, more broadly, those who feel the impact of those decisions). Perhaps most importantly as regards poverty reduction, accountability concerns the nature of the relationship between citizens and the state. When citizens are able to demand that the state provides justifications for its action, and are able to sanction the state if it fails to do what it has promised, then there is accountability. An entity such as the state is considered responsive if it seeks to identify and meet the needs of its citizens. Responsiveness is not the same as accountability, but a state is more likely to be responsive if it is accountable to its citizens.

Parliaments: Legislation, oversight and representation

8. Parliaments and parliamentarians play a variety of roles (Corre, 2004; Johnson, 2005). Their primary roles are those of legislation, oversight and representation. Legislation is about passing the laws which constitute a country's legal framework. Oversight is about keeping an eye on the activities of the executive, and – on behalf of citizens – holding the executive to account. A particularly important element of oversight concerns the budget; checking that spending decisions are in line with national priorities. Representation is about collecting, aggregating and expressing the concerns, opinions and preferences of citizen-voters. Parliaments also provide an arena for dialogue in which citizens' disparate and varied interests can be discussed.

Parliaments and governance

9. Mapping the roles of parliaments onto the elements of good governance (see figure 1), provides some suggestion of the contribution which parliaments might make to the delivery of good governance. Legislation is part of state capability; law-making is an important way in which capable

states formulate and implement policies. Parliamentary oversight can contribute to ensuring that the relationship between the state and its citizens is one which is characterized by accountability. And representation is crucial to responsiveness; there is little chance of political decision-makers being responsive if citizens' views are not effectively transmitted by their political representatives. There is more to good governance than parliamentary representation, legislation and oversight, but in the absence of a parliament which can perform these roles effectively, good governance – and particularly good democratic governance – will be elusive. In sum, parliaments are necessary but not sufficient for effective democratic governance.

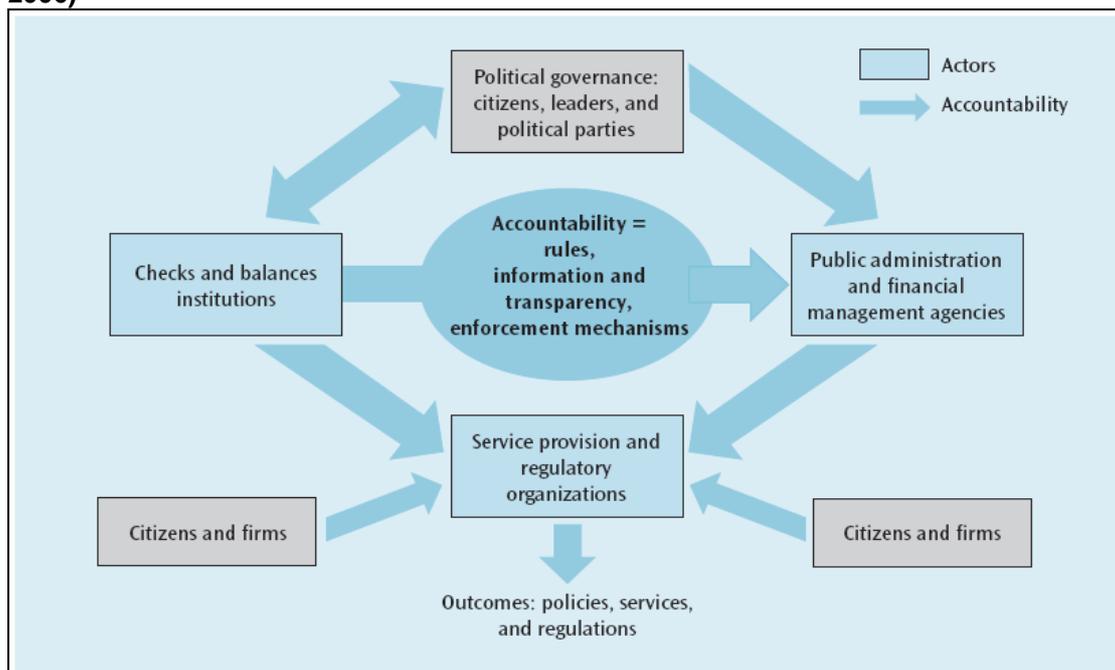
Figure 1: Governance and parliaments: Elements and roles

Effective governance	Parliamentary roles
State capability	Legislation
Accountability	Oversight
Responsiveness	Representation

Parliaments and national governance systems

10. In a recent attempt to get a handle on governance, to enable its measurement, and to identify the sorts of policies which might improve it, the World Bank has introduced the idea of there being “national governance systems” (World Bank, 2006). These systems are made up of a range of actors, playing different roles, and linked together in accountable relationships (see figure 2).

Figure 2: National governance systems (from World Bank Global Monitoring Report 2006)



11. At the apex of the system of accountability is political governance; a country's citizens, leaders and political parties. Parliaments are one of the key "checks and balances institutions", along with supreme audit institutions, ombudsmen, anti-corruption commissions, the judiciary, a free press and democratically accountable local institutions. For the World Bank, checks and balances institutions play three key roles: they establish the rules of the game for political competition; they provide the rules of the game for the broader working of civil society and the operation of the market economy; and, they limit the influence of politicians on the bureaucracy (World Bank, 2006).
12. This is a useful way of looking at the role of parliaments. It emphasizes the importance of parliaments, but also makes clear that they are one component of a wider governance system – what others have described as an "ecology of governance" (Parliamentary Centre and World Bank Institute, 2002) – which includes the nature of the constitution, electoral systems, political parties, the judiciary, supreme audit institutions, the civil service bureaucracy, the executive, civil society organisations, the media, the private sector and others.
13. Parliaments do however have a distinctive role and one which makes them pivotal to good governance. This pivotal role is due to the fact that parliaments are involved both in vertical accountability mechanisms and horizontal accountability mechanisms. Their function is, in effect, to transmit and translate vertical accountability issues into horizontal ones and vice-versa. Put more simply, parliaments are the point in a governance system where citizen-state relations (vertical accountability) come into contact with executive-legislature relations (horizontal accountability). An effective parliament is one which performs its horizontal accountability functions in a manner which is in tune with the wishes of the citizen-voters on whose behalf it acts.
14. It is through playing this pivotal role that parliaments can contribute to effective and democratic governance. By legislating, they can contribute to state capability. By providing oversight, they can contribute to accountability, which in turn can facilitate learning and improved performance. And by representing citizens, they can contribute to responsiveness. The contribution which parliaments actually make to effective democratic governance depends both on the internal characteristics of the parliament and its members, and on the position of the parliament in wider national (and international) systems of governance.

3: Governance and parliaments in practice

Parliaments in developing countries

15. There have been few systematic efforts to assess and compare parliamentary performance and the contribution of parliaments to delivering good governance. But the evidence suggests that whereas parliaments could make an important contribution to good governance, in practice, in most developing countries – and, it might be added, in many developed countries³ – parliaments are ineffective. Rather than enhancing state capability, accountability and responsiveness, they are little more than “rubber-stamp” legislatures (Johnson, 2005), approving the executive’s plans and doing little to deliver good governance or poverty reduction.
16. In its African Governance Report for 2005, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) found that: “In terms of enacting laws, debating national issues, checking the activities of the government and in general promoting the welfare of the people, these duties and obligations are rarely performed with efficiency and effectiveness in many African parliaments” (UNECA, 2005, p.127). This finding echoes that of Eberlei and Henn, whose research documented the limited involvement of African parliaments in PRSP processes (Eberlei and Henn, 2003) and is confirmed by UNECA’s recent findings about the involvement of African parliaments in the budget process (UNECA, 2006).

Parliamentarians and parliaments in context: Explaining performance

17. There are a variety of reasons – both structural and individual – for poor parliamentary performance in developing countries (Barkan et al, 2004; Wang, 2005). Eberlei and Henn suggest that “The position of parliaments vis-à-vis the executive is traditionally weak in the PRS countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. While the constitutions give them legislative, oversight and budgetary powers, the parliaments exercise these only to a limited extent, if at all. This is rooted in political systems that tend to strengthen the executive, a generally weak democratic culture, and very limited capacity in terms of members and institutional resources” (Eberlei and Henn, 2003, p.9).

³ There are a number of parallels between the ways in which a parliament such as Westminster operates, and parliaments in developing countries operate. Parliaments in the developed often do not operate as effectively as they might. This serves as a useful reminder; the developed world ought not to assume that exporting its models of parliamentary democracy – particularly to contexts which are very different – is necessarily a good thing.

Assessing parliamentary performance

If donors and others are to make well-informed evidence-based decisions about whether and how to move forward with parliamentary strengthening work, they need to be able to assess parliamentary performance. This is important, first so that they can identify whether a particular programme of parliamentary strengthening is warranted, and, later, to assess whether a programme of parliamentary strengthening has worked. Without such assessments, there is little scope for learning about what works, for improving subsequent programmes, or for accountability to those who pay for and/or those who are intended to benefit from parliamentary strengthening.

As a recent survey of the contribution of African parliaments to democracy put it: "Questions about the effectiveness of capacity building in African parliaments remain largely unanswered because we do not yet have comprehensive and comparative measures of the institutional capacity and performance of parliaments on the continent" (Nijzink et al, 2006, p.5). Neither are there well-established criteria for conceptualizing and measuring legislative effectiveness (Nijzink et al, 2006 p.4).

Assessing parliamentary performance is a challenge; assessing the impact of parliamentary strengthening and attributing cause is even more of a challenge (Schulz, 2004). But they are challenges which must be faced. Regrettably, little effort has been made, either to evaluate the impact of parliamentary strengthening work, or to devise frameworks for assessing parliamentary effectiveness. DFID's own framework Country Governance Analysis currently lacks an indicator relating directly to parliamentary performance.

The following organisations have made some progress towards developing frameworks for assessing parliamentary performance.

- The Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AFRIMAP) has developed a [questionnaire](#) on political participation, sections 68-82 of which relate to the role of parliaments.
- The [African Legislatures Project](#) is embarking on a cross-national comparison of African Legislatures, which will include the development of a methodology for assessing parliamentary performance.
- The Canadian Parliamentary Centre has developed a simple [template](#) for assessing parliamentary performance in the budget process and is working with [IFES](#) to develop a framework for conducting "state of the parliament" country reports.
- DFID's publication "Helping parliaments and legislative assemblies to work for the poor" includes a helpful [checklist](#) for assessing parliaments in Annex 5.
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International-IDEA) has developed a [tool](#) for assessing the state of democracy, section 7 of which is particularly relevant to parliaments.
- USAID is leading the way in terms of trying to develop ways of assessing parliamentary performance. Progress is slow, but USAID's [Handbook](#) of democracy and governance programme indicators, especially pp.198-214, includes indicators relating to "more effective, independent and representative legislatures" as part of a wider section on "more transparent and accountable government institutions". USAID's [Handbook on Legislative Strengthening](#) also provides an assessment framework and questions on page 15 and in appendix A.

Parliamentarians

18. In many developing countries, parliamentarians themselves lack the skills, experience, education or occupational background to play an effective role in legislation, oversight and representation. In Kenya, the minimum educational standard for MPs is simply that they must be able to read and write in English and Kiswahili; in Lesotho ability to read and write in Sesotho or English will suffice (UNECA, 2005, p.202). It would be short-sighted to exclude from parliaments representatives who, because of their embeddedness in rural constituencies, lacked formal education, but MPs clearly need the ability to understand and communicate with others about the work of parliament.
19. Beyond their level of educational attainment, their attitude – conservative and parochial, or reformist and aware of practices in other countries – can also have an impact on how parliamentarians perform (Governance and Social Development Resource Centre Literature Review on Elites and Institutions, footnote 39 – citing personal communication with Joel Barkan). In addition, parliamentarians may not have a good understanding of their role or the role of parliaments in delivering good governance.
20. Parliamentarians may also find themselves poorly paid, and without adequate incentives to perform their roles effectively (Barkan et al, 2004). And, even when MPs are paid well, this is no guarantee that they will be motivated to play an active role in holding the executive to account; instead, their primary concern might be to hold onto their seat and access to resources. Or, if they do seek to hold the executive to account, they may find that they lose their seat before too long.

