**Second Expert Roundtable on the
Common Principles for Support to Parliaments**
Proactive parliaments: Bolstering self-development
Geneva, 29 March 2018

ROUNDTABLE REPORT

Background

In recent decades, support to parliaments has steadily increased, as have the number of support partners. The Common Principles for Support to Parliaments were developed by a working group[1] to underpin parliamentary support and help make it more effective.[2] Following extensive consultations with parliaments in 2014, the Principles were formally adopted by the 131st IPU Assembly in October 2014, and have since been endorsed by 120 parliaments and organizations.[3]

Once the Common Principles had been produced, parliaments and their partners sought to examine more closely how to apply them in day to day work. The organization of a regular series of Expert Roundtables was proposed to provide deeper operational insight into the Common Principles and to help develop tools that would allow them to be applied more robustly.

On 28 October 2016, the First Expert Roundtable took place at the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva. It focused on Common Principle 3: *Parliamentary support aims for sustainable outcomes* and led to the exchange and compilation of good practices to strengthen the sustainability of support projects.[4]

The Second Expert Roundtable took place on 29 March 2018. Its aim was to examine the principle of parliamentary ownership at a more granular level and to strengthen its operationalization by informing the production of a *Guide for the Common Principles* (the *Guide).* The *Guide* would serve as a reference tool for parliaments and their partners to help increase parliament's proactive engagement in self-development and, in turn, enable parliaments to better assess offers of support.

Introductory remarks and setting the scene

Introductory remarks were made by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General. He welcomed the delegates and laid emphasis on the importance of the Common Principles to support the mandates of parliaments to better deliver to the people. He highlighted the importance of assisting parliaments to apply the Principles further through the drafting of a *Guide.* As was done in the elaboration of the Common Principles itself, a member-driven approach with broad consultation was important for such a *Guide* to genuinely be relevant to parliaments' needs and circumstances.

Setting the scene for the day ahead, Mr. John Patterson, Parliamentary Advisor, referred to the conclusion of the first Common Principles Roundtable in 2016 namely, that parliaments benefitting from external support must be engaged in driving their own development if sustainable change is to be achieved. The objective of the day was to take that conclusion forward into the drafting of a *Guide* whose purpose was to enhance parliament's capacity to assess offers of support and retain direction of implementation.

The day's morning sessions focused on: (a) deepening the institutionalization of development ownership in parliament so that it is part of day-to-day operations; and (b.) exploring the role of

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[1] Comprised of the European Parliament, the National Assembly of France, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

[2] http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/principles_en.pdf

[3] Endorsements as at 25 April 2018: https://www.ipu.org/file/4459/download?token=XeCxqlWK

[4] The Report of the First Roundtable: http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/common16/report.pdf

support partners in that process. The afternoon was devoted to breakout sessions where participants would contribute to the content and form of a *Guide* in "zero draft' " form.

Case studies: How parliaments govern their own development

This first session looked at existing practices in parliaments to institutionalize development ownership. It was moderated by Ms. Lydia Kandetu, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Namibia.

Mr. Amjed Pervez Malik, Secretary General of the Senate of Pakistan, discussed the Senate of Pakistan's experience in evolving from a parliament whose development was led externally, to one much more internally-led. Entailing fundamental reforms in both institutional mechanisms and behavioural culture, the shift led to significantly more successful results in sustaining change. It was galvanized by two factors: a shift of perspective from external- to internal-based support in the Senate's **self-generated strategic plan**; and greater **political support** from the top political level of the Senate. In summarizing the various bodies and mechanisms governing the Senate's development, Mr. Malik observed that the enhancement of MPs' capacities in contributing to the management of the development process was directly correlated with the amount of responsibility offered to them: **the greater the responsibility the greater the development**.

Mr. Clezy Rore, Clerk of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands, described his Parliament's strategy process. Development was organized in an **annual strategy cycle**, which permitted needs to be identified, progressed and adjusted both internally and with help from partners. The cycle had two aspects: monitoring the achievement of annual objectives in the current year and preparing revised annual objectives for the next year. Central to its success was the **Strategy Support Unit (SSU)**. It comprised Secretariat staff and target-driven departmental annual work plans subject to monthly presentations to the Speaker and Clerk. These plans were also subject to **triennial reviews** and adjusted as necessary. The cascading of tasks was coherent from the strategic plan, to the departmental level, and also to the level of individual performance appraisals.

