UNDP

Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening II

Mid-term Evaluation Report

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Executive summary

Introduction

The evaluators have conducted an extensive, independent evaluation of the GPPS II programme. National pilot projects were visited in all the countries where GPPS is operating, intensive briefings were held with the key program staff both in New York headquarters and Brussels, as well as in the field, and the project documentation and written products were reviewed.

Despite its limited budget (€6,000,000 over four years), the programme has developed and implemented innovative parliamentary development projects at the national, regional, and global levels. These outcomes compare favourably with other democratic development programs disposing of larger operational budgets. The keys to success are *innovative ideas, dedicated staff, and the supportive collaboration of the major programme donor*.

Like other multi-component programmes, some elements stand out as exceptional successes, while others have faced challenges. We have provided our honest assessment of both strengths and weaknesses. *Overall, we judge GPPS II as a considerable success that warrants continuation in a new phase.*

The Executive Summary contains a very brief digest of the overall evaluation. Each chapter of this document, covering the national, regional, and global activities, contains a more detailed summary of that aspect of the evaluation.

A. Overall assessment

- The Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (GPPS) has leveraged relatively limited resources into some major impacts at the country level; in Niger and Benin where the project has been operating for 6 years, substantial strengthening of parliament and deepened democratization is noted. Longer-term intervention is clearly correlated with project effectiveness.

- The regional programmes, particularly in the Arab region, have allowed sensitive issues to be addressed and helped to build networks of reform-minded parliamentarians.

- The transversal theme of supporting strengthening of the role of women parliamentarians at all the intervention levels of GPPS has been applied systematically and generated positive results at the national, regional, and global levels.

- The global initiatives have fostered innovative approaches to tackle fundamental problems of parliamentary development, including institutionalization of parliamentary institutions in post-conflict societies, encouragement of greater women's involvement, and establishment of benchmarks for effective democratic parliaments.

- The programme's three activity levels (global, regional and country-level) have been effectively integrated in several project aspects; particularly in the parliaments and conflict prevention and recovery project, and in building links

with developed country parliaments such as in Belgium and France. GPPS I and II have provided significant opportunities for intraregional South-South sharing of expertise and learning. This has been a success and the evaluators recommend continuation and expansion of both intra- and inter- regional South-South sharing of experience.

B. Implementation strategies

- The programme's staff leadership has been very strong since its inception in GPPS I. Visionary and committed leaders are the cornerstone of the programme's success

- The programme's 'thin', 'virtual' organizational structure allows flexibility, rapid response to emergent issues, and appropriate risk-taking. This is a cutting edge approach to the organization of a global governance programme

- GPPS's regional approach allows controversial issues to be addressed in relatively sensitive environments, and supports the building of networks of reform-minded parliamentarians who may act as a nucleus to bring forward democratic reforms both during and after the end of the programme

- Norm-setting global initiatives in areas of conflict prevention and reduction, and overall democratic functioning, represent a contemporary approach to transnational democracy-building.

C. *Programme highlights*

National Pilots

- *Algeria*:
  - Ø Hosting major international parliamentary forums, increasing ties between Algerian and other democratizing Arab-region parliaments
  - Ø The project is working with both chambers of parliament, a good example for other parliamentary development projects
  - Ø New Algerian parliamentary training centre provides good potential for sustainability of project activities.

- *Benin*:
  - Ø Integration of a GPPS-launched budget analysis unit into the administrative structure of parliament, demonstrating project sustainability
  - Ø Involvement of civil society in pre-budget discussions, innovative for a developing democracy
  - Ø Parliamentary field visits focusing on issues affecting women and children.

- *Lebanon*:
  - ∅ Work on implementation of the Taef Accord
  - ∅ Parliament taking the lead in developing a national human rights strategy
  - ∅ Parliament is a place for informal dialogue during political crisis

- *Morocco*:
  - ∅ Implementation of comprehensive human resources and communications development plans including overhaul of the parliamentary administration

- *Niger*:
  - ∅ Remarkable improvement in parliament's overall capacity since GPPS I, demonstrating impact of longer-term development partnership
  - ∅ Expanded parliamentary oversight of executive driven by parliament, complemented with technical capacity building support from GPPS
  - ∅ New women parliamentarians have been provided extensive support, group of women MPs have assumed leadership positions in commissions and parliamentary groups, and intervened effectively in policy debates

- *Arab Region*:
  - ∅ Building of knowledge base on parliamentary development in Arabic language, including www.arabparliaments.org
  - ∅ Regional parliamentarian working groups to tackle difficult oversight issues such as the security sector
  - ∅ Support to development of regional parliamentarians' anti-corruption group

- *West Africa*:
  - ∅ Regional anti-corruption conference highlighting parliaments' role in ratifying and implementing international anti-corruption conventions
  - ∅ Regional capacity-building and experience sharing with women parliamentarians
  - ∅ Initiative to address needs of non-schooled deputies

- *Global initiatives*:
  - ∅ Conflict recovery initiative promoting international commitment to post-conflict parliamentary institution-building.
  - ∅ Initiative on standards for democratic parliaments aiming to build global consensus on need for strong, democratic parliaments.

- *Transversal initiatives – Gender*
  - ∅ GPPS has consistently emphasized gender mainstreaming in its national, regional, and global activities. This has generated positive results across the program. Apart from the specifically-targeted **iKnow Politics** project, some key field activities in this area include:
    - o Organization in **Algeria** of an international colloquium of women and men parliamentarians from Arab and Mediterranean countries, on women's political participation
    - o Parliamentary field visits in **Benin** that focused on gaps in legislation covering protection of women and children
    - o Organization of comprehensive programme of capacity-building and exchanges for the first large group of female deputies ever elected in **Niger**
    - o The **Parliament and Conflict Reduction** global project paid special attention to the gendered aspects of conflicts and ways to ensure parliaments properly address women's needs in conflict recovery.

D. Focus areas for future work (see section 10.2)

- *The programme is operating smoothly and is ready to consider programme enlargement. The following specific elements are recommended for consideration*
  - ∅ Multi-level: sponsor national pilot tests of global parliamentary development strategies, particularly to build on the guidelines for parliamentary development in post-conflict situations
  - ∅ In order to facilitate rapid response to emerging needs for parliamentary development, particularly in post-conflict situation, a Rapid Response Fund should be established within GPPS, with clear criteria for use and a streamlined approval process involving the Fund donor(s)
  - ∅ For current national pilots, further GPPS support should where possible be part of national parliament plans for strategic, long-term institutional development
  - ∅ In selection of possible expansion countries, regional and thematic coherence should be maintained where possible
  - ∅ Regional programming: the Arab region working group on democratic control of security sector should be used as a model, the working group concept should be extended to the West African region. Synergies should be expanded with national pilots, extending intra-regional learning opportunities
  - ∅ Global programming: continue and deepen GPPS work on norms/guidelines for democratic parliaments; explore better strategies for parliamentary involvement in MDGs and poverty reduction, including for example

increased focus on parliamentary engagement in economic governance and budget review and control.

Introduction

A. GPPS Background

The Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening is the flagship UNDP programme on parliamentary development. It is based on the principle that healthy democracy requires capable and effective parliaments. To date, direct GPPS programming in phases one and two has been supported 100% financially by the Kingdom of Belgium, although most project elements within GPPS also leverage other national and international funding on a case-by-case basis.

The GPPS I programme began in 1999, supporting pilot parliamentary strengthening projects in 12 countries, as well as regional and global parliamentary development initiatives. The GPPS I evaluation confirmed the value of this approach and recommended a second 4-year phase concentrating on a smaller group of countries and coordinated regional activities.

The GPPS II programme was rolled out in 2004, and runs for four years until early 2008. Core funding of €6 million is provided by Belgium. GPPS II delivers an integrated national, regional and global approach to parliamentary strengthening. GPPS II leverages existing UNDP and other resources at all three levels of operation. The programme emphasizes country ownership, a thin management structure, and innovative strategies.

Initially national pilots were launched in 4 countries (Niger, Benin, Algeria, Morocco). In 2005, Lebanon was added as the fifth country pilot. Regional programmes are delivered in West Africa and the Arab Region. Strategic direction for the GPPS programme is provided by the Parliamentary Development Policy Adviser in the Democratic Governance Group of the Bureau for Development Policy in UNDP Headquarters and in close collaboration with the GPPS Programme Manager, who is based in the UNDP office in Brussels. The latter also ensures day-to-day GPPS management. Financial and other administrative support is provided by UNOPS.

B. GPPS II Evaluation Background

The evaluators were selected and contracted in September and October 2006. The evaluation began in late September 2006 with documentation review, and an initial briefing meeting in Brussels on October 2, 2006. Evaluation missions were conducted to Benin from October 25 to October 30 2006, to Niger from October 30 to November 4 2006, to Morocco from November 29 to December 4 2006, and to Algeria from December 18 to December 22 2006. The mission to Lebanon, originally scheduled for December 2006, was conducted between January 8 to January 12 2007 because of the security situation. Information-gathering was also conducted through the mission to Brussels noted above, a mission to New York between December 10 and 12 2006, and through telephone interviews. An initial presentation on evaluation findings was made in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme Executive Board meeting on January 25, 2007.

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Section One

Country reports

1. Algeria

Summary

Country Background

- Algeria has a formal semi-presidential system with a bicameral parliament

- Algeria's long and difficult struggle for independence continues to frame the country's democratic development; there is a high level of national pride that must be acknowledged in mounting institutional development projects

- Algeria has experimented with difference governance forms with varying results. Initial democratization efforts in the early 1990's were halted. By 1996 cautious democratization was restarted

- Algeria has one of the freer written presses in the region

- Parliamentary elections were held May 30 2002, they are next scheduled for May 2007.

GPPS Background

- UNDP support to the Algerian parliament has been continuing since 2000

- The first, non-GPPS parliamentary development project supported development of constituency offices in this large, diverse country

- Since 2005 the GPPS II programme has been supporting institutional strengthening in both houses

- The primary modality for support has been through organization of conferences, both national and regional, on parliamentary development themes

- A significant number of staff exchanges have been organized with Western democratic parliaments

Evaluation summary

- The project implementation strategy was unique in comparison with other pilots; in particular, the project's success in working with both chambers of parliament was an exceptional achievement, and should be used as a model for other projects

- The administration's creation of a legislative training centre within the parliament is an interesting and positive step

- The transfer of responsibility for project direction to parliament from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs demonstrates the growing maturity of the institution

- There are some differences between the two assemblies on future directions; the upper house emphasizes communications (development of a parliamentary TV station), while the lower house emphasizes developing its in-house training facility

- Parliament is well-organized; the administrative staff team appears to be drivers of institutional change, which may have both positive and problematic features.

Comments and recommendations

- The project has achieved strong buy-in and its coordination on both parliament and UNDP sides has been exemplary

- Further emphasis should be placed on working directly with parliamentarians, relative to the parliamentary administration

- Administrative staff could provide technical assistance to other Arab and African parliaments

- Informal exchanges of parliamentarians with other African and Arab parliaments in transition countries can provide helpful comparison points and examples

- Further activities can be built on strengthening links between parliament and a fledgling parliamentary press gallery.

Detailed assessment

1.1. Political Context

The GPPS II project in Algeria takes place within a specific context of transition and democratic consolidation. Initial steps towards multiparty democracy in the late 1980's engendered severe social disagreements regarding the nature of the Algerian state, culminating in violent civil strife and the cancellation of elections planned for 1991. Power was retained by military authorities until the political and social situation stabilized and a cautious process of political reform was restarted. In the constitutional revision of 23 February 1996 a number of important reforms were introduced, notably the creation of a bicameral parliament. Drawing from the earlier political experience, the 1996 revision outlawed political parties created on a religious basis, as well as parties with regionalist, linguistic, racial, or corporatist platforms. The revision opened the way for the elections of 1999 which were a key step in the progressive return to constitutional normalisation, reinforced by the politics of national reconciliation adopted by the new authorities. With the elections of 2004, and the continuation of these reconciliation policies, Algeria entered in a phase of consolidation of the peace process and of its democratic system. Given this dynamic, it is anticipated that new perspectives of democratisation are possible in which parliament can play an important role.

The National Popular Assembly (APN or Assembly) is composed of deputies elected by direct universal suffrage, the National Council (CdN) which plays the role of senate, is made up two-thirds by senators elected indirectly from wilayas and commune councils, and one-third nominated by the President of the Republic from leading figures in the scientific, cultural, professional, economic, and social fields. Both chambers have

legislative responsibilities and the power of government oversight, but only the Assembly has the right to initiate laws, as well as the right to amend legislation proposed by the government. In order to adopt laws the senate requires a three-quarter majority whereas the APN requires only a simple majority. Bills can only be adopted into law if they are approved by both chambers of parliament. The functioning of the two chambers is indicative of the positive evolution of the constitutional system in Algeria. Nevertheless, despite the advances noted, Algerian democracy remains fragile and still marked by the country's recent history, thus justifying support to continuing democratic development through programmes such as GPPS.

1.2. <u>Origins and objectives of the project</u>

The GPPS II programme of support to the Algerian parliament is included within the United Nations cooperation programmes 2002-2006 and 2007 – 2011 for Algeria (UNDAF), and the second UNDP-Algeria Country Cooperation Programme (CCP). It extends the cooperation between the Algerian parliament and UNDP that began with a somewhat different non-GPPS programme of support that extended from 2002 – 2005.

The earlier programme concentrated primarily on the strengthening of parliamentary democracy through improvements in relations between the parliament and the citizenry through support to the creation of constituency offices. The activities conducted in the framework of the earlier support had permitted deputies, among other things, to better engage in participative democracy and to become closer to their constituents. Parliamentary assistants were engaged who were charged both with assisting deputies in their preparation for parliamentary debates (for example through the preparation of basic research) as well as performing secretarial functions including receiving visitors. Despite the interesting focus of the earlier project, financial constraints meant that it was only able to reach a minority of deputies.

The Algeria GPPS II programme has as its overall objective to contribute to strengthening of governance and the consolidation of a constitutional democracy. In this regard, it should be noted that although the stabilisation of Algerian institutions has seen substantial progress, it is a general perspective, of the Executive as well as the majority and opposition parliamentary groups, that much remains to be achieved. Notably, parliament and parliamentarians have ambitions to play a more active role in representing their electorate, in their legislative functions, and in governmental oversight. Equally, it is hoped that substantial progress can be achieved through introducing the gender perspective in project activities. GPPS II Algeria objectives thus include:

- Improve Parliament's access to information as well as improve the circulation of information within Parliament

- Consolidate the role of parliamentary oversight and Parliament's relations with society

- Strengthen Parliament's legislative capacities

- Integrate the gender dimension as a transversal theme in the different activities of the Algerian parliament

The new project was formulated at the end of 2004. However as a result of some turnover in the UNDP office during 2005, and because the project document was only signed by the Algerian parliament in 2005, the project actually began its activities in the autumn of 2005. In common with other GPPS national pilots, a steering committee charged with project direction was put in place. According to the project document the steering committee included representation from Parliament, the Ministry for Relations with Parliament (MRP), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and UNDP. In practice the two chambers are represented by two coordinators (the director of legislative affairs of the senate, and the diplomatic advisor of the President of the Assembly), as well as the UNDP programme officer. It is also anticipated that a national project director (NPD) would be appointed to oversee the project, who would be assisted by a project coordinator and assistant, all from parliament. These latter positions have not been implemented. In practice the UNDP programme officer is the actual project coordinator. The project is implemented through UNDP national execution (NEX).

1.3. **Project partners**

The project collaborated with a number of different partners, particularly in the organization of study missions and exchanges. These partners have included the Belgian Parliament, the French National Assembly and Senate, and the Quebec National Assembly. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is identified as a key partner in the project document, responsible for seeking additional project support. IPU has participated in several activities including the co-organization of the forum of women parliamentarians, and further collaboration is anticipated.

1.4. **Principal activities**

The overall completion rate of planned activities is high. The project activities can be grouped into three categories: study and training days, research studies and teaching materials, meetings and study missions and exchanges. The activities are described below according to the relevant strategic objective, as well as the state of execution:

1.4.1. *Parliamentary oversight and relations with the citizenry are consolidated*

Activities completed

- Completion of a study on Parliament and civil society in Algeria. The document, in Arabic, is in the process of being translated into French

- Organization of a study workshop on the theme, "Parliament and civil society", including parliamentarians, representatives of NGOs, union representatives, and media

- Organization of a study day on the theme "Parliamentary communication and the relationship between parliament and the media", involving parliamentarians, representatives of national and international media,

managers of the communications services of both chambers of parliament, and the Ministry for relations with parliament

- Organization of a study and training workshop on analysis and oversight of the national budget by parliament, for members of the finance, budget, and economic affairs commissions of the two chambers, as well as legislative staff working with these commissions. This session permitted participants to familiarise themselves with the preparation of the budget. Themes addressed included the relationship between public policies and fiscal probity, the development of the budget law, the role of government in the legislative process, local finance, how to target national priorities within the budget, parliamentary budget oversight, examination and analysis of the budget law, parliamentary methods of budget analysis and oversight, transparency and responsibility in the budget process, opening the budget process to the public and civil society, and the capacities parliament needs in order to play its full role in the budgetary process.

- Training session for parliamentarians on communication techniques with the media.

Activities underway or awaiting commencement

- Development of a guide on budget oversight and on legislative drafting in the Algerian context. This document is being finalized by Assembly staff

- Creation of work groups on means to improve the profile of parliament and parliamentarians, including regional and international exchanges

- Creation of work groups including parliamentarians, staff, media, civil society, and the public on parliament and its roles.

1.4.2. The gender dimension is widely integrated into the activities of the Algerian parliament

Activities completed

- Organization of an international colloquium including female and male parliamentarians from the National Assembly and the National Council, as well as female parliamentarians from the Arab region and the Mediterranean region around the theme of the participation of women in public and political life. Themes addressed included among others international initiatives and regional and global tendencies regarding the situation of women, including the current state of affairs regionally and globally regarding women in political life. In addition, the colloquium included a brief review of the Convention on the Elimination of all Types of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing platform, and the Millennium Development Goals, the context and advances in Algeria regarding the participation of women in public life, and the mechanisms to promote the participation of women in politics

- The creation of a network of Algerian women parliamentarians

Activities underway or awaiting commencement

- Study on the question of the representation of women in parliament and the role of political parties

- Organization of study missions and exchanges for parliamentarians with parliaments in other countries that have integrated the gender dimension into their work

- Seminars and national and international meetings on the gender perspective in legislation

1.4.3. Strengthening of Parliament's legislative capacities

Activities completed

- Organization of a training session on the analysis of proposed legislation and techniques for their elaboration. This session was an opportunity for parliamentarians and parliamentary personnel to inform themselves on the role of legislative personnel, as well as to learn techniques of report production and of legal drafting, methods to ensure the effective application of laws, the conception and evaluation of the contents of a legal proposition, the legislative process in a bicameral situation, how to identify the social problems that a bill seeks to resolve, and the role of commissions

- Organization of study missions and exchanges with Francophone parliamentary institutions, notably the French, Belgian, and several Arab region parliaments. The themes addressed during these missions are varied, addressing among other subjects parliamentary work (debate reporting, committee work, etc.), international and inter-parliamentary relations, and translation of legal and parliamentary terminology

- Development of a guide on legal drafting, translated into Arabic by UNDP and distributed to each deputy and senator

Activities underway or awaiting commencement

- Execute a plan for the strengthening of the human resources capacities of the parliamentary administration and of the Ministry for Relations with Parliament. Partially realized through study missions for parliamentary staff

1.4.4. Strengthening Parliament's access to information and information tools

Activities completed

- Organization of a study day on the virtual library addressing the analysis and study of the technical needs and procedures to follow in putting in place a 'virtual library' as a means to modernize the research tools available to the legislature. Other practices and experiences in this field were examined. This

session included parliamentarians, information technology staff, and the parliamentary library staff

- Organization of study missions and exchanges to the French National Assembly for the staff of the press and communications section of the APN, on the theme of developing communications plans, and how best to exchange and share information with the media

- Organizations of study missions and exchanges with the French Senate for staff of the National Council on themes of parliamentary research, technical support to commissions, and the preparation and distribution of the official Hansard (report of proceedings)

Activities underway or awaiting commencement

- Organize meetings with key officials in the main ministries and public administrations, notably to secure information for parliamentarians on the structures, functioning and missions of different government departments

- Strengthen the content and accessibility of the internet and intranet sites of the parliament, as well as support to internal publications of the parliament

It should be noted that the project document's listing of activities is fairly general, leaving flexibility in activity execution. Factors influencing the carrying out of activities include the current preoccupations of parliament, questions of timing, the pertinence of activities, and the overall situation in the country, notably forthcoming elections and the potential for constitutional changes.

1.5. <u>General Assessment of Project Results</u>

The overall impression of the project is very positive. The UNDP programme officer, who in effect plays the coordination role, enjoys excellent rapport with the parliament, and notably with the key personnel in the two chambers. This in essence is the foundation for a successful project. The proportion of planned activities that have been carried out is very high. The leading UNDP officials are closely involved in the project activities, and indicate that they view the project as an important element in achieving the overall objective of consolidating democracy and constitutional order. It is important that this level of involvement from UNDP should be maintained. At the same time the fact that the project is not physically located within the parliamentary precinct does reduce the capacities of the project to respond immediately to emergent needs. It would be preferable to move towards the physical location of the project within the parliamentary precinct as envisaged in the project document. This would require, however, discussions with the parliamentary leadership through the project steering committee.

One of the weaknesses of the Algerian parliament is the circulation of information both internally and externally. At the same time both chambers possess modern communications technology, modern libraries with good holdings, and internet connectivity. The parliament has a good website with much useful information available

to the public. The maximum utilization of these tools will depend on further training of personnel and expert assistance.

The project for the creation of the virtual library is underway in the National Council. As noted in the previous section, the virtual library was the subject of a study day organized for both chambers. This project will permit parliament to access information from throughout the world, as well as assisting the work of the parliamentary researchers and documentalists. The evaluators support the pursuit of this initiative.

The staff support and office space available to parliamentarians is limited. Only parliamentary officials such as the President, the vice-presidents, and commission chairs have offices and assistants. Despite the existence of small pool of assistants for the remainder of the deputies and senators, secretarial and research support is limited. It will be important to increase the number of parliamentary assistants and to strengthen their capacities in the specific areas of their work.

The Archives are well maintained, including in the Senate, despite the youth of the institution. Nevertheless parliament envisages the introduction of a system of electronic archiving. This is a worthwhile objective but lies outside GPPS funding priorities. The Council is also planning modernization of its interpretation system.

The project activities are well covered by the media, constituting an indispensable benefit to both parliament and UNDP/GPPS in raising visibility, and most importantly as an avenue for civic education on the role of parliament and in making citizens aware of democratic developments. All the study and training days have been the subject of articles in both the public and private media.

Legislative elections are planned for 2007. In this perspective and in order to permit a greater participation of women in these elections it would be desirable to organize a second, more targeted forum on gender issues, which would build on the results of the first forum. The best timing for such a forum would be during the period when parties are selecting their candidate lists for the elections.

Following the study days on civil society and parliament, a number of recommendations were formulated by the participants, notably the widening of the internal rules of the two chambers to permit the permanent commissions to involve civil society organizations as expert witnesses in their deliberations. Following up on this proposition could be another avenue for GPPS involvement. In addition, it would be desirable to support further civil society participation in the thematic parliamentary study days.

The support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is required in order to permit the involvement of external resource people, an approval process that has sometimes caused delays. The MFA has stepped back from the project in recent months and this may no longer present as great a difficulty, though it would be preferable that eventually the relationship between MFA and the project should be formally clarified.

1.5.1. Methodology

The methodologies used in the project are appropriate in meeting the objectives that have been set. The keystone of the methodology is the establishment of a firm partnership between the parliament and UNDP enabling the establishment of the project, which in turn has maintained close collaboration with parliament, ensuring in particular that the project meets the strategic objectives of parliament. The activities carried out annually are defined and established on the basis of the agreement of the steering committee, including the representatives of both chambers, as well as UNDP. The project initiatives have permitted a large number of people to benefit from the project, with activities conducted locally wherever possible. The approach that is utilized depends on training and the provision of external expertise as key methods to achieve the goals that have been established. Study missions and exchanges have also been used where appropriate as a method for transferring expertise. However, as in other national pilots, the evaluators recommend individualized training missions focusing on building technical expertise, rather than large group, general training missions where technical expertise is less likely to be transferred. The organization of colloquiums with the officials of relevant ministries and public organizations, as well as the creation of thematic work groups all constitute useful approaches.

The workshops have been held in the presence of parliament's leaders, including the presidents of both houses. They are often led by renowned experts including figures from the academic, professional, and political worlds, including a number of former ministers and parliamentarians. Documentation for the project activities has been strong. Technical organization of events has also been strong.

The methodology used in sessions links the theoretical and practical. Thus, for example, during the training on the development and drafting of legislation, the participants were organized in two groups for drafting and editing of laws. The training included national and international experts including representatives from Europe and the Arab world such as Lebanon and Egypt, with the opportunity to practice the skills that were being taught, a positive feature.

1.5.2. Impact of the project

The project has had a pronounced impact on parliament. It has created a transformational dynamic encouraging the institution to play its constitutional role. This dynamic is noticeable in the course of training sessions and missions overseas, where parliamentarians have suggested means to improve the quality of parliamentary work. Thus, in the course of the sessions on budget analysis and oversight, the parliamentarian participants formulated the request that they receive more information about the proposed legislation they are considering. Also, they asked the President of the Assembly to ensure that parliamentary commissions receive more funding to enable them to do their work. A proposal was made to establish a parliamentary reform workgroup to examine parliament's prerogatives, and to produce a balance sheet of the strengths and weaknesses

of parliament's work during the four previous years, and to implement reforms in parliamentary procedures before the 2007 legislative elections.

Algeria's circumstances remain complex. As a result the project cannot be measured solely on the basis of criteria that might typically be used for this type of evaluation. It is difficult for quantitative indicators to reflect aspects such as the climate of confidence that the project has fostered permitting a better collaboration between the two chambers and greater opening towards the international arena. The project has opened a space for communication and discussion, both within the parliament and between parliament and the media and civil society.

The project uses questionnaires to evaluate training programmes that are carried out. These show universal assessment that the training has been useful in improving job performance. The steering committee has emphasized the need to more effectively measure project impact. One tool that could be used is to conduct surveys over time with observers of parliamentary life (for example the media, and perhaps engaged civil society representatives) on their perceptions of the parliamentary institution.

1.5.3.   *Project sustainability*

The project supports the Algerian government's objectives of strengthening the country's democratic governance and building a stable constitutional order. In the evaluators' view the project has contributed towards this objective and thus represents a sustainable contribution to good governance. The creation of thematic workgroups that produce documentation and guides for parliamentarians also constitutes a sustaining contribution of the project.

1.5.4. *Success factors*

The project benefits from the support and commitment of the top leaders in both chambers of parliament, including both the political and the administrative leadership of both chambers. The parliamentarians with whom the evaluation team met were also all supportive of the project. Another success factor is linked to the involvement of the key representatives of UNDP-Algeria. Notably, the commitment and competence of the programme officer is acknowledged by all the actors as a major contributing factor in the project's success.

1.5.5. *Administrative and financial management of the project*

The project is evidently well-managed, in particular because of the strong organizational and administrative skills of the de facto project coordinator. Nevertheless the institutional structure of the project as envisaged in the project document is not yet fully functional. Initially, difficulties in coordination between the project's main partners delayed the commencement of activities. The project has therefore placed considerable emphasis on strengthening the relationships between the project partners, with particular emphasis on building stronger working relationships and collaborations between the two chambers.

Initially, the national direction of the project was held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a situation which was not entirely acceptable to the two chambers. In August 2006 the Ministry effectively withdrew from this role and the national direction now rests in practice with the two chambers. This development reflects a maturing capacity of the parliament to chart its own institutional development without the oversight of the executive branch.

The Ministry for Relations with Parliament is also included within the project document as a member of the project steering committee, but has not in fact assumed this function. Nevertheless, ministry staff have participated in project activities, though activities have not been directly geared to the ministry as suggested in the project document, and desired by the ministry. It will be desirable for a future phase of GPPS to iron out the differences of understanding regarding the roles of the two chambers and particularly of the two relevant ministries, thus assisting efficient project planning and oversight.

The UNDP country office would prefer that an actual project coordinator be recruited, preferably someone qualified in the domain of parliamentary development and speaking at the same time English, French, and Arabic. However adequate funds would need to be put at the project's disposition, presumably by GPPS. The parliamentary representatives with whom the evaluators met stated their preference for someone to be recruited/seconded from within the parliamentary institution. There may be differences of opinion between the three partners (Parliament, UNDP Algeria, GPPS) on this question.

The steering committee does not presently include any parliamentarians. It would be desirable for the committee to be expanded to include parliamentarians, which would enable them to define the themes and activities that would be of particular benefit to them. In general there is a need for greater ownership of the project on the part of parliamentarians vis-à-vis the parliamentary administration.

1.6. Recommendations

i. The project is supported by all the key actors in the Algerian parliament. The parliament is proud of its achievements including particularly the higher profile it has achieved within Algeria and in the regional parliamentary community through the national and international activities supported by the GPPS programme. This in turn has the impact of increasing the confidence of the institution to play its constitutional role and thus strengthen the democratic transition in Algeria. The evaluators recommend that the project continue through 2007 and to an anticipated new GPPS III programme.

ii. An international forum of woman parliamentarians was organized through the project which raised the awareness of the Algerian parliament of contemporary international practice in encouraging women's involvement in politics. At the conclusion of the forum various propositions for future action were formulated including action to increase women's political participation in rural areas, development of a national strategy on women's participation, and training for parliamentarians on strategies to combat discrimination. The

forum created a committee to pursue these recommendations. The evaluators recommend that this activity be pursued in 2007 and beyond

iii. There is a strong desire within parliament, particularly on the part of the senate, to create a parliamentary television channel. The evaluators believe that such a channel would be a useful tool to bring democratic debate to the population and thus increase awareness of parliament. The evaluators understand that GPPS is not in a position to support major capital investment, but it could have an important role to play especially in supporting training exchanges with parliaments that have parliamentary networks, and in supporting the establishment of the necessary organizational structures to ensure that the network functions professionally and impartially, and to ensure that it supports increased public information about parliament without increasing political polarization.

iv. Parliamentarians and staff appreciated the opportunity to participate in missions and exchanges to examine parliamentary practices elsewhere. The evaluators believe that this practice encourages the adoption of international best practices. There is also room for Algerian parliamentarians to exchange with other African parliaments, particularly in domains such as the library and information technology where Algeria is advanced in comparison with many parliaments on the continent. The evaluators recommend that international exchanges, both outbound and inbound, continue in the remainder of GPPS and an anticipated GPPS III, but that these exchanges should be smaller, and focused on specific thematic areas and building professional and technical capacities.

v. Previous experience suggests that there will be a substantial turnover of deputies and senators during the elections of 2007. The evaluators recommend GPPS support to an orientation programme for these new parliamentarians.

vi. During several GPPS sessions there have been proposals to constitute working groups to continue work on the relevant seminar topic, including the seminar on women parliamentarians mentioned above. In general the evaluators recommend that this type of initiative be supported by GPPS. The project would be strengthened by a greater involvement of deputies as well as programmed follow-up of seminar activities.

vii. The success of the project in working with the parliamentary administration could be extended to include on a more consistent basis the parliamentarians themselves. As noted earlier in the evaluation, it would be desirable for parliamentarians themselves to be represented in the project steering committee, and this is indeed the normal practice in parliamentary development projects.

viii. The project should explore with the two chambers the potential for strengthening committee work, and the parliamentary groups. One example of

possible activity would be a mission of the parliamentary group leaders from all tendencies to examine the work of parliamentary groups in other multi-party democracies.

ix.   The project has made a good start in its work with the media. This should be continued. One opportunity to explore is the potential for supporting the development of a parliamentary press corps, whereby members of the media who specialize in parliamentary coverage would have the opportunity to become accredited and to receive regular training on parliamentary press coverage issues. In other countries undergoing democratic transition, exchanges with other parliamentary press associations have been organized to mutual benefit.

2. Benin

<u>Summary</u>

Country Background

- Benin was one of the first of the 'new wave' of African countries to adopt democracy beginning in the late 1980's

- The country has successfully navigated several democratic transfers of power

- Parliament has at times played a key democratic role but remains somewhat distant from popular concerns

- The country has a highly fractured and ideologically undeveloped political party system

- Benin's political system continues to be marked by regional and ethnic cleavages

- The last parliamentary elections were held on March 25 2003, with the next scheduled for March 23 2007

Programme summary

- The GPPS I project focused on strengthening economic oversight

- A successful budgetary analysis unit was established through GPPS and integrated into parliamentary administration

- GPPS II focuses on strengthening the representative and legislative functions of parliament

- UNDP Benin country office provides major financial and technical support to the project

- The parliament project coordinator is fully funded by GPPS and funding for project activities is shared between GPPS and the UNDP country office

Evaluation summary

- The project has strong institutional buy-in, demonstrated through UNACEB's incorporation into the parliamentary structure

- There have been substantial improvements in quantitative indicators such as legislative production, interpellations of ministers, and opportunities for citizen participation (see 2.5.2)

- Numerous activities on improved representation have been conducted; a major goal is to implement a National Assembly radio station

- The project has helped parliament to pilot consultation with civil society on the proposed national budget; this is an unusual step in a parliament within a developing democracy

- GPPS has sponsored parliamentarian field visits that have highlighted the need to improve government services to girls and women; support for affirmative action in constitutional reform

- There are advanced plans to implement upgraded technical support on legislation

Comments and recommendations

- Benin's parliament is a beacon in the region; the country is a good location to pilot more advanced parliamentary development techniques

- Benin's parliamentarians and staff should be used more in South-South parliamentary development activities

- Future programming should focus on a smaller number of intensive, quality activities

- It would be preferable for the project coordinating staff to be housed in the parliamentary precinct rather than in the UNDP office

- Efforts should be made to build a broader donor partnership to support the deepening of democratic development in Benin, which is a country with very limited internal resources, but that has made great democratic advances. Parliament still lacks both adequate premises and sufficient operating resources, particularly to carry out oversight and perform representation. The international community should be enlisted to help fill these gaps, and thus demonstrate that there is a democratic dividend.

