5th Donor Coordination Meeting on Parliamentary Development

Organized by the UK Department for International Development, the United Nations

Development Programme, and the World Bank Institute

Hosted by the French National Assembly

Paris, 13 -14 June 2013

Abstract

On June 13-14 2013, the United Kingdom (UK) Department for International Development (DFID), the World Bank Institute (WBI) and the United Nations Development Programme (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 coordination meeting was dedicated to taking stock of the progress in terms of bilateral and multilateral development assistance in the area of parliamentary development, providing space for donor agencies to share experiences and exchange knowledge on good practices and emerging challenges, as well as reflect together on how to improve actionable strategies and approaches for strengthening the capacity of parliaments as central institutions of democratic governance. Special consideration was given to how donor support can be harmonized and aligned with country priorities with a special focus on the post-2015 agenda.

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. Other discussions examined monitoring and evaluation of programming and a review of the Political Party Coordination meeting in Sweden (10-12 June 2013). Members of the wider parliamentary development community were invited to take part in the event as per the recommendations from the previous donor coordination meeting.

Summary of Discussions

1. The *Donor Coordination Meeting on Parliamentary Development* was a follow-up to the fourth meeting held at the OECD Conference Center, (Paris, April 2012). The meeting provided a forum to follow-up on the tasks set at the previous donor coordination meeting.

   ➢ During the **opening session**, the participants presented their parliamentary development programmes with other donors and organizations participating, including first time representatives (Tika, JICA). It was clear democratic governance and parliamentary strengthening remain as top priorities for the donor community.

2. Participants highlighted the importance of sharing information on their agencies' support to parliaments; particularly as such support may be part of larger governance programmes. The participants agreed that coordination is crucial, particularly at the country level.

   Session 1-2: New Priorities and Strategies for Parliamentary Development

3. Donor representatives during this session discussed new priorities and strategies for parliamentary development. A literature review examined recent research related to parliamentary strengthening design, including indicators, evaluations, and results-based management. This session also looked at the findings and outcomes of recent research related to parliamentary strengthening design (see Annex) in order to improve parliamentary development programming and identify new initiatives and strategies for this

work. The discussion also included a focus on the effectiveness and relevance of a number of existing aid modalities and opportunities for better coordination as well as identifying parliamentary development trends and priorities with the aim of disseminating good practice on the different parliamentary functions.

During these sessions, the coordination group discussed (a) research findings, trends, good practices and new approaches; and (b) strategies and initiatives for better results. Highlighted topics included:

- **Program design**: The discussion examined how poor program design renders outcomes difficult to monitor and evaluate, thus measure and attribute changes made to a respective organization or program. Organizations should focus on SMART indicators that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. Bottom-up approaches in program design are essential to ensure effective outcomes. Program delivery should be interactive, iterative, and flexible rather than static in order to be able to accommodate political changes in a given country. Donors also discussed the opportunity to take a more issues-based approach to program design, providing a potentially easier entry point in parliamentary development by focusing reform on technical and policy-specific issues.

- **Comparative, comprehensive research:** A political-economy and institutional analysis was considered essential to programming parliamentary development; the coordination group emphasized the importance of collecting and analyzing the relevant legislative, economic and political frameworks before developing assistance programs as well as taking into account incentives, behaviors and cultures.

- **Evaluating results:** Participants also noted the importance of sharing and coordinating evaluation and research agendas, including outcomes of using a results-based approach to program design. This also opened the floor to the attribution-contribution debate, examining how to measure success and to whom it could be attributed. A point was made that measuring the effects of a program should not be based solely on attribution; rather a donor or implementing agency's contributions to intermediate outcomes are equally valid and important.

- **Approaches to capacity building**: Participants placed value on participatory, dynamic capacity building activities that took participants' feedback into account. Mixed methodologies, or blended capacity building approaches[1] were promoted as well. Technical support to parliament as an institution, including the parliamentary secretariat, was also considered an important program component; building the capacity of parliamentary secretariats contributes to the scaling up of institutional memory, thus sustainability, of programming. Moreover, a south-south learning methodology needs to be further encouraged in programming.

