

*Africa-Canada Parliamentary Strengthening Project*

**REPORT**

**Centers of Excellence Meeting  
Nairobi, Kenya, 3-4 February 2006**

---

**Background**

Late 2004 and early 2005, PC and IPA discussed the idea of bringing together key people from training institutions in Africa (all of whom PC has worked with) to brainstorm on the potential creation of Centers of Excellence in parliamentary training that would respond to the needs of African parliaments and ensure better coordination of training, to develop an action plan to move forward such a project and to elaborate a promotional strategy.

The rationale behind this meeting was that with the expansion of democracy and responsive governance in Africa attributed in part to the growing prominence of young African parliaments, national, pan-African and regional parliaments, such as those of ECOWAS and SADC-PF are now demanding increased training and capacity to cope with the challenges both of legislation and engaging with Government to ensure accountability and oversight for public policy. The recent launch of the Pan-African Parliament gives further boost to the processes of parliamentary democracy across the continent.

As demand for more sustained capacity building of African Parliaments grows, there is a need to develop a more systematic arrangement that:

- Presents a vision for changes in capacity development and utilization among African Parliaments;
- Introduces coherence in the curriculum and pedagogy of the various training efforts
- Allows participants from various countries of Africa to access the wide range of training available to Parliaments in a manner that meets the highest standards;
- Permits collaboration among faculty and staff of the various training institutions
- Allows the evolution of a system of governance for Parliamentary Training that involves the key stakeholders – leaders of the African and Pan-African Parliaments and Parliamentary services.

**Objectives of the Roundtable**

This roundtable was a first in a series of consultations among training institutions. The objectives were:

1. To share experiences in the conduct of training and capacity building for African Parliaments;
2. To develop a shared commitment to improving training that is offered to African Parliaments; and,
3. To assign roles and responsibilities towards a comprehensive programme of Parliamentary capacity building in Africa.

## **Meeting highlights**

A roundtable which brought together one institution of Parliament as well as 7 policy and training institutes that work with parliaments and have expertise in complementary fields such as community monitoring, gender analysis and budget analysis, was held in Nairobi in February 2006.

The eight organizations present were:

Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) – South Africa  
University of Western Cape – South Africa  
Forum for Women and Democracy (FOWODE) – Uganda  
Office of professional development (in Parliament of Uganda) - Uganda  
Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) – Tanzania  
Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) - Tanzania  
Institute for Policy Alternatives (IPA) – Ghana  
Parliamentary Centre - Canada and Ghana

The final outcome of the meeting was not known from the start but we expected that a collaboration or partnership be developed.

The meeting started with PC and IPA sharing their respective experience in supporting Parliaments through capacity-building initiatives and laying out some of the challenges and successes of such training programs. Each representative then presented the history and mandate of their organization as well as the field of activities they are involved in and experience in supporting Parliaments.

It was apparent by the range of fields covered by the 8 organizations that these institutions all had complementary strengths and that they were all committed to support Parliaments. Early on there was an agreement on the need to consolidate our efforts to improve and better coordinating parliamentary training development and delivery in Africa.

Dr. Hamza from the University of Western Cape shared his experience in South Africa as a member of a consortium. He provided insights on the objectives of a national consortium in which the University is involved, on how it is managed, challenges faced and achievements. After discussions, the group came to an agreement that a consortium is exactly the type of alliance that is needed. This consortium should be small by including 7 of the 8 training institutions present at the meeting to which other partners could be tied in later.

Some key issues to consider were identified:

- Greater focus on how NEPAD issues can be integrated in Parliament
- Not all Parliaments have designed what they desire in terms of capacity-building
- Common needs for Parliaments need to be identified in a demand driven manner – these can be linked to common needs identified in NEPAD
- Target regional and Pan-African Parliament first
- Provide training to MPs outside their country for greater exposure to certain localized needs that can be exported
- Gender to be a cross-cutting issue in all initiatives

The group then defined their vision, common principles, objective of the consortium, the structure, the steps to achieve the vision, services to be offered and areas of focus, targets and establishment of a committee.

## **Results and way forward**

The 7 capacity-building organizations agreed on the need to form a consortium which would develop collaborative programs mainly for regional Parliaments in Africa and PAP (some national parliaments may be considered) on: strengthening public policy analysis and oversight, strengthening institutional and HR development, and managing public accountability.

In order to set up this consortium, a communiqué was signed by the seven NGO's and a steering committee (Office of professional development attended the meeting as an advisor, so is not part of the steering committee) has been established to develop and manage a work plan for the next 6 months. Responsibilities have been shared between the various organizations in order for the work plan to be completed within the set timeframe. Moreover, an interim secretariat is to be established within the offices of the African Parliamentary Network on Poverty Reduction managed by the Parliamentary Centre in Ghana. The second meeting of the steering committee is being planned for mid-May 2006.

For more information on the consortium see communiqué below.

**Sandra de Moura**  
**February 27, 2006**

## **Consortium for Parliamentary Capacity Building in Africa**

### **Communiqué**

Eight training and capacity building organizations convened a roundtable in Nairobi, Kenya (February 3-4, 2006) to share experiences on capacity building for African Parliaments.

This Communiqué is an affirmation of the intent to establish a Consortium dedicated to the advancement of Parliamentary Democracy in Africa, through training and capacity building. This memorandum contains:

- (a) A statement of general principles and shared values of the partners;
- (b) A description of the scope and content of collaboration among the partners;
- (c) An outline of the instrument of collaboration referred to as the Consortium; and,
- (d) An interim work programme leading to the establishment of the Consortium and its programme strategy.

Vision:

**To promote and strengthen democracy and accountability, while enhancing social and economic justice in Africa**

Principles:

Partners in the Consortium believe in:

1. Strengthening African legislatures to address key development challenges, including, the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals and NEPAD Goals
2. Training and development as an instrument of empowering people and institutions
3. Partnership and collaboration among existing entities that have competence and strengths in Parliamentary support activities
4. Integrating gender equality considerations in all aspects of development engagement.

The Consortium as an Instrument of Collaboration:

- The Consortium shall be an organization of equal partners, comprising initially of seven promoting organizations represented by the individuals who participated in the roundtable until such a time that the said organizations nominate substantive representatives.
- A steering committee of the whole has been established to develop and manage a work program for the first six months
- An interim secretariat is to be established within the offices of the African Parliamentary Network on Poverty Reduction managed by the Parliamentary Center and located in Accra, Ghana.

### **Scope and Content of our Collaboration:**

The Consortium shall develop collaborative programmes focusing on:

## 1. Strengthening Public Policy Analysis and Oversight

This programme stream will include:

- Context of development and public policy – MDGs, NEPAD, PRSPs
- Public policies and budgets, including budget analysis
- Equity considerations in public policy – gender equity, socio-economic equity and justice
- Rights dimensions of public policy – rights of children, the disabled
- Environmental considerations in policy and its oversight
- Citizen participation in public policy making and oversight

## 2. Strengthening Institutional and HR Development

This programme stream could include:

- Support for the development and refinement of strategic plans for Parliament
- Capacity building for, and strengthening of Parliamentary Committees
- Training and support for the Parliamentary Services
- Legislative strengthening

## 3. Managing Public Accountability

This program stream could include:

- Expenditure Tracking
- Issues of transparency
- Social and Public Accountability to Citizens
- Community monitoring of poverty and public expenditure

### The Interim work program

#### Schedule of Tasks to Reach Agreement

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Who takes Lead</b>	<b>By when</b>
Signing of Communique	All participants	February 4, 2006
Feedback, confirmation of participation by individual organizations (based on briefing by the organization's representative)	All	February 17, 2006
Prepare draft MOU for review by confirmed consortium participants	Dr. Rasheed Draman	February 24, 2006
Collate comments and finalize and sign MOU	Dr. Rasheed Draman	March 3, 2006
Compile background information regarding Regional organizations Pan African Organizations Training and Capacity Building services offered Donors	Mary (IDAS) Sandra (PC)	March 15, 2006
Prepare detailed concept paper for the consortium and its functions	Dr. Gariba and Hamza	March 31, 2006
Develop detailed agenda for meeting of steering committee	Dr. Gariba, Hamza, Rasheed and Hamza	March 31, 2006

Second meeting	Secretariat and IPA	By mid May
----------------	---------------------	------------