Dear Reader

It have been busy weeks for the Somali Federal Parliament (SFP). During the past days the SFP passed an impressive number of laws including key legislation as the bills on political parties, on the constitutional court and on the Human Rights Commission. After a short recess for the last weeks of Ramadan the SFP intends to reconvene to receive the report of the Oversight Committee re the review of the Provisional Constitution and to pass a number of bills related to financial issues.

The UNDP Parliamentary Support Project during the past weeks continued its support in particular to the newly formed parliaments providing technical equipment and training.

On behalf of the whole project team let me wish you Ramadan Kareem

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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During the past weeks the NFP intensified its legislative work and passed a number of laws and resolutions which are critical for the development of Somalia:

On June 1st the Speaker addressed the Parliament re priority legislation pending with the NFP. He emphasized the need for several bills to be adopted before the end of the 8th Session expected to end before August 20, 2016.

During its sitting on June 6th the NFP approved three bills: Political Parties and Multi-Party System, Animal Husbandry, and Establishment of the Human Rights Commission. In addition the Bill on Agreement on Establishment of East African Countries Standby Force went through the first reading.

The UNDP Parliamentary Support Project provided assistance to the Interior Committee on conducting public consultation on the Political Parties and Multi-Party System bill which took place on June 1st at Villa Hargeisa. 50 participants from political party associations and Civil Society Organizations attended the event.

On June 11th the NFP approved the Bill on the Establishment of the Constitutional Court. In addition, the NFP amended Article 6 of the Boundaries & Federation Commission and the Water Resources Bill went through the first reading.

During its sitting on June 15th the NFP passed an amendment to Article 60 (1) of the Federal Constitution that modifies the term of office of the current Parliament from 4 years to the day when the election results of the new Parliament are announced. In addition, the NFP passed an amendment to abolish Art. 136, (2) of the Provisional Constitution with regards to holding a National Referendum to approve the Constitution and to postpone the holding of the National Referendum to be organized during the term of office of the 10th Parliament, which extends to 2020. Both provisions were approved by 208 MPs (out of 215 present) which means that the necessary 2/3 majority has been achieved to pass constitutional changes. Parliament will go for a short recess and will resume work immediately after Eid.

UNDP Parliament Support Project has delivered a four-day training on reporting writing skills from 22nd to 25th May, 2016 for twenty-two staff members of the Federal Parliament of Somalia in Mogadishu. The objective of the training was to enhance the capacity of the Parliament staff on reporting, including impact oriented, gender-sensitive and evidence-based reporting. This capacity building training also intended to contribute to efficient report writing, stock taking of activities and stories, as well as sensitizing re the importance and significance of activity reports to document achievements. The project has elaborated a reporting scheme which shall enable the Parliament staff to report the implementation of project activities. The project’s reporting strategy focuses on establishing a common understanding for determining when and what kind of reports are needed, what is their purpose, who should create the reports, and how the reports should be produced.
Youth meets with Oversight Committee to Discuss Constitutional Review

On the 12 June, more than 80 young people representing different parts of Somalia participated in a one-day workshop facilitated by the Parliamentary Oversight Committee of the Somali Federal Parliament. The workshop, supported by UNSOM and UNDP was part of the broader constitutional review consultation process. OC Chairlady OC Hon. Mariam told participants that this is an opportunity for youth to convey their aspirations, views and recommendations with regard to the future revision of the Provisional Constitution. Members of the OC and of the Federal Parliament Youth Caucus encouraged youth to become active in requesting the safeguarding their political and socio-economic rights in a revised constitution. “As youth, we are often excluded when decisions about our lives are made, but we hope that a revised constitution will guarantee every right that we have as young people and ensure meaningful participation of youth at all levels of government” said Shaakir from Southwest State of Somalia. He also added that the National Youth Policy should approved in order to increase youth participation. As the workshop was concluded, youth participants presented their discussions and recommendations to OC Chairlady Hon. Mariam who guaranteed these

Oversight Committee Discusses Constitutional Review with Women’s Organizations

The review of the Provisional Constitution requires broad dialogue and consultations at different levels to be inclusive and nationally owned. It requires the meaningful participation of a broad spectrum of the Somali society, including youth and women.

