

# PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENT : NEWSLETTER

United Nations Development Programme

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE



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Resilient nations.

## FOREWORD

Over the past year, UNDP has provided extensive support to parliaments around the world in our shared pursuit of sustainable development and inclusive and effective democratic governance. Much progress has been made in strengthening democratic legislative institutions.

As shown in the interactive map below, UNDP has supported parliaments to engage in the **Post-2015 Development Agenda** ([London](#)); **HIV/AIDS** related issues ([Jamaica](#)), the fight against **corruption** ([Moldova](#), [Trinidad and Tobago](#), [New York](#)) and discussions around **climate change** ([Kiribati](#), [Marshall Islands](#), [Samoa and Tonga](#)). UNDP is also: strengthening the political participation of **women and youth** ([Tunisia](#); [Brussels](#), [OPT](#), [Vanuatu](#), [Palau](#), [Moldova](#), [Samoa](#), [Lesotho](#)); supporting the development of the parliamentary **strategic plans** ([Iraq](#)); building the organizational structure and capacities of **secretariats and committees** of newly established / fragile parliaments ([Libya](#), [Lesotho](#), [Moldova](#)) and **political parties** ([Tunis](#), [Moldova](#)); and enhancing the **oversight function of parliaments** particularly **over the budget**, ([Timor-Leste](#), [Samoa](#), [Lesotho](#), [Bangladesh](#)) by promoting parliamentary **openness and outreach** ([Serbia](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Bangladesh](#), [Iraq](#), [Somalia](#), [Moldova](#)), and **citizen engagement** ([Liberia](#), [Georgia](#), [Samoa](#), [Somalia](#)). Furthermore, UNDP is promoting inclusive and transparent **constitutional review processes** ([Somalia](#), [Georgia](#)); **training media** in parliamentary reporting (Mozambique), and; providing technical **legislative assistance** to draft social policy related laws and legal reforms ([China](#), [Kosovo](#), [Liberia](#)). A number of **parliamentary scoping and needs assessment** missions have also been conducted during the year with support from HQ ([Sri Lanka](#), [Guatemala](#)).

Our community of practice can look back upon another year of immense achievements and positive developments in the area of parliamentary development. These successes remind us of the importance of our work to parliaments around the world. As we enter a new year, let us all take inspiration from these examples and draw upon these successes to inspire our future action. In that spirit, I look forward to working more closely with you over the course of the year.

*Charles Chauvel - UNDP Parliamentary Advisor, NY*

## February 2014 9<sup>th</sup> Edition

### 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](mailto: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.

### Democratic Governance Group

Bureau of Development Policy  
United Nations Development  
Programme

#### Charles Chauvel

Parliamentary Development Advisor  
[charles.chauvel@undp.org](mailto:charles.chauvel@undp.org)



#### Diane Sheinberg

Parliamentary Programme Manager  
[diane.sheinberg@undp.org](mailto:diane.sheinberg@undp.org)



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Email: [marilyn.cham@undp.org](mailto:marilyn.cham@undp.org)

## UNDP Parliamentary Support Across The World

Please click on the map to view highlights of parliamentary support across the world. The “filter” allows you to search information by country, activity and key words.



## Global Project

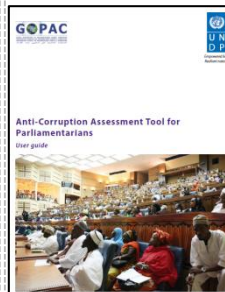
### Parliamentary Action on Renewable Energy (PARE) – Key Successes in 2013

- Maintained and expanded the network of parliamentarians with over 200 MPs from the ten target countries of the project.
- Established new cross-party Climate Parliament groups in the parliaments of Jordan, Morocco, Senegal, Tanzania, and Tunisia, comprised of MPs both male and female, from all the major parties. Currently, 105 MPs belong to formal Climate Parliament groups in national parliaments.
- 64 parliamentary questions were asked in the ten target countries over 2013.
- Researched, drafted, finalised and distributed a detailed 70-page Handbook entitled ‘Renewable Energy for Parliamentarians: How-To Guide’, designed to build the capacity of MPs to undertake sound parliamentary initiatives on renewable energy by providing a guide to different renewable energy technologies, examples of policy best practice, and an exploration of different parliamentary strategies for introducing or improving energy legislation. The handbook was distributed to over 16,000 MPs.

