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TUTOR: Dr. Cristina Leston-Bandeiras

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OFFICE RECEIPT

NAME: Lenni Montiel

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TUTOR: Dr. Cristina Leston-Bandeiras

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Tutor: Dr. Cristina Leston-Bandeiras
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Research Report

**Parliamentary assistance: external support to legislatures
in developing and transitional countries**

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I. Introduction

This report is presenting the findings of a research aimed at reviewing the questions:

- What is parliamentary¹ assistance²?
- How is parliamentary assistance delivered?

These questions were tackled through an inductive approach³ that allowed us to explore a selected number of official reports and documents⁴ as well as few scholarly articles on the subject.

As a result of this qualitative research we have been able to identify that parliamentary assistance (PA), and all its many synonymous terms used by practitioners, is a specific area of activity that has been reflected marginally within the academic literature and consequently has been practically ignored within the wider scope of legislative studies⁵.

¹ For the purposes of this paper the terms legislature, parliament, congress will be used interchangeably and synonymously.

² For the purposes of this paper the terms assistance, aid, and cooperation will be used interchangeably and synonymously.

³ See - 'Methodological issues and sources of information' in Annex III.

⁴ Most of the documents analysed are issue papers, research reports of informal position papers, rather than formal institutional policies. All of them, however, have been written as part of formal agency processes to assess the significance or to guide PA initiatives within their development policies, articulating key institutional priorities and concerns. Collectively, therefore, they reflect current developments in how international agencies understand PA issues (all of them are dated from 1995-2003).

⁵ In a review of all the articles published in the Journal of Legislative Studies we found only two that referred to aid to parliaments by the British government or by the European Parliament and another one that makes references to parliamentary institution building. These are correspondingly: J.M. Lee (1995) 'British Aid to Parliaments Overseas' *The Journal of Legislative*

We would like to speculate by saying that legislative studies have paid very little attention to the study of parliamentary processes in developing and in transitional countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, precisely, where parliamentary assistance efforts of different kinds and for many years have concentrated.

Assistance to parliaments has been an important instrument of the foreign and aid policy of many nations since the 1970s, at least. Multilateral organizations have actively got involved in this field since the 1990s as part of the donor countries' efforts to support the spread of democracy around the world. There is no doubt that the amount of financial resources and technical inputs that have been put into PA is having significant impact in the way parliaments in many countries are being changed, reformed and developed. This is a process that deserves analysis and systematisation from the perspective of legislative studies.

The report is structured in three sections. Through the first one we review the concept of parliamentary assistance. In the second, we are presenting a historical perspective on what we have identified as the key stages of development of the concepts, and practices that may be associated to PA. This historical review and the analysis of categories used for the delivery of PA is

Studies, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring) pp. 115-135; David Blackman (1995) 'The European Parliament's Aid Initiatives in Support of Democratic Development in Central and Eastern Europe' *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Summer) pp. 301-314; and Anders B. Johnson (1995) 'The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Promotion of Representative Institutions' *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Winter) pp. 104-111.

substantively complementing this exploratory research on the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of PA.

II. What is Parliamentary Assistance? A review of the term

We can say that Parliamentary Assistance (PA) is, in our view, a term that has been used to refer to the processes by which a parliament of a developing or transitional country⁶ receives technical and/or financial assistance from an external⁷ actor or agent with the purpose of improving parliament’s own business, capacities or performance in any possible way, with the purpose of promoting change or reform in a series of pre-established areas or goals.

PA is an intrinsic activity of the many existing international parliamentary associations or coalitions. A significant amount of individual parliaments are involved either in its provision or in its reception. Several multilateral and bilateral development agencies use it, and since the 1990s it is a common component⁸ in a very large number of development projects promoting good governance and democracy around the world.

⁶ Although in principle parliamentary assistance is a process that could also take place between parliaments of developed countries, the term is usually applied in the practical world to refer only to the relations North-South, East-West or eventually South-South.

⁷ From our perspective, external actor refers to individuals or organizations of any kind, of national or international origin, that are in no way related or associated to the regular business or organization of a parliament.

⁸ See Malloch Brown (2003; 2000); Johnson (1995); UNDP (2003) and USAID (2001).

However, by reviewing selected scholarly articles and documents from development-related agencies one can find many other terms and concepts that are used synonymously and interchangeably with PA, such as:

- Aid to Parliament (Lee, 1995; Blackman, 1995)
- Legislative assistance (Lipmann *et. al.*, 1997: 3; UNDP, 2000: 1; USAID, 2000)
- Legislative development (Baaklini *et. al.*, 1994; Lipmann *et. al.*, 1997: 3)
- Legislative modernization⁹ (USAID, 2001, 2000)
- Legislative strengthening or strengthening legislatures¹⁰ (Lipmann *et. al.*, 1997: 3; McCannel, 1995; USAID, 2001)
- Parliamentary development (UNDP, 2003: 5; USAID, 2001: 3)
- Parliamentary institution building¹¹ (Johnson, 1995: 108)

Marginal efforts to compare terms have taken place. Lippman and Emmert (1997: 3) tried to bring clarification to the way terms in this field should be used:

‘Since no one term encompasses the variety of roles and functions for which legislatures are typically responsible, the terms legislative assistance, legislative development and legislative strengthening are often used interchangeably. However, there are subtle differences in meaning. Legislative assistance implies a donor role, both in terms of activities inside and outside the legislature. Legislative development conveys a sense of comprehensive institutional development that does not necessarily imply a donor

⁹ No definition of the term was found in the reviewed literature.

¹⁰ In 1999 UNDP launched a global programme under the name ‘Global Programme for Strengthening Parliaments’ (UNDP, 2001: 9). The term “parliamentary strengthening” is also used often by practitioners; however we did not find any reference to it in the literature. We would assume that such term is synonymous to legislative strengthening.

¹¹ We could assume that ‘parliamentary institution building’ could be used as a synonymous of terms “legislative capacity building” or “capacity development in legislatures”, a couple of other terms frequently used among practitioners in the field. However, no reference was found about them in the reviewed literature.

role. Legislative strengthening, the term generally used in USAID, implies a need to strengthen the legislature in relation to the executive branch'

Through the analysis of available attempts to explain these terms in the literature it is not possible to achieve a clear conclusion about how much different they are (see Table 2. in annexes). On the contrary, they seem to be very close and differences seem to be represented mainly by the focus of the intentions or operations of the institutions that promote or carry them out.

Consequently, the evidence from the reviewed literature shows that the practice continues to be today that in a single document one can find the use of several of these terms, interchangeably, to refer to the same process. Although for development agencies and parliamentary bodies it seems that definitions may not be a relevant matter, the study and clarification of these processes may represent an interesting challenge for students of comparative legislative studies.

From all the cases analysed above, the common factor is that there is always an external agent, either a donor (multi or bilateral), a 'peer' parliament, a parliamentary association or a non-governmental organization involved in the process. This is the reason for emphasising the perspective of 'assistance', 'aid' or 'cooperation' that is embedded to all the terms under consideration.

A clear and undisputable conclusion in this case will be that the definitions, concepts, uses and applications of these different terms are varied and overlapping, and the absence of agreement on their definition may eventually produce undesirable effects. This situation make difficult important tasks, such as comparative and quantitative analysis; as well as the achievement and share of a common ground between government and parliamentary decision-makers, aid agency professionals and academics, when they are discussing development issues and initiatives to improve the role, functioning or impact of actions on a parliament.

