Dear Reader,

UNDP Parliamentary Support Project (PSP) has been busy during the past month with the constitutional review workshop, organized in collaboration with UNSOM, to understand lessons learnt in implementing the Somali constitution. In Puntland, the project handed over the modern video teleconference (VTC) equipment for Puntland’s House of Representatives, and PSP team members met with Puntland civil society Representative in Garowe.

The evaluators held a de-briefing meeting to share their initial findings from the mid-term evaluation. The meeting took place in Mogadishu and connected through VTC to UNON in Nairobi.

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.

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4th Somalia National Federal Parliament Anniversary

On the 20th August 2016, the National Federal Parliament met to commemorate its fourth year anniversary. Parliamentary leadership presented a comprehensive report on the progress made and achievements of the Somali Federal Parliament since it was established on 20th August 2012. In the opening, Rt. Hon. Speaker Sh. Osman Jawari made a brief speech, stating that the term of office of the 9th parliament shall officially end on the day when the election results of the upcoming 10th Parliament are announced to replace this current parliament. He added that the Federal Parliament passed and adopted a resolution to amend Article 61 of the Constitution to extend the term of office of the current Parliament. The Second Deputy Speaker also addressed the plenary, mentioning that the 9th parliament has passed 22 priority laws, passed 42 resolutions and adopted 6 treaties, which were all important to the to the socio-economic and political recovery of Somalia. While highlighting the major achievements of the Parliament during the past 4 years, the Deputy Speaker mentioned the establishment of Villa Hargeisa where the leadership has offices, offices for parliamentary staff, and committee meeting rooms. All these achievements were made with sacrifices with 18 MPs and 8 staff members being victims of terrorist attacks and assassinations during this term of the House of the People.

UNDPK Constitutional Support Project, in collaboration with UNSOM, organized a workshop with the overarching aim of understanding lessons learnt in implementing the Somali Constitution. The 3-day workshop was held in Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi from the 23rd - 25th August 2016. It brought together different stakeholders and mandated institutions including the ICRIC, the federal Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, Ministries of Constitution Affairs from the federal states, the Parliamentary Oversight Committee, civil society representatives, international constitutional experts, and representatives from donors, the World Bank, and the African Union. Participants from the Federal Ministry of Constitution Affairs were able to share their challenges and opportunities candidly. The main theme focused on peace-building in a fragile state like Somalia and the need to provide legal framework where citizens can co-exist peacefully and respect the rule of law. The international constitutional experts in attendance were able to share their experiences in post-conflict countries. The participants agreed that the constitutional review process takes time and needs all parties involved in finding an amiable solution that promotes peace and coexistence. Regarding state building, some stakeholders felt that time was running out in the constitutional review and it is imperative that all actors played their part. The establishment of States was discussed as their role was important in constitutional review. With Somalia moving to a federal system, there were concerns that this may create clan-based regions and also a need to harmonize constitutions from various regions. There was a feeling that there is no political will in getting the constitutional review off the ground as some of the political actors have been disingenuous in the review process. Another area of concern was the mistrust between the arms government, i.e. Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. Finally, the Parliamentary Oversight Committee finalized the review of chapters 1-5 & 10-14 which was presented to the Federal Parliament. For Somalia to prepare for one man one vote in 2020, the process must be Somali-owned and all stakeholders must participate in a fair and transparent process. The rule of law must be respected, public participation and consensus building must be achieved. The harmonization process of state and federal constitution must be finalized and more importantly the need to build state institutions ensuring that public service in heart of their work in completing the constitution review process.