Detailed assessment

2.1. Political Context

The GPPS project in Benin supports the process of democratic renewal in that country, which began in the late 1980's. It is important to note that Benin is a pioneer among African states in the democratization process. Benin, in fact, gave birth to the phenomenon of National Conventions (conférences nationales) which, through ending single-party systems, opened the way to the liberalization of the authoritarian political systems then in place in the majority of African countries. Benin's democratic experiment began formally with the convocation of the National Convention held from 19 to 28 February 1990. The Convention regrouped 521 delegates from different state organs, unions, churches, associations, former chiefs of state, etc. The Convention proceeded to dismiss the political leaders then in place, established a new transitional government, and defined the principles of the future constitution, which would henceforth be based on democratic values and a constitutional order. In doing so, the country broke with the tradition of extra-constitutional government, and of military coups d'états that had regularly punctuated the country's evolution since its independence in 1960.

The country's political evolution opened new possibilities for stability, characterized by the regular organization of free and transparent elections permitting the alternation of power between different political movements, founded upon consensus on the major questions of institutional structure. The constitution adopted on 11 December 1990, which is still in place, introduced a presidential system along with a unicameral parliament with the power of oversight over governmental action.

The elections of 2006 were organized in transparency and with respect for democratic norms, further confirming the relative stability of the country's democratic system. Parliamentary elections are planned for 2007. The remarkable advances in democratic functioning and respect for human rights make Benin an example on the African continent. However, the democratic system should still be considered fragile, having regard to the country's relatively low index for human development, and unmet expectations for economic development as well as a continuing tendency for the country's political divisions to be based on regional and ethnic factors. The support for Benin's National Assembly through GPPS I and GPPS II can therefore be justified on the grounds of supporting the continued implantation of democratic norms and practices in a country that remains in transition. The strategic importance of Benin as an example to other Francophone African countries, many of whom have less solid democratic foundations, also argues for continuing international support.

2.2. **Project origins**

The first phase of the collaboration between the National Assembly of Benin and UNDP began with the signing of a protocol of agreement on 18 January 2001, giving birth to the GPPS I project. This agreement followed a diagnostic study supported by UNDP-Benin and which assessed the obstacles facing parliament in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities. One of the key points covered by the study addressed the weaknesses of parliament in carrying out its constitutionally-mandated oversight function, including the analysis and evaluation of public expenses. The results of the diagnostic study led Parliament and UNDP to formulate and implement a project involving the established of a specialized unit charged with analyzing the state budget (UNACEB). This first GPPS-I supported project focused on two main objectives:

A. Reinforcement of the capacities of the National Assembly in the domains of analysis, oversight, and evaluation of the national budget

B. Support deputies in their communications with citizens around budgetary questions and parliament's role in oversight of the national budget.

The activities conducted during GPPS I through the creation of UNACEB greatly assisted the National Assembly in strengthening its budgetary analysis capacities. Nevertheless, despite these advances and the legitimacy that UNACEB's work achieved at the Assembly (and which led the Assembly to absorb UNACEB's functions into the structure of the institution), the Assembly continues to suffer from a number of institutional

weaknesses that hamper its ability to fully realize its constitutional potential. In this regard, the principal problems that have been identified were:

- Ø An insufficient understanding by parliamentarians of the fundamental texts of the Beninois democratic system
- Ø Weak capacity on the part of deputies to propose laws and to make amendments to legislation
- Ø Communications weaknesses
- Ø Low representation of women in parliament (7.2%)
- Ø Limits in parliament's power to oversee government actions
- Ø Lack of human and material resources
- Ø Need to strengthen capacity to analyze and assess public policy
- Ø Need to strengthen capacity to understand processes of sub-regional and regional integration and to become more involved in the developing international networks

The GPPS II project in Benin is founded from this analysis. GPPS II is built on the successful foundations of GPPS I, with the intention of maintaining the positive outcomes of the previous project while looking to deepen parliament's strengths in this and other areas. GPPS II is built around five strategic objectives:

- *A.* Strengthen the National Assembly in matters of legislation and oversight of executive actions
- *B.* Strengthen parliament's representative and communications capacities with a view to strengthening its image among the public
- *C.* Support the adoption of new legal initiatives to support the improved status of women in society and the protection of children
- *D.* Support a better understanding on the part of parliamentarians regarding the Millennium Development Goals and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
- *E.* Support the networking of all the structures of the National Assembly.

The project's management structure includes a steering committee, a project director, and a project officer. The steering committee is responsible for overall oversight of the project and its roles include helping to resolve any impediments to the project's successful operation, and to provide the project the necessary support and guidance. The steering committee is responsible for setting the major project orientations, discussing and approving the continuing workplan, and making changes in the project direction as necessary. The steering committee is made up of the UNDP Resident Representative or designate, a resident representative of the Belgian international development ministry in Benin, a representative of the governance NEX group, a representative of CAPAN[1], a representative of UNACEB, a female deputy, and the presidents of four Assembly commissions, as well as the administrative secretary of the National Assembly. Chaired by a parliamentarian, the steering committee meets twice per year to define the annual workplan and to assess the current state of advancement of the project. Between

committee meetings, the national project director, who is the Secretary General - Administrative of Parliament, is responsible for overall project direction. The project officer is a member of the parliamentary administration who plays a liaison role between the project director and the other parliamentary cadres and who helps the national project director in carrying out his project responsibilities. The UNDP programme officer plays a key role in the project in conceiving, organizing, and carrying out project activities and is involved in all aspects of the project. He acts, de facto, as the project coordinator. This role has the advantage of reinforcing the relationship between the project and UNDP but there is also the risk that the UNDP programme officer will be overburdened with responsibilities both relating to the project and to UNDP. The project is located in the National Assembly precinct, as part of the administrative secretariat, although the programme officer is located in the UNDP office in Cotonou, some 30 kilometers from the parliament building in Porto Novo.

2.3. Partnerships

The project acts in concert with several institutions of the UN system, particularly including UNICEF and the UNFPA. In addition, the project works from time to time with other development partners that are working with parliament, including the African Development Bank (ADB), USAID, and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). The project plays a significant role in the coordination of the contributions of other partners.

2.4. Principal Activities

The activity execution rate is very high; above 90% over the past two years. Activities can be divided into four categories, including training, public consultations, studies and research, and missions organized for deputies. Training has included both parliamentarians and administrative staff, as well as parliamentary journalists. The activities are presented below according to the strategic objectives of the project:

2.4.1. Strengthening the capacities of the National Assembly in the domain of governmental oversight

- Organization of training sessions for deputies on programme budgeting

- Training of parliamentarians, UNACEB staff, and staff of the parliamentary administration on strategic planning techniques

- Training of parliamentarians, UNACEB staff, and staff of the parliamentary administration on gender budgeting

- Training of parliamentarians, UNACEB staff, and staff of the parliamentary administration on contemporary fiscal management tools

- Organization of public hearings in open commission meetings with representatives of civil society, on the proposed national budget legislation for 2006

- Study on bottlenecks in public projects

- Development of a guide on oversight of the implementation of the general state budget

- Development of second generation tools on budgetary analysis

- Training session for UNACEB experts on modern fiscal and financial tools

- Training of parliamentarians on biodiversity and the struggle against desertification

2.4.2. Strengthening the capacities of the National Assembly

- Training of parliamentarians on techniques to promote the advancement of women in politics

- Feasibility study on electronic voting in the plenary sessions

- Development of tools to permit the tracking of implementation of international conventions and agreements ratified by Benin

- Training sessions for parliamentarians on time management as well as management of natural resources

- Study on the potential for improving legislative efficiency

- Information and sensitization session on the need to adopt legislation that forbids the trafficking and exploitation of minors

- Information workshop on the creation of a legislative drafting team

- Training of cadres of the legal drafting team on legal drafting techniques

2.4.3. Strengthening the representative and communicative capacities and functioning of the National Assembly in order to improve its public image

- Organization of public consultations on male-female equality and on civil status (état civil)

- Creation of a parliamentary first aid network

- Training of parliamentarians in communications techniques

- Training sessions for parliamentary journalists on parliamentary reportage

- Study on the barriers to women's participation in public life

- Feasibility study on the implementation of an Assembly radio station

- Development of a guide for parliamentary correspondents

- Development of a parliamentary code of ethics

- Support to the formation and development of a network of women political leaders

- Organization of a day of dialogue between deputies and parliamentary staff
- Preparatory study into the Millennium Development Goals

It should be noted that certain activities not originally part of the workplan have also been carried out thanks to the support of GPPS. These include the participation of members of the UNACEB team in the methodological seminar on integration of gender into budgeting (Ouagadougou, 19 – 23 April 2005), a study mission to Ouagadougou for 25 members of the Benin section of the Réseau Africain des Personnels de Parlement (RAPP), and the purchase of a timer to assist in time management in the Assembly plenary sessions.

2.5. General Assessment of project results

The overall project assessment is very positive, both in terms of objectives achieved and the project's administration. The impact of the project is real and perceptible through an improvement in the quality of legislative work, oversight of government action, and the representation function of parliament. The project is well-administered and the project coordinator enjoys excellent relationships with parliament and in particular with parliament's key elected and administrative officials, a necessity for a successful project. The proportion of planned activities carried out is very high, above 90% in 2005 and 2006. In comparison with the other West African GPPS project in Niger, the relationship between the coordinator and UNDP country office is stronger. This is indicated by the greater financial support to the project by the country office through TRAC funding, as well as the much closer intellectual and leadership contribution of the Benin office in the success of this project. This facilitates inter-linkages between the project's work and other UNDP endeavours in governance and other fields. This is a highly desirable circumstance and it is hoped that it will continue. At the same time the fact that the programme officer, effectively the project coordinator, is located outside Porto Novo inevitably makes the project somewhat less responsive to parliament and with a somewhat lower profile in comparison with the Niger project. If possible a future Benin GPPS III project would see the coordinator physically located in the parliamentary precinct. The objective of project sustainability is being achieved through the integration of UNACEB into the administrative structure of the Assembly and thus as part of the core functions of the institution.

The evaluation of the Benin National Assembly does indicate some areas of institutional weakness. These include the practice not to share key posts in the institution between the representatives of the different political tendencies. This area could be one for future project involvement, because 'winner takes all' practices are generally seen as antithetical to deepening of democratic and participatory practices and certainly limit parliament's potential role as a location for the resolution of conflicts.

There is also a tendency for parliament to marginalize deputies not schooled in French, though in comparison with Niger the proportion of such deputies is much lower. Nevertheless, Niger does provide a good example in permitting the use of national

languages in the plenary, and the Niger GPPS project's delivery of some information seminars in national languages may also be a useful practice to follow.

The proportion of women represented in parliament remains disappointingly low, and there is some low-key resistance to the introduction of legal measures to encourage a greater involvement of women in political life. Activities have been organized by the project to encourage further movement in this area, including training sessions, public consultations on women's issues, and studies on women's participation in political life. The key actors encountered by the evaluators supported the principle of introducing a quota to ensure a minimum representation of both sexes in the Assembly, but apparently this is not feasible in time for the next legislative election scheduled for March 2007, as it would require a constitutional amendment, although there is apparently consensus in favour of such an amendment. It would be desirable for the project to pursue activities encouraging women to ensure they are on the electoral registry for the 2007 elections. There is room to continue to widen the project's activities in this area, not only through the strengthening of women's role in parliament, but also in strengthening the parliamentary administration.

The experience of Benin in the area of democratic development is positive and a salutary example for many other countries in the sub-region and beyond. The regional and global reach of the GPPS project provides great opportunities for activities that would permit Benin and other countries that are 'democratisation success stories' to share their experiences and their expertise. This will have the impact not merely of skills transfer but will also lead to a further reinforcement of Benin's pride in and commitment to the democratic path.

The involvement of civil society in committee hearings around the budget is very positive and again could be shared with other countries in the French constitutional tradition which have inherited from the former colonial power a reticence towards participatory governance techniques. The practice of conducting hearings could be strengthened by conducting more hearings outside Porto Novo in the interior of the country.

2.5.1. Methodology utilized

The project has generally operated through conducting studies on different problems in the parliament's development and then implementing solutions identified through those studies. In most cases the project methodology has included training and information sessions. The project has been able to build partnerships involving both internal and external expertise, including UNACEB as well as civil society organizations, and government officials, although there is room for greater involvement of international expertise that can bring a fresh perspective, whether in terms of South-South learning or through the incorporation of learning from experts from advanced democracies.

The themes selected for project involvement are well-chosen and fit the priorities of the country, whether in the area of gender equity, budget oversight, or the environment. The

use of public consultations to strengthen parliamentary representation capacities is an excellent technique that could be shared with other parliamentary development projects.

2.5.2. *Project Impact*

The project has demonstrated strong impact in the areas of legislative effectiveness, government oversight, and institutional modernization.

Ø *Legislative effectiveness*

In regard to the legislative function, a qualitative strengthening of parliament is demonstrated through the greater effectiveness with which the institution has dealt with the national budget. In contrast with previous years, the budget in 2006 was adopted by parliament within the necessary time frame, thus avoiding recourse to decree-based expenditure as had been the case in several previous years. The improvement of parliament's functioning is also reflected in parliament's reconsideration of legislative bills that had been submitted to parliament but never considered by MPs. In certain cases, laws that have been held up in parliament for up to ten years have been taken up again, considered by the appropriate Commissions, and adopted in plenary.

Ø *Legislative production*

There has been an increase of approximately 36% in the number of laws adopted by parliament since the beginning of GPPS II. Undoubtedly, the simple use of statistics to measure parliamentary effectiveness can be problematic, as in some cases ineffective parliaments can be very efficient in passing laws proposed by the executive. One measure that may provide a better indicator of parliamentary effectiveness and independence is the number of bills proposed by parliamentarians themselves and then enacted into law. The number of members' bills that have passed into law since the current legislature was elected in 2003 is 11, whereas previous legislature had never managed more than three. Again, in terms of the quality of these laws, they have tended to be of significant public interest and import. For example laws have been proposed and passed on HIV/AIDS, against female circumcision, law against sexual harassment, etc. One method that could be used in the future to assess perceptions of parliamentary effectiveness, here in Benin and elsewhere, would be to regularly conduct a survey or focus group with observers of parliamentary life (for example parliamentary journalists) on their perceptions of institutional effectiveness, measuring changes in perception over time.

Ø *Oversight of government activities*

The project has encouraged a greater use of oversight procedures, such as interpellations of ministers and parliamentary commissions of enquiry. The number of interpellations has increased continually since the beginning of GPPS II; for example in a single session in 2006 there were twice as many interpellations than in two sessions in 2004. The mechanism of commissions of enquiry, which was not used in 2004, has been reactivated,

and the number of commissions has doubled between 2005 and 2006. Deputies appear to have a deeper understanding of the files they are addressing, which results in stronger oversight of government activities. Questions relating to governmental corruption are more and more frequently raised.

Ø *The representation function*

Deputies are demonstrating a greater responsiveness to the interests of citizens, which can be shown through the use of amendments and even proposition of new laws in areas of public concern. The public consultations, and hearings with civil society, held with support of GPPS II, encourage a closer relationship between deputies and citizens and contribute to an improved image of parliament.

Ø *Modernisation of the National Assembly*

The project has had a substantial impact on the National Assembly's ability to make use of information technology. The project has helped to support the further extension of the internal computer network within the parliamentary precinct. The installation of the internet site of the Assembly should help to improve the visibility of the Assembly in making detailed information available on the Assembly's work, although in practice the Assembly website is not being regularly updated, which indicates a weakness in the Assembly's communication functions.

2.5.3. Success factors

The project benefits from the support and the engagement of the political and administrative leadership of the national Assembly, which is an indispensable element in its success. The political and administrative personnel that the evaluators met all agreed that the project is an important factor in the continuing success of the Benin parliament. The involvement of the UNDP programme officer in all of the project activities is a key factor in the project's success. His dynamism, deep understanding of the parliamentary institution, availability, and personal and institutional networks all contribute greatly to the project's success.

2.5.4. Administrative and financial management

The institutional framework of the project is well-established with a steering committee that is representative of the different parliamentary actors and ensures that the benefits of the project are widely distributed. The steering committee may wish to consider expanding its membership to include representation of civil society, thus helping to ensure that the project's objectives relating to representation are effectively met.

The absence of opposition members in the decision-making bodies of the Assembly presents a difficulty that extends both to the regular functioning of the parliament and by

extension to the project steering committee. Béninois parliamentarians may benefit from information sharing with other parliaments, where it is the custom for opposition representatives to preside over at least some of the institutional structures such as parliamentary Commissions, and/or be represented in the Bureau through one or more vice-presidential positions.

The workplans developed by the project coordinator each year are followed carefully and their execution is followed regularly and reported in biennial reports. The activity reports should be more detailed which would benefit not only the GPPS administrators and external evaluators but would be useful for other parliamentary development programmers interested in assessing the merits of different types of intervention. It would be preferable if a consistent table of the state of progress of each of the activities were maintained, as this would allow much more ready assessment of progress towards the workplan objectives. Such a table would also include a record of expenditures on each project activity. As with other elements of the GPPS programme generally, it would be desirable if project products such as reports were made available through a dedicated internet site, thus permitting a ready sharing of experiences and best practices.

The project has enjoyed strong media coverage from both the print and electronic, state and private media, and journalists with whom the evaluators met were interested in and aware of project activities. As noted earlier, the internet site that has been supported through the project is not kept updated, and several elements of the site appear never to have been activated. This should be addressed by the project in collaboration with the relevant section of the parliamentary administration, and a plan should be put in place to ensure that the website is in fact kept up to date; otherwise the project's investment will be wasted.

The various studies and reports conducted by external consultants to the project are of variable quality. Several consulted by the evaluators lacked adequate structure, and tended to stray outside the real terms of reference. It appears that closer supervision should be provided to external consultants, so that problems can be addressed before final reports are presented. Where possible, studies should be conducted with the close collaboration of the relevant commission and/or the parliamentary administration, thus ensuring that the studies meet the needs of parliament.

2.6. Recommendations regarding the continuation of the project

The key informants with whom the evaluators met were all of the view that the project is vital for the continuing development of the parliamentary institution and that it should be continued in a new phase beyond 2007. The GPPS project undoubtedly helps to solidify and extend the tremendous advances Benin has made in its transition towards a stable democracy. In a future GPPS phase, priority should be placed on helping Benin's parliament to share some of its democratization experiences with parliaments in other countries in the region which are only now embarking on a genuine process of democratization.

2.6.1. Recommendations regarding future areas of intervention

The evaluation has identified a number of different areas that could be considered for future GPPS Benin activities:

- A greater attention to strategic objectives could strengthen the project. A strategic development plan for parliament, which the Assembly wishes to undertake, would be an excellent vehicle to strengthen the strategic coordination and coherence of the project. The development of a strategic plan is included in the 2006 workplan but unfortunately this activity has not yet commenced. The support of GPPS to the development of such a plan is recommended; this should include the involvement of national and international expertise to ensure the widest possible range of development activities can be considered. A particular area for strengthening as part of a long-term plan is the functioning of parliamentary groupings, which can provide an anchor for strong parliaments. A strategic plan should be for parliament as a whole and thus needs to include the coordination of other parliamentary assistance programming.

- The second suggested area of intervention concerns the participation of women in parliamentary work. The report supported through GPPS into the role of women in Benin political life contains important recommendations regarding greater equity in public life, notably through the creation of a quota system. One area that is not well developed in the report is activities that can be conducted within parliament to support a greater involvement of women deputies in parliamentary life. We suggest a more intensive capacity-building programme for women parliamentarians in 2007, including those already present and new members to be elected in the 2007 elections. It would be interesting to work with the new group of women deputies to ensure that the strategic plan mentioned above includes an important element of capacity reinforcement for women deputies and a general attention of parliament to gender issues in good governance.

- The third area of intervention concerns the role of parliament in poverty reduction. There is a need for work to assist parliament to play its constitutional role in programmes such as the PRSP, which frame government policies in a wide range of areas. As the UNDP-Benin office has a work programme on the PRSP and the MDGs, it should be possible to ensure that parliament is properly integrated into key elements of the development, follow-up, and evaluation of such programmes. Many parliaments in Africa and elsewhere have faced similar challenges of finding effective vehicles for parliamentary involvement, and it would be useful to study best practices prior to establishing a programme to support deeper parliamentary involvement in PRSP and similar programmes. Questions to consider include the potential role of parliament at each stage of the PRSP, and ways to design a workplan that will assure a constructive role for parliament. It is crucial that the vehicles for further parliamentary involvement extend beyond simply sharing of information and statistical data, and make use

of parliamentarians' links with local communities where poverty reduction and human development programming is realized.

- The fourth area of intervention concerns the process of budget closure. Benin's *loi de règlement*, which establishes the process through which past expenditures are accounted for and related to budgeted expenditure, is not properly functional. The process of review of previous years' expenditure is several years in arrears. In addition, Benin has yet to comply with the procedures of the West African Monetary Union (UEMOA) that require the creation of a Cour des Comptes separate from the Supreme Court to carry out the formal analysis of budgetary expenditures, that is then submitted to parliament for approval. It would be useful to carry out a project activity that examines the problems underlying the closure of the budget cycle and recommends steps that each interested institution can take in order to establish a properly functional system. Obviously, because the closure process involves the executive, judiciary and legislature, such a project should preferably be carried out jointly, or at least with the full knowledge and participation of the other two state institutions. Beyond the coordination issue between the different state institutions, it would be useful to examine ways in which the process of examination of previous years' expenditures can be extended to include other commissions that are responsible for specific areas of oversight, such as health and education. It might be possible, for example, for the project to support oversight missions into the interior of the country to explore the execution of projects voted by parliament.

- The fifth potential intervention area concerns non-schooled deputies. While the number is relatively small when compared for example with Niger, it would be helpful to discuss issues such as the potential for the use of national languages in parliament and support that might be provided to the deputies who do not read or speak French.

2.6.2. Recommendations regarding UNACEB

UNACEB plays a key role in the GPPS strategy to reinforce oversight, with the Finance Commission as the main point of entry for UNACEB support. UNACEB is in principle integrated into the structures of the National Assembly, although the evaluators were not completely clear about its status. UNACEB appears to have lost a significant proportion of its personnel and it would be useful for the project to discuss the status of UNACEB with the parliamentary administration to determine what role if any there might be in ensuring UNACEB's stability.

UNACEB produces a number of documents which are very useful for parliamentarians in providing background understanding the key economic issues facing the country, the economic impact of government actions, and analysis of budget documents. The evaluators were quite impressed by the quality of this documentation. At the same time, some of the material, for example, on processes for parliamentary oversight, was somewhat theoretical given the non-functionality of state budget accounting processes. It

would be useful for UNACEB staff to work with GPPS staff on a project as mentioned above, to help ensure all elements of the budget cycle are functional.

2.6.3. *Recommendations concerning the legal drafting team*

The National Assembly is proposing to create a staff team responsible for drafting legislative propositions. The evaluators concur that the small group of current staff who have legal training should be further supported in developing legislative drafting skills. The issue relates to how the proposed legislative drafting team would be organized, which was not clear to the evaluators. Is the team to be part-time, in other words made up of members of different branches of the parliamentary administration who receive training in legal drafting techniques and collaborate together as necessary without forming a distinct branch of the administration? Or are the members of the drafting team to form part of a separate staff grouping within the parliamentary administration? The evaluators have some concerns about the latter approach as it is not clear that the workload will be sufficient to sustain a separate team. In addition it may be preferable to build drafting competence in several branches of the administration. Finally, it should be emphasized that in most countries it is the government which prepares the bulk of legislative proposals, which is also the case in Benin. The main role of parliament involves studying legislation proposed by government and making necessary amendments. Legislative expertise should be built primarily around supporting these functions.

2.6.4. *Recommendation regarding the Assembly radio*

The principal project activity for 2006 in the area of representation is the creation of a National Assembly radio station. The development of such a radio, equipped with a schedule of programmes, is a key preoccupation of the top political leadership of the Assembly. While the creation of such a radio is highly desirable, its success will be dependent on the existence of a number of preconditions which may not all yet be fully in place. In particular, the limited record of bipartisanship at the Assembly raises questions about how fairness to all the political tendencies will be ensured in the radio programming. It is crucial that a politically balanced steering committee be formed to oversee the radio. In addition, the communications sections of the assembly has quite limited human and material resources and these will need to be substantially upgraded to be able to cope with a major project such as the Assembly radio station. Given that the Assembly web site is not updated regularly, questions are raised about the ability of the parliamentary institution to sustain the radio. Clear plans to address these issues will need to be in place before a radio station starts broadcasting. Finally, the evaluators felt that the needs assessment that was carried out for the radio requires further work, as the sums anticipated for materials appeared excessive, and there was insufficient attention to the operational as opposed to technical aspects of the radio's functioning.

3. Lebanon

<u>Summary</u>

Country Background

- Lebanon is a modified parliamentary republic with a unicameral parliament

- The country has a complex religious mosaic reflected in a formal distribution of state institutions between the communities

- Between 1975 and 1992 the country endured a serious civil war in which external actors were also involved

- The country has particularly complex relationships with its neighbors Syria and Israel

- The institutionalization of state structures is low for a country of Lebanon's level of economic development

- Parliamentary elections were last held in May – June 2005, next are scheduled for 2009.

GPPS II Background

- The current parliamentary project has been operating since 2000, but with GPPS support since 2005

- The project team is well-endowed with five full-time, and a fluctuating number of project staff and interns

- The project has focused in recent years on training of administrative staff and on exchanges with the French and Belgian parliaments

- The project operates in fairly close connection with the Programme of Governance in the Arab region (POGAR), whose parliamentary development advisor provides consulting support as requested

- The current GPPS project is conducting a broad and potentially important project on strengthening the country's human rights framework, and is also working on decentralization and political party law.

Evaluation summary

- The broad-based support for the project from all the key actors in a fractured political environment is impressive

- Political actors in Lebanon are able to identify barriers to democratic institutionalization, however concrete steps to address barriers are hard to take

- It is difficult to measure programme impact given the unstable and conflictual political environment

- MPs agree that greater support is required to improve parliamentary commission work, but they do not agree on how this should be achieved

- There is significant resistance to inter-group dialogue within parliament; even a GPPS project steering committee could not be established

- Despite these difficult operational circumstances, many MPs indicated that the project was one of the few neutral places within parliament where people from different groupings could work together.

Comments and recommendations

- The project is valuable, although its impact is limited by the nature of the state system and the continuing political crisis

- Further support to parliamentary committees should be instituted, possibly through an internship programme in conjunction with local universities

- It would be useful to plan for future programming through collaborative development of a strategic development plan by all the parliamentary actors

- Greater involvement of the Bureau and/or the Conference of Presidents in project activities and accountability would be useful

- Exchanges of parliamentary staff should be evaluated to assess impact on the effectiveness of the parliamentary administration

- Exchanges of parliamentarians with other countries provide a neutral venue for informal discussions. The circle of parliaments with which exchanges are held should be expanded, and efforts should be made to target the programming organized during these exchanges

- The project reports are insufficiently detailed and do not contain an evaluative component. The reports should be substantially strengthened in a future GPPS phase.

Detailed assessment

3.1. Background

Lebanon is a constitutional parliamentary republic with special provisions safeguarding the representation of the country's religious groups in its state institutions. Lebanon's parliament is a unicameral, 128 seat legislative chamber. The 128 members of parliament are drawn 50% each from the country's Moslem and Christian communities, with the 64 members from each of these communities allocated in turn to the religious groups within the two broader faith communities. Also in accordance with Lebanon's constitution and the 1989 Taef Accords, the Speaker of Lebanon's parliament is a member of the country's Shi'a religious community, although elected by all the members of the parliament. The complex balancing of faith communities is reflected in other state

institutions; the President of Lebanon is selected from the Christian community, while the Prime Minister is a Sunni Moslem. Of 128 members of parliament, only 6 are female.

Lebanon has had a complex and often turbulent history. Part of the Ottoman empire for several hundred years, the country eventually became a French Protectorate after the empire's collapse. Lebanon achieved independence in 1943. Lebanon has often been drawn into the continuing conflict between Israel and Palestine, and about 10% of those residing on Lebanese soil are Palestinian refugees displaced after the creation of the State of Israel. Between 1975 and approximately 1992, Lebanon endured an intense civil war that led to the deaths of many thousands as well as wholesale destruction of what had been a flourishing economy. The 1989 Taef Accords formed the foundation of a return to peace, although the Accords remain only partially implemented. Lebanon has often been impacted by powerful neighbours including Israel, which has physically attacked the country on several occasions and occupied parts of southern Lebanon from 1978 to 2000. Syrian troops were present in several parts of Lebanon between 1975 and 2005 and exercised significant influence over the country's affairs. The relationship between Syria and Lebanon is extremely complex, with disagreement over Lebanon's relationship to a 'greater Syria' that was a sub-jurisdiction of the Ottoman Empire and that included Lebanon. Despite the departure of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon in 2000, low-level conflict continued between Hezbollah militias and Israel and erupted into a full-scale Israeli bombardment and another limited invasion of southern Lebanon by Israel forces in 2006.

Lebanese political movements are rooted in the country's various confessional groups, but are also historically identified with various political ideologies of the Left and Right, disposition towards Arab nationalism, and attitude towards the various external actors who play a direct and indirect role in the country. Most political movements have or have had association with militia forces, although significant efforts have been made towards disarmament of most militias since the end of the civil war. Alliances between the various political forces have shifted considerably over time. In recent years the major opposing political alliances have been multi-confessional.

The internal and external security situation in Lebanon remains extremely fragile, and the political environment tense and conflictual, especially since the assassination of former Prime Minister and Sunni Muslim leader Rafik Hariri in 2005. Evaluation of the parliamentary development project must take into account this difficult environment.

3.2. <u>Origins and Objectives of the Project</u>

Lebanon was not originally one of the country pilots of the UNDP/GPPS II programme. However, under GPPS II, a contingency fund was set aside permitting quick response to emerging situations at the national, regional, and global levels. It was under this provision that Belgium agreed to support the joint UNDP/Lebanon Parliament Phase III "Strengthening the Structures of the Lebanese Parliament" 2005 - 2007. This project includes five main objectives:

- Consolidation of Parliament's role as a place of dialogue to support national reconciliation

- Strengthening of the legislative services of the parliamentary administration

- Strengthening of Parliament's role as guarantor of constitutional order

- Integration of a human rights approach in parliamentary work

- Support to inter-parliamentary cooperation/diplomacy

There is a considerable degree of continuity between the pre-GPPS and current UNDP partnership programmes with the Lebanese parliament. Like the earlier projects, the current collaboration includes a substantial number of written studies, seminars, and exchanges with parliaments in established democracies. Two of the project objectives do present a new approach, however. These are the role of parliament as a place of national dialogue, and the integration of a human rights approach in parliamentary work.

3.3. <u>Parliamentary partnerships</u>

UNDP Lebanon has been working with the Lebanese parliament 2000. The current phase of cooperation between the two institutions is defined as the third phase of a programme of collaboration covering the period 2000- 2002, 2002-2005, and 2005-2007 respectively. The current 2005-2007 collaboration will be discussed in the next section of the review.

The programmes operated between 2000 and 2005 were targeted to institutional strengthening, covering the classic parliamentary responsibilities of legislation, monitoring and oversight of the executive, representation, and international parliamentary diplomacy[2]. The projects specifically entailed providing books and database materials to the parliamentary library, production of a series of studies and research on issues of relevance to the various parliamentary committees and their mandates, and a series of seminars on national and international interest to the Lebanese parliament. The 2000-2005 activities also involved civil society organizations in some of the seminars. The project developed and distributed a database of NGOs that would be available to provide public input and expert advice to the various parliamentary committees.

The Centre for Legislative Development at the State University of New York, Albany (CLD-SUNY) has been working with the Lebanese parliament since 1994, on a number of activities that parallel or are complementary to those provided through GPPS-UNDP. Included in these projects are support to the library and archiving system, support to the internal communications structure of parliament, budget analysis support, and policy dialogue exchanges with the United States. In recent years the CLD-SUNY has decreased its focus on parliament in favour of a concentration on municipal government development.

Lebanon participates in most of the relevant international parliamentary organizations including the Inter Parliamentary union, the Arab Inter Parliamentary Union, the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, etc. Through its participation in these

international associations and fora, Lebanon's Parliament is also exposed to international links and practices.

Lebanon's parliament has bilateral arrangements to receive support from the French National Assembly, the French Senate, and the Belgian Chamber of Representatives. Discussions are being held on a programme of collaboration with the Italian parliament. These partnerships primarily provide opportunity for parliamentarian and staff learning exchanges. The partnerships are in practice coordinated by the UNDP/GPPS Lebanon project team.