Mr. Bruno Lencastre, Chief Technical Advisor of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste, presented the Parliament's development approach and strategic plan. These were built on recognition of relevant **international development instruments**, such as the Paris Declaration (2005), Busan Principles (2011), and the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments (2014). The approach and plan also resulted in changes to the Parliament's **Organic Law**, which further strengthened the regulatory framework governing development. It was designed to be "donor-friendly" and to facilitate the easy slotting of partner contributions to specific areas where support was needed. A **common matrix** of intended results was generated and shared with partners, who could coordinate their efforts. **Monitoring and evaluation bodies** were established and partners and donors were invited to participate in meetings. The Parliament participated in and directed all stages of development from project design, recruitment, to monitoring and evaluation. This was done through a **steering committee** which met periodically and included political and administrative staff, as well as donors. A **technical committee** was also established for more operational follow-up and decision-making. Harmonization of delivery with priorities was ensured by a **coordinator**. **Parliament contributed funding** for its development in all projects, even if only a symbolic amount.

The following additional insights were raised by the presentations and the ensuing interactive discussions:

- In addition to leadership from the Secretaries General of parliaments, **political support** at the highest levels was also underlined as an essential requirement for development to succeed.

- **Political inclusion was indispensable** in the elaboration of developmental plans, both to receive input from a variety of perspectives, but also to strengthen continuity if and when political power shifted between elections.

- Putting in place relevant tools was essential, such as a '**strategy**' in which review processes, development and modernization could take place organically. The strategy often determined the DNA of daily work of the entire institution, including in the 'core' parliamentary functions. This often implied cascading it by means of a corporate annual plan, departmental plans, individual job descriptions, and review and reporting processes involving both staff and the political level. Familiarization and training sessions on these systems were important.

- **Formally mandating someone or somebody** (such as a steering committee, task force, co-ordination unit, etc.) to operationalize the strategy cycle and development process was essential. The creation of new structures was not necessary in cases where parliaments already had an existing structure that was suitable.

- The signing of **Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)** with external partners was one way that parliaments could keep hold of the development reins while leveraging external assistance. In some parliaments, further regulatory frameworks (such as Secretariat standing orders) have been developed to fill in gaps in governing the administration's functioning.

The perspectives of support partners

The second session was devoted to the role and perspectives of support partners. It was moderated by Ms. Frieda Arenos, Senior Programme Officer at the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

The first presenter, Mr. Dararith Kim-Yeat, Executive Director of the Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC), emphasized the **independent** and **non-partisan** nature of the organization. He explained that it implemented training curricula **tailored** to the needs of Cambodia; for example, to support the induction of MPs who came from military backgrounds. The PIC approach emphasized: trust-building, neutrality, and an understanding of parliamentary development as a **long-term process** requiring patience. A continuous "institution building approach" rather than a time-limited "project" was, therefore, useful. It also promoted the building of institutional memory. A good practice of selecting "**champions**" – MPs trained for future provision of support and the sharing of knowledge – was also highlighted. Finally Mr. Kim-Yeat stressed the importance of integrating sustainability in support interventions, reminding participants that the end-goal of support was *to leave.*

The Right Honourable David Carter, MP from New Zealand, detailed the New Zealand Parliament's approach to development, both as a consumer, as well as a producer in support of others. As a consumer, the Parliament of New Zealand's self-development work was never-ending: **induction courses** for new MPs were regularly undertaken after elections and **standing orders** were also systematically updated. As a support provider, the Parliament worked closely with regional and

national parliaments, including in the South Pacific. Support was at times provided directly to parliaments to use at their own hands or in partnership with others. New Zealand measured the effectiveness of its aid by the degree to which it: strengthened democracy in recipient nations, boosted human development, raised economies, and increased strength and accountability. The goal was never to clone New Zealand-style democracy but to support within a framework of **respect** of national cultures.

Ms. Isabel Obadiaru, SDG Consultant at the Inter-Parliamentary Union, presented IPU's **self-assessment toolkits.** These were designed to enable parliaments to take the reins in identifying their needs and mapping out priorities and solutions. Using the example of a self-assessment in Mali, Ms. Obadiaru mapped the organizational timeline of the activity and how national ownership was maintained throughout the process: it began with the request for assistance originating from parliament, the signing of an MoU informed by their views, and followed by the facilitation of the self-assessment exercise itself which resulted in parliaments' identification of its priorities in partnership with local stakeholders, such as the government and civil society. To further promote national ownership, Ms. Obadiaru signalled the value of monitoring and evaluation approaches anchored in the **perspectives of the beneficiaries**. For example, an important way to measure success was through the eyes of the participants themselves, and the extent to which they felt the activities met their expectations. In addition to the SDGs, self-assessment toolkits have also been produced for **parliament gender-sensitivity**, as well as on the broader **representation**, **oversight** and **legislative** functions of parliaments.