III. Development of PA – an introduction to the topic

In this section we will report the results of our analysis trying to understand the origins and the process of development of PA. In this sense, the the results of our analysis have allowed us to propose four periods, without clear-cut boundaries among them, for the study of PA:

1. European and Imperial Parliamentarism. 1889 – 1945
2. Post World War II and Decolonization. 1945 - 1970
3. Cold War politics. 1970 – 1989
4. The wave of democratization. 1989 – till today

1. European and Imperial Parliamentarism. 1889 – 1945

The first references about interactions among parliamentarians, in terms of what we could call initial stages of PA, may be related to the dealings that took place among European parliamentarians at the end of the XIX century. In this sense, little is reported in the selected literature about the period that goes from those days till the end of the World War II in terms of incentives, organisational settings and nature of the international interactions among European parliamentarians¹². From the analysis of the literature, we identified two features characterizing this period that we could call the 'initial stages of PA':

- The creation of the first parliamentary associations- the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Empire Parliamentary Association.
- PA in those early days could be seen fundamentally as a process based in the personal interaction and exchange between parliamentarians through visits and conferences.

The origins of PA initiatives- European Parliamentarism¹³

The origin of PA has to be linked to the origins of cooperation among European parliamentarians, through the informal exchange of experiences, meetings and policy advocacy on issues of international arbitration and peace during the

¹² It would be interesting to analyse the development of PA on the light of the development process of parliamentary associativism having as a reference the period that goes from the creation of IPU in 1889 till the end of the World War II. Such a review should unavoidable include the IPU, the EPA and any other parliamentary association that could have been created during that period.

¹³ At the moment of its creation in 1889 the IPU was called the 'Inter-Parliamentary Conference' and it was mainly an organisation of individual parliamentarians of Europe. Ten years later, the organisation turned-up into IPU as an association of parliaments.

1880s-1890s. The creation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1889¹⁴, is an important landmark as the first parliamentary association in the world, setting the path for the development of many other regional or issue-based parliamentary associativism during the XX century.

From the perspective of PA, the establishment of IPU could also be seen as an answer to the need of European parliamentarians at the end of XIX century to have a forum where to meet foreign peers, learn from political processes in other parliaments and discuss issues of common interest at the time – peace; with the purpose of promoting changes in position of individual parliamentarians on issues related to international relations hoping in this way to influence policy positions and lawmaking in national parliaments¹⁵.

Concerns about ‘learning from foreign examples’ and ‘contacting foreign peers’, perhaps, is the origin of the busy international agenda that significant numbers of parliamentarians¹⁶ have up to the date. In addition, the practice of advocacy of

¹⁴ The initial purpose of the IPU was the ‘peaceful settlement of disputes’ (Johnson: 1995). Thus one may assume that at the time of its creation it couldn’t have had as a purpose the provision of assistance to any of its members in a systematic way – this may be a hypothesis for further research.

¹⁵ The IPU “is a centre for dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy among legislators representing every political system and all the main political leanings in the world – constituting a unique platform for observing political opinions and trends around the world” (*IPU – Brief history*. [Available at <http://www.ipu.org/English/history.htm>] consulted in April 2005).

¹⁶ Every year, a large amount of parliamentarians from all over the world pay visit to other parliaments and attend global, regional or national conferences abroad. Almost every national parliament has established groups or committees for the development of relationships with foreign parliaments. For illustration, see the webpage on ‘Interparliamentary Delegations’ at the European Parliament – http://www.europarl.eu.int/delegations/default_en.htm; and the calendar of international parliamentary assemblies scheduled for German MPs- <http://www.bundestag.de/htdocs-e/internat/2005.html>. These practices have to be associated also to the development of bilateral inter-parliamentary relations and to what is known generally as

policy issues from international perspective among parliamentarians is still a very active practice today (see section 3. below). From the perspective of PA, these processes of exchange and continuous contact are of a fundamental relevance as mechanisms of systematic cross-fertilization of experiences.

The British Imperial¹⁷ perspective on PA - the second stage of PA

The Empire Parliamentary Association (EPA) was created in 1911 in Britain. This represents, in our view, the initial stage in the use of parliamentary associativism as an instrument of an specific state foreign policy to influence political processes overseas. In this case, the purpose was to influence the legislatures in the British colonies. From the perspective of PA, EPA work could also be interpreted as the first ever systematic initiative aimed at improving the state of affairs in parliaments¹⁸ of overseas nations with less developed socio-economic and political conditions than those of the provider of funds and knowledge. This may also represent the first official PA initiative provided with official state character.

The EPA developed during its years of existence a significant experience in the organization of Conferences for parliamentarians and in the organization of visits

'parliamentary diplomacy'. The international agenda of many MP's has become very busy since several international agencies have been promoting the establishment of regional and global networks of parliamentarians that would support or advocate specific policy issues or concerns. See for instance: *Parliamentarians for Global Action* [<http://www.pgaction.org/>]; *Parliamentary Network on the World Bank* [<http://www.worldbank.org/>]; *Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption* [http://parlcent.ca/gopac/index_e.php]; *Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas* [<http://www.e-fipa.org/>].

¹⁷ This paper has not included analysis of PA initiatives by other Imperial powers such as France, Germany, Belgium, or Portugal that could have happened as well at the beginning of the XX century. This issue may represent another subject for further research in this field.

¹⁸ For the British Empire one may assume that the key purpose was to establish and develop the State in its colonies based on the model of existing institutions in the British Islands. Thus, Westminster parliamentary traditions and rules had to be transplanted and nurtured in all the colonial legislatures.

of exchange from countries of the Empire to London and vice-versa (Lee, 1995: 117). In our view, EPA experience may represent the origins of one of the most common mechanisms used in PA today- conferences, seminars and study visits.

2. PA, Post World War II and Decolonization. 1945 - 1970

This period will be characterized in this paper through the results of the analysis of literature reporting only on the US assistance to Japan and Germany (USAID, 2001: 3) and the transformation from the EPA into the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association¹⁹ -CPA (Lee, 1995: 117). Conclusions from our analysis are presented now.

The systems of international relations that framed the provision of PA changed: imperial powers were in decline and parliamentarism tended to develop further on the basis of relationships between parliaments and parliamentarians representing independent and sovereign nations²⁰; the emergence of a new

¹⁹ See <http://www.cpahq.org/>

²⁰ The transformation of the influential EPA into the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), which includes parliaments and sub-national legislatures associated in one way or another to Westminster parliamentary traditions, is a fundamental process in the post World War II period. The creation of the CPA and in fact the transformation of relationships between its parliament members was prompted by the independence of India and the movement towards self-government among British colonies in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Middle East. The CPA was the first parliamentary association, beyond the European space, that was developed among independent member countries and this of course had to create very different reasons, conditions and ways for the delivery of PA than those that initially existed within the framework of the EPA. The CPA includes today more than 15.000 parliamentarians and has Branches in more than 170 national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures around the world. See <http://www.cpahq.org/>

world order created conditions for the development of bilateral agreements²¹ among countries for the specific provision of technical assistance ‘from parliament to parliament’. This was done again, on the basis of transfer of know-how from a more developed to a newly created or a less developed parliament.

PA moved during these years as a practice into more sophisticated activities that considered technical assistance through formal training and the transfer of know-how on complex systems as well as through the involvement of individuals others than MPs²², e.g., parliamentary staff²³ as well as political party members. This was a significant step further from all the previously known experiences at the level of exchanges and conferences that included only MPs. Assistance moves from strictly political considerations into the inclusion of technical expertise of the organisation and functioning of parliaments²⁴. In our view, at this point, the

²¹ Immediately after the World War II finished, the US Library of Congress provided expert assistance for the development of two new legislatures – the German Bundestag and the Japanese Diet (USAID, 2000: 3). This represented in our view the first cases of PA developed strictly on principles of bilateral relations between nations.

²² The US Library of Congress, provided technical expertise to support the development of staff and capacities of the German Bundestag and the Japanese Diet (USAID: 2000, 3). In 1952 the CPA conducted its first training course addressing the needs of parliamentarians (Lee, 1995: 117).