3.4. Project Activities

The workplan for 2005 – 2007 contains an impressive number of activities, the majority of which have been realized. The main activities are enumerated below according to their main objective:

3.4.1 Consolidation of Parliament's role as a place of dialogue to support national reconciliation

- An international seminar held on the role of Parliament as a place for dialogue. This included discussions between international experts and Lebanese political leaders, and the publication and distribution of a document on the results of the seminar

- Various activities supporting further civil society involvement in parliamentary life, including the publication of a study on the relationship, publications to enable civil society to be more aware of parliament's activities, and a round table discussion between civil society and parliamentarians

- Publication of studies addressing subjects that, according to the Taef Agreement, should generate new legislation; these included laws on political parties and on administrative decentralization

- Parliamentarians' visit to Belgium focusing on the resolution of conflict

- Publication of numerous different studies on various subjects of importance to parliament ranging from education to human rights to social security, to parliamentary oversight

- Development of an internal monthly parliamentary bulletin containing news on developments within the parliamentary institution

- Development of a quarterly parliamentary magazine for circulation outside parliament, each issue focusing on a topical question such as corruption, AIDS, and the MDGs.

- Seminars on local development in two regions of Lebanon, including civil society participation

3.4.2 Strengthening of the legislative services of the parliamentary administration

- Implementation of a new organigramme of the parliamentary institution, including workshops on the new structure, and orientation of employees to their new functions and their place within the new administrative structure

- Support to the legal department of parliament to enable it to play its role in preparing legislation to implement the Taef Accord

- A variety of training opportunities for parliamentary administrators including exchanges with the French parliament on IT services of parliament

- Purchasing publications for the parliamentary library

- Purchasing computer equipment for the parliamentary administration

- Publishing UNDP/GPPS project-developed and other studies on the parliamentary website in Arabic, French, and English

3.4.3 Strengthening of Parliament's role as guarantor of constitutional order

- Seminars on the Millennium Development Goals, including for the Budget Committee on the relationship between the National Budget and the realisation of the MDG's

- Preparation of a list of international conventions; study analyzing the international conventions that Lebanon has not ratified

- Technical support to parliamentary committees as requested

3.4.4 Integration of a human rights approach in parliamentary work

- Joint development, with the parliamentary human rights committee, the Lebanon high commissioner for human rights, UNDP, and civil society of a comprehensive strategy to develop a national human rights plan to be developed through 22 multisectoral committees

- Preparation and publication of 17 reports on different aspects of human rights

- Seminars on human rights to coincide with international human rights day, and preparation of documents on human rights

- Preparation of studies on parliament and human rights

- Preparation of a national plan on human rights

- Donation of a 400 volume resource library on human rights to the parliamentary library

3.4.5 Support to interparliamentary diplomacy/cooperation

- Support to the establishment of an administrative unit charged with interparliamentary relations

- Organization of various study visits to the parliaments of France and Belgium

- Establishment of cooperation agreements with the Belgian and French parliaments

- Support to parliamentarians attending study visits in various countries

3.5. <u>**General Assessment of project**</u>

An evaluation mission was organized to Lebanon between January 7 and January 12 2007. Both the evaluators participated, accompanied by the Parliamentary Development Policy Adviser from UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy, Democratic Governance Group. The mission had been delayed from December 2006 because of the security situation in Lebanon. In preparation for the mission the evaluators read the various available project documents and activity reports for the project.

The mission team met with various of the key project actors. These included:

- Parliamentarians from all of the major political groupings

- The ambassador of Belgium and his staff

- Senior representatives of UNDP Lebanon

- Senior members of the parliamentary administration

- Parliamentary staff having benefited from the programme of exchanges

- The parliament strengthening project team members

- Representatives of the French embassy

- Representatives of civil society

- Consultants who had worked on aspects of the parliament strengthening project

- Representative of POGAR, the regional UNDP Programme on Governance in the Arab Region, which is headquartered in Beirut

In addition, the team visited the parliamentary facilities, including installations such as the library that have been supported by the project.

Some parliamentarians were not available, because parliament has not been sitting as a result of the political crisis the country is facing. Other parliamentarians were not present in the parliamentary precinct because of personal safety concerns. Nevertheless, the evaluators held intensive, separate meetings with ten parliamentarians from different political tendencies, and are comfortable that a wide range of views were heard.

3.5.1. *Initial overall impressions*

The interviewees were overwhelmingly positive about the project. Indeed there was a remarkable degree of unanimity that the project was very helpful for parliament, and that the project team was exceptionally professional and helpful.

At the same time, most of the parliamentarians we met from all political groups felt that the Lebanese parliament still did not offer the necessary level of professional support in order to help them play their role as parliamentarians. This sentiment was partly exacerbated by the frustration, particularly among the majority opponents of parliament's Speaker, that the most recent parliamentary session had been cancelled because of the country's political stalemate. Parliamentarians from the coalition supporting the Speaker, on the other hand, argued that holding a session would merely worsen existing tensions.

Parliament is currently not playing an institutional role in resolving the broader political conflict. Unfortunately the evaluators visited Lebanon during a difficult period in which the institution has largely been excluded from a role in the current crisis. Thus, there was little sense that parliament is becoming a more effective institution.

The overall impression of the project, consequently, is contradictory. On the one hand the key actors were delighted by the project, which had provided real benefits to both parliamentarians and staff. On the other, parliament *as an institution* remains somewhat ineffective.

The profundity of the political impasse in Lebanon is reflected in the project operations. All, or almost all, UNDP parliamentary development projects have a steering committee comprising representatives from all parties (often, this role is played by an organ of the institution, such as the Bureau). However in Lebanon, there is no formal steering committee. None of the key actors from the different political tendencies appeared open to such a committee, on the grounds that the Members from different tendencies would not be able to work together to provide direction to the programme. Thus the GPPS project's leadership manages relationships informally, through regular one-on-one meetings with representatives of different tendencies. While this situation is not ideal, it is nonetheless remarkable that a program has broad cross-party support in the current conflictual environment.

Providing an overall evaluation of the project is extremely difficult. Outcomes measurements in terms of activity completion rate would be very positive, as would measurements of beneficiary satisfaction levels. On the other hand, institutional effectiveness is much less easy to measure, particularly given events external to the parliament and the impact of regional influence in the domestic polity. Parliament is not currently directly playing an institutional role in resolving the country's social conflict, although key parliamentarians are individually engaged in these issues. Beyond this, parliament has only a limited role in key oversight activities, such as on budget and finances. However, just as an evaluation approach measuring inputs and immediate outputs would be superficial, an evaluation measuring institutional effectiveness would be inappropriate, because the parliament project is clearly only one, relatively small factor, in the overall institutional environment, which itself derives from deep features of Lebanese society and even global geopolitics.

The UNDP Beirut office is extremely supportive of the project. Like the project team leadership, however, UNDP staff emphasized the limits to institutional reform given the dual role of parliament as both a democratic institution and at the same time one of the state institutions whose leadership is allocated to a representative of a particular confessional community as part of the semi-formal power-sharing compact between the different communities.

We attempt in this evaluation to move beyond an either/or approach, to focus on the institution's current role, and thus to examine both how the current project might help deepen that role, and perhaps more importantly, what role the project could play in the future in helping to make the parliamentary institution a cornerstone of constitutional democracy in Lebanon. We will begin by examining the activities undertaken to meet the specific objectives of the project.

3.5.2. Assessing specific components of the Lebanese project

1. *Consolidation of Parliament's role as a place of dialogue to support national reconciliation*

- Activities in this area, noted above, included a seminar on parliament's role in national dialogue, a round table discussion with civil society, a mission to examine the Belgian system, two local development workshops, and a variety of different publications

   Ø The seminar and related activities on parliament's role in national dialogue was an important attempt to strengthen parliament's place in Lebanese political life. The seminar included notable international figures, including Lord Alderdice who had played a leading role in finding a peaceful solution to Northern Ireland's conflict, who met for one-on-one dialogue with leaders of different political groupings. Lebanon's political crisis precluded further direct building of the institutional role in dialogue, but follow-up does include supporting legislative initiatives on decentralization and on political parties, which were mandated within the Taef Accords.

   Ø The dialogue with civil society, and the two local development workshops appeared interesting, but the evaluators did not access any detailed information on the activities and their outcomes. The dialogue activities appeared to have ended or been suspended as a result of the current political crisis. However, the project plans to support involvement of civil society in the Commission discussions on decentralization and on political party legislation discussed above.

   Ø Publications, including monthly and quarterly newsletters, were of high quality, and generally appreciated, though not all the parliamentarians or parliament's interlocutors were aware of the publications. The publications plan was included in the 2005 – 2007 workplan, and certain

of the publications had specifically been requested by commission presidents.

2. *Strengthening of the legislative services of the parliamentary administration*

- A new organigramme has been developed and promulgated, although there were different opinions expressed about the extent to which it had been implemented. The library had received support to purchase reference materials. Staff had benefited from exchanges with the French and Belgian parliaments, and some computer equipment had been purchased

  Ø The apparent difficulty in implementing a new organigramme provides an indication of the difficulties encountered in moving a state institution that, like all others in Lebanon, reflects not merely operational needs but also inter-community balance.

  Ø As noted above, deputies generally expressed dissatisfaction with the professional services provided by the parliamentary administration, particularly to committees. To some extent at least, this is due to the mandate of the administration, which includes mainly administrative rather than in-depth legal and research support. Some deputies argued that the administration is not recruited on the basis of competence, although they provided no specific evidence of this. For whatever reason, therefore, the project's training support to the administration has not permitted the administration to achieve a level of service deputies expect, or to rise above claims of partisanship

3. *Strengthening of Parliament's role as guarantor of constitutional order*

- Only a proportion of planned activities in this objective had been carried out. While a study had been carried out on the MDG's, no seminar had been held as planned with the Budget Committee. Support had been provided to several parliamentary committees, though written details were not provided of the type of support. However, committee chairpersons consulted by the evaluators were very happy with the services they had received. Several other activities are cross-listed in project reports from other objective areas (for example, work on human rights, purchases for the library)

  Ø This objective area was indicative of a general tendency for the project to achieve goals that require relatively little involvement of parliamentarians (for example, publications and purchases) while facing difficulties in implementing activities requiring engagement of deputies, as a result of the fluctuating degree of political openness in Lebanon.

4. *Integration of a human rights approach in parliamentary work*

- The project had moved ahead in this area despite the political difficulties facing the country. MPs from different coalitions were able to work together on these issues. A large and ambitious set of collaborative activities building up towards a national human rights plan is underway. A large number of publications had

been produced dealing with different human rights issues. The topic areas were selected jointly by an NGO meeting and by the human rights commission of parliament.

Ø   Although still at a relatively early stage, this objective area appears to be one where the project offers clear added value. By bringing together different political forces and actors from civil society, the project is not only helping to develop the specific activity, but also modeling a methodology for different groups and sectors of society working together in other areas

5. *Support to inter-parliamentary diplomacy/cooperation*

•   The project has provided significant support to help parliamentarians and staff participate in exchanges with the French and Belgian parliaments. In addition, parliamentarians have been supported to attend various regional and international parliamentary meetings of special interest

Ø   This is a very popular element of the project, for which the project team was commended by many interviewees during the evaluation. Some activities; for example, the exchange with the Belgian parliament, have potential to help Lebanon explore alternative governance solutions for countries where populations are divided. It was not clear from the reports of these missions, however, that the missions attained that depth of discussion. One intangible, but possibly important feature of some of the missions was that members of different political groupings, who would not easily be able to sit down together in Lebanon, were able to meet informally and discuss political issues outside the country

3.5.3. *The role of parliament in Lebanese society*

In order to understand some of the barriers to project success, it is necessary to go beyond the project activities and look at the barriers to institutionalization of parliament within a democratic system in Lebanon. The problems underlying a political stalemate lie at the heart of Lebanese society and polity and cannot be resolved by a relatively small parliamentary support programme. At the same time, a parliamentary programme, particularly in a difficult and volatile environment such as contemporary Lebanon, must target its resources in areas of greatest need and likely impact. In order to assess the role currently played by Lebanon's parliament, we assess the role of parliament using some of the GPPS II Conflict Prevention and Recovery Guidelines:

A. *Does parliament help to reduce tension in Lebanon through its "everyday work of representing constituents through law-making, oversight of government action, and the process of political contest?"*

Ø   Parliament currently appears largely marginalized in this process. There is a tendency for even relatively technical issues (for example provision of public utilities) to be politicized. If all difficulties are immediately referred

back to the major social cleavages, it is unlikely either that parliament will be able to play an important role, or that solutions will be found to these issues

B. *Is parliament enabled to "use its representational legitimacy to engage in conflict or dispute resolution"?*

Ø   Parliament as an institution appears mainly tributary to the large extra-parliamentary blocs into which Lebanese society is divided. In a sense this is inevitable because in the Lebanese constitutional system, parliament is *at the same time* a representative body, *and* one of the state institutions included in the formal distribution of institutional authority between the country's communities. The parliament has two roles that are more or less incompatible; if it plays its former role it undermines the latter arrangement, and vice versa

C. *Is there an asymmetry of power between parliament and "the executive branch, armed groups and even other non-state and external actors"?*

Ø   As noted throughout the evaluation, there is an asymmetry between parliament and other non-state and external actors. Parliament's relationship with the executive is also subordinated to this relationship with non-state actors. Complexity is increased because these non-state actors are themselves represented in parliament. However, parliament is not the locus for key negotiations between these actors. Parliamentary elections are, however, important in measuring the relative strength of the different actors.

D. *Does parliament oversee national economic planning processes?*

Ø   The Lebanese state is in serious financial difficulties, at least partly because continuing conflict hampers finding and implementing solutions to introduce sustainable economic policies. One of the major contributors to the current political impasse in Lebanon is the process of addressing Lebanon's large debt and current account deficit with the international community. The state budgeting process is typically behind schedule, with budgets approved ex post facto. Parliament is not significantly involved in ex post facto budget expenditure monitoring. This area, therefore, is also enveloped within the consolidated governance stalemate faced by Lebanon[3].

E. *Does parliament safeguard "the rule of law and human rights, including those of women and minority groups"?*

Ø   There is an overall absence of security in Lebanon, resulting from external threats, political violence, etc. The justice sector as other aspects of the state system is marked by divisions and requires professional strengthening. The long term trajectory of the Lebanese legal system after the departure of Syrian forces remains unclear. Women suffer discrimination in several legal areas, particularly nationality rights. At the same time, Lebanon does have a relatively free press, and human rights

issues are discussed openly. In the parliamentary-strengthening project's most ambitious and to-date successful initiative, the project is helping parliament to take a lead in an all-party and multi-stakeholder initiative on developing a national human rights policy.

F. Do parliamentarians play a role in regional conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives?

Ø   As noted elsewhere, most of the key decisions involving Lebanon are taken outside parliament and often outside the country. One interesting initiative of GPPS II's regional activities is the regional working group on oversight of the security sector. This working group permits parliamentarians from across the region to discuss how parliament can provide responsible oversight of the security sector. Although this is not directly linked with regional peacebuilding initiatives, the gradual strengthening of democratic constitutional authority in this region will be a positive factor in preventing and reducing conflict.

Conclusion An assessment of these guidelines for parliaments in the prevention and reduction of conflict show that in many areas, Lebanon's parliament is not currently in a position to play a substantial role. Formal institutions in Lebanon are built upon a foundation of divided populations and thus have difficulty effectively mediating between those communities. The Taef Accords proposed the gradual elimination of this collective foundation of the Lebanese state. Progress towards that goal which had appeared to be gaining momentum in 2005 and early 2006, has stalled due to the Israeli intervention and the subsequent degradation of the political situation in the country. Nonetheless, the project's success in the area of human rights suggests that there are times and places where parliament can play a lead role. It would be unrealistic to suggest that parliament and the parliamentary-strengthening project will be able single-handedly to overcome institutionalized barriers to a liberal democracy. However, broad future activities should be clearly targeted towards that goal. Some of the directions that should be considered are:

Ø   The project's great achievement is the good will that it has generated among all the key actors. This should be built upon in a new phase by ensuring *the project is more clearly targeted towards specific goals.* Although the GPPS II project objectives are discrete from one another, in practice, many project activities appear functional rather than strategic; staff and MP exchanges with European parliaments, purchase of equipment, books for the library, etc.

Ø   The project needs much more active buy-in from parliamentarians. While it may be difficult to develop a space for dialogue around project directions, cross-party dialogue is really the ground zero of an effective parliamentary development project. In the first instance, *a strategic development plan for parliament should be developed collectively by the different political tendencies*

Ø   Study missions should be much more clearly geared towards *studying examples that would be useful in the context of conflict-reduction in*

Lebanon. The project has been extremely successful in concluding partnerships with parliaments on missions and exchanges, which also cover most project costs. However, efforts should be made to move beyond basic briefings on the operations of developed country parliaments. Apart from visits to developed country parliaments, greater emphasis should be placed on south-south exchanges where there is a potential for genuine mutual learning.

Ø   Additional resources should be expended within a GPPS III on support to regional working groups, that permit *the development of a core of reform-minded deputies throughout the region*, who are able to think 'outside the box' of routinized conflicts and who can start to conceptualize grounded alternatives

3.6. <u>Recommendations for future action</u>

3.6.1. *Short-term*

Continue the planned programme to end 2007, with the following observations:

i.   Ensure that the objectives of each activity are clearly articulated as part of the agreed project document

ii.   Ensure that project activities are demand-driven through the expressed requests and wishes of parliamentarians

iii.   Focus on building capacity rather than have project staff carrying out the normal work of a parliamentary administration

iv.   Ensure that any sponsored staff training and travel is part of an individualized training plan with clear and specific objectives

v.   Establish a timeline for the transfer of production of the quarterly and monthly parliamentary bulletins to the parliamentary administration

vi.   Provide support to committees through supporting a sustainable approach, such as working with local universities to establish an internship programme

vii.   Provide comprehensive reporting on all project activities, thus making project information more readily accessible to other parliamentary development projects

3.6.2. *Longer term (post-2007)*

a.   Build a new project phase on the basis of a collectively-designed long-term development plan for the parliamentary institution

b.   Ensure that there is a steering committee or other consultative body in the parliamentary institution that is responsible for a successor project

c. Incorporate parliamentarian exchanges with post-conflict countries where parliament is playing an important role (e.g. South Africa or Ireland)

d. Negotiate training/development agreements with a broader range of parliaments

e. Human rights is an important focus in a country with Lebanon's history. Programming on human rights begun in GPPS II should be continued if possible

f. Emphasize strengthening of parliament's budget and fiscal accountability oversight capacities

g. Address gender issues through specific programme activities (both issues of female representation and gender policy focus)

4. Morocco

<u>Summary</u>

Country Background

- Morocco's political system is a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral parliament

- Parliament has been disrupted several times since independence in 1956 by political instability, "régimes d'exception"

- There has been substantial democratization since the 1990's, and Morocco is now one of the freest countries in Arab region

- Parliament has rarely exercised all its constitutional powers

- The political party system remains fluid with a plethora of parties and numerous scissions

- Parliamentary elections were held on September 27 2002, and are next scheduled for September 2007

GPPS Background

- The UNDP country office has been working with parliament since 1999; however GPPS has only been involved since Phase II (2004)

- Parliamentary support has gone almost exclusively to the Chamber of Representatives, the directly elected lower house

- The long-term parliamentary development focus has been on administrative renewal and internal and external communications

- Both parliament and UNDP Morocco provide substantial financial support to the strengthening project, along with GPPS.

Evaluative summary

- The project was long-delayed in commencing

- Nonetheless, an important administrative renewal program has been implemented, and the strategic communications plan is well-advanced

- Work on MDG's has encountered barriers, with the project strategy here questionable

- Friction between project actors within parliament and the UNDP country office has hampered positive project communication and effective activities

Comments and recommendations

- Morocco is a strategically important country for democratic development

- The project has achieved important successes in administrative modernization

- Ø … thus efforts should be made to continue development work
- Ø However, a durable and effective strategy to address internal project frictions is a precondition to future success
- The expanded involvement of regional/global GPPS staff and targeted international expert support may help navigate implementation challenges.

Detailed Assessment

4.1. Political Context

The support project to the Moroccan parliament should be contextualized within the framework of the overall democratization of Moroccan society and polity, that began in earnest in the late 1990's, and which has been accelerated since the ascension to the throne of the current King, Mohammed VI, in 1999.

Morocco's post-independence history began in 1956 when the country achieved full independence from France, of which it had been a protectorate since the early years of the twentieth century, as well as from Spanish domination of parts of the north and west of the country. During the protectorate period, no parliamentary institution existed. After independence, a constitutional council was appointed by the King, and the principle of multipartism was established, the latter in contradiction to the French protectorate administration which had suppressed political parties.

An independence constitution was developed and approved by referendum in 1962, six years after independence. This first constitution provided for a bicameral parliament which took office in November 1963. However, in the course of subsequent revisions of the constitution in 1970, 1972, 1992, and 1996, parliament's make-up and attributions were altered on several occasions[4], with the institution transformed into a unicameral legislature before a bicameral chamber was reinstalled in 1996[5]. The two houses of parliament are the Chamber of Representatives and the Chamber of Councilors[6]. The Chamber of Representatives comprises 325 seats elected on a combined constituency (295 seats) and national list (30 seats) system, and is the sole house with the mandate to approve the government and its programme. The Chamber of Councilors comprises 270 members elected indirectly from local government and representatives of the professions. Debate continues at the present time as to whether this upper chamber should once again be eliminated.

The governance system is described in the 1996 constitution as a constitutional monarchy[7]. The constitutional structure draws inspiration from the French Fifth Republic, with the King playing a similar role to that of the President in the French system. In principle, therefore, parliament has relatively wide powers, including the right of approval of the Prime Minister and his governance programme, the right to vote laws, vote a motion of censure resulting in the dismissal of the government, vote the budget, and general oversight powers. These powers are tempered by the King's right to amend

laws by decree or organize a binding referendum, and ultimately, his right to dissolve parliament and call new elections. Authorized political activity is contingent on acknowledgement of the inviolacy of the monarchy.

In practice, parliament and the democratic system in general in Morocco have seen their fortunes ebb and flow since independence. Between 1965 and 1971, the Parliament was closed by then King Hassan II in one of the provisions of a state of emergency established as a response to social and political tensions. The country's political development during that era was impacted by unsuccessful coup attempts in 1971 and 1972, and the social mobilization implications of the country's assertion of sovereignty over the Western Sahara region previously controlled by Spain. Until the early 1990's, Morocco's governance system was marked by authoritarian governance practices, including relatively widespread human rights violations and inconsistent but sometimes severe repression of political opposition.

Nevertheless, during the latter years of the rule of King Hassan II (1961 – 1999), democratic space opened in all areas. King Mohammed VI has continued and deepened the modernization process, installing wide but not unlimited freedom of the press, enhancement of the rights of women, and establishing a reconciliation process to address earlier authoritarian excesses.

At the same time, the possibility for parliament's marginalization remains real within both constitutional provisions and governance practice. The King, for example, retains the right to select a Prime Minister of his choice. In 1997, the Prime Minister was selected from the largest political party in elections held that year, halting an earlier tradition of selecting the chief of the executive from a party close to the palace. This practice was not continued, however, in 2002, when partly in response to discord between the largest political parties as to which should have the 'right' to lead the government, the new King Mohammed VI selected a (respected) non-party technocrat to lead the government, whose government and programme was then approved by parliament by a large majority.

The 2002 elections continued a tendency towards political fragmentation that is in part underpinned by an election system that offers generous representation to smaller parties; 22 different parties elected deputies to the Chamber of Representatives, and the largest party, the social-democratic USFP, won only 50 of 325 seats, or 15% of the total. As a result of this fragmentation, the potential for parliament to speak with one voice in asserting its constitutional and moral representative authority is limited. In conclusion, therefore parliament is a relatively weak institution in comparison to the executive and the palace or *makhzan*[8].

Despite the limitations of the democratic system in Morocco in comparison with established democracies, the country remains a positive example of democratic development for other countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. Morocco is the only country in North Africa ranked as Partly Free by the US-based NGO Freedom House; all other countries are ranked as Not Free[9]. Morocco also tolerates moderate Islamist political activity; one such party, the '*Parti de la Justice et du Développement'* (PJD) holds 42 of 325 seats in parliament and is the largest opposition party in parliament.

In common with other emerging democracies, Morocco's parliament lacks a strong permanent administration, adequate physical and technological infrastructure, and offers limited support to parliamentarians in exercising their constitutional responsibilities. These deficits are freely acknowledged by both the political and administrative leadership of parliament, and strengthening of the administrative framework of parliamentary activity has been at the cornerstone of collaboration between UNDP and the Parliament of Morocco.

4.1.1. Organization of the Chamber of Representatives

Despite the presence of two houses in the Moroccan parliament, UNDP support in both Phases I and II has focused exclusively on the lower house, the Chamber of Representatives. As noted above, the lower house holds greater constitutional powers than the upper house, and in addition is directly elected. Thus, concentration on the Chamber of Representatives is justifiable, although the GPPS II project description does argue the merits of providing support to both houses, and the Phase II Prodoc did propose involvement of the upper house in some activities.

The Chamber of Representatives is constituted of 325 members, of whom 35 are women. The relatively strong representation of women in comparison with other parliaments in the region is mainly due to an informal accord between the political parties whereby the 30 seats selected through the national list process are reserved for women.

The Chamber is headed by a Bureau, comprised of 14 members, and presided over by the Speaker of the Chamber, elected by the Chamber as a whole in the first session after an election, and again at the beginning of the third year of the legislature. Other members of the Bureau include the eight vice-presidents, the two questeurs or financial administrators, and three secretaries. The leading positions in the Chamber are distributed proportionately among the represented political groups. The current president is a member of the Socialist parliamentary group, made up of members of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), the party gaining most seats in the 2002 election.

The Chamber of Representatives is constituted into six permanent committees or commissions that perform in-depth functions of legislative scrutiny and government oversight. These committees are:

- Social affairs
- Finance and economic development
- Justice, legislation, and human rights
- Interior, decentralization, and infrastructure
- Foreign affairs, national defence and Islamic affairs
- Production (Commission des secteurs productifs)

Parliamentary groups play a key role in parliamentary life. A parliamentary group can be formed by a political party or combination of political parties comprising at least 12

members of parliament (deputies). Currently there are 7 official parliamentary groups in the lower house. In comparison with other parliaments in countries transitioning towards democracy, the parliamentary groups are relatively well resourced; each disposes of several support staff as well as equipped office space. In conversations with parliamentarians, it was clear that many functions are carried out within parliamentary groups, including training of new members as well as more traditional roles such as the formulation of common policy positions.

Parliamentary groups and commissions are represented through the Conference of Presidents, which is chaired by the Speaker of the Chamber and also includes the eight vice-presidents. The Conference of Presidents provides input to the organization of the parliamentary agenda. Votes in the Conference are proportional to the number of deputies belonging to each parliamentary group.

One feature of the internal rules of the Chamber of Representatives is that the parliamentary administration is not mentioned.

4.2. <u>Origins and Objective of Project</u>

Collaboration between the Moroccan parliament and UNDP dates back to December 30 1999, when the Chamber of Representatives and UNDP agreed on a programme of collaboration in order to strengthen the parliamentary administration and providing a more contemporary range of supports to parliamentarians. This programme, which ran through to 2004, came to be known as Appui au parlement, Chambre des Représentants Phase I (from here, Phase I). Phase I was supported by UNDP Morocco TRAC funds, as well as the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF), administered globally by UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy (BDP).

Phase I focused on supporting development of a modern administration with particular emphasis on improving infrastructure. The activities planned during Phase One included:

- the creation of a legal research unit
- creation of a database of laws promulgated since independence and computerization of the library
- support in updated laws to support Morocco's global economic integration
- strengthening parliamentarians' mastery of international policy perspectives
- strengthening the administrative machinery of parliament under the direction of the Secretary-General, including in particular the computerization of parliament
- The implementation of a web page for parliament.

In interviews held with parliament's political leadership as well as representatives of the parliamentary administration, the crucial and fundamental role of Phase I and Phase II of the project in transforming the parliamentary administration into a modern parliamentary

service was underlined repeatedly. At the same time, some of the planned activities from Phase I were not fully realized. In particular the research unit was not operationalized, which is of some significance given that a similar initiative is included in Phase II, and which also appears to be encountering delays. The key activity linking together Phases I and II of support to the Moroccan parliament was the strategic analysis undertaken of the reform of the parliamentary administration, which has guided both projects and which remains the central vision underpinning parliamentary reform.

As the first Phase of project activity was coming to a close, discussions were held between the parliamentary leadership and the UNDP administration to continue support through a second phase of the project. These discussions coincided with the interest of GPPS in expanding its activities in the region, and an agreement was reached between the parliament, the country office, and GPPS, on a four year phase II of the parliamentary support programme, to run from 2004 to 2007.

4.2.1. *Phase II of the Parliament support project*

In the GPPS II programme document[10], which was written prior to the finalization of the Morocco phase II project, support activities are anticipated to focus around:

- Working with selected parliamentary committees to build greater links with actors outside parliament

- On the job training for staff of the Parliamentary Research Centre

- Training support to women members of parliament, complementary to that provided by NDI.

The project document ultimately agreed upon by the Parliament of Morocco, GPPS, and UNDP Morocco country office diverged significantly from the original GPPS II conception, focusing on the following three strategic areas:

1. *Implementation of the administrative reform plan of the Chamber of Representatives, to include:*

    A. Restructuring of the administration

    B. Staff training

    C. Support increased use of new information and communication technologies

    D. Implementation of an archive management system in the Chamber of Representatives

2. *Strengthening the capacities of parliamentary commissions, to include:*

    A. Information seminars for parliamentarians and partisan and non-partisan parliamentary support staff on issues such as the Millennium Development Goals, and the implications of information technology

    B. Capacity building on technical analysis of legal texts

C. Organization of information missions outside parliament

3. *Developing parliament's information, research, and communications services, to include:*
   A. Development of parliamentary research capacities
   B. Modernization of the documentation and information services of the parliament and increasing synergy with Commissions
   C. Organization of internships and training
   D. Support to the communications and information sections of the administration
   E. Support to the printing division

Gender is identified in the Project Document (Prodoc) as a 'transversal' theme. Specifically, efforts would be engaged to ensure that the beneficiaries of project activities such as training would be at least 30% female. In addition, the project would support the participation of female parliamentarians in regional and global networks.

Although the project was primarily geared to work with the Chamber of Representatives, it anticipated working with both chambers of parliament, particularly in ensuring support would be provided to administrative services common to both chambers of parliament. The success of this initiative for involving the Chamber of Councilors would be evaluated in 2005. However, in the detailed workplan no specific activities to involve the upper house are identified, and in practice it does not appear that any progress was made in realizing this objective.

The project was to be coordinated by a *comité de pilotage*, in the event comprised of the 4th vice-president of the National Assembly as chairperson, one of the Questeurs as vice-chairperson (a member of the parliamentary opposition), the Secretary General and two other senior representatives of the parliamentary administration, the UNDP resident representative in Morocco, and the project coordinator.

The project administration involved political leadership through the project National Director, a position occupied by the chairperson of the *comité de pilotage*, and administrative coordination through the Project Coordinator. In the Prodoc, the question is left open as to whether the Project Coordinator would be a member of the parliamentary administration (as in Phase I) or a new hire external to the administration. In practice the repercussions of this unresolved question proved fundamental to difficulties encountered by the project, and we will discuss this issue below in some depth.

4.3. <u>Project partners</u>

Phase II is of course a collaborative initiative in itself, involving the three partnering institutions of the Chamber of Representatives, UNDP-GPPS, and UNDP-Morocco. The

project document also anticipates involvement of the upper house, but as noted this ambition was not realized. Collaboration and coordination was envisaged with other agencies supporting parliamentary development, specifically the National Democratic Institute NDI).

Subsequent to the development of Phase II, USAID funded a large parliamentary development project through the implementing agency of the State University of New York, Center for International Development (SUNY), which is active in parliamentary development in a number of countries globally. NDI did continue providing parliamentary support programming, although in 2006 the agency decided to wind down parliamentary support and transfer its efforts to support to political parties and civil society in preparation for the elections of 2007. One very useful collaboration/synergy between NDI and the UNDP/GPPS project is that NDI is covering the contract of the communications consultant, engaged to provide oversight of the communications strategy development process.

Both formal and informal efforts were made to coordinate the initiatives being carried out by these different agencies. A coordinating meeting was held by the *comité de pilotage*, during which the plans and activities of the three parliamentary support projects were discussed. UNDP representatives indicated some concerns regarding duplication with NDI and SUNY, but neither parliament nor these agencies expressed concerns, and in studying the range of activities undertaken, this did not seem to be a major problem.

4.4. <u>Project Activities</u>

A brief overview follows of the planned activities in the workplan and their state of realization. It should be noted that the programme is in the latter stages of year three of a four-year programme; activities that are part of a logical series of consecutive steps may appropriately be scheduled for year 4, while the postponement to year 4 of major and/or multiple related activities may raise questions about whether these activities can actually be realized during Phase II:

4.4.1 *Implementation of the administrative reform plan of the Chamber of Representatives*

A. *Activities completed or underway*

   i.   Development of an organizational chart for the new administrative structure

   ii. Establish and implement a logical employee classification system based on identified position requirements (underway)

   iii. Establish new statute governing employee conditions of work (underway)

   iv. Analyze relationship between current employee profile and required profiles (underway)

v.   Acquisition and implementation of administrative software to support human resources, financial, and estate management (underway)

vi.   Recruitment on the basis of objective criteria to unfilled positions within the new organigramme

vii.   Computerization of the External Relations department (underway)

viii.   Implementation of a new SGBD system

ix.   Implementation of a new firewall system

x.   Connecting all offices to the intranet

xi.   Reorganization of the archives according to the plan carried out during Phase I (underway)

B. *Activities not commenced*

i.   Establishment of an employee evaluation system

ii.   Establishment of a staff salary grid in conjunction with the new staff structure

iii.   Assessment of staff competency in information technology and overall administrative skills

iv.   Training to address issues identified in iii).

v.   Computerisation of the mailroom

4.4.2 Strengthening the capacities of parliamentary commissions

A. *Activities completed or underway*

i.   Organization of discussion seminars on the relevance of the Millennium Development Goals to the work of parliamentary commissions

B. *Activities not commenced*

i.   Development and institutionalization of Commission activities 'on the ground', through organization of information seminars on the national human development indices in three regions, involving deputies as well as local representatives and civil society

ii.   Analysis of the national budget in light of the Millennium Development Goals

iii.   Support to the *Forum des Femmes Parlementaires*

4.4.3 Developing parliament's information, research, and communications services

   A. *Activities completed or underway*

      i.   Development of a communications strategy for parliament

   B. *Activities not commenced*

      i.   Implementation of the communications strategy
      ii.   Study missions for key parliamentary administrative personnel
     iii. Study on the establishment of a research and analysis division of the parliamentary secretariat

4.5. <u>General Assessment of Project Results</u>

The two key accomplishments of the project to date are the partial implementation of the administrative reform package developed during Phase I of the project, and the development and validation process of a communications strategy.

