

PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENT : NEWSLETTER

United Nations Development Programme

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE



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August 2013

Special Edition

Dear Colleagues,

We are very happy to share with you our latest thoughts and analysis on our parliamentary development (PD) portfolio, and engage with you in a global discussion about new trends and demands in our area of work in the context of the UNDP new Strategic Plan (2014-2017). We would like to: (1) share with you an overview of our latest mapping of parliamentary development project; (2) share with you some of the latest thoughts and discussions from the June donors' consultation on parliamentary development; (3) update you on some cross-practice initiatives and; (4) launch the preparations of our 2014 community of practice.

1) News from the field – Where is UNDP in terms of its parliamentary development (PD) portfolio?

UNDP has **68 active parliamentary projects and activities**, including 47 active **parliamentary** projects, and 21 active parliamentary activities. Most projects are in Africa (35%) and Asia-Pacific (26%).

- ✓ 190 out of 193 countries now have some form of functioning Parliament, accounting for over 46,000 representatives.
- ✓ Compared with 50 years ago, parliaments are generally more open and accessible, more professionally-run, better-resourced and more representative.
- ✓ Global average of 20.9 % of women in parliaments (July 2013 - <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>)

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the Parliamentary Development News Update, which aims at sharing and disseminating the latest news and developments in the area of parliamentary development.

Your contributions as a member of the Parliamentary Development Community of Practice are vital to enhance this Network. Please send your contribution to: marilyn.cham@undp.org

We also encourage you to become member of the UNDP Parliamentary Development [Teamworks space](#) in order to access additional information, including previous Newsletters.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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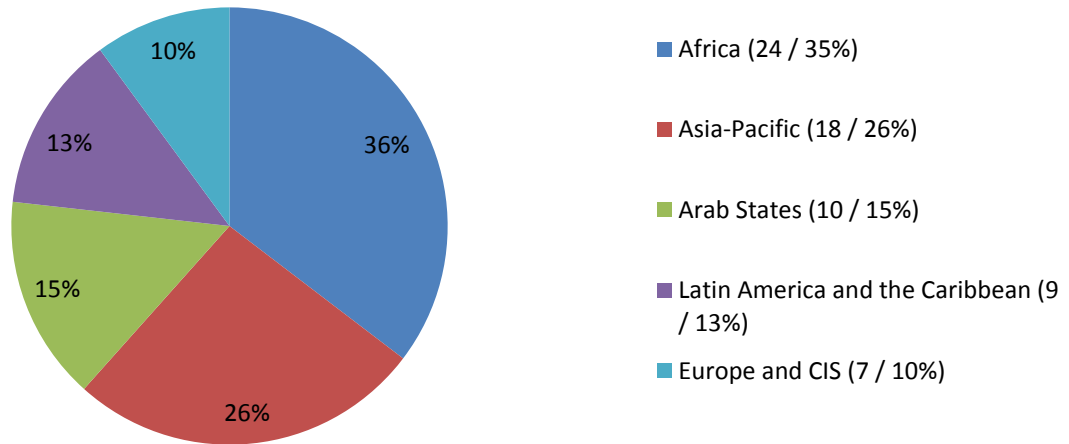
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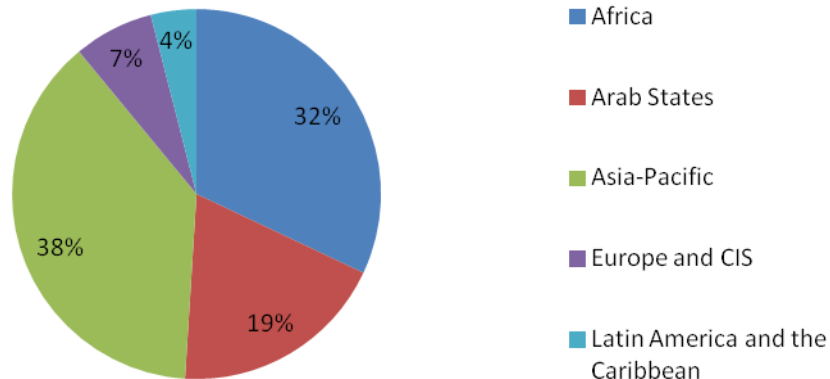


Parliamentary Projects and Activities 68 in 2013



The total budget in 2013 for active parliamentary projects and activities, as reported by COs and indicated in Project Documents/RRFs/AWPs, is **\$ 127,088,008**.

