

PARLIAMENT WATCH

An Evaluation of the Parliament of
Maldives 2010

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Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this report. All information is believed to be correct as of March 2011. Nevertheless, Transparency Maldives cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of its use other than its intended purpose.

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1) Introduction

Parliament Watch: An Evaluation of the Parliament of Maldives report is produced by Transparency Maldives under the Parliament Watch project funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The time frame under evaluation is the year 2010.

This report contains two main sections. The first section of the report summarizes key events including attendance of MPs, details of legislation submitted, rejected and passed in the three sessions of Parliament. The voting record of all MPs for all votes taken in the Parliament in the year 2010 is also included in the evaluation report.

The second section of the report is a survey based on the Inter Parliamentary Union's (IPU) parliamentary assessment framework, developed in 2008. Institutions in many countries have utilized the IPU framework to evaluate the functions and processes of their respective parliaments. A total of 22 persons participated in the evaluation, including 15 Members of Parliament (MPs) and seven professionals in the media, civil society and legal sectors. Additional information contained in this report is derived from publications made public by the Parliament and information provided to Transparency Maldives upon request.

The aim of producing this report is to increase Parliamentary effectiveness, transparency and accountability and promote citizen participation in Parliamentary processes. This report will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Parliament and provide an insight into the general functioning of the Parliament, its committees, transparency and accessibility mechanisms. Transparency Maldives hopes that this report is a valuable advocacy tool for the Parliament Secretariat, political parties, individual MPs, media and civil society to address the identified weaknesses and improve upon the strengths.

Transparency Maldives acknowledges the support and cooperation of MPs, journalists, NGO persons, lawyers and Parliament Secretariat in the evaluation of this report.

2) Parliament Watch

Transparency Maldives conducted the Parliament Watch project from March 2010 to March 2011 in partnership with local NGO Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN). Though the Parliament Watch project is jointly implemented, this report is produced solely by Transparency Maldives.

The aim of the Parliament Watch project is to make the Parliament accountable through increased and effective monitoring of the legislative processes and routine workings of the Parliament as well as to lobby for specific changes in bills relating to governance and human rights. Though advocacy to amend bills was a joint effort of both Transparency Maldives and MDN, Transparency Maldives focused mostly on governance related bills whereas MDN focused on bills relating to human rights.

Transparency Maldives advocated for changes to most of the 32 bills passed by Parliament in the year 2010, focusing extensively on Decentralization Act, Local Council Elections Act, Right to Information Bill, Political Party Bill and Maldives Broadcasting Corporation Act.

3) The Inter-Parliamentary Union

The IPU is the international organization of Parliaments established in 1889. The IPU functions as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and cooperation among peoples and for the establishment of representative democracy. The IPU has 154 members and eight associate members, including the Maldives. IPU is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

The parliamentary self-assessment tool kit was produced by the IPU in 2008. The assessment kit is drawn mainly from the Democracy Assessment methodology of the International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA). The purpose of the IPU framework is to assist Parliaments and other institutions in evaluating Parliaments against widely accepted criteria for democratic parliaments.

IPU works with UN bodies and regional and global institutions including governmental and non-governmental organizations. The IPU is primarily financed through its members from public funds.

3.1 The IPU evaluation framework

The IPU parliamentary assessment framework consists of a survey questionnaire focused on six main areas. Each of the six main areas or categories covers one aspect of a democratic parliament. The six main areas under the evaluation are:

1. The representativeness of the parliament;
2. Parliamentary oversight over the executive;
3. Parliament's legislative capacity;
4. Transparency and accessibility of the parliament;
5. Accountability of the parliament; and
6. Parliament's involvement in international policy.

Each of the 48 questions requires participants to make a subjective judgment on a rating scale from one to five, where one represents the minimum score and five represents the maximum. Transparency Maldives averaged the scores of the 22 participants for each of the six dimensions, and converted the scores to percentages for further simplification and better understanding.