- **The role of parliamentary groups:** The group further observed that regional parliamentary working groups, networks and associations are of a great importance not only because they provide an entry point and safe space to discuss and target issues of a sensitive and political nature but also because many issues or challenges are similar across regions.

Session 3: Review of AGORA

4. AGORA, the Portal for Parliamentary Development (www.agora-parl.org) was developed in response to the direction provided at the 2007/2008 DFID-WBI-UNDP Donor Consultation Meetings. This multilateral initiative aims at centralizing and sharing information with regard to parliamentary development and connecting the global community of practice through a knowledge sharing platform. During this session, staff from AGORA provided an update on the platform, its successes and models for moving forward.

   AGORA presented the findings of the extensive review of the portal and its services and offered a teaser to the participants on the new and revised friendly portal which will provide parliamentary development stakeholders with resources, documents, unique 'Areas of Expertise' as well as platforms for interacting with other interested bodies. Donors also learned of an upcoming e-learning course tailored for legislators who are new to parliament

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[1] A mix of e-learning with traditional teaching methods. Such learning will draw on media, face to face activities and e-learning in different proportions. Existing materials will be included in any blended learning within a framework of pedagogical and operational considerations.
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/subjects/escalate/4051_Book_review_-_Preparing_for_bl

and for parliamentary staff, practitioners, donors, civil society organizations and others who want to learn about the functioning and mandate of parliament.

A subsequent discussion provided an opportunity for donors to assess the platform's impact and options for sustainability.

Session 4: Parliaments in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States: The Arab Spring Two Years On

5. Countries emerging from conflict or facing fragility present a more complex set of challenges for parliaments. Furthermore, parliaments in such environments historically are faced with lower institutional capacity than many of their peers in more stable environments.

   During this session donors discussed the role of parliamentary development in contributing to the aspirations expressed during the Arab Spring over two years ago for a more participatory and accountable system of governance in the Arab world.

   Despite few gains made over the past period and some positive trends in the region, for instance increased women's participation in Algeria, the coordination group noted that progress is slow and the remaining challenges are manifold namely:

   ➢ Parliamentary development in the Arab countries may have suffered from a certain level of duplication due to the multiplicity of actors;

   ➢ The demands for greater representation and timely response to the needs of citizens is still high;

   ➢ There remains limited understanding of political opposition movements and political fragmentation and their effects on parliamentary development;

   ➢ Undeveloped engagement between political parties is prevalent;

   ➢ Parliamentarians focus on local issues more than national priorities; both are important;

   ➢ Building up a parliamentary culture, training and retaining parliamentary staff is still a major requirement to build long term trust and institutional memory for the parliament;

> ➢ Linkages need be drawn between parliamentary development project design and service-delivery in the region;
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> ➢ Increased focus should be placed on addressing codes of conduct as a means to help build higher levels of trust and confidence.

Session 5: Improving Parliamentary Development Programming: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

6. The coordination group and members of the parliamentary development community discussed ways to monitor and evaluate parliamentary development programs, as well as capture lessons learned in order to feed best practices into new program design and delivery. This included an examination of opportunities for more rigorous and empirical based evaluations, new methodologies for measuring outcomes and impact, and new approaches to codifying results considering the challenge of quantification in this development field.

   Donors noted the challenges in developing quality and meaningful indicators and baselines, which render evaluations difficult; the combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators was thus highly recommended to achieve comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluation reports . Additionally, it was deemed good practice to incorporate/integrate parliamentary strengthening and development activities into thematic areas i.e. climate change, rather than stand-alone projects.

   Participants expressed increased interest in including beneficiaries in leading the development of parliamentary development programs; beyond parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, citizens should also be involved. This will increase the likelihood of buy-in to the development process as well as responsiveness to monitoring and evaluation requests.

   The coordination group reflected on issues and lessons learned from the global Political Party Peer Network, held in Sweden on 10-12 June 2013 which was attended by leading political party support organizations, and donors. The meeting discussed the latest developments in the field of assistance to political parties and political party systems and in

particular covered the topic "Political party dialogue for strong party systems" – currently among the most used approaches in political party assistance.

Session 6: Open Agenda and its Implications on Parliaments

7. The coordination group provided an overview of the global trend towards opening up governance in this session. The objective of the Open Governance movement is 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.