- Read more about PARE [here](#).

## RESOURCES

### UNDP Toolkit: ‘Anti-Corruption Self-Assessment Tool for Parliamentarians’



The tool focuses on the role of parliaments in the fight against corruption and more specifically on the implementation of the provisions of Chapter 2 of the UN Convention against Corruption. It comprises a series of questions and checklists, answers to which will serve to identify gaps in the effectiveness of a parliament’s contribution to the implementation of the Convention. The Toolkit is accessible [here](#).

### Renewable Energy for Parliamentarians: a How-To Guide



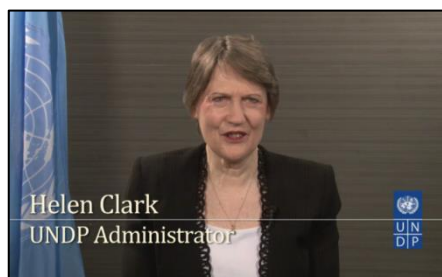
This Guide is a publication by UNDP and the Climate Parliament in the framework of their joint Parliamentary Action on Renewable Energy (PARE) project. The Guide explores the benefits of renewable energy development, presents an overview of renewable energy technologies and their respective applications, and offers concrete guidelines and tips for parliamentary action. Specific attention is paid to regulatory and policy frameworks. The Guide is accessible [here](#).

### Launch of the Gender Legal Review Study in Lebanon



The Gender Legal Review Study was presented and discussed in plenary session at the Lebanese Parliament during the International Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Days. Members of Parliament, representatives of line ministries, media, civil society representatives, sectoral experts and stakeholders were present. The publication is available [here](#).

## Featured: UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark, on "Parliaments and the Post-2015 Debate"



The message explains how parliaments and parliamentarians can play a role both in shaping the Post-2015 agenda but, perhaps now more importantly, in sensitizing national constituencies to it in a way that was not done with the

MDGs, and in using parliamentary tools to enshrine goals in national law, and monitor national compliance with the goals. Up-skilling parliamentarians and parliamentary administrations in these ways using the Post-2015 Agenda will need to be a focus of our parliamentary programming, especially in the preparatory period over the next two years. Watch the video [here](#).

## Highlights from the field

### Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment – Tunisia's new Constitution



UNDP has been supporting the democratic transition in Tunisia since the revolution of 2011, and is the main international partner to the National Constituent Assembly in supporting the constitutional process, a project which runs from 2012 to 2015. Gender issues and the importance of

entrenching women's equality in the constitution have been key themes in the dialogue. UNDP has supported Tunisian parliamentarians' knowledge of international best practice on gender equality, quotas, and constitutionalization of equality provisions. The new Constitution of Tunisia (adopted on January 26, 2014, and signed and promulgated in a ceremony at the Assembly on January 27) is ground-breaking in its provisions to assure women's equality, in explicitly committing to eliminate violence against women, in promoting women's assumption of positions of responsibility in all sectors, and in working towards parity in all elected bodies within the country.

- Read more about the specific provisions on gender equality [here](#).
- Read the Fact Sheet on the new Tunisian Constitution [here](#).

### Youth Participation in the decision-making process in Iraq – Report on the Youth Training Camp



The Youth Training Camp took place from 18 to 24 August 2013 at the American University in Sulaymaniya (Iraq). Over 70 youth

activists have participated in this seven days training event (51% women). The training contributed to provide the participants with information regarding diversity, how to address conflict, advocacy, youth mobilization, social media, project cycle and project management. To read the full report, please click [here](#).

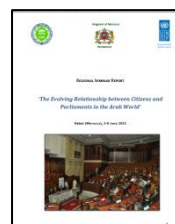
### Guía práctica para la incorporación del enfoque de género en el trabajo legislativo - Argentina



This guide aims to provide practical tools for mainstreaming gender in legislative work in Argentina. Its target audience are the national, provincial and

municipal legislators. The Guide is accessible [here](#).

### 'The Evolving Relationship between Citizens and Parliaments in the Arab World' - Regional Seminar Report



The report is a summary of the regional seminar organized by UNDP with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Moroccan Parliament (Rabat, Morocco - 5 & 6 June 2013). The event

provided an opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities of parliamentary representation in the region on the basis of the [Global Parliamentary Report](#), launched in 2012 by UNDP and the IPU. 50 parliamentarians from the region attended the meeting and engaged in a regional dialogue and working group discussions. To read the full report, please click [here](#).