On 4 June, the Oversight Committee of the National Federal Parliament (OC) with support from UN DPA, UNSOM and UNDP organized a one-day workshop in Mogadishu on constitutional review for Somalia women, at which the participants discussed the constitutional reform from the point of view of women’s interests including the 30 % women’s quota in the parliament. Many influential women’s organizations, including the Somali national women’s organizations, representatives from the regions including women equal rights that is the reason why it is necessary to include a 30% women’s quota in the constitution. To address this conundrum, OC urged the Ministry of Women and Human Rights to initiate a draft bill.

Participants stressed the importance that women politically and financially should support each other and should nominate the best candidates. They emphasized that the current 4.5 clan-based power-sharing formula was hampering women’s political participation and suggested as a solution to expedite the establishment of political parties. Equally, speakers warned that the focus should not be only on political level participation, but women should be continuously empowered to equally partake in all government branches.
The UN recently prepared a Youth Strategy for Somalia which aims at the creation of a mechanism for youth participation in decision-making and political processes. In line with this strategy UNDP Parliamentary Support Project began cooperation with the Somali Youth Parliament (SYP).

The SYP is a structure which mirrors that of the NFP consisting of 276 young people between the ages of 18 and 35 of which 50% are women. It was established in 2014 and has 15 parliamentary committees. Remarkably the SYP maintains a 50:50 gender quota.

According to the SYP leadership the selection of the youth MPs has been facilitated through the Student Unions of various universities in Mogadishu. Current members were selected in December 2014. It is planned to hold the election of the new youth MPs in early July 2016 for a period of two years who will then elect the SYP leadership. Upon the request of Somali Youth Parliament UNDP in collaboration with the UNDP/UNSOM Elections Support Project conducted a two-day workshop on Voting and management techniques that are fundamental to good electoral practice. The workshop aimed at ensuring that youth parliament members are familiar with the necessary election principles for the voting and counting processes in order to apply them in their upcoming SYP elections.

“It was a very useful and practical workshop, we learnt a lot, for example I understood the principles of elections including how to identify the voters and how to help them to vote” said Dr. Sumaya, SYP Secretary General. With the knowledge and skills acquired from the workshop; the Youth Parliament will prepare for an efficient polling day.

UNDP Parliamentary Support Project organized final training sessions on Rules of Procedure for 27 staff, including 10 women of the National Federal Parliament. The three-day advanced training focused on the articles in the Provisional Constitution and the Rules that govern the relationship between the House and the Government, such as oversight, questions, votes of confidence and interpellation motions.

In addition, Financial Provisions, such as consideration of the annual and supplementary budgets, closing of final accounts and approval of the Parliament’s budget were examined in detail. The articles of the Provisional Constitution and corresponding Rules of Procedure governing the role of Parliament in electing the President as well as the role of impeachment were discussed. The training was conducted by UNDP consultant George Crawford.
Dear all,

after nearly two years I am leaving the project to hand over to my successor Mrs. Nahid Hussein. During this period substantive work has been implemented by the project team: The capacity of the National Federal Parliament, the Somaliland HoR and the Puntland HoR to conduct oversight and to draft legislation has been increased. All three parliaments now have much stronger administrative structures and with the completion of the security perimeters MPs can hold their sessions in a much safer environment. All three parliaments have significantly better trained staff, functioning websites and a much improved ICT infrastructure. Beyond that it was possible beginning in late 2015 to extend the technical assistance to the Somaliland Guurti and to the three newly formed assemblies in Jubaland, Galmudug and South-West state. (Draft) rules of procedures and planning tools (strategic plans) are prepared for most parliaments.

Let me take the opportunity on behalf of the whole project team to express my gratitude to all national counterparts and donor partners for the fruitful and effective cooperation experienced and to wish you a productive work for the years ahead.