Parliaments themselves

21. Parliaments themselves often lack the institutional capacity to perform their roles effectively (UNECA, 2005, pp.201-2). Parliamentary rules and procedures may be poorly developed, parliamentary committees may be weak or non-existent (Burnell, 2002; Rahman, 2005) and there may be more basic infrastructural problems. Such problems may include inadequate or non-existent accommodation, a lack of access to information, information technology, and library facilities, a lack of parliamentary staff to assist in the administration of parliamentary affairs and in particular in carrying out the research which is needed for parliaments to hold the executive to account. Fundamentally, such challenges result from the fact that parliaments receive insufficient funding. Parliaments may also face serious questions about their legitimacy (UNECA, 2005, p.226), and – with funding largely dependent on the executive – are likely to lack the financial resources that they need.

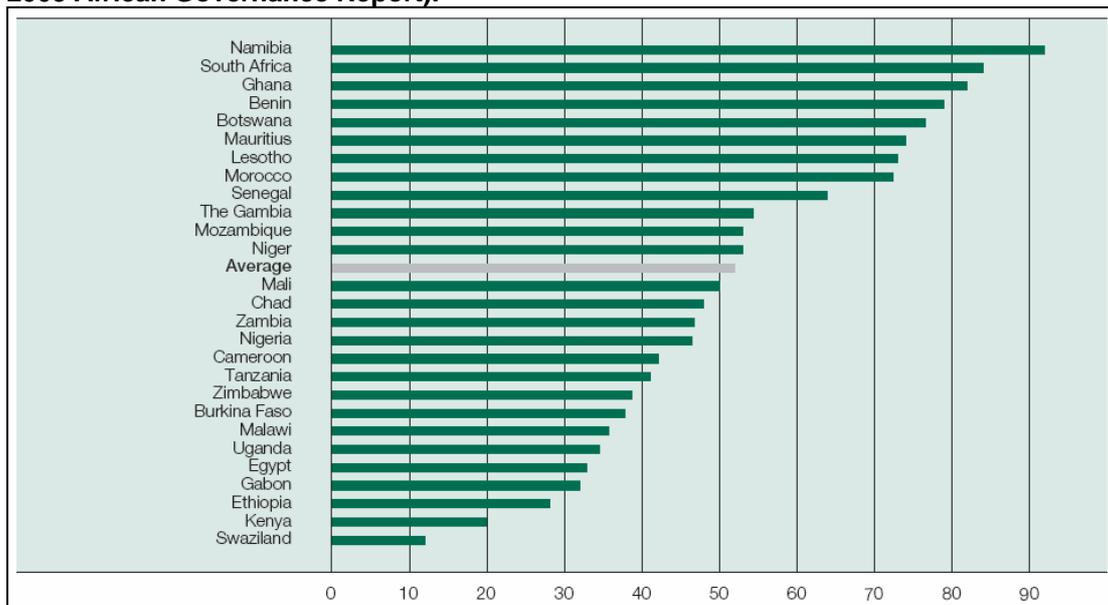
Parliaments and formal political systems

22. Parliamentary performance is also shaped by the formal political system which a parliament is part of. In some countries, the constitution may fail

to establish a clear role and powers for parliaments. And even when this fundamental building block is in place, the reality may be that parliament is very weak compared to the executive. As UNECA put it: “In assessing the role of the legislature in checking and balancing the executive a distinction ought to be made between constitutional prescriptions and political realities” (UNECA, 2005, p.122; see also Democratic Alliance, 2004, p.1).

23. In many developing countries, particularly in Africa, and most particularly it seems in presidential systems, the executive is overwhelmingly dominant (Gyimah-Boadi, 1998). In such contexts, the legislature is likely to lack the power to hold the executive to account. UNECA’s African Governance Report found that only a third of African legislatures were perceived as being largely free from subordination to external agencies in all major areas of legislation, and that more than half were under various degrees of subordination to external agencies in all major areas of legislation (UNECA, 2005, p.7). Namibia, South Africa and Ghana were the least subordinate, with Swaziland, Kenya and Ethiopia ranked as the most subordinate (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Expert opinion that the legislature is free from subordination to external agencies in most or all areas of legislation – percentage of respondents (from UNECA 2005 African Governance Report).



24. In addition to executive dominance, there are other aspects of a political system which can hinder parliamentary performance. These include a very dominant ruling party, the lack of an effective opposition (or even the idea of an opposition), electoral systems which hinder accountability, and either overly-strict party discipline which constrains MPs’ actions, or an absence

of political parties based around different political ideologies with the result that voters' choices are constrained.⁴

Parliaments and the social and cultural environment

25. Beyond the formal political system, parliamentary performance is shaped too by the social and cultural environment in which parliaments are situated. Put differently, the formal rules of politics may be at odds with the informal realities of social relations and cultural understandings. In many developing countries, the social system is characterized by neo-patrimonialism, a system in which "big men" look after their constituents through providing them with the resources to which their position within the state allows them access (Barkan et al, 2004; Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Lindberg, 2003).
26. Informal understandings of representation and accountability can be at odds with formal (liberal democratic) notions of accountability and representation, a disjuncture that undermines the ability of parliaments to perform their expected roles, and to promote the public good. More concretely, MPs can find that they are expected to provide school fees, medical bills, roads and financing for their constituents and constituencies, rather than being expected to represent their interests in processes of legislation and oversight.
27. Relatedly, when the state is the primary source of economic power, and politics is about providing resources for constituents, politicians who are not able to access the state's resources and hence are unable to provide for their constituents find themselves without much of a role to play. This can prevent the emergence of effective opposition parties, particularly when it is combined with the practice of floor-crossing, with MPs switching parties to access resources. Parliamentary performance may also suffer because of weak links and a lack of consultation between parliaments and other elements of civil society, the media, the private sector, trade unions and so on.

Parliaments and development partners

28. Development partners including donors such as DFID, share some responsibility for weak parliamentary performance. The focus of donor interventions in support of good governance has tended to be on the executive; an effective state has been equated with an effective executive (Eberlei and Henn, 2003, p.9). Whilst there is clearly value in donors working closely with the executive, an overly-exclusive focus on this branch of government does risk marginalizing parliaments.

⁴ Electoral systems and political parties are an important part of governance in developing countries and have an impact on parliamentary performance. Their role, and their relationship with parliaments, is not covered in this report, but should not be neglected by donors.

29. The ways in which donors, and perhaps particularly the international financial institutions, do their business, have also marginalized parliaments. Whereas civil society participation was encouraged, parliaments were excluded from the PRSP process (Youash, 2003; Mfunwa, 2006, p.15). And – because of a lack of transparency – parliaments have not been able to scrutinize the conditions attached to loans offered by the international financial institutions.
30. There are some, albeit limited, signs of change in this regard both in terms of donor policy and behaviour (Hatcher, 2006; Hubli and Mandaville, 2004; World Bank, 2003), and in terms of parliaments stepping up to oversee aid relationships. But clearly, donors’ parliamentary strengthening work would be more effective if in their dealings with developing countries, donors and the international financial institutions ensured that parliamentary sovereignty – the will of the people’s (more or less) democratically-elected representatives – was given due weight. Concretely, parliaments in developing countries would be able to do a better job of scrutinizing the agreements which their governments enter into – on behalf of the country’s citizens – with donors, if donors undertook to publish the conditions which are often attached to loans. A lack of transparency undermines accountability and risks further marginalizing parliaments in developing countries.
31. Transparency will not of course deliver effective parliamentary scrutiny; rather it is a pre-condition. At present, many parliaments are insufficiently aware of the detail of their countries’ aid relationships with donors and as a result do not demand an oversight role. And further, many parliaments currently lack the capacity to exercise effective oversight over complex loan documents. This too is an issue which donors could address; doing so would demonstrate their commitment to making parliaments more effective.
32. This it seems is an area where there is a convergence of interests between parliaments and donors, a potential win-win. Parliaments would like to play a bigger role in the management and oversight of aid, and donors – particularly as they seek to provide more funds through budget support – would like aid to be spent more effectively, something which may be enhanced by parliaments playing a bigger role (Mfunwa, 2006). This is also an area where donor’s development and fiduciary concerns converge; that is, strengthening parliamentary engagement in the budget process can improve development effectiveness whilst also mitigating fiduciary risk.⁵
33. Donors should ensure that their aid relationships, including their transparency, facilitate and enable parliamentary accountability and oversight. Otherwise, large inflows of resources may undermine the

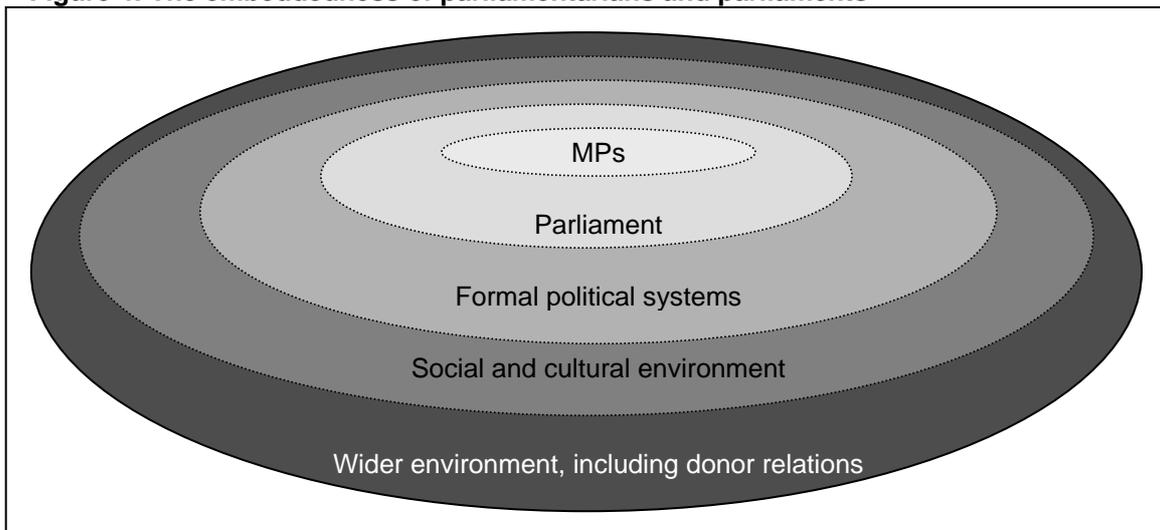
⁵ Personal communication with Carlos Santiso, DFID Financial Accountability and Anti-Corruption Team.

emergence of domestic accountability. A more radical move could see donors stipulating that a certain percentage of their aid to a partner country, be invested in parliamentary strengthening. This sort of conditionality – in support of democratic accountability – could well be justified and effective, and might, over time, command the support of governments seriously committed to good democratic governance.

