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1. West Africa: Strengthening the role of Parliaments in Budget oversight

By El Hadji Fall and Rossella Albertini, from the Pole “*Development Strategies and Public Finance*” of the UNDP Regional Center for West and Central Africa (Dakar - Senegal)

Implementation of the 2009 West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) public financial management (PFM) directives presents new challenges for the Parliaments of the region. Their involvement in terms of budget oversight and the identification of their needs for future technical support where the subject of the three-day regional workshop held in Dakar on September 28-30: “Capacity development for Parliaments in the new harmonized public finance framework of WAEMU”.

This event, organized by the Pole “Development Strategies and Public Finance” of the UNDP Dakar Regional Centre, gathered representatives from the eight WAEMU countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo) together with participants from neighboring countries Cape Verde and Guinea, and officials from the French Senate, the WAEMU and UNDP.

The workshop aimed at providing participants with detailed information on the implications of the new harmonized WAEMU framework and at promoting adoption of these reforms by the parliaments of the region. The new guidelines introduce profound changes in the development, implementation, monitoring and scrutiny of the central government budget; they intend to strengthen parliamentary control over public expenditures and to increase the flow of information to national representatives, through the introduction of key innovations and the evolution from a resources-based to a results-based budget.

Over three days, representatives from ten countries exchanged on the main challenges for WAEMU member countries, highlighting the existing hindrances and analyzing options for a successful implementation of the reform. The workshop represented the onset for a wider discussion on the establishment of a control program in the Parliament and for a multifaceted reflection on the best strategies for an effective ownership of the reform.

To learn more about this event:

[The Pole internet site](#)

[The Teamwork event space](#)

[Full article on Teamwork](#)

2. Tunisia: women's participation in the elections of the Constituent Assembly



Ms.Lobna Jribi, elected and Ms. Jinane limame non-elected sharing their experiences of the electoral campaign. Moderator: Mrs. Bouraoui

Seminar: *Taking stock of women's participation in the elections of the Constituent Assembly, 15-16 December 2011, Tunis*

On 23 October 2011, Tunisia held its first free and democratic elections to elect the members of the new Constituent Assembly. 59 women were elected among the 217 members (27.18%). UNDP Tunisia, in partnership with the [Centre for Arab Women Training and Research \(CAWTAR\)](#) and [iKnow Politics](#) organized a seminar: '*Taking stock of women's participation in the elections of the Constituent Assembly*' on 15-16 December 2011. The aim of the seminar was to reflect – a month after the elections- on the lessons learned, providing an opportunity for women candidates, key actors of the electoral process (representatives of civil society and the media) - to assess the experience of women candidates in terms of difficulties and impediments encountered as well as successes achieved. The inputs gathered from these exchanges will serve to develop strategic plans for better election results of women in future elections. Discussions particularly focused on the specific role played by partner organizations, NGOs advocating for women rights, and the media, in supporting women candidates, as well as entry points and recommendations to improve women's participation in politics in Tunisia.

3. Marshall Islands new Parliament commits to promoting better service delivery

The Secretariat of the Nitijela (Parliament) of Marshall Islands, with support from the UNDP Pacific Centre organized an Induction Seminar [25 – 27 January 2012] to empower the newly elected Senators to more effectively use parliamentary processes to support better delivery of Government services, in order to progressively move the national development goals of the Republic of the Marshall Islands forward.

The Induction seminar was attended by both Ministers and Senators of the new Nitijela, formed after general elections in November last year. The seminar covered technical procedural issues such as the law-making process, committee oversight, question time and moving motions. It has also been designed to upskill Members on a range of key issues, including climate change, human rights, youth and HIV/infectious diseases.

4. UNDP parliamentary development training at the French Parliament, 5-9 December 2011, Paris

11 UNDP staff in charge of parliamentary development activities from various countries (Egypt, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mauritania, Palestinian Authority and Turkmenistan), HQ and the office in Brussels, participated in a training in Paris on parliamentary development, from 5 to 9 December 2011. The purpose of the training was to discover the organization and functioning of the French Parliament and discuss parliamentary development activities, as well as inter-parliamentary cooperation. The meeting is organized on an annual basis since 2005, as part of the French National Assembly's and UNDP's active partnership. Participants had the opportunity to visit the historical sites of the French National Assembly and French Senate, attend a plenary session, and meet with numerous parliamentary officials among which the Secretary Generals of both Houses, the Secretary General of the UMP parliamentary group (presidential majority) and the Vice-President of the French National Assembly.

For more information on the meeting, please visit the AGORA website [here](#)

UNDP staff training in Paris



5. Publications

Upcoming UNDP – IPU Global Report: In April 2012, UNDP and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) will jointly publish a Global Parliamentary Report. The Report focuses on the relationship between parliaments and citizens and provides an assessment of the state of parliaments worldwide. Comprising 5 chapters, the report itself will analyze the change in public expectations regarding political representation and the role of political parties, parliamentary outreach, consultative processes and innovative forms of dialogue, mechanisms and procedures to enhance parliamentary responsiveness and accountability and constituency service. It will reflect the diversity of parliamentary systems around the world, promote best practices in various regions and include recommendations based on successful experiences. The Annex of the report gathers substantive data on key characteristics of parliaments.

6. Events

A 15-minute video entitled “Enti Essout” meaning ‘*You are the voice*, was produced by the UNDP Regional Center for the Arab States and the Tunisian CO. Through this movie, Tunisian people voice their aspirations, expectations and concerns regarding the newly elected Constituent Assembly and the democratic transition process. It can be seen at the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRKgPmaXtiY>

A 25-minute movie on women’s political participation In Tunisia (“*Women of my country are woman and a half*”) has also been produced and will be broadcasted on Tunisian national television. The movie highlights the experience of women who ran in the Constituent Assembly elections (23 October 2011).