Mr. Greg Power, Director of Global Partners Governance, emphasized the complexity of parliamentary development and the diverse motivations of various stakeholders (such as donors, etc.). As outside partners, it was important – as much as possible – to examine parliaments and political contexts from the **inside**. He also emphasized the importance of extending beyond only support for "institutional" change within parliaments (such as rules and regulations), to also focus on the people, and support **behavioural change**. For example, changes to standing orders may create new powers for MPs, but they were meaningless if such powers were not actually exercised. Mr. Power also highlighted the complexity of scientifically measuring change when much of how parliament worked depended on less tangible factors, such as culture, behavioural patterns, and the informal interactions that went on in the "hallways" of parliaments. He, therefore, challenged the assumption that meaningful and impactful changes could always be measured. Practitioners and donors needed to be **realistic** in their expectations: instead of being overly ambitious, they should aim for **modest and significant change**. He echoed the view that the role of partners was to enable self-development, rather than implement changes.

> ## "Development is not the implementer's import but the beneficiary's aspiration"

The following additional insights were raised from the presentations and the ensuing interactive discussions:

- Effective development was unlikely to work well in the **absence of respect** between donor, implementer and beneficiary parliaments.

- The forms of intervention chosen needed to be suited to the unique contexts of parliament. **One size fits all is out**.

- It was important for donors, external support partners, and beneficiary parliaments to communicate through **a common vocabulary**. Local considerations must also be accounted for in the definition of these terms.

- Techniques such as "**self-assessments**", "**strategies**", "**corporate plans**" and the like could be genuinely empowering for parliaments and were essential for implementers to provide genuine entry points and traction. These documents and the management structures based on them constituted a *common development delivery platform* for all actors.

- While it was important to measure results in support work with parliaments, it was also vital to acknowledge parliaments as deeply rich and complex institutions, where **meaningful**
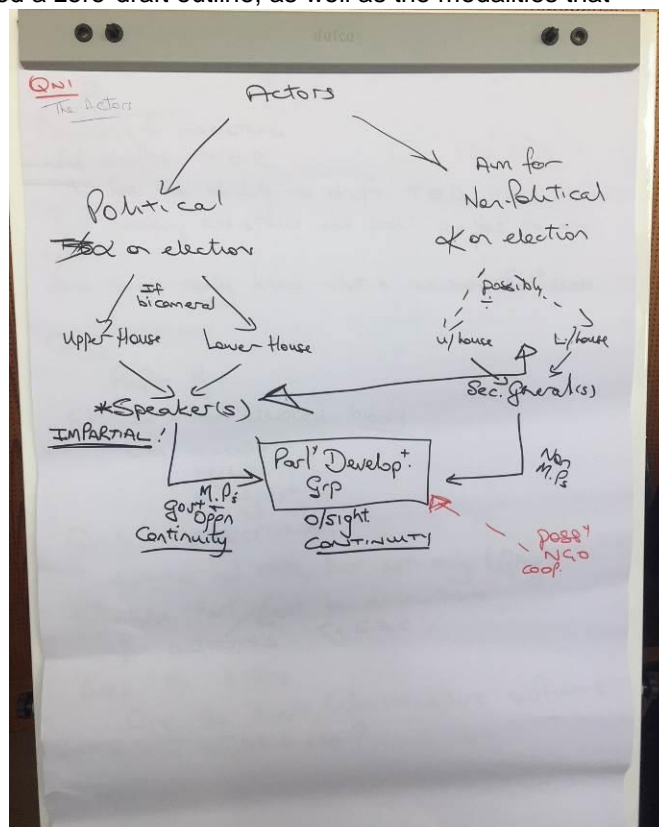
changes could not necessarily be revealed through simple quantifiable indicators (such as meetings held, laws passed, etc.).

Bringing the *Guide* into focus: Breakout groups and presentations

The second half of the day drew on the knowledge of participants to inform the drafting of a *Guide* for parliaments on the Common Principles. This was carried out through working groups. Mr. John Patterson introduced the session and presented a zero-draft outline, as well as the modalities that followed. Optional questions were provided to participants to help stimulate feedback. Following group discussions, a Rapporteur from each group presented the results. This session was facilitated by Mr. Jonathan Lang, Project Officer at the IPU. The following is a summary of key ideas expressed.