The work of the Parliamentary Oversight Committee (OC) has reviewed the Chapters of the Provisional Constitution and provided options to be considered for the type of government and the relations between the three arms of Government. This will assist to avoid conflicts amongst government agencies and will ensure political stability. One of the significant accomplishments of the 9th Parliament is the broader female representation of 14% as compared to previous parliaments of transitional governments. Although the 30% quota allocation for women was not reached, the parliament was able to successfully complete all the eight sessions during its four-year term as has been defined in the Constitution.
During the past weeks NFP held two sittings NFP commemorated its fourth anniversary on August 20, 2016. The leadership of the parliament presented a comprehensive report highlighting the progress and achievements made during the four-year term. The Speaker addressed briefly to the parliament emphasizing that this parliament will continue to work until the start of the new parliament. The Deputy Speaker highlighted several achievements including the adoption of more than twenty key pieces of legislation and the establishment of Villa Hargeisa which is the seat of the leadership, offices for staff and committee meeting rooms. NFP discussed the report tabled by the Oversight Committee (OC) on the remaining five chapters of the Provisional Constitution on August 17, 2016. The OC Chairperson informed the Parliament that OC has been working hard for the past six months to finalize the five remaining chapters of the Provisional Constitution. She reminded MPs that these chapters are critical for the political stability of the country. She also emphasized that in order to pave the way for a durable political solution, the OC has proposed three options for each contentious issue with the aim of initiating broad public debate and identifying the option with the most support. In her final remarks she praised the NFP Leadership and MPs for taking the courage to amend article 136 of the Provisional Constitution to defer the completion of the constitution review process to the next parliament. On August 17, the Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) presented its quarterly report highlighting several achievements, including (a) the completion of the recruitment of 34 staff members including the Secretary General of the NIEC, emphasizing that the selection process was fair, transparent and in accordance to with the Somali Civil Service standards and regulations; (b) the development of an glossary of election terms in Somali in order to standardize the usage of terminologies during the election process; (c) the completion of the NIEC website, and (d) membership in the Arab Election Council. The adoption of a resolution on the constitution review process has been postponed for the next sitting of the NFP.

Both NFP and SLHoR Legal Advisors Attend Legislative Drafting Training in Kampala

The legal advisor for the National Federal Parliament (NFP) and the legal advisor for Somaliland’s House of Representatives together with the legal officer from the PSP staff are currently in Kampala, Uganda from August 29 – September 16 here they are undergoing legislative drafting training. Since legislative drafting is a specialized skill, advanced training in addition to a law degree is necessary. Currently none of legislatures in Somalia has drafting experience, and these legislatures are unable to undertake any legal analysis on bills which they receive from the Executive. Furthermore, the parliaments are unable to draft private members’ bills or amendments to government bills. The International Law Institute is the leading global provider of training and technical assistance related to international legal, economic and financial issues. ILI has provided legal training to more than 30,000 government officials, legal and business professionals and scholars from 186 countries. This has contributed to good and efficient governance through the rule of law. ILI is a non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, DC and has its regional center in Kampala, Uganda called the African Centre for Legal Excellence or ILI-ACLE. Somaliland’s House of Representatives and the National Federal Parliament will have a certified drafter for the first time as a result of this course with support from UNDP. And UNDP’s national staff member, Dahir Mahmoud, will also be certified and will be able to train the parliamentary staff in the new state assemblies in 2017. Dahir explained, “Lawyers interpret the law according to given situation but drafters transform policies into draft bills. It clear that I will benefit and that skill will be passed to the new state parliaments.”
The 31st Session of Somaliland HoR is due to close on 20th September 2016. The session’s agenda foresees the debate on 6 priority bills; most of the bills are financial related bill and will not require the Guurti verification and approval.

Bills to be debated and voted during the session include:
- PFM and Accountability Bill.
- National Audit Bill.
- Anti-Money Laundering Bill.
- Remittance Bill.
- Somaliland Commercial Banking Bill.
- Standing Rules of Procured.

After a technical workshop reviewing the draft Counter Terrorism bill (18-20 July) for the Internal Affairs and Defense committee members, the committee requested that the House remove the bill from the agenda in order to have more consultation with different stakeholder before debating it during plenary.