It was agreed that open data is essentially a positive trend that leads to greater transparency and accountability and has helped parliaments perform their primary functions. Issues surrounding the quality of data and capacity of stakeholders (parliaments, governments, media, civil society, etc.) to understand and use data are of paramount importance.

Parliaments also have a role in serving as transparent institutions accountable to citizens. There are a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening parliamentary monitoring organizations to this end.

Session 7: The Role of Parliaments in the Post-2015 Debate and Emerging Development Priorities

8. Parliamentary systems differ, so a 'one size fits all' approach will not help to determine the extent to which parliaments have been successful in building on political will and momentum to deliver on the MDGs. This session explored the role of parliaments in the post-2015 debate, as well as the pros and cons of establishing a quantitative commitment on the part of donors.

The moderators' panel presented an overview on the 128th IPU assembly and the Quito Communiqué in particular. A specific focus was given to the need to link development goals and objectives with public policy, planning and budgeting which must be reflected in

countries' action plans. Parliaments play a large role in establishing and promoting strong frameworks and must be hence included in the development post-2015 debate as well.

Despite the fact that few donors have indicated that disbursing funds will be linked to good results and improved performance, the majority of the coordination group stressed that governance remains a significant component of the post-2015 aid agenda whereby parliamentary development remains a key element.

Recommendations and way forward

- Donors came to a general consensus on the role parliamentary strengthening programs play in the development agenda. There was specific emphasis placed on the non-traditional nature of measuring the results of parliamentary development work. USAID committed to explore alternative methods of conducting M&E, including holding an "Evidence Summit" aimed at sharing the empirical results of this research.

- There is a continued need to coordinate and integrate research agendas in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to maximize information exchange. Sectoral assessments measuring one or two aspects of assistance programs rather than an overall program evaluation was deemed as more efficient. Conducting a comprehensive evaluation to measure donors' contributions to one aspect of governance was highly praised.

- Political-economy and institutional analysis should be conducted and linked to program design and management; context analysis should shape how projects are designed, delivered, sequenced and measured. Similarly, capacity building initiatives and technical support should be contextually linked in order to determine needs, gaps and intervention modalities by topic/area.

- Participants promoted the idea of including beneficiaries in project design, supporting the effectiveness and buy-in of parliaments in the process of project execution, monitoring, and evaluation. This includes facilitating political steering committees in parliaments which would combine the speaker of the house, donors and multi-lateral organizations to monitor activities and create greater political ownership of projects.

- Civil society and political parties in parliamentary strengthening programs should be considered as key actors in governance systems.
- Further efforts need to be made for strategic coordination between donors and practitioners, leveraging knowledge, resources, and relationships for more effective programming.

Annex: Recent Publications on Parliamentary Development

Parliamentary Careers: Design, Delivery and Evaluation of Improved Professional Development (AusAID, ARC, Monash University, IPU 2012)

This study provides an opportunity to test and develop the application of human resource development frameworks, such as Tharenou, Saks, and Moore's (2007) training performance model and resource-based theory, against the functions of parliaments and parliamentarians. In addition, the project also explores training of parliamentarians on the roles and relationships of accountability bodies such as Audit Offices, Ombudsman and Anti-Corruption Commissions and the significance of their independence from government. It also examines the role of training parliamentarians in the nature, development and maintenance of appropriate relationships between the coercive arms of the state, the police and military, government and the parliament.

For details please refer to the following link: http://www.ipu.org/dem-e/research.htm#objectives

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GSDRC Research Report: Integrating parliamentary and political party strengthening in sectoral programs (2012)

Though evidence of the impact of sector-oriented parliamentary programs is slim, such approaches are regarded in the literature as having the potential to improve sectoral outcomes in a number of ways. It is sometimes argued that narrowing the focus and scale of capacity building efforts around a single issue can help to build consensus around that issue (Mcloughlin 2008). Tostensen and Amundsen (2010) argue issue-related events or thematic programs run the risk of being less effective where they are not linked to a parliamentary process. Moreover, they suggest that thematic experts and civil society representatives could undermine thematic programs unless they are committed to the parliamentary process. In spite of the relatively slim rigorous evidence of the impact of sector-oriented parliamentary and political party support programs, a few examples have been identified in this report that indicate their potential impact.

