The Southern African Hub
Hosted by
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA

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Background

Regional uniqueness

- We share common practices in the way we conduct Parliamentary business – they are our people therefore we can listen to them
- We speak similar language and benchmarking with each other on best practices is cardinal
- There exists strong political will for parliaments to share common practices – this is reflected by initiatives such as ZIM/ZAM/BOT
Background (cont’d)

- Disparity in ICT adoption (wide gap here)
- Constraints in resource envelope (mostly due to weak ICT governance to plan and mobilize resources)
- Lack of political will in some parliaments
- Lack of dedicated ICT staff to service Parliament (Parliament has unique business process that require dedicated staff)
- Lack of needed basic skill set in some parliaments
Purpose

Knowledge sharing and collaboration

- Project implementation – learning best practices from parliaments that have already implemented similar projects reducing project failure rate
- Adoption of solutions that are already in use by other parliaments – avoid re-inventing of the wheel
- Easy access to available pool of expertise that may lack in one parliament
Purpose (cont’d)

_creation of a pool of experts_

- To avoid costly approaches of hiring consultants who know nothing or little regarding parliamentary business process

- Parliamentary driven initiatives

- Secures political buy-in considering the fact that its parliamentary driven and not initiatives imposed by external forces
Purpose (cont’d)

- Enable Hub members to work together towards sharing fundamental approach to design and implementation of parliamentary initiatives that aim at making parliaments more open, accountable and inclusive; and

- Enhanced communication and cooperation at regional level as well as global level
How the Hub will function

- Hub coordinator – Desk officer will be appointed
- Parliaments from the region or similar scale connected to the hub
- Take part in:
  - ICT related conversations.
  - Sharing of ICT related innovations, projects, business cases, Policies, Strategies as part of ToRs of ICT departments (show case your developments)
  - Video conferencing sessions between requesting parliaments and regional and global champions
How the Hub will function

- Hub outputs:
  - Number of contributions (from conversations, sharing, conferencing) to a hub knowledge base
  - Number of parliaments that were serviced in their requests

- Hub access for:
  - CIP
  - All hub participants
  - ICT champions and thought leaders from ICT advanced parliaments
  - International development actors e.g. staff from UNDP, NDI, or EU funded projects at parliaments. Often these projects have ICT component, and they can learn about regional practices, and what worked / what not?
Why National Assembly of Zambia?

Strengths

- We are willing to test the storms that come with brazing a new trail;
- We have and are building a very strong pool of experts that could be useful in helping other parliaments who are yet to build capacity; and
- We have management and political will to make the Hub a reality.
Why National Assembly of Zambia?

Opportunity

- Support from H.E Mr. Edgar C. Lungu the President of Republic of Zambia, as demonstrated by the presence of senior government officials;
- We have strong political will and leadership. This can be demonstrated in the way we hosted the 134th IPU Conference held from 19th to 23rd March 2016 in Lusaka
- Support from Hon Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the National Assembly (our involvement in supporting parliaments in ICT strategic planning)
Hub challenges and Risks

- Lack of permanent ICT staff in some parliaments. ICT staff are seconded to Parliaments by the government and these ICT personnel could be recalled any time and redeployed elsewhere;

- Budgetary constraints and conditionalities in accessing funding. This is both from co-operating partners as well as government perspective;

- Lack of recognition of ICT as critical business partner in parliamentary business. This perception is changing; and

- Lack of active involvement by member Parliaments.
How do we deal with Hub challenges?

- Active involvement of Centre for Innovation in Parliaments (CIP) to sensitize the politician on the critical role ICT plays and the need to be involved in business decision making. A platform exists through bi-annual IPU conferences.

- Multilateral approach in resource mobilization to assist needy parliaments.

- Sensitize politicians and government leadership on the need to have permanent ICT staff who can understand parliamentary business processes. ICT is no longer about fixing a computer or network but a critical business partner.
CIP
- Consolidate knowledge
- Reach out for assistance

Regional / thematic hub

Zambia Regional Hub
- Directly assist parliaments
- Knowledge base
- Identify needs

Development actors e.g. UNDP, EU, etc

Other parliaments (e.g. EP, ..., ..)

PMOs, dev. actors on the ground
Conclusion

The CIP and Hubs are a great initiative, which are expected to have resounding positive impact as they address or try and cure the mischief of resource divide in parliaments.

Thank you