The respondents consisted of 15 MPs, three journalists who cover the Parliament, Deputy Solicitor General, a former Attorney General and two members from civil society organizations. Of the 15 MPs, seven are from the main opposition Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) and four from the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP). Two MPs from Jumhoore Party (JP) and one MP from People's Alliance (PA) as well as an independent MP took part in the survey

1. Abdulla Mausoom MP, DRP, Kela Dhaaira
2. Ahmed Amir MP, Independent, Kudahuvadhuo Dhaaira
3. Ahmed Mahloof MP, DRP, South Galolhu Dhaaira
4. Ahmed Nihan Hussain Manik MP, DRP, Villimaafannu Dhaaira
5. Ali Azim MP, DRP, Mid-Henveiru Dhaaira
6. Eva Abdulla MP, MDP, North Galolhu Dhaaira
7. Gasim Ibrahim MP, JP, Maamigili Dhaaira
8. Hamdhoon Abdul Hameed MP, DRP, Inguraidhuo Dhaaira
9. Hamid Abdul Ghafoor MP, MDP, South Henveiru Dhaaira
10. Ibrahim Mutthalib MP, JP, Fares-Maathoda Dhaaira
11. Ilyas Labeeb MP, MDP, Hulhumeedhuo Dhaaira
12. Imthiyaz Fahmy MP, MDP, North Maafannu Dhaaira
13. Mohamed Mujuthaz MP, DRP, Hanimaadhoo Dhaaira
14. Visam Ali MP, DRP, Maduvvari Dhaaira
15. Yoosuf Abdul Ghafoor MP, PA, Gan Dhaaira
16. John-James Robinson Editor, www.minivannews.com
17. Ahmed Hamdhoon Journalist, Haveeru Daily and Haveeru Online
18. Aishath Shiura Reporter, MNBC One
19. Aishath Bisham Deputy Solicitor General, Attorney General's Office
20. Azima Shukoor Former Attorney General and practicing lawyer
21. Mohamed Thoriq Hamid Project Coordinator, Transparency Maldives
22. NasheethThoha Project Coordinator, Maldivian Democracy Network

4) The Parliament of Maldives

As per the Constitution of Maldives, the Maldivian Parliament is a unicameral legislature. Extensive powers are granted to the Parliament in Maldives' presidential system of governance. Chapter three, Article 70 of the Constitution defines the role of the Parliament as:

- Amendment of the Constitution of Maldives according to the Constitution;
- Enactment of legislation, amendment or repeal of laws;
- Holding the executive to account;
- Approval of the annual budget and supplementary budget;
- Oversight of independent commissions and offices;
- Holding public referendums on issues of public interest; and
- Other duties specified in the Constitution of Maldives.

Tabulated below is the composition of the Parliament at the time of writing of this report. Since there are no laws or procedures prohibiting MPs from crossing the floor, the initial composition of the Parliament has changed since the 17th Parliament of Maldives was sworn in following the Parliamentary Elections in May 2009.

| Party Affiliation | Initial | Current |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) | 28 | 27 |
| Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) | 26 | 32 |
| Independent | 13 | 8 |
| People's Alliance (PA) | 7 | 7 |
| Dhivehi Qaumeey Party (DQP) | 2 | 1 |
| Jumhooreey Party (JP) | 1 | 2 |

The opposition, is formed by an alliance between DRP and PA and holds the majority in the Parliament. The ruling MDP initially had 26 MPs, but now consists 32 due to cross overs of MPs from other parties as well as those MPs elected as independent candidates.

4.1) The 17th Parliament in numbers

The Parliament of Maldives convened in three sessions in the year 2010. A total of 52 bills were presented to the Parliament floor. Works on 42 bills were completed in the year 2010. Of the 42, the Parliament rejected four bills, their sponsors withdrew five bills, and one bill did not pass Parliamentary vote. 32 of the 42 bills were sent to the President for ratification following Parliamentary endorsement. In addition, five motions were presented to the Parliament out of which three were passed. An additional 27 issues presented to the Parliament were looked into. A total of 35 pieces of legislation remain at Parliamentary committees at the end of the Parliamentary year 2010, including legislations from the previous years. Of these 35 bills, individual MPs sponsored 24 bills and the government sponsored 11 bills.

Altogether, the 95 sittings of the Parliament added to 298 hours and two minutes, an average of three hours and eight minutes per sitting. Often times, committee meetings are conducted concurrently with Parliament sittings. This data does not include the time MPs spent in committee meetings. A total of 22 sittings of Parliament were disrupted at various stages, leading to termination of sittings. Hence a quarter (23%) of Parliamentary sittings were disrupted.