Budget



Key Areas of Support

The core functions of Parliament are the largest content areas of UNDP's active PD projects and activities: 79% of the active projects and activities include support to the representative function of Parliament, 72% - support to the oversight function, and 68% - support to the legislative function. Parliamentary Administration is also a key area of support (68%). In terms of development and cross-cutting issues, gender mainstreaming / women's empowerment and anticorruption/transparency/accountability are prioritized (57% and 35% respectively). The tables below show you the exact breakdown per region, and focus of each project. Once again, we would like to thank all colleagues who participated in our mapping exercise and shared with us their project documents.

Region	Total Number	Core Functions				MPs, Staff, Structures, and Infrastructure				
		Legislation	Representation - Outreach to Constituency / CSOs / Media	Legislative / Executive Relation	Oversight (policies, budget and security)	Capacity Building of MPs	Modernization, Infrastructure, Library, Communication and ICT	Administration (Staff, internal regulations, procedures)	Strategic Plan	Committees / Groups / Caucus
Africa	24	17	21	8	20	18	9	14	4	19
Arab States	10	4	7	1	7	6	7	8	2	6
Asia-Pacific	18	11	13	3	10	11	11	11	7	10
Europe and the CIS	7	6	7	0	6	7	6	7	2	7
Latin America and the Caribbean	9	8	6	2	6	7	6	6	3	8
Total	68	46	54	14	49	49	39	46	18	50
		68%	79%	21%	72%	72%	57%	68%	26%	74%

Development and cross-cutting issues													
Region	Total Number	MDGs / SDGs	Anti-corruption, transparency and accountability	Inclusive development/ Participation	Gender mainstreaming / Women's Empowerment	Youth Empowerment / Youth Parl.	Climate Change / Environment	HIV / Aids	Poverty reduction / Human development	Human Rights / UN Conventions	Constitutional reform	Citizen Security	CPR / Peace building / Reconciliation
Africa	24	5	4	3	13	3	2	4	4	6	0	0	6
Arab States	10	2	4	6	6	5	1	0	1	3	0	0	5
Asia-Pacific	18	5	6	7	11	6	3	0	2	7	0	0	1
Europe and the CIS	7	3	4	3	4	3	3	0	1	4	2	0	3
Latin America and the Caribbean	9	2	6	3	5	3	2	1	3	3	0	2	1
Total	68	17	24	22	39	20	11	5	11	23	2	2	16
		25%	35%	32%	57%	29%	16%	7%	16%	34%	3%	3%	24%

2) Findings from the June 2013 Donor Consultation on Parliamentary Development:

The 5th annual donor consultation organized by DFID, UNDP and WBI brought together 37 representatives from key donors and parliamentary development practitioners at the French National Assembly to discuss and share experiences and lessons learned, with the goal of continually improving our work in parliamentary development and identifying emerging priorities. Discussions focused on the role of parliaments in the Post-2015 debate and emerging development priorities; the 'Open Agenda' and its implications on parliaments; improving parliamentary development programming: monitoring, evaluation and learning; parliaments in fragile and conflict affected states: the 'Arab Spring' two years on. Participants stressed the importance of adapting political economy analysis tools to the work with political institutions, looking at mechanisms at CO level to improve donor coordination, and reviewing parliamentary development programmes and ensuring their linkages with broad governance programmes. The meeting discussed at length monitoring and evaluation of parliamentary development programmes.

3) AGORA launches its new Portal for Parliamentary Development

AGORA, the Portal for Parliamentary Development, is launching its new website at www.agora-parl.org. Since its launch in 2010, AGORA has become the leading portal for the parliamentary development community, connecting international organizations, parliamentary development experts and professionals, but also MPs, parliamentary staff, NGOs and civil society organizations.

Embracing the latest communication and knowledge management tools, AGORA is creating a true 'community of practice' in the field of parliamentary development. AGORA's new design, based on the feedback of its partners and users, will make it even easier for users to connect, share and find information on parliamentary development. The Portal offers a virtual library, a unique set of 'Areas of Expertise' pages on all aspects of parliamentary development, a news portal and an interactive platform. You can also connect with AGORA on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. AGORA is available in English, French and Arabic.