## Enhancing parliamentary openness and oversight - Mobile Committee Sessions in Serbia

Mobile committee sessions are predominantly aimed at exercising scrutiny over the Executive power at national level on local or regional topics. Convening the committee session outside the Parliament provides a direct link between the Executive power at national level, local self-government, independent scrutiny bodies, the citizens and the media. The committee sessions combine the investigative process in determining the degree of government's accountability and required response but also open a debate by allowing local self-government and citizens to take part in such sessions. This in turn gives voice to the constituency in influencing the key local policy issues, tables them on the national agenda and brings Parliament closer to its citizens. In 2013, four mobile committee sessions were supported by UNDP with a high degree of success in terms of the Executive power responsiveness on committees' requests. Based on the findings of the [public opinion poll](#), the Project invited widest media presence at every mobile committee session to secure a higher visibility of the committees' work at the local level. Additionally, the project supported the first live streaming of the mobile committee sessions. As a result local problems that remained pending for years have been resolved within days following the sessions (e.g. 4,500ha of disputable land was cleared for rent by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Committee determined that a Ministry failed to apply for



EU Rural Development funds and requested the Ministry to apply in the next round, etc.).

*Caption: Zlatibor - 6 September 2013: immediate resolve of the assignment by the Ministry of Agriculture of disputable 4,500 ha to rent.*

## Promoting public participation in the constitutional review process - Georgia

In 2013, the Parliament of Georgia initiated a number of constitutional amendments, which targeted different provisions of the Constitution, including the ones defining the official seat of the Georgian Parliament, its powers, constitutional revision process. The Parliament created the special commission to direct the process of public debates and gather citizen input on proposed amendments. With the view of supporting the Parliament in furthering nationwide discussions, UNDP promoted the first ever Internet and social media based constitutional debates. The interactive website – [www.constitution.ge](http://www.constitution.ge) and its Facebook page were developed and linked to the Parliament's official web portal. To ensure communication and information sharing between law-makers and the public, the summary of expert opinions and results of public opinion polls have been regularly provided to the public debates commission of the Parliament. The success of the initiative has been demonstrated by the raised public awareness on the process and the Parliament's decision to adopt the draft amendments modified based on the expert and citizen feedback collected on the website. Read more [here](#).



## Report of the 5th Donor Coordination Meeting on Parliamentary Development

On June 13-14 2013, the United Kingdom (UK) Department for International Development (DFID), the World Bank Institute (WBI) and UNDP jointly organized the fifth donor consultation meeting to coordinate and share recent donor experience and lessons learned in parliamentary development programming. The consultation was hosted by the French National Assembly. The first day of the consultation saw delegates from among the multilateral and bilateral donors in the parliamentary development field share recent reviews and programme evaluations and reflect on new priorities and strategies for parliamentary development. The second day focused on lessons learned in strengthening the role of parliaments in the post- 2015 debate, the Open Agenda, and the Arab Spring. To read the full report, please click [here](#).

## Videos

### Open Governance Partnership: Launch of the Legislative Openness Working Group (LOWG)



The launch allowed members of LOWG to define their objectives as a working group; Exchange knowledge across governments, parliaments, civil society and international institutions on the opportunities/challenges associated with opening the legislative process. Watch the video [here](#).

## Improving service delivery by supporting parliamentary oversight over the government - Ethiopia

Thanks to the support provided to ensure the continuous and frequent oversight of the Regional State Council of Tigray in collaboration with the Woreda councils, the pace of project implementation like road construction, schools and health institution and water projects - undertaken and reported by the executives - have been improved. The members of various standing committees of the regional state councils have undertaken a physical visit to the selected project sites to ensure activities are done according to the plan, the existing rule and regulation. The oversight has indeed contributed towards improving service delivery, increasing access of information to citizen, and enhancing the confidence and capacity of parliamentarians. The fieldwork of the councils is becoming more significant due to the fact that the critical and valuable feedbacks of the standing committee on the performance of the executive organ has increased accountability; and the executive has become more responsible to discharge its function with respect of delivering basic services to the people. Read more [here](#).



