



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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## **REVIEW OF THE COMMON PRINCIPLES FOR PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENT**

MANILA, PHILIPPINES  
28-29 AUGUST 2014

### **Introduction**

Strong democratic parliaments are essential to fully inclusive political representation. Parliament is the central institution of democracy; it represents society in all its diversity and embodies the will of the people, while holding government to account.

As support to parliamentary development has steadily increased since the 1990's, there has equally been an increase in parliaments seeking to improve their performance.

While traditional parliamentary support is seen more as a technical exercise, that is to say improved structures, procedures and enhanced skills of Members and staff, there is a gradual understanding that parliamentary development is a politically sensitive area of cooperation. Today there is also the realization that institutional change process and institution-building cannot be directed or achieved externally. Change must come from within. In essence, parliaments are unique institutions requiring specific development approaches.

However, the diversity of actors in the field of parliamentary development raises a number of issues related to coordination, cooperation and coherence.

In late 2013, the IPU organized a meeting of parliamentary development practitioners on to address these issues, in which parliaments, parliamentary training institutes and development organizations participated. Participants recognized the need for a set of Common Principles for Parliamentary Development Practitioners and requested the IPU to take the initiative forward.

The Common Principles are intended to provide a summary of what is most important and aspirational in parliamentary development and a common language that all actors involved in parliamentary development can share. An essential aspect of the Common Principles is that parliaments should drive their own development agenda.

In November 2013, a drafting group<sup>1</sup> began work on the Principles. To ensure broad ownership, support and endorsement of the Common Principles, the IPU has invited national parliaments and organizations involved in parliamentary development to contribute to the document.

As part of the process of broad consultation, the IPU will organize a meeting of representatives from national parliaments in the Asia region and parliamentary development organizations to invite final input to the draft Common Principles.

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament, the French National Assembly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

**Objectives:** The aim of the meeting is: to review and improve the draft Common Principles; and to consider approaches to their practical implementation at the national level, including the use of existing good practices of cooperation and coordination. The meeting will also discuss the process of endorsement of the principles by national parliaments, parliamentary development organizations and other relevant bodies.

**Agenda items:**

Day 1           **Presentation of the draft Common Principles**  
The drafting group will present their work to date and provide a briefing on content, scope and implications of the draft Common Principles. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss and provide input to the Principles, and how they relate to parliamentary development support.

**Good Practices in Cooperation and Coordination**

Working groups will exchange experiences on cooperation in providing parliamentary development support at the national level. What works-good practices, and what does not work –what is to be avoided?

Day 2           **Practical considerations for implementation**  
The session will discuss practical ways to implement the principles at the national level and mechanisms for regular follow-up and exchange of experiences.

Outcome: Together with contributions received during the period of broad consultation, the meeting will result in a revised text of the Common Principles for endorsement by parliaments and parliamentary development organizations; recommendations by participants for the implementation of the Common Principles, based on good practices in cooperation and coordination of parliamentary development support at the national level; guidelines for the endorsement of the Common Principles.

Participants   - **National Parliaments from the Asia Region (Secretaries General or their representative)**  
- **Organizations / Parliaments that provide parliamentary development support**

Language      English

Venue          TBC, Manila, Philippines

23 July 2014