Implications for parliamentary strengthening

34. If their parliamentary strengthening work is to be effective, donors need to ensure that they take full account of the environment within which parliamentarians and parliament as an institution works, or, put differently, the multiple embeddedness of parliamentarians and parliaments (see figure 4). Donors also need to consider how their own behaviour as providers of development assistance might shape parliamentary performance. The following chapters review the parliamentary strengthening work of a range of agencies. Particular attention is given to the approaches taken by different agencies; the extent to which they address MPs and parliaments within the wider political and social context.

Figure 4: The embeddedness of parliamentarians and parliaments



4: Parliamentary strengthening: Organisations based outside the UK

Introduction

35. This chapter provides information about the parliamentary strengthening activities of organisations based outside the UK. It is not a comprehensive survey. Rather, this chapter provides an overview of the landscape of parliamentary strengthening, identifying the key players and approaches, in order to inform DFID's thinking about how best to move forward in this area.
36. The chapter begins by identifying the organisations involved in parliamentary strengthening, before outlining the approaches that are taken to strengthening parliaments. The chapter then moves on to explore the impacts of parliamentary strengthening. Given the paucity of evaluations this is a considerable challenge. Finally, working with the available data, and the information collected through expert interviews, some lessons about what does and doesn't work are outlined.

Who is involved in parliamentary strengthening?

37. A wide variety of organisations are engaged in activities which contribute to parliamentary strengthening in developing countries. These organisations include: bilateral aid donors; multilateral development agencies; parliamentary networks; political party foundations; and, research institutes, think tanks, not-for-profits and private sector organisations (see figure 5).

Bilateral donors

38. Several bilateral donors fund parliamentary strengthening work. **USAID** has been involved in legislative strengthening since the 1970s. Under its "democracy and governance" programme, USAID remains very active, particularly in Africa. It tends to provide support both to the parliament itself, and to civil society-parliament relations, with a focus often on financial oversight and efforts to tackle corruption. In contrast to most other donors, USAID has made considerable efforts to establish indicators and assessment frameworks for parliamentary strengthening. As well as providing support to parliaments – often working through NDI – USAID has also produced a number of technical assistance guides including its Handbook on Legislative Strengthening.
39. In the 1990s, other donors including the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) became active in parliamentary strengthening, with DFID, Germany's GTZ and the Austrian and Belgian development agencies becoming involved too. **Sida**, along with USAID, is now perhaps

the most important bilateral donor working on parliamentary strengthening, and – commendably – has undertaken a serious independent published evaluation of its work. Other donors could learn much from Sida’s experience. GTZ has worked with the Canadian Parliamentary Centre, supplementing its support from CIDA⁶, and has also funded some strategic planning work for the Pan-African Parliament jointly with organisations such as the African Capacity Building Foundation, AWEPA (European Parliamentarians for Africa) and the UN’s Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The Belgian development agency has funded UNDP’s Global Programme on Parliamentary Strengthening⁷, whilst the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) has funded a series of useful publications on “Parliaments of the South”, produced by the South African Institute of International Affairs.

Figure 5: Key outside-UK organisations involved in parliamentary strengthening

<p>Bilateral donors USAID; Sida; CIDA; GTZ; Austrian development cooperation; Belgian development cooperation; DANIDA</p> <p>Multilateral development agencies World Bank (Institute); UNDP; Inter-American Development Bank; European Commission - AIDCO; International-IDEA</p> <p>Parliamentary Networks and institutes General: AWEPA; Commonwealth Parliamentary Association; Inter-Parliamentary Union; Parliamentarians for Global Action Thematic: Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC); Parliamentary Network on the World Bank</p> <p>Political Party Foundations Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; Konrad Adenauer Foundation; Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy; International Republican Institute; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)</p> <p>Research institutes, think tanks, not-for-profits and private sector organisations Canadian Parliamentary Centre; Center for International Development, State University of New York; Chr. Michelsen Institute; Democracy International; Electoral Reform International Services; Global Partners; Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA); IFES; South African Institute of International Affairs</p>

Multilateral organisations

40. A number of multilateral organisations are involved in parliamentary strengthening. These include the biggest players – the World Bank and UNDP – alongside other newer entrants to the field such as the European Commission, and more regionally-focused organisations such as the African Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank

⁶ Interview with Rasheed Draman (Canadian Parliamentary Centre).

⁷ Interview with Thomas Huyghebaert (UNDP)

which has funded legislative strengthening projects in countries including Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia (Johnson and Nakamura, 1999).

41. The **World Bank Institute** (WBI) is at the centre of the World Bank's parliamentary strengthening work. Its programmes on parliaments have three components: (i) strengthening the capacity of parliaments to oversee the allocation and use of public funds; (ii) assisting parliaments in better representing the interests of the poor in the policy process; (iii) supporting parliamentary learning networks on key policy issues related to development and facilitating research on the role of parliaments. Much of WBI's work is done through training workshops or seminars for parliamentarians and other actors in the political process including civil servants. As well as one-off seminars the Institute also conducts multi-year projects in countries that have either indicated parliamentary strengthening to be a priority or where it forms part of a loan or credit. In addition, the World Bank has provided support to parliamentary networks including the African Parliamentary Network Against Corruption, the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), and the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB). The World Bank's Development Policy Dialogue team has also done much useful work – including study visits and conferences – to nurture parliamentary champions for poverty reduction in developing countries.
42. **UNDP** is a key player in the field of parliamentary development, with its work in this sphere part of its wider programme of work on democratic governance. Institutional reform work focuses on procedures and the internal organisation of legislatures to provide the basic capacity for parliaments to function. This has included support for transcription services, libraries and information systems. For individual parliamentarians, UNDP has provided induction seminars as well as technical training on issues such as legislative drafting. Alongside these activities, UNDP has also published a number of handbooks aimed at parliamentarians considering aspects of poverty reduction for parliamentarians, including the relationship between parliaments and the executive, and parliaments and civil society organisations. UNDP is currently evaluating its work on parliamentary development, with initial findings expected in early 2007.⁸
43. **International-IDEA**, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, is an inter-governmental organisation which was set up in 1995 to support sustainable democracy worldwide. The UK is not currently a member. I-IDEA works at the interface between those who analyse and monitor trends in democracy and those who engage in democracy promotion and development. Its focus is on political parties and electoral systems, but such activities play an important role in shaping the environment in which parliaments operate. International-IDEA's framework for assessing the "state of democracy" includes elements

⁸ Interview with Thomas Huyghebaert (UNDP)

focused on parliaments. Also of note is the work of the European Union, particularly through the **EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly**. This is in many ways a model of north-south parliamentary cooperation and has reportedly done much to strengthen parliamentarians and parliaments in developing countries.⁹

Parliamentary Networks and political party foundations

44. Parliamentary networks include the long-established Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) as well as more recent and subject-focused networks. The **IPU** is by no means exclusively concerned with capacity building in developing countries. It also acts as a network of parliamentarians working on issues of international interest, and enjoys close links with the United Nations. However, the IPU has – particularly since 1999 – worked in the area of technical assistance, seeking to assist parliaments in developing countries. It also publishes guides for parliamentarians on issues such as gender and oversight of the security sector. The IPU often uses its convening capacity in conjunction with another organisation that has more specialist knowledge.
45. The **CPA** exists to promote the advancement of parliamentary democracy, and to deepen the co-operation between parliaments in the Commonwealth. One of its most significant contributions to parliamentary development is a distance learning course for professional development which can be used in an individual or group context and is currently being developed. The CPA also provides support and learning for parliamentarians through conferences and study visits.
46. **AWEPA** is an association of West European parliamentarians, which works both to strengthen parliaments in developing countries, and to ensure that issues of poverty reduction in Africa are high on the political agenda in Western Europe. It organizes training, study tours and workshops – often focused on particular issues such as HIV/AIDS or gender – as well as building parliamentary networks at national, regional and inter-regional levels.
47. The **Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB)** supports parliamentarians in their work related to the World Bank (and the IMF). PNoWB retains strong ties with the World Bank, and was initially set up by its European Vice-Presidency, but has sought to assert its independence. In recent years it has – with the support of DFID – set up a West African chapter, to complement its East African chapter, and will establish a Southern African chapter in 2007. **GOPAC** too is focused on a particular issue – corruption – and seeks to build networks of parliamentarians committed to, and equipped for, tackling corruption in their own countries.

⁹ Interview with Glenys Kinnock (MEP and Co-Chair of EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly).

48. In addition to these parliamentary networks, there are a number of political party foundations which provide support to political parties and political party development in developing countries. The US-based **National Democratic Institute for International Affairs** (NDI), with links to the Democratic Party, is a major player in legislative strengthening, with a mission to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Its focus is on the need for professional parliamentarians who understand their roles and responsibilities. NDI provides technical assistance to legislators on a range of topics such as: committees, constituency relations, executive-legislative relations, legislative drafting, party caucus organisation; and rules of procedure. It publishes a series of papers designed to provide legislators in developing democracies with comparative information about legislative practices and democratic norms. In 2006, NDI established a pro-poor parliamentary strengthening programme that seeks to enable legislatures to address poverty and inequality. Although it is US-based, NDI is multi-national and is able to bring significant local expertise to bear in developing countries, as well as accessing the expertise of legislators from the US and other developed countries. NDI's approach focuses on the use of workshops with experienced legislatures and legislative staff that allows "emerging democrats" to raise questions and concerns with peers who understand the context and competing pressures facing legislators. NDI's Republican counterpart is the International Republican Institute. In the UK, there is the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (see chapter 5). In continental Europe, there are a variety of foundations, including the German "stiftungs".

Research institutes, think tanks, not-for-profits and private sector organisations

49. There are a wide number of smaller organisations which are involved in parliamentary strengthening, and in seeking to enhance understanding of the role and functioning of parliaments. These include academic institutions, research institutes and think tanks such as the Center for International Development at the State University of New York, the Norwegian Chr. Michelsen Institute, IFES, the Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa (IDASA), and the South African Institute of International Affairs. Also of note are private sector organisations such as the US-based Democracy International which often works for USAID. The southern-based organisations are playing an increasingly important role in developing southern expertise on parliaments and governance more widely. In addition, many NGOs work in developing countries on civic engagement and increasingly on CSO-parliamentary relations.

50. The **Canadian Parliamentary Centre** is a major player in terms of research and capacity building, with a focus specifically on parliaments. Nevertheless, their work on parliaments is well-contextualized in a sound understanding of wider political and electoral systems. The Parliamentary Centre is largely but not exclusively funded by CIDA. Its work in Africa –

with a substantial base in Ghana and strong African networks – seeks to strengthen good governance through improving accountability and oversight structures. Much of the work of the Centre is carried out through workshops for parliamentarians, often bringing together parliamentarians from across Africa. Its focus on parliamentarians and parliaments has enabled it to build a significant area of expertise across Africa. This makes the Parliamentary Centre well-equipped to operate across Africa, with a good understanding of local contexts, and with the ability to facilitate learning between different African parliaments. The Parliamentary Centre has also done more than most to develop frameworks to assess parliamentary performance, and to evaluate the impacts of its work. More recently, the Parliamentary Centre has also begun to do parliamentary strengthening work in Asia. This work is at an early stage, taking the form of building cooperation between the Canadian Parliament and legislatures in Asian countries, but promises to be a fruitful means of exchange and learning.

What sorts of approaches do they take?

51. Just as there is a great diversity of organisations involved in activities which contribute to parliamentary strengthening, there is also considerable diversity in the sorts of activities which they undertake (see figure 6). Some organisations and their activities focus on MPs themselves, their skills, their understanding of parliament's role and parliamentary procedures, and their expertise on specific issues such as poverty reduction, human rights or gender. Other organisations and projects focus on parliament as an institution, pursuing institutional reform, or having a more specific focus on enhancing the effectiveness of committees such as public accounts committees. Still other organisations and projects pursue their parliamentary strengthening work as part of their work on democratic governance. In these cases, projects are likely to address other aspects of the political system – parties and electoral systems – as well as parliaments themselves.

