



Inter-Parliamentary Union

Technical Cooperation Programme

PROJECT PROFILE: GAMBIA (THE)



Created 27/09/2006

Project details

Title:	Reform of parliamentary structures and processes in the Gambia
Status:	Closed
Duration:	3 Years (1996-1999)
Budget:	US\$ 360,000
Donor partner:	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Background

In the Gambia an elected government was in place until the 1994 coup d'état carried out by the armed forces. The latter set up a provisional government and eventually resolved to re-establish democratic governance.

The military government turned to the international community, looking for assistance to create new, modern and democratic institutions. Eventually an agreement with UNDP was reached to meet the costs of a relevant programme and assist in its implementation.

In response to a UNDP request for assistance, IPU fielded two needs-assessment missions to prepare a conclusive project of assistance to the parliament.

Areas of activity

The project focused on providing assistance to the new National Assembly and to assist it in starting operations. To this end, the following activities were planned:

- Creation of an interim (pre election) administration for the parliament capable of organizing the functioning of National Assembly.
- Creation of a basic library and documentation unit.
- Provision of general advice to the local officials in charge of the work of the National Assembly.
- Identification, refurbishment and equipping of adequate facilities for the Assembly.
- Training for the newly elected parliamentarians and staff following the elections.

Target beneficiaries

The principal objective of the project was to strengthen the parliament as an institution. The main target beneficiaries were thus its secretariat and new members.

A successful transition back to pluralistic democracy and transparent governance would also benefit Gambia's civil society.

Results

A number of services were delivered to the Gambian National Assembly, notably:

- Creating a parliamentary task force, consisting of civil servants and former parliamentarians, to prepare for administer the National Assembly until further staff and the newly elected members were able to begin their work.
- Conducting four technical assistance missions to enhance the capacities of the newly elected parliamentarians and issue recommendations for the further development of the National Assembly. The missions also provided expertise in preparing adequate facilities.



The Gambia's Parliament in Banjul

- Sending a consultant to the Gambia for six months to assist with the establishment of the library, a basic reference collection and providing the necessary equipment.
- Organizing a seminar for the new parliamentarians on the basic functions of parliament, prior to the first constitutional plenary session.
- Organizing two study visits for three Gambian MPs to the Parliaments of Kenya and Zambia.

The elections, held as scheduled, were widely regarded as fair and free and the new National Assembly started its work in 1997.

Experts providing advice to the project included:

- Mr. Chris Lucas, Deputy Secretary to the Parliament of South Africa
- Mr. Murumba Werunga, Principal Clerk, National Assembly of Kenya
- Mr. John Sweetman, former Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees, House of Commons, United Kingdom
- Ms. Alice Malamah-Thomas, Librarian at the University of Sierra Leone

Parliaments supporting the project were:

- Parliament of Kenya and the Parliament of Zambia