



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Draft Common Principles for Parliamentary Development

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¹ Parliamentary development has arisen as a distinct branch in the realm of democratic governance development over the past 20 years or so. Over time, it has been built on standards that have become widely known and established, and are still growing in strength and popularity. It is expected that these “common principles” will contribute to their further strengthening.

Introduction

About parliamentary development

Strong parliaments are essential to democracy. Most parliaments have a number of constitutional roles that no other institution possesses, including making law, voting the national budget and holding government to account on behalf of citizens. The extent to which parliament is able to carry out these functions effectively is an indication of the quality of democracy in a country.

Like democracy, parliaments are always perfectible. Parliaments worldwide are seeking to improve their performance, in response to pressures from inside and outside the institution. Parliaments have the primary responsibility for their development, and need to be able to call upon support from the international community. This support is broadly known as 'parliamentary development'. It is fundamental that this support should be of the highest quality possible.

Parliamentary development is different in significant ways from traditional forms of donor-driven development assistance, because parliaments are unique institutions. Parliaments are political bodies whose Members are elected or appointed to represent the people. They are complex institutions, whose rules and procedures have been designed to help manage the competing priorities of society and ensure that laws are made in the public interest. They comprise multiple voices: all Members of parliament, regardless of their political affiliation, have an equal vote on legislation and other matters.

In recent decades, established parliaments have provided support in order to assist their newer counterparts. Concurrently, parliamentary development has emerged as a distinct field, and is becoming increasingly professionalized. Besides parliaments themselves, other actors in the field include international organizations, training institutes, donors, civil society groups and consultancy firms. The resources dedicated to parliamentary development have increased significantly, as the importance of parliaments for good governance, development, political inclusion and social justice has become more widely understood.

The key long-term objective of parliamentary development is to assist parliaments to develop the full capacity to perform their role, to promote involvement of citizens in the strengthening of democracy in their country, and to ensure genuine accountability of the executive branch of government before parliament.

There are many challenges to effective parliamentary development, often relating to the very nature of parliament as a complex political institution. Experience has shown many cases where parliamentary development activities have not led to significantly strengthening of the parliament. The reasons include limited understanding of the political environment, and flawed approaches to working with parliament and a lack of cooperation at all levels.

Appropriate and effective parliamentary development must be tailored to suitably address the unique structure of parliaments, as well as the specificities of each country and legislature. Parliamentary development involves sharing different models and helping parliaments to make their own choices about what is most suitable to their historical, cultural and political context.

Parliamentary development needs to be considered as a partnership between parliament and the organizations providing support. Parliament must be able to determine its own priorities, with due regard for emerging international standards for democratic parliaments.

Historically, parliamentary development has rarely happened in orderly arrangements. Change is frequently driven by political events, as well as increasing public expectations as a culture of democracy grows and matures. As such, parliamentary development does not lend itself well to a project-driven approach, with a clearly defined beginning, middle and end, and targets to be achieved. Key indicators for parliaments are notoriously difficult to identify and measure. The impact of support needs to be assessed with regard to the long-term impact on parliament and the broader political environment.

Acknowledging this situation, a number of parliaments, organizations and institutes involved in parliamentary development gathered in Geneva in October 2013 to discuss ways to improve the suitability, accuracy and effectiveness of the support they provide. They agreed to develop a set of common principles on which to base the work they carry out.

There is great potential for positive change in the field of parliamentary development. The overall quality of parliamentary development can be improved by greater sharing of good practices and lessons learned and developing more effective partnerships between parliaments that receive support and those that provide it.

Purpose of the Common Principles

The Common Principles are firstly a statement of principles, distilled from the experience of more than forty years of support to parliamentary development. During this time, many good practices and also many less successful ones have been observed. The Common Principles aim to capture the most important aspects of this learning into a single document, for the benefit of all.

