Dear Reader,

Welcome to Newsletter #1 of the UNDP Parliamentary and Constitutional Support project. In order to better communicate our work and to inform national counterparts, donors and other implementers about the project’s work we intend to publish a project monthly newsletter. The newsletter shall report on key activities of the past month and inform about upcoming events in an easy-to-digest manner. As this is the first newsletter of the Project, it will include references to some activities that date more than a month.

Any feedback to the newsletter is most welcome!

IN THIS ISSUE...

- NFP Speaker travels to Baidoa on a reconciliation trip
- NFP Committees are trained on reporting
- UNDP Consultant develops public hearing protocol
- PCSP holds Project Board Meeting
- A new way forward for PCSP
- Newly appointed CTA visits Puntland and Somaliland
- Committee clerks are trained on workplans
- MOCFAD completes recruitment of new team
- Induction course in Somaliland

UPCOMING EVENTS

December

Parliamentary Development expert, Mr. David Payne, begins work with Puntland Parliament

Mr. Kare Vollan starts working with the election committee on the NIEC draft

Mr. Austin Zvoma begins work with Secretariat and Standing Committee of Somaliland Parliament on management system of work

December/January 2015

Human Rights training for the Puntland Parliament
& Security assessments of outer perimeters of Somaliland and Puntland Parliaments

NFP Speaker travels to Baidoa on a reconciliation trip

After several unsuccessful attempts since the collapse of the Somali Government in 1991 to create a functioning Regional Administration in the Southwestern regions of Somalia, H.E. Mohamed Osman Jawari, Speaker of the Federal Parliament attended on 14th September 2014 along with 40 MPs, a reconciliation conference, which was aimed at finding new ways to resolve the political crisis that engulfed the region for the formation process of the Southwest state. UNDP in this regard, facilitated the transport and organization of the 40 MPs to travel to Baidoa for the conference. This event brought a sense of acceptance to the regions by the Government and the Parliamentarians and is expected to be proven as a big step towards the formation of the three-region southwestern state, comprised of Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabelle.

UNDP Consultant develops public hearing protocol

UNDP with the support of an expert consultant, George Crawford, developed a public hearing protocol for the 15 committees of the Federal Parliament. This protocol will be used by the committees as a tool to facilitate information gathering while drafting legislations and developing policies. It also established the mandate within the existing Rules of Procedures (RoP) for Committees to conduct public meetings, consultations and hearings. The committees welcomed the way in which they were consulted in the development of the document and furthermore agreed to continue working with Mr. Crawford on other issues.
UNDP consultant George Crawford continued providing training to staff of the Committees in the area of committee report writing. In his own words, “Informative Committee reports establish the ‘why’ behind a Committee’s actions and recommendations”. The aim of these trainings is to establish a uniform format for Committee reports that accompany draft legislation. Items that needed to be resolved were the lack of a standard template and agreement on contents to be included in the reports. Examples from other Parliaments informed the MPs and staff, not only on the format and structure of the report but also on presentation of substantive information. Substantial training took place with the Committee staff on proper techniques of Report writing.

Mr. Oskar Lehner, the new Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) for the Parliamentary and Constitutional Support Project of UNDP, visited Puntland and Somaliland shortly after his appointment. The purpose of the visits was to introduce himself to the national counterparts and to familiarize himself with the specific situation in Puntland and Somaliland. During his tour he met with the Parliament and the Ministry of Justice in Somaliland, as well as with the Parliament and the Ministry of Constitution, Federal Affairs and Democratization in Puntland. In order to better understand the challenges to link MPs with their constituencies, the CTA jointly with a Somaliland MP undertook a field trip to a district to meet village elders and to learn about the level of communication between the rural population and the political center. One of the main problems raised by the village elders was that there are currently no channels of communication available between the constituency and their elected MP. The elders mentioned that it was the first time their elected MP had been able to visit the region since he was elected.

On the 28th October 2014, a project board meeting took place in Mogadishu. The board advised on the way forward to revise the current project document. Considering the importance of support to the parliaments, this should be separated from support to the upcoming constitutional review process. The next project board meeting in Mogadishu as well as board meetings in Garowe and Hargeisa are planned for January 2015.

The current project document combines support to the parliament with assistance to the constitutional review process. Considering that 2015 will be the year assigned for the national dialogue concerning the review of the provisional constitution, it has been agreed to split the project. One will focus on the parliament while the other will provide support to the constitutional review process. The rational of splitting the project into two follows the need to provide support to all state institutions involved in the constitutional review process (including the Parliaments, the Oversight Committee of the NFP, the Independent Constitution Review and Implementation Commission [ICRIC], the Ministries and the sub-national institutions).

On 19th and 20th November 2014, 30 committee clerks from the NFP attended a two-day training organized by the PCSP team. The project team developed the agenda with close consultation from the Secretary General of the Parliament and his deputy. The objective of the training was to support committee clerks to understand and familiarize themselves with the newly developed work plan template supported by George Crawford.
MOCFAD completes recruitment of new team

With the help of Warsame N. Hassan, an organizational development consultant provided by UNDP, the Puntland Ministry of Constitution, Federal Affairs and Democratization (MOCFAD), achieved one of its milestones by establishing and strengthening key departments of the Ministry. Achievements include developing organizational structures and functional descriptions for departments, establishing administrative policies and procedures and recruitment of key civil service staff. The recruitment process was carried out in a fair, transparent and competitive manner in order to hire the most qualified candidates. The Puntland Government recognized MOCFAD’s recruitment process as a role model for its civil service reform policy. New recruits received a one-day interactive employee orientation training, covering issues such as the mission and purpose of the Ministry, employment policies and pay/benefits information. To ensure that all new hires have the necessary training and tools to succeed in their posts, UNDP provided technical assistance to implement a series of on-the-job training activities. A training needs assessment survey was completed. Fourteen training activities were identified, including development of employee work plans, employee supervision, employee performance review, project management, report writing, effective meeting management and workplace communication skills. UNDP also provided technical assistance to the Ministry to complete its five-year strategic plan facilitated by NDI.

Induction course for five regional offices in Somaliland

A two-day induction workshop was organized on 11th/12th October with the support of Ms. Soulef Guessoum, a UNDP consultant, for the five newly established Parliamentary offices in Somaliland. The five offices are in Borama, Berbera, Burao, Las Anod and Erigavo, and the aim of the workshop was to build capacity in the areas of rules and procedures, role of Parliament in democratic states, representative roles of MPs, responsibilities of the staff, and planning of the parliamentary work at the local level. The participants gained information on how parliamentarians work and acknowledged the importance of the induction. The Secretary General of the house also attended the workshop and encouraged the regional participants to practice the knowledge and experience they received from the course and apply it in the day to day activities in their respected constituencies.