Tabulated below is a summary of the attendance records of MPs published by the Parliament. In addition

| Legislation | |
|--|---------------------|
| Total no. of bills presented | 52 |
| Not accepted to Parliament | 4 |
| Withdrawn | 5 |
| Rejected at the final voting stage | 1 |
| Endorsed and sent for ratification | 32 |
| Legislation carried over to 2011 | 35 |
| Sittings | |
| Total number of sittings | 95 |
| Total number of time spent in sittings | 298 hours 2 minutes |
| Average time spent in each sitting | 3 hours 8 minutes |
| Total number of sittings disrupted | 22 |
| Percentage of sittings disrupted | 23.16% |

to four months of recess MPs get, MPs took casual leave and leave. In the first session of Parliament, 20 MPs took casual leave of 38 days, 13 MPs were on leave for a total of 58 days, two MPs were on an official trip for five days, 22 MPs were absent for 35 sittings of Parliament.

Only seven MPs attended all sittings of Parliament, while 23 MPs were absent for ten or more sittings of the 95 sittings of Parliament.

| | | Casual leave (Salam) | Leave | Official trip | Absent | Attended after conclusion of sitting |
|-------------|----------------|----------------------|-------|---------------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| 1st Session | No. of members | 20 | 13 | 2 | 22 | 0 |
| | Total | 38 | 58 | 5 | 35 | 0 |
| 2nd Session | No. of members | 27 | 8 | 3 | 42 | 11 |
| | Total | 66 | 38 | 9 | 142 | 13 |
| 3rd Session | No. of members | 23 | 11 | 11 | 41 | 8 |
| | Total | 43 | 34 | 24 | 127 | 9 |

4.1.1) The first session of the Parliament at a glance

The first session of Parliament lasted from 1st March to 4th May 2010. The Parliament held 28 sittings that added up to 109 hours and 39 minutes. On average, the Parliament spent three hours and 55 minutes per sitting. A total of five sittings were disrupted and discontinued. An additional sitting was cancelled due to loss of quorum of the assembly. This is an average of 18% of the total sittings. Three of the sittings were cancelled over discussions of MNDF regulations and two over alleged corruption of the Auditor General.

A total of 16 bills were submitted to Parliament. The government presented eight bills and individual MPs presented eight bills. Six pieces of legislation were passed by Parliament and sent to the President for ratification.

The highlights of the first session of Parliament include the removal of Maldives' first Auditor General, provision of state subsidies to the media, passage of Maldives Broadcasting Corporation Act, Tax Administration Act, Decentralization Act and Local Council Elections Act. The Parliament voted to increase the session of Parliament by four days to conclude work on the Local Council Elections Act.

| Legislation | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Total no. of bills presented | 16 |
| Not accepted to Parliament | 1 |
| Withdrawn | 1 |
| Rejected at the final voting stage | - |
| Endorsed and sent for ratification | 6 |
| Sittings | |
| Time-frame | 1st March – 4th May 2010 |
| Total number of sittings | 28 |
| Total number of time spent in sittings | 109 hours 39 minutes |
| Average time spent in each sitting | 3 hours 55 minutes |
| Total number of sittings disrupted/cancelled | 5 |
| Percentage of sittings disrupted/cancelled | 18% |

The Auditor General was removed via a vote of no confidence on 29th March 2010. At the time of publishing of this report, an Auditor General has not been re-appointed. On 28th April, the Finance Committee of Parliament recommended to provide subsidies worth MVR 4 million to media organizations. 50% of the total amount of subsidies was handed out to VTV and DhiTV. Four radios received 35% while four daily newspapers received 15%.

The Decentralization Act and Local Council Elections Act paved way for the introduction of a

decentralized system of governance. The Maldives Broadcasting Corporation Act aimed to free the state TV and radio from political influence. Maldives Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) is currently at court to obtain the assets and staff of the state TV and radio, which the President says is functioning under a company formed through a presidential decree and hence, do not fall under the Maldives Broadcasting Corporation Act. The Tax Administration Act is an important legislation that needs to be in force prior to introduction of a tax regime as planned by the authorities.

