

# GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARY REPORT: FACTS AND FIGURES

2 April 2012

1. Almost all the countries in the world have some form of functioning parliamentary institution.
2. **MPs:** There are 46,552 MPs in the world. The global average number of parliamentarians per country is 245. China has the largest parliament with 3,000 members in the Chinese National People's Congress. The world's smallest parliament is in Micronesia, with just 14 MPs.
3. The global average number of inhabitants per parliamentarian is 146,000 though in India, that number is 1.5 million inhabitants per MP. San Marino has the smallest number at 517.
4. **Women:** There are 8,716 women parliamentarians globally, which is 19.25 per cent of the total number of MPs. **NB: New IPU figures on women MPs supersede these. Please go to: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>**
5. **Age:** The global average age of an MP is 53. The average age for a woman MP is 50. Sub-Saharan African MPs have the lowest regional average age at 49 with Arab countries with the highest at 55.
6. **Budgets:** The U.S. Congress has the largest parliamentary budget at US\$5.12 billion. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines spends least on parliament budget at 1.8 million.
7. The average cost of parliament per inhabitant in the world is US\$5.77
8. **Gaps:** MPs rated creating legislation as their most important job. The public rated solving constituents problems and promoting the interests and economy of a constituency an MP's most important job.
9. **Obstacles:** MPs rate a lack of resources for constituency work as their greatest obstacle to doing their job. Resources and staffing for parliamentary work and in parliament itself were ranked second and third.
10. **Constituency work:** About 20 per cent of MPs surveyed said they spend 40 or more hours a week working on constituents' issues.
11. **Communications:** Just over 40 per cent of MPs surveyed judged parliament as being fairly effective in communicating its activities to the public during plenary debates. That percentage dropped to about 30 per cent for committee debates and hearings and for international activities.
12. **Monitoring:** There are more than 191 parliamentary monitoring organizations (PMOs) in the world today, monitoring the activities of more than 80 parliaments.
13. **Trust:** Support for parliaments has been waning in established democracies. Within EU, trust in parliament now stands at less than a third, while in the U.S., trust in Congress hit its lowest figure in more than 30 years, with just 9 per cent people surveyed saying they trusted it.

14. There are equally low levels of trust in newer democracies of Eastern Europe with Latvia and Lithuania representing the lowest figures at 11 per cent and 8 per cent respectively and similar patterns in the Arab world and East Asia. In Kuwait and Lebanon, more than half the population has little or no trust in parliament while in South Korea, only political parties are less trusted than parliament.
15. **Polls:** A 2008 global poll by World Public Opinion found that 85 per cent of people believed that the will of the people should be the basis of the authority of the government.

The *Global Parliamentary Report: The changing nature of parliamentary representation* is published by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations Development Programme. For more information, go to:

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