For details please refer to the following link: http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HDQ835.pdf

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Mind the Gap: Lessons Learnt and Remaining Challenges in Parliamentary Development Assistance –A SIDA Pre-Study (2012)

Parliamentary Development Assistance (PDA) remains an under-evaluated area of donor support. As with democracy strengthening more generally, evaluation efforts have not been systematic, robust, or comprehensive enough. The evaluation literature consists mostly of either ad hoc single program evaluations (which were beyond the scope of this study) or broad thematic reviews that draw quite general lessons from a diverse set of programs. For this reason, there is almost no comparative data on funding levels and activities, and little detailed analysis of what has worked under different conditions and why. The main purpose of the Evaluation Pre-Study was to assess the need and appetite for a multi-stakeholder evaluation of PDA and explore other options for addressing gaps in knowledge.

For details please refer to the following links: http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7925.pdf & http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7926.pdf

World Bank Institute's Approach to Parliamentary Capacity Strengthening (2012)

For approximately 15 years, the World Bank Institute (WBI) has aimed to enhance the capacity of parliaments in their oversight, representation and law-making functions, recognizing their essential role to good governance: they are representatives, set priorities, hold the executive accountable and engage directly with the media, civil society and individual citizens. This article outlines WBI's model for strengthening parliamentary capacity globally and regionally in considering: capacity development and adult learning; challenges in implementing parliamentary capacity support projects; WBI's parliamentary strengthening model; a case-study on WBI's parliamentary staff training and the conclusion that a multi-faceted, medium-to-long term process is the best approach to parliamentary capacity building.

WBI Parliamentary
Strengthening Article

Please click on the attachment to read to article:

Indicator Gap Analysis: Legislative Strengthening (USAID 2010)

This report discusses the state of development with respect to indicators for capturing the performance of legislatures and the impact of donor-funded legislative strengthening programs. The report includes a discussion of the results captured through an illustrative Results Framework and suggests ways for improvement. It reviews several sets of indicators and datasets that address legislative performance, investigates the existence of data, and examines country coverage for those indicator sets. It pays particular attention to measurement of the higher order result, what might be terms the "Assistance Objective" (AO) for legislative programming, as a way to report more compellingly on overall progress in democracy and governance programming. Finally, the paper makes recommendations on several priorities and ways to strengthen existing indicators as well as move forward with indicator development.

USAID Legislative
report.pdf

Please click on the attachment to read the report:

The difficult development of parliamentary politics in the Gulf: Parliaments and the process of managed reform in Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman

Parliaments have a poor record in the Middle East. However, since 2011 demands for representation in the region have tended to focus on the creation of mass political parties and an effective, and democratic, parliament. This paper by Greg Power published by the LSE's Kuwait Programme examines the development of the parliamentary institutions in three Gulf states: Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman. The institutions in these countries have, to some extent, been a forum for the articulation of public demands for more political and constitutional power. But the parliaments have also been used as part of a ruling strategy to maintain Executive control – with governments manipulating membership, limiting parliamentary power and preventing sensitive political issues from being discussed. The paper examines how these dynamics have played

themselves out in each of the three Gulf states, and reflects on the role that parliamentary institutions might play in the coming years in both managing those states' political tensions and providing a catalyst for more far-reaching political reform.

For details please refer to the following link:

http://www.global-partners.co.uk/?publications=1087

Global Parliamentary Report

In 2012, UNDP launched the first ever Global Parliamentary Report currently available in 6 languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian). The Report is a joint work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNDP, and draws on input from 73 parliaments. It analyzes changes in relations between parliaments and citizens, and suggests improvements to parliamentary strategies for meeting public expectations. It has been used as a basis to launch parliamentary debates and round table discussions in order to enhance parliamentary representation and outreach in a number of countries, including Algeria, Bangladesh, Chile, Ecuador, Morocco, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, as well as in the United States (New York and Washington DC).

For details please refer to the following link:

http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/parliamentary_development/the-global-parliamentary-report/