Outgoing Chief Technical Adviser Oskar Lehner

Update on Project Funding

Parliamentary Support Project still faces a funding gap of USD 1.4 M against the approved annual work-plan with a budget of USD 5.4 M. This has been highlighted to the donors in last project board meeting held on 11 May 2016 and efforts are made to mobilize resources to fill this gap ASAP for successful implementation of 2016 AWP to support 6 parliaments which includes:
- Somaliland House of Representatives and House of Elders.
- Puntland House of Representatives.
- Galmudug State Assembly.
- Jubaland State Assembly.
- South West State Assembly.

New Chief Technical Adviser for the Project Will Take Over

It’s a great pleasure to welcome and introduce Mrs. Nahid Hussein as the new Chief Technical Adviser of the UNDP Parliamentary Support Project. She will be start working in Mogadishu from 1 August on.

Ms. Hussein is South African / Sudanese and holds a Master Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy from the School of International Relations, Geneva, Switzerland and a Bachelor degree in Law from the University of Khartoum/ Sudan.

Mrs. Nahid Hussein, has been working with UNDP for the last 13 years serving in different (post) conflict countries like Kosovo, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Iraq as well as Pakistan and Sudan in the area of supporting Civil Society, Parliamentary Development, Governance, Rule of Law, Justice, and Human Rights.

During the past five years she was based in Iraq developing and strengthening the capacity of the legislative institutions with simultaneously promoting a meaningful and effective community engagement towards legislative and oversighting process.
Installation of VTC Equipment for the National Federal Parliament

In June UNDP Parliamentary Support Project arranged installation of a video teleconference equipment for the NFP and trained key ICT Department Staff on VTC handling. The installation of the VTC system shall improve communication between federal parliament leadership, counterparts and donor partners by enabling them to hold video conferences. A key aspect for purchasing the VTC equipment is to reduce the need for key government officials and counterparts to travel within Mogadishu and thus to reduce exposure to terrorist attacks. VTC system is cost effective and helps to reducing travel time. The Parliament will also be able to share presentations and data during a video conference call. The committees can also use video conferencing whenever they have meetings with other governments and international agencies or if they are unable to travel.

Depending on the communications capacity of the remote party, the system will run using either an ISDN telephone line or a direct Internet connection, with the latter providing a higher quality video. Considering the security environment the VTC equipment shall improve and ensure communication while decreasing exposure to hazardous travel. Such setups are useful for parliamentary business by enable the parliament leadership to take part in international conference through established telecommunication networks.

Public Engagement Workshop for NFP Staff

Six members of the Outreach Unit of the National Federal Parliament took part in a one-day workshop on public engagement. Participants began by discussing the goals of public engagement and the importance of that engagement to the Parliament and the Committees. Areas covered ranged from increasing public education of the role of a Parliament in a democratic society, to ways to increase access to the Parliament, as well as methods of engaging citizens in decision-making dialogues with Committees.

The role of technology and social media has revolutionized the way that Parliaments can engage with the public. Engagement no longer is confined to Parliament merely distributing information to people. Instead, the avenues now exist whereby Committees can gather public input via social media, analyze and process that information and use it to make better-informed decisions. Particular emphasis was placed on ways to enhance the Parliament's website, bring in fresh content and create ways for the public to more fully engage in a meaningful way with the Parliament and the Committees.

NFP VTC System is Installed

Secretariat Staff During The Training
As part of the follow-up of the implementation of project activities, a team consisting of the UNDP PSP visited the National Federal Parliament premises in Mogadishu.

The goal of the monitoring mission was to identify issues that need to be addressed to ensure on-track implementation of the project work plan and explore the challenges in implementation and probe possible solutions and recommendations on the way forward. The monitoring also assessed the level of satisfaction of technical/advisory/financial support received by the NFP from the project.

The monitoring mission found that the parliament highly appreciated the support provided by the project as well as the consistent collaboration and engagement with the project management team.

The mission also recognised that the trained parliamentary committee staff contributed to enhance MPs ability to perform their functions in terms of law making, oversight and representation. NFP confirmed that the consultancy firm engaged with project support has delivered trainings, developed for the parliament guidelines and procedures, and provided technical assistance in the areas of accounting, financial management, staffing, organizational change, internal controls and procurement.