²³ The emergence of PA activities addressing the needs of parliamentary staff was unquestionably influenced by the strong influence of the US Congressional Research Service in legislative affairs in the USA. However, during our research we found out that the ‘American Society of Legislative Clerks & Secretaries’ was founded in 1943, see - <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legman/aslcs/cshome.htm>. We would speculate that this initiative had also a significant influence in promoting a better understanding of the role and importance of parliamentary staff in the appropriate and efficient running of legislatures. Thus, the need to incorporate these issues in PA programmes. ‘Library and Research Services for Parliaments’ is a section of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. They also do provide assistance to its members, see - <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s3/content-e.htm>

²⁴ Today, the Association of Secretaries General of Francophone Parliaments (<http://www.asgpf-francophonie.org>) and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament (<http://www.asgp.info>) do include as part of their routine of activities the implementation of PA initiatives.

programme and project approach were consequently introduced for the delivery of PA.

PA in the context of international relations moves from the very specific European (IPU) and Imperial-Commonwealth (EPA-CPA) experiences into a process that involves political interaction between parliaments and nations representing different continents and even different parliamentary systems.

3. Cold War politics and PA. 1970 – 1989

The next stage in the development of PA, as per our analysis, can be characterized fundamentally as a period where PA efforts were significantly enhanced and driven as part of the political instruments seeking to promote capitalism or socialism in developing countries during the Cold War²⁵.

The literature reports that in general terms PA during the period of the cold war was very much about contacts, exchanges, training courses, study visits and research (Lee, 1995; USAID, 1997: 3). These activities in our view were in several cases organised under the framework of technical assistance projects but very often as stand-alone activities promoted and conducted as political opportunities allowed them to be implemented.

²⁵ In this paper we have not analysed the provision of political support to parliaments, parliamentarians or political parties in countries of Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America that were aligned under the Soviet bloc since the end of the II World War till the fall of the Berlin Wall. This could also represent another area of interest for further research.

One of the key considerations that conditioned the way PA was delivered during this period, as part of the efforts to bring political aid to developing countries, was the fact that ‘legislative strengthening involves political risks for donors²⁶, whose activities may be regarded by some as meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation’ (McCannel: 1995, 5).

Through the analysis of the literature one can identify some alternatives²⁷ introduced, since then, to minimize the political risks of criticism to the direct involvement of governments in PA. This included:

- the use of contractors and grantees as intermediary in the provision of PA, including non-governmental organizations, universities, research centres²⁸;
- the use of Foundations independent from the donor government, although linked to partisan politics, as a grantee and direct deliver of PA. In this field the classical reference is made to the experience of the German political Foundations²⁹.
- the use of direct aid to MPs through political parties

²⁶ “Because of the political sensitivity of the issues dealt with in legislative strengthening projects, USAID should continue to work through a grantee or contractor” (Creative Associates International (1993) USAID PD-ABF-904, pp. 81).

²⁷ “Legislative assistance has higher chances of success when financial support is not solely dependent on one donor government. When several governments participate in the financial support or when foundations, international organizations, and the private sector participate in funding, the assistance is viewed as neutral and objective, while when it is solely supported by one government, partisan political aims could be seen as the *raison d’être* of the assistance”. (Creative Associates International (1987) USAID PN-AAZ-442, pp. 116-117).

²⁸ During the 1970s and 1980s the USA also promoted the exchange of study tours and the exchange of experiences with legislatures of other countries by funding for this purpose several US universities, which also developed a significant amount of comparative research in the field. This was done through a limited but increasing number of PA programmes (USAID, 1995: 3).

²⁹ Since the end of the 1950s the work of German political foundations in countries of Southern Europe and Latin America has been recognised as very influential in the development of political parties of these countries (Lee, 1995; Pinto-Duschinsky, 1997). Among others, this work included assistance to MPs through political parties (Pinto-Duschinsky, 1997). Although some PA activities are still funded by German Foundations, their influence in the area has significantly diminished today compared with their initial period of operations. This was political aid with political party bias. German Foundations continue to promote democracy around the world till today. See Friedrich Ebert Foundation [<http://www.fes.de/>]; Konrad Adenauer Foundation [<http://www.kas.de/>].

These new ways of operation in the area of PA were and continue to be till today effective instruments of informal diplomacy to establish and develop contacts with political elites of selected countries. These were also important mechanisms to support political developments in several newly independent countries of Asia and Africa during the 1970s and 1980s.

Political aid was also provided during the cold war by the two main British political parties³⁰, to emerging political parties in the newly established independent states of the Commonwealth and Westminster enhanced its own services to provide systematic training and advice to representatives from other legislatures visiting the UK, up to the creation of the Parliaments' Overseas Office in 1968 (Lee, 1995: 117).

However, the most significant example in the use of political foundations as providers of PA is the case of the USA. In the 1980s the US Congress passed an act establishing the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)³¹ and two core

³⁰ The Conservative and Labour Parties

³¹ This was a direct consequence of the announcements made public by the US President Ronald Reagan in his address before the British parliament in June 8th, 1982. The address was presented under the title "Promoting Peace and Democracy". With this address Reagan publicly announce for the first time ever the USA determination to promote democracy around the world. He said then "if the rest of the century is to witness the gradual growth of freedom and democratic ideals, we must take actions to assist the campaign for democracy". He continued saying that he and the leaders of the two US parties were going to "determine how the United States can best contribute – as a nation – to the global campaign for democracy now gathering force....I look forward to receiving their recommendations and to working with these institutions and the Congress in the common task of strengthening democracy throughout the world". Ronald Reagan (1982) Promoting democracy. Address before the British Parliament, London, June 8. [Available at http://www.ccd21.org/articles/reagan_westminster.htm; consulted in April 2005]. This doctrine has significantly influenced US foreign relations and has been strengthened further through the presidencies of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush (see also- George Bush (2003) Remarks at the

grantees that have since then had developed an extensive activity in the promotion of democracy in general, but particularly in the area of PA up to the date. These are the National Democratic Institute³² (NDI) and the International Republican Institute³³ (IRI). In this period the USA emerged in the system of international relations as the largest and more influential provider of parliamentary assistance in the world. This position has been consistently kept up to the date³⁴.

4. PA and the wave of democratization around the world. 1989 – till today

The end of the 1980s and the 1990s witnessed significant political changes in all continents. This was the start of PA as a systematic and serious field for the promotion of democracy³⁵ around the world by the international donor community.

20th anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy. November 6 [Available at http://www.ccd21.org/news/bush_freedom.htm. Consulted on April 2005]

³² See <http://www.ndi.org>

³³ See <http://www.iri.org>

³⁴ No information was found exploring the size and influence of PA provided by different countries in comparative terms in any period of time. However, the fact that USA bilateral PA programmes have been implemented without interruption since post World War II in Western Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and former countries of the Soviet Union, allows us to express with conviction this perception. No other country in the world has undertaken such a systematic and sustained effort in terms of PA since the 1970s-1980s. The amount of financial resources devoted to and the number of PA projects that have been and still are under implementation in this field have to be significantly much bigger than any other closer example of bilateral or multilateral efforts in the same field.

³⁵ This trend developed unquestionably within the international community of donor countries since the mid 1990s. See the '*Compilation of documents or texts adopted and used by various intergovernmental, international, regional and subregional organizations aimed at promoting and consolidating democracy*' from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1999 was a fundamental catalytic of the democratization process that has taken place in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Many new states have been founded since then. Former rubber-stamp and many newly created legislatures were subject to a very fast process of reform or institutional development. Thus, the demand and political opportunity for the provision of PA increased significantly and perhaps also unexpectedly. As a consequence, several 'multilateral organizations, bilateral donors and NGOs has responded to the increasing demand for technical assistance in this area by making legislative assistance a core component of...governance interventions'. (UNDP, 2001: 3). Key characteristics of this period will be presented below as a result of the analysis of the literature.

