Dear Reader,

During the past month the project concentrated its work on support to the three new parliaments. Project staff conducted needs assessments for the assemblies in Jubaland, Galmudug and South-West State. These assessments shall provide the necessary information for an evidence-based decision on technical assistance and support for 2016 and beyond. Reports, once completed, will be shared with all interested stakeholders.

During the past weeks the construction work on the security parameters for the parliaments in Puntland and Somaliland has been completed making both parliaments a much safer place for MPs and staff.

The UNDP Parliamentary Support Project (PSP) provides support to the NFP, and the Parliaments of Puntland and Somaliland in order to capacitate them to operate as inclusive, transparent and effective law-making, oversight and representative bodies. The project provides technical assistance to

1. enact quality legislation and to maintain effective oversight over the government
2. establish effective institutions, with a functioning administration and infrastructure
3. empower MPs to represent and remain accountable to the people and to provide leadership

The Project is supported by the European Union, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and UNDP. The total budget for 2013-2016 is 11.7 million USD.

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Young boys conducting a jumping competition at Lido Beach - Mogadishu
The 8th session of the National Federal Parliament of Somalia which will be the last session of this legislature started on April 11th.

Several priority bills are included in the agenda for this session such as:

- Law establishing the Human Rights Commission.
- Law establishing the Constituional Court.
- Law on Political Parties & Multi-Party System.
- Petroleum bill.
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- Telecomunications bill.
- Review and amendment to the Border & Federal Commission Law.
- Bill on the review of the Provisional Constitution.

PSP

NFP MPs attended IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Zambia

Two (2) Youth Caucus representatives had the opportunity to engage with parliaments and parliamentarians of other countries in the IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, held in Zambia between 16th 25th March 2016.

The conference functioned as a forum for dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy of legislator’s world-wide and provided a unique platform for familiarizing with political opinions and trends around the world and to share experiences.

The agenda included a dedicated day for a Forum of Young Parliamentarians whereby they discussed their input to the Assembly: Rejuvenating democracy, giving a voice to youth. Perspectives of young parliamentarians on draft resolutions for prevention of terrorism and preservation of cultural heritage were also discussed in this forum.

MPs will share the acquired knowledge with their fellow MPs. The participation in the conference has been funded by the UNDP Parliamentary Support Project.

Opening of the 8th Session of the Somali Federal Parliament

The Federal Parliament of Somalia commenced its 8th Session on 11 April 2016. In his speech President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud the President congratulated the Speaker and Members of Parliament for the good work they have done during the past four years. He stressed that there is a lot of work ahead this year and elections are one of them. President Hassan said, “As we all recognized that one-person-one-vote elections will not be possible this year, there are other methods of arrangements and indirect elections. He assured the MPs that all issues regarding the elections will be submitted to parliament for legitimacy.

His Excellency also emphasized the exertion and legitimacy done with agreement forward by preserving the current procedures of the national institutions.

The President pointed out that the 9th House of Somalia is the best compared to previous parliamentary sessions of the country experienced during the process of national reconstruction in Somalia started in the 2000s. The Rt. Hon. Speaker of the House of the People Mr. Mohamad Sh. Osman Jawari in his speech focused on achievements of the Parliament and the tasks ahead.

The Speaker emphasized the need to prepare for elections in 2016, to go ahead with the constitutional review process, institution building and the strengthening the judicial service.

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- Law establishing the Human Rights Commission.
- Law on Political Parties & Multi-Party System.
- Petroleum bill.
- Telecommunications bill.
- Review and amendment to the Border & Federal Commission Law.
- Bill on the review of the Provisional Constitution.
UNDP provided three days of trainings on the House Rules of Procedure to two separate groups of staff members of the National Federal Parliament. The first group was comprised of Committee staff. The second group was comprised of the leadership office and departmental Staff. The following offices and departments were represented: Speaker’s office, Chief Whip, Secretary General, Plenary, Public Outreach, Public Relations/Media and Procurement/Logistics.

The objective of the trainings was to work with the staff to give them an improved understanding of the Rules of Procedure. The training began with an overview of the general principles of Parliamentary Law and the structure of the House Rules. Particular attention was paid to the Constitutional underpinnings of many of the Rules.

Over the three days, in-depth training was provided on the following overarching topics: Organization of the House - Participants discussed the Organization of the House including the election of the leadership (Speaker, Deputy Speakers, Chief Whip and Deputy Whips) and examined the duties of those officers.

The management of the House was also a topic of study as participants gained an understanding of the composition and the role of the Standing Committee in the House. Members’ rights, responsibilities, privileges and immunities were discussed and the specific authorization for Committees to engage in public hearings and consultations. Committee meetings and the requirements outlined in the Rules of Procedure were looked at as was the process that Committees are to use when amending and reporting draft laws back to the Plenary.

Areas of the Rules of Procedure still to be covered in future trainings include the election and impeachment of the President, House and Committee relations with the Government including votes of confidence, interpellations and questions.
In order to improve the security of the parliaments the project has contracted local construction firms to upgrade the security infrastructure of the Puntland Parliament premises and the Somaliland Parliament based on assessments conducted in December 2014.