The commitment of the parliamentary administration and political leadership to the administrative restructuring was evident, and barring a disruption in support through Phase II of the project, it can be assumed that much of the administrative restructuring will be completed or well underway by the end of 2007. The key factors in this successful aspect of the project are:

1. Long-term commitment of parliament to the objective of administrative reform
2. Strong buy-in of the parliamentary administration as well as the project political leadership to the specific planned activities; organizational consensus
3. Project consultant able to build the confidence of the key project actors including crucially both the parliamentary administration and UNDP

The communications plan, while at an earlier stage of realization, also appears to enjoy consensual support. Once again, the parliamentary institution is enthusiastic about strengthening its public profile, and the expert consultant engaged to oversee the process and has been able to build the confidence of the key actors. A particularly important feature of the communications strategy is its attention to both internal and external communications. However, it is important to note that UNDP, and particularly GPPS, is not mandated to provide capital items that might be needed as part of a communications strategy. Neither is it the role of GPPS to supporting production of organizational marketing materials. GPPS would be most suited in this domain to help the parliament strengthen dialogue with society, and to become more open and accessible.

Other core project elements have not been so successful. While some work has been completed on organizing training seminars on the Millennium Development Goals

(objective two), an ambitious project to organize seminars involving deputies and local political leaders in Morocco's regions was cancelled at the last minute. The consultant engaged to support this activity is highly qualified and has prepared quality presentations to deputies. The seminars with commissions did generate significant interest, with a turnout of over 50% of commission members, which is impressive given deputies' busy schedules. At the same time, the topics did generate some opposition, with some parliamentarians expressing concern that they were being enlisted in a 'foreign' agenda. One commission declined to participate in the seminars. The political leadership of the project recommends suspending the commission/MDG activities for the remainder of Phase II, partly because participation is likely to be limited given planned elections for 2007.

To some extent, in a society such as Morocco's, where the social policy agenda that underpins documents such as the MDG's is contested (reflected, for example, in significant opposition to recent changes in family law), some resistance is to be anticipated and even welcomed as part of a full debate on key social issues. At the same time, questions can be posed about the efficacy of the strategy employed.

In the opinion of the evaluators, based on interviews in Rabat and on the written material prepared for the various workshops, three issues can be identified. The first is that the pedagogical approach was fairly traditional, with an emphasis on expert presentation of key facts on the MDGs and Morocco, followed by discussion. It would be preferable to approach the subject from the ground up, perhaps by focusing on case studies, and engaging deputies as experts in their own right, with the expert consultant role more that of a facilitator, tying case studies into an overall national human development strategy, rather than act as traditional presenter. Second, the emphasis on the global MDGs apparently raised concerns that a global social programme was being imposed on Morocco. However, Morocco's own National Initiative for Human Development (INDH), which is explicitly presented by the government as the Moroccan approach to the MDGs[11], covers key MDG areas. Parliament is already involved in the INDH[12]. Strategically it would be preferable to build on the work of the INDH as the national manifestation of the MDGs. Third, the abortive regional workshop also appeared to build from these externally-asserted goals rather than grassroots experience feeding into overall strategy.

4.5.1. Methodology

The project *content* methodology appears to combine two relatively discrete objectives; to strengthen parliament's institutional capacities (administration, communication, research), and to strengthen parliamentary committees' policy capacities. The first objective builds from a strategic plan for parliamentary development that was supported in Phase I and continues to provide a vision for parliamentary development. In Morocco and other countries, building from a comprehensive development plan tends to permit pursuance of a coherent and uncontested institutional development agenda.

As noted above, however, the strategic objective of strengthening committees in practice mainly involves building an MDG focus into committee work[13] through training

seminars. This has not been readily accepted, and we believe that a policy focus built on the national development indicators (INDH) would have been preferable and more likely to be effective. Further, the overall objective of strengthening parliamentary committees would need to involve a broader range of activities than solely working on development indicators (in other parliaments, committee strengthening activities include such initiatives as supporting public dialogue, strengthening the research capacities of committee support staff, and training committee members on technical needs such as budget analysis).

From the perspective of *process* methodology, the most striking finding of the evaluation was the divergence between concerns expressed by the UNDP partners, both in Morocco and from GPPS, about delays and low delivery rate, and the very positive overall evaluation of the project by parliamentarians (in particular) and the parliamentary administration. The other issue raised repeatedly, from different perspectives, by all of the project partners, involved the delays and conflict surrounding the appointment of a project coordinator. These issues unfortunately tended to taint the public profile of the project and obscured its achievements. There is a need to build capacity at the UNDP Country Office level for effective management of a parliamentary project, which requires a sound understanding of political context and the specificity of parliaments. Although this problem was most pronounced in Morocco, it does reflect the major weak link in the GPPS implementation model in general.

4.5.2. *Project Impact*

As noted above, the project has had an important impact on parliament. This can be measured in the actual changes undertaken and underway to transform the parliamentary administration into an appropriate, contemporary parliamentary support service. Further, parliament's commitment to implement a comprehensive communications strategy also indicates a forward-looking openness and desire to more effectively share parliament's activities and role in Moroccan governance.

On a broader level, the existence of UNDP's *comprehensive* approach to parliamentary strengthening is of substantial symbolic importance that may often outstrip in importance the actual activities underway. The presence of such a programme builds internal and external confidence in the importance of the parliamentary institution in the country's governance structure, a factor that may be difficult to measure but which is nonetheless in the evaluators' view crucial in demonstrating global commitment to democratic governance outcomes.

Along with most of the other GPPS II project activities, the Morocco Phase II project does not appear to have attempted to measure impacts along the lines proposed by UNDP's propositions on outcome measurement[14]. Establishment of pertinent indicators is in fact a highly complex issue, and elsewhere in the GPPS II evaluation we propose revisiting this subject as part of the preparation for a GPPS III. In brief, indicators tend to measure empirical factors that do not necessarily mean a parliament is functioning effectively (e.g., number of transcribers trained), or outcomes that cannot be scientifically linked to a parliamentary development project (e.g., numbers of pieces of legislation

amended), or factors that cannot be measured (e.g. quality of debates). One potentially useful indicator, which was used in the development of the parliamentary communications strategy for the Chamber, is the assessment over time by key interlocutors (e.g. press, civil society, etc.) of parliamentary functioning.

4.5.3. Sustainability

The commitment of the lower house to implementation of a long term development plan suggests that project activities, particularly in the areas of institutional strengthening, are in general likely to leave lasting impact. The evaluator was struck by the full support offered to the strengthening project by the vice-president of the *comité de pilotage*, who is a deputy in his first term (and thus not bound by previous activities) and a member of the parliamentary opposition. None of the parliamentary key informants felt that the high level of support for the institutional development goals would be affected in any way by any changes in the make-up of parliament after the 2007 elections.

In regards to infrastructural items included in the project, strategic investments appear to have been used appropriately, and are well-maintained. For example, installed networks, and the parliamentary website were functional, though the website (in French) lacked details of current activities. This positive outcome contrasts with much parliamentary development experience where hardware items often rapidly fall out of use in the absence of functioning management systems and qualified staff. This probably reflects Morocco's relatively advanced development status and the consequent capacity of its state institutions to absorb investments.

The project's support to human resource development will clearly have a long-term impact, because the project has enabled the institution to implement a modern recruitment, classification, and staff development strategy. Investments in this area are very well spent.

4.5.4. Critical success factors

As noted above, the critical success factor in this project is the broad support for the institutional strengthening goals developed during Phase I, which continue to guide institutional vision. Conversely, the absence of consensus on the MDG/Committee strengthening activities has hindered progress in that area.

4.5.5. Operational and financial management

The evaluator did not have the opportunity to review financial management in any detail as the key liaison person within UNDP Morocco in this area was absent during the evaluation. Review of project files suggested that in general, project reporting had not been as prompt as would be desirable. There was a tendency to organize activities at the last minute which caused difficulties for UNDP-BDP as expenditures sometimes had to be authorized in retrospect.

Operational management of the project was overshadowed by two problems. The first was the very late start of Phase II; a *comité de pilotage* was not established until 2006, in

the third year of the project. In addition, the recruitment of the project coordinator was highly contentious. Ultimately the coordinator who was recruited was unable to build the confidence of the leadership of the parliamentary administration which left her, and to some extent the project as a whole, in an untenable position. These factors had a major impact on the project's productivity and are a main reason for the significant number of planned activities still outstanding at the end of the 3rd year of a four year project.

4.6. Findings and Recommendations

4.6.1. Findings

i. Despite a number of operational and communication difficulties the project has achieved some significant successes

ii. Substantial progress has been made in strengthening the parliamentary administration, in developing a communications strategy, and in strengthening committees through provision of support and information on the integration of the MDGs into committee work

iii. All the key actors emphasized the major improvements in the effectiveness of the parliamentary administration since the beginning of the UNDP-sponsored parliamentary development projects in 1999. Parliamentary development in emerging democracies such as Morocco needs to be viewed as a long-term process

iv. A comprehensive communications plan is in the process of being adopted and its implementation will help parliament to improve both internal and external communications effectiveness, and expand public understanding of parliament and the democratic system

v. The evaluator was struck by the consistency of support, from all the parliamentary participants, for continuing the project through to the conclusion of GPPS II in 2007 and, hopefully, beyond

vi. Nevertheless, discord between some of the key players at the national level in the project, particularly over the selection of the coordinator, caused inefficiencies and particularly hampered the creation of a positive internal and external image for the project

vii. In future parliamentary strengthening activities after the end of GPPS II, dedicated project coordination will be essential. However this role must be determined by consensus between parliament and UNDP and all the key actors within parliament should agree on the process and the ultimate selection of a candidate.

viii. Given the long delays in beginning the project, the UNDP CO should have requested in-depth management and technical support from the GPPS secretariat to overcome the roadblocks

ix. GPPS has been placed in a difficult position as a result of the problems occurring on the ground in Morocco in which it is not implicated. GPPS is not

in a position to intervene unilaterally in projects effectively being conducted through the Country Office. In some respects this reflects a weakness of the GPPS implementation model. It does underline the need for further capacity-building of UNDP Country Office staff working with parliaments

x. Several project staff and consultants worked for extended periods without contracts. The UNDP CO must ensure that contracts are signed prior to work commencing, in accordance with UNDP guidelines.

4.6.2. Recommendations for the remainder of the GPPS II project

i. A revised workplan should be developed for 2007, focusing on the project activities already underway; including the implementation of the communications strategy, as well as further reinforcement of the parliamentary administration

ii. It will be difficult to pursue the MDG training activity in 2007, which is an election year. Therefore it is recommended that MDG-related activities not be pursued in 2007

iii. 2007 should be used not only to complete activities planned in GPPS II 2004 – 2007, but also to plan future parliamentary strengthening activities and innovative approaches to parliamentary involvement in improving human development indicators

iv. Give staff redeployment in the UNDP CO, it will be crucial for a staff person to be identified as the new project focal point within the office.

v. A streamlined implementation approach should be employed in 2007, in which the Coordinator, who has tendered her resignation, should not be replaced, with a senior parliamentary administration staffperson performing coordination functions in the interim.

vi. The senior project consultant, who is currently focusing on human resources development issues, could be retained with a broader mandate to include assisting the administration in liaising effectively with UNDP.

vii. Given planned elections in the second half of 2007, the bulk of project activities should be scheduled for the first half of 2007.

viii. The possibility of future UNDP support for parliamentary strengthening activities, whether from UNDP Morocco country office and/or a GPPS III, will depend largely on the successful development and implementation of a 2007 parliamentary strengthening workplan.

4.6.3. Recommendations for future work

i. Morocco is a key country to the success of parliamentary democracy within the Arab region, and in principle should be a priority country for UNDP

support to parliamentary development, provided that an effective process for providing support can be agreed between the parliament and UNDP.

ii. In future project activities, redoubled efforts should be made at the beginning of the project to ensure that all the key players both from within parliament and the donor agency(ies) agree on the project components, and particularly organizational structure and processes.

iii. One of UNDP's main competitive advantages is its access to a pool of international expertise. International expertise not only provides access to international best practice but international advisors can also assist in providing an external strategic vision. In future projects, greater use should be made of international parliamentary development experts, engaged in collaboration with the GPPS management.

iv. The 'thin structure' of GPPS management is one of the strengths of the programme. Further, it is crucial that the regional programme staff not be seen as part of a hierarchy over the national pilots. However, the Morocco project would have benefited from more intensive management support from GPPS global and/or regional staff. GPPS staff did attempt to provide such support. However GPPS is not in a position to impose itself on country projects.

v. While global development strategies such as MDG's are important vehicles for development, they are a means to the end of improved human development outcomes. Training and awareness-building of parliamentarians on human development should focus on existing national human development programmes rather than abstracting the human development process to global benchmarks. This is particularly crucial in a country, such as Morocco, which already has a well-developed national strategy linked to MDG objectives.

5. Niger

<u>Summary</u>

Country Background

- Niger is one of the world's poorest countries, with very low Human Development Indicators

- The country has a history of authoritarian governments since independence in 1960

- A democratic system was established for the first time in 1993, which was overthrown in a military coup in 1996, but restored in 2000

- Parliament has been relatively effective since democratic restoration

- The country has a competitive and well-rooted political party system

- One democratic rights weakness is that freedom of speech, particularly of the media, is not consistently respected

- The last parliamentary elections took place on November 16 2004, the next are scheduled for 2009

- After many years of extremely low representation rates of women (only one woman elected in the 1999-2004 parliament), a quota law was passed in 2002, and 14 women were elected in 2004 elections, accounting for 12.4% of members, in excess of the minimum requirement of 10%

GPPS Background

- Development of Niger's National Assembly has been supported through both GPPS I and II

- GPPS I activities emphasized representation and public consultation; successful national consultations supported on decentralization law

- GPPS II continues support on representation and oversight, support to women's participation, and parliamentary staff strengthening

Evaluation summary

- The project has helped build a substantially increased parliamentary profile and exercise of constitutional responsibilities and can be considered a major success

- There is an impressive level of cross-bench collaboration to increase parliamentary effectiveness, which is remarkable given the highly competitive polity

- Control of the Executive is significantly enhanced; written and oral questions and interpellations were three times higher in the first half of the current legislature (2004 – 2006) than in the whole of the first legislature of the Fifth Republic (1999 – 2004).

- The project has emphasized support to women MP's, who are assuming key responsibilities in parliament after many years of marginalization. This is reflected formally in the election of women to head two parliamentary commissions, and for a woman deputy to sit as member of the Bureau, as well as in the leadership women have taken on key policy issues such as the price of fuel.

- There is a high level of buy-in at top political and administrative levels, facilitated by project location on-site

- GPPS is supporting efforts to address the high proportion of MPs lacking formal education in French

- GPPS is also supporting continued efforts to enlarge the role of the Assembly radio station, which is an example that several other countries in the sub-region wish to follow

Comments and recommendations

- The project's successes in a *prima facie* difficult environment for democracy mean that activities should be continued in a new phase

- For a future GPPS phase consideration should be given to organizing more exchanges with newly-democratic parliaments (e.g. DRC, Mauritania) to share Niger's learning

- In the future a broader donor partnership should be mobilized to support democratic development in Niger, a country with very limited internal resources but that has made important progress in democratization

- The project should make greater use of international expertise

- The project should focus on implementing plans for expanded Assembly radio; these plans have been in place for several years and are supported by the institution

Detailed Assessment

5.1. Political Context

Niger is one of the large group of African countries that embarked on democratization beginning in the late 1980's and early 1990's. The democratization process in Niger has encountered various challenges and difficulties, although since 1999 a general respect for democratic processes has been secured.

After independence in 1960, apart from an early brief period of instability, the country enjoyed a notable period political calm until 1974 when the first military coup brought an end to the essentially single-party regime of the RDA. In its place an extra-constitutional military government assumed power and continued to rule for the next fifteen years. This

long period of restrictions on freedoms ended with the 1989 constitution which entrenched the single-party system and the role of the army in political life. During the late 1980's a movement towards democratization took hold, which eventually brought an end to the single party system. The sovereign National Convention that enacted this change included all of the major political forces in the country, and charted a new political path including:

- Free and transparent elections

- Multi-party system

- Respect for human rights

- Constitutional order

These key factors continue to structure political life in Niger. Nevertheless since 1990 the country has encountered important periods of instability, including an armed rebellion from 1991 to 1996, as well as two military coups d'états in 1996 and 1999. As a result of this instability, between the installation of the Second Republic and the Fifth Republic in 1999, no parliament finished its elected term.

The Fifth Republic heralded by the constitution of 1999 appears to have opened a new period of political stability in the country. Holding substantial powers within a semi-presidential system, Niger's National Assembly plays an important role in the political life of the country and contributes substantially to the stabilization of Nigerien political life. However, the country continues to face enormous challenges, including continuing extreme poverty and weak indicators of human development. Nigerien democracy remains fragile, accounting for the need for continuing support through GPPS.

5.2. **Origins and objectives of the project**

The GPPS II project was initiated at the request of Niger, in coordination with UNDP. GPPS II is integrated into the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2004 – 2007 signed between the Republic of Niger and UNDP on December 23 2003. In the CPAP, good governance is one of the three areas of cooperation identified. CPAP 2004 – 2007 envisages a programme of support in this area to the various Niger state institutions including parliament. GPPS II in Niger continues a programme of cooperation between UNDP and the Niger National Assembly that operated under GPPS I between 2001 and 2003, which was carried out on behalf of UNDP and the National Assembly by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). This first phase pursued two primary objectives:

A. Strengthen the capacities of parliamentary deputies and staff of the National Assembly in the areas of legislation and parliamentary oversight, in order to permit them to efficiently analyze, develop, and vote into law government and members' bills.
B. Strengthen the communications capacities of deputies in dealing with their constituents, including through the media.

Activities carried out during GPPS I included the organization of seminars and workshops on study and analysis of legislative propositions, public consultations, study missions and exchanges, and the development and publication of a Legislative Review.

The activities carried out under GPPS I undoubtedly helped strengthen the links between the elected and their electors, notably through public consultations that were carried out throughout the national territory, particularly in relation to decentralization propositions. The GPPS I activities helped to strengthen government oversight through interpellation of ministers, as well as through a better understanding on the part of parliamentarians of the various legislative proposals, demonstrated through deputies' amendments, particularly in the area of decentralization which had been a main focus of the public consultations.

The beginning of the GPPS II project coincided with a new legislature that was characterized by changes in the political make-up of the Assembly, including i) many new members of parliament, ii) a substantial representation of deputies whose lack of knowledge of the French language, official language of Niger, made full participation in parliamentary activities difficult, iii) a large increase in the number of female parliamentarians. For many of the new parliamentarians their arrival in parliament constituted a first experience in public and political life, and they were sometimes unaware of the dimensions of their roles and responsibilities as elected members, complicating issues of parliament-citizen relationships. As in many other countries, citizens tend to have a relatively negative view of parliament and of parliamentarians. Further, parliament needs to make greater efforts to incorporate the preoccupations of citizens in the course of their parliamentary work.

The parliamentary administration continues to suffer from various weaknesses, including the lack of the necessary tools and capacities to provide an efficient and effective support to the deputies. There is need to further professionalize the support provided to parliamentary commissions and to parliamentary groups by parliamentary staff. In addition there is a need to strengthen the internal management of parliament and to take into account the requirements of regional and sub-regional integration.

The objective of GPPS II is to maintain the advances noted through GPPS I and to build on that successful project through deepening parliament's ability to address its new challenges. In particular, GPPS II is built around the following three principal elements:

A. Strengthen the capacities of members of the legislature through organization of orientation seminars for the newly elected members, and training and information sessions for members to enable them to carry out their constitutionally-defined responsibilities

B. Strengthen the capacities of the parliamentary administration in order to enable it to better serve elected members, by providing the administration with the tools and mechanisms permitting it to establish its own strategic development plan, through advancing the professionalization of the parliamentary staff, and in addition supporting the Bureau and other management structures of the Assembly in improving the internal management of the parliament

C. Improving citizens' knowledge of parliamentary work and permitting the integration of citizens' preoccupations into the work of the National Assembly, through encouraging further development of an interface between parliament and citizenry.

Effective implementation of the project requires continuing knowledge transfer and gradual acquisition of skills by the Assembly. Taking into account the requirements of the GPPS II programme and the need to ensure full involvement of parliament in the project's execution, the project management system is based on a steering committee which oversees the project and provides its strategic orientation in order to ensure the attainment of the strategic objectives. This structure deviates slightly from the modalities laid out in the CPAP, which is legitimate given the special character of parliament as a state institution autonomous of the executive. The composition of the steering committee reflects the high level of both political and administration commitment to the project. The parliamentary members of the steering committee include the four Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly, as well as the Assistant Secretary-General. This presence of the political and administrative leadership emphasizes the institutional support for the project activities and the effectiveness of the project in helping to meet parliament's development needs. Decision-making is further facilitated through the inclusion on the committee of a representative from UNDP, the project's national coordinator (senior staff person), the head of the UNDP-Niger governance support team, the resident representative of the Belgian international development ministry, and a representative of civil society. The committee meets every three months under the chairmanship of the 1st Vice President of the National Assembly, agrees on a project workplan and evaluates the project's activities and results. The steering committee approves any necessary changes to the project's implementation. The President of the National Assembly is regularly briefed about the project's activities and accomplishments, and provides crucial institutional support and advice.

Operationally, the Project Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the effective execution of the project workplan under the supervision of the steering committee. She works closely with the UNDP representative on the steering committee. Within parliament her primary daily contacts are with the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General who also oversee project activities.

5.3. <u>Project partners</u>

The project document envisages collaboration with other partners with an interest in supporting parliamentary development. The project coordinator is responsible for implementing such collaboration. Several United Nations agencies are involved in supporting aspects of parliamentary life. These include UNDP, UNICEF, the WHO, and the UNFPA. Short-term collaboration has been engaged with the Canadian Parliamentary Centre and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). Nevertheless these collaborations remain somewhat limited and of relatively narrow scope. The project is working to expand the scope and size of partnerships in parliamentary development.

5.4. <u>Principal project activities</u>

The project execution is well above 90% for activities planned to date, which is a strong indicator of project effectiveness given the difficulties of implementation within a multi-partisan institution that is always subject to changing priorities and emergent political situations. The project activities can be regrouped into four main areas: training, information and awareness-building; research and study activities; the development and implementation of educational materials and communications tools; and, the organization of study missions and exchanges. This evaluation will indicate the activities conducted and those remaining to be carried out. It should be noted that the project is scheduled to run until early 2008, and thus it is appropriate that some activities remain to be carried out.

5.4.1. Strengthening capacities of elected members

Activities completed

- Orientation session for new members of parliament on the role of parliaments in the strengthening of democracy, relations with constituents, the legislative function of parliament, the development and adoption of legislation, governmental oversight, the budget, parliamentary commissions, the regional and international role of parliament. This training was accompanied with the presentation to each participant of a comprehensive documentary library including the Niger Constitution, Standing Orders of the Assembly, The Role of the Deputy, Accounting Regulations of the National Assembly, the Political Parties Charter, etc.

- Training sessions for deputies on themes including the initiation of legislative proposals, legislative procedures, and parliamentary oversight, human rights, principles of effective communication, and the process of analysis and oversight of the national budget.

- A training session in strategic planning for members of the Bureau of the Assembly, the political groups, and the senior staff people of the parliamentary administration, including the secretary general.

- A training session for parliamentary groups on the role, organization, and functioning of parliamentary groups.

- Training and information days organized on various themes including the gender approach, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

- Specific sessions in national languages for deputies not schooled in the French language, on the mission of the National Assembly, the roles and responsibilities of the deputy, as well as the concept of 'gender'.

- Specific sessions for female deputies on women's leadership, on lobbying skills, and on computer and internet use.

- Organization of study missions and exchanges for female parliamentarians in Burkina Faso and Rwanda, and in Geneva, Switzerland for a seminar on the effective application of CEDAW.

- Commissioning of two studies; one on the problematic of non-schooled deputies and identification of ways to support this large group of deputies, and the second, diagnostic study on the role of deputies in proposing laws, with a view to identifying mechanisms to better support deputies in this area.

5.4.2. *Strengthening the capacities of the parliamentary administration*

Activities completed

- Creation and implementation of a workgroup responsible for preparing orientation seminars for the new deputies and for the conception and development of training modules. Training sessions have been organized for this workgroup on gender and development, human rights, how to write project Terms of Reference, conducting a tendering process, etc.

- Organization of training sessions for parliamentary staff, including Assembly technical directors, counselors, assistants, departmental heads, etc. Themes of these sessions included among others the legislative process, gender and development, information and communication techniques, rules and procedures for a parliamentary administration, and development of a code of professional conduct for a parliamentary administration.

- Conception and development of documents, including notably: a booklet on gender and development for parliamentarians, manual on human rights for the use of deputies, summary of national and international legal instruments concerning human rights, a collection of the fundamental texts of the national Assembly, a participant's guide on the CEDAW, a module on internet training, a participant's guide to the national budget, a module on strategic planning, and a technical module on making legal arguments.

Activities planned but not yet completed

- Evaluation of the structure, resources, and needs, particularly in the area of training and of the functioning of the parliamentary administration, including identification of possible assistance programmes of bilateral and multilateral funders, with results to be presented to parliament in a workshop. The consultant to carry out this study was selected and recruited and the study begun. However the

results are not yet available as a result of difficulties encountered by the consulting firm. In order to ensure effective completion and involvement of all actors, the activity has been delayed to 2007, along with the plans to implement the study recommendations

- The second activity that is yet to be completed is the preparation of a strategic development plan for parliament.

5.4.3. *Strengthen citizens' knowledge of parliamentary work and permit the better integration of citizens' concerns in parliamentary work*

Activities completed

- Development and production of a diverse schedule of broadcasts for the parliamentary radio, La Voix de l'Hémicycle.

- Development and production of a legislative review.

- Establishment of a partnership with 89 local and regional community radios, as well as some private radios, in order to relay broadcasts of the Hemicycle radio throughout the country. These agreements were followed by a workshop for community radio producers on the broadcast contents. However, the broadcasts developed for community radio deal mainly with the functional activities of parliament and do not to date include rebroadcast of parliamentary debate as envisaged in the project workplan.

- Development and implementation of a website for the GPPS parliamentary support project.

Activities planned but not yet completed

- Support to commissions to carry out public hearings on themes of interest, as a means to take into account citizen concerns in legislative work. The funds available for this activity were judged insufficient by parliament.

- Organization of 'Open Days' or open houses at parliament to increase citizen awareness of parliamentary activities and functioning.

5.5. **General Assessment of Project Results**

The overall assessment of the project is very positive. The Niger GPPS II project has succeeded both in terms of planned objectives and in terms of its effective administration. The impact of the project is real and is perceptible through the improvement in the quality of legislative work, oversight of government activities, and the role of representation of the Nigerien people. At all levels of the parliamentary institution, deputies and parliamentary staff were extremely well informed of the details of GPPS II support to parliament, indicating that the

programme has had an impact throughout the institution. The current Assembly has in general been much more effective than its predecessor.

The overall level of project completion is high; yet some of the more strategic aspects of the project remain to be fully realized. In the future it will be important to study the means and mechanisms necessary to ensure the success of long-term strategic development activities. Future GPPS development activities in Niger should be framed within the strategic development plan which was intended to be carried out during 2005 and 2006 but which had to be postponed. The approach for the development and implementation of the plan should be rethought.

One of the particular challenges of the Nigerien parliament is the very high percentage of deputies who are unschooled in French and who are unable generally to play a major role in parliamentary activities. The proportion of unschooled deputies has risen over time and now stands at approximately 40% of the total, presenting a substantial burden on other deputies and on the smooth functioning of the institution as a whole. Niger does have the advantage over other countries in the sub-region of carrying out translation of the plenary debates in the two most-spoken national languages of Haoussa and Djerma. Nevertheless no formal support is supplied to this group of deputies during commission deliberations, or for the carrying out of the daily activities of deputies which includes reading a large quantity of legal texts and other documents written in the French language. Despite the work of the project, for example in organizing the seminars in national languages which were highly appreciated, the deputies who do not master the French language are not able to carry out their full responsibilities as deputies.

The capacities of parliament in the areas of communication and information technology remain quite low despite previous support to network the parliamentary precinct and assure an internet connection. The internet connection speed is poor and thus not entirely functional; further investment is merited to ensure a good quality connection. Nevertheless, if support is to be provided in the area of IT this would need to be combined with support to ensure the effective management of the parliament information technology and communications services.

The Nigerien parliament has strengthened its ability to represent the interests and perspectives of the population through the establishment of commissions of parliamentary enquiry on important and controversial subjects, as well as organization of public hearings. But the progress that has been achieved is limited by the reticence of parliament to change the constitutional traditions inherited from the French system which provide for commission hearing to be held behind closed doors, even though the commission hearings in the French National Assembly itself are now frequently open to the public.

One possibility to explore in this area would be for the Finance Commission to experiment with the initiative of the Benin National Assembly, with support from GPPS, whereby public hearings have been organized by the Assembly finance

commission, permitting civil society representatives to present their perspectives during the budgetary process. If such activities to encourage public participation in the work of the different commissions are indeed included in the next GPPS Niger phase, it is important that issues of funding are addressed, as the lack of internal resources was cited by the Niger Assembly as an important reason for the relative lack of opportunities for public participation.

In relation to the objective of strengthening the internal administration of parliament, the project has launched a range of training activities to support personnel development in the Assembly, with an objective in turn of permitting staff to provide information seminars to deputies. The committee initially put in place to implement this programme has expanded its zone of intervention and been made permanent, responsible for continuing training at the Assembly. This is an innovative development. Frequently, institutional development projects are carried out with little or no input from staff. The deepening of the training planning committee's role reflects an openness on the part of the parliamentary administration and leadership to make best use of staff capacities, and the success of the project in fostering real commitment to individual and institutional growth and development. This is an evolution that the evaluators view as highly positive.

In contrast, the activities planned in order to strengthen the internal budget administration of the Assembly have not been carried out, although a study on the internal administration was carried out as part of a West African regional initiative. In practice, however, the internal budget controls of the Assembly have objectively improved because the institution registered a balanced budget in the last fiscal year, in contrast to previous years' deficits. The project should discuss with the Assembly whether the institution does indeed wish to go ahead with this project element.

The personnel of the parliamentary commissions have benefited from training offered more generally to Assembly personnel. However the evaluators believe that it would be useful for Commission personnel to receive a specific training as proposed in the GPPS II Niger project document. Deputies interviewed by the evaluators continue to stress the relatively weak personnel support available in the Commissions.

The effectiveness of the project management is closely tied to its flexibility. Project effectiveness is also tied to its capacity to respond immediately to new expressed needs and which may not necessarily have been programmed specifically, even though they enter generally into the project objectives. The project has often responded quickly to such expressed needs, reflecting a willingness and ability to be flexible. One important area to which the project has responded is in responding to a request of parliament by providing training to deputies who are members of the High Court of Justice, a court made up of parliamentarians that is charged with trying senior government officials accused of committing crimes while in office. At the same time the evaluators note that the project leadership should be prepared to resist the temptation to expand activities beyond the natural framework of the project or to activities that are not of strategic development importance.

The project's objective of helping parliament to measure the country's progress against the Millennium Development Goals has potential to make a useful contribution to institutional strengthening and to meeting the MDGs. However, securing meaningful parliamentary involvement in the development, implementation, and oversight of national programmes such as MDGs and PRSP is a complex process that will require careful planning. An introductory workshop on the MDGs organized by the project is a useful first step, but genuinely effective parliamentary programme will require an intensive follow-up programme. It would be useful to consider this area for one of the main activities of a GPPS III phase.

Parliamentary groups play an important role in the life of the Nigerien parliament, a role that is poorly understood outside the Assembly. A peaceful democratic system rests in large part on the role played by the parliamentary groups of majority and opposition alike. The Nigerien experience could be an inspiration to other parliaments in the sub-region and beyond. More generally, Niger could play an important role in subregional exchanges. This would permit not only the exchanges of good practice but also reinforce Niger's confidence in the success of its own democratic transition.

5.5.1. *Methodology*

The methodology employed by the project in the areas of capacity-building in legislative production, oversight of government actions, and representation are all suitable in addressing the problems identified. The methodology focuses particularly on training as a key instrument to expand capacity. The study missions also served as a pedagogical tool. The methods used to address certain difficult questions such as non-literate deputies, for example through holding workshops in national languages, an approach rarely used in national institutions, provided evidence of a willingness to use innovative approaches.