4.1.2) The second session of the Parliament at a glance

The second session of Parliament lasted from 7th June to 30th August. Thirty six Parliamentary sittings added up to 97 hours and 23 minutes. Two hours and 42 minutes were spent per sitting on average. Eight sittings of Parliament, or 22 % of the sessions, were cancelled due to disruptions. The disruptions in Parliament were a direct result of the political turmoil that ensued towards the end of the interim period specified in the Constitution of Maldives, aggravated due to an MP being held in the presidential retreat island against his will and due to corruption allegations against MPs.

A total of 18 bills were presented to the Parliament in the second session. The government presented six bills whereas individual MPs presented 12. Fifteen pieces of legislation were endorsed by Parliament and forwarded to the President for ratification.

| Legislation | |
|--|------------------------|
| Total no. of bills presented | 18 |
| Not accepted to Parliament | - |
| Withdrawn | 1 |
| Rejected at the final voting stage | - |
| Endorsed and sent for ratification | 15 |
| Sittings | |
| Time-frame | 7th June – 30th August |
| Total number of sittings | 36 |
| Total number of time spent in sittings | 97 hours 23 minutes |
| Average time spent in each sitting | 2 hours 42 minutes |
| Total number of sittings disrupted/cancelled | 8 |
| Percentage of sittings disrupted/cancelled | 22% |

The highlights of the second session of Parliament include the passage of the Public Finance Act, appointment of members to the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, Parliament’s reaction to the resignation of the cabinet en-masse, conclusion of the interim period specified in the Constitution and arrest of four MPs on corruption and sedition charges.

The cabinet of Maldives resigned en-masse on the 29th of July, citing Parliament obstruction of its duties as the primary cause. On the same day, two MPs were charged with corruption and sedition. A few days later, the same charges were leveled against an additional two MPs. In the ensuing political drama, the two-year interim period specified in the Constitution ended on the 8th of August. As per the Constitution, permanent institutions were required to come in to force before the end of the period. The Parliament failed to pass the Judges bill, and hence the Supreme Court bench was not appointed. The Maldives National Defense Force, on orders from the President, blocked the interim Supreme Court and confiscated its keys. The constitutional meltdown was averted when the Judges Act was passed and the Supreme Court was appointed and sworn in. The Judges Act was passed on 10th of August, two days after the conclusion of the interim period.

4.1.3) The third session of the Parliament at a glance

The first sitting of the third session of Parliament took place on 7th June and the last sitting on 30th December. The Parliament spent 91 hours in a total of 31 sittings. The average time spent per sitting is two hours and 57 minutes. Of the 31 sittings, nine sittings of Parliament were disrupted and cancelled. This is an average of 29% of the total number of sittings. The main reason for disruption of Parliamentary sittings was the issue of cabinet endorsement. The third session of Parliament is also the budget session of the Parliament.

Eighteen bills – same as in the second session of Parliament – were submitted to Parliament in the third session. Government presented one bill and individual members presented 17 bills. A total of three bills were endorsed by Parliament and one bill failed at the final voting stage.

The highlights of the third session of Parliament include the deadlock in Parliament over the issue of

| | Legislation |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Total no. of bills presented | 18 |
| Not accepted to Parliament | - |
| Withdrawn | 3 |
| Rejected at the final voting stage | 1 |
| Endorsed and sent for ratification | 3 |
| | Sittings |
| Time-frame | 4th October – 30th December |
| Total number of sittings | 31 |
| Total number of time spent in sittings | 91 hours |
| Average time spent in each sitting | 2 hours 57 minutes |
| Total number of sittings disrupted/cancelled | 9 |
| Percentage of sittings disrupted/cancelled | 29% |

endorsement of the cabinet after its resignation en-masse in July, rejection of Presidents' nominee to the post of Auditor General, passage of the Parliamentary Privileges Bill, passage of the state budget and amendment of the Judges Act to provide benefits to former Supreme Court judges.

The endorsement of the cabinet was a contentious issue, as MPs from the ruling MDP supported a block vote of consent while the opposition campaigned for individual endorsement of cabinet ministers. On 22nd November, the Parliament voted to approve five of 12 cabinet appointments amid an opposition boycott of the Parliament session. The issue was resolved after a verdict from Supreme Court in the first week of December, leading to the removal of the seven cabinet ministers who were not given consent by the Parliament.

Also of note in the third session of Parliament is that the President's nominee – who was also formerly the President of the Anti Corruption Commission – to the post of Auditor General was rejected by the Parliament.

5) Evaluation

5.1 Overall evaluation results