Moving forward: E-learning

Following the growth of AGORA's member network, requests for technical assistance and capacity-building have multiplied. In response, AGORA has designed an innovative induction e-course for first-time Parliamentarians, available at <http://learn.agora-parl.org/>. This course is designed for legislators who are new to Parliament, and for parliamentary staff, practitioners, donors, civil society organizations and others who want to learn about how Parliament works.

4) New initiatives:

Over the past year, our team has increased its cross-practice work, and has collaborated with the Environment and Energy Group (EEG) and Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Anti-Corruption team in the Democratic Governance Group (DGG) and the Oslo Governance Centre, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), and the HIV/AIDS team to push the parliamentary development portfolio towards greater impact for sustainable human development.

A. Climate Change

The ‘Parliamentary Action on Renewable Energy’ (PARE) initiative aims to build the capacity of parliamentarians to strengthen their advocacy and monitoring of the development of renewable energy sources and to promote policy and regulatory reform to encourage investment in renewable energy in ten countries (Bangladesh, Congo-Brazzaville, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Tunisia). Achievements to date include:

1. With regard to the primary function of Parliament, which is the drafting and amending legislation, MPs that are participating in PARE have been reviewing the legislative framework on renewable energy and considering introducing amendments.

Morocco: The group of MPs in Morocco have been active with drafting an amendment to the Environment Bill, subsequently adopted in plenary, which expanded the remit of the Economic and Social Council, a government organization tasked with overseeing public policy, to cover the environment as well, and renamed it the Environment, Economic and Social Council. The amendment was co-drafted and supported by a range of MPs extending to a wider group of MPs.

Tunisia: The Climate Parliament group of MPs is working towards having environmental protection incorporated into Tunisia’s new constitution.

2. The Parliamentarians involved in the project have been actively monitoring government’s commitment to renewable energy.

India: The India group of MPs have played a lead role in more than doubling the country’s 2020 renewable energy target from 6% to 15% of electricity through asking over a dozen parliamentary questions since the start of this year, writing open letters to senior Ministers in the Energy and Environment Ministries, and meeting with the Prime Minister of India to urge greater government support for India’s renewable energy industry.

3. The group of MPs in the target countries of the project have been successfully pushing for considering increased budgets for renewable energy in the countries.

India: MPs have played a lead role in more than doubling the national renewable energy budget from 0.3% to 0.7% of the national budget. In December 2011, the Climate Parliament group of MPs worked closely with the Estimates Committee, advocating for 1% of the national budget to be spent on renewables. The committee later produced a report, endorsing this goal, and, by 2012, India’s Prime Minister had flagged that he will generate a plan for implementing this recommendation. Their action had concrete implications as this year’s proposed budgetary

allocation for the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy increased by approximately 32% over the last year's budget allocation.

4. Beyond the specific tools provided by the Parliament's rules of procedure, such as a question period, committee hearings or draft laws, the MPs have been able to advocate effectively for policy changes by establishing cross party groups.

This entry point for effective development work has proven to be a very successful pilot strategy to promote the issue of renewable energy. A cross-party group of MPs has been created in the ten target countries of the project with two MPs in charge of heading the group. The groups are being trained on renewable energy and provided technical assistance and specific knowledge.

Bangladesh: The case of Bangladesh illustrates how work on renewable energy can be a topic that can create dialogue despite political differences and a difficult political climate. Bangladesh's standing committee on Environment is one of two Standing Committees chaired by the opposition in Parliament, with bipartisan dialogue. In 2012 another cross-party group, Bangladesh's Climate Parliament group, was established. Following this group's advocacy, the bill 'Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority Act' (SREDA), was passed by Parliament in December 2012. The Climate Parliament group focused its work around Parliaments capacity building on renewable energy before the introduction of SREDA, by e.g. organizing a round table discussion on renewable energy issues and the future outlook for the country.

Tanzania: a cross-party group of MPs is currently being created in Tanzania to consider and drive parliamentary interventions related to energy access, renewable energy, climate change policy, renewable energy policy, renewable energy budgetary allocations and the creation of a favorable investment climate for renewable energy in Tanzania, and participate in building community awareness for action on climate change and renewable energy.