The themes, methodologies, content and the quality of the trainers used demonstrated the project's close attention to specific needs. The efficient organization of training workshops is greatly aided by the staff workgroup on the conception and development of training modules. The training themes fit generally with the overall objectives of the project and the expressed interests and needs of parliamentarians. The trainers, both internal and external, were of high quality. Participatory training methods were generally used which increased the interest and involvement of participants in the workshops. Some international expertise was used for workshops, but there is room for additional international expertise, whether in the form of South-South collaboration or experts from elsewhere. While knowledge of ground realities is crucial, it is important that a project such as this takes advantage of the global network of support available through UNDP and partner organizations.

The workshops organized in national languages for deputies not fluent in French were an excellent and popular strategy, and given the number of deputies in this category, more workshops and seminars should be organized. The example of Niger would be

useful for other countries in the sub-region, even if the proportion of deputies who are non-literate in French is somewhat lower in many of the neighboring countries.

The organization of workshops during the parliamentary session presented some difficulties, as parliamentary business often imposes delays, sometimes at the last minute, or hampers turnout. One option would be to consider following the model of Benin where training programmes are held in different locations in the country, although the additional costs entailed may be a barrier.

5.5.2. *Project Impact*

The activities supported by the project have made a considerable contribution to the strengthening of parliament's capacities in the current legislature.

Concerning the quality of parliamentary work and legislative production there is a greater involvement of parliamentary commissions in the examination of bills proposed by the government. The strengthened capacities for analysis and critique are reflected in the increased number of amendments proposed by parliament.

Parliament's increased efficiency is demonstrated by its consideration and passage of a larger number of pieces of legislation proposed by government, and by a doubling in the number of laws proposed by parliamentarians themselves. Almost half of these propositions were adopted into law. The quality of parliamentarians' propositions has also improved significantly; whereas previously many propositions related to members' own concerns, more recent parliamentarians' bills relate to matters of common or national interest.

In the area of government oversight the impact of the project is demonstrated through the use of different constitutional mechanisms for government oversight, including interpellations of ministers, questions to the government, and commissions of parliamentary enquiry. The number of interpellations and questions has increased significantly. In three months during this second legislature of the Fifth Republic, parliamentarians called ministers as witnesses more frequently than in the entire previous five years of the first legislature of the Fifth Republic. Commissions of parliamentary enquiry had never previously been established. Similarly, the establishment of an oversight commission concerning state services in the interior of the country, and the establishment of ad hoc commissions in the case of ministers accused of corruption demonstrated parliament using these constitutional powers for the first time in the history of the country. The High Court of Justice, a constitutional body made up of deputies, is responsible for the organization of the trial of the accused ministers.

The project has also shown results in supporting the newly elected female deputies to play a full role in parliamentary life. The project has contributed to raising the profile of the women deputies and encouraged their effective participation in parliamentary debates and in parliamentary life generally. For the first time, two commissions are chaired by women and women MPs have shown to be most active in questioning the executive.

Concerning the number of deputies unschooled in French, the project has helped to improve their participation through training in national languages, giving them a better sense of their role and responsibilities as deputies.

The project has encouraged the creation of thematic networks in parliament, often launched after training workshops organized by the GPPS project, for example in the network of parliamentarians on gender issues, on corruption, etc. These networks provide a focus for parliamentary activities in priority areas.

5.5.3. *Project sustainability*

The training planning workgroup established by key cadres from the parliamentary administration with the support of external experts has played an important role in the success of the training programme. This workgroup represent a means to the continuation of strengthening activities after the end of GPPS support. Long-term sustainability of some activities such as representation will be dependent on an increase in parliament's own budget.

5.5.4. *Success factors*

- The project benefits from the unconditional support of the political and administrative leadership of the Assembly. The evaluators were highly impressed by the level of knowledge and involvement of all the key actors in the Assembly, beginning with the President of the Assembly, the vice presidents, the presidents, of commissions, the group of women parliamentarians, and the parliamentary administration. This support represents a major success factor.

- Another success factor is the coordinator herself, who manages the project with great enthusiasm and professionalism. Her constant availability is highly respected by all the key actors in parliament.

- The fact that the project is located within the parliamentary precinct is undoubtedly another beneficial factor, leading to high project profile and rapid availability and response.

5.5.5. *Administrative and financial management of the project*

As noted, the location of the project in the parliamentary precinct has undoubtedly helped the project to develop close links with the key parliamentary interlocutors, thus permitting administrative details in the implementation of activities to be quickly resolved. It has not always been easy to organize the steering committee, because of lack of availability of the key actors, but this is a frequent difficulty in parliamentary development projects. The presence of opposition party representatives in the steering committee is a highly positive factor which reflects the good practice of Nigerien democracy generally.

The Niamey office of UNDP has provided strong support to the project. Unfortunately the loss of the previous UNDP interlocutor has reduced the level of

contact with the project, and it is desirable that a permanent replacement be found. UNDP has strong capacity to support the project and can provide a window of support for the coordinator into global resources. Likewise the coordinator is encouraged to continue to use the expertise and support of the GPPS staff in Brussels and New York.

The project reporting is of very high quality. Reports are clear and detailed and prepared in a timely fashion. The only area for improvement would be in ensuring a consistent numbering pattern in reports, as it is difficult to follow project progress between reports when the numbering system changes. The numbering system where possible should follow the logframe in the Prodoc.

The project has been able to mobilize extensive positive coverage in the media through the combined efforts of the coordinator and of parliamentary communications staff.

5.6. <u>Recommendations for the continuation of the project</u>

All of the key actors emphasized their support of the project as a core vehicle for continuing the strengthening of the Niger parliament and strengthening of the democratic system in Niger. This dynamic must be encouraged and continued. The relationship between the Assembly and GPPS has been continuing since 2001 and it is now that the fruits of this longer-term collaboration are being clearly demonstrated. Parliamentary development in countries with limited resources and limited democratic tradition will inevitably be a long-term process. Nigerien democracy remains fragile despite its considerable advances, and it is highly desirable that support for a third phase of GPPS support be provided.

5.6.1. *Recommendation regarding a strategic plan for parliament*

The President of the National Assembly and the other key leaders within the institution are strongly committed to the idea of developing and implementing a long-term plan for parliamentary development. The evaluators are also favorable to this option which responds to the multiple challenges still facing the institution. A long-term strategic plan would also be a key tool in assuring the sustainability of the GPPS project. An organization was originally selected by parliament to assist it in developing such a plan, but there have been significant delays in implementation,.. In the view of the evaluators it is important to engage expertise that can deliver results within established timeframes. The GPPS Niger staff should work closely with GPPS globally to reconsider the development plan for this strategic plan and to ensure the involvement of national and international expertise.

5.6.2. *Recommendation regarding deputies not schooled in French*

The problematic of deputies who are not schooled in French is a recurrent problem which unfortunately appears to be becoming more severe. On the one hand, this reflects the make up of the population as a whole; on the other hand, the high

proportion of deputies in this category is a real barrier to parliamentary effectiveness. In addition to the seminars in national languages described above, GPPS supported a regional enquiry into this issue, which demonstrated that Niger has a much higher proportion of non-literate deputies than other countries in the sub-region. The study produced some useful data. It will now be important to continue the process through the development of a workplan to improve the situation. The strengthening of the Assembly's interpretation services, as well as the transcription of plenary contributions made in the national languages are relatively easy matters to include in such a workplan. Options such as the provision of intensive French language classes represent a theoretical solution; however, it is unlikely that all the members of this group of deputies will be prepared and able to follow such a course. Any results would be shown only in the long-term, by which time a new crop of unschooled deputies might be elected. In addition to augmented support to these deputies, the project may also be able to play the role of facilitator of a discussion with the political groups with a view to finding solutions to address the issue.

5.6.3. *Recommendations and observations regarding the national assembly radio 'Voice of the Hemicycle'*

All the actors emphasized the limited communications capacities of parliament. The assembly needs a higher level of visibility and to be closer to the public, and in order to achieve this it needs to improve its own communications capacities. Despite its weak transmitting power, the Voice of the Hemicycle radio is appreciated by both the population and by parliamentarians. Parliament is strongly supportive of implementing a radio with a stronger transmitter and thus wider coverage, and also providing a programming schedule rather than merely retransmitting Assembly plenary debates. GPPS has a key role to play in supporting such a strengthened parliamentary radio. In the project GPPS II, as we have noted above, links have been made with community radio stations that will transmit recorded messages about parliament. There are plans to measure the impact of these distributed messages, but in the opinion of the evaluators this does not fully respond to parliament and the GPPS project's goals of ensuring the retransmission of plenary debates. In addition the modality of physically transmitting tapes is not efficient. In GPPS III efforts should be made to support parliament in acquiring a larger transmitting capacity, and the potential for directly relaying Voice of the Hemicycle to community and private radio station through satellite. Private radios, which often have a large coverage in regional centres, have an important role to play in helping to extend radio coverage of parliament in a territory as large as that of Niger.

5.6.4. *Recommendations regarding strengthening of the capacities of the Finance Commission*

The role of budgetary oversight is one of the most critical if not the most critical role that a parliament plays in a transparent democratic system. Deputies benefited from training on parliamentary oversight in 2005. However there is room for a more specialized and intensive support to the Finance Commission in a future project phase. The GPPS Niger project should consider holding a joint workshop with the

Finance Commission with a view to develop a joint intensive training programme for Commission members and their staff. In addition, Niger is still hampered by delays in the final reconciliation of revenues and expenditures, which represents the crucial final stage in parliamentary budgetary oversight. The project could assist in addressing this issue through supporting a study on the functioning of the 'loi de règlement' which should also involve the Cour des Comptes. Funding would need to be mobilized to permit this activity.

5.6.5. *Recommendation regarding the Legislative Review*

The Review has been produced for several years and is appreciated by the bureau and the parliamentary administration. It plays an important role in presenting an image of parliament as the location for serious political debate. It would be useful during 2007 to assemble the principal partners and users of the review to determine its continuing role. Two questions that should be clarified are the target audience of the publication, and assuring the targeted distribution of the review to that audience. It is crucial, nonetheless, that any changes made to the review should not turn it into merely a publicity vehicle for the Assembly.

Section Three
Regional Activities

Regional Programming Background

The idea of including regional (and global) initiatives in the GPPS programme dates back to the GPPS I project. Initially, GPPS I had planned to include a component on building the capacity of regional parliamentary associations, in order to help ensure availability of technical expertise to national parliaments. This was not found to be a practically feasible plan, however, and GPPS I instead focused on "identifying means to strengthen regional parliamentary cooperation and to undertake activities that reinforce the role and capacities of parliaments within a region. In effect, this meant GPPS supporting a variety of regional seminars, as well as two regional parliamentary associations, the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, and a looser group of parliaments from the former Soviet space. Seminars were supported in the Arab region, in West Africa, Central Africa and East Africa, East Asia and the Pacific Islands. Themes included parliament's role in budget oversight, political parties in parliament, and more general parliamentary development themes. The mid-term review of GPPS I was quite positive regarding these activities, suggesting that several regional fora had enabled synergy with national pilots thus extending programme learning. A key evaluation finding from GPPS I was that the regional fora represented a useful means to approach sensitive subjects that might be difficult to tackle directly in national-level projects. As a result of the experience in GPPS I, an expanded, more formal, and more focused regional component was included in GPPS II.

6. Arab Region

Summary

Background

- The main aim of the regional programming is to model innovative parliamentary strengthening techniques that can best be addressed at an international rather than national level

- A coordinated system of regional programming was instituted with GPPS II

- The programming is carried out in conjunction with POGAR[15] under the formal title Parliamentary Development Initiative for the Arab Region (PDIAR)

- The regional programme currently has two dedicated staff people, one in Casablanca and another in Beirut, and supports part of a POGAR advisor position in Beirut.

Activities summary

- The regional team supported the development of ARPAC, the Arab regional chapter of GOPAC, a worldwide association of MPs working on anti-corruption issues

- Several regional seminars were held on broader issues to prepare for launch of thematic parliamentary working groups

- A working group made up of MPs from several GPPS and non-GPPS Arab countries has been established to examine democratic oversight of the security sector

- The regional initiative has launched www.arabparliaments.org, a parliamentary development knowledge portal in Arabic and English, and produced a large body of studies, reports, and user handbooks on parliamentary development issues

- Another working group has been established to consider development of political party legislation

- Several regional seminars were held on legislative drafting and Arabic-language support documentation developed; it has been decided these activities at present are best carried out at the national level due to country specificities

Evaluation summary

- The Arab region programme has been innovative and effective in building parliamentary development programming in a challenging environment. It is a model for regional programming in other areas

- The international working group model is a useful approach both in helping to address issues that cannot be directly tackled at the national level and in providing an informal opportunity for reform-minded MPs to collaborate together across the region

- The work on security sector oversight has been particularly innovative, on an issue that is crucial to continued democratization in the region

- Strong partnerships have been developed in the regional programming, both within UNDP through POGAR, and also with other global organizations with specifically relevant expertise, such as DCAF[16] in the security sector, and GOPAC on anti-corruption.

- The merging of GPPS and POGAR work in the Arab region activities is perhaps a unique global/regional collaboration within UNDP and should be seen as an example for other programme initiatives.

- Some valuable research and reporting material has been produced on Arab parliaments through GPPS support, primarily in Arabic. Key documents are being translated into English and/or French wherever possible, both to share knowledge and best practices and to improve broader understanding of democracy issues in the Arab region.

- Thought could be given to a new working group on MDGs / poverty reduction; national projects need assistance in developing relevant, effective parliamentary programming in these areas

- While a regional GPPS hierarchy should be avoided, it would be beneficial if regional staff were available to help provide short-term support to programmes facing difficulties, such as occurred in Morocco.

Detailed assessment

6.1. Background

The Arab region is one where democratic transition has occurred much less quickly than in other parts of the world. The different countries making up the region have varied governance systems, but only in Lebanon is there a long history of multi-party democracy, and even there, as noted in the Lebanon country pilot evaluation in this document, the democratic tradition is seriously hampered by the constitutionalization of the distribution of state power positions between different religious communities. In recent years, there have been tentative moves towards democratization in several Arab region countries, although in none of them is the final outcome of these developments clear. In some countries, advances have been followed by social unrest and a retreat towards more authoritarian governance methods. In other countries, early hopes for a thoroughgoing democratization have been replaced by a sense that only controlled democratization will be permitted, with a tendency for legislative institutions to remain weak in comparison with executive power. Nonetheless, comparing the present situation with that a decade ago, many countries have seen a modest but nonetheless real and tangible advance in the exercise of democratic freedoms.

During GPPS I, the only country pilot involving the Arab Region was the Palestinian Territories. Unfortunately, due to the unstable situation there, activities in GPPS I had to be suspended and could not be continued in GPPS II. Although Palestine was mentioned as a possible recipient of contingency funding during GPPS II, this has not proven feasible.

Despite the relatively difficult environment for democratization in the Arab Region, a decision was made by UNDP and the Kingdom of Belgium to select the Arab region as a priority area for GPPS II. The rationale for the selection of the Arab region included several of the factors noted above:

- Ø Encouraging steps towards democratization in several Arab region states
- Ø Continuing roadblocks towards full democratization
- Ø Pivotal role of parliaments in engaging civil society
- Ø Need to support increased women's representation in Arab parliaments, which lag behind most other parts of the world

National pilots under GPPS II were launched in Algeria and in Morocco. Subsequently, a further pilot was launched in Lebanon. At the same time, a series of GPPS II regional activities were planned, with two broad objectives:

- Providing independent information and policy support through workshops, web-based information dissemination, and regional workshops

- Networking women parliamentarians, through a web portal and through exchanges and support to attend regional and global parliamentary forums.

The Arab region activities are implemented in coordination with POGAR, the UNDP programme on governance in the Arab region, which carries out governance development activities throughout the region from its base in Beirut, emphasizing information-transmittal through its web portal (www.pogar.org) and region-wide policy dialog and comparative assessment of key governance issues. POGAR has been in operation since 2000. The Arab region activities evaluated here are in effect a joint project of GPPS and POGAR. Formally this project is known as the Parliamentary Development Initiative in the Arab Region (PDIAR), but we will describe it here as the Arab regional project.

6.2. **Regional Project Activities**

Within the rubric of the broad objectives noted above, the Arab regional activities have flourished into a range of specific activities. Prior to the regional project, relatively little parliamentary development resources were available in the Arabic language. Activities carried out to date include:

- Translation of a number of documents into Arabic, including handbooks on the legislative function, gender and budgeting, oversight of the security sector, UNDP

practice notes and parliamentary development manuals, role of parliaments in reconciliation, etc.

- Desk studies carried out on key issues of importance to democratization and parliaments in the Arab region, including legislative drafting, Arab women's political participation, regional study on the budget process, comparative regional study on parliamentary rules of procedure, survey of youth legislation, etc.

- Publications to assist parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in the Arab region to carry out their functions, including a manual for drafters, and a manual on legislation for youth

- Regional seminars on key issues in parliamentary development, including a major regional seminar held in Algeria in September 2005, several workshops on legislative drafting, seminar on gender budgeting

- Working groups of parliamentarians interested in playing a key role in strategic parliamentary activities including in security sector oversight, and political party legislation, and budget oversight / corruption. Plans are underway to develop a working group on parliamentary rules / bylaws

- Working groups supported by extensive background research on the working group topic areas (the security sector oversight group has been provided with twelve different commissioned papers and other background documents; the group on political party representation with a similar number)

- Support to the creation of ARPAC, the Arab regional chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)

- Regional activities as part of the Parliaments and Conflict Reduction global project (see in Global evaluation section)

- Focus on ensuring female representation in all of the project activities, as well as support to women deputies attended other international events of strategic importance

- The creation of a web portal, www.arabparliaments.org, through which the project materials and other relevant information is disseminated.

The Arab regional activities are coordinated by a full-time project coordinator located in Casablanca. In addition, a project assistant is located in Beirut, whose responsibilities include maintenance of the www.arabparliaments.org website. The senior advisor at POGAR, whose salary is partially covered by the GPPS program, provides, along with the GPPS staff, direction and support to the regional project.

6.3. <u>General assessment of Arab region project activities</u>

The Arab region activities are remarkable for their scope, volume, and strategic vision. The evaluators were highly impressed not merely with the extent of the work conducted but primarily with the rigorous and strategic manner in which it has been carried out. In this assessment we will focus on some of the results which may be useful for other parliamentary development initiatives:

A. The regional parliamentary development seminar in Algeria. This seminar brought together over 150 parliamentarians from 16 countries along with parliamentary development experts and researchers. Participants received over 20 presentations and papers on topics of interest in parliamentary development.

- *Often, large events of this type are perceived as of limited value; they are costly and time-consuming to organize, and it is very difficult to measure impact. In this case, however, the seminar was very useful in building an* esprit de corps *among parliamentarians, who in the Arab region often feel isolated and lacking in authority in comparison with the executive branch of government. The strong emphasis on the* content *of the seminar, with sessions underpinned by research papers, added to the seminar's working orientation. Further, holding the seminar in Algeria helped to build the prestige of the parliament in that country, reducing something of a sense of separateness that has marked that country for various reasons. The seminar demonstrated the usefulness of* **strategic keynote/launch events as part of a broader democratic development strategy**.

B. The use of working groups (originally described in the GPPS II proposal as task forces) as a basis for building dynamic parliamentary development activities at the regional level

- *In the evaluators' experience, this is a unique approach to democratic development. One of the dilemmas of democratic development internationally has been to find ways to support democratization without being perceived as intervening in a country's internal affairs. An excessively directive approach adopted by some bilateral democracy-building initiatives has often diverted attention away from democratization towards the external 'imposition' of a democratic model. On the other hand, while regional parliamentary associations have important functions, they generally do not provide leadership in democratic development. The regional working group approach, in which MPs self-select to participate in discussion and knowledge building about strategic parliamentary development issues, enables nationally sensitive issues to be addressed in an international environment where experiences can be shared. Another useful feature of the approach is the provision of background papers commissioned by experts within the region, to underpin discussion.* ***The next and difficult step of this***

process will be supporting transference to the national level. It will be important for the national pilot and regional GPPS staff to work together more closely in the next period, where possible providing support programming to permit national transference of concepts developed at the regional level.

C. The emphasis on grounding regional activities through commissioned papers and studies.

- *Typically, research and practice activities in democratic development are poorly integrated. Practical activities often lack strategic underpinning, focusing on technical skill-development with inadequate attention to the political and institutional context that may preclude appropriation of new skills. At the same time, research-oriented work is often untested through practical application, and poorly-grounded hypotheses can become the basis for extensive programming. The Arab region faces a particular deficit of Arabic language analysis of democratic issues, and the commissioned papers and studies are all in Arabic. The usage of commissioned papers and studies as a basis for regional seminars and working groups brings the theoretical and practical together, and also helps to build a joint researcher and practitioner community. It will be important in the next phase of the project to transfer this methodology to the national pilots. In addition, democratization of the Arab region depends not only on building capacity and understanding in the region, but also on expanding outside actors' knowledge of the region. **The evaluators support the plans to make project research available in English and other pertinent languages**.*

D. The focus on democratic oversight of the security sector, in conjunction with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).

- *One of the barriers faced by Arab societies in the democratization process is the virtual independence from democratic scrutiny of the armed forces and other parts of the security sector. For historical reasons the security sector is extremely powerful in most Arab countries, and has often played an overtly political role. A crucial step towards democratization is the placing of the security sector under responsible civilian democratic oversight, through national parliamentary institutions. However this is evidently a highly contentious and potentially destabilizing issue, especially when handled 'head-on' at the national level. GPPS Arab region's regional working group approach, launched in May 2006, has generated considerable interest and involvement from parliamentarians from six Arab region countries and security sector representatives. The working group is now focusing on national security policy as a framework for institutionalization of security policy within the democratic state.*

E. The www.arabparliament.org web portal

- *The portal provides a wealth of information on Arab parliamentary development. As noted above, much of the documentation is available only in Arabic and the GPPS Arab region activities to ensure documents are produced in English (and preferably also in French) is endorsed by the evaluators. It is also crucial that this web portal be extensively marketed both within UNDP circles and beyond, as the key challenge facing contemporary information sharing activities is to assure visibility and accessibility. The fact that POGAR's own website does not adequately showcase the arabparliaments.org portal is an indication of the marketing challenge facing this aspect of the project.*

6.3.1. Methodology

The methodologies used by this aspect of the GPPS have been detailed in the discussion and assessment above. To recap, the project grounds its activities in knowledge-building tied to intensive involvement of parliamentarians in addressing key issues facing the region and individual countries. Seminars and workshops tend to be smaller in size, and involve parliamentarians likely to play an active role in their countries in addressing the issues under discussion. Current emphasis is on building workgroups that will build a corps of reform-oriented deputies with specific policy expertise. The regional project has worked closely with key partners, including DCAF, Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union and GOPAC, as well as POGAR.

As noted above, the evaluators strongly endorse the methodological approach being pursued by the Arab regional programme. There is room for further synergy between the Arab region national pilots and regional programming.

6.3.2. Implementation structure

Like the overall GPPS programme, the Arab regional project relies on a virtual structure, with a small project team distributed in the region. The advantages of this structure in terms of lack of organizational overhead outweigh the disadvantage of distance, as the project team uses new communications technologies to remain in permanent contact. The evaluators view the presence of a dedicated project coordinator as crucial to the success of the Arab regional programme, which is a lesson that should be transferred to the West African project. Obviously, the Arab region project's success is also highly dependent on the qualities of the current team, which is one of the disadvantages of the very thin organizational structure as turnover of personnel can effectively freeze a programme. As noted above, there is room for a more consistent and coordinated dialogue with the country pilots. The evaluators also believe that the availability of the regional team to support national pilots facing challenges or roadblocks should be formalized in the GPPS funding agreements with the national pilots.

6.4. <u>Recommendations for future actions</u>

i. The ***Arab regional activities are highly successful and should be continued and expanded*** with the provision of additional resources in a future phase of GPPS

ii. The organizational structure of the Arab regional activities is appropriate to its needs and functioning and should be maintained with additional staffing as necessary to permit an expanded workplan

iii. The methodology involving ***integration of analytical knowledge with parliamentarian action should be continued***. It is important that background knowledge should be available in English as well, thus building external understanding of democratization issues in the Arab world

iv. ***The workgroup approach is a promising innovation*** in parliamentary development practice that should be continued. Efforts should be made in a future GPPS to track workgroup impact in national parliament reform, including through GPPS support to parliamentarian-driven reform initiatives, drawn from regional working group activities, in national pilots

v. The focus on ***security sector oversight***, in partnership with the respected international foundation DCAF, is interesting and should be continued. It is a potential example for other regions (sub-Saharan Africa, Asia)

vi. Stronger efforts should be made to build and maintain ***links between the regional project and the national pilots***, perhaps through a regular conference call. The regional team should have a formally-designated role in supporting national pilots in the region, particularly where the national pilot faces difficulties as has occurred during GPPS II in Morocco

vii. Consideration should be given to regional activity to build a more innovative and more effective approach on ***parliamentary involvement in establishing and monitoring human development and anti-poverty goals***. The evaluators noted that much of the work in these areas carried out in national pilots both in the Arab region and elsewhere lacked resonance with parliamentarians and thus generated resistance. The regional and global GPPS levels have a key role to play in overcoming this type of methodological problem in parliamentary development

viii. A greater ***effort should be made to market the arabparliaments.org*** web portal

ix. The project's strategic vision is commendable. There is room to ***extend the project visioning and planning process to include key reform-oriented parliamentarians***, such as those identified through the regional working

groups. This will ensure greater ownership of the project by its beneficiaries, as well as building project legitimacy.

7. West Africa

<u>Summary</u>

Background

- The West Africa programme is coordinated through an arrangement between the institutional development advisor at Regional Facility in Dakar and the GPPS programme office based in New York

- A workplan of activities was developed in 2005/2006, although there were delays both in development and implementation of the workplan

Activities

- The activities conducted that have reached partial or full implementation include regional work on the problem of non-schooled deputies, region-wide studies on the strengths and weaknesses of parliamentary development, and a conference on women parliamentarians, the MDGs and the African Peer Review mechanism

- There have been a number of successful exchanges, involving for example the Niger, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Rwanda parliaments, with a special focus on encouraging exchanges of women parliamentarians

- In addition, a large regional conference on the role of parliaments in anti-corruption was held in Accra in conjunction with Transparency International and Institute for Security Studies (South Africa)

- A research assistant was hired to promote and facilitate experiences and information exchange on parliamentary development

Evaluation summary

- The activities planned by the West African regional project were highly relevant to the needs of West African parliaments

- The problematic of non-schooled deputies, need to empower women parliamentarians, and the importance of strengthening parliamentary administrations are all areas that warrant further work

- The anti-corruption workshop was highly successful and provided an important opening for work on this subject which should be followed up both by the new BDP anti-corruption advisor and GPPS regional staff.

- The difficulties encountered in the unfolding of the regional activities demonstrated the value of the dedicated coordination support provided to the Arab region project

- Although the West Africa project management team produced a ambitious workplan, the dedicated coordinating staff were not available to see all of these projects into action and/or realization

- The Regional governance officer with the UNDP SURF office in Dakar is too heavily committed with responsibility for support to country offices across a

whole region to be able to coordinate the project. The SURF officer should provide strategic advice to the regional GPPS project rather than being responsible for operations

- For future regional work, efforts should be made to recruit a dedicated GPPS regional coordinator in West/Central Africa

- Once an adequately resourced coordinating structure is developed, the current workplan should be reexamined to assess state of execution and determine next steps.

Detailed assessment

7.1. Background

West Africa as a region includes many of the countries with Human Development Indicators in the lowest ten percent in the world. There are many reasons for this, including the colonial heritage of underdevelopment, and often difficult climatic conditions. Governance has also been an issue in the postcolonial period that has contributed to lagging development in comparison to other regions of the world. Many countries in the region have experienced periods of authoritarian rule and of political instability. Since the 1990's, however, most countries in the region have embarked on a democratic transition. With some exceptions, these experiments have been successful and have generated a substantial democratic dividend in terms of economic growth and enhanced human rights. Nevertheless many countries within the region continue to face governance challenges including weak and under-resourced legislative institutions.

The majority of countries within West Africa have externally-financed parliamentary development programmes, including the two GPPS national pilots in Benin and Niger. During GPPS I, limited regional activities were already commenced, including a first exchange between the parliaments of Niger and Benin. The regional project under GPPS II aims to build on the success of the national pilots, and expand the opportunities for learning, exchange, and development activities more widely in the West African region.

7.2. Regional Project Activities

A decision was made for GPPS II to focus national pilot activities in West Africa and the Arab region, therefore it was logical that the reinforced regional component should include these two regions. Some of the West African regional activities have extended to Central Africa.

In the 2004 Project Document for GPPS II, it was proposed to carry out West African regional activities focusing on two main themes:

- Peer support, regional exchanges and sharing of best practices on budget analysis and oversight

- Dialogue and constructive opposition in parliaments

Initially, the GPPS II West Africa regional activities were informally coordinated by the global GPPS team with input from the Governance Institution specialist at the West/Central Africa SURF (Dakar regional resource centre). During 2004 and 2005 a variety of activities were carried out, including:

A. Visit of Benin parliamentarians to the Niger National Assembly (this activity was the reciprocal visit of a 2003 visit to Benin by Nigerien deputies to the Benin Assembly)

B. A training seminar for Francophone African countries on the role of parliament and the budget process, held in Helsinki in collaboration between UNDP, the World Bank Institute, and the Finnish government

C. A seminar on gender budgeting methodology held in conjunction with the World Bank in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

D. Support for parliamentary staff from Benin and the Democratic Republic of Congo to attend the General Assembly of the Reseau Africain des Personnels de Parlements (RAPP) in 2005.

In order to provide a more structured framework for the West African regional initiatives, in September 2005 a team was established to provide management direction, including both GPPS and non-GPPS UNDP staff and consisting of the UNDP HQ Parliamentary Advisor, the Governance Institutions specialist at the West/Central Africa SURF, the GPPS Programme Manager, and the GPPS Programme Officer. The team developed a workplan that built upon the original GPPS II project document. The workplan included the following elements for 2006 – 2007. Current state of execution is listed below:

- A study of non schooled deputies in order to understand the dimension and needs of the group, and to propose practical actions to provide them with better support

- Ø *By the time of the evaluation, the study of the non-schooled deputies had been carried out, although an anticipated further step remained to be taken in validating the study and determining future actions*

- A study of the obstacles to professionalization of the parliamentary administration in the region, and a regional validation seminar to pursue the findings of the professionalization study

Ø *Six national studies were commissioned from experts in Central and West Africa. The reports have now been finalized and the programme is planning a regional validation seminar.*

- Regional training seminar for women parliamentarians on the Millennium Development Goals and the African Peer Review Mechanism

Ø *A successful seminar was organized in September 2006, in collaboration with the Canadian Parliamentary centre, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, involving women parliamentarians from seven West and Central African countries*

- A workshop/seminar on involving parliamentarians in the fight against corruption

Ø *A successful workshop was held in March 2006 in Accra, Ghana, jointly organised by Transparency International, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and UNDP. Products of the workshops include two handbooks on carrying out anti-corruption activities, dedicated to civil society and parliamentarians respectively*

- Regional activities as part of the global initiative on the role of parliaments in preventing and reducing conflict

Ø *The Africa regional activities were conducted and fed into the overall global parliament and conflict reduction process, which is discussed below in the evaluation of the global component of GPPS*

- A Clearing House for the circulation and dissemination of information on parliaments and parliamentary development

Ø *A researcher was hired to work under the supervision of the governance specialist in Dakar. This project has been commenced, but limited progress has been achieved*

7.3. <u>General assessment of West African region project activities</u>

Several of the specific activities conducted in West Africa resulted in useful contributions to parliamentary development, particularly where the activity involved the direct sharing of information and ideas regarding challenges facing parliament. This was the case, for example, in exchanges between parliaments in West and Central Africa, in raising awareness of the role of parliaments in anti-corruption activities and the importance of the UN convention against corruption (UNCAC), and women parliamentarians' role in anti-poverty and Millennium Development Goals realization through the September 2006 Ouagadougou workshop, and the 2005 gender budgeting seminar.

Particular positive attention is drawn to the anti-corruption workshop held in March 2006. From the UNDP side, this activity was coordinated primarily by the UNDP BDP New York anti-corruption staffer. The workshop was timely in addressing the new global and regional conventions against corruption, involved important global and regional civil society actors in the field of anti-corruption, received encouraging feedback from parliamentarian participants, and laid a framework for future anti-corruption activities. The workshop also resulted in the development and validation of two handbooks for parliamentarians and for civil society on conducting anti-corruption activities. It will be important to follow-up this activity to ensure the learning and commitment built through the workshop is sustained. Options would include working with APNAC (the African Parliamentary Network Against Corruption) and/or national chapters of APNAC working on relevant anti-corruption topics, for example the ratification and implementation of the UN and African Union anti-corruption conventions.

Some of the planned documentary and research activities regarding key issues facing West African parliamentarians have also been achieved, although several activities appear to lag behind schedule and would need to be hastened in order to assure completion before the end of the GPPS II cycle. These delayed items include the follow-up to the regional study on non-schooled parliamentarians in West Africa and the case studies on the strengthening needs of parliamentary administrations in West and Central Africa. It is important that the information gathered on these important topics should be used at the national and regional levels to foster parliamentary strengthening.