Involvement of bilateral³⁶ and multilateral development agencies in the direct provision of assistance to parliaments all around the world is today and since the 1990s, a fact³⁷. This has been prompted by:

- the massive request for support from new democracies;

Rights- http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/compilation_democracy/index.htm. In there most documents are dated during the end of 1990s-beginning of 2000s. PA work has been carried out since the 1990s within the framework of programmes promoting "good government" first, "good governance" later on and finally "democratic governance", but all in all this has been done within the general framework of promoting democracy around the globe.

³⁶ Bilateral initiatives. Significant presence in the PA field has been developed since the early 1990s by the Canadian government, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Canadian Parliamentary Centre. Other relevant bilateral donor agencies that also joint activities in this area during the 1990s are the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Australian International Development Agency (AUSaid), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the UK Department for International Development (DfID). We will not analyse these institutions in this paper.

³⁷ Today PA is provided in general with acceptance from national authorities and in most cases in direct response to their own request for support.

- the willingness of the donor community to assist in the development of democratic political institutions, such as parliaments; as well as by,
- the effects of the end of the ideological war that characterized international relations during the Cold War.

But at the time most development agencies had limited experience in the area of PA, and in the way it was demanded³⁸. On this subject UNDP underlined that 'legislative assistance is a relatively new area for organizations providing democratization and governance assistance' (UNDP, 2001: 7).

The great demand for assistance and the rapid pace of political change experienced in many countries created new conditions that allowed for the first time ever the development of PA activities 'within parliamentary walls'³⁹ of recipient countries. This implied first of all, the implementation within parliamentary premises of direct institutional development activities, the provision and installation of equipment and communication technologies and even carrying out infrastructure works financially supported by international development agencies⁴⁰.

³⁸ Commenting this situation with regards to PA in 1997 a USAID paper (Lippman *et. al.*, 1997: 1) pointed out "experience is therefore limited and there is little conventional wisdom on when and how to provide assistance...legislative assistance...is one of the more controversial and challenging of contemporary donor programs".

³⁹ The level of tolerance to international assistance has changed so much during this period that it is usual to see international consultants and advisers located in offices within parliamentary premises, allowing them to interact on a daily basis with MPs and parliamentary staff.

⁴⁰ This period implied concentrated efforts to introduce in recipient parliaments IT technologies, basic office equipment, the development of parliamentary libraries, the improvement of research facilities for MPs and the training of parliamentary staff involved in research and analysis as well as in the running of parliamentary procedures, but fundamentally the promotion of parliamentary

The massive scope of work conducted on PA during this period and the advancement of information, educational and communication technologies have allowed the introduction and extensive exploitation of new instruments for the delivery of PA- publications and periodicals, the preparation and dissemination of handbooks and guidelines (with corresponding adaptation to national conditions when appropriate). During this period, more (although not many) PA projects and programmes are evaluated allowing to systematize experiences and to learn lessons from it. Their findings are published and disseminated allowing the improvement of knowledge and skills among those involved in the area.

An important focus of PA during the early 1990s was on the need to balance powers between legislatures⁴¹ and the executive- thus the focus on the concept strengthening legislatures. With experience and early stages over, since the end of the 1990s more efforts have been put into the need to emphasise relations and links between the legislature and the civil society and between the legislature and citizens or voters⁴².

democracy (Lee, 1995: 125-126; USAID, 2000: 3). But that happened while at the same time conferences, seminars, training and exchange visits were still predominant mechanisms to provide assistance to parliaments during this period (Blackman,1995; Lee, 1995).

⁴¹ The USAID characterizes this period as one where PA focuses mainly in “redressing the balance of power favoring the historically strong executives” (USAID, 2001: 3) and this implied basically strengthening technical capacities of legislatures to perform lawmaking and policy making functions. In this period the PA programmes usually were as a trend part of a significant change in the political environment (USAID, 1997: 7).

⁴² See USAID (2000: 3)

There is a predominant perception⁴³ in the field of PA that the biggest and more influential provider during this period has been again the USA bilaterally funded programmes⁴⁴ through the USAID, NDI and IRI. Another important provider of bilateral PA has been the British government⁴⁵. Mainly but not only⁴⁶ through the Westminster Foundation for Democracy⁴⁷ and the Department for International Development⁴⁸.

An important feature of this period was also the concentration of funds and activities addressing the needs on PA from countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Resources have flown to these countries mainly from bilateral US and European assistance, and, multilaterally from the European Union.

⁴³ Unfortunately there are no available comparative studies in terms of the amount of financial resources and the number of countries in which different bilateral or multilateral development programmes have implemented PA during the 1990s.

⁴⁴ USAID PA initiatives during this period were developed as “legislative strengthening programmes” and have had a significant influence in the development of political processes in Eastern Europe till today. This trend could be explained basically by the understanding that “Effective legislatures support additional good governance objectives and US foreign policy goals” (USAID, 2000: 4)

⁴⁵ Britain went beyond its natural influence within the Commonwealth to start providing PA to other countries with different parliamentary traditions. Its main regional focus of assistance has also been Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union countries.

⁴⁶ The British Council through its ‘Good Governance’ programme during the 1990s also joint the UK group of non-governmental organizations that deliver PA services, but it also promoted English language teaching in EE and FSU and many MPs and political figures from the region were benefited with this initiative.

⁴⁷ In 1992 the UK followed the US model of creation of a bipartisan political foundation to channel public funds assigned for that purpose by the Parliament for the promotion of democracy in developing and transitional countries. This was the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). PA is one among many other areas of activity of the WFD and it inherited the little experience accumulated in the area since 1989 by the British Know-How Fund (Administered by the UK Foreign Office).

⁴⁸ The UK Department for International Development (DfID) created during the first government of the Labour Government in 1997 also joint work in the area of PA. It has been influential in the areas of parliamentary budget oversight and in engaging parliaments in poverty alleviation strategies. See for reference DfID (2004) *Helping Parliaments and Legislative Assemblies to work for the Poor: A Guide to the Reform of key Functions and Responsibilities* (Policy Division, DfID: London).

The provision of multilateral PA has been led worldwide since early 1990s by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). That means - UNDP's support to legislatures is relatively new and definitively its experience in the area is limited⁴⁹ compared to the experience accumulated by US bilateral agencies. Same situation applies in general to the many UN agencies⁵⁰, regional multilateral organizations⁵¹ and multilateral development Banks⁵² that have initiated work with parliaments at the end of the 1990s – early 2000s. In this sense, UNDP⁵³ has been able to take the lead in the provision of assistance in this controversial governance area given its condition as a “neutral” partner of national governments and in this case also of parliaments.

At the beginning of the 2000s⁵⁴ with a clear consensus about the need to promote democracy on the one hand and with the need to challenge key global

⁴⁹ UNDP (2001: 4)

⁵⁰ Such as - UNESCO, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, or UNAIDS – Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. See corresponding websites for further information on work with parliamentarians.

⁵¹ Such as – the Organization of American States through its ‘Strengthening Legislative Institutions’ Programme at the Unit for Promotion of Democracy – <http://www.upd.oas.org/lab/democratic/legislativeprocesses.htm>

⁵² The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) as a multilateral development regional bank, is implementing since end of the 1990s PA projects in several countries of Latin America: (i) ARGENTINA: Institutional Strengthening of the Argentine Senate(1603/OC-AR); (ii) COLOMBIA: Modernization of the Congress of Colombia (1179/OC-CO); (iii) DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: Modernization of the National Congress(1258/OC-DR); (iv) HONDURAS: Modernization of the Honduran Congress(1070/SF-HO); (v) PERU: Institutional Strengthening Program for the Peruvian Congress (1458/OC-PE); (vi) Institutional Development for the Legislative Branch of Government (ATN/FJ-4346-PE). See - <http://www.iadb.org/exr/doc98/apr/applan.htm>. Among IADB proposed PA projects - COSTA RICA (CR-0154): Modernización de la Asamblea Legislativa. See <http://www.iadb.org/exr/doc98/pro/prpla.htm>

⁵³ From six projects supporting parliamentary development in 1994-1995, UNDP in 1999 was supporting parliaments in a total of 41 countries around the world, eleven of which were new (UNDP, 2001: 7).