B. Anti-Corruption:

The Oslo Governance Centre, the Anti-Corruption Team and the Parliamentary Development Team as well as the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) finalized an Anti-Corruption Self- Assessment Tool for Parliamentarians. This self-assessment tool focuses on the role of parliaments in the fight against corruption and more specifically in the implementation of the provisions of Chapter 2 of the UNCAC on the Prevention of Corruption. By generating accurate data on the effectiveness of parliamentary procedures for the prevention of corruption, the self-assessment tool may be used to supplement the self-assessment conducted by the broader government as part of the monitoring of UNCAC. The tool is ready now for country offices to engage with parliaments on this important issue. The tool has already been piloted in Timor Leste, Burkina Faso, and Morocco.

C. Fragility:

Our team has continued its collaboration with the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and recovery (BCPR), particularly in the Arab States region and provided support to Country Offices in the region.

Algeria: Two national workshops targeting MPs were organized in June to focus on parliamentary engagement with the media and public outreach (Training on Communications to 4 groups of 20

MPs each; and a ToT to MPs and members of Administration of APN and Senate on how to engage the media). This provided a good opportunity for UNDP to engage with MPs and not only with the administration as it was the norm in the past.

In Jordan, UNDP provided advisory services on the revision of the electoral law through a gender and inclusive lens, facilitated dialogues with political parties, media, youth organizations on the new Political Party strategy. A Gender strategy for the Independent Elections Commission to mainstream gender in the electoral cycle has been developed. An action plan to reach out to women and foster their participation in the electoral cycle was also developed.

In Lebanon, A Youth Policy Document Implementation Strategy with recommendations for the Youth and Sports Parliamentary Committee is being drafted. A study and recommendations on the role of the Parliament and Parliamentary Committees in “Promoting employment opportunities for youth in Lebanon”, as one of the youth policy document recommendations was produced. Some of the recommendations were to establish an Advisory Board for universities that assesses the needs and requests of today’s job market, develop policies encouraging companies to accept more and more internships, promote a sustainable partnership between the Academic, public and private sectors, support the government in offering scholarships to students, strengthen the concept of long life learning, offer companies tax exemption when they hire fresh graduates, among others.

In Libya, UNDP supported a national survey around the constitution review process in March 2013, through a partnership with Benghazi Research and Consulting Center - University of Benghazi. The survey covered all of the Libyan 22 governorates with interviews being allocated proportionate to population size. The planned sample size for the nationwide public survey was 2,252 but the actual interviews that were conducted reached 3,000 - including ethnic minorities. A second component of the survey covered 352 representatives of Civil Society Organizations, 100 respondents from the private sectors, 117 members of the Libyan Parliament and 25 governmental officials. A second phase of the survey was undertaken in May 2013 (without Project funding).

A Regional Seminar on “The Evolving Relationship between Citizens and Parliaments in the Arab World”, was jointly organized by the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in Rabat, Morocco on the 5th and 6th of June 2013. The seminar provided a platform to launch the first Global Parliamentary Report (GPR) for Arab countries on the changing nature of parliamentary participation, jointly commissioned by the IPU and UNDP. The seminar initiated a high-level dialogue on how to strengthen the relationship between Parliament and citizens in the dynamic and evolving context of the Arab world. 40 parliamentarians from the following countries attended the two-day seminar: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Oman, OPT, Sudan, Somalia, Tunisia and Morocco. The regional seminar provided a great regional dialogue platform for MPs to engage and discuss key issues regarding the issue of representation in the Arab region, i.e. the potential of social media to improve the representative function, strengths and weaknesses of codes of conducts, translating citizens’ concerns into parliamentary action and how to manage public expectations at the local level. Specific recommendations were identified and good practices shared. UNDP and the IPU, through their on-going support to parliaments in the region will further disseminate the recommendations identified in Rabat in their respective parliamentary development programmes and activities. More specifically for Morocco, the regional meeting created a platform for Morocco to launch its newly adopted Strategic Plan that comprises a strong communication and outreach component.

In Somalia, UNDP supported Parliamentary Leadership to finalize the Strategic Plan to guide parliamentary capacity development. UNDP also initiated a Parliament Young Graduates Scheme, to

immediately staff up the Secretariat. More than 800 young Somalis applied, and approximately 200 then sat an exam to test their skills. Forty young graduates have now been recruited and are being mentored and trained to provide a range of legal, research and other support services to MPs. UNDP build upon the 2012 Parliament Staffing Assessment to undertaken an organizational review of the current staff composition and skills, in order to provide more systematic, long-term recommendations to the Parliamentary Leadership on a right-sized parliamentary administration and a capacity development plan for staff.