The Common Principles are intended to provide a common language that all actors involved in parliamentary development can share. In this way, the Common Principles should facilitate the dialogue between parliaments receiving support and those actors that provide support. Observance by all actors of the Common Principles should ensure that the diversity each brings is beneficial to the parliament receiving support. They should also support cooperation between all actors in parliamentary development, including at global, regional and national levels.

Finally, the Common Principles provide a benchmark that can be used in the design, implementation and assessment of parliamentary development activities.

By disseminating these principles and good practices, the Common Principles are intended to have a positive impact on the quality of support to parliamentary development, and by extension on the quality of parliaments and democracy.

About the Common Principles

The document is structured around twelve Principles that aim to encapsulate a major facet of parliamentary development in a few words. Each Principle is accompanied by a commentary that describes the different aspects of the Principle. The commentaries are illustrated by indicative examples of good practice. These examples do not aim to cover every possible situation that could arise during parliamentary development activities. Parliaments and parliamentary development actors will need to interpret the Principles in the context of their own work.

The Common Principles are applicable to all activities aimed at strengthening parliament. This includes long-term, large-scale activities which address the whole institution of parliament, as well as smaller time-bound activities and ones which involve only a certain part of the parliament or its Members. The Common Principles are intended to be universal in scope, relevant to all countries and contexts in which support is made available to help strengthen a parliament, and applicable to all actors involved in parliamentary development.

The Common Principles were developed through a consultative process. A five-member working group² was convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to lead the process, with the support of an independent consultant. Parliaments provided input during the process through the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament and the governing bodies of the IPU. Actors in parliamentary development provided comments on successive drafts, including at a review meeting in July 2014.

The Common Principles will be presented for formal adoption to the IPU's governing bodies in October 2014, in parallel with endorsement by the other members of the working group. After their adoption, the Common Principles will be made available for endorsement by other actors working in parliamentary development. This notably includes parliaments, in their capacity both as providers and receivers of support, international organizations, civil society groups, organizations specialized in parliamentary development and donors. To endorse the Common Principles, national parliaments and organizations simply need to notify the IPU of their decision, accompanied where necessary by a formal statement from the appropriate authorities. The IPU will keep a public record of the endorsements of the Common Principles.

² Members of the Working Group : Inter-Parliamentary Union, United Nations Development Programme, National Assembly of France, European Parliament, National Democratic Institute

Principle # 1

PRINCIPLE: Strong parliaments are essential to democracy, and parliaments are entitled to the highest quality assistance in support of their own development.

Commentaries:

1. Effective separation of powers is intended to prevent the concentration of power and ensure proper checks and balances. It entails the existence and operation of strong parliaments, and citizens' right and ability to express their expectations and concerns in an orderly way through their representatives. This in turn contributes to institutional and government stability.
2. Parliaments are multifaceted. They are composed of various structures and parts (committees, sub-committees, caucuses, etc.) that operate internally through specific and complex procedures and mechanisms. They interact with the executive and the judiciary according to the Constitution and laws as well as with civil society. Parliaments are also unique in that all members have an equal vote on legislation or other matters whether from majority or opposition.
3. All parliaments are entitled to the highest quality of assistance. However, especially in developing countries, they often lack the means to develop internally, and are in need of external assistance, through the exchange of information and experience with other national parliaments.
4. Only high-quality expertise, provided with integrity, and commensurate with the importance of legislatures as central institutions of the overall government of a country, can only be beneficial to parliaments.
5. Each parliament, and each member of parliament, is entitled to receive support not only from internal and local sources, but also from other parliaments and the international parliamentary community.
6. All parliaments, whether new or long-established, can learn from each other in an increasingly complex world. For example, parliaments that are less tradition-bound have sometimes been more flexible in adapting to new technologies and fresh challenges than their more established counterparts. The parliamentary and international communities should encourage the reciprocal sharing of experience among parliaments.
7. Assistance in the form of parliamentary development may address the whole institution, or focus on particular areas or groups within parliament. Individual MPs, too, are entitled to benefit from technical assistance and sharing of standards and best practices.

Principle # 2

PRINCIPLE: Parliamentary development should be driven by a parliament's own development needs.