52. Parliamentary strengthening is often carried out by organisations working in partnership. The quartet of the World Bank Institute, Canadian Parliamentary Centre, UNDP and NDI are at the core of the field.¹⁰ These and other organisations work in partnerships because each organisation is able to provide different skills, expertise, experience and access. For instance, an organisation with technical expertise on parliaments may opt to work with an organisation that has more experience in dealing with political parties or electoral systems. Or, it may make sense for an organisation with experience in working with public accounts committees to work with an organisation which has good access to parliamentarians in the north who may be in a good position to engage directly with their southern counterparts.

¹⁰ The expert interviews confirmed that these are the key organisations involved in parliamentary strengthening.

53. The implication of this is that as DFID moves forward on parliamentary strengthening, it should do so on the basis of a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of its potential partners, and of itself. In addition, working with partners can to some extent address the potential concerns of host governments that a donor is seeking to push a particular agenda and undermine its authority (Hubli and Schmidt, 2005, p.27).

Figure 6: Approaches to parliamentary strengthening

	MPs		Parliaments		Political systems ¹¹
	Professional skills/procedural issues ¹²	Subject knowledge ¹³	Institutional reform ¹⁴	Subject specific ¹⁵	
World Bank		X		X	
UNDP	X	X	X	X	
Parliamentary Centre	X	X	X	X	X
NDI	X	X	X	X	X
IPU		X	X		
CPA	X	X	X	X	X
Stiftungs	X	X	X		X
I-IDEA	X				X
IDASA		X	X		X
AWEPA	X	X	X		
WfD	X	X		X	

¹¹ Includes Parliament-civil society relations, public access to Parliament and extra-parliamentary structures such as Human Rights Commissions or institutions that form part of a National Integrity System.

¹² Includes assistance with drafting legislation, parliamentary procedures, orientation, codes of conduct, constituency relations, executive relations and “soft skills” such as public speaking.

¹³ Includes public accounts scrutiny, PRSPs and other forms of subject specific knowledge eg. Gender and Human Rights.

¹⁴ Includes general support for committees, libraries, parliamentary civil service, transcription, parliamentary leadership, rules of procedures, reviewing legislation and transparency/freedom of information issues.

¹⁵ Includes help with the public accounts committee and oversight of poverty reduction.

What impact does parliamentary strengthening have and why?

54. Donors and implementing agencies have, on the whole, failed to document the impacts of their parliamentary strengthening work. The fact that parliamentary performance and the success or otherwise of parliamentary strengthening depends very much on the political context provides only a partial justification for this failure. With little documentation, and even less in the way of independent, systematic, comprehensive evaluation, it is far from easy to identify the impacts of parliamentary strengthening, or to make generalizations about what works and what doesn't work. Donors and implementing agencies must do more to document their parliamentary strengthening work, and to seek to identify what works in different contexts. However, some important lessons can be learnt from the limited number of case studies and assessments which have been carried out.
55. USAID in its 2001 review of its experience of strengthening legislatures, emphasised that legislative strengthening is a "long and arduous path", which reflects the growing pains of new democracies (USAID, 2001). USAID also pointed out that a single donor – whilst able to provide assistance – cannot by itself create strong and independent legislatures in developing countries. This, for USAID, means that it is sensible to focus on specific issues such as anti-corruption, economic reform, budget oversight, constitutional development, the rule of law, transparency and accountability and civil society promotion which might deliver wider benefits.
56. In their 2003 joint review, IPU and UNDP identified a number of factors which can lead to more effective parliamentary strengthening (IPU/UNDP, 2003). Some of these factors are beyond the control of donors or implementing agencies, but careful attention to them may enable the design of more effective projects and programmes. The sorts of things that contribute to successful parliamentary strengthening are: a reform-minded parliament; projects that engage with the opposition as well as majority-party MPs; a focus on specific issues rather than focusing solely on parliamentary procedures; working visits to contexts which are similar to those where the participants come from; and, investments in information technology which are based on clear understanding of need.
57. On the other hand, IPU and UNDP identified a number of characteristics of parliamentary strengthening which can lead to it being less effective. These include: inadequate donor appreciation of the autonomy of the parliament and resulting suspicion of the donor's motives; duplication and poor coordination of activities; lack of sustainability; inappropriate study visits to well-resourced parliaments in developed countries; and, inadequate involvement of the recipient in project planning and implementation.
58. Sida too, in its excellent review of its support to parliaments identified a number of factors which tend to make parliamentary strengthening

ineffective (Sida, 2005). Firstly, much parliamentary strengthening work has tended to focus on parliament as a self-contained entity, rather than as part of a wider political and social system. As such, parliamentary strengthening may focus on the symptoms – a weak parliament – rather than on the causes – political, electoral and social systems which prevent strong parliaments and parliamentarians from emerging. As Sida’s review puts it: “Too often, parliamentary support programs have focused on parliament as a self-contained institution and, as a result, have concentrated on the symptoms of a dysfunctional political process, rather than the underlying causes” (Sida, 2005, p.5).

59. A second weakness identified in the Sida review is that the leadership of parliaments often has insufficient political will to undertake reforms. Thirdly, donors are often naïve about the political incentives which MPs work under, assuming incorrectly in many cases that they are primarily concerned with representing their constituents and holding the executive to account, when in fact they are most interested in retaining their seats.¹⁶ Finally, Sida’s review suggests that methods of assistance for parliamentary strengthening are often poorly matched to objectives. That is, parliamentary strengthening often takes the form of conferences, seminars and study visits rather than long-term capacity building. Whilst this review was of Sida’s parliamentary strengthening work, it very much echoes the highly critical comments of Carothers on legislative strengthening (Carothers, 1999); the evidence and experts consulted as part of this research project suggest that Sida’s findings are of much wider relevance.

Case Study - The Parliamentary Centre and Ghana – Ensure local ownership

The Parliamentary Centre has worked with the Parliament of Ghana on capacity building efforts since 1994, just two years after the re-establishment of the Parliament of Ghana in 1992 (Salih, 2005, p.35).

The partnership is now in its second full phase (known as the Ghana Parliamentary Committee Support Project Phase 2 – GPCSP II) launched in June 2004 following the completion of the initial partnership phase in 2003. GPCAPII is explicitly and fundamentally a partnership programme whereby the Canadian Parliamentary Centre’s Office in Ghana is not the “implementing agency” but rather one of a number of partners that are engaged in a project that has been developed alongside the Parliament of Ghana and will also involve Civil Society Organisations.

Reviews of the project in Ghana have found that it is successfully improving the Governance situation (Canadian Parliamentary Centre, 2005, p.10). Progress has been made in entrenching democratic development and in institutionalizing norms and practices. In an interview with Bob Miller, Director of the Parliamentary Centre, he considered this to be a result of the long term engagement and of the fact that the project provided practical assistance which was relevant and applicable to the

¹⁶ Interview with Tony Worthington (PNoWB)

everyday work of the MPs involved. This ensured that the project fitted the requirements of the parliamentarians and did not add to their burden.

The local ownership of the project, based on a sound understanding of the local political context, its alignment with the needs of the parliamentarians, and the use of realistic targets helped to create a project that is achieving its goals and can be deemed a success.

60. The expert interviews revealed considerable consensus about the factors which determine whether or not parliamentary strengthening succeeds. The most important issue is that of understanding the system of which parliament is a part, and the context within which it operates.¹⁷ Without such an understanding, and particularly if donors seek to export inappropriate models of parliamentary democracy, parliamentary strengthening will not succeed.¹⁸ Understanding local context may well entail working with local implementing agencies such as IDASA in Southern Africa.¹⁹ In addition, an important part of seeing parliament in its wider context is to also engage with civil society to strengthen the link between parliament and the electorate, and – particularly in large countries – to engage with parliaments at regional or provincial levels as well as the national.²⁰

Case study – Sida, The Swedish Riksdag and the Office of the National Assembly in Viet Nam (Anderson et al, 2002) – Understand what is needed

Between 1998 and 2001 Sida financed a co-operation project between the administrative branches of the Swedish Parliament – the Riksdag – and the National Assembly (NA) of Viet Nam. With a focus on administrative technical assistance, although with consideration of the political reality, the aims were to increase the skills and capacity of the professional staff and members of the National Assembly and increase public and media access to the Assembly.

Although there were a large number of contacts between the Viet Nam and Sweden the impetus for the project was from the Swedish side as the idea of co-operation was promoted in the Riksdag. Thus, Sida set aside funding for the project as a financial framework rather than on the basis of detailed cost estimates and Sida acted as a promoting agent. The fact that the impetus for the project came from Swedish parliamentarians, with the funding pre-approved without a development plan, created a situation where there was significant pressure on the project partners to establish a functioning project.

The evaluation found that as a result of this situation the initial project documents were “brief and superficial in analysing the problems that the project was intended to address” (Anderson et al, 2002, p.22). There was no baseline of the political

¹⁷ Interviews with Garth Glentworth (DFID), Bob Miller and Craig Kowalik (Parliamentary Centre), Tony Worthington (PNOWB).

¹⁸ Interview with Greg Power (Global Partners)

¹⁹ Interview with Bob Miller and Craig Kowalik (Parliamentary Centre)

²⁰ Interview with Glenys Kinnock (MEP and Co-Chair of EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly)

situation; this made it difficult to conduct an impact assessment at a later stage. The lack of planning resulted in some misunderstanding between the parties as to where responsibility lay. And there was also no consideration of whether the proposed activities were an appropriate model for co-operation or whether the NA was the most appropriate partner. There was also concern that the project was overly burdensome on the ONA and may have impacted on the work of other donors as they were crowded out.

This case study demonstrates that it is essential for the initial phases of a project to be planned considering the appropriateness of the project given both the political context and the capacity of the organisation – as well as in terms of harmonisation with other donors. The impact of the role of the domestic politics in Sweden should also be considered as it was these interventions that resulted in an incomplete inception that failed to fully consider the appropriateness of the project in terms of form and partner.

This case study also highlights the importance of a through evaluation as following the evaluation some of the problems were addressed and a further project was approved for 2002-2005. The publication of the evaluation also allows other donors to learn from these mistakes.

61. A second set of issues is about local ownership and sustainability.

Parliamentary strengthening will not work if it is done on a short-term basis or is planned without adequate consultation with the parliament about what assistance it needs; ideally there should be a strategic locally-owned plan for parliamentary development. In addition, if a project is to have an impact beyond its completion, it must generate a sense of local ownership, nurture local champions of change, and be based on a sound understanding of the incentive structures which drive the behaviour of parliamentarians.²¹ A third issue which emerged is the value of focusing on specific thematic issues such as HIV/AIDS or budget monitoring, and on the sorts of things – such as participating in oversight committees – which MPs do from day to day, and which they can therefore see the value of and put into practice.²²

62. Finally, – whilst some reservations were expressed about harmonisation, in terms of “putting all of your eggs in one basket”²³ – most of the experts consulted stressed the importance of donors working multilaterally, coordinating their work to maximize synergies and avoid duplication, and to reduce the administrative burdens placed on parliaments in developing countries.²⁴ Bob Miller of the Parliamentary Centre contrasted Burkina Faso, which has developed a ten-year parliamentary development plan

²¹ Interviews with Glenys Kinnock (MEP), Jeff Balch (AWEPA), Thomas Huyghebaert (UNDP), Bob Miller and Craig Kowalik (Parliamentary Centre), Greg Power (Global Partners)

²² Interview with Bob Miller and Craig Kowalik (Parliamentary Centre).