*Caption: Oversight/Committee Based field visit on Construction of public building and facilities/Health Center and water projects/in Tigray Region-Humera town-standing Committee discussing with the community.*

## Support to parliamentary budget oversight - Bangladesh

With the technical support of UNDP, for the first time in the history of the Bangladesh Parliament, the Standing Committee on Government Assurances involved the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation (IME) Division of the Planning Ministry in its process of examining the explanations put forward by the Line Ministries about the status and implementation of the assurances made by the Government in the Parliament. The Committee with UNDP support also conducted policy discussions in June 2013 with Ministries about their priorities for the budgetary allocations in 2013-14. They sought information about the implementation of the last budget along with suggestions about how to overcome any lapses where funds voted by the Parliament, were not utilized as intended. In May 2013, the Assurances Committee visited the Indian Parliament to learn and share experiences about the modality of dealing with government assurances. As a result of those interactions the

## Open Governance Partnership: Opening Parliaments – Practical Examples



This session demonstrates how opening up parliamentary information – transcripts, attendance records, voting records etc. – help to strengthen democracy, drive integrity and increase citizen engagement with the political process. Watch the video [here](#).

## AGORA: Re-launch & E-Learning Course

The [new platform](http://www.agora-parl.org), still available at <http://www.agora-parl.org>, was launched officially in July 2013 and provides a unique collection of resources, learning materials and news on parliamentary development. The library, resource tools and other features have been redesigned to be even more user-friendly and easy to use. The members-only 'Trusted Area' has been redeveloped and will now be available as 'Interact': a dedicated space where you can share updates and resources, connect with other members and join groups dedicated to specific issue areas. The new Portal is available in English, French and Arabic.

The new Portal also hosts AGORA's pilot e-learning course: '[Induction for First-Time Parliamentarians](#)'. This course is available free of charge and is designed for legislators who are new to Parliament, and for parliamentary staff, practitioners, donors, civil society organizations and others who want to learn more about parliaments. The course will soon be also available in French and Arabic.

Bangladesh Parliamentarians agreed upon a plan of action to define the terminology that constitutes an assurance and devise guidelines to manage the monitoring of the implementation of the Assurances made by Ministers in the House and to collate all the Assurances made in the House to date with the support of UNDP. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Government Assurances conducted a workshop to introduce the Guidelines for Government Assurance Monitoring it drafted to officials representing over 22 Ministries, on October 27, 2013 at the Parliament Cabinet Room. Read more [here](#).



*Caption: Left: Assurances Committee study visit to the Indian Parliament; Right: Committee workshop introducing the guidelines to the ministries.*

### First Parliamentary Youth Programme - Samoa



Organized from 6th to 7th August 2013 with the participation of select youth representatives under the age of 29 present during Parliament's August session. The initiative with its collective theme of "Know your Parliament" officially started with an Open Week in June whereby its doors were open to the

general public to actively participate whilst Parliament was in its budgetary session. One of the key priorities for Parliament is to promote and strengthen its engagement with the general public, women and youth. The selected youth members were actively engaged in a mock session of Parliament of which they put their debate skills to test but following parliamentary proceedings. Read more [here](#).

### Parliamentary engagement in transparency and anti-corruption - Chile

The [Legislative Openness Working Group](#) was launched by the President of the Chilean House of Commons and President of the Senate Ethics Committee. 4 major topics were discussed: the legislative process, action plans for open parliament, civil society participation and integrity of MPs. MPs shared good practices in the field of open parliament, i.e.: the "good law" initiative in the UK; "Open Australia"; and the joint work carried out in this area by the civil society and Congress in Mexico. Countries which expressed interest to join the Group include: Armenia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Mexico, Moldova, Paraguay, United Kingdom and Uruguay. Read more [here](#).

### Good Practices: Libya Assembly votes in first Berber as new chief

Libya's National Assembly elected a minority Berber, Nouri Abusahmain, as its new President after his predecessor quit following passage of legislation curbing who can hold public office - a move to ban ex-associates of late dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

### Request for Information!

#### Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) between UNDP and parliamentary organizations

UNDP Parliamentary Team in HQ is compiling copies of past and present MoUs concluded between UNDP and parliamentary organizations such as the IPU, CPA, the Parliamentary Centre, etc. Please send any MoUs to [marilyn.cham@undp.org](mailto:marilyn.cham@undp.org).