Commentaries:

1. Each parliament – as well as each national situation – is unique, and democracy does not come in one universal format. Hence, caution should be exercised against imposing a notional “one-size-fits-all” approach to parliamentary development.
2. Democratically-elected parliaments are sovereign bodies, and should be treated as such when providing assistance. To be effective, support to a parliament needs to be owned by the beneficiary parliament and determined by its specific needs, not by donor priorities. This entails an appropriate assessment of the needs of any given parliament, conducted in accordance with a participatory and inclusive process. It should reflect the parliaments priorities in meeting the needs of the society and citizens that it represents.
3. It is important for parliamentary development to proceed at a pace that is appropriate for the parliament in question. The capacity of an institution to absorb assistance must be considered in developing a programme of support.
4. It is important for a parliament to articulate its own development needs through an inclusive, multi-party process. Such a parliamentary development strategy, enabling the various components of the parliament and other local stakeholders to set priorities for

parliament's support needs, helps parliamentary development actors to provide more effective assistance, to be able to respond quickly, to tailor their deliverables to the parliament's needs, and to plan and coordinate their activities more efficiently.

Parliaments may seek assistance to help them design that strategy.

5. Parliamentary ownership of a development strategy must reflect the fact that parliaments are, by definition, composed of multiple voices, each one – including individual Members – having the right to seek support, and having a different perception of its needs. These voices, which may include representatives of the opposition and minority parties, do not all necessarily expect the same outputs and outcomes from parliamentary development programmes, and may also ask directly for assistance. The more inclusive the process for developing a parliamentary development strategy, the more useful the strategy is likely to be for parliamentary development partners who are seeking to support the institution in achieving its own development goals.
6. Parliamentary development actors should stand ready to assist parliaments in periodically reassessing and articulating their long-term development strategy, as requested.
7. Assistance provided to parliamentary staff should be coordinated with, and conducted by, the office of the Secretary General or the chief administrative officer of the parliament.
8. Given separation of powers issues, governments should not play a direct role in approving, managing or overseeing parliamentary development programmes. However, parliamentary development programmes should seek to promote constructive and effective government-parliament relations. In cases where parliamentary development programmes address this issue, the government should be consulted in the design and implementation of those aspects of the programme.
9. Parliamentary development activities are most successful when the parliament itself is directly involved in implementation of the support programmes, for example through cost-sharing, in-kind contribution to the development and implementation of the activities, or through other mechanisms.
10. Without distracting parliamentary staff from their normal duties, parliamentary development programmes should encourage such staff, where appropriate, to participate in the implementation of programmes. For example, in conducting a general parliamentary orientation programme for new members, the parliamentary secretariat should be engaged in the planning and implementation and possibly the presentation of the programme to ensure that staff develop the skills to organize future orientation programmes without international assistance. Caucus or political party staff may be utilized to strengthen the functioning of political party groups or caucuses.

Principle # 3

1. **PRINCIPLE: Parliamentary development should be appropriate to the context.**

Commentaries:

1. The success or failure of a parliamentary development programme is contingent on a deep understanding of the country's constitutional system and the political background that shapes the operating environment of its institutions. All involved in parliamentary development should have a clear understanding of the institutions, as well as the institutional history of the country. Parliamentary development requires a sound knowledge of the overall political environment prevailing in the country (e.g. the electoral system, relevant provisions of the constitution, human rights situation, gender equality, recent experience of conflict, etc.), as well as of the budgetary and fiscal environment of the country.
2. There are various points of entry for parliamentary development, the relative importance of which may vary from country to country depending on the political context and the dynamics of the parliament.
3. An important factor in programming parliamentary support is whether the legislature is unicameral or bicameral. In bicameral settings it is preferable that long-term projects and programmes whenever applicable aim to address both Houses equally. This may not

always be feasible since often the Houses are autonomous and function independently. However, one Chamber should not be able to veto development support provided to the other.