In total the output of the West Africa activities in comparison with the planned activities is somewhat disappointing, given the high achievement rate in many other areas of the GPPS II programme. Interviewees readily acknowledged that this was the case, although the ascribed reasons varied from informant to informant. Some of the explanations provided included:

- Excessively ambitious original plans; given the different actors in the West African regional programming had not previously worked together, it would have been better to begin with some relatively small-scale regional activities and plan larger scale projects after working modalities were established

- Communications breakdowns and interpersonal differences between some of the actors involved in the West Africa regional programming

- Lack of clarity as to the roles and responsibilities of different actors in the regional project, including the UNDP West Africa governance SURF and the former BDP democratic governance JPO

- Excessive complexity of processes such as contracting for the implementation of various of the project activities

- Failure to keep to established timelines for conduct of project activities

- Need for clearer links between the research activities and their application in parliamentary development

7.3.1. *Methodology*

The methodology adopted by the West African regional project involved support for region-wide activities on issues that are either motivated by global concern (for example, anti-corruption and parliaments and conflict reduction) or national experiences (non-schooled deputies and weaknesses in parliamentary administrations). The topics were generally highly pertinent.

The regionally-driven topics on non-schooled deputies and on parliamentary administrations entailed research studies followed by validation and implementation of approved recommendations. Although the topics were well-chosen, they would have benefited from a more detailed and explicit strategic vision underpinning. The methodology used may not be the most likely to lead to practical outcomes, although this is a speculative conclusion given the delays encountered in completing the activities. In the view of the evaluators it would be preferable for research studies of this type to be integrated in a continuing involvement of deputies, for example through the working group approach that has been used effectively in the Arab region activities.

7.3.2. *Implementation structure*

As noted above, the implementation structure of the West African regional activities changed somewhat over the course of the project. Initially, coordination was informal, and driven mainly by UNDP/GPPS with input from the regional office in Dakar. Subsequently, a more formal approach was adopted in which a management team was established including the UNDP HQ Parliamentary Advisor, the Governance Institution specialist at the West/Central Africa SURF, the GPPS Programme Manager in Brussels, and the GPPS Programme Officer (JPO) in New York. In addition, an assistant was hired to support the programme out of the SURF office in Dakar.

Given the SURF advisor's overall responsibilities for governance in the region, it would be appropriate to engage a dedicated coordinator to the GPPS West Africa region.

7.4. <u>Recommendations for future actions</u>

Despite the difficulties encountered by the West Africa regional programming to date, the activity areas remain important. Some of the areas to be considered for future work include:

7.4.1. *Potential activity foci*

i. *Seeking ways to address the problem of non-schooled deputies in certain of the West African countries*. The study discovered a considerable variation in the proportion of non-schooled deputies in different countries, as well as differences in the way that countries dealt with the issue. The issue is clearly very sensitive and thus options for addressing it should be carefully thought out. In the evaluators' view the problem is composed of two separate issues; the problem of deputies unable to communicate in the official language (typically French or English), and the question of deputies' capacity to absorb legislative texts. Although there will be a considerable overlap between the groups affected by each of the issues, the alternatives for addressing the problem are different. In regard to language used in the parliamentary chamber, some parliaments within the region permit the use of national languages and provide translation, at least during plenary sessions. In regard to capacity to absorb legislative texts, some constitutions in the region establish minimum educational criteria for eligibility to elected office or focus on qualified staff that can assist the non-schooled MPs in their duties, although this could be considered a serious violation of equality rights. It may be possible to organize a multi-national task force of senior deputies and/or former deputies, to study different practices and to present findings to a regional workshop.

ii. *Parliamentary oversight on human development goals and poverty reduction*. One of the difficulties generally in UNDP-driven parliamentary strengthening activities on the Millennium Development Goals has been a tendency for activities to follow a set format involving relatively abstract seminars on the content of the MDGs and the potential role for parliaments. In many cases, in parliamentary strengthening programs operated through GPPS, UNDP, and more generally in the democratic development community, these initiatives have delivered little or no long-term impact on the work of parliaments. A similar problem has tended to occur with poverty-reduction programmes (PRSPs) which are primarily 'owned' by the World Bank and IMF in conjunction with national governments. Here, the difficulty is often that, while the programmes' impact on national policy is wide-ranging, parliamentary involvement is very limited[17]. The proposed regional seminar of Francophone Parliaments on poverty reduction, which has not been carried out to date, remains important but perhaps should be expanded to cover the role of parliaments in national development programmes, which would cover, in practical terms, both human development programmes such as MDGs at the national level, and poverty reduction programming.

iii. *Anti-corruption*. With GPPS financial support, UNDP in conjunction with Transparency International, and also involving the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the African Parliamentary Network against

Corruption (APNAC) organized a successful regional workshop for parliamentarians on anti-corruption in Accra, Ghana in March 2006. The deliberations resulted in the preparation of handbooks for parliamentarians and civil society on anti-corruption related to the ratification and implementation of the UN and African Union conventions against corruption. The workshop also resulted in a series of recommendations for future actions and activities, including regular regional meetings of parliamentarians and the expansion of activities to include Central as well as West African countries. There may be room for further GPPS regional activity in this area, which might include collaboration with APNAC to facilitate further meetings on progress towards ratification and implementation of the multinational conventions against corruption. Given the strength of GPPS and broader UNDP programming in the West African francophone countries, and the specific constitutional environment in which most of these countries operate, it may be possible and desirable to establish a working group of West African francophone country parliamentarians on corruption. In the event that a GPPS III expands its activities to include Central African countries, parliamentarians from the Central African region could also be included.

7.4.2. *Organization of the West African regional activities.*

i. *Regional co-ordinator.* A preferable implementation model would be one similar to that used in the Arab regional GPPS activities, where a dedicated staff is contracted to manage these activities in collaboration with POGAR but under the general direction of the GPPS programme manager in Brussels. Further, the number of activities planned should be restricted to ensure high quality and completion rate.

ii. *Strategic planning.* The evaluators felt that future West African activities would benefit from a longer term, strategic approach. Perhaps this could be launched through a workshop during 2007, involving, in addition to the current West African project committee, the GPPS national pilot coordinators, UNDP parliamentary development staff from other non-GPPS countries in West Africa, and some of the key parliamentarians from the GPPS projects. Such a workshop would permit regional programming for a future GPPS phase to reflect the point of view of the different actors, ensuring buy-in, and providing clear direction to a new regional coordinator.

iii. *Working groups.* The evaluators felt that the working group approach adopted by the Arab region has been quite effective in gaining input from parliamentarians while avoiding excessive overhead involved in large conferences and seminars. Issues such as the non-schooled deputies lend themselves to a workgroup approach.

Section Four

8. Global Activities

Summary

Background

- Global programming has been part of the GPPS programme since GPPS I. In GPPS I emphasis was placed on normative tools, action research, and knowledge networking

- In GPPS II, global programming has been expanded and systematized, focusing on carrying out specific projects in the cutting edge of parliamentary development

- These include parliaments and conflict prevention and recovery, iKNOW Politics (increasing women's participation in politics), baseline standards of parliamentary institutions' functioning, and ethnic minorities and parliaments

Parliaments and Conflict Prevention and Recovery (CPR)

- Easily the largest of the GPPS II global projects

- Project derived from the common experience of democratic governance workers that while large scale resources can be mobilized for ending hostilities and organizing pluralist elections, very little support is provided to help build and sustain democratic institutions in countries emerging from conflict

- The project involved a multi-layer process to understand experiences and best practices on parliaments and CPR. 27 country studies were commissioned on the role of parliaments and CPR. These national studies were followed up by five regional workshops which considered the studies and whose comments provided the foundation for 5 regional syntheses of experiences

- A special focus was placed on women and conflict, with a major study commissioned that identified ways in which parliaments need to intervene in the peacemaking and peacebuilding process to ensure the special needs of women are addressed

- UNDP's lead office on CPR, the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), joined the project as partner

- A planning meeting was held in Geneva in July 2005 in which a draft set of *Guidelines for the international community on Parliaments, Crises Prevention and Recovery* was established. A donors' meeting was then held in Brussels in April 2006 on the *Guidelines* and on the general principle that resources must be found for sustainable democratisation in post-conflict societies

- A comprehensive website www.parlcpr.undp.org, was launched that included all materials produced nationally, regionally, and globally

- Follow-up activities are planned by UNDP BDP and BCPR in order to widely distribute the study findings as well as develop pilot projects on parliaments and conflict prevention and recovery

iKNOW Politics

- iKNOW Politics (International Knowledge Network on Women in Politics) is an original multi-partner project designed to expand women's participation in politics. The original partners of the project were UNDP, the National Democratic Institute (USA), and UNIFEM; International IDEA and the Interparliamentary Union joined the partnership later.

- The organizing product of iKNOW Politics is a website which will act as a comprehensive global portal on women's participation in politics. Launch is planned for 27 February, 2007 in New York, with internationally prominent women political personalities

- Plans for the portal are ambitious; it will include topical discussion, the provision of expert advice, links to external expertise, profiles of women in politics, etc. The portal will initially be available in English, French, and Spanish, with an Arabic version by end 2007

- The portal is intended to be accessed both directly by women involved in or interested in politics, and by professionals working in the area. As noted above, the key project element had yet to be launched when the evaluation was conducted and thus could not be evaluated. A specific evaluation of iKNOW Politics is planned

- Apart from GPPS funding, iKNOW Politics has also been awarded a sizeable contribution from the UN Democracy Fund. In the long-term it would be anticipated that iKNOW Politics would secure sustainable funding independently from GPPS.

Standards for democratic parliaments

- International governance practices are increasingly guided by formal and informal standards or norms

- GPPS has worked with both the IPU and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) on best-practices or norm-setting projects

- The GPPS/IPU project entailed development of a workbook on parliamentary best practices

- GPPS has supported the continuation of work already begun by CPA in conjunction with the World Bank Institute, which has resulted in the development of recommended 'benchmarks for democratic legislatures'.

Minorities and parliaments

- In order to fulfill their democratic role, parliaments must properly represent the interests and needs of national minorities, including indigenous peoples

- In 2005 the United Nations appointed an Independent Expert on minority issues, charged with findings ways for the United Nations to mainstream minority concerns in its work

- As a first step, GPPS is financially supporting a contract between the IPU and the Minority Rights Group, which is preparing a 'scoping report' on the current state of representation of minorities in parliaments across the world

- Future activities would be dependent on the outcome of this initial study, and an expert consultation is scheduled for March 19 and 20, 2007 at the IPU in Geneva to consider this study.

Global activities – Evaluation summary - general

- The global activities undertaken include key issues of broad relevance to parliaments in developing and transitional countries; the issues are ambitious, well-chosen and innovative

- The collaborative approach adopted means that relatively small 'seedcorn' support can leverage significant projects and impacts

- GPPS focus on cutting-edge parliamentary development issues - such as the role of parliaments in conflict situations and the fostering of global standards for parliamentary democracy – demonstrated the added value that UNDP can offer to global parliamentary development

- GPPS has forged impressive partnerships with international parliamentary associations and other international democracy-building associations; it is also important that these global partnerships be linked to specific outcomes at the national and regional levels.

Global activities – Evaluation summary – specific activities

- **The parliaments and conflict project** highlights the importance for the international community to support long-term democracy-building that must extend far beyond the creation of state institutions

  Ø The *Guidelines* developed in the project set standards for long-term international peacebuilding efforts, and provide a framework for programmes to support parliaments in countries emerging from conflict

  Ø GPPS has built support for this initiative among UN and other international agencies (UNDP BCPR, UN DPA, OECD DAC, etc)

  Ø The analysis conducted will be further disseminated, and plans for pilot activities to model use of the developed Guidelines are being pursued as a priority. UNDP/BDP is currently discussing with BCPR the launch of pilots with funding from the BCPR trust fund. The programme would be implemented through the GPPS umbrella.

  Ø In summary, this is an exemplary and extraordinarily successful initiative which should be vigorously pursued in the next GPPS phase

- **The parliamentary practice standards project** is a cutting-edge approach to democracy-building at the supra-national level.

  Ø The CPA project in particular has developed clear and specific guidelines; the challenge will be to find ways to develop acceptance and implementation of these guidelines.

  Ø The IPU best practice book, *Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century: A Guide to Good Practice*, supported in part by the GPPS program, has been widely used, being presented at the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and forming the basis for much of the discussion of the parliamentary pillar at the 6th International Conference of New and Restored Democracies in Doha in October 2006.

- The **iKNOW Politics initiative** is a promising endeavour to increase women's involvement in politics; there is a possibility for synergy with GPPS regional projects and national pilots in helping developing country women to access and participate in the virtual community

- The work on **minorities and parliaments** is at too early a stage to evaluate.

Global activities – Evaluation summary – possible areas for future work

- The role of parliaments in support of MDG realization, and in poverty reduction processes is problematic in many countries, and there is a need to pilot and model more effective approaches. There is an important role for UNDP/GPPS in supporting such a process, preferably in conjunction with an organization such as WBI that has special expertise on poverty-reduction processes with which there is substantial overlap.

- GPPS has supported development of ARPAC, the Arab regional chapter of GOPAC, the global parliamentary network against corruption and in 2005 organized a large conference on the role of Arab parliaments in the ratification and implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption.

- GPPS also coordinated a highly successful parliamentarians' forum on anti-corruption and the UN and AU conventions in Accra, Ghana. GOPAC is launching a series of taskforces on various issues related to corruption. GPPS could explore collaboration on one or more of these workgroups, for example working on the role of parliaments in the UN Convention Against Corruption. Such an initiative should also involve the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Detailed assessment

8.1. **Background**

Global activities represent the third fundamental element of the GPPS programme. Global activities are viewed as means to expand understanding of methodologies for parliamentary strengthening, with knowledge developed through global initiatives available to the national pilots and to parliamentary development programmers more generally.

GPPS I also included global activities as one of its three levels of intervention. During GPPS I, activities included the development of normative tools, action research, and knowledge networking. Normative tools included for example the preparation of Indicators of Legislative Development, and a bibliography on gender and political participation. Action research included development of a distance learning programme for legislative drafting, and work on the involvement of parliaments in the Poverty Reduction Strategy process. Knowledge networking included the documenting of lessons learned in parliamentary development, evaluation of legislative support programmes in Africa, and capacity training of UNDP parliamentary development staff. The GPPS I evaluation was positive in general about the global activities, emphasizing particularly the programme's ability to foster broad partnerships and networks, track and utilize global learning in democracy development, and strengthen UNDP's internal capacity to work on parliamentary development.

The GPPS II project document envisaged the continuation of global project activities although with a refocused agenda. Activities would be divided broadly into the areas of research and dialogue, gender initiatives, and capacity development within UNDP. Specific content areas include:

- Examination of the role of parliaments in conflict mediation and resolution

- Development of standards of practice regarding parliamentary administration and budget needs

- Networking support to women parliamentarians and on gender issues

- Tools for strengthening UNDP capacities in parliamentary development, including on-line tools and some formal staff training opportunities.

8.2. **Global Project Activities**

The global project activities have followed the GPPS II project document fairly closely, although in 2006 and 2007 several new initiatives are planned. The specific project areas that are described and assessed in this section include:

i. *Parliament and conflict prevention and recovery.* This major programme entailed development of a series of research papers on the role of parliaments in 27 countries facing conflict, five regional workshops in which the country level research was discussed and compared and regional summaries prepared, development of global guidelines on parliaments and conflict prevention and recovery, and launching of the guidelines at a global donors conference

ii. *iKNOW Politics web portal.* The iKNOW Politics initiative, due to be launched on 27 February 2007, is a joint endeavour of five international organizations, geared to supporting women's political involvement around the world, and providing a one-stop-shop for information and expert advice

iii. *The minimum standards for democratic parliaments initiative.* Encompasses several initiatives geared towards establishing a commonly accepted framework of 'what constitutes effective democratic practice in contemporary parliaments'.

iv. *Minority representation in parliaments.* This new initiative, in collaboration with the IPU, is not evaluated as it has only recently been launched.

8.2.1. *Parliaments and Conflict Prevention and Recovery*

8.2.1.1 Background

The Initiative on Strengthening the Role of Parliaments in Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR) was developed beginning in 2004, under the leadership of UNDP's Democratic Governance team at the Bureau for Development Policy, and in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The initiative received significant funding and staff support through GPPS and is easily the largest of the GPPS II global activities.

The initiative grew out of a perception on the part of UNDP/GPPS global staff that international peacebuilding efforts were frequently designed with a too short time frame and a narrow and unbalanced intervention focus. Naturally, the international community's efforts when intervening in countries affected by conflict are initially geared towards ending physical hostilities. Subsequent to conflict, the international community does now pay increasing attention to governance institution building, but this attention is devoted primarily to building structures for executive governance and to a lesser extent a judicial system, with little or no attention paid to the legislative branch of government. However, many conflicts originate from the failure of government to adequately reflect the aspiration of different segments in a diverse population. An executive-focused institutional development strategy without sufficient attention to the need for continuing dialogue through the representative institution risks recreating an imbalance between a narrowly-drawn leadership and a diverse population that lies at the heart of many conflicts.

The CPR was thus designed to address two hypotheses about parliaments and conflict reduction. The first was that parliaments play a crucial role in preventing conflict within societies, through providing a forum for dialogue between different groups within

society, through interaction with citizens, and through providing a vehicle for informal agreements about resource allocation. However, this role is rarely well-understood, and indeed the spectacle of parliaments as the scene for agonistic conflict[18] is often misconstrued as a failure of the institution.

The second hypothesis underlying the initiative was that parliaments in post-conflict situations are crucial in restoring a space for dialogue, but that they are typically under-resourced and lacking the necessary support framework to carry out that role. Democratic institutions such as parliaments, that are established in post-conflict situations, typically require both financial and expert support in their early years in order to build the foundations of durable democratic dialogue. Weak parliamentary institutions in post-conflict situations increase the risk of reversion to authoritarian governance and ultimately renewed conflict.

In response to these concerns, UNDP established an agreement with IPU to carry out a project on parliaments and conflict, including four main components:

- Documentation of the role that parliaments can play in conflictual and crisis situations

- Documentation of roles that parliaments could play in conflict/crisis situations

- Documentation of the obstacles preventing parliaments from playing these positive roles in conflict prevention, resolution and recovery

- Establishment of concrete recommendations and findings to guide national and international stakeholders in enhancing the role of parliaments in preventing and resolving conflict.

8.2.1.2 Conflict Prevention and Recovery Initiative Activities

The UNDP crisis prevention initiative was carried out in several stages.

i. In the initial stage, UNDP BDP in New York, in conjunction with regional and national offices, commissioned 27 different country studies on the role of parliaments in specific conflict situations. These studies were carried out by a variety of different actors, ranging from local and international Non Governmental Organizations, independent academics, and UNDP parliament programme staffers. The studies varied in approach and depth of treatment, but in total provide a unique perspective on the role of parliaments in conflict and post-conflict situations[19]. The summary findings of many of the studies coincide in making the following general observations:

- Tendency for parliaments in conflict situations to be marginalized from the major political developments

- Parliaments in most conflict-affected states, as in most developing and transitional states, tend to have limited resources and capacities for intervention.

- International community focus in post-conflict situations is often primarily on elections, followed by some support for executive-building, with very limited attention to parliamentary development

- It is important for the international community to pay more attention to parliamentary development

- Nevertheless, parliaments are reflective of the societies from which they originate, and the role of parliament in conflict situations is not necessarily positive

- Support for parliaments in pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict situations needs to be increased, with a special focus on professionalization, oversight, mediation skills, and representativity

- Support for parliaments needs to be viewed as a medium-and long-term investment. Short-term interventions are unlikely to leave lasting results.

ii. In addition, five regional studies were commissioned that synthesized the experiences from the countries within their region. All the studies were then discussed together in regional conferences held between May and July 2005 in Kenya, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Guatemala, and Sri Lanka. The output from these conferences varied, but tended to reflect a synthesis of the points noted above. Another two papers were commissioned on the gender aspects of parliaments and conflict, and on parliamentary immunity. The regional meetings allowed sharing of experiences involving a substantial number of MPs and researchers.

iii. A major study on the gender aspects of conflict was commissioned. This study identified ways in which women are differentially affected by conflict, for example they are much more likely to be internally displaced, and to suffer sexual and other violent abuse. Women should be involved in negotiations to end conflict and to set the parameters for rebuilding peace. Parliaments have an important role to play in ensuring that gender issues are taken into consideration; this will require a higher proportion of women parliamentarians.

iv. The next step in the process took place in July 2005. A study meeting organized jointly by UNDP and IPU was held in Geneva, where the findings from the regional conferences and the national case studies were discussed. Participants in the meeting included parliamentarians from some of the countries that had been covered in the case studies, many representatives from regional parliamentary associations and international parliamentary development organizations, and a number of UNDP staff including BDP and regional offices. The primary output of the meeting was some preliminary conclusions and recommendations about how parliaments can play a stronger and more positive role in conflict prevention and recovery. These recommendations were eventually distilled into the core project document, *Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery: Guidelines for the International Community*[20].

v. The *Guidelines* document contains sixteen 'Principles' regarding parliaments and conflict, and twenty 'Recommendations for the international community'. These Guidelines encapsulated and extended the major findings from the previous phases of the initiative. The Guidelines could be seen as a strong endorsement of the crucial role of parliaments in democratic consolidation. They particularly emphasized the need to greatly extend international community support to parliaments, to ensure that parliaments are genuinely involved in key national policy issues, and to emphasize development assistance to parliament that fosters a role for minorities, disadvantaged groups including women, and political opposition.

vi. The Guidelines formed the centerpiece of a major 'donor' conference held in Brussels in April 2006. The Brussels meeting involved over 100 representatives of donor agencies engaged in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, democratic governance practitioners, and parliamentarians. The Brussels conference marked a new collaborative stage, as UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) became closely involved as project partners.

vii. The Brussels meeting included presentation of some of the key findings of the extensive research process, as well as presentations from other key actors in parliamentary development, and interventions from key figures from the Belgian government and United Nations officials. The Guidelines were well-received and key international development associations such as IPU and OECD Development Assistance Committee distributed them to their members and included some or all of the guidelines in its work on fragile states, etc . The Belgian government agreed to lead efforts to have the Guidelines adopted broadly as development principles.

The donor conference concluded the most intensive part of the CPR project. In addition, discussions are underway with UNDP BCPR to identify further opportunities for collaboration, including the potential for selecting some pilot cases for intervention, testing some of the *Guidelines* recommendations. (In practice, several of the current GPPS national pilots are post-conflict countries.)

8.2.1.3 Conflict Prevention and Recovery Evaluation

The CPR project presents as an extremely impressive initiative that achieves the rare feat of combining very extensive groundwork and initial enquiry with a focused outcome. The CPR guidelines are certainly a good summary of the findings of the various studies and analyses. The plans to build on the initiative through some collaborative pilots in post-conflict situations are commendable, and it is to be hoped that these can be realized in the often confused environments in which countries emerge from conflict.

The initial research papers are perhaps inevitably of variable quality. In retrospect different individuals or organizations might have been commissioned for some of the studies, but what is clear in hindsight is not necessarily evident in advance. Some of the

reports lacked focus and consistent treatment of the pertinent issues, and it may have been useful to establish more strict rules regarding the formats used in the reports to ensure consistency and appropriate treatment of the key issues, though this would inevitably have generated criticism of excessive central control. Along these lines, there was some criticism from Africa that a Europe-based organization played a key role in the preparation and coordination of papers from African countries, although from the evaluators' reading of the outcomes of the Nairobi forum, there did not appear to be substantive difference of opinion regarding findings and priorities.

The consolidating meetings held at the regional level, and then in Geneva and Brussels, are impressive for their breadth of representation and for the manner in which the basic research was woven into an agenda that permitted ideas to be incorporated from other development organizations. The Brussels meeting was undoubtedly a success and the strong commitment demonstrated by the Belgian hosts reflected not merely their commitment to the CPR initiative but to GPPS generally. It is rare for a development programme to have such a loyal and engaged core funder.

Despite the strong arguments advanced in the course of the initiative that parliaments do have a generally positive role to play in conflict situations, and the general recognition of this by major development partners, mobilizing partnerships for parliamentary development in post-conflict situations remains a challenge. Within the donor community and within developing countries alike, there are still those who remain skeptical about whether parliaments are necessarily a force for good, and whether political pluralism is necessarily a good thing. Often these views are expressed covertly, because the international community is at least nominally committed to universal democratization, but cynical viewpoints about parliament are very widespread in the donor community, including in the donor communities within several of the countries the evaluators visited as part of this evaluation. As one of the CPR national reports noted, development assistance administrators are themselves representatives of an executive branch, and may naturally have a predisposition towards the prime role of the executive in assuring good governance.

Where new ideas about democratization have come to influence donor thinking, this has typically been associated with civil society and the concept of 'participatory democracy'. While strong civil society is a useful contributor to democracy, its advocates, particularly within the development assistance community, sometimes forget that a functioning democratic infrastructure, including strong representative institutions, is the prerequisite for genuinely independent civil society: "civil society can only be of real assistance to democracy if encased in stable and efficient political institutions"[21].

Heterogeneous parliamentary institutions by definition reflect the often unattractive cleavages existing in conflict-affected societies. It is implausible to think, however, that unrepresentative governance is an alternative. Indeed, conflict typically arises from popular or minority complaints that they are discriminated against in undemocratic or majoritarian polities. Democratization in long-repressive societies may indeed result in tensions that fledgling parliaments cannot effectively sublimate, but it is mistaken to believe either that the tensions arose because of their airing in parliament or that there is

any short-cut to the often long and difficult process of building peace through effective and genuinely representative democratic institutions.

Given these real challenges and barriers to a development assistance focus on parliaments in conflict and post-conflict situations, the evaluators believe that GPPS needs to devote more resources to promoting or 'marketing' parliamentary development as a cornerstone of good governance programmes. While it is desirable that international institutions such as OECD adopt parliamentary development as a good idea, UNDP needs to be more assertive in insisting that principles are turned into action. One means to strengthen marketing of the Guidelines would be to focus them down from the 36 separate recommendations into a few main messages that could be easily transmitted to the development community.

During 2007 and beyond BDP and the GPPS coordinating staff should keep a close track of conflict situations and move quickly to build support for parliamentary development as an important component of any plausible long term peace-building initiative, and work with UNDP national teams to design properly resourced parliamentary programming. These resources can be found partly through an upgraded GPPS contingency or rapid response fund, as well as the anticipated partnership with BCPR. It will be important as a principle to mobilize resources from new international development partners, particularly those that emphasize good governance and democracy in their development assistance frameworks. While clearly GPPS is better placed to support such projects in regions where it already has a presence, this should not be a barrier to entry into other regions that would benefit from the deep knowledge base that GPPS has built through the CPR initiatives and the national pilots.

8.2.2. iKNOW Politics

8.2.2.1 Background

The iKNOW Politics initiative grew out of the Win with Women Global Forum that the National Democratic Institute (NDI) launched in December 2003. Win with Women brought together women political leaders from 27 countries to draft a global action plan on increasing women's involvement in political life[22]. The action plan included several recommendations for coordinating support to women in political life or wishing to enter political life. The iKNOW Politics concept originated as a means to achieve this objective through the creation of an interactive, electronic network of women political leaders.

Initially iKNOW Politics was a joint endeavour of three organizations; UNDP/GPPS, UNIFEM and National Democratic Institute. The Inter-Parliamentary Union and International IDEA[23] have since agreed to participate as part of the sponsoring group of organizations. A formal agreement between these five organizations was signed on January 30, 2007. Each of the partners is expected to contribute both knowledge and resources to the project, which has also been successful in securing funding from the United Nations Democracy Fund.

iKNOW Politics, shorthand for International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics, is a coordinated effort to strengthen the role of women in politics. Despite numerous efforts of the past few years to increase women's participation in politics at all levels from the local to the transnational, women remain highly underrepresented in almost all polities. The sponsors of the iKNOW Politics initiative note that, although there are numerous individual actions geared to enhancing women's place in the democratic system, there is no overall vehicle for reaching out across the globe and sharing experience and expertise with women who are involved or interested in getting involved in politics, as well as supporting organizations who are working towards these objectives.

8.2.2.2 iKNOW Politics activities

iKNOW Politics proposes a variety of activities built around a virtual network hosted at the website www.iknowpolitics.org. The network will help people to advance the role of women in politics through supporting, "accessing, creating, and sharing knowledge … share resources, make contacts, collaborate, and learn about development and events"[24]. The website will initially be launched in English, Spanish, and French, and later in 2007 in Arabic. The network will bridge existing networks that the primary collaborating organizations have already developed, thus permitting a broader synergy of information and knowledge. The project will then draw in secondary partners with expertise in the field of women in politics, expanding on a step-by-step basis the information-sharing and building circles.

Over a five year period the project plans to:

- Operationalize the website and related listservs as the ground point of the network, which will feature intuitively organized information, thematic discussions on approaches or models for women's participation, and the participation of volunteer experts (perhaps programme staff from the partner organizations)

- Hold regular e-conferences of the iKNOW Politics initiative

- Make the website and thus the network available to women and men in five languages

- Develop regional pages within the website to permit localized content

- Conduct web-based advocacy campaigns

Early-stage discussions have been held on the possibility of complementary activities to improve access to the website from regions and activists where internet access is not good and where political activists do not use the internet as a matter of course.

There are plans to evaluate the project through continuing iterative methodologies, largely themselves administered through the website, both through the collection of usage data and the use of web survey instruments. In addition, the project alliance participants will conduct continuing reviews of the project, and there will also be an external evaluation.

The iKNOW Politics project was initially intended to be launched through the public unveiling of the website in September 2006. The launch was delayed, partly because of the expansion of the alliance partner group, and is now scheduled for February 27, 2007, in connection with 51st Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

8.2.2.3 iKNOW Politics Evaluation

Any assessment of the project and of UNDP/GPPS's role in it is highly tentative due to the early stage of the project and specifically because the central vehicle for achieving the project's goals, the iKNOW Politics website, has not been launched at the time this document is being written. The project's successes and areas for change or further strengthening will be separately evaluated according to the project terms of reference, after the website has been operating for a period of time.

iKNOW Politics clearly fits within the overall mandate of the GPPS project. Strengthening parliaments as core democratic institutions will require a much greater involvement of women within parliamentary institutions, and in order to achieve this, the barriers to women's participation must be addressed. The project's objective of combining the networking resources of the five partner organizations should help to reduce overlap between various global networks as well as strengthen the resources available to each.

The virtual networking modality of the iKNOW Politics project can help share knowledge across the globe and thus in principle is an appropriate approach. In relation to UNDP/GPPS participation it will be important, given the mandate of GPPS, to assess the project's reach into developing country parliaments and the political and social environments in which the project is working. It would be beneficial for GPPS to support some country-level and region-level activities to help people in the West African and Arab regions to learn about the initiative and participate in it.

Some of the evaluation informants were unsure whether the volunteer expert advisor model will prove feasible. Given most advisors will likely already have a heavy workload, they may not be able to effectively add this responsibility to their burden.

GPPS has played an important role in helping to bring the iKNOW Politics project into being, both through staff support and through financial contributions. In the longer-term it would be anticipated that iKNOW Politics would secure its own financial resources.

8.2.3. Minimum standards for democratic parliaments

8.2.3.1 Background

During GPPS I the staff team developed a document, *Indicators of Legislative Development* that was designed to serve both as a tool to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of parliaments and also to provide a benchmark for measuring the success of parliamentary development programming. In related initiatives during the first phase, UNDP produced a concise assessment of the lessons of parliamentary development programming, *Lessons Learned in Parliamentary Development*[25], and supported

development of an IPU publication that evaluated legislative strengthening programming in Africa over the previous decade[26]. Finally, UNDP BDP produced a *Practice Note* on parliamentary development work that aimed to summarize best practices this field[27]. All of these initiatives were geared to help provide a framework for parliamentary development programming as well as some criteria with which to judge the effectiveness of that programming.

One issue that arises in setting criteria and objectives for parliamentary programming is the absence of any objective standards for determining what a parliament *should be*. Other areas of governance tend to have quite elaborate criteria through which their effectiveness is measured. Good economic governance, for example, generates fairly specific measurements (although these are often contested), that are often used as funding conditionalities by the international financial institutions. In the area of elections, the international community is increasingly moving towards common criteria for determining whether elections are 'free and fair', an important determinant of the legitimacy with which a government will be viewed by the international community. Criteria in the area of human rights are also based on international treaties. The question of standards for parliaments is somewhat complex because, although parliaments have always had a representative quality, they have not always reflected the universalist view of democracy that is now generally accepted. In the early nineteenth century, for example, even the British parliament – which is viewed as the mother of democratic parliaments – was elected by only a small percentage of the adult population, and more recently the South African parliament under apartheid explicitly excluded the bulk of the population from representation on the grounds of race. While this type of exclusionary practice is no longer considered acceptable, a number of parliaments still have no fully elected chamber.

A further issue is the representation of disadvantaged groups within the population. The proportion of women elected to many parliaments, even in the most 'advanced' democracies, is often extremely small. Ethnic minorities are also often virtually absent from parliaments, even though (or because) their relationship with the majority population is widely identified as a key social problematic.

Another, and broader, standards issue that arises is the powers held by parliament. In some countries parliament is purely advisory, whereas in other countries parliament holds exclusive authority over the passage of laws. Similarly, some parliaments have very limited formal and/or *de facto* ability to hold the executive accountable for its actions, whereas others can and do. Varying formal and actual capacities are particularly notable in the area of budget oversight.

Finally, there are numerous different approaches to the question of parliament's role of representation of the population. Some constitutional systems explicitly require parliament to reflect the views of citizens, while other models leave this question open, or emphasize the importance of parliament representing the higher goal of good governance rather than any particular viewpoint.