⁵⁴ See extract from the IPU website section IPU Cooperation with the United Nations published first quarter 2005 – “Over the last decade, the IPU has been working closely with the United Nations to enhance the parliamentary dimension of international cooperation. A key event in this

problems as the increase of poverty around the world on the other, most multilateral organizations initiated activities with parliamentarians with the intention to engage them in their own business and to facilitate the advocacy and promotion of policy issues within national parliaments⁵⁵.

IV. PA and its programming categories

In this section we will present the results of our analysis on components and process of PA, which is also based on the same literature. We have focused the analysis at this point on the issue of programming categories.

From the analysis presented above one fact that has been seen is that systematic PA has been provided since the 1970s by USAID and since the early 1990s by UNDP. Both organizations have on their own, the longest standing experience as a bilateral and as a multilateral development agencies in this field. Both have had the widest possible scope of operations with parliaments in

new partnership took place in August 2000, when the IPU organized the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, just a few days prior to the Millennium Summit of Heads of State and Government. The Conference, organised with the full support of the United Nations, concluded with a Declaration entitled The Parliamentary Vision For International Cooperation at the Dawn of the Third Millennium. With this Declaration, the Presiding Officers of the world's parliaments committed themselves and their institutions to join forces with the United Nations to help address the tremendous challenges facing the world community: the achievement of international peace and security, democracy, respect for human rights, sustainable development and social progress".

<http://www.ipu.org/un-e/un-overview.htm>. Consulted on April 2005

⁵⁵ "*Partnership with Parliamentarians*" section in UNESCO website – <http://www.unesco.org>; the webpage "*Parliaments in Action*" at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification – <http://www.unccd.int/parliament/menu.php>; see also UNAIDS and UNICEF on HIV/AIDS - <http://www.unaids.org/en/default.asp> and http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_19021.html, respectively

developing and transitional countries, including in many cases the newly emerged democracies during the 1990s-2000s.

Based on this experience, they have been able to produce some few evaluation reports, handbooks and guidelines about how to best plan and implement PA from an overall perspective. No other international development agency has done so yet⁵⁶.

An exploratory review of UNDP and USAID views and approaches on planning or programming⁵⁷ of their PA interventions will allow having an overall idea about how PA is delivered today and what are typically its key areas of intervention.

The review of the literature reveals that there are differences between UNDP, USAID and certainly other agencies delivering PA in terms of organization's mandate and policy frames, key areas of interest and emphasis in operational terms⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ Exception is the National Democratic Institute, who has published online a significant amount of manuals, handbooks and reports from its own PA projects in several regions. However, this documentation focuses on very specific issues or categories of PA, rather than on the overall process of PA, as in the case of UNDP or USAID. See – <http://www.ndi.org>

⁵⁷ PA is implemented today through the concept of development 'projects' or 'programmes' according to a series of established practices within the international development agencies. In opposition to this there may be also one-off PA activities that are usually called 'stand-alone'. Projects tend to be complex and to include several activities under a commonly agreed strategy between donor and recipients countries or agencies. We will not review in this paper the project approach in the development business. Instead we will focus on the content and categories that allow giving substance to PA projects or stand-alone activities.

⁵⁸ In addition, evaluations, reports and experience over the years are also an important source of lessons and this in turn is eventually reflected in programming- planning and implementation practices.

These differences undoubtedly should shape the ways in which these agencies structure and characterize the categories of PA through which they do operate. It is through these categories that change and improvement is expected to happen in the recipient parliament. This is why it is important to analyse categories and approaches of PA.

Table 1. Programming Categories in Parliamentary Assistance

Comparative evolution of UNDP and USAID approaches and categories in the period 1997 – 2003*

USAID 1997	UNDP 2000	UNDP 2001	USAID 2000	UNDP 2003
<i>Approach – predominant term used</i>				
Assisting Legislatures	Assisting Legislatures	Legislative Assistance	Legislative Strengthening	Parliamentary development
<i>Programming Categories</i>				
-----	-----	-----	Political will and domestic support	-----
Legislative Staff Support	Legislator and Staff Training	Capacity Building for Legislators and Legislative Staff	-----	Capacity-building for members and staff
Comprehensive Institutional Development	Institutional/ Technical Development	Institutional Development	-----	Institutional development
Physical and Administrative Infrastructure Development			Maintenance/ Infrastructure	-----
External Forces Programming	External Forces Programming	Working with Civil Society	Representation	Working with civil society and the media
-----	-----	Constituency Relations		Civic education
-----	Work on Legislation	Legislative Policy	Lawmaking	Policy development
-----	-----	Development Constitutional Reform	-----	Constitutional reform and support for institutional frameworks
-----	-----	Gender Initiatives	-----	Gender initiatives
-----	-----	Political Party Training	-----	Strengthening of political parties
-----	-----	-----	Oversight	-----

Constructed from: Lipmann *et. al.* (1997: 6); UNDP (2003: 6); UNDP (2001: 6); UNDP (2000: 11-12); USAID (2000: 55);

* For details and illustrations of concrete PA activities that may be implemented under these categories see also in the annexes, tables 3. for USAID 1997, table 4. for UNDP 2000; table 5. for UNDP 2001; table 6. for USAID 2000; and table 7. for UNDP 2003.

The table 1. presented above has been constructed to provide a one snapshot view of what are the key areas where PA programmes have focused their action during the last decade, at least. Table 1. was created based on detailed information presented in tables 3. to 7. in the annexes.

We also identified that PA categories could be organised in two groups- basic PA categories and complementary PA categories. As basic PA categories we could highlight the following five (USAID, 1997: 5).

- Building support for democratic reforms within a legislature
- Increasing representation of citizens
- Improving technical capacity in lawmaking
- Enhancing oversight of the executive branch
- Ensuring sound management and adequate infrastructure

In addition to that, following today's trends, development agencies also include in their menu of options what we could called complementary categories of PA, that may not be seen as directly related to the key functions of parliaments, although, they have a fundamental influence in the promotion of democratic practices, the advancement of development policies and the increase of MPs' awareness on key policy issues, such as:

- Engaging media and civil society in parliamentary affairs (see table 7)
- Promotion of political participation of women and (see table 7)

- Gender mainstreaming in legislative affairs (see table 7)
- Strengthening of political parties (see table 7)
- Engaging MPs and parliaments in poverty alleviation strategies and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals⁵⁹
- Improving MPs awareness of parliaments' role in tackling key issues of the international development agenda, such as human rights, globalization and WTO, HIV/AIDS, international security, human trafficking, anti-corruption and transparency, prevention of natural disasters⁶⁰.

The implementation of PA projects or activities focusing on any of the previously mentioned categories or topics usually does take place through study visits, conferences, seminars, and training courses.