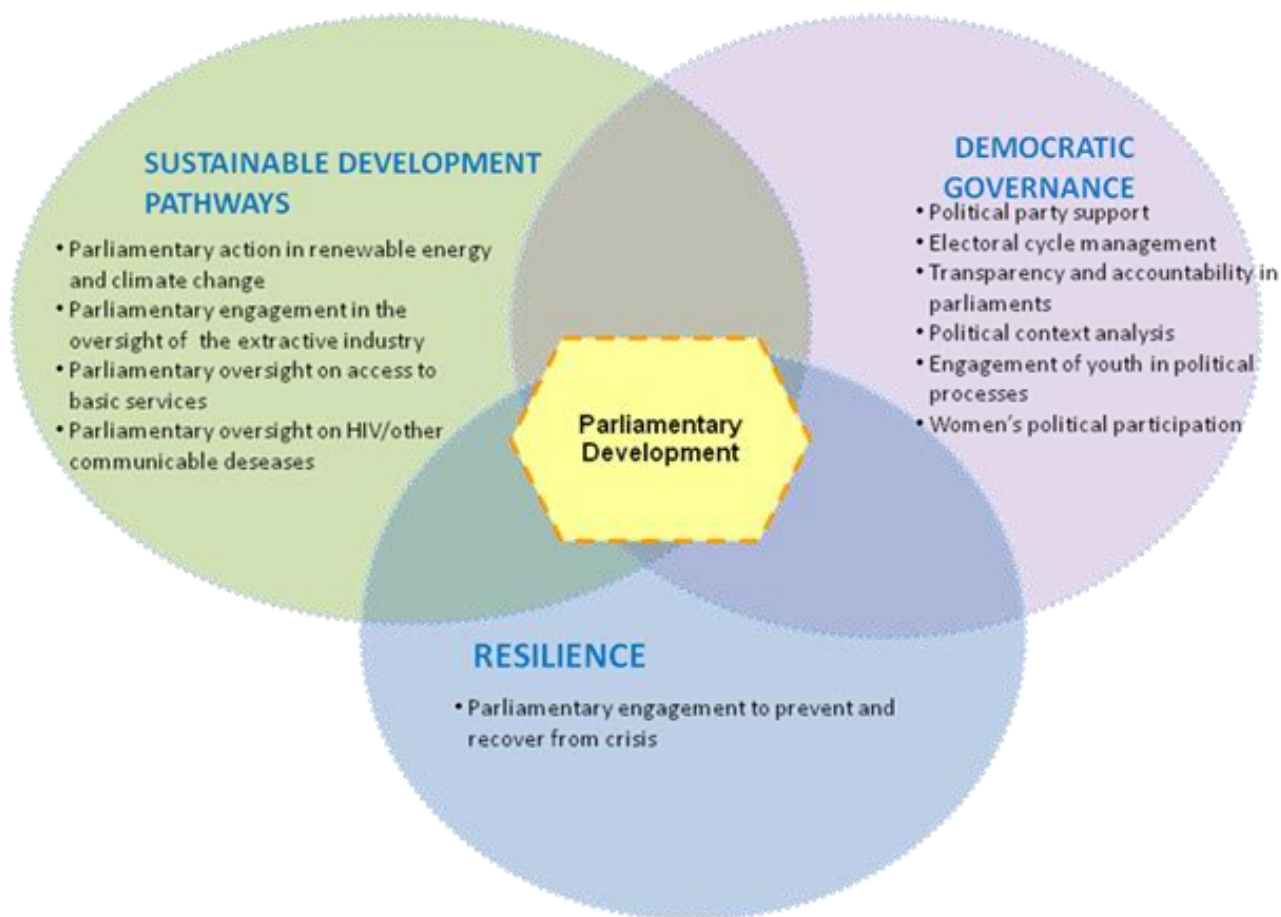
D. HIV / AIDS:

Joint advisory services between the Parliamentary Development team and the HIV/AIDS practice were provided to country offices to reform provisions in domestic law which touch and concern HIV-AIDS, and to sensitize parliamentarians on the need for early reform of domestic laws negatively impacting persons affected by HIV. Such approach will be bolstered in the framework of the implementation of the recommendations of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law. Parliaments have a key role to play in ensuring that certain recommendations of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law are implemented, particularly when it comes to how evidence and human rights based laws can end an epidemic of bad laws and transform the global AIDs response. The Parliamentary Development team will work closely with the HIV/AIDS team to take the recommendations of the Commission to its next implementation level through dedicated research and by connecting country demands to policy recommendations and field the piloting of innovative advocacy efforts.