²³ Interview with Jeff Balch (AWEPA)

²⁴ Interviews with Glenys Kinnock (MEP), Thomas Huyghebaert (UNDP), Greg Power (Global Partners).

with the support of UNDP, with Cambodia, where, he recalled there had been a large number of players working in an uncoordinated manner and undermining each others' activities.²⁵ A multilateral approach can also serve to reassure developing country partners that donors are not seeking to impose particular models of democracy or particular policy agendas, and can usefully expose parliamentarians in developing countries to multiple models of parliamentary democracy.

Guidelines for effective parliamentary strengthening

- Respond to demand: Parliamentary strengthening should be demand-led, and responsive to local needs, rather than externally-driven.
- Address causes: Parliamentary strengthening should seek to address the causes of poor parliamentary performance, rather than addressing solely the symptoms.
- Take account of context: Parliamentary strengthening must take full account of the local context – including the political context – within which parliaments function.
- Involve recipients: Parliamentary strengthening should involve a range of local organizations, and interest groups, including opposition MPs and parties as well as members of the government.
- Focus on issues: Parliamentary strengthening should use particular issues such as budget oversight, anti-corruption, HIV/AIDS and poverty reduction as vehicles to improve parliamentary performance, rather than focusing solely on parliamentary procedures.
- Coordinate and deliver organize appropriate activities: Agencies involved in parliamentary strengthening must do more to coordinate their work, and to ensure that their activities are appropriate to the objectives of parliamentary strengthening. Think twice before setting up or supporting study visits and seminars.
- Provide long-term sustainable support.

These guidelines are distilled from the literature on parliamentary strengthening and a number of expert interviews.

Conclusions

63. A wide range of organisations are involved in parliamentary strengthening, including bilateral donors, multilateral organisations, parliamentary networks, and an assortment of research institutes, not-for-profits and private sector organisations. The approaches taken to parliamentary strengthening are similarly diverse, but can be categorized into those which focus on parliamentarians, those which focus on parliament as an institution, and those which address the wider political system within which parliaments operate. Data on the impact of parliamentary strengthening work is extremely inadequate, but the reviews which have been

²⁵ Interview with Thomas Huyghebaert (UNDP)

conducted, along with the expert interviews conducted for this piece of work, reveal considerable consensus about the pre-requisites for successful parliamentary strengthening. The next chapter reviews the work of UK-based agencies in the field of parliamentary strengthening, before a concluding chapter outlines a series of issues which DFID will need to consider in formulating its future strategy for parliamentary strengthening work, and makes a number of recommendations.

5: Parliamentary strengthening: UK-based organisations

What is the history of UK-based parliamentary strengthening?

64. The UK has, as a result of its colonial history, been responsible for exporting a particular political structure to many countries. As such, the UK had, and retains, strong ties with parliaments and the broader polity in many developing countries. This historical association, particularly with Commonwealth countries, means that MPs from those countries often have a great respect for the UK Parliament and parliamentarians, creating a positive basis for any joint activities.²⁶ And, more broadly, parliaments in many developing countries have been established in ways that bear at least some resemblance – less so in practice than on paper – to Westminster.

65. Whilst detailed information on parliamentary strengthening work prior to 2001 was not readily available, project documents indicate that, for example, DFID (and previously the FCO) has been engaged with the Malawian Parliament since the establishment of multi-party democracy in 1994.²⁷ Similarly, the Future of Europe Trust was funded by DFID and the FCO to carry out parliamentary exchanges in former Soviet Bloc countries following the collapse of the Berlin Wall.²⁸ So, whilst there has been a resurgence of interest in parliamentary strengthening, DFID and the UK Government more widely, is not entirely new to the field.

Which non-governmental organisations are involved?

66. A number of UK based organisations are currently involved in parliamentary strengthening activities of various forms. These include parliamentary organisations, political party organisations, as well as private sector consultancies and not-for-profit organisations.

67. The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – UK (CPA-UK)** is a relatively autonomous branch of the CPA. Funded directly by the Treasury, rather than through a Government Department such as the FCO or DFID, its mission is to promote parliamentary democracy in the Commonwealth. It is very much a parliamentary rather than a governmental body.²⁹ The CPA-UK organises 2-4 seminars a year for legislators from across the Commonwealth and also co-ordinates visits to the UK and return visits for parliamentarians. For example, it has in recent

²⁶ Interviews with Andrew Tuggey and others (CPA-UK). and Liam Laurence-Smyth (House of Commons).

²⁷ DFID Malawi, Briefing Note on Malawi Parliament and DFID support, 2006 (internal document)

²⁸ DFID, Russian Federation, Sharing Parliamentary Experience (SHAPE) Project, Project Memorandum, 2000.

²⁹ Interview with Andrew Tuggey and others (CPA-UK)

years hosted visits by a number of Public Accounts Committees. The **Inter-Parliamentary Union – British Group** (IPU-BG) is a similar organisation, but is less autonomous from its parent Geneva-based IPU which is very active on parliamentary strengthening. IPU-BG assists with the coordination of non-Commonwealth country visits.

68. Alongside these parliamentary associations, which are both closely linked with and housed in Westminster, there are the Houses of Commons and Lords **Overseas Clerks**. These individuals have a responsibility for the relationships between both Houses of Parliament and other parliaments. However, they are not concerned solely with parliamentary strengthening, but are also involved in building networks and sharing information with other parliaments.³⁰ Beyond Westminster, the Scottish Parliament – working with the British Council – has done some parliamentary strengthening work in Ethiopia and Nepal.

69. The **Westminster Foundation for Democracy** (WFD) is another significant actor in the UK democracy strengthening community. WFD is a Non-Departmental Public Body of the FCO, and receives its core funding as a grant-in-aid from this source. WFD tends not to focus on parliaments and parliamentarians but rather works through UK political parties frequently on party-based activity. They have nevertheless done some work on parliamentary strengthening directly, and in recent years have made considerable efforts to re-orient their activities in ways which are more in tune with the poverty reduction goals of DFID.³¹

70. In addition to these organisations, there are a number of UK based NGOs which have chosen to allocate some of their resources to working on various aspects of parliamentary strengthening. This is often in connection with advocacy work on broader development issues. A good example is the NGO-coalition working on the International Parliamentarians' Petition, a petition which aims to promote parliamentary engagement in policy-making in developing countries. Beyond the NGO sector there are a small number of other organisations including the British Council, Electoral Reform International Services, the British East West Centre and Global Partners, which engage in various activities which relate either directly or indirectly to parliamentary strengthening.

What does the FCO do in terms of parliamentary strengthening?

71. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not have a specific programme on parliamentary strengthening in developing countries, but much of its work – well beyond its support for the Westminster Foundation for Democracy – has a bearing on the role of parliaments in developing countries. In terms of specific activities which relate to the role and functioning of parliaments, the FCO's Parliamentary Relations Team helps to organize and coordinate exchange visits between parliamentary staff

³⁰ Interview with Liam Laurence-Smyth (House of Commons)

³¹ Interview with Hugh Bayley, MP (AAPPG and Westminster Foundation for Democracy)

and parliamentarians from the UK and developing countries. In this work, the FCO engages closely with Select Committees, All-Party Groups, the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the Overseas Office of the House of Commons. Relations with parliaments and parliamentarians in Commonwealth countries are managed by the FCO's Commonwealth Coordination Office.

72. At country-level, much of the FCO's work on seeking to understand and influence the political system within a country has a bearing on the role and functioning of parliaments. As such, whilst the FCO might not use the label, much of its work does impact on the role and functioning of parliaments. Particularly if parliamentary strengthening is understood as involving engagement with the wider political system, the FCO's knowledge, expertise and skills are highly relevant.³² With DFID's approach to poverty reduction increasingly focused on governance, human rights, and democracy, the complementarities between DFID's work and financial muscle, and the FCO's detailed in-country political knowledge and expertise, are clear.

What does DFID do in terms of parliamentary strengthening?

73. DFID's records show that it has been involved in around 30 distinct parliamentary strengthening projects (see Appendix D). The earliest of these projects began in 1998; the newest projects are just beginning. Half of DFID's projects are in Africa, and half elsewhere. In Africa, DFID has engaged in work which contributes to parliamentary strengthening in Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. According to the response to a Parliamentary Question, DFID spent an estimated £1.21m in support of African parliaments in 2003-04, £1.6m in 2004-05, and was expected to spend £1.41 m in 2005-06 (PQ 52238). Beyond Africa, parliamentary strengthening work has been carried out in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Central Asia, Pakistan, Russia, the Slovak Republic, Sri Lanka and the West Bank/Gaza.

74. DFID's parliamentary strengthening activities are diverse. They range from projects with a narrow focus, short time-frame and a small budget, to projects which encompass multiple aspects of political governance, over a period of several years, and with a budget – alongside other donors – of tens of millions of pounds. The smaller projects include ones focused on building the capacity of federal and regional parliaments in Ethiopia, enhancing the effectiveness of parliament and its committees in Kenya and in South Africa through the provision of information, research and legal services, developing the capacity of parliament to oversee public resource management in Zambia (as part of a multi-donor public financial management reform programme), supporting the Public Accounts Committee in Ghana, and building a library for the Palestinian Legislative

³² Interview with Andrea Campbell, Steve Collier, Susan Hyland and Claire Scarratt (FCO)

Council. The largest project, in which parliamentary strengthening is just one component of a wider political governance programme, is in the DRC. This proposed project has a five-year time frame, a £50 million budget and will involve a number of donors working under the leadership of UNDP.³³

75. Despite the diversity, it is possible to categorise DFID’s work in terms of whether it is focused on MPs, parliament, or the wider political system (see figure 7). This analysis suggests that the majority of DFID’s work is focused on Parliament as an institution, rather than on training individual MPs, or on the wider political system. More specifically, strengthening key parliamentary committees (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania), and/or helping parliaments to develop their own plans for parliamentary development (Malawi, Uganda), seem to be the most-used approaches. Beyond parliaments themselves, projects in Afghanistan and Mozambique, as well as an earlier project in Malawi, have focused or will focus on civic education and parliament-civil society engagement. Much of DFID’s parliamentary strengthening work is conducted alongside, or in a harmonized manner with, other donors.

76. The vast majority of DFID’s work is concerned with national legislatures, although in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Pakistan DFID is/has also been involved in supporting regional assemblies. DFID also has plans to support the Pan African Parliament, and has provided support to PNoWB, and Parliamentarians for Global Action. In the UK, DFID supported the successful Parliamentary Seminar on Africa in October 2005, an event which was attended by parliamentarians from more than 30 African countries, as well as the UK and the wider EU. Andrew Tuggey of the CPA-UK described this event as a model of how DFID can work together with organisations such as the CPA-UK and the IPU-BG (AWEPA was also involved).³⁴

Figure 7: DFID’s parliamentary strengthening activities³⁵

	MPs		Parliaments		Political systems
	Professional skills/procedural issues	Subject knowledge	Institutional reform	Subject specific	
Afghanistan					X
Bangladesh		X	X		
Burundi					X

³³ DFID, “Strengthening Democracy & Accountability in DRC 2006-2011 – Project Concept Note”, 2006.

³⁴ Interview with Andrew Tuggey and others (CPA-UK)

³⁵ This table was compiled using information provided by DFID in the form of an answer to a parliamentary question as well individual project documents. The reliability of the table depends on how accurate and comprehensive the project documents received were. Except in Malawi where there were two separate consecutive projects that took different forms, more than one cross indicates that the same project includes more than one approach.