With regard to the infrastructure and process for self-development:

- When defining the parts of parliament (bodies or post holders) key to parliamentary development, it was important to include actors from both the political and administrative (Secretariat) spheres. A body should be drawn from both in an inclusive manner.

- Parliament, often through the body mandated to govern self-development, was best suited to allocate development roles and assess external viewpoints to enrich the prioritization of development priorities.

- Parliament's ownership could be asserted at all stages of development. The following concrete examples were highlighted: requests for assistance, assessment of offers of support, drafting of terms of references, recruitment of experts, and carrying out monitoring and evaluation.

"Capacity support is needed on how to manage self-development"

- Support to parliaments to help build capacities to manage such processes was important in order to facilitate parliamentary self-development in line with the Common Principles. As the "oil for the self-development engine", the identification and support to build this basic professional capacity should be a priority for development partners.

- For this, and for parliament's assessment of offers of support, a suite of skills would be useful for both members of parliament and staff, including:

  o numerical and non-numerical data management;

  o stakeholder (and donor) mapping to help determine roles and identify partners;

  o project management, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic planning skills;

  o risk management tools;

  o support in adopting a results-oriented approach;

- enhanced leadership and consensus-building capacities;

- sample criteria on specifically how to assess offers of support; and

- a strong regulatory framework for transparency and accountability.

It would be useful for the *Guide* to provide either concrete examples that would help address these needs, or ideas on how parliaments could obtain them. In the case of MPs, one way could be for such development training to be provided in induction programmes, a platform for training already very common in parliaments.

With regard to the format and layout of the *Guide*

- Although all acknowledged the inherent diversity of parliaments, there was agreement on certain common features that were important to keep in mind when drafting the *Guide*. For example, generally all parliaments had to deal with:

  - limited resources;

  - the existence of political/partisan divides;

  - the common interest of politicians to "keep their seat",

  - the balancing of legislative and executive branches; and

  - the management of public expectations.

- It would be useful for the *Guide* to map donor priorities to help parliaments better understand how donors operate.

- The *Guide* should be useful to parliaments with and without a defined strategic plan. However, parliaments that may not have such plans will generally still have a "strategy" in some form, i.e. they will have knowledge of where they wish to get to and defined priorities along a timeline. Such a "strategy" (whether written or not), is important to create a development agenda to enable capacity growth and provide a basis from which external support could be assessed according to parliament's needs.

- The *Guide* should be accessible, concrete, and not too long. It should go beyond abstract statements and present good practices, case studies and real-life stories of parliamentary development in a straightforward (and not too technical) manner. The participants welcomed the possibility that the *Guide* be presented in a digital-friendly way.

"Don't just tell me, but show me"

Closing remarks

Ms. Norah Babic, Manager of the IPU Technical Cooperation Programme, thanked all the participants for their contributions, recapped the discussions that had taken place, and outlined next steps. In the short-term the IPU would share a Report on the Roundtable, and subsequently begin drafting the *Guide*. It would seek out parliamentary input on examples to be presented and would share a draft version with parliaments for wider consultation and feedback. Once completed, the *Guide* would be a win/win for parliaments and support partners alike.

Annex 1: Key takeaways for drafting of the *Guide*

The idea for the production of a *Guide* was strongly supported by the participants. The following are some of the key elements discussed to be considered for inclusion in the *Guide's* drafting:

- ✓ A glossary of a common vocabulary to be used by parliaments and partners.

- ✓ Explanation of the bodies that could be mandated to govern parliamentary self-development and examples of their possible composition (i.e. inclusion of political tendencies and representation of political and administration sides of parliaments).

- ✓ The importance of a strategy, whether written in a strategic plan, or expressed in a less formal way, to serve as the primary reference point for self-development. This would serve as the source of objectives, which could cascade down to inform annual work plans, job descriptions, and other management mechanisms. Self-assessment tools are one helpful way to help parliaments identify such a strategy and their priorities.

- ✓ The parliament-donor relationship should be guided by the principle of parliament driving its own development. Nevertheless it would be useful for the *Guide* to provide insight to help parliaments understand the perspective of donors, the pressures they have to account for, how they operate, and how they seek to measure development (in so far as such measurement is possible).

- ✓ Once needs have been identified, parliaments can claim ownership over all stages of the project cycle. The *Guide* can help flag for parliaments some of these stages, such as:
  - o the assessment of offers of support (possibly along predetermined criteria);
  - o the elaboration of MoUs;
  - o the elaboration of ToRs;
  - o the selection of experts;
  - o the implementation of projects;
  - o their monitoring and evaluation; and
  - o their eventual integration into parliament's daily work.