4. Parliamentary development should be carried out in accordance with the national legal framework which gives a parliament its mandate.
5. Parliamentary development should carefully consider regional and international issues ([trade, political, economic or cultural regional relations]) or disputes, which may impact on the role and work of the parliament, as well as on support efficiency. Conducting a prior assessment of the economic environment of the country may be beneficial when engaging in large-scale programmes.
6. Parliamentary development should be aware of the international obligations of the country, and ensure that programmes take into account the terms of international treaties and conventions to which the beneficiary country has committed itself.
7. In the implementation of the principle, parliamentary development should aim to ensure that broader national development needs are fully considered in the development and implementation of the support to parliament.

Principle # 4

PRINCIPLE: Parliamentary development should be sensitive to the political nature of parliament.

Commentaries:

1. Parliamentary development deals with political institutions and contexts, and each parliament is different from others and likely to be at a different stage of development. A careful analysis should be conducted to ascertain the overall political climate before designing any programme, project or activity. Parliamentary development should be mindful of unsought effects on the work of parliament, or on the overall national political environment. Proposed interventions must also take into account the capacity of the parliament to absorb input, and for this purpose it is important to liaise closely with the relevant parliamentary authorities.
2. Because the legislature reflects in its ranks a broad spectrum of the country's political opinion, parliamentary development should ensure that its outcomes reinforce the capacity of the parliament to be the principal forum for debate on public policy issues and a place for compromise and consensus-building.
3. Parliamentary development organizations should aim to deliver support in a predictable and timely manner and in a way that appropriately takes into account the electoral and legislative calendar and parliamentary and political timetables. For example, in order to avoid interference in an electoral process, certain types of activities, such as support for constituency outreach, should be avoided in the immediate pre-election period.
4. Full-fledged parliamentary development programmes may cover a multi-year period, extending beyond the term and mandate of a legislature. This must be taken into account in planning, since no legislature or parliamentary development programme should seek to commit the successor legislature to activities that may not reflect that legislature's priorities (although some aspects of development, such as staff training, are less directly linked to a legislature's term).
5. Equally parliamentary schedules are often driven by circumstances beyond the immediate control of the legislatures, as parliaments seek to respond to the evolving needs of the country. Parliamentary development should be viewed as an ongoing process, which cannot be defined by rigid project cycles. Those actors involved in parliamentary development should strive to be responsive to the shifting demands and needs of the parliaments. This may require flexibility in implementation and even adjustment/adaptation of project goals and objectives, in response to shifting circumstances and evolving parliamentary priorities.
6. Parliaments, in turn, should facilitate development activities and seek to promote optimum outcomes. For example, during the implementation of programmes the cooperation of the

parliament and its administration is important in ensuring that members and staff are available for activities, and appropriate facilities are provided where required.

7. Timing is especially important for parliamentary support that involves the capacity-building of members of parliament. Developing the basic core skills of recently elected parliamentarians, for example, should be done during the first year of their term in office for this training to have the strongest impact. Developing core skills, including parliamentary procedure, may be especially important with respect to members of parliament who lack previous parliamentary experience or in parliaments with a high turnover. Workshops with experienced MPs, aimed at debating and considering more advanced parliamentary issues, may also be useful.
8. Linking local parliamentary development goals to regional programmes may help increase national awareness of common institutional challenges and weaknesses faced by a parliament. Parliamentarians from the same region can engage more easily together than alone on sensitive or controversial issues, such as political party legislation, parliamentary oversight of the security services, or internal governance of parliaments.

Principle # 5

PRINCIPLE: Parliamentary development should be inclusive of all political tendencies.

Commentaries:

1. The parliament should be the place for all political tendencies to be represented, in line with the country's electoral law. Political parties are crucial players in democratic life, and parliamentary democracy is intended to give a voice to all groups with significant electoral support. While the primary focus in parliamentary development must be the effective functioning of the parliament as a whole, it is important for those involved in parliamentary development to be aware of the history and political background of the main parties represented in the partner parliament. It is also important to have an understanding of the political tendencies that may not be currently represented in parliament.
2. Inclusiveness means providing equal opportunities for support and assistance to all political tendencies represented in parliament, to the extent that they abide by generally accepted democratic practice, such as respect for the rule of law and for the rights and privileges of political opponents. Members of the majority and of the opposition are equally entitled to benefit from parliamentary development support, while no group should be entitled to veto support provided to others.
3. Political inclusiveness should be reflected in the design and implementation of parliamentary development, which should benefit the democratic functioning of the parliament as a whole.
4. Inclusiveness does not necessarily require that identical assistance be provided to each political party group, since the needs and priorities of these groups may differ substantially depending on their role in parliament (ruling party, opposition, junior coalition partner, etc.).
5. Some foundations and organizations involved in parliamentary development are tied to specific political parties. While there is an appropriate role for party-to-party assistance and exchanges among parties sharing similar ideology or affiliations, political inclusiveness should be reflected in the design and implementation of parliamentary development assistance, the overall goal of parliamentary development being the strengthening of the democratic functioning of parliament.
6. In some country contexts, parliamentary development actors need to consider and engage with significant political groups or tendencies that might be absent from parliament, for example because they did not meet the threshold to gain seats or were unable to fully participate in the electoral process.

Principle # 6

PRINCIPLE: Parliamentary development should aim for sustainable, long-term development.

Commentaries:

1. The key to sustainable parliamentary development is that it assists parliaments to develop the full capacity to perform their role, promote citizen involvement in the strengthening of representative democracy in their country, and promote genuine accountability of the executive before parliament.
2. Particularly in emerging democracies and with newly established parliaments, parliamentary development is a long-term process, requiring sustained support over several legislative cycles to achieve sustainable results.
3. Parliamentary development must be planned in consultation with, and implemented with the full consent of, the beneficiaries. The relevant components of the parliament ought to be part of the team that oversees the implementation of the project.
4. Sustainability of parliamentary development actions involves capacity development that benefits the whole institution, its different components, MPs and staff. This sustainability should be built in from the outset and in the initial design of a programme. However, this should not be construed to imply that every programme or organization involved in parliamentary development needs to cover all issues, nor should every programme or organization seek to address all the challenges facing parliament. Nonetheless, parliamentary development interventions should be designed with a *holistic understanding* of parliament; taking into account how the institution fits into the broader political culture and structure. Each organization involved in parliamentary development should understand the bigger picture of a parliament and its needs.
5. Parliamentary development should also avoid excessively narrow-focus programming that fails to take due account of the global environment (including political parties, the media, etc.). The aim should be to ensure that broader national development needs are fully considered in the design of parliamentary support programmes.
6. Strong parliaments need highly professional and qualified staff. Parliamentary development may help achieve this aim through the promotion of staff selection and careers based on merit, and with employment protection appropriately guaranteed in labour contracts or regulations.
7. In any parliament, the development of an institutional memory is necessary for sustainability. Forms of assistance such as training procedural staff, developing or improving a research or training centre in the legislature, developing manuals or enabling Parliament to gain access to independent qualified expertise, may often provide more sustainable support than excessive "training" of MPs.

Principle # 7

PRINCIPLE: Parliamentary development should be grounded in the emerging international standards for democratic parliaments.

Commentaries:

1. While each national parliament is unique, with its own characteristic conventions and procedures, there are aspects of parliamentary practice that are universal. Parliamentary development agencies, while recognizing the unique character of each parliament, should reinforce these universal practices that are grounded in the emerging international standards for democratic parliaments.
2. A particular parliamentary development actor may often be most familiar with parliamentary functioning in its own country. High-quality parliamentary development assistance should seek to share a range of models and experiences so that the partner parliament can identify elements of various models or options that are best suited to its particular needs at a given time.
3. The emerging international norms and standards for democratic parliaments may serve as a tool for avoiding the tendency to focus on a single model of parliamentary

democracy, and instead base development efforts on those elements of parliamentary practice that are universal across constitutional systems.

4. The efforts of the IPU, and of parliamentary associations such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie*, to develop international norms and standards for democratic legislatures are to be commended and should be developed and expanded.
5. Agreed international guidelines, standards and assessment frameworks for democratic parliaments can provide an objective measure of the effectiveness of any given parliament. They are useful reference points for conducting evaluations, can help in establishing a baseline for work with a parliament and assist in developing a roadmap for future support. Such standards can also contribute to parliaments' self-evaluation and reform efforts to strengthen their performance.
6. Parliamentary development should always aim to promote the rule of law as fundamental to democracy, taking into account international treaties and conventions to which a particular country is a signatory. It should seek to advance universal civil and political rights, as well as the efficient functioning of a State whose authority derives from the will of the people as expressed in genuine, free and fair elections held at regular intervals on the basis of universal, equal and secret suffrage of both men and women. Parliamentary development should aim to support the development of a vibrant political life, enriched by a free and open competition of ideas among all political tendencies in a country. Parliamentary development should endeavour to help parliaments operate transparently and contribute to the strengthening of democracy and the active involvement of citizens in determining the country's policy, through their elected representatives.
7. It is the responsibility of all those involved in parliamentary development, including parliaments benefitting from parliamentary development assistance, to ensure that the core elements of emerging international norms and standards for democratic parliaments, based as they are on universal parliamentary practice, are reflected and respected in parliamentary development activities.

Principle # 8

PRINCIPLE: Parliamentary development should be gender-sensitive.

Commentaries:

1. Democratic parliaments derive their legitimacy from their ability to effectively represent the citizens of their country; in many countries, women constitute the majority of the population.
2. Gender mainstreaming is a key mechanism for the enhancement of parliamentary development programmes. Mainstreaming gender throughout all aspects of parliamentary development and securing an equal participation of men and women in the design, implementation and monitoring processes results in more effective programmes, as objectives and results will take into account and respond to the needs of both women and men.
3. Addressing gender equality issues in parliamentary development programmes should include two different though complementary dimensions: (1) Parliamentary development programmes should aim at supporting and responding to the specific needs of women MPs or staff or specific parliamentary structures working on gender equality/women's rights issues. (2) Parliamentary development programmes should also aim at advancing gender equality by supporting both men and women, and the institution of parliament as whole in that endeavour.
4. Parliamentary development should enable parliaments to become gender sensitive institutions: i.e institutions that respect and embody gender equality in their functioning, and institutions that contribute to the advancement of gender equality in their work and outputs. The Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments adopted by IPU members serves as a useful reference tool in that respect.
5. Parliamentary development actors should work to ensure that women and men are well represented in all development activities at equivalent levels, and should support efforts

to ensure that both women and men are effectively represented in parliament, both as members and in parliamentary staff, in all levels.

6. Parliamentary development actors should support parliaments in regularly reviewing and assessing their functioning, internal rules, procedures, practices etc from a gender perspective, to ensure that these are gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory.
7. Parliamentary development support should enable parliaments to better equip themselves to develop policies tackling gender-based discrimination. Parliamentary development should aim to ensure that parliaments promote gender-sensitive/disaggregated regulatory impact assessment of bills and budgets, and include a gender approach in the evaluation of public policies implementation.

Principle # 9

PRINCIPLE: Parliamentary development should assist parliaments in their efforts to better represent the diversity of the population.

Commentaries:

1. In multi-ethnic countries, parliamentary development should help parliaments address inclusiveness issues in an appropriate way, support the fair representation of all groups in parliament, and promote equal rights and effective access to the Parliament for all MPs, regardless of their origin or ethnicity.
2. Parliamentary development should seek to ensure that different groups are appropriately represented in all development activities.
3. Where relevant, parliamentary development should provide specific training to address diversity issues in parliament. Development activities should promote political inclusiveness, for example by producing documents in minority languages.
4. Parliamentary development should assist parliaments in promoting equal opportunities for, and tackling discrimination against, historically marginalized groups and persons with disabilities.
5. Parliamentary development should support parliaments in promoting policies that tackle discrimination in all its forms.
6. In assisting parliaments to develop and improve their practices and procedures, development partners should seek to promote awareness of diversity issues and encourage a spirit of inclusiveness in parliament's functioning.

Principle # 10

PRINCIPLE: Parliamentary development should use and develop local expertise and support regional cooperation.

Commentaries:

1. Parliamentary development should strive to harness national and global expertise and favour regional cooperation in developing activities, especially with parliaments of neighbouring countries.
2. Parliamentary development should facilitate the development of sustained linkages between parliament, local universities, national and foreign experts based in the country, and think tanks, to help the legislature benefit from local expertise resources.
3. Parliamentary development should promote the use of appropriate local parliamentary expertise and, where appropriate, help competent and independent civil society organizations work more effectively with parliaments.
4. Where competent and independent civil society organizations exist to support parliamentary development, international parliamentary development actors should seek to work with and support these organizations.

5. Parliamentary development should assist in the utilization of appropriate media by the parliament to foster links between the legislature and citizens. Increasingly, there are opportunities for parliaments to use mobile and new media to better communicate with citizens.
6. Parliamentary development programmes may include providing internships in parliament (junior staffers for MPs, or internship positions in the research department/library of the Office of Parliament) for post-graduate students in national universities and colleges.
7. Parliamentary development programmes should develop outreach activities targeting pupils and students, to involve future citizens in the strengthening of their parliament. Such programmes may include educational curricula, open-door programmes in parliament, youth parliaments, etc.

Principle # 11

PRINCIPLE: Those engaged in parliamentary development have a duty to support cooperation and learning.

Commentaries:

1. Greater cooperation among those involved in parliamentary development should be encouraged in order to avoid duplication and working at cross-purposes. Cooperation should aim to harmonize activities and promote complementarity, and can occur through informal as well as formal structures.
2. It should be recognized by all parliamentary development agencies that the interests of partner parliaments are best served through cooperation, not competition. All actors involved in parliamentary development should increase their cooperation through regular joint meetings, information-sharing, combined efforts, reciprocal assistance and, when appropriate, through coordination of activities.
3. Improved cooperation among actors involved in parliamentary development should result in more focused and effective utilization of available material and human resources.
4. Parliamentary development should involve mutual sharing among providers of lessons learned, exchange of experience, and the endeavour to harmonize standards and best practices.
5. Agreed international guidelines can provide a useful reference point for conducting macro-level evaluations and study institutional and functional operations of a parliament and may facilitate cooperation.
6. Although cooperation at national level is a priority, those involved in parliamentary development should strive to promote cooperation at all levels.

Principle # 12

PRINCIPLE: Parliamentary development should be done responsibly, ethically and in a way that avoids unintended consequences.

Commentaries:

1. Just as parliamentary development programming should seek to promote public integrity within parliaments, parliamentary development actors must themselves adhere to the highest standards of ethics and integrity.
2. Parliamentary development actors must adhere to principles of financial probity, particularly given that one of the primary purposes of parliamentary development is to improve parliamentary accountability and openness.
3. Parliamentary development should not be used to advance commercial interests. While there may be a role for profit-making actors in the field of parliamentary development, activities should be driven by the goal of parliamentary development, rather than a business or profit motive.

4. Parliaments should publicly disclose information about their partners in parliamentary development and the types of assistance received. The effectiveness and efficiency of parliamentary development support requires parliaments to deal fairly with all stakeholders involved in their support, and not to seek to use one against the other, or seek similar assistance from multiple actors without disclosure.
5. Parliamentary development actors should abide by the general principles embodied in the internal codes of conduct of parliaments, for example by not engaging in nepotism or other practices that are inconsistent with the standards of conduct that parliaments have defined for themselves.
6. Parliamentary development should promote the sustainable enhancement of the capacities of the institution. This principle implies that those involved should avoid “hiring away” existing parliamentary staff to work for parliamentary development programmes.