However, since the 1990s the nature and size of PA projects has increased in terms of complexity, size and amount of financial resources available. This has facilitated the used of specialized short-term and long-term consultants as a direct input to activities taken place even “within parliamentary walls” in many

⁵⁹ See - DfID (2004) *Helping Parliaments and Legislative Assemblies to work for the Poor: A Guide to the Reform of key Functions and Responsibilities* (Policy Division, DfID: London); UNDP - NDI (4004) *Strengthening Parliamentary Involvement in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process and the Millennium Development Goals: Legislative Public Outreach on Poverty Issues*, Parliaments and Poverty Series Toolkit No. 3 (UNDP: New York); Canadian Parliamentary Centre (2002) *A Work Guide on Poverty reduction & Parliament for Ghana Committees*. Commentary & Conclusions from the Workshop Retreats of the Finance & Public Accounts Committees, July 2001, Akosombo – and from the Video-Conference Sessions with Committees, November-December 2001, Accra. The Ghana-Canada Parliamentary Support Project, February.

⁶⁰ Canadian Parliamentary Centre and the World Bank Institute (1999) *Controlling Corruption: A Parliamentarians Handbook* (Canadian Parliamentary Centre: Ottawa, Canada); IPU, UNDP, WBI and UNIFEM (2004) *Parliament, the Budget and Gender Handbook*. Handbook for Parliamentarians N° 6. (IPU: France). See also the CPA webpage on 'Topics/Issues' <http://www.cpahq.org/topics/default.aspx> to see their work on international trade, human rights and gender issues. The 'European Parliamentarians for Africa - AWEPA' has developed very interesting work on the role of parliaments on HIV/AIDS prevention in Africa, see <http://www.awepa.org/>; the also the 'Second International Conference on Legislative Strengthening in Response to Globalization & International Security Issues'. December 2-3, 2004. Manila- Philippines, at <http://www.cld.org/2ndconference/index.htm>

cases. Long-term international and national specialists are attached to the projects and are the pillar of their implementation. In addition, several new mechanisms have been introduced to implement activities in any of the above mentioned categories, including communication strategies, promotion of information technologies, implementation of research studies, dissemination of publications and online publishing of information relevant for PA and parliaments.

V. Conclusions

In this paper we have reported results of our exploratory research on parliamentary assistance (PA). Through a brief review we have presented findings reflecting different perspectives, approaches and institutional views on the subject. All of them together do allow us to understand better the little studied phenomenon of assistance to parliaments that has been so important in the shaping of legislatures in developing and transitional countries, at least, since the 1970s.

We have pointed out that there is no clear definition on PA and that many different terms are used synonymously and have also reflected on the consequences of such a situation. The literature analysed provided us the possibility to initiate the construction of what could be called the different 'stages' in the process of development of PA practices, the identification of its driving forces and tools.

This historical account is far from being comprehensive and further research and analysis is required to achieve a good understanding of all details associated to the development of PA since the end of XIX century up to the date. This review of stages of PA is important as it facilitates the understanding and comprehension of this very diverse and at times vague, by its typically political character, process.

Finally, we have also contributed with the exploration of the issues - what is PA? And, how is it delivered? , through the analysis of categories that are used today in PA and their evolution in recent years. This was done having as a reference the documentation and experience of the bilateral and multilateral international agencies with more experience in the field – USAID and UNDP, respectively.

Many other aspects of the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of PA remain open to analysis. Its specific process of delivery and implementation, lessons learned from years of experience in the area, trends in terms of demand from national parliaments, specifics of training addressing the needs of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, are important among many others. Throughout the paper, suggestions for further research were presented.

From the perspective of legislative studies, we can conclude that PA is an area not yet fully acknowledged and marginally analysed within the academic literature. This can be explained perhaps due to its recent emergence, since the

end of the 1990s, as a widely accepted political phenomenon in the system of international relations and specifically in the system of development cooperation. However, we believe that this situation is also a consequence that, all in all, very little attention is paid in the legislative studies literature to parliamentary processes in developing and transitional countries.

PA has a significant influence in the way parliaments in developing and transitional countries are being established and developed and this per se is an important reason to conduct further research in this area.

The way parliaments do impact the society in developing and transitional countries to certain extent is being influenced by PA practices in most countries of the world, during the last decade at least. It is valuable to explore why and how this is done, but also it is relevant to assess the impact and value of such initiatives. This in turn I believe could enrich the field of legislative studies in itself.

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VIII. ANNEXES

Table 2. Parliamentary Assistance
Related terms used synonymously and interchangeably

Concept	Source	Suggested definition or notion
Aid to Parliaments	Lee, 1995: 115	<i>'Political aid' and 'political development assistance' are loose terms in foreign policy covering the actions of donors who supply money, materials, personnel or advice to recipients who are deemed to be shaping the regime of another country....Aid to overseas parliaments is a special category.</i>
Legislative assistance	Lipmann <i>et. al.</i> , 1997: 3	Refers to all types of activities that <i>help legislatures become more efficient, effective and democratic</i> . It encompasses long- and short-term activities. And it can be part of a specific legislative development project or a broader democracy and governance initiative. Implies a donor role, both in terms of activities inside and outside the legislature.
	UNDP, 2001: 3	Refers to <i>activities that help legislatures become more representative, transparent, efficient and accountable in performing their three basic functions: representation, oversight and lawmaking.</i>
	UNDP, 2000: 1	Refers to activities that <i>help legislatures, both in presidential and parliamentary systems, to become more efficient, effective and democratic</i> . The activities focus on the three basic functions of a legislature: (a) representation of the people; (b) oversight of the public sector; and (c) lawmaking.
Legislative development	Baaklini <i>et. al.</i> , 1994: 355	the ability of the legislative institution, acting through its leadership, to <i>study, assess, and identify its needs for resources and information, to formulate plans and programs to acquire those needed resources, and to continuously assess those needs and develop its resources</i> for the purpose of reaching political agreements with the executive"
	USAID, 1997: 3	conveys a sense of <i>comprehensive institutional development that does not necessarily imply a donor role</i>
Legislative strengthening	McCannel, 1995: 1	Refers to activities that <i>contribute to the institutional development and technical capacity of legislatures</i>
	USAID, 1997: 3	implies a <i>need to strengthen the legislature in relation to the executive branch</i>
Parliamentary development	UNDP, 2003: 5	Comprises activities that <i>aim to strengthen the role of the parliament in governance</i> . The primary goal of this assistance is to enhance the representative, legislative or oversight capacity of the parliament. Activities undertaken to reach this goal can be of long or short duration and can have various entry points.
Parliamentary institution building	Johnson, 1995: 108	A unique feature of the IPU's programme for promoting parliament is its advisory services and technical assistance component. The programmes <i>seeks to mobilise international support for improving the capabilities, infrastructure and technical facilities of national parliaments to help them meet the requirements of their members more effectively.</i>

Table 3. **USAID Legislative Assistance Categories. 1997**

Category	Description
Legislative Staff Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside the legislature, primarily with career professional staff. • Develops skills and abilities staff need for legislative functions, such as policy analysis, budget review, bill drafting, and research.
Comprehensive Institutional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside the legislature, with staff and legislators of all parties and factions. • Considers the institution as a whole, including roles of legislators and staff, links with the public and other government branches. • Aims to improve effectiveness of key legislative functions, such as oversight, budget, lawmaking, and representation. • Examines how the legislature models democratic principles, through internal operating rules, committee composition, or procedures for disseminating information.
Physical and Administrative Infrastructure Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside the legislature, to develop physical or administrative infrastructure for efficient, effective operations. • Improves production, tracking, and filing of legislative documents, and publication of proceedings. • Improves buildings and facilities, such as legislative chambers, committee rooms, and member offices. • Provides office and other equipment, including telephones, copiers, computers, sound and vote-tabulation systems.
External Forces Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside the legislature, including civil society and the media. • Develops independent centers to provide research, analysis, and training support for members and staff. • Works with organizations that monitor legislative developments, promote public awareness of and input into legislative activities, or advocate for legislation. • Promotes transparency in the legislative process and legislators' actions through media coverage and polls.