Central Asia					X
DRC					X
Ethiopia	X		X		
Ghana				X	
Kenya			X		
Malawi			X		X
Mozambique					X
Nigeria				X	
Pakistan		X	X		
Palestinian Territories			X		
Russia			X		
Sierra Leone			X		
Slovakia			X		
Somalia	X		X		
South Africa	X			X	
Sri Lanka					X
Tanzania			X		
Uganda			X		
Zambia				X	

What impact has DFID’s parliamentary strengthening work had, and why?

77. The information held by DFID centrally about its in-country parliamentary strengthening work is patchy, in part because documentation is held in country offices. Information about impacts is particularly lacking. In such circumstances, learning about what works, and making well-informed decisions about how to move forward, is a challenge.

Case Study: Sharing Parliamentary Experience Project in Russia – Beware of Supply-Driven Projects

Instigated in 2000, the Sharing Parliamentary Experience Project (SHAPE) was conceived to “strengthen Russian parliamentary practice by sharing British parliamentary experience with counterparts in the Russian Federal Assembly”. The project was anticipated to run for three year from 2000 and focus on the legislative process representation and accountability with a total budget of no more than £600,000.

The project was intended to replace the short-term and *ad hoc* engagement with the Russian parliament to that point which had meant that there was no strategic focus. With such a shift the engagement would be coming into line with practice in the area that has been found to be most effective – i.e. that which is long term and strategic.

In establishing the project DFID's Eastern Europe and Central Asia team sent a delegation to Russia to review parliamentary activities which had been co-ordinated through the Overseas Clerk in the House of Commons. The intention was also to establish whether there was appropriate support for a complete project (SHAPE), and to find a local project partner who would be able to implement the project in Russia. Such support and a local partner were found, and on return from the trip the details of SHAPE were finalised and the management put out to tender.

However, it is clear that this project was donor-led with DFID both seeking a local project partner and a UK project manager, as well as acting as an advocate for the project within the Duma. As such there was significant risk (identified in the memorandum) that there would not be enough interest in the project by staff and parliamentarians to ensure that it could go ahead.

SHAPE, conducted in a Middle-Income Country, was axed in 2003/04. As such, and with a budget of less than £1 million there has been no evaluation and no project completion report. However, a "snapshot" project progress report was completed in 2001 which found that project outputs were likely to only be partially achieved. There was concern too that the dialogue between British and Russian parliamentarians lacked substance and question marks were raised as to whether the approach selected was appropriate to the aims of the project.

78. DFID's parliamentary strengthening work in Bangladesh is perhaps the clearest example of failure. This project ran from 2001-05 and had a budget of £2 million to strengthen the role and capacity of parliamentary committees. UNDP was the lead agency, tasked with the role of coordination and managing pooled funds. There was much delay, and little progress was made. Indeed the project completion report suggested that this was "an example of how not to approach strengthening parliamentary committees"³⁶. Divergent understandings of the project were identified as the primary reason for its failure.

79. Work in Sierra Leone has not gone well either; in this instance because key players in the Sierra Leonean parliament have not been supportive of reform. In Tanzania, a USAID initiated project, to be implemented by the State University of New York, encountered much resistance and raised concerns about parliamentary/political sovereignty. This led DFID and others to conclude that it would make more sense to support and work directly with the Parliamentary Administration, and with UNDP – seen as a less political actor than USAID – in the lead. Progress is now being made, with for instance the Public Accounts Committee engaging more effectively in financial oversight, and the quality of the budget debate having increased too.

³⁶ Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Bangladesh, Project Completion Report, 2005.

Case Study: Legislature Capacity Building in Pakistan - Harmonise

Commencing in January 2003 and with a budget of £500,000 this project was intended to develop effective and responsive national and provincial assemblies following the return to parliamentary democracy after three years of military rule. The project was based on a DFID-funded study that had considered the governance of Pakistan and areas in need of reform.³⁷

Following consultations with the donor community in Pakistan to ensure harmonisation of approach it was determined that DFID would work with a local NGO – the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Training (PILDAT) and provide core funding for three years and assist PILDAT in seeking long term funding. In the planning stage there were also discussions with the relevant government department and assembly secretariats to ensure engagement with both the project and NGO.³⁸

Following the completion of the initial three years of funding, the Project Completion Report found that the project had effectively brought the issue of parliamentary capacity to the forefront of the debate and the Government, as a direct result, had begun training for legislators. Unfortunately, this had undermined one of the objectives of the project – for PILDAT to become a self-sustaining organisation. This aside, it was found that the project was successful and had contributed to parliamentary development.

In the planning and implementation of the project a great deal of consideration was given to donor harmonisation, the local political context and the long term sustainability of the work. As a result there was a successful project that effectively improved the national and regional assemblies in Pakistan. The Project Completion Report found that “PILDAT had done a credible job of effectively pursuing the agenda of improved parliaments in Pakistan.”³⁹

80. In Uganda, parliamentary strengthening had a slow start, but now after some years of engagement DFID’s support for a country-led, carefully-planned, multi-donor, long-term process of institutional development is beginning to deliver results. Experience in Malawi – as in Tanzania and Uganda – shows that although parliamentary strengthening may not initially succeed, if lessons are learnt, then progress can be made.

Case Study: Parliamentary Strengthening in Malawi – Letting Parliament Lead

DFID has funded two significant projects in Malawi. The first of these, begun in 2003, was to enhance the voice and influence of Malawian citizens, within accountable and responsive systems of governance. Working through CIDA, this included efforts to enhance engagement between CSOs and Parliament. However, an end of project

³⁷ DFID, “Pakistan: Legislature Capacity Building Project - Project Concept Note”, p. 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3.

³⁹ DFID, PILDAT: Project Completion Report, 2005.

review found that though some progress had been made there remained significant weakness in the institutional capacity of the Parliament.⁴⁰

The evaluation also identified an emerging opportunity for action on this institutional weakness due to changes in the domestic politics. As such a second project was funded specifically focusing on institutional strengthening with support given to Parliament to allow it to develop its own priorities rather than have donors impose their agendas. This project has resulted in the creation of a Parliamentary Task Force with a remit for parliamentary reform. The Strategic Plan - expected to be launched in February 2007 – will provide a basis both for reform, and for greater alignment and harmonisation of donor support.

The initial project was less successful as it did not correctly identify the needs of the organisations and as such focused on the wrong area for work. Thus, engagement with civil society was not the priority when Parliament was starved of resources, lacked suitable staff, and did not have control over its own budget, agenda and timetable.⁴¹ It was essential that Parliament was able to determine its own priorities. Once this was achieved, the prospects for further parliament-led progress on modernization and reforms were considerably better.

Furthermore, this demonstrates the importance of considering the changing domestic political environment; the second project was able to take advantage and build upon momentum from a domestic political re-balancing (the President splitting from the ruling Party). There will always be an aspect of luck with parliamentary strengthening as domestic events and politics are of over-riding importance. However, whilst such events can undermine a project, they may also provide windows of opportunity.

Conclusions

81. The lack of data on the impact of DFID's parliamentary strengthening activities makes it difficult to draw reliable conclusions about what works and what doesn't. However, some lessons can be learnt. Projects which are demand-led, take full account of local context, involve harmonisation and coordination between donors, and are sustained, are the most likely to succeed. In contrast, supply-driven short-term projects, or projects which are poorly coordinated with other donors, are likely to fail.

82. The issue of where the demand for parliamentary strengthening comes from is very important. If projects are developed in response to the enthusiasm of donors, or implementing agencies, they run the risk of failing to meet the needs of parliaments in developing countries, of failing to understand the local political context, and of failing to engender local ownership. Supply-driven projects may also be viewed with suspicion both by parliaments and by the government in developing countries. The expert consultations suggested that parliamentary strengthening is increasingly demand-led.⁴² They also revealed that in the past parliamentary

⁴⁰ DFID Malawi, "Briefing Note on Malawi Parliament and DFID support", 2006.

⁴¹ E-mail from Jackie Pearce to Stephen Sharples, 7th December 2006.

⁴² Interview with Bob Miller and Craig Kowalik (Parliamentary Centre)

strengthening has been donor-driven and that such tendencies certainly persist today. Whilst the enthusiasm of British MPs for parliamentary strengthening should not be squandered, DFID will need to think carefully about how to ensure that their enthusiasm is channeled appropriately in support of demand-led projects.

6: Issues and recommendations for DFID

The imperative of parliamentary strengthening

83. Strengthening parliaments is an important element of work to foster capable, accountable and responsive governance in developing countries. Parliamentary strengthening is of course not the only way of improving governance and accountability, but effective parliaments are a key component of democratic governance. By exercising their powers to legislate and to oversee the activities of the executive, and by representing citizens, parliaments can enhance state capability, accountability and responsiveness. In practice, in many developing countries, parliaments are ineffective.
84. Explanations for poor parliamentary performance can be found at many levels: the MPs themselves, parliament as an institution, the position of parliament in the wider political and electoral system, the cultures and societies within which they are embedded, and the wider network of relationships – including aid relationships – between developing countries and developed countries. As such, whilst strengthening parliament as an institution is important, attention also needs to be paid to the wider environment and political systems within which parliaments operate. This chapter outlines some principles which DFID should bear in mind as it moves forward with its parliamentary strengthening work, before setting out a number of issues which DFID needs to consider, and making a number of recommendations as to next steps.

Applying the Paris principles to parliamentary strengthening

85. Under the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, donors and partner countries undertook to enhance their respective accountability to their citizens and parliament for their development policies, strategies and performance. Donors and partners must live up to their Paris commitments and work to ensure that parliaments are brought into the policy process more fully. Conversely, considering the relevance of the Paris principles to their parliamentary strengthening work, may be useful as donors move forward in this area. This section explores what the implications of the Paris principles might be for parliamentary strengthening.

Ownership

86. Donors must ensure that parliamentary strengthening is demand-led, responding to the needs of developing countries and their parliaments. They should be wary of exporting their own models of parliamentary democracy, and must be sensitive to the context within which parliaments operate. This is essential if processes of parliamentary strengthening are to be nationally-owned.

87. Efforts must also be made to ensure that parliamentary development plans are owned by the wider society. This will entail working with organisations beyond the parliament – CSOs, the media, and political parties including the opposition – to ensure that they have a stake in the process of parliamentary strengthening. Without this wider sense of ownership, parliamentary strengthening will be ineffective and unsustainable. DFID's Governance and Transparency Fund provide an ideal vehicle to stimulate and support the demand side of accountability, and to enable CSOs, the media and others to engage more effectively with parliaments and to push for better parliamentary performance. Donors should also consider carefully the merits of working with and through local partners and organisations with experience, expertise, and understanding of the local context. By working in this way, they can help to generate a sense of ownership, and ensure that their support is appropriate for the country context.

Alignment

88. Parliamentary strengthening ought also to be aligned with the development plans of a country and of its parliament. Any engagement on parliamentary strengthening must include an assessment of need. And, ideally, parliamentary strengthening should in its early stages involve discussions with parliaments to help them to develop a strategic plan, with which donors can align their efforts. Donors should also pay attention to the timing of their engagement, ensuring that it is appropriately aligned with parliamentary and electoral timetables. Of course, parliamentary strengthening may – particularly if it is demand-led, and aligned with locally-owned priorities – produce parliaments which at times take positions which are uncomfortable for donors; this is the inevitable flip-side of real partnerships and, particularly where they are representative, does not justify a neglect of parliaments.