- ✓ In order to further support parliaments' ownership of this process, additional tools and skills may be needed for both political and administrative staff. These include:
  - o criteria on how to assess offers of support;
  - o numerical and non-numerical data management;
  - o stakeholder and donor mapping;
  - o project management skills that is evidence- and results-oriented;
  - o indicators and tools (such as use of stories, anecdotes) to help parliaments measure results; and
  - o a strong regulatory framework for transparency and accountability.

- ✓ The *Guide* should be applicable to the diversity of parliaments, including from the global North and South.

- ✓ The *Guide* should be accessible, short, easy-to-read, and concrete. It should show good practices and case studies used in parliaments around the world rather than abstractly "tell" parliaments what to do in a prescriptive manner.

<u>Annex 2: List of participants</u>

PARLIAMENTS

Algeria	Mr. Mohamed Mani Member of Parliament, Council of the Nation
Algeria	Mr. Seddik Chiheb Member of Parliament, National People's Assembly
Algeria	Mr. Mohamed Drissi Dada Secretary General, Council of the Nation
Algeria	Mr. Slimani Bachir Secretary General, National People's Assembly
Algeria	Mr. Noureddine Si Bachir Secretary, Algerian Delegation to the IPU
Algeria	Ms. Benziada Mounia Administrator, Council of the Nation
Burundi	Mr. Rénovat Niyonzima Secretary General, Senate
Burundi	Mr. Marc Rwabahungu Secretary General, National Assembly
Chad	Mr. Bellah Keda Member of Parliament, National Assembly
Chile	Ms. Jenny Alvarez Member of Parliament, Chamber of Deputies
Chile	Mr. Iván Flores Member of Parliament, Chamber of Deputies
Germany	Mr. Jochen Guckes Senior Officer, Parliamentary Strengthening, Bundestag
Guinea	Mr. Jean Edouard Sagno Chief of Staff, National Assembly
Haiti	Mr. Joel Semerzier Member of Parliament, Chamber of Deputies
Haiti	Mr. Jacquelin Rubes Member of Parliament, Chamber of Deputies
Hungary	Mr. Krisztián Kovács Head of Department, Directorate for Foreign Relations, EU Department, National Assembly
Kenya	Mr. Jeremiah Nyegenye Clerk, Senate
Kenya	Mr. Zakayo Mogere Assistant to the Clerk, Senate

Namibia	Mr. Phillipus Wido Katamelo Member of Parliament, National Council
Namibia	Mr. Peter Kazongominja Member of Parliament, National Council
Namibia	Mr. Norbert Uuyuni Parliamentary Clerk, National Council
Namibia	Ms. Juliet Mupurua Deputy-Secretary, National Council
Namibia	Ms. Lydia Kandetu Secretary, National Assembly
Namibia	Ms. Elisabeth De Wee Co-Secretary, National Assembly
New Zealand	Right Honourable Mr. David Carter Member of Parliament, House of Representatives
Pakistan	Mr. Syed Naveed Qamar Member of Parliament, National Assembly
Pakistan	Mr. Amjed Pervez Malik Secretary General, Senate
Solomon Islands	Mr. Clezy Rore Clerk, National Parliament
Tanzania	Mr. Peter Serukamba Member of Parliament
Timor-Leste	Mr. Mateus Belo Secretary General
Timor-Leste	Mr. Bruno de Lencastre Chief Technical Advisor
United Kingdom	Mr. Liam Laurence Smyth Clerk of Legislation, House of Commons
Zimbabwe	Mr. Kennedy Chokuda Clerk
Zimbabwe	Mr. Ndamuka Marimo Director, Clerk's Office

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Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie	Ms. Mireille Eza Director, Noria Programme
Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)	Mr. Hans Born Assistant Director, Head of Policy and Research Division

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IPU	Mr. Martin Chungong Secretary General
IPU	Ms. Norah Babic Manager Technical Cooperation Programme
IPU	Mr. Jonathan Lang Project Officer, Technical Cooperation Programme
IPU	Ms. Isabel Obadiaru SDG Consultant, International Development Programme
National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)	Ms. Frieda Arenos Senior Programme Officer
Parliamentary Expert	Mr. John Patterson Parliamentary Expert
Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC)	Mr. Dararith Kim-Yeat Executive Director, Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia