Dear Reader,

Parliament Support Project (PSP) has welcomed the newly formed HirShabelle State Assembly, the swearing in ceremony of the Honorable Members of the Assembly which in turn elected their Speaker and his Deputy. Five Federal member states have successfully completed the indirect election of their members to the Upper House. At this juncture the indirect election process for the Lower House has started all over the capital cities of member states.

The Project is currently developing an induction program intended to introduce good parliamentary practices and procedures, to the new incoming MPs of both Houses.

UNDP Parliamentary Support Project (PSP) provides support to the NFP, Parliaments of Puntland, Somaliland and State Assemblies of Jubaland, Galmudug and South West to capacitate and 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 USD 14.6 Million.

Follow us: www.so.undp.org
The state formation process for Hiran and Middle Shabelle regions was recently concluded in Jowhar with the establishment of Hirshabelle State. Mr. Ali Abdullahi Osoble has been elected as President and Mr. Ali Abdullahi Hussein as Vice President. The newly established Hirshabelle Assembly consist of 117 MPs and 19.7% are women. On the 13th of October, 2016; member of the assembly had their election the leadership of the assembly Hon. Osman Barre Mohamed as Speaker and Hon. Anab Ahmed Isse as Deputies. A woman is among the leadership, she has been elected as the 2nd Deputy Speaker of the Assembly. The newly State Assembly and its members have a critical role to play in the ongoing electoral process, peace building and reconciliation efforts. The Assembly needs to be supported to effectively perform its role. UNPD’s Parliament Support Project is planning to conduct needs assessment of the assembly; so that interventions do not overlap with the already existing resources and capacities.

The board meeting of UNDP’s Parliamentary Support Project was held in Mogadishu on 17th October 2016 with the attendance of project donor’s partners including DFID, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and USAID. The meeting was co-chaired by the Speaker of the National Federal Parliament Hon. Mohamed Sh. Osman Jawari and UNDP Somalia’s Country Director George Conway. In their meeting, the Board reviewed the overall project activities and achievements made over the last year and deliberated the way forward. At the end of the meeting, the Board recognized the need to support the transition from the 9th to the 10th Federal Parliament of Somalia, including the handover of lessons learned on key processes such as the constitutional review. Hence, the Board approved a three-month extension for the Project to support the induction of the incoming MPs to familiarize themselves with good parliamentary practices and procedures at the beginning of their legislative term. Furthermore, the Board agreed to give support to both the newly established Upper House and Assembly of HirShabelle State, as well as the continuation of support to the legislatures covered under the 2016 AWP.

The legal archiving capacity of the National Federal Parliament has been strengthened after receiving modern software OmniScan and Adobe Professional. This allowed Parliament to digitize old Somali legislation to Microsoft Word in order to digitize the entire parliamentary archives as a result of the ongoing provision given by the Parliament Support Project.

Hon. Mohamed Sh. Osman Jawari UNDP Somalia’s Country Director Mr. George Conway During the co-chairing of the Meeting with donor’s.
The Puntland House of Representatives and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted joint Project Board Meeting of the Parliamentary Support Project (PSP) on 4 October 2016 at the conference room of Puntland Parliament. The objectives of the board meeting was to reflect on project achievements during the third quarter of 2016 and jointly put forward specific recommendations to ensure that expected results are achieved and that the next phase of the project is linked with the priority needs of Puntland Parliament.

Hon. Ahmed A. Hashi, the Speaker of Puntland HoR commended UNDP for its continuous support of PL State Parliament. Moreover, he appreciated the strong and continually improving relationship between UNDP and the Parliament. Hon. Hashi said, “Project Board Meetings are improving each time, which is indicative of an improving relationship between Puntland Parliament and UNDP as allies and partners. Although the Puntland Parliament also has good relationship with other organizations, UNDP is our closest ally – and I am not just saying it, I mean it – UNDP is our closest ally and partner.” Mr. Sayed Sahibzada, Head of UNDP Area Office, remarked on Parliament’s achievements during the 37th session. Mr. Sayed said, “The 37th session was very productive. PL Parliament has passed a number of important bills, especially, the Sexual Offences Bill. The Parliament rejected the list of High Court Council candidates, a sign of Parliament’s independence. In a few days’ time, the Parliament will vote on the candidates for the Upper House. This is indicative of the important work PL Parliament is doing, and UNDP is commending the Parliament for competently discharging their functions. Ms. Nahid Hassan, the CTA of UNDP Parliamentary Support Project, informed the meeting that the next phase of PSP should focus on providing substantive support to build the legislative and oversight capacities of the Parliament. Ms. Nahid emphasized that the project will not only building Parliament’s capacity to review, amend, approve or reject draft laws submitted by the government but also its capacity to initiate their own laws on behalf of the citizens of Puntland State of Somalia. She explained that in the next phase of the project, UNDP would support linking the parliament and civil society organizations including but not limited to NGOs, universities, professional organizations and community-based organizations. Finally, Nahid informed the Parliament that due to a donor fatigue, resources are not anticipated to be as high as in phase one of the project. Nevertheless, she assured the meeting that UNDP support of the Puntland Parliament will continue.

Through a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with UNDP’s Parliamentary Support Project, the Puntland Parliament has recruited Mr. Mohamed, a Somali national legal expert with 10 years of experience in legal work in both public and private sectors, to provide a legal advice to the parliament including supporting parliamentary committees to analyze and draft better legislation. This marks the first time the Puntland Parliament has had in-house legal services from a qualified lawyer. He has LL.M and LL.B from International Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan and an MBA from Preston University Pakistan. Mr. Abdillahi is the Deputy Dean and a lecturer at Puntland State University. Prior to this, he worked as a legal consultant with Puntland’s Ministry of Public Works and Transport and with the Ministry of justice, Religious Affairs and Rehabilitation. He also served as a lawyer for Khuram Law Firm (Pakistan) and PSAWEN in Puntland. Mr. Abdillahi commenced his work at the House of Representatives in October 2016, and he will continue until December 2016.
The Project Board Meeting for the Somaliland Parliament was held in Hargeisa on 29th September 2016 at the HoR press conference room. The meeting was co-chaired by the Speaker, Honorable Abdirahman M. Abdillahi, Hon. Said Jama Ali, Deputy Chairman of Guurti, Hon. Ali Yusuf, 2nd Deputy Speaker of the HoR, and Mr. Sergei Pushkarev, Head of Office, UNDP Hargeisa Office. Representatives from the Parliament, USAID-funded Strengthening Somali Governance project and UNDP project staff participated. During the session, the Speaker briefed the participants about 2016 achievements and pointed out the tremendous progress made with regard to achieving the milestones of the Quarter 3 plans and the need to continue the support in order to improve the legislative drafting, research and committee work. UNDP head of Office agreed with his positive assessment and acknowledged the achievements made during the reporting period. During the closing of the meeting, Members of the Board noted with satisfaction the results achieved during the short period after signing the agreement. Finally, the Speaker highlighted the need to improve coordination between the different agencies supporting the parliament.

Outreach Training for Regional Offices Staff

A two-day workshop aimed at improving the skills and knowledge of the Somaliland parliamentary staff on outreach and public engagement mechanisms was held in Hargeisa on 18th September 2016. This will enable staff to create a better link between the parliament and the public with the goal of achieving improved public outreach, increased oversight and above all, boosted public confidence in the parliament as well as other democratic processes in the country. Funded by EU, DFID/UK, SIDA/Sweden and Norway through UNDP’s Parliamentary Support Project, 16 staff members of both houses (House of Representatives and House of Elders) have benefited the training.

“The training helped me learn that in outreach, one size doesn’t fit all; therefore, messages need to be tailored to the specific target audiences,” said Ilham Abdi, a female staff member from Togdheer regional office.

“I now understand the complementary roles of civil society organizations and the parliament. When I go back to my office, I would like to start working with them for better engagement with the public,” said Bay Mohamed Ahmed from Sool regional office.

The project has recruited Ms. Hana Mohamed as the first lawyer to work for Somaliland House of Elders. She has 6 years of experience working in the field of legal aid and human rights protection in different capacities. In the last two years, she was working with Somaliland Ministry of Rehabilitation and Resettlements together with UNHCR Refugees related matters including providing legal aid and giving protection for women and children refugees. Ms. Hana holds LLB Degree of Laws at University of Hargeisa. She is also doing her Master’s on Peace and Conflict Studies. Ms. Hana is expecting to provide a legal assistance to the House of Elders.
PL HoR Social Affairs and Culture Committee Conducted Oversight Missions

Through technical and financial supports provided by the UNDP Parliamentary Support Project, the Social Affairs and Culture Committee of Puntland House of Representatives conducted an oversight mission from 27 Aug to 5 Sep 2016 in Nugaal and Mudug regions to evaluate government health and education services in twelve districts under Nugaal and Mudug regions. The delegate, which consisted of 7 MPs and 2 committee staff, met first with regional and district officers of the government including but not limited to the governors, mayors and health and education directors. They also visited regional and district offices, hospitals schools, community centers and other key public and private sector institutions, where they both spoke with and listened to ordinary citizens in these areas in order to gain an understanding of the practical problems faced by people in relation with health and education services of the government. The committee plans to present their findings and recommendations to the plenary during the 38th session of the HoR which is scheduled to open on 25 Oct 2016. Similar oversight missions are planned to take place in other parts of Puntland during the upcoming months. UNDP is committed to enable parliamentary committees to conduct effective oversight over the executive branch, to strengthen good governance and bring the parliament closer to the community.

SUCCESS STORY

Mustafa Mohamed H. Dahir, is the Legal Advisor of Somaliland House of Representatives.

“I’m very grateful to UNDP’s Parliament Support Project (PSP) assistance to participate in the International Law Institute-Africa Centre for Legal Excellency (ILI-ACLE), which has given me a glimmer of hope in my knowledge pertaining to legislative drafting and also provided me an opportunity to put into practice legislative preparation techniques. I am able to produce clear and comprehensive legislation in order to strengthen the capacity of the House.”

Based on the skills and acquaintance with professional lawmakers from different countries in Africa, Mustafa plans to draft the first Legislative Drafting Manual of the House which will beneficial for better drafting legislation as a result.

Mustafa Mohamed H. Dahir, Legal Advisor for SL HoR.