Harmonisation

89. There are a wide variety of organisations involved in parliamentary strengthening. In any one country there may well be several organisations working in this area. As donors seek to engage in a particular country, they must begin with a clear map of what is already taking place, before then thinking about whether and how they can best add value in a harmonised manner. There are risks to harmonisation, and it must not lead to donors working in concert to impose their plans on partners, but it can play an important role in ensuring that parliamentary strengthening is more coordinated and effective than has often been the case. Donors should also consider seriously the value of adopting pooled funding arrangements. Echoing the Paris Declaration's call for more predictable aid, donor support for parliamentary strengthening ought also to be long-term, and must include mechanisms to ensure its sustainability.

Managing for results

90. As the process of producing this report has revealed, there is very little systematic or comprehensive data on parliamentary strengthening and its impacts. If donors and others are to learn about what works, and what doesn't, and to improve the impact of their parliamentary strengthening, then this must change. Greater efforts must be put into developing frameworks for assessing parliamentary performance, and the impact of parliamentary strengthening. Donors should also ensure that evaluations are shared, so that the parliamentary strengthening community as a whole can improve its performance. In addition, there is much value in learning which takes place between parliaments of different developing countries. Donors should seek to support such south-south learning.

Accountability

91. Parliaments and accountability should go hand-in-hand. The purpose of parliamentary strengthening should be to enhance the democratic accountability of governments in developing countries to their citizens. In a time of rising aid flows, and increased budget support, parliaments have an important role to play in ensuring that aid is managed and spent effectively in support of poverty reduction. By strengthening parliaments in developing countries, donors will not only strengthen domestic accountability, but will also help to ensure that the aid they provide is used effectively.

Issues and recommendations for DFID

92. A first issue for DFID is to decide whether or not it wants to get more involved in parliamentary strengthening. The answer would seem to be yes. DFID, in its recent White Paper, made commitments to working more with parliaments, and other recent high-profile reports – the Commission for Africa, and UNECA's African Governance Report – have also called for more effort to be put into parliamentary strengthening. Given the importance of parliaments in good, poverty-reducing, governance, DFID should certainly increase its support for, and engagement with parliaments in developing countries.

93. However, DFID must think carefully about its comparative advantage, and about how best it can contribute to parliamentary strengthening. This requires consideration both of the UK and DFID's comparative advantage, and of what gaps there are in the current landscape of parliamentary strengthening. The UK and DFID have various strengths to play to. Firstly, the UK and its parliament have strong historically-based relationships with parliaments in many developing countries, with many former colonies' parliaments established on the Westminster model. Second, DFID is the acknowledged leader – along with Sida – on governance, in the donor community. Third, through their country offices, the FCO and DFID have much experience and knowledge of how political systems operate in particular developing countries. And fourth, British representatives – in

Westminster as well as in the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly – are keen to share their expertise and experience with their developing country counterparts.

94. DFID and the UK Government more widely should capitalise on these strengths, engaging in demand-driven parliamentary strengthening, which sees parliaments as part of wider governance systems, and which is based on a sound understanding of local context. DFID should also persuade other donors of the need to give parliaments a bigger role in overseeing aid, and make use of the UK's elected representatives.
95. Channelling MPs' enthusiasm, particularly when the aim is to respond to developing country demands, is not a straightforward matter. There are a number of organisations – the CPA-UK, the IPU-BG, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and the House of Commons itself – which already enable MPs to engage with their counterparts in developing countries, and which could provide DFID with excellent access to MPs' expertise. These organisations play an important role, but DFID needs to engage more systematically with them, helping to ensure greater coordination of their work, and – subject to the wishes of these organisations – enabling them to play an effective role in strengthening parliaments' role in governance for poverty reduction.
96. DFID should work more closely with the CPA-UK, IPU-BG, WFD and House of Commons' Overseas Office, taking advantage of their willingness to work more closely with DFID, and of the fact that the CPA-UK and WFD are in the process of re-orienting their work. More concretely, DFID should take the lead in establishing regular meetings to exchange information about parliamentary strengthening activities, and – where possible and appropriate – to enable greater coordination of activities. DFID should also consider appointing someone to liaise with the various parliamentary bodies, something which the Foreign Office has done for many years.
97. Greater clarity from DFID about what it means by parliamentary strengthening, and the provision to MPs of information about how parliaments in partner countries operate, would also be useful. DFID could also encourage the CPA-UK, IPU-BG and the WFD, to develop a roster of former MPs who might be willing and able to engage in parliamentary strengthening work, much like the USA's Association of Former Members of Congress. DFID's Africa Capacity Building Initiative might also be a vehicle through which UK parliamentary expertise could be channeled in support of parliamentary strengthening. Establishing an additional organisation to channel MPs' enthusiasm and interests would seem to be unnecessary; the emphasis should be on helping to enhance the effectiveness and coordination of existing organizations.
98. DFID should also ensure that its support for parliaments, and its engagement with the wider political system – at the UK level, but perhaps

most importantly at a country-level – is co-ordinated with that of the Foreign Office. The fact that DFID increasingly sees governance, human rights and democracy, as important building blocks for poverty reduction, provides a strong incentive for better coordination with the FCO, so that DFID and the FCO can play to, and combine, their respective strengths.

99. Beyond the UK too, DFID needs to consider which organisations to work with. There are a large number of organisations currently engaged in parliamentary strengthening; finding the right partners and/or implementers will be key. It will be important to get a better handle on which organisations are more effective, and which organisations complement DFID's expertise. This review has uncovered some useful information in this regard, but it does not provide the basis for hard and fast recommendations.
100. The evidence strongly suggests that it is essential to consider parliaments in their wider political, social and cultural context. This need not mean that DFID loses its focus on strengthening parliament as an institution; indeed, a clear focus, with appreciation of the wider context, is essential. Appreciation of the wider context might however mean that DFID engage further with strengthening the demand side for effective parliaments, working with CSOs, the media and – through civic engagement work - the wider public. DFID's £100 million Governance and Transparency Fund would seem to be an ideal vehicle for supporting CSOs, the media and others to engage more effectively with parliaments. An appreciation of the fact that parliamentary performance depends in large part on the wider political context, might also mean that DFID consider seriously whether and how to work more with political parties, an area which International-IDEA is the acknowledged leader.
101. DFID, with a focus on governance, can also play an important role in helping other donors to see that parliaments are part of wider governance systems, and in helping to link up work on the various elements of national governance systems. More specifically, DFID could contextualize its work with parliaments as part of a wider initiative to work with systems of representation and accountability. It will be important in this regard that all of the "accountability stock-takes" being undertaken by the Effective States Team in DFID's Policy and Research Division are brought together, and that the links and synergies between them are fully explored.
102. In terms of the issues which parliamentary strengthening addresses, there does seem to be value in working on substantive issues such as poverty reduction and budget oversight, rather than solely on parliamentary procedures. A more radical suggestion, worthy of serious consideration, is whether and how DFID could mainstream its engagement with parliaments across all of its areas of work. So, for instance, DFID could include in its work on conflict, or health, or education, engagement with the institution which has the mandate to make democratic decisions about national priorities. If DFID decides to

conduct a series of case studies on parliamentary strengthening in particular developing countries, a case study on engagement with parliaments as part of sectoral work – for instance through Sector-Wide Approaches – would be very useful.

103. Last, but by no means least, DFID needs to consider how it can best learn from its experience in parliamentary strengthening. Efforts need to be made to develop frameworks for assessing parliamentary performance, so that benchmarks can be established, and the impact of parliamentary strengthening programmes assessed. DFID should work with others – USAID, and the Canadian Parliamentary Centre for instance – who are active in this area. In doing this, DFID should think carefully about whether such assessment frameworks are intended for external evaluation, or perhaps more helpfully, to provide parliamentarians in developing countries with tools to monitor and improve the performance of their parliaments.

Recommendations and next steps for DFID

Should DFID do more parliamentary strengthening?

- DFID should do more work on parliamentary strengthening.

What approach to parliamentary strengthening should DFID take?

- Ensure that DFID's parliamentary strengthening work is demand-driven, addresses causes, is context-aware, involves recipients, focuses on substantive issues, is coordinated with that of other donors, is long-term, and includes systematic evaluation.
- Build on existing DFID and UK strengths in parliamentary development, and identify gaps in parliamentary strengthening work done by other agencies.
- Partner with non-UK-based organisations to ensure that their approaches to parliamentary strengthening are based on a vision which sees parliaments as part – an important part – of political society and national governance systems.
- Work more closely with Westminster-based organisations to enable them to play an effective role in strengthening parliaments' role in governance for poverty reduction.

What should DFID do next as regards parliamentary strengthening?

- Hold a meeting with the Westminster-based organisations, organised with the FCO, to discuss how DFID and the FCO might work more closely with them to strengthen parliaments in developing countries.
- Organise an experts' workshop on parliamentary strengthening, to map out who does what in more detail, so that DFID can accurately identify its comparative advantage.
- Conduct a series of case studies of parliamentary strengthening in a number of developing countries, to learn more lessons about what works and what does not.
- Engage with organisations such as USAID and the Canadian Parliamentary Centre to explore the feasibility and value of developing means of assessing parliamentary performance and the effectiveness of parliamentary strengthening.

- Develop a “how to” note on parliamentary strengthening, and ensure that parliaments and parliamentary performance are part of DFID’s Country Governance Analysis.

Next steps

104. DFID’s support for parliamentary strengthening should be about strengthening democratic accountability, and in this way delivering good, poverty-reducing governance. In considering how to enhance its support for parliamentary strengthening, DFID’s overarching concern should be how best to respond to requests for assistance, in a manner which takes account of country context, and which nurtures a strong sense of national ownership. DFID’s assistance must be demand-driven, not supply-led.
105. In the short-term, DFID and the FCO should engage more with the UK-based organisations to establish how best they – and the MPs which are their members – can contribute to parliamentary strengthening. Beyond, the UK, DFID needs to work out which are the best partner organisations to work with and support. Progress on the latter might be achieved by holding a workshop on parliamentary strengthening, with participation from many of the players referred to in this report, to map out more fully the landscape of parliamentary strengthening. DFID will then be in a better position to determine how it can add most value.
106. DFID should also consider conducting some country case studies of parliamentary strengthening. This review has thrown considerable light on the issue, but the complexities of parliamentary strengthening – and particularly the challenges of ensuring good coordination between donors and agencies – are best understood in particular country contexts. DFID should also, as a matter of some urgency, work with others to establish better frameworks for collating information about parliamentary strengthening, and to develop means to assess its effectiveness. DFID should consider producing a “how to” note on parliamentary strengthening. And finally, as DFID moves forward with its Country Governance Analysis, it should ensure that parliaments and parliamentary performance are part of this analysis.

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES – REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES AND OF DFID'S EXPERIENCE TO DATE

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANTS

Background

The 2006 White Paper commits DFID to consider opportunities to expand its engagement and increase its effectiveness vis-à-vis parliamentary strengthening in developing countries. At an internal meeting on 12 September 2006, and in subsequent discussions, it was agreed that a virtual team will commission and oversee a review of DFID's work in this field. On receipt of this review, the team will prepare an internal DFID report, to be submitted by end January 2007.

Objective

The review will help our team move DFID towards a clear view of:

- the unifying ***purpose*** of potential future work on parliamentary strengthening;
- the ***content, division of labour and timeframe*** for potential DFID workstreams that will help achieve this purpose.

Deliverables

The main output of the review will be a single report that will:

- suggest a clear medium term vision for parliamentary strengthening in developing countries, given DFID's revised conception of governance (CAR framework) and our knowledge of the current roles and functions of parliaments in developing countries;
- identify the role external agencies can play to help realise this vision;
- summarise the extent to which DFID – and other agencies – are currently fulfilling this role;
- make recommendations on how DFID might raise its game – and that of other agencies – to contribute more effectively to parliamentary strengthening.