Source: Hal Lippman and Jan Emmert (1997) *Assisting Legislatures in Developing Countries: A Framework for Program Planning and Implementation*. Program and Operations Assessment Report No. 20. PN-ACA-902 (USAID: Washington, D.C. USA) pp. 6

Table 4. UNDP Specific Types of Legislative Assistance. 2000

Institutional/ Technical Development

- Improving quality of drafting of economic laws, decrees and regulations;
- Technical assistance in budgetary analysis and review;
- Assistance to political parties;
- Establishing or strengthening a committee system;
- Provision of equipment, computers, physical infrastructure¹;
- Development of library collections, electronic classification systems;
- Establishment of research and analysis institutes;
- Internships for university graduates;
- Gender initiatives (such as the establishment of an interparliamentary women's organization or women's caucus);
- Materials and operational support for programmes to improve citizen understanding of the role and function of the legislature in a democratic society;
- Preparation of member directories;
- Review of internal operating rules, committee composition, procedures for disseminating information, codes of conduct.

Legislator and Staff Training

- Observation tours to expose members and support staff to other legislative systems and operations;
- Workshops and seminars to increase staff and member knowledge about their jobs, the legislative process, and the legislature's relationship with the executive and judicial branches;
- Orientation for new parliamentary members;
- Training in policy analysis to support staff and Secretariat;
- Training and skills-building in policy analysis, budget review, drafting of bills and research;
- Publication for members of parliament, the press and the public on developments in legislatures, parliamentary/congressional issues and information on legislatures in other countries;
- Development of ethics rules for legislators and officials of the executive branch.

External Forces Programming

- Support to groups outside the legislature (i.e., civil society and the media) who interact with and impact the legislature and the legislative process;
- Establishment of links between women legislators and civil society organizations (CSOs) to promote a particular agenda in the legislature;
- Development of independent centres to provide research, analysis and training for legislators and staff;
- Building the capacity of local or regional organizations that promote public awareness of or advocate for legislation or monitor legislative developments;
- Training in media coverage of the legislature and how to conduct public opinion research.

Work on Legislation

- Development of draft legislation on governance issues such as ethics, elections and the constitution, NGOs, political parties, media, and inter-governmental relations.

Source: UNDP (2000) *Assisting Legislatures. Essentials*. Synthesis of Lessons Learned, no. 4 (Evaluation Office, UNDP: New York, USA) pp. 11-12

Table 5. UNDP Categories of Legislative Assistance Activities. 2001

Categories of Legislative Assistance Activities	What Does it Mean?
Capacity Building for Legislators and Legislative Staff	Training of members and/or staff on issues related to their functions, roles and responsibilities as well as professional skill development.
Institutional Development	The process of strengthening the internal organization of a legislature through modernization of entities, systems and processes.
Constituency Relations	Increasing/improving legislatures' interactions with their constituents and public in general, as well as raising the profile of the legislature.
Legislative Policy Development	Assistance that touches on the actual substance of legislation or country policy.
Constitutional Reform	Technical assistance (to legislatures, constitutional committees or commissions) on drafting, amending, or creating laws and documents that make up and affect a country's constitution.
Gender Initiatives	Activities whose key aim is to affect the gender balance in political leadership and/or highlight or impact the legislature's role in reviewing and passing gender-sensitive legislation.
Working with Civil Society	Activities that focus on actors outside of the legislature (i.e. civil society organizations and the media) who directly interact with and impact the legislature and the legislative process.
Political Party Training	Activities conducted directly with party members and leaders that focus on strengthening parties' internal structures and processes, which may in turn affect their transparency and efficiency in the legislature.

Source: UNDP (2001) *Legislative Assistance Retrospective* (Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP: New York, USA) pp. 6

Table 6. **Legislative Strengthening activities USAID. 2000**

Political will and domestic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish/strengthen a legislative modernization group Expose leaders to successful groups in other nations Organize a legislative leader study tour Hold workshops/conferences on comparative legislative strengthening Convene decision workshops Assist in drafting of legislative development plans Administer legislative questionnaires
Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage public interest fora Train citizen organizations and advisory groups Prepare citizen groups to testify at public hearings Help candidate information programs Finance public opinion polling Train journalists Provide rules reform assistance Provide exposure to other electoral systems (electoral reform) Assist with public hearings Assist legislatures to provide adequate notice of meetings Develop bill-status systems Improve the quality, distribution, and timeliness of legislative records Conduct media and constituent relations programs Help develop facilities for meetings with constituents Develop legislative web sites Produce publications on the legislature Develop visitor information centers
Lawmaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design orientation programs for legislators Strengthen committees and political party caucuses Develop committee staff and infrastructure Consolidate laws Train committee and research staff Develop expert databases Establish/strengthen legislative libraries Develop research centers Develop bill-drafting services
Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the legislatures role in budget making Provide exposure to other systems of formal oversight authority Provide exposure to legislative systems with longer committee terms Provide technical assistance on strategies to enhance legislative oversight Increase legislative budget authority Amend budget adoption provisions Improve legislative access to budget information Simplify budget formats Introduce budget hearings Provide expert input Train professional budget staff Provide legislative budget software
Maintenance/Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance record-keeping systems Standardize administrative procedures Draft manuals of administrative procedures Assist in reforming rules of procedure Improve physical facilities and equipment

Source: USAID (2000) *USAID Handbook on Legislative Strengthening*. Technical Publication Series (USAID Center for Democracy and Governance: Washington D.C. USA) pp. 55

Table 7. Principal entry points for UNDP parliamentary development programmes. 2003

Type	Description
Constitutional reform and support for institutional frameworks	Technical assistance to representative institutions in drafting, amending or creating laws that establish and affect a country's constitution and the powers of the parliament. This includes support in drafting organic laws or revising rules of procedure.
Capacity-building for members and staff	Training of members and/or staff in issues relating to their functions, roles and responsibilities as well as development of professional skills.
Institutional development	Strengthening the internal organization of a parliament through modernization of entities, systems and processes. This may involve developing law-making processes, improving parliamentary libraries or professionalizing the legislative civil service. These types of programmes may include an investment in infrastructure, including information and communication technologies (ICT). These changes allow Congress to track draft laws better; they have also improved its research capacity.
Gender initiatives	Activities whose main goal is to affect the gender balance in political leadership and/or impact the role of parliament in developing, reviewing and/or passing gender-sensitive legislation. This may include training for women members of parliament in lobbying, public speaking and networking.
Working with civil society and the media	Activities that focus on actors outside of the parliament (i.e., civil-society organizations and the media) who may directly interact with and impact the parliament and the parliamentary process. A parliament's capacity for fulfilling its representative role is ultimately dependent upon the ability of those being represented to be able to advocate their views and needs effectively. UNDP is enhancing its work with actors outside the parliamentary institutions and facilitating interaction between these institutions and civil society.
Strengthening of political parties	Activities conducted directly with party members and leaders that focus on strengthening parties' internal structures and processes, integrating multi-territorial views, enhancing the role of backbenchers, etc., to improve their transparency and efficiency in the parliament. One beneficial aspect of working with legislative caucuses is the promotion of cross-party women's caucuses in the parliament, where opportunities for consensus on gender and other issues can be promoted.
Policy development	Assistance to parliaments in shaping priorities and legislation. This is important in ensuring that the quality of democracy results in human development outcomes.
Civic education	Activities whose key aim is to enhance public awareness of the role of the parliament and the rights and duties of citizens in a democracy. Includes but surpasses voter education, e.g., legislative outreach, the integration of civic education into the public school curriculum, and dissemination of information on how citizens can liaise with parliamentary representatives and/or report grievances.

Source: UNDP (2003) *Parliamentary Development: Practice Note* (UNDP: New York, USA) pp. 6

Methodological issues and sources of information

Introduction

This section is aimed at providing an account on the research methods and approaches used in the process of addressing the research question selected for the preparation of this report: *what is parliamentary assistance (PA) and how is it delivered today?*

Why a qualitative approach?

The design and implementation of this research exercise has been based on a qualitative approach. The reasons for taking this research decision are the following:

- I was aware of the fact that there is very little available academic literature in the area of parliamentary assistance⁶¹, as a result of quick reviews in library catalogues, academic databases and selected websites of agencies involved in parliamentary assistance. Identifying this apparent gap in the literature was per se the factor that encouraged me to think about undertaking a review of selected literature on PA to initiate the exploration of stated questions.
- Having a clear idea that I was going to get into an exploration of the topic 'PA', it was very clear that the nature of this exercise was going to inductive rather than deductive. I organised myself to search for patterns and regularities in the literature trying also to seek for pluralism and complexity in the analysis of the research questions. There was an assumption from the very beginning – there will be no need to use numerical indices⁶² and the process of research confirmed the assumption.
- During this exercise I interacted with "that being researched", and obviously my perceptions of "that being researched" have been shaped by my personal experiences in the area of PA since the year 2000. In the

⁶¹ Consequently I could not begin my research with clear hypotheses, because there were no other available works in this subject.

⁶² Consequently I assumed that no standardised instrumentation was going to be used for collection of data. I, as a researcher was going to be 'the primary instrument for data collection and analysis', in opposition to inventories, questionnaires, or equipment as is the typical case in quantitative research.

quantitative research approach, the relation of the researcher to "that being studied", presumes detachment and objective portrayal.

- According to Yin⁶³ if research questions focus mainly on 'what' and 'how' questions, they lead to research approaches that are exploratory by nature and are likely to favour the use of case studies and histories.

As a consequence, the purpose of a my research was to explore a relatively little-understood phenomena, such as parliamentary assistance, to identify or discover important variables of this phenomena and to identify considerations for further research.

Methodology

1. Searching the literature

The basic methodology for this exercise was to carry out a literature review consisting of tracing references in different sources of information using the following keywords:

- Aid to Parliament
- Legislative assistance
- Legislative development
- Legislative modernization
- Legislative strengthening or strengthening legislatures
- Parliamentary capacity building
- Parliamentary development
- Parliamentary institution building
- Parliamentary strengthening

The literature was traced mainly in sources of information related to international development and parliamentary assistance. The electronic sources of information and data bases consulted are:

Periodicals and Journals

- BIDS. Bath Information and Data Services
- Journal of Legislative Studies

Websites of international agencies involved in parliamentary assistance

- Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association - CPA
- Canadian Parliamentary Centre - CPC
- International Republican Institute – IRI

⁶³ R Yin (2004) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 2nd ed. (Newbury Park, Sage Publications)

- Inter-Parliamentary Union
- National Democratic Institute
- Organization of American States
- United Nations Development Programme
- United States Agency for International Development -
- World Bank

2. Results of the Literature Search

The initial search of literature on parliamentary assistance provided few academic resources and several internal documents, evaluation reports, handbooks and guidelines from several international development agencies. We decided to set a series of criteria for the selection of relevant material. We were looking for literature that would help us to understand:

- “Concepts and notions” of PA as a general process.
- There was no interest to analyse and review details of the many specific processes or issue-topics within the cycle of PA projects or programmes.
- Characteristics of institutions delivering PA
- Evolution or historical perspectives of PA
- Methods and specifics of PA delivery
- There was no interest to analyze concrete projects, programmes or cases of PA.

The set of literature selected to initiate the exploration of the stated research questions was:

From the Journal of Legislative Studies

- Blackman (1995); Johnson (1995) and Lee (1995)

From UNDP

- UNDP (2003, 2001, 2000)

From USAID

- Lippman et. al., (1997), McCannell (1995), USAID (2000)

Complementing what has being said before in the first section of this Annex, while I was reviewing the selected literature on the question of parliamentary assistance, I identified the total predominance of the qualitative approach in this field. Although, it is important to recognise that in very few cases an explicit account and description of the methods applied is presented in the material reviewed.

3. The analysis

Following the criteria presented in point 2. above, we reviewed each of the documents and articles identified as relevant trying to search for common patterns, key concepts and ideas. The review of the literature, 'per se', also allowed us to increase our understanding of the topic.

Identifying PA concepts and definitions or terms used by different international agencies and authors was not difficult. Neither was the identification of the key categories that are currently used to deliver PA. To facilitate the analysis of the information gathered I decided to construct two tables (Table 1. and Table 2.). Table 1. represents a collection of terms used as synonymous to PA and corresponding definitions given by authors and international agencies. Table 2. was constructed with information from tables 3. to 7., produced by UNDP and USAID, as the two more representative cases of agencies conducting PA in multilateral and bilateral cooperation, respectively. Therefore I was assuming that systematizing their information about the categories and methods of delivery of PA could have been considered representative of much action taken place in the field. In addition it is important to mention that no other systematic approach on PA was found in any of the other international agencies working in this field. Thus, UNDP and USAID documentation if the only one available on this specific issue, from an overall perspective.

While analysing the information from tables 1. and 2. and through several sections of additional reading of the same articles and documents I realized the fact that terms/concepts and categories of PA have been changing over the years. I realized that these changes were shaping the way PA was understood and practiced by different agents. Then, I realized that to continue the exploration on this subject I had to review the selected literature from an historical perspective trying to identify the reasons for change, the driving forces of these different perspectives and the conditions under which PA used to operate in each different stage.

With this intention in mind, I started to build up a 'puzzle' with the scattered and limited historical information available. Very useful resources were in this case, the articles by Lee (1995) and Blackman (1995), the UNDP (2001) and the USAID (Lipmann *et.al.*, 1997) reports. Johnson's (1995) article was instrumental to confirm the importance to explore further the creation of IPU and its links with activities that today could be also called PA.

After identifying key historical references made in this literature, we also tried to identify (to the extent possible) what was the predominant perspective on PA and its methods at the time. In some cases that was possible from the available literature, in others not. Consequently we had incorporate the use of assumptions about those periods – at the same time identifying with this possible areas of interest for further research. An important set of ideas were also built-up by

associating general historical knowledge with the level of development of international cooperation methods and techniques during the XX century. To this we also incorporated our references and background on legislative affairs around the world. We ended up having a draft of an analysis reflecting a particular view on the process of PA over the years from the late XIX century till the beginning of XXI century. We were able to identify a series of stages of PA and made an attempt to characterize them.

At this stage, besides the progress made in systematizing information in tables and identifying key stages of development of PA, we also felt that a good line of argument was structured. However, it was clear that additional supporting material and more evidence was required to strengthen several of our findings, arguments and conclusions. This perception was also confirmed by a set of comments provided by Dr. Leston-Bandeira, who kindly reviewed a draft of the research report. As a consequence, we decided to restructure two sections. First, the one related to the development of PA and second the one related to categories and processes.

We decided that at this stage it was more relevant to put attention on the development of PA, and to leave the complex and to leave aside in this review the very detailed issue related to the specific analysis of process of PA. In this way, and bearing in mind the space limitations, we decided to focus our work on two additional issues – linking PA development to the analysis of tools and methods of delivery and searching additional literature and sources of information to support with appropriate evidence our argumentation. Regarding the first issue, there was not much additional information (different from the one already systematized and analysed by us) linking PA development with its tools and methods. However, significant progress was made in finding additional sources of information. This was done basically by using Internet resources.

With new information at hand from analysis conducted from sources such as the websites of the IPU, the CPA, the World Bank, the Canadian Parliamentary Centre, among others we were able to strengthen our arguments and to tune-up the wording of our findings and conclusions. Further review of the report was done several times going through the revised literature confirming our conclusions and suggestions.