NFP stated that UNDP support has helped to strengthen capacity of the institution to become a centre of knowledge transfer which now engaged in sharing experience with emerging state assemblies.

The NFP also underlined that as a result of the security perimeter wall construction supported by UNDP, attendance of MPs and staff improved thus contributing to the overall functioning of the institution. With regards to public engagement, it was pointed out that trained outreach and committee staff support in planning, routinely following up activities, gather information and also facilitating public hearings. As a result Committees and MPs now better interact with stakeholders during legislation and oversight of government. This has improved public input and legitimacy of the laws passed by the parliament.

Recommendations and proposed actions include review of strategic plan of the parliament, regular information sharing, induction training for the incoming MPs, quarterly monitoring of the work plan implementation by the project, support to committees and departments of the parliament, capacity building training on website management for ICT staff of NFP, translation of guidelines and manuals developed for the parliament and to provide technical support to NFP staff through on the job training.

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Somaliland Parliament Board Meeting Held in Nairobi

On Monday, 30 May 2016, the quarterly Board Meeting for the Somaliland Parliament was held in Nairobi, Kenya. Nairobi was agreed as a venue during the previous board meeting in order to facilitate the leadership meeting with donor representatives who have previously been unable to attend board meetings in Hargeisa.

In attendance was the Speaker and the Second Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, the First Deputy Chairperson of the House of Elders, the Secretary General and the Director of Planning of the HoR. From UNDP, Sergei Pushkarev, Carla Riquito and Kimberly Smiddy attended. A representative of the EU delegation provided insights into the funding perspective.

At the meeting, activities undertaken so far were reviewed including the construction of the security perimeter, the legislative drafting training, and the draft Strategic Plan for the House of Elders (Guurti). Upcoming activities which were discussed included a training and study tour on the Counter Terrorism bill, the support to establish a library, the effectiveness of the regional offices and the support to the Guurti.

The Speaker requested that UNDP provide similar training and support to the Guurti staff as was provided last year to the House of Representatives in order to improve their administrative and financial capacities.

A theme of the meeting was the need for improved coordination between different implementers like SSG, AWEPA and UNDP. The Parliament will take the initiative to call quarterly coordination meetings. The first one will be held in June 2016 in Hargeisa.

Monitoring Mission to SL HoR

As part of the monitoring of project activities the parliament support project team visited Somaliland House of Representatives in Hargeisa. The goal of the monitoring mission was to identify issues that need to be addressed, to ensure on-track implementation of the project and to explore the challenges in implementation.

The monitoring also assessed level of satisfaction of technical/advisory/financial support received by the SL HoR from the project. The monitoring exercise found that overall progress against achievement of the project outcome is on track.

The interviewed Parliament Secretariat expressed high level of satisfaction for the level of support provided by the project and added that they enjoy a good collaboration with the project team.

The Parliament indicated that they would like to receive additional support that was not included in the AWP / LoAs namely, construction of parliamentary regional offices, provision of CCTV, sound system for the plenary, database system for the library and equipment for regional offices.

The monitoring also found that there is need of capacity building training for new staff of the parliament in the areas of outreach, minutes taking, rules of committees’ clerks, office management, parliamentary business, asset management and research skills.

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The House of Elders (HoE) is the Upper House of Somaliland (Golaha Guurtida). It includes 82 members representing traditional leaders which have played a critical and important role in establishing a state and mediating conflict. The Strategic Plan 2016 – 2021 was developed in May 2016 with the aim of outlining the long-term needs of the House of Elders. It was found necessary to develop a long-term plan with clear objectives and activities as a way to improve the performance of the legislature overall and guide the development of the House of Elders up to 2021. The new Strategic Plan, which is the first of its kind for the Guurti, is an important step on the road towards the institutionalization of the house. The Strategic Plan was developed by the Guurti’s Strategic Plan Committee with the help of an international consultant through a participatory and consultative process, which involved consultative and technical meetings with staff and MPs. The process was aimed at ensuring that there is ownership of the plan as well as commitment and leadership that are necessary for its successful implementation.