Despite this diversity within parliamentary institutions, there is increasing consensus around key desirable aspects of parliaments. These might include:

- Parliament elected by all adult citizens

- The need for minority as well as majority viewpoints to be reflected and respected

- The importance of a professional parliamentary administration

- Parliamentary immunity

- The right to initiate and amend legislation

- The ability to conduct effective executive oversight, including of the national budget

- Continuing opportunities for citizens to dialogue with their representatives

In response to the growing need to establish some baseline standards for democratic parliamentary institutions as a corollary to a global commitment to democratic governance, the project document for GPPS II proposed programming designed to further understanding and discussion on standards. Several different initiatives are underway to fulfill this objective.

8.2.3.2 Standards initiatives

    i.   IPU Guide to Good Practice

In its first major standards initiative, UNDP/GPPS partnered with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. IPU is the major global association of parliaments, founded in 1889, and regrouping most of the world's national legislatures. IPU was granted formal observer status to the United Nations in 2002. GPPS has worked closely with IPU on several other initiatives, at the national, regional, and global levels, including on the major parliaments and conflict project.

IPU has several functions. It is an association for parliaments and hosts regular conferences and other opportunities for 'exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians'. It also has a technical cooperation arm that works mainly with parliaments from developing countries to help them strengthen their technical capacities. As part of its mandate, IPU has been placing greater emphasis on the centrality of democracy to the parliamentary institution, a perspective underlined in its 1997 Universal Declaration on Democracy[28]. It was in this context that IPU launched a good parliamentary practice project to produce a handbook, *Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century*.

GPPS II was closely involved in the project. Two GPPS staff members were part of the Working Group that oversaw the development of the handbook, contributing in the development and editing of the book. In addition, GPPS was one of the funders of the project.

The manual, which was published in 2006, encourages good institutional practice regrouped into five qualities towards which parliaments should strive:

- Representative
- Transparent
- Accessible
- Accountable
- Effective

The manual, which extends to over two hundred pages, discusses in detail different practices of parliaments in the wide range of their responsibilities, highlighting examples of good practices and also discussing the dilemmas that parliaments face in discharging their duties. However, the manual is careful to avoid ranking parliaments or making critical comments about some parliaments' practices. In keeping with IPU practice, the guide also avoids establishing criteria that might be used to judge some parliaments as 'compliant' and others as non-compliant.

ii. *CPA initiative on benchmarks for democratic legislatures*

Unlike IPU, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) operates within the Commonwealth infrastructure that clearly requires its national members to be democracies. The CPA has been working with various international democracy promotion organizations, including the National Democratic Institute, the World Bank Institute, and UNDP to codify some of the benchmarks that would characterize a parliament as an effective democratic institution.

At a meeting hosted by the Legislature of Bermuda in October 2006, the CPA working group, comprised of seven representatives from five Commonwealth parliaments, along with seven resource people including UNDP/GPPS representation, agreed on a set of benchmarks[29] to be proposed for adoption at the next meeting of the CPA. These benchmarks are grouped into ten categories that address issues ranging from elections to ethical governance. Summaries of some of the key points include:

i. Elections for at least one house should be by universal suffrage and meet international standards

ii. There should be immunity for anything said in the house

iii. The legislature should set its own rules of procedure and agenda, and elect its own table officers

iv. Committees should reflect the political composition of the house and committee meetings should normally be public

v. Committees should have the right to call witnesses and experts

vi. Legislators have the right to form into party groups, which will be provided resources and facilities according to the legislature rules

vii. There shall be a non-partisan professional staff employed under rules set by the legislature

viii.   Members will be provided with adequate research and library facilities

ix.   All laws must be approved by the legislature

x.   The national budget must be determined and approved by the legislature which will have adequate time to review a proposed budget

xi.   There will be an independent non-partisan supreme audit office that reports to the legislature

xii.   The legislature will be able to override executive veto

xiii.   The public will have the right to input into legislation

xiv.   The legislature will have the powers and capacities to provide meaningful executive oversight, including of security services and state enterprises

xv.   The legislature will have power to express non confidence in the government and thus force the government's resignation

xvi.   The legislature will be accessible to the public and the media

xvii.   The legislature will have and enforce a code of conduct, and legislators will publicly disclose their assets and business interests.

8.2.3.3 Evaluation of GPPS work on standards for democratic parliaments

This is one of the most important and also the most complex of the areas of work in which GPPS is engaged. The work has the potential to foster major improvements in the general standards of parliamentary democracy, although as with most initiatives of this type it will be very difficult to measure specific impact given the number of other variables in play. UNDP/GPPS has strong expertise in the area of parliamentary standards; the Parliamentary Development Advisor has previously worked with NDI on a broad project of democratic parliamentary standards that includes a similar set of benchmarks to that adopted by the CPA[30].

In an era of globalization, standards-setting represents a primary vehicle through which governance reform occurs at the international level[31]. These standards are generally not imposed through formal mechanisms, but are rather adopted by states through various 'soft' approaches as part of a process of inclusion within a global governance paradigm[32]. The means through which this inclusion is accomplished vary from positive reinforcement at the most informal, to preconditions for receipt of international assistance or participation in international bodies at the most formal[33]. Globalization has engendered an expectation of international openness which may act as the most powerful incentive for states to accept general principles of good governance, including effective parliamentary institutions[34].

Apart from their normative value in promoting democratization, the presence of commonly accepted norms, benchmarks, or standards for parliamentary institutions is of considerable practical benefit to parliamentary development in several ways:

- Helps empower parliaments to claim their proper place in the state institutional order

- Provides a readily accessible guide to evaluate the areas of strength and weakness of individual legislatures

- Useful in designing parliamentary strengthening programming

GPPS has initially approached this issue through two vectors; working with IPU and CPA. The advantages and disadvantages of each are evident. IPU, as a global organization, represents the widest range of parliamentary institutions. However, despite IPU's formal commitment to representative democracy, its membership includes a number of states that are not representative democracies in the commonly understood sense, and member parliaments are not required to be elected bodies[35]. Therefore, it is very difficult for IPU to move beyond a 'best practices' project of the type GPPS has supported and participated in, to an actual 'standards' exercise. On the other hand, CPA is part of the Commonwealth organization, which does have democracy as a membership criterion, and therefore CPA was able to develop a fairly rigorous set of standards or benchmarks for a democratic legislature. One disadvantage, however, is that CPA only represents a proportion of the world's parliaments. Further, the benchmarks that have been developed are specifically targeted to state systems based on the British parliamentary model and would need to be adapted to fit the historic practices of, for example, the French and American democratic traditions.

The standards initiatives of GPPS are undoubtedly useful and should be continued as planned. The manner through which norms are established and propagated is crucial to their general acceptance, particularly in a situation where there can be no direct sanctions for failure to comply. There is a sense in many developing countries that the 'democratization and good governance agenda' has been imposed by the major western powers; this perception has led to a backlash within some international institutions[36]. It is important to avoid the sense that norms are being 'imposed'. One interesting initiative to develop an inclusive international standards agenda is the African peer review mechanism (APRM), in which African states agree voluntarily to participate in an independent process of evaluation of their democratic, political, economic and corporate governance. It is too early to say how effective the Mechanism will prove[37], but the notion of peer review may be worth exploring as a means to operationalize a parliamentary standards project.

The next steps in the standards initiative planned by the GPPS program will involve partnership with a Southern parliamentary organization, such as the SADC Parliamentary Forum, which has been active on electoral standards, or the African Parliament, to ensure that Southern perspectives on standards for democratic parliaments are a crucial part of the international debate. Another vehicle that could be used in order to promote the broad-based acceptance of a set of guidelines for parliamentary institutions is the adoption of these guidelines by the United Nations. This is the strategy being pursued by UN-Habitat, the United Nations' agency for human settlements, which is currently developing a comparable set of guidelines for good urban governance[38]. However various intermediate adoption steps at thematic and regional forums would need to be taken before General Assembly adoption should be considered

To conclude, the establishment of guidelines or standards for parliamentary institutions is both promising and complex. Guidelines need to be flexible enough to accommodate

different types of effective parliamentary institutions within different democratic models. At the same time they need to be meaningful, providing benchmarks that can help parliaments become more effective and also to lobby for their proper recognition and inclusion within each country's democratic institutional system. The process through which guidelines are drawn up, and measured, will be of crucial importance to their acceptance; the success of the project will be closely tied to the extent that the process is seen as one driven by parliaments themselves. Despite various potential pitfalls, a project to establish guidelines for parliamentary institutions would be a valuable investment for a GPPS III, with the potential to begin building more general awareness of effective parliaments as a key component of good governance.

8.2.4.1 Minorities in legislatures

One issue facing parliaments is how to ensure that ethnic and other minorities are properly represented; several national studies in the parliaments and conflict initiative indicated that inadequate representation of ethnic minorities in public institutions was a factor in the degradation of public order and outbreak of physical conflict. Lack of adequate representation of indigenous communities remains a continuing issue in several Latin American countries; and adequate political representation of Roma/Sinti in Central and Eastern Europe has also been an issue in the process of European integration.   The goal of the initiative is to strengthen the political inclusivity of parliaments, using minorites as one useful entry point.   As a first step to better understanding this issue, GPPS has contracted with Minority Rights Group International, based in London, to prepare inputs on minority representation in parliaments for an expert consultation to occur at the IPU in Geneva on March 19 and 20.   The consultation will focus on gaps in data collection on minorities that may be able to be addressed by the IPU and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments in advance of their upcoming meeting in April.   The consultation will also seek to identify and recommend advocacy measures that could be undertaken by UNDP and the IPU to advance the issue of political representation of underrepresented minorities.   Further action would be built on the outcomes of that initial research.

8.3. <u>Recommendations for the global level of GPPS</u>

Existing Initiatives

8.3.1.   *Parliaments and Conflict Prevention and Recovery*

i.   This has been an important and successful initiative. It is important that it continue.

ii.   As noted in the evaluation section 8.2.1.3, discussions have been held with UNDP's Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery on supporting pilot initiatives to work with parliaments in countries emerging from conflict. It is

recommended that a process be put in place to regularly review conflict-affected countries and assess the potential for launching pilot parliamentary development activities

iii. Discussions should also be held with other potential funding partners from the bilateral and multilateral development community to assess the potential for collaboration on pilot projects in countries emerging from conflict

iv. Continued efforts should be made to popularize the *Guidelines* and to ensure wide distribution of the research material underpinning the *Guidelines*

8.3.2. *Standards for democratic parliaments*

i. This is another key initiative that has substantial potential. Current efforts should be extended to include other regional and language-based parliamentary associations

ii. Consideration should be given to sponsoring an assessment process based on the same methodology as the African peer review mechanism, in which Southern parliaments would assess the capacities and needs of peer institutions and recommend action; this would be a useful part of strategic planning exercises, which emerged as a key priority of several of the national pilots. One option would be to work with a regional parliamentary organization such as the Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF)

iii. In the medium to longer-term, thought should be given to findings ways to institutionalize global standards for democratic parliaments, perhaps through eventual adoption by the United Nations General Assembly. Premature consideration at the political level, before technical acceptance has been secured, would be inadvisable, however.

8.3.3. *iKNOW Politics*

i. This is a promising initiative that should be carefully monitored and reviewed to assess usage and impact on women's political participation

ii. The national pilots and regional projects of GPPS should include collaboration with iKNOW Politics in their activity plans for 2007 and beyond, thus promoting synergy between the different GPPS programme levels

iii. If, as some of the iKNOW Politics participants believe may be the case, participation of developing country women in the project turns out to be limited, resources should be sought to establish pilot on-the-ground liaison projects to build women's participation in iKNOW Politics initiatives and information sharing.

Potential New Global Initiatives

8.3.4. Parliaments and anti-corruption

i. As discussed in the assessments of the Arab and West African regional projects of GPPS II, the programme has been closely involved in initiatives to promote parliamentary involvement in anti-corruption initiatives.

ii. In both West Africa and the Arab region, work has focused on involving parliamentarians in the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), as well as the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption

iii. The Global Association of Parliamentarians Against Corruption has committed to support ratification of UNCAC and capacity-building to enable parliaments to play an effective role in legislating appropriately against corruption, in building parliamentary oversight capacities, and in engaging citizens and civil society in the battle against corruption[39]

iv. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is the lead United Nations agency on this issue

v. GPPS should explore, as part of its global activities for GPPS III, means to work in partnership with GOPAC, and in collaboration with UNODC, to operationalize the Parliamentarians Action Plan to support UNCAC implementation.

8.3.5. Parliaments and human development and anti-poverty strategies

i. As noted in national pilot evaluations within this document, parliaments in developing and transitional countries are frequently disengaged from key national policy initiatives including the plans to achieve human development goals and to combat poverty

ii. Several GPPS pilot projects have included programming to build parliamentarians' awareness of Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction strategies

iii. These initiatives have typically focused on providing information and have not extended to practical involvement of parliamentarians in monitoring and evaluation of national progress towards Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction strategies

iv. Although human development and poverty reduction strategies are frequently the overriding policy frameworks for governance in developing and transitional countries, parliament is often not significantly engaged in these strategies at any stage. However, governments typically engage with international institutions and international partners to implement these strategies[40]

v. As a result, parliaments are frequently faced with a *fait accompli* where the executive insists that they pass certain pieces of legislation as these are required to comply with international engagements

vi.   Experience has shown that there is often resistance to effective parliamentary involvement in evaluating progress towards human development goals and anti-poverty strategies, both on the part of national governments and some international institutions.

vii.   Therefore, given the importance of these policy areas to citizens, and the necessity for parliaments to be engaged in the process of defining broad national policy objectives in human development and poverty reduction, and in monitoring and evaluating progress towards those objective, support to enable greater parliamentary involvement and engagement of the citizenry in these issues should be a priority for UNDP/GPPS

viii. UNDP/GPPS should secure partnerships with other groups concerned with these issues (for example, the UNDP Poverty Group in the area of poverty reduction). In partnership UNDP/GPPS should develop projects at the global and regional level to assist parliamentary development programmers to more effectively support parliamentary engagement. UNDP/GPPS should also work with GPPS projects at the national pilot level to operationalize best practices of parliamentary engagement in human development and poverty reduction goal-setting, monitoring, and evaluation.

Section Five

9. Project Administration

Summary

Background

- The organizational structure of GPPS is a lean, geographically dispersed network connected through economic use of new communications technologies

- The programme reports internally within UNDP through the organizational structure of the Bureau for Development Policy

- The programme liaises with the Belgian core funder through GPPS presence in both Brussels and New York (Belgian UN Mission)

- Regular biennial reports are prepared and submitted to the funder, and ad hoc discussions are held as necessary to secure agreement on any necessary project adjustments

- The project is 'executed' by UNOPS, which primarily entails provision of financial accounting, travel logistics, and certain administrative supports

Evaluation summary

- Project leadership is exceptionally strong. Managers are committed and innovative

- The organizational structure functions well, though it is highly dependent on the capacities of the individuals within it

- The reporting arrangements with the funder are appropriate and the funder is satisfied with key aspects

- There is some dissatisfaction with the services provided by UNOPS which should be resolved, at least before a next GPPS phase

Recommendations

- A new GPPS phase should include a modest increase in staffing as the current model is insufficiently robust for operations to continue smoothly in the event of an extended staff absence or turnover

- Staffing contracts for the GPPS program should be reviewed to ensure that the staff are engaged on renewable contracts permitting them, subject to performance, to continue working on the program without mandatory interruption

- The issues relating to project administration and UNOPS should be resolved through a formal discussion that established clear written understandings on procedures and timelines

- The evaluators considered the possibility for reestablishing a programme steering or advisory committee. This is not recommended. Input is provided to programme elements through individual steering committees. The evaluators have indicated in

the relevant sections of this report where we believe these structures need strengthening.

Detailed assessment

9.1. Description

GPPS is managed by the democratic governance group of the Bureau of Development Policy, UNDP, New York. Financial and other administration is provided on a contract basis by the United Nations Office for project services. The staffing pattern is as follows:

- BDP's Parliamentary Development Policy Adviser provides overall strategic oversight to GPPS

- A full-time UNDP technical adviser is programme manager for the project, providing day-to-day management, and is located in Brussels. He is recruited on a time-limited contract (ALD) through UNOPS

- A Belgian national JPO acts as programme assistant based in New York

- The field staff at the regional and national pilot levels are engaged under a variety of different arrangements, partly dependent on the nature of any cost-sharing arrangement with the UNDP country office. The most prevalent form of contract is external consultant (SSA).

As noted above, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provides financial and administrative oversight to the GPPS project. A fee of 7% of the programme budget is paid to UNOPS to cover these services. In principle, all contracting of international expertise to the programme is carried out by UNOPS. In practice, decisions are often made by BDP/GPPS and these decisions are transmitted to UNOPS for execution. UNOPS processes all financial transactions for the programme and prepares financial reports according to programme and donor requirements.

GPPS liaises regularly with the Belgian core funder both in New York (with the Belgian mission to the United Nations) and in Brussels (with the Belgian Development Co-operation Administration). Detailed reports on project activities are provided bi-annually.

The GPPS programme includes a contingency fund permitting intervention of the programme in emerging areas of importance to parliamentary strengthening; approval is provided by Belgium on a case-by-case basis. During GPPS II, Belgium agreed to contingency resources being used for creating a new national pilot in Lebanon. In addition, contingency resources were allocated for several new initiatives in the global programming area, as well as regional activities.

The GPPS II project reporting structure contains three elements; semi-annual progress reports, annual financial statements, and the present mid-term review. In 2001 UNDP produced a document outlining 'Indicators for legislative development'; it was hoped these indicators would form the foundation for programme evaluation. This is reflected in

the GPPS II project document which proposes the measurement of programme progress in relation to these indicators.

During GPPS I, there was a programme steering committee. This structure was not put in place for GPPS II and the evaluators were asked to consider the advantages and disadvantages of such a committee.

9.2. Assessment

9.2.1. Organizational structure

The organizational structure of the GPPS programme is a positive example of 'lean organization'[41]. An extremely thin staff infrastructure is operationalized through extensive use of new communications technologies. Overall this has proven innovative, flexible, and effective. Programme staff believe that the thinness of the administrative structure permits them flexibility for rapid response. The geographical span of the programme staff permits strong connections to be maintained with key contacts both in the United Nations headquarters and in Brussels where the donor is located. A similar geographically dispersed structure functions well in the Arab region, again made possible through new communication technologies.

The thinness does mean that there is little margin for maneuver if programme implementation problems arise in the field. Because of administrative and programme management duties, there is limited room to allocate central resources to resolving country- or region-level programming difficulties. In the view of the evaluators, some additional hands-on support to the Morocco and the West African programmes might have been beneficial during GPPS II.

The UNOPS administration contract does not compensate for the absence of dedicated administrative support. Two options for freeing up some additional time to provide additional programme support would be either to seek an additional junior programme officer such as is currently provided by the Belgian JPO, or the addition of one or two administrative support positions in Brussels and New York. One advantage of dedicated administrative support would be in the development and maintenance of comprehensive programme documentation systems. The potential disadvantage of adding staff is an inevitable tendency towards greater hierarchization which might detract from the innovative quality of the GPPS programme. One positive development is the agreement between UNDP and the French National Assembly on the assignment of a National Assembly staff member to UNDP New York to work on parliamentary development.

The contractual situation of the programme manager and the Arab regional coordinator should be revisited in the event of a GPPS III. The contractual arrangement under which the manager is engaged is time limited; after four years the individual contract may not be renewed. This is undesirable and should be replaced with a contract that is renewable as necessary. The Arab regional coordinator is on an external consultant contract. This is not appropriate as the coordinator is effectively working as a UNDP staff person. The contract should be replaced with a staffing contract. There may be cost ramifications for

these contractual changes which should be taken into consideration in financial planning for GPPS III.

9.2.2. Project leadership

Project leadership is the outstanding feature of GPPS II. The commitment and capability of the GPPS central programme staff, both in Brussels and New York, is the foundation for the programme's success. The evaluators were genuinely impressed by both the commitment and vision of the core staff in both centres.

The highly innovative character of the programme can be attributed both to the programme leadership (previous and current parliamentary development advisors, and the programme manager), as well as the strong bond developed with the funder. The funder has been unusually supportive and flexible in considering programme changes and innovations to respond to emergent circumstances, such as the political opening in Lebanon that occurred in 2004/2005.

The imaginative thinking underlying the GPPS programme should not be understated. As we have repeated throughout this evaluation, parliamentary development is an under-resourced area. This entails not only that limited resources are available, but that very little thought has been given within the development community to effective strategies for parliamentary development. Although bilateral and multilateral development agencies highlight the need for 'good governance' and democracy as a precondition for development and a conditionality for receipt of aid, they often provide little support for the representative institution that underpins all democratic systems.

From its inception in GPPS I, the programme leadership has always privileged the testing of new methodologies for parliamentary development. Whether through support for the public consultation processes in Niger that were a highlight of GPPS I, or the regional working groups piloted in the Arab regional project, and the conflict reduction work in GPPS II, these initiatives are ground-breaking.

9.2.3. Financial and Administrative Organization

As noted above, UNOPS, a specialized UN agency devoted to project administration, provides 'project execution', which essentially means financial and administrative services to the project. A fee of 7% of the total GPPS programme budget is charged. Use of UNOPS has a number of advantages:

- It conforms with BDP's general practice of focusing on policy work and avoiding programme administrative details

- It provides an external oversight of project activities' compliance with UN regulations

- It avoids the need to engage programme administrative personnel

At the same time, the evaluators found a relatively high level of dissatisfaction with the service provided by UNOPS. Concerns were expressed by the funder, the central programme staff, and national pilot staff. The problems focused on the following issues:

- There has been excessive staff turnover in the UNOPS officers administering the GPPS project, and different UNOPS staff's interpretations of the 'rules' differed

- Financial reporting was not always provided in a timely fashion

- The Atlas accounting system used by UNOPS was not fully compatible with that used by UNDP and the result was that information could not easily pass electronically between the two organizations (UNOPS disagreed that this was the case, see below)

- The accounting system was inflexible and difficulties with the requisitioning system in particular sometimes caused national pilot staff to practice inappropriate accounting procedures (e.g. temporarily booking expenditures on the 'wrong line')

In response to the last two concerns which were presented to the evaluator and submitted to UNOPS for consideration, UNOPS noted that:

- There were no incompatibilities between the UNOPS and UNDP Atlas systems, and any difficulties encountered were because UNDP offices "may have decided to structure their reporting parameters differently; but as long as a user has access and knows how to look for the data, it is available."

- All requisitions had been prepared properly by UNOPS and the difficulties presented by several national pilots would not occur if the system was being used correctly

- Difficulties may have arisen because different project IDs are used by different UN agencies. This issue is expected to be resolved by the implementation of a single project ID

- The primary difficulty is that UNDP offices have not received adequate training on "on sourcing requisitions into POs". A document explaining the process would be distributed to country offices in future.

GPPS staff did not completely concur with the UNOPS interpretation listed above. They did, however, note a willingness on the part of UNOPS to listen to concerns and to make certain changes in practices to facilitate project execution. Further, individual UNOPS staff were prepared to rush procedures in order to facilitate project activities.

Overall, however, GPPS staff still felt that the rules implemented by UNOPS differed according to the UNOPS officer handling the file, and felt they had to spend a rather important amount of time following up issues with UNOPS. UNDP staff also feel that the handling of authorizations to UNDP country offices for the national pilots is very time-consuming. In the view of the evaluators, the type of administrative difficulties encountered between UNOPS and UNDP/GPPS should be resolvable. One possible means to resolve the difficulty with transfers to country offices would be transfer funds to COs annually on the basis of approved workplans, with greater CO flexibility in use of those funds.

It would be preferable, for the reasons listed above, for UNOPS to continue providing administrative support to the GPPS programme, contingent on a satisfactory re-engineering of the support in order to meet the needs of the client and the funder, while respecting UN rules and general accounting principles. UNOPS is near the end of a difficult reorganization process and therefore there is reason to believe that a greater stability of support will be provided in future. In the event that this does not occur GPPS could consider alternatives such as bringing the administration of the programme in-house.

It should be noted that the evaluators are not accountants or auditors and have made no effort to review the project's financial reports.

9.2.4. *Reporting, evaluation and reviews*

The semi-annual reporting provided to the funder was timely and of high quality. Activities were detailed accurately and comprehensively, problem areas were highlighted, and potential new activity ideas canvassed. A table of activities and current progress was included which permitted a rapid understanding of current project progress.

As noted above, there was an expectation in the project document for GPPS II that indicators of legislative development would be used as a measure of project success. In practice, the evaluators found that country programmes mainly did not use the indicators as a basis for outcome measurement. The evaluators believe that indicators are a useful approach to assessing legislative capacity especially as a tool for carrying out parliamentary development programme planning. However, as we have detailed in the methodological note in Appendix One, there are significant difficulties judging project progress using such indicators, because of the presence of multiple contextual factors and the risk that quantitative measures may not reflect the desired qualitative change.

One key tool for evaluation of country level development programmes is measurement against a long-range strategic plan. Several pilot countries indicate their parliament's desire to carry out such a plan. In the evaluators' experience a long-range plan is a good discipline in parliamentary development programming. It reduces the temptation for programmes to carry out the 'easy' activities while leaving aside the more risky 'transformational' activities. This long range planning should be encouraged and financially supported.

9.2.5. *Communications and external relations*

The GPPS programme has made substantial communications efforts. Attractive and informative brochures on the overall programme have been produced, as well as specialized communications efforts for specific project elements, for example the Parliament and CPR project and the arabparliaments.org website. There is, however, no single internet location at which programme public products are posted. As a result many products, particularly at the country level, are not immediately available to other parliamentary development programmers either within or outside UNDP. A GPPS-

specific site within the undp.org domain would also be a useful marketing tool as well as a place to centralize the wide range of project information

GPPS has strong and beneficial links with international parliamentary associations, international democracy-building organizations, and key developed-country parliaments, particularly the parliaments of France and Belgium. In a future phase efforts should be made to broaden these contacts and partnerships with bilateral cooperation agencies.

9.2.6. *Assessment of benefits of a steering committee*

GPPS staff felt that the steering group that had been in place during GPPS I had provided some useful inputs but that gathering these inputs entailed a significant workload. The senior GPPS staff in New York and Brussels are in close contact with the key actors in parliamentary development, which is in any event a relatively small circle of people, and thus expert consultation occurs informally on a regular basis. As we have noted, the donor is consulted regularly on all programme developments.

In all but one of the national pilots, there is an active steering committee; the evaluators have recommended that steps be taken to establish a committee in the one country where this has not been possible due to the sensitive political situation. We have also recommended that regional programme planning should be carried out including consultation with key members of the working groups that have been established.

In this light, the evaluators believe that establishing a formal global steering committee may not generate significant additional input and feedback, and thus may not be a good use of limited resources.

Section Six

10. Perspectives and Recommendations

10.1.   Is there a niche area of parliamentary development for UNDP?

UNDP's involvement in parliamentary development activities dates back a number of years. The results of a review conducted in 2001 show that UNDP was sponsoring programmes in forty different countries, a number which at a conservative estimate now exceeds fifty programmes. While initially, UNDP-supported parliamentary development activities were most prevalent in Africa, there has been substantial expansion in the Arab region, Asia, and countries of the former Soviet Union.

The scope of UNDP-supported parliamentary-strengthening programmes is quite wide. The 2003 UNDP practice note[42] lists eight different types of activities being conducted with parliaments, including institutional framework development, member and staff capacity-building, institutional development, gender initiatives, working with civil society and the media, strengthening political groups, policy development, and civic education. The demand for UNDP support of parliamentary development continues to grow, and there is growing acknowledgement within the United Nations system that intervention within conflict-affected countries must include a robust institutional development component.

UNDP is not the only actor in parliamentary development, although in comparison with other areas of development support to good governance, the parliamentary sector remains badly underfinanced. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, along with various regional and history- and language-based international parliamentary associations, offers parliamentary development support. The United States, through the National Endowment for Democracy, USAID, and the United States Information Agency, supports numerous parliamentary strengthening projects, often through affiliated non-governmental organizations such as the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, the SUNY Centre for International Development, and the National Conference of State Legislatures. Apart from the United States, other bilateral development partners such as DFID, CIDA and SIDA and a few international NGOs operate some parliamentary development programmes, although their scope tends to be quite limited.

The traditional reticence of many bilateral and multilateral development partners to support parliamentary strengthening may be accounted for due to several factors:

- Preference for working 'directly' with populations through activities such as civil society strengthening that are perceived as more 'tangible'.

- Apprehension that parliament is a 'political' institution and that involvement in parliamentary strengthening could be construed as partisanship or intervening in the internal affairs of a country

- Development programmes are typically negotiated between executive branches of government (both on the donor and recipient side) which often place a low priority on parliamentary development

- Lack of experience of international development agencies in dealing with institutional development of parliament.

In recent years the rationale for disengagement with parliamentary development has largely disappeared. As noted above, it is now widely accepted that civil society strengthening is only likely to be effective within a broad democratic framework. The importance of good governance for aid effectiveness has become a key message governing development policy. In addition, the shift towards *budget support* as a primary vehicle for development assistance means that the existence of effective democratic oversight and representation institutions is essential. Nevertheless, the number of development actors substantially involved in parliamentary strengthening remains very small in comparison with those supporting executive strengthening. This imbalance runs the risk of hampering democratic development globally as executives are equipped with resources and advanced management tools, while parliaments lag behind in resources and capacity.

In comparing the two largest parliamentary strengthening institutions, the UNDP and the US, UNDP has several advantages. US programmes are frequently relatively short-term in nature and are dependent on the US government's selection of the country as a development priority. US support is frequently perceived within recipient countries as politically motivated, which has resulted at times in programmes being closed down by government. The pool of parliamentary development experts available to US agencies is less diverse than that available to the UNDP, given the natural US preference for its own citizens.

UNDP's competitive advantages include:
a. Confirmed status as a non-partisan agency with no hidden agenda, which works closely with national governments to develop programming frameworks and activities

b. Long-term experience in parliamentary development

c. A significant transferable expertise pool both within the organization and among external consultants, available to support parliamentary development

d. Co-location in UNDP country offices of both international experts with a broad knowledge of development practice and worldwide contacts, along with national experts

e. Commitment to South-South development cooperation

f. Synergy with the policy expertise concentrated at the Bureau of Development Policy and available to institutional strengthening programmes worldwide.

g. The ability to mobilize resources and technical support from a variety of development partners both within and outside the United Nations system, which would often not be possible for a single bilateral development agency

Despite these advantages, certain critiques could be made of UNDP's activities in support of parliamentary development. These include:

a. UNDP's democratic governance activities are relatively under-resourced and there is consequently inadequate coordination and sharing of best practices between country programmes

b. It is not always evident that specialized expertise exists at individual country office level to nurture and support parliamentary development activities

c. UNDP's programming tends to be fairly cautious given the agency's close ties with national governments; US-supported programming by way of comparison tends to take more risks and is more prepared to 'push' reticent governments in the direction of further democratization.

The GPPS programme responds to these concerns through its innovative structure and modalities of intervention:

a. Through its tri-level national, regional, and global approach, GPPS provides a framework for sharing of best practices and expertise both between and beyond GPPS pilot project countries, enriching parliamentary development practice well beyond the five pilot countries where GPPS resources are concentrated.

b. Because GPPS is linked in to the policy expertise of the UNDP's Bureau of Development Policy, it has ready access to the best in global thinking on democratization, and also provides a crucial action research terrain for the testing of cutting edge thinking on parliamentary development

c. Without diverging from UNDP's emphasis on partnership with host country's, GPPS programming encourages acceptance of broad democratic standards, both directly through projects such as the global 'standards' initiative and indirectly by expanding cross-national sharing of democratic practices and innovations

d. GPPS has potential as a mechanism through which multi-country support to parliamentary strengthening can be leveraged, although this potential has currently only been realized on a relatively small scale, for example in iKNOW Politics and the conflict prevention and reduction activities at the global level, as well as at the national level in a number of the country pilots.

Despite these undoubted merits of the GPPS programme, questions have been raised about the viability and appropriateness of this type of globally-coordinated programming within the United Nations system. In the context of United Nations reform, it has been argued that centrally-managed development programmes should be eliminated in favour of country-level programming, with headquarters staff concentrating on providing cutting edge policy advice.

In practice such an approach is unlikely to be effective. As noted above, and reflected in some of the country pilot project evaluations, many UNDP country offices simply do not have the necessary expertise in parliamentary development to be able to effectively advocate for inclusion of parliamentary development programming within UN-

government negotiated development assistance frameworks. In the event that country-level programmes are established, the present system of headquarters and sub-regional expertise is often insufficiently integrated with the country-level offices to support innovative parliamentary development programmes. In principle the SURF and comparable regionally-based experts are charged with offering expertise to country-based programmes. However their mandates cover both numerous countries and a broader governance portfolio than simply parliamentary development. Given the number of parliamentary development programmes currently being delivered by UNDP offices in the different SURF regions, it is not possible for the SURF advisors to consistently respond to the needs of all the individual country programmes. In addition, contemporary management theory emphasizes that organizations should create multiple avenues for organizational learning and knowledge sharing[43]. GPPS, integrated into UNDP and broader parliamentary development networks at the local, regional, and global levels, and offering a variety of learning modalities, is an ideal adjunct to UNDP's formal democratic governance support framework. GPPS is well placed to act as a *knowledge facilitator* for parliamentary strengthening, both within and beyond UNDP[44].

To conclude, UNDP is an important actor in parliamentary strengthening globally. This area is one in which the agency has a substantial competitive advantage that is reflected in the large and growing number of parliamentary development programmes being supported by UNDP. At the same time, the agency has certain weaknesses given its very limited resource base; country offices are rarely staffed with personnel with substantial parliamentary development experience, while regional offices are also stretched, and again typically lack a dedicated parliamentary development counselor. The unique tri-level structure of GPPS provides for multi-directional learning. Country programmes can benefit from regional and global expertise, regional programmes provide the potential for sharing best practice among countries with similar traditions and common understandings, and GPPS allows UNDP's global expertise to be shared efficiently with grassroots programmes, while at the same time providing opportunities for action research – testing cutting edge policy ideas in development practice.