The Somaliland House of Elders (Guurti) secretariat staff received two-day training on staffing and organizational structure, accounting, procurement and fixed asset management from 23-24 August. The training, delivered by national consultant Warsame Hassan, was an orientation training for policies and procedures developed for HoE in July 2016. The first training session was attended by five department directors (4 males and 1 female). Documents presented included the HR policy manual, staff recruiting procedures, staff training policy, employee performance review procedure and the new organizational chart. Participants discussed and learned about how these policies and procedures will be utilized during the recruitment and management of staff. The second day of training was about accounting, procurement and fixed asset management policies and procedures. Administration and Finance Department staff of the Guurti (3 females) attended this session. Documents presented included accounting and procurement manual and several forms and templates for carrying out accounting, procurement and fixed asset management transactions. Participants learned and discussed how to use these documents in their everyday work.
The 37th session of the Puntland House of Representatives started on 15 June and closed on 25 August. This session was remarkably different from previous sessions. Several important bills were debated and passed by Parliament including:

- Quality Control bill
- Fishery Service Fees bill
- NGO bill
- Sexual Offenses bill

Parliament passed the Sexual Offenses bill with around 40 legislators in attendance. Only 2 legislators abstained and none voted against the piece of legislation. The passage of the Sexual Offenses Bill is a milestone for Parliament and for the Government of Puntland. The entire process took more than 1 ½ years. The bill first was approved by the Council of Ministers and then by Parliament’s Standing Committee, which approves legislation when Parliament is in recess, and finally now by the whole house. The Ministry undertook lobbying and advocacy with religious leaders and MPs to dispel fears that the legislation will be against the principles of Islam.

The bill was drafted with support from UNDP’s Rule of Law Programme. After the bill is signed into law by the President, it is expected to significantly reduce the violence against women and end the impunity of those who commit such violence. The bill also provides specific protection for vulnerable groups such as children, persons with disabilities, internally displaced people, and others outside the social protection mechanisms that exist within Somali society. In addition to this, the house rejected the Agriculture Fees bill and postponed the adoption of the new Rules of Procedures (ROP), which were revised in April 2015 with support of the Parliamentary Support Project.

Notably during this session, the House rejected the extension of the High Judicial Council members term of office as requested by President and agreed by standing committee.

The Parliamentary Support Project procured modern video teleconference (VTC) equipment for Puntland’s House of Representatives. The official handover ceremony was held at Parliament on 31 August, and the equipment was handed over by Nahid Hussein, the new CTA for Parliamentary Support Project (PSP) during her first visit to Garowe. The event was attended by the Speaker, the Secretary General, parliamentary staff and three UNDP representatives. This is part of the ongoing support to upgrade the IT and communications infrastructure of the house which started last year. The provision of the VTC system is expected to improve communication between parliamentary leadership, counterparts and donor partners by enabling them to hold video conferences without overseas travel. 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 as they enable real and face-to-face communication over sophisticated digital platforms and established telecommunication networks.

VTC system is cost effective and helps to reducing travel time and links the parliament to outside world while at home. The Parliament will also be able to share presentations and data whilst on a video conference call.

The project also upgraded the internet connectivity of the House in order to make better use of the new equipment. The project is also providing an ICT consultant to train the parliament staff on the installation, configuration and proper use of the VTC.
As part of an ongoing staff capacity development and following of procurement of ICT equipment, the secretariat staff of PL HoR received ICT training held in Garowe from 27 Aug to 5 Sep 2016 with support from UNDP Parliamentary Support Project (PSP). The training was facilitated by local consultant from Puntland State University and the director of ICT department of the parliament.

The participants of the training included all the heads of departments and other staff members. The objectives of the workshop were to equip the staff with technical ICT skills and best methods to use the internet and tools provided by the internet for learning, research, and to access and assess information sources for relevance and accuracy.

The workshop shall enhance the skills of PL HoR staff to improve the effective use of ICT including internet research and to administer the parliament website more effectively.
On 28 Aug 2016 with the support of the Parliamentary Support Project the Social Affairs Committee of PL HoR conducted oversight mission to five districts in the Mudug region: Galkio, Garacad, Galdogob, Jaribban and Buursalah. The main objective was to assess the government’s work and the delivery of public services in the areas visited with special focus on education and health facilities. This oversight enabled the MPs to better understand the social economic situation of these communities. During the visit the committee visited public schools, held consultations and meetings with officials from education and health institutions and officials from civil society groups who provided valuable information and feedback. The findings of this mission will be submitted to the full house of the parliament during next session in October. The parliament will evaluate the committee findings to ensure that executive policies reflect the public interest and have a positive impact on people’s lives. These oversight missions will also help the public to understand the role of parliament and improve the image of the house as an institution.

**Monitoring Visit to Jubaland State Assembly**

From 14-21 August, UNDP’s Parliament Support Project (PSP) and the Partnership and Planning Unit (PPU) team visited Jubaland State Assembly in Kismayo and conducted an oversight monitoring visit. The team visited stakeholders’ offices including the Major of Kismayo, Ministry of Security, Ministry of Interior, Youth Umbrella and Women Umbrella. The objective of the oversight monitoring visit was to monitor the progress of legislation, policies, strategies and structures of the Parliament, examine the impact of the Assembly’s work to the different beneficiaries and provide LoA management training for parliamentary staff. The monitoring team also assessed level of satisfaction of technical/advisory/financial support received by the Jubaland State Assembly from the project. The oversight monitoring mission found that overall the Jubaland State Assembly welcomed the collaboration with UNDP, and stakeholders highlighted that UNDP has done a lot for the Assembly including provision of chairs, desks, computers, cameras, speakers/sound system which enabled the smooth implementation of the reconciliation process and the establishment of Jubaland State Assembly. The team also observed during the visit to the plenary hall that the tables and chairs provided by UNDP were of poor quality, and MPs expressed concern of standards and quality for chairs and desks. The team observed that stakeholders need to understand better how to the legislature works as the State Assembly does not share decisions with the beneficiaries. Both MPs and civil society leaders mentioned that they do not understand the work of the standing committees. LoA training was provided to Jubaland parliament staff for them to understand UNDP operational requirements and provided training materials crucial to use as reference documents during procurement and all other aspects of LoA implementations. In order to speed up the implementation of the current LOAs in remaining period, much need to be done with the support of UNDP.
As part of the follow-up to the implementation of project activities, a team consisting of the UNDP Parliament Support Project and Partnership and Planning Unit (PPU) visited the South West State Assembly in Baidoa and its beneficiaries. The team visited stakeholders’ offices including Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Information, Mayor of Baidoa District, and Somali South West Youth Network. The objective of the oversight monitoring visit was to monitor the progress of legislation, policies, strategies and structure of the Parliament, examine the impact of Parliament’s works to the different levels of beneficiaries and provide LoA management training sessions for parliamentary staff.

The monitoring also assessed the level of satisfaction of technical/advisory/financial support received by the SWSA from the project.

Overall, the monitoring mission found that the South West State Assembly highly appreciated the support provided by the UNDP Parliament Support Project as well as the consistent collaboration and engagement with the project management team. The Speaker stated that provision of the chairs for the MPs enable them to conduct assembly sittings on regular basis in the new plenary hall and can now carry out their functions more efficiently. The Speaker also mentioned that UNDP was the first agency responded to our request and furnished the assembly hall.

The provided sound system equipment consists of microphones, amplifiers and loud speakers for plenary hall, which have improved plenary debate.

As stated by the Speaker, initially it was not easy for the MPs to address the plenary and to participate in discussions of the sittings efficiently. The South West State Assembly constructed a plenary hall with its own domestic resources. The leadership stated that they are looking forward to the new building for the Secretariat with funding from UNDP on allocated land near the plenary hall.

The Parliament has no staff and Members of Parliament do not receive salaries. However, they do receive $200 per month from the Federal Government for the support to emerging parliaments.

The Assembly does not have the essential necessary resources to execute its basic functions. The Speaker and his deputies mentioned that SWSA MPs capacity improved after provided trainings by UNDP Parliament Project on principles of democracy, functions of parliament and specialized topics related to the day-to-day activities of the Parliament. Parliament requested support to implement all the trainings and workshop activities outlined in the signed LOA, as there is need to be expedite the implementation of activities in the coming three months (October-December).