Ms. Soulef Guessoum, UNDP international consultant, facilitated the technical meetings attended by the committee members, used information gathered from several sources including other members and staff of the House, carried out a SWOT analysis and developed the components of the Strategic Plan.

As part of the overall capacity building activities for national counterparts, a training on report writing took place 14-18 June 2016 in Hargeisa. 20 staff (7 female and 13 male) of the Somaliland House of Representatives including heads of departments participated in the training. The intention of the training was to strengthen staff report writing skills and to make reports more focused, impact oriented, gender-sensitive and evidence-based.

This capacity building training also intended to contribute to efficient stock taking of activities and stories, as well as sensitization re the importance and significance of activity reports to document achievements. The project has elaborated a reporting scheme which shall enable the parliament staff to report the implementation of project activities. The project’s reporting strategy focuses on establishing a common understanding for determining when and what kind of reports are needed, what is their purpose and benefit, who should create the reports, and how the reports should be produced and delivered. The training was also an opportunity for the staff to apply the new narrative reporting format and to start reporting with the support of the project. The recommendations resulting from the training were to enhance note taking skills and how to draft minutes during the sessions.

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The Jubaland State Assembly is in the process to establish its secretariat. In support to this process secretariat staff received a two-day training on administrative regulations delivered by Warsame Hassan, consultant of the UNDP Parliamentary Support Project. A total of 22 future employees attended, consisting of plenary clerks, administration and finance, IT, security, translation, office secretariat and nursing staff.

The 09 June training focused on roles and responsibilities of a parliamentary secretariat. This introductory workshop detailed the mandate of a secretariat and covered the procedural, administrative, operational and external relations support that staff should provide to the parliament.

Strategic Plan Drafted by Jubaland Parliamentary Assembly

Name one characteristic of large private companies, global aid agencies, small and medium size businesses, and the emerging states of Somalia Strategic Plans. All need to see the need to design and adopt a simple but clear statement of where they are and where they are going in terms of their history, their challenges, their strengths and their weaknesses. Only then can they elaborate on their vision for the future, their goals, and how they intend to achieve them, by means of a work plan.

Jubaland has just completed its own draft Strategic Plan accompanied by a detailed Work Plan, the latter of which designs the details based on the finding and values and capabilities of the Strategic Plan. To be successful a Strategic Plan should be the result of sincere and intense soul-searching about the above topics, and involve as many stakeholders as possible from within and beyond the parliamentary Assembly. Jubalanders are fond of saying they like talking - well they have been talking a lot, and listening a lot to what should be the core of the Strategic Plan. The MPs have designed a four pronged strategy of democratic development:

1) To strengthen the institutional capacity of State Assembly.
2) To introduce an efficient legislative process in Parliament that provides quality legislation and sound oversight.
3) To improve the capacity of Parliament to provide effective oversight.
4) To develop the outreach work of Parliament and to strengthen the representative role of MPs.

They see these as the pillars of the parliament institution. A popular methodology for drafting a Strategic Plan involves a SWOT analysis, an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once these were itemised and scrutinised the Assembly sought ways whereby they could mitigate the threats against the opportunities that presented themselves. For example the fact that Jubaland has created from scratch a new Assembly in less than a year.

When it comes to an assessment of performance, a Strategic Plan and Work Plan becomes an essential reference point when looking back on achievements and shortcomings, and planning ahead. A Strategic Plan is not written in stone. Objective circumstances can change goals, create new opportunities, or create an impediment to the goals’ success and a different approach has to be adopted to achieve them. In this sense the Strategic Plan needs an institutional body to constantly monitor its implementation.

Jubaland assigned the permanent parliamentary Standing Committee with this task. The Standing Committee is the key central committee the coordinates the parliamentary Agenda, the Committee sittings and the parliamentary Budget. Above all it meets also during the parliamentary recess – to keep the parliamentary business rolling even when the Parliament is not sitting.