



# Inter-Parliamentary Union

## Technical Cooperation Programme

### EXPLORATORY MISSIONS: PAKISTAN



Created 08/06/2005 Updated 13/06/2005

At the invitation of the Speaker of the parliament of Pakistan, Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, the IPU Secretary General, paid an official visit to Pakistan from 22 to 25 July 2003. The parliament was very keen to explore the possibility of establishing a technical cooperation programme.



The parliamentary authorities stated that they wanted to strengthen the federal assembly. They identified a weak library/research/information service as being one of the main deficiencies in the parliament. They also wanted to improve on “parliamentary techniques and procedures”, including an overhaul of the existing, modest committee system. Members of the parliamentary staff complained of a lack of drafting skills in parliament. They hoped to see training in just about every area of parliamentary work. Although there were computers in parliament, there was a need to upgrade the system and create a parliamentary website, etc. Many also said they hoped to see telecasting of parliamentary proceedings.

In the light of the discussions with the parliamentary authorities, a joint IPU/UNDP needs assessment mission was carried out in October 2003. Broad areas of focus for the mission included:

- Institutional reforms aimed at streamlining the organizational structure of the parliament;
- The committee system, with a view to streamlining it and ensuring better parliamentary scrutiny of legislation and oversight;
- Legislative drafting;

- Parliamentary services, with special attention being paid to needs in the library, research, documentation and information technology fields;
- Human resources and the need for streamlining personnel administration to enable it to provide more efficient backstopping to members;
- Capacity-building measures for women parliamentarians and a strengthening of the parliament's ability to address gender issues;
- Relations with constituents, the media, and civil society organizations, to ensure that parliamentary processes are adequately informed by inputs from these sectors of society.

On the basis of the needs assessment, the mission prepared a comprehensive long-term project proposal for assistance to the parliament-designed to address the problems identified.

The parliament is at an important crossroads in its history. The people of Pakistan are pinning considerable hopes on it. It contains the ingredients for a productive and effective legislative body that can pass good laws, ensure proper oversight of the Government and represent the people. Success in achieving these goals is dependent largely on the parliamentary authorities' taking bold steps to reform and modernize the parliament's working methods and to strengthen its human and technical resources. The UNDP/IPU joint needs assessment mission of October 2003 confirmed that the parliamentary authorities have that commitment.

This commitment needs to be supported by the donor community so that the authorities can successfully address those factors that impair efficiency. Indeed, the parliament's 56-year history has been marked by frequent interruptions as a result of military rule. It has been generally recognized that this has not allowed the parliament to build experience and consolidate a coherent long-term tradition of parliamentary good practices.