The report will be treated as a working document, for use by DFID in whole or in part according to its needs. It may be shared with others, internally and externally. The report will be no more than 20 pages in length, with a 2-3 page executive summary. Whilst an in-depth analysis is not expected, the report must be sufficiently substantive to enable DFID to make informed, sound decisions on the way forward.

Scope of Work

The activities required to produce this report should take in the region of 12-16 days to complete. They include:

- a) **Review of the current state of knowledge regarding the role Parliaments play in nurturing state capability, accountability and responsiveness in developing countries.** Key issues include the potential for parliaments to serve their 'ideal-type' roles in the 'patrimonial' and 'clientelist' political systems in which they are often embedded; the roles of parliaments vis a vis other institutions of political and civil society; the state of the art as regards indicators of parliamentary effectiveness.
- b) **Review of the parliamentary strengthening work that DFID has undertaken in recent years, and what we know regarding the *impact* of this work – vis a vis state capability, accountability and responsiveness.** This should cover country level interventions and HQ work within Policy and Regional divisions. It should include DFID's engagement with Whitehall, international institutions, other donors, and research bodies. It should review the degree to which our engagement has followed now established principles of aid effectiveness (aid is effective where it is aligned, harmonised, untied, long-term, predictable..).
- c) **Review of the parliamentary strengthening work of other external agencies' in recent years, and what we know regarding the *impact* of this work – vis a vis state capability, accountability and responsiveness.** Key players will include other bilateral donors, the IFIs (notably the World Bank), international parliamentary networks and organisations, other UK Government departments (particularly FCO) and 'private sector' entities.
- d) **Review of future options for DFID.** Providing: i) an assessment of DFID's comparative advantage, if any, in relation to parliamentary strengthening; ii) comment on whether there are significant gaps which DFID should help to fill; iii) recommendations on how DFID should prioritise its involvement, including identifying areas where involvement should be scaled up, scaled back or discontinued.

Some of the initial work under a) to c) has already been carried out by the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, in response to queries submitted earlier this year by the Effective States team. The

consultants will take the GSDRC responses as the starting point for their work, but also reflect other evaluations and stocktakes – such as that recently conducted by Sida (2005, 2006) – on a similar theme. They will need to conduct a further, brief review of DFID's current work on parliamentary strengthening. After this, we may not require much more beyond evaluating GSDRC findings, exploring their implications and translating these into recommendations for the future.

Process

The consultants will collate comments and queries on this terms of reference that require clarification, and propose how much time and resources they require. They will discuss with DFID – through the Effective States Team - to reach clarity on these issues.

In early November 2006, an inception meeting will be held with interested parties within DFID, and a skeleton outline of the consultants' Report submitted. The draft Report should be submitted in early December, after which the consultants will facilitate an internal DFID workshop to discuss the draft. A final draft of the report will be early in the New Year 2007. It is important that these timelines are adhered to.

DFID resource persons

The consultants will confer with leaders of past and existing DFID workstreams with relevance to parliamentary strengthening. These persons include:

- a) Graham Teskey, Sheelagh Stewart, Ellen Wratten and Peter Owen, Governance and Social Development Group, Policy Division: Strategic direction on likely trajectories for DFID governance work post White Paper; 2005 inventory of DFID governance initiatives
- b) Stephen Sharples/Ina Ellen Ismail, Africa Policy Department: i) DFID submission for the UK All-Africa Parliamentary Group enquiry into parliamentary strengthening; ii) inventory of existing country office work with parliaments in Africa; iii) John McFall MP issues paper/initiative; iv) collaboration with Parliamentary Network of the World Bank and EISA; v) work with Pan-African Parliament
- c) Carlos Santiso, FACT Team, Policy Division: i) guidance on strengthening parliamentary involvement in budget process; ii) recent dialogue with PC/GOPAC/APNAC
- d) Jeremy Armon, Effective States Team, Policy Division: i) GSDRC responses to EST queries June-July 2006; ii) Support to Wilton Park seminar series/proposed DFID:WBI dialogue, through Rick Stapenhurst
- e) Richard Thomas, Central Research Department: Central Research Department governance portfolio
- f) Garth Glentworth: DFID institutional memory and 2004 publication

- g) Steve Nally, Information and Civil Society Department: Governance and Transparency Fund
- h) ??? on country office work outside Africa

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Evidence submitted to the Africa All-Party Parliamentary Group

AWEPA

DFID

IDASA

Tony Worthington

UNECA

World Development Movement

Appendix C: List of experts consulted

Experts on parliamentary strengthening

- Jeff Balch – AWEPA
- Hugh Bayley MP – Member of International Development Select Committee, Chair of Africa All-Party Parliamentary Group, Chair of Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Member of Executive Committee of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, UK
- Alex Brazier – Hansard Society
- Gwen Corre - ECDPM
- Rasheed Draman – Canadian Parliamentary Centre
- Stefan Gilbert – IDASA
- Thomas Huyghebaert – UNDP
- Glenys Kinnock – Member of the European Parliament, Co-President of the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly
- Liam Laurence-Smyth – House of Commons, Overseas Clerk
- Bob Miller and Craig Kowalik – Canadian Parliamentary Centre
- Mohamed Ali Mohamed – Third Clerk Assistant, Kenyan Parliament
- Greg Power – Global Partners
- Keith Schulz - USAID
- Anita Thurairara – Committee Clerk, Kenyan Parliament
- Andrew Tuggey – Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, UK
- Tony Worthington – Parliamentary Network on the World Bank, UK MP until 2005, Member of International Development Select Committee

DFID Staff

- Jeremy Armon – Effective States Team
- Susan Loughhead – Effective States Team

- Stephen Sharples – Pan-Africa Strategy
- Mark Smith – Pan-African Strategy
- Carlos Santiso – Financial Accountability and Corruption Team
- Garth Glentworth, OBE – former DFID Governance Adviser

FCO Staff

- Andrea Campbell, Human Rights, Democracy and Governance Group
- Steve Collier, Deputy Head, Parliamentary Relations Team
- Susan Hyland, Head, Human Rights Group
- Claire Scarratt, Commonwealth Coordination Office

Appendix D: DFID's Parliamentary Strengthening Projects

Country / Region	Project title	Dates	Commitment	Purpose
Afghanistan	Support for Afghanistan's Parliamentary Elections	2005-06	£3,600,000	Support for UNDP and Afghan Civil Society Forum in their efforts to provide civic education for Sept 05 elections
Bangladesh	Strengthening the role and capacity of parliamentary committees in Bangladesh	2001-05	£2,077,554	To assist the Parliament in strengthening its legislating, oversight and representative functions in order to achieve higher levels of transparency, efficiency and responsiveness
Burundi	Burundi Leadership Training Program	2005-07	£1,108,014	Targeted leadership training workshops to create a cohesive network of Burundian leaders with a common vision, including but not exclusively parliamentarians
Central Asia	Central Asia Parliamentary and Governance Project	2004-05	£96,000	To support the development of more accountable democracies across the region.
DRC	Strengthening Democracy & Accountability in DRC	2006-2011	£50,000,000 ⁴³	Programme over 5 years to strengthen democracy and government accountability in DRC. Including support for political governance through support to the legislatures, political parties and the electoral commission.
Ethiopia		2005-	£21,350	To build the capacity of federal and regional parliaments
Ghana	Parliamentary Financial scrutiny Project	2006-2008	£330,000	Strengthen public financial management and accountability by strengthening capacity of Public Accounts Committee to hold Executive accountable.
Kenya		2005-06	£9,537	To enhance the effectiveness of parliament and parliamentary committees through the provision of information, research and legal services.
Malawi	Strengthening Parliamentary Committees and Engagement with Civil Society	2001-04	£4,400,000	Support for NDI and CIDA to strengthen Parliamentary committees and to enhance civil society's involvement in parliamentary processes

⁴³ Parliamentary strengthening only one small part of project implemented by UNDP and combined with other donors.

Malawi	Tikambirane	2003-08	£10,000,000	A programme to help poor people to realize their civil and political rights. Works with parliament, the electoral commission, media and civil society to develop a more accountable and responsive governance system,
Mozambique	Consolidating Democracy Project	2006-09	£450,000 ⁴⁴	Improving engagement between parliament and civil society with a view to strengthening accountability of parliamentarians to the public
Nigeria	Strengthening the National Assembly Programme	2005-08	£2,650,000	To develop the National Assembly's ability to support pro-poor reform
Pakistan	Pakistan Legislature Capacity Building Project	2003-06	£630,000	To develop effective and responsive national and provincial assemblies
Russian Federation	Sharing Parliamentary Experience Project	2001-04	£600,000	To strengthen practice, in both chambers of the Federal Assembly, in the areas of legislative process, representation and accountability.
Russian Federation	Parliamentary Cooperation Project	1998-2002	£300,000	To contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness in key legislative support functions in the Russian State Duma and Federation Council.
Sierra Leone	Parliamentary Committees Strengthening Project	2004-2006	£285,039 ⁴⁵	To help strengthen the Parliamentary Committees to play an effective oversight and leadership role in budget and legislative scrutiny and law-making.
Slovak Republic	Strengthening Parliamentary Processes in Slovakia	2000-04	£400,000	Sustained improvement in the parliament's ability to manage the legislative process and to perform its scrutiny functions
Somalia	Support to Transitional Federal Parliament	2004-09	c.£2,500,000 in 2006-07	Financial support to MPs to enable parliament to sit and rehabilitation for temporary parliament
South Africa	Support for parliamentary committees	Unclear	Unclear	Support for work of Public Accounts, Budget and Local Government Committees
Sri Lanka	Strengthening prospects for peace by promoting a process of thinking on post conflict issues	2000-03	£225,000	To enhance the prospects for a sustainable negotiated settlement by strengthening the capacity of significant actors including parliamentarians to contribute to the peace process
Tanzania	Strengthening the Union National Assembly of Tanzania (Phase II)	2003-2006	£1,850,000	To help strengthen Parliament's capacity to carry out its oversight, lawmaking and representative roles. To support the administration in Parliament.

⁴⁴ Part of larger project run by the Electoral Institute for Southern Africa – combined with other donors.

⁴⁵ £1.1 million was originally committed but the project was ended earlier than anticipated

Uganda	Support through a strategic fund allocation	2003-	£200,000	To support the restructuring of the Parliamentary Service – including through the development of a Strategic Investment Plan - so that it can serve MPs more effectively; to establish a joint donor basket fund to enhance Parliament's ownership and reduce transaction costs.
West Bank & Gaza	Strengthening parliamentary Democracy	1998-2002	£773,110	To strengthen the capacity of the Palestinian Legislative Council to serve as a democratic, professional, accountable and responsive Parliament.
West Bank & Gaza	Palestinian Legislative Council Library	1999-2003	£388,000	To establish a sustainable Parliamentary Library in order to strengthen the access of council members to the information required to better meet the needs of the Palestinian people.
Zambia		2005-	£55,000	To develop the capacity of Parliament to oversee public resources management to promote democratic governance, transparency and accountability
Asia	Parliamentarians for Global Action supported Sub-Regional Asian Parliamentary Seminar on HIV/AIDS	2004-05	£14,000	To generate increased political will and commitment to address HIV/AIDS in South Asia
PNoWB	To strengthen parliaments and parliamentarians in West and Southern Africa	2005-06	Unclear	Enhancing the capacity of parliamentarians to carry out their legislative and representative roles in West and Southern Africa.