E. Where we want to go?

UNDP will maintain a strong focus on democratic governance in its upcoming Strategic Plan (2014 - 2017). One of the key pillars within the new Strategic Plan is to continue for the next few years to build and strengthen inclusive and democratic governance systems that can deliver sustainable solutions to poverty, inequality, and exclusion, of which parliaments are at the core. The presence of a strong legislature is an unmixed blessing for democratization. As elected representatives of the people, parliaments constitute uniquely legitimate democratic institutions; with a central role to play in all governance and development processes.

Parliamentary development is anchored within the three main pillars of the new Strategic Plan: democratic governance, sustainable development pathways and resilience.



The post-2015 development agenda needs to build on the momentum of, and lessons learned from, the MDGs. The need for country ownership, government accountability, and national policy was not sufficiently taken into account during the MDGs design and implementation, and is now being highlighted as a requirement to ensure that the new set of objectives is attained. Parliaments and parliamentarians should be at the forefront of this exercise, because they play a critical role in meeting those requirements through their lawmaking, budgeting, and oversight functions.

UNDP can play a key role in bringing parliamentarians into the policy discussions around the post-2015 Development Agenda at national, regional and global levels in collaboration with parliamentary associations while at the same time working with select countries on parliamentary engagement on the MDG Acceleration Framework. Parts of the organization are already active in this, and external resources are clearly available for mobilization, but the Parliamentary Development team needs to be much more engaged in this initiative.

5) *Call for a Community of Practice (CoP):*

With the proposed changes coming ahead of us in the way UNPD delivers services to country offices and its stakeholders on the ground, we would like to call on a global reflection on some of the upcoming priorities that we have identified through increased demands from the field and

discussions with development partners. This preliminary discussion will feed into a Community of Practice (CoP) to be organized in 2014. The objectives of the CoP would be:

- 1) To effectively improve parliamentary development programming throughout the programme cycle;
- 2) To position UNDP as the lead parliamentary development organization delivering sustainable solutions to poverty, inequality, and exclusion.

We have identified six priorities for discussions, and would like each Country Office to submit expression of interest indicating their interest to participate in the meeting by selecting 2 topics maximum. The expression of interests should be responding to the following questions for each priority:

- 1) Have you received a demand to work with the Parliament on this issue? What was the exact request – please link it to the country’s context accordingly.
- 2) What is UNDP’s comparative advantage in addressing this issue in your country?
- 3) What were / will be the planned activities to respond to such demand?
- 4) What were / will be some of the opportunities and challenges when working on this issue?

Expression of interest should be sent to Marilyn Cham (marilyn.cham@undp.org) by September 1st.

The six priorities for discussion are as follows:

A. Extractive industries

Many developing countries are rich in natural resources. Many face the challenge of ensuring that revenue from exploiting those resources is utilized sustainably, to help reduce poverty, and to improve living standards. Instead of contributing to poverty alleviation and economic growth, the risk is that resource revenues are used inefficiently. In order for natural resources to be used effectively and to contribute positively to development, more accountable and transparent mechanisms should be adopted from the beginning of the mineral exploration stage, supported by a wide range of stakeholders such as governments, multinational corporations, the media, political parties, civil society organizations (CSOs) and legislatures. The development partner community is already looking to develop new approaches to ensure a stronger role for parliaments in this area of work. UNDP is particularly well-positioned to work in this area, with existing strengths in the substantive areas of extractive industries and anti-corruption, as well as its Parliamentary Development team.

B. Enhanced Parliamentary Engagement: Post-2015 Environment

The post-2015 Development Agenda needs to build on the momentum of, and lessons learned from, the MDGs. The need for country ownership, government accountability, and national policy was not sufficiently taken into account during the MDGs design and implementation, and is now being highlighted as a requirement to ensure that the new set of objectives is attained.