The construction work commenced in December 2015 and for both parliaments has been completed in March 2016. The total costs for both constructions together is approximately 150,000 USD.

Considering the security situation in Garowe and Hargeisa the upgrading of the security parameter became a necessary investment in order to ensure that both MPs as well as the parliamentary staff of both institutions can work in a safe environment.

Internet will ensure that the members of the Secretariat will be able to communicate efficiently with staff, MPs and other stakeholders. The new internet will provide the MPs and staff with access to real-time information and enables them to search and find latest updates on matters and issues that affect their districts.

Importantly, this new support will create linkages between the parliament, the media, and citizens and will provide them access to more information about the activities of the executive branch.

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UNDP Parliamentary Support Project has procured and installed high-speed internet for the Parliament of Jubaland offices in Kismayo, thereby addressing one of the key operational requirements of the Parliament.

The leadership, staff, and MPs of the Jubaland State Assembly indicated their need for reliable internet. The MPs said that the internet would ease their day to day work both when in session and during the recess period in order to meaningfully represent the needs of their constituencies.

The improved communication facility will allow internet research on bills and policies and will help to conduct oversight over the executive.

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Based on a request coming from the recently formed South-West State Assembly UNDP together with UNSOM arranged a first initial workshop for a group of 30 MPs.

The three-day workshop jointly conducted by project staff and staff from the UNSOM office in Baidoa provided SWS MPs with basic information on Principles of Democracy and Democratic Society which aimed at introducing the recently selected MPs to the principles and core elements of democracy and parliament.

The training-workshop, which was held at UNSOM compound 20 to 23 of March was the first one of a series of in-house training workshops that UNDP is planning to implement in Baidoa in the next several weeks in order to reach all 149 MPs.

The workshop among others addressed issues such as democracy & the Quran, functions of parliament, human rights and principles of democracy. As a result, participants have now an improved understanding of their role as parliamentarians in a democratic society.

Sout-West State Assembly: Needs Assessment Conducted

From 20 to 23 March, a small team from the Parliamentary Support Project conducted an extensive needs assessment of the South West State Assembly. The assessment consists of two distinct parts, one is the Organisational Assessment examining the physical and human resources while the MP Needs Assessment looked specifically at the background, interests, and needs of the MPs in order for them to be effective lawmakers. Upon completion of the data analysis, a short report will be prepared which will be shared first with the Speaker. Once his feedback is incorporated the report will serve as the basis for the strategic interventions which UNDP will make based on the Annual Work Plan for 2016. This report will be shared with donors and other stakeholders by the end of April.

Training Needs Assessment Conducted for Jubbaland MPs

UNDP Parliamentary Support Project (PSP) provides a broad range of technical assistance to all Somali parliaments. Training and capacity building activity is a key component of the Project’s supports to the parliaments as it is a way to ensure that MPs have the right knowledge and skills to be able to do their work effectively and competently.

Training activities are effective when they are tailored to the needs of the MPs. In this regard, PSP conducted a training needs assessment for Jubbaland State Assembly MPs on 11-14 of April 2016. The purpose of the assessment is to identify the gap between current and desired knowledge, skills and abilities of the MPs. The result of the assessment will help PSP to develop appropriate training programs for the MPs and to focus project’s resources to capacity-building programs where most needed.

Data collected through the assessment will also provide a baseline against which the impact of PSP assistances may later be evaluated.
The Parliamentary Project and Constitutional Support Project held a project retreat from 7-8 April in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss important issues and to build team spirit among the project team. The retreat followed the UNDP Somalia Retreat 2016 held in Naivasha, Kenya from 4-6 April 2016.

The objective of the retreat was to enhance team work and team spirit among staff to work towards common goals and to increase communication and cooperation between units. A number of specific issues were discussed, follow-up action agreed and their operationalization laid out. The discussion of the first session focused on organizational behavior, effective communication and team building, i.e., establishing team-oriented culture and what "effective leadership" entails - is it a title or is it a behavior?

The second session addressed issues related to planning and implementation, i.e., how do we plan; with whom do we plan; how we cooperate with our partners in developing and implementing projects; result-oriented approach to project implementation. The third session addressed issues relating to business processes and efficiency in the office, i.e., how we can improve the management of our operational processes; how can we simplify our work-processes to reduce labor intensity and improve clarity? How can we better streamline and accelerate our work-processes?

The last session focused on office structure & staff development, including roles & responsibilities of each unit. Discussion included: how can we improve the cooperation and communication between different units? How can we develop and decide specific standards for the different services the units provide to each other? How can we improve the communication between the offices in different geographical locations?

During the last PSG 1 meeting Norway and Sweden agreed to provide an additional 1.2 million USD to the Parliamentary Support Project. Furthermore UNDP decided to release an additional 0.5 million USD for the project from its TRAC funds. Based on the additional funds the project in cooperation with the parliaments will elaborate a 2016 AWP. The project wants to thank all its donors for these contributions.

PSP in March recruited one more national staff member Mr. Dahir Mahmoud, as a National Legal Officer. Mr. Dahir has more than 20 years of experience with both the continental and the common law system. In previous assignments he worked as legal advisor in community legal clinics proving support to access to justice for marginalized groups.

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