10.2. <u>What emerging issues should be the focus of a follow up phase?</u>

Many specific recommendations for future activities are included within the national pilot, regional, and global sections of this evaluation report. In this section we briefly outline our perceptions of promising broader strategic intervention areas, based on interviews with the key actors in the programme as well as our assessment of opportunities.

10.2.1. Long range strategic development planning

- One issue with parliamentary development programming, from which GPPS is not entirely immune, is the tendency for similar activities to be repeated over time, often carried out with different funding sources, which are attractive to parliamentarians and staff but which are not tied to clear

performance improvement. For example, training missions may be organized overseas for staff but when they return, the legislature environment is unchanged and there are limited opportunities to put lessons learned into practice.

Ø The most obvious means to ensure GPPS national pilot interventions have strategic impact is to integrate them into a longer-term (7 – 10 years) strategic plan for national parliamentary development. Annual workplans can then be drawn from this strategic plan, which will clearly tie activities to strategic objectives and overall institutional development. The strategic development approach also encourages consistent review of achievements and clearly identifies areas where progress is lagging. The strategic plan is not a panacea but it has been shown to be effective in focusing development activities. In the view of the evaluators national pilots should be encouraged to work on strategic planning with national parliaments.

10.2.2. Piloting intervention in post-conflict situations

• GPPS's parliaments and conflict project has been one of the highlights of this phase of activity. Nevertheless the difficulty securing broad donor participation in the donor's conference demonstrated that the donor/development community still undervalues the importance of long-term investment in democratic development as a means to build good peaceful, well-governed societies. There is a need to build on the work on parliaments in conflict through pilot activities that will demonstrate the importance of parliamentary development in these situations.

Ø The initial discussions with UNDP/BCPR on launching national pilots in immediate post-conflict situations should be pursued. Discussions should be held with the GPPS programme donor (current and any future new donor) to allocate a rapid response fund within GPPS that would permit the programme to participate from an early stage in the conceptualization and implementation of a parliamentary support programme in key post-conflict situations during the next phase of GPPS III. Clearly there are risks to this approach; post-conflict situations are inherently unstable and it is possible that peace could break down in a post-conflict pilot country, rendering further work impossible. However, with careful selection of countries where a real possibility for peaceful development exists, this danger can be minimised. Such pilots would be an entry-point for leveraging significant partnerships with other donors, who will undoubtedly be present on the ground in any post-conflict country, and will be likely to respond with further support to an on-the-ground pilot parliamentary development project.

10.2.3. Building stronger ties between the global, regional, and national pilots

- The tri-level GPPS programming has generated important synergies during GPPS II, for example work on anti-corruption that involves interconnected interventions at the global and regional level. Nevertheless, many activities are restricted to one level, whether national, regional or global. There is room for greater mutual learning, particularly in supporting use of global cutting-edge methodologies in national level work, in practical testing of theoretical approaches developed at the global level, and in operationalizing regional working group theme work at the national level.

- Ø Some areas where we believe there is potential for increased inter-level synergy include in providing support for national pilots to carry out more effective interventions in the MDGs and anti-poverty programming, in testing the applicability of the standards-based approach to parliamentary development at the national level, and in operationalizing the security sector and political party legislation working group work at the national level. These specific possible interventions are discussed within the text of the evaluation.

10.2.4. Opportunities for South-South learning

- GPPS I and II have consistently supported opportunities for South-South sharing of expertise and knowledge, ranging from staff from one GPPS project acting as consultants in the development of a new program in another country, to a variety of regional learning forums and workshops, to bilateral exchanges between southern parliaments. These have had very positive effects in supporting indigenous leadership capacity and challenging the notion expressed in some countries that democracy is something that is being imposed from outside.

- One of the results of the success of some of the longer-running GPPS national pilots, such as in Niger and Benin, is that the parliaments in those countries have gained capacities that are an example to other developing and transitional country parliaments. For example, Benin's parliament has expanded capacities in budget oversight and in public participation in the budget elaboration process that are quite advanced and would be of great use to other parliaments both in the region and more widely. Niger's parliament is simply more effective than most in the sub-region and several areas of its work should be highlighted more broadly, for example in its missions of enquiry in the field. The example of the Benin-Niger interchange during GPPS II showed that this activity can be very effective.

- Ø Future GPPS activities could include specifically programmed elements permitting exchange of skills and capacities between Southern parliaments. Experience in GPPS II showed that this programming, which should include national and regional GPPS involvement, is often best achieved through direct

exchange rather than conferences. Perhaps the most promising means through which this could be achieved would be through integration into programming in a new national pilot, for example in West and/or Central Africa.

10.2.5. Parliamentary development portal

- After 7 years of operations, GPPS national, regional and global activities have generated a great deal of knowledge about parliamentary development, in English, French, and Arabic languages. A welcome initiative has been launched to make much of the Arabic language material available through the www.arabparliaments.org website, and some core documents are available through the UNDP/BDP website. It is expected that the iKNOW Politics website will accumulate a broad base of knowledge about women's political involvement. However much parliamentary development material, particularly country level knowledge, is still not easily accessible. Similarly, opportunities for direct knowledge sharing are limited, and typically restricted to internal discussion networks, such as exists within UNDP. Parliamentary associations, including the Inter Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association[45], gather mainly their own materials and make them available, but again there is no consolidated knowledge-base.

- GPPS could consider partnering with others to establish an online knowledge base that would gather parliamentary development documentation from around the world. GPPS would contribute its own materials, and collect materials from the many UNDP-supported parliamentary development projects around the world. Depending on the resources available to such an initiative, discussion groups could also be hosted, although simply providing development materials and effectively marketing the site would undoubtedly be a good investment in global parliamentary strengthening.

Appendix One
Methodological Notes

Considerations and constraints in evaluation of GPPS II

a. Justification for parliamentary development programming

This evaluation was grounded in a theoretical perspective regarding the role of parliament within democratic development and the desirability of parliamentary development. The first of the United Nations Development Programme's five major policy service areas is democratic governance, and within the domain of democratic governance, parliamentary development is a key activity area, with UNDP's intervention defined as, 'ensuring democratic participation by strengthening parliaments as institutions of governance'[46]. Nevertheless, the crucial importance of elected legislatures is by no means taken for granted by all development practitioners or theoreticians, and must be established in order to justify a programme such as GPPS.

While, superficially, the merit of elected parliaments is generally accepted, two key arguments are sometimes advanced as limiting factors to the importance of elected legislatures in democratic development.

The first is connected to the perspective that genuine democratization depends on the presence of certain prerequisites, such as gender equity, environmental sustainability, and overall social equity that are not necessarily addressed effectively by legislatures in developing countries. From this viewpoint, it may be legitimate to 'impose' external conditionalities even where these are against the will of elected representatives[47]. Legislatures may be repositories of 'backward' thinking and act as a block to effective and far-sighted policy-making[48]. While this argument may appear to have *de facto* merit on occasions, it is essentially an argument in favour of elite rule and is inimical to the fundamental principle of democratic governance. Further, although in the short-term the 'efficacy' and 'quality' of decision-making by enlightened elites may appear superior to that by popularly-accountable bodies, in the longer term this governance approach leads to social tensions created by imposing social values on a population unready to accept them.

The second argument against placing a priority on parliamentary strengthening counterposes the 'authentic' and 'direct' democracy embodied by civil society to the distant and neutered democracy offered by representative institutions: "the meaningful interface between citizens and the elected is minimal between election periods", "the [political] parties themselves are characterized by a lack of internal democracy or fail to address issues that citizens believe are important", and "the influence of monied interests in many political systems is also turning citizens away from traditional engagement in favour of new forms of participation"[49]. While, unsurprisingly, many civil society activists and theorists support this viewpoint, its currency is considerably wider; there is a broad-based tendency in both developed and developing countries to introduce managed public consultation and representation in discrete programme areas, often as an alternative to expanding the scrutiny and oversight roles of parliament[50].

The merits of and limits to 'participatory democracy' have been the subject of substantial debates in recent years. Without necessarily adopting the strong critical position that participatory approaches without democratic underpinnings can represent a form of neocolonial manipulation or 'tyranny'[51], a broader consensus is developing that participatory democracy approaches are not an alternative to support for institutionalization of formal democratic structures. Participatory processes that are not grounded within the framework of representative democracy can often strengthen already-powerful groups at the expense of the less powerful[52]. This position is now acknowledged even within some international organizations such as the World Bank which pioneered the participatory approach internationally[53].

Parliaments and civil society have a complementary role in fostering democratic societies. While civil society is an essential feature of democratic society, modern democracy equally cannot exist without directly elected representative institutions as a key component of the governance system[54]. At the same time, civil society's criticism of parliamentary functioning does reflect a genuine principal-agent problem in societies where the elective institution is distant from the daily concerns of citizens. Thus, support to establish mechanisms and modalities for improving parliament-citizen dialogue is an important part of many parliamentary-strengthening programmes. Often, strengthening initiatives engage civil society organizations as a vehicle to facilitate such dialogue. It is important, however, to acknowledge that civil society organizations themselves sometimes have limited representativity[55] and dialogue with them should not be viewed as a proxy for direct representation of populations, a role played, however imperfectly, by elected legislatures.

b. Evaluation constraints

Definitive or data-based measurement of the impact of any institutional development activity is not possible, for several reasons:

- State institutions such as parliaments operate in environments that to a large extent they do not control. The impacting factors on institutions are multiple, multi-dimensional, and often themselves immeasurable (for example, the nature and effect of a 'democratizing' cultural bias within societies and the international environment).

- As is well known in development theory, development resources are substantially fungible. It is not possible to know what institutional reform activities would have been undertaken had GPPS not been present, especially given that the release of GPPS resources is not tied to specific reform outcomes[56].

- 'Micro' measures of parliamentary development, such as the numbers of laws proposed by parliamentarians and passed into law, may provide some insight into parliamentary activity but are heavily impacted by the nature of the constitutional system and governance practices in individual countries. Further, certain political circumstances, such as in semi-presidential systems where the president and the parliamentary majority are of opposing political formations, will naturally generate substantial 'evidence' of parliamentary effectiveness, even though in

emerging democracies this eventuality can in some cases represent a source of democratic instability[57].

- Programme monitoring measures are equally problematic as evaluative indicators. Programme monitoring typically establishes quantitative measures at the beginning of a programme cycle, including expected programme outputs such as workshops held, as well as resources to be expended. Programme monitoring is a necessary component of management control over any development programming, and can yield useful information for programme evaluation. But neither the implementation of specific activities nor the expenditure of resources is necessarily correlated with parliamentary strengthening. It is easy to determine whether a workshop was carried out, but much harder to determine whether it changed practice and thus helped to achieve broader programme goals.

- It is extremely difficult to divorce development assessments, particularly in the area of governance and democratization, from analysts' preferences in terms of democratic models. Comparisons of countries ranked by both the Bertelsmann[58] and World Bank[59] governance measures, for example, show that countries pursuing liberal market approaches are favored in comparison with those pursuing heterodox economic strategies, even where relative levels of democratic freedoms appear roughly comparable.

- Most crucially, definitive impact assessment – "the calculation of pure programme impacts given a suitable comparison or control group of nonparticipants"[60] is theoretically impossible because no control group is available. Within countries, parliaments are unique institutions, and valid comparison cannot be made with other state institutions[61]. Countries, and their parliaments, are sufficiently dissimilar that comparisons are largely invalid. Even countries that share many similarities – such as Benin and Togo, for example, in terms of size, geographical proximity, shared cultures and languages, and level of economic development – have substantial differences in factors such as colonial history, postcolonial governance traditions, international relations, and elite composition, resulting in highly divergent democratic governance outcomes that cannot plausibly be tied to any specific (or more probably, any) international development intervention.

In the specific case of GPPS, the relatively small size of the GPPS II fund (€6,000,000 over four years) means that in many cases the possibilities for leverage of institutional change, even given the best designed and most effective pilot activities, is relatively small. As we have noted in the evaluation of some of the country pilot programmes, the impact of GPPS projects can be appear to be quite large, especially when projects are carried out over the long term. Even here, however, for macro level indicators it is impossible to correct for exogenous impacting factors on parliamentary effectiveness such as changes in the relative levels of exigency of development partners regarding development impacts[62]. For regional and global GPPS programmes, where the relative size of the GPPS programme in comparison with the continent-wide and worldwide scope of parliamentary development is small indeed, and the number of confounding variables exponentially greater, the potential for definitive measurement is even less promising.

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Given that definitive or quantitative data-based evaluation of parliamentary development programming was precluded, a qualitative and analytic evaluation has been carried out, using a variety of data-gathering methods.

c.   Methodological approach

In the early phases of the evaluation, the evaluators were provided the available project documentation and discussed the overall project in Brussels with the GPPS II Programme Manager and the Parliamentary Development Policy Adviser of the Democratic Governance Group at the UNDP's New York-based Bureau for Development Policy. As the evaluation project continued, further documentation was provided by various of the evaluation informants, and the evaluators in turn requested and received additional documentation from UNDP and other sources. The review of this written material provided a framework for deeper exploration of the GPPS II project's accomplishments.

In common with most qualitative evaluations, a core feature of the evaluation process was the conducting of interviews with key informants within parliaments in order to obtain their understanding and assessment of GPPS-supported parliamentary development activities. This information has been filtered before being incorporated in a generalized assessment of programme impact. Parliamentarians and staff may for example be inclined to report positively on development activities if they have benefited from those activities, even if the link to parliamentary strengthening may be weak. Conversely those who have not personally benefited or have not benefited as they expected may present a negative evaluation even though the programme may have met its goals.

Another crucial component in institutional evaluation is context. This is readily illustrated in the divergent countries selected as pilot countries for the GPPS II project. Some of the countries involved have enjoyed a number of years of relative political stability, whereas others have recently emerged from serious social conflict and have made only a partial transition towards democracy. The institutional development needs in these different environments are very different, and programme expectations need also to be tailored to circumstances. Conversely, inadequate attention to broader democratization goals in countries facing barriers to full democratization can create a paradoxical situation where the presence of a parliamentary strengthening programme may actually provide an institution with unwarranted legitimacy. Further, in countries where there are real or perceived limits to democratization, there can be a tendency to focus parliamentary development programming on administrative strengthening rather than expanding representativity and public dialogue. Such an approach, while understandable, may not necessarily strengthen parliament as a democratic institution. Throughout the evaluation we have consciously attempted to place parliamentary development initiatives within a broader historical and social context of democratic development, and have assessed the success of the GPPS interventions in terms both of the local realities of democratic development and of the need to remain focused on overall democratization goals. One of the most difficult judgment calls in democratic strengthening is determining when the

benefits of engagement with the parliamentary institution are outweighed by an unfavourable overall context for democratic development.

Thirdly, parliamentary strengthening can be evaluated to some extent through discussions with representatives of broader 'interested' society, including for example representatives of the media, government officials, and civil society organizations. Wherever possible the evaluators met with parliament's external interlocutors and discussed both the impact of the GPPS-supported activities and the overall effectiveness of the parliamentary institution. Assessment of these perspectives takes into account the constraints and structure of public dialogue; the tone of dialogue varies substantially between countries, with some tending towards 'collegiality' and others preferring to set high expectations and to air grievances openly when these are not met. External representatives of different social institutions also themselves come from positions of interest and their views have been filtered accordingly.

Appendix Two

TOR for the Evaluation of the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening II

1. Background

In May 1999, UNDP launched, with the support of the Belgian Government, the first Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (GPPS I) with the overall objective of strengthening the capacity of parliaments and improving the ability of elected officials to represent and be accountable to the will of the people.

The GPPS I explicitly recognized good governance as a precondition for the attainment of sustainable human development and recognized that parliaments had a critical role to play in representing peoples views in the decision making processes that effect their lives.

The programme was launched in the context of the relatively new and gradually increasing area of international co-operation - parliamentary development support. Knowledge of what could be done and what worked in this area was scarce. Among the chief aims of the GPPS 1, therefore, was pilot testing legislative assistance strategies with a view to understanding the variables critical to the success of parliamentary democracy in developing countries.

The GPPS I intended to (i) pilot and develop new modalities for UNDP's assistance to parliaments; (ii) develop new modalities for UNDP to strengthen regional parliamentary cooperation; and (iii) undertake research and improve documentation on key parliamentary issues as a means of building up UNDP's and other donors' ability to effectively support parliaments. From 1999 until 2003, the programme supported national parliaments in Benin, Cambodia, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Kazakhstan, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Uganda, and Uruguay. Regional support included training on budgetary oversight and gender budgeting. At the global level knowledge tools were developed among others on how MPs could contribute to Poverty reduction strategies or national MDG plans elaboration and implementation monitoring. The programme also strengthened parliamentary associations and promoted networking among parliamentarians.

The lessons learned through the GPPS I initiatives were documented through an extensive mid-term review that was conducted from May-August 2002 identifying lessons learned as well as ways forward for the GPPS II. A copy of the country level reviews and overall mid-term review report will be provided. The review also contributed to UNDP's 'Parliamentary Development Policy Guidance Note' released in September 2002 (see http://www.undp.org/governance/sl-parliaments.htm). On the base of the achievements of GPPS I, its lessons learned and the conclusions of the discussions at the international policy dialogue conference on parliamentary development (November

2002), it was decided to prepare a follow-up, a GPPS II, which would focus on the following:

1. supporting parliamentary development in regions where democratic development support was most needed, notably the Arab Region
2. Build on the success of pilot initiatives in West Africa but better integrate the regional and pilot country level initiatives
3. Focus global attention on the matter of parliaments role in conflict prevention and recovery

As a global programme with a learning agenda, the GPPS II seeks to achieve enhanced parliamentary capacity to represent effectively the interests of the people, control actively the executive and ensure solid law making through the following three interrelated strategies – common to the GPPS I.

(1) *Country level initiatives*: The strategy focuses on testing alternative parliamentary development approaches with a limited number of national parliaments (each with its peculiarities) in both regions. These country level projects aim to strengthen the parliament in their respective countries, to contribute to democratic outcomes and to come up with lessons learned useful for other parliamentary development efforts.

(2) *Regional Level Initiatives***:** The country level initiatives are to be strengthened and the learning disseminated by regional training, networking initiatives and electronic dissemination. Where possible, regional initiatives ought to engage regional parliamentary associations or institutions with a secondary objective of strengthening their capacity through the process. Regional initiatives are also to be utilised to stimulate additional capacity development efforts in the region and to forward discourse on democratic development or highly sensitive issues.

(3) *Global Level*: At the global level, GPPS II studies key political variables that may be critical to improving our understanding of how parliamentary democracy can be strengthened and/or impacted in developing countries. Issues such as parliament's role in conflict mediation/resolution are studied in greater detail. Activities to network and support women parliamentarians must be undertaken as those which seek to engender parliamentary debate and process.

As determined in the GPPS II Programme document it is foreseen during the third year of the programme to undertake a mid-final term review to assess the impact of the programme towards achieving its target goals, to document pilot case studies and lessons learned for wide dissemination. This Terms of Reference set out the framework for the review.

This evaluation will be undertaken by an evaluation team that will work closely with the GPPS programme team.[63]

2. Purpose

The purpose of this consultancy is to review the lessons learned and document the practices of the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening with a view to:

> learning what works and what doesn't in the provision of parliamentary development assistance;
> making recommendations for the remainder of the various programme pillars (national projects, regional work and global endeavors), including prioritization and any reallocation of resources across regions, countries, themes etc.. so as to achieve optimum impact and delivery
> providing direction for future parliamentary development activities to be supported under a possible Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening III and other UNDP legislative assistance

The consultancy will also be asked to comment on aspects of programme implementation (formulation, management, substantive and financial reporting, etc.), but the thrust of the focus of this consultancy should be on the documentation of lessons learned, recommendations for remainder of current GPPS II, and suggestions for a follow up programme.

3. Evaluation Team

The team should be composed of a senior consultant (60 days) who will be recruited for leading the whole evaluation. He will be assisted by a second consultant for the review of the country level and regional activities (40 days). The team may be accompanied for some of the field visits by the GPPS manager or Senior Parliamentary Development Advisor and/or an official from the Belgian Development Cooperation Ministry.

4. Qualifications of experts

> In depth knowledge of parliamentary development assistance
> At least 5 years of practical experience in programme management, monitoring and evaluation or design of international parliamentary development assistance projects
> Knowledge of UNDP parliamentary development programmes and UNDP mandate and structure
> French and English Proficiency, Arabic a plus
> Experience in documenting lessons learned

5. Duties and Work Methodology

The evaluation team will be responsible for developing a suitable methodology for achieving the following results. The final document should be organized in a manner consistent with the duties as outlined below. The timetable and workplan are indicated in a following section.

The evaluation team will be provided with the programme document, all progress reports as well as all relevant background material on all the undertakings of the pogramme (ToR, event reports, research papers and other knowledge tools, etc.).

5.1. Country level initiatives: Review, documentation and forward looking recommendations

5.1.1. The thrust of the consultants' duties are on documenting the experiences and lessons learned of the country level activities of the programme (see table below) and making recommendations on the remainder of the project. The experts will start with reviewing all project documentation (project documents, workplans and progress reports) and subsequently undertake in-country analysis through interviews with main stakeholders (MPs, parliamentary staff, UNDP country office, and other relevant external beneficiaries and other actors involved in parliamentary development, Belgian development co-operation attachés), review of all project documentation (from seminar/workshop related information (agendas, participants lists, presentations, reports) to analytical notes, review of processes, administration, handbooks, etc.) and review of financial and operational management of project. On the basis of the review and status of progress, suggestions will be made as to the remainder of the GPPS II (end of 2007).

Country	Type of Review	Cooperating Partner	Visit By + Duration
Benin	In depth review of long-term assistance to the Benin National Assembly; particular attention should be given to the sustained support outcomes and suggestions to be made on the exit strategy. In addition to reviewing the substance of the work, the expert team should also have a look at the financial management of the project.	UNDP Benin and in particular GPPS parliamentary project officer Ibouraïma.yankpe@undp.org	- Expert team Field Visit - 4/5 days
Niger	In depth review of long-term assistance to the Niger National Assembly; particular attention should be given to the sustained support outcomes and suggestions to be made on the exit strategy. In addition to reviewing the substance of the work, the expert team should also have a look at the financial management of the project.	UNDP Niger and in particular GPPS Parliamentary project coordinator fatifoukori@yahoo.fr	- Expert team Field Visit - 4/5 days
Dakar – Senegal	Discussions with SURF WA governing institutions advisor on	SURF West Africa: Governing institutions	- One day stop over

	parliamentary development in the region and in particular on the West-Africa regional activities of the GPPS.	advisor Kango.lare-lantone@undp.org; Research Associate Michel.douti@undp.org	
Algeria	Detailed review of first year of activities of parliamentary support to the Assemblée Populaire Nationale & Conseil de la Nation, including suggestions for follow-up and management modalities of project.	UNDP Algeria and in particular GPPS parliamentary project officer sophie.haspeslagh@undp.org	- Expert team Field Visit - 3/4 days
Morocco	Review of a initial limited activities in support to the Moroccan Parliament that have taken place over the last 16 months; prepare suggestions for the way ahead, in particular on how effective implementation could be accelerated. Interviews with Arab regional activities coordinator based in Casablanca Karima.el.korri@undp.org	UNDP Morocco; in particular myrieme.znyber@undp.org Aurelie.boukobza@undp.org and parliamentary project coordinator Mama Hamamida hamimidamama@yahoo.fr	- Expert team Field Visit - 3/4 days
Lebanon (Pending on rapid change of current situation)	In depth review of support to Lebanese National Assembly (UNDP project started in 2000, GPPS support in July 2005), and recommendations for way ahead. Interviews with POGAR senior advisor on Arab regional activities.	In country project team headed by Elie Khoury undpparm@inco.com.lb and UNDP CO POGAR Senior advisor Salim.nasr@undp.org	- Expert team Field Visit - 5 days (including a day for the Arab regional activities with the POGAR colleagues involved in that work)

5.1.2. Country reports should be no more than 12 pages long.

They should be organized as follows:

<u>Contextual descriptive section</u>
- Country & Title & Funding & Period:
- Origin of Project: Where did the initial impetus or idea for the project come from? From the parliament, the UNDP Country Office, Democratic Governance Group or other?

- Problem(s) to be addressed:
- Main beneficiaries:
- Project Objectives & Strategy:
- Key Activities and Implementation:

- Organizational modalities:
  Describe the involvement of the UNDP country office in implementation of the project. Who are the counterparts in the parliament - is it the Speaker, a Reform Committee, the Parliamentary Secretariat? What is the role, if any, of the executive? How is the steering committee functioning? Is there a project manager within the Parliament?
- Partner Agencies:
  Are their participating agencies/donors? Are there other key projects in the sector?

Analysis
- Methodology:
  Comment on the strategy and its appropriateness in meeting the problem issue identified?
  Could the strategy be adapted for other countries and/or situations?
  Which improvements to the current strategy could be recommended?
  Are allocated funds and resources adequate to achieve objectives?
  Have political factors sufficiently been considered and addressed in the programming and implementation phases?

- Results/Impact:
  What has the Project achieved? Has it had any impact in terms of making the parliament a stronger governing institution? Have the outputs contributed to the aimed outcome(s)? In which way(s)? Have indicators or benchmarks been used to evaluate progress? If not suggestions should be presented.

- Sustainability:
  Are the project achievements sustainable? If not, what more needs to be done? What should be done differently?

- Critical Success Factors: Are there factors which you view as having been critical to the success or that will be critical to the success of the project?

- Operational & Financial Management:
  Is the management structure of the project appropriate (steering committee, project coordinator, UNDP CO involvement, etc.)? Review financial management; attribution of funds and actual expenditures in terms of appropriateness and sound use of funding. Review also execution modality (UNOPS).
- Provide recommendations for remainder of initiatives: directions of remaining activities and priorities, review workplans, etc.

Particular attention should be given on how the project has been involving not only the parliament (MPs (from both majority and opposition) and administration), but also relevant actors of the government, Civil society and citizens. How it communicated through the media on what has been done?

<u>Conclusion</u>
    Findings and Lessons Learned
          Summarize the key findings and lessons learned, with a particular attention to those relevant for other parliamentary programmes. Identify possible gaps that would merit attention for future support.
    Recommendations
          Recommendations for improving the project, for a possible follow-up or exit strategy.
          Recommendations for designing future interventions in similar environments.

In undertaking country analysis, the consultants should try to apply the success indicators developed by the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (attached) or any other relevant indicators, helping to frame the assessment.

5.2. Review of Regional Activities

The consultants will review the reports on activities undertaken as well as the products developed (knowledge tools, information dissemination, established networks, etc.), interview the regional activities advisors and coordinators as well as a number of beneficiaries of those services. The experts will comment on the extent to which the selected activities contribute to the regional objectives of the GPPS II. They will review the approaches and make recommendations on the types of activities undertaken and which could be undertaken in the future. They will review the inter-linkages between the national and the regional pillars of the GPPS II. They will, where appropriate, review the co-operation modalities and achieved synergies with regional programmes.
The consultants will review the output of the select regional activities and provide detailed profile and comment, similar to the framework proposed in the country level initiatives section I above. On the basis of the review and status of progress, suggestions will be made as to the remainder of the GPPS II (end of 2007).

Main regional endeavors to be reviewed include:

West-Africa:
- Study tour of Beninese MPs to the Niger National Assembly
- Francophone Africa Seminar on Parliamentary Oversight for Poverty Reduction
- Desk review on the Quotas in West Africa and women parliamentary participation
- Regional seminar on Gender Budgeting

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- General Assembly for Francophone Parliamentary Administration
- Initiative on advancing anti-corruption conventions in West-Africa with a particular focus on involving Parliaments (legislative guide and Accra workshop in March '06)
- Regional study on non-schooled MPs in West Africa
- National case studies on how to professionalize parliamentary staff in West and Central Africa (DRC and RC)
- West and Central Africa practitioners network

Arab region:
- Desk Review on Parliamentary Development in the Arab Region, highlighting Arab women's political representation
- Regional Comparative Study on the Budget Process
- Role of Parliaments and Parliamentarians in fighting Corruption – UNCAC conference launching the Arab Chapter of Parliamentarians against cooruption
- Regional training on legislative drafting
- Arab Regional Parliamentary Seminar on the Budget Process including from a Gender Perspective
- Regional Parliamentary Conference on Empowering Arab Members of Parliaments
- Regional Comparative Study of Parliamentary Rules of Procedure
- www.arabparliaments.org
- Regional task forces on political party legislation and parliamentary oversight of the security sector

5.3. Review of Global Activities

The consultant will review the reports on activities undertaken as well as review the products developed (knowledge tools, information dissemination, etc.), interview the global activities consultants and partners (IPU, NDI, etc.) as well as a number of beneficiaries of those services. The consultant will comment on the extent to which the selected activities contribute to the global objectives of the GPPS II, on how those activities have contributed to advancing the parliamentary development agenda? He/she will review the approaches and make recommendations on the types of activities undertaken and which could be undertaken in the future. He/she will review the relevance of those global endeavors for UNDP's parliamentary development work at the national level.
The consultants will review the output of the select global activities and provide detailed profile and comment, similar to the framework proposed in the country level initiatives section I above. On the basis of the review and status of progress, suggestions will be made as to the remainder of the GPPS II (end of 2007).

Main global endeavors to be reviewed include:

iKNOWpolitics (started only in January 2006)	- Review documentation and discuss with project partners and project coordinator

	(violet.Awotwi@undp.org). Suggestions for iKNOW Politics next steps.
The initiative on the role of Parliaments in conflict prevention, settlement and post-conflict reconstruction	- Review website www.parlcpr.undp.org with all relevant documentation, - Interview project manager ludohood@gmail.com and the initiative's partner IPU

5.4. General Comments/recommendations on GPPS II and suggestions for future GPPS work

2. What emerging issues do you think should be the focus of a follow up phase and how best would they be handled – at the local, regional, global level? What issues that were initially addressed in GPPS II need further deepening?
3. Is there a niche area of parliamentary development for UNDP?
4. Have the impact of the regional/global activities been significant – how can they be built upon to maximize impact?

5.5. Comments related to management of GPPS II:

1. Is there a need for a steering committee or some other senior advisory vehicle for decision making and steering?
2. The main consultant will review the effectiveness of the current UNOPS execution and make recommendations where felt appropriate.
3. The consultant will review the partnerships established or consolidated through the GPPS, comment and make recommendations for improvement.
4. The consultant will review also the added value of the modality of global programming in particular as the country level initiatives are concerned and identify the advantages and/or disadvantages of such modality.

5.6. Executive Summary

An executive summary will be prepared highlighting the key findings, recommendations and lessons learned.

6. Workplan

Total Duration: 60 days

Desk Review/ meeting GPPS management/Preparation of Field Visits: 13 days (at home base + visit New York or Brussels)

Field Visits: 30 days including travel to include the following:

Benin, Niger, Senegal
Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco

Preparation of Draft Report: 17 days as follows:
10 days at home base to write report
2 days to discuss draft report with UNDP's key GPPS interlocutors and debriefing
with Belgium Development Cooperation Administration
5 days to review comments and prepare final report

To start by October 2006 and to be concluded by February 2007

Appendix Three
Biographies of Evaluators

Brief biographies of the evaluation team members

Jonathan Murphy is the lead evaluator of the GPPS II mid-term review. Jonathan worked between 1997 and 2002 as director of research for the government caucus in the Canadian parliament. He has many years of experience in international democratic development, and has worked in long-and short-term parliamentary support projects in over a dozen countries in Africa and Asia. Jonathan holds a doctorate in management from Cambridge University in the United Kingdom. He has published widely on international management and social policy issues, and currently lectures in International Management at Cardiff University. Jonathan holds dual British and Canadian citizenship and currently splits his time between India and the United Kingdom.

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Appendix Four
List of Persons Interviewed

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DENHAM Julie, National Democratic Institute (telephone interview)

DEROUA Amel, député

DESTANNE DE BERNIS Marc, Resident Coordinator, System of the United Nations

FELLAH Mohammed Sénateur, Conseil de la Nation

FLICI Fatima-Zohra, député

HAFID Tarek, Journaliste, Le Soir d'Algérie

HASPESLAGH Sophie, Programme Officer UNDP

Members of the Commission des Affaires Economiques in addition to members of the Conseil de la Nation having participated in GPPS activities

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ACHADE Madeleine, Députée, Chef de Parti Politique

ADAM SOULE Abou, Président de la Commission des Finances et des Echanges, Président du Comité de Pilotage du GPPS

ADANDE Abel Stafford, Secrétaire chargé des relations avec la Presse Ecrite, AN

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FAYOMI Isaac, Directeur des Services Législatifs

GASANA Edith, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

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Footnotes

[1] Centre of Political and Economic Analysis for Parliament. CAPAN is a project primarily funded through the African Capacity Building Foundation

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[62] For example, the Niger parliament's 2006 actions regarding corruption allegations against some government ministers can at least partly be tied to the insistence of development partners that action be taken to address financial irregularities in a multi-donor development programme (Agence France Presse, October 2, 2006).

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63 The programme team is which is composed of programme manager, responsible for the overall steering of the programme, a Programme Officer supporting the West Africa activities (both national and regional), the SURF West Africa Governance advisor working on the West Africa regional undertakings, the Arab regional coordinator and the Programme on Governance for the Arab region (POGAR) advisor on participation and a series of consultants and local project coordinators.