Parliaments and parliamentarians should be at the forefront of this exercise, because they play a critical role in meeting those requirements through their lawmaking, budgeting, and oversight functions.

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C. Parliamentary Implementation: Relevant Recommendations of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law

Many of the successes in mitigating the causes and consequences of HIV have taken root where laws have been used to protect the human rights of the marginalized and disempowered. For example, in some countries, anti-discrimination laws have helped people living with HIV keep their jobs and their homes and look after their families. Laws to protect confidentiality have contributed to increasing confidence in health systems, encouraging people to learn their HIV status and to access HIV prevention and treatment. Legal guarantees of property and inheritance rights for women and girls have helped to mitigate the social and economic burdens of AIDS. Still, in many places across the globe, the legal environment is presenting significant challenges for sustaining and scaling up effective HIV responses. In many countries, laws and policies continue to prevent access to life-saving HIV treatment. Every day people living with HIV and people most at risk, including sex workers, drug users, prisoners, men who have sex with men, and transgender people, suffer stigma, discrimination and violence, including through the maintenance of colonial-era criminal codes. Laws and practices that discriminate against women or fail to protect their rights, including the right to be free from violence, make women particularly vulnerable to HIV.

Parliaments have a key role to play in ensuring that certain recommendations of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law are implemented, particularly when it comes to how evidence and human rights based laws can end an epidemic of bad laws and transform the global AIDS response.

D. Role of political institutions in fragile contexts

Political parties and parliaments are important actors in a transition to democracy, to prevent conflict and to address fragility; they play a particularly critical role in rebuilding trust and reconnecting citizen's - state society relationship in such environments, therefore supporting political settlements and reducing the potential for renewed conflict. Following a period of conflict or fragility, elections should not be viewed as an end unto themselves, nor a panacea to end ethnic, religious, economic or political strife. Rather, elections are part of a process for furthering democratic governance and state building and may be rendered meaningless if support to democratic and responsive institutions such as political parties and national parliaments is inadequate or ill-conceived. There is clearly a need for more inclusiveness in the work of parliaments and political parties as democratic institutions, a need to strengthen the representativeness of the assemblies as well as a necessity to rebuild citizens' trust in state institutions and their ability to improve citizens' lives. Engaging with parliaments and political parties on a neutral manner will help foster inclusive political and economic participation and rebuild resilient state-society relations and prevent conflict.

E. Opening up parliaments

The Open Agenda includes the role of Parliament as a key stakeholder in strengthening country-systems. Doing development differently means embracing global changes which are creating opportunities for a more 'open' approach to development, including Open Aid, Open Knowledge, and Open Governance.

There is an important global trend towards opening up governance. The Open Governance movement aims to provide citizens and accountability institutions, such as parliaments, with greater access to government information, data, and processes, especially around budgets, in order to engage governments more effectively to achieve development results. The Open Government Partnership (<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>) is a new multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. In the spirit of multi-stakeholder collaboration, OGP is overseen by a Steering Committee of governments and civil society organizations. To become a member of OGP, participating countries must embrace a high-level Open Government Declaration; deliver a country action plan developed with public consultation; and commit to independent reporting on their progress going forward. Following the last Steering Committee of OGP in April 2013, it was decided to create a working group on transparency of parliaments. These working groups will officially be launched in October 2013. The primary objective of the groups is to regularly convene active communities of open government practitioners to accelerate learning and peer exchange in key OGP areas like fiscal transparency or access to information.

The Open Governance Agenda, including opening up the budget through fiscal transparency, strengthening the capacity for participation by demand-side stakeholders, and opening up the process of obtaining and executing government contracts, brings increased opportunities for our work with parliaments to increase accountability.

F. Improved Parliamentary Development Programming

UNDP is looking at developing higher quality programmes through better project planning, design, monitoring and evaluation, underpinned by stronger results-based management (RBM). The June 2013 DFID – UNDP and WBI donor consultation on parliamentary development brought 35 donors and development practitioners together to discuss new trends and priorities in this area of work. All partners agreed that a stronger and more realistic results-based management framework is needed to improve parliamentary development programming. At the same time, political economy analysis tools need to be adapted and applied to ensure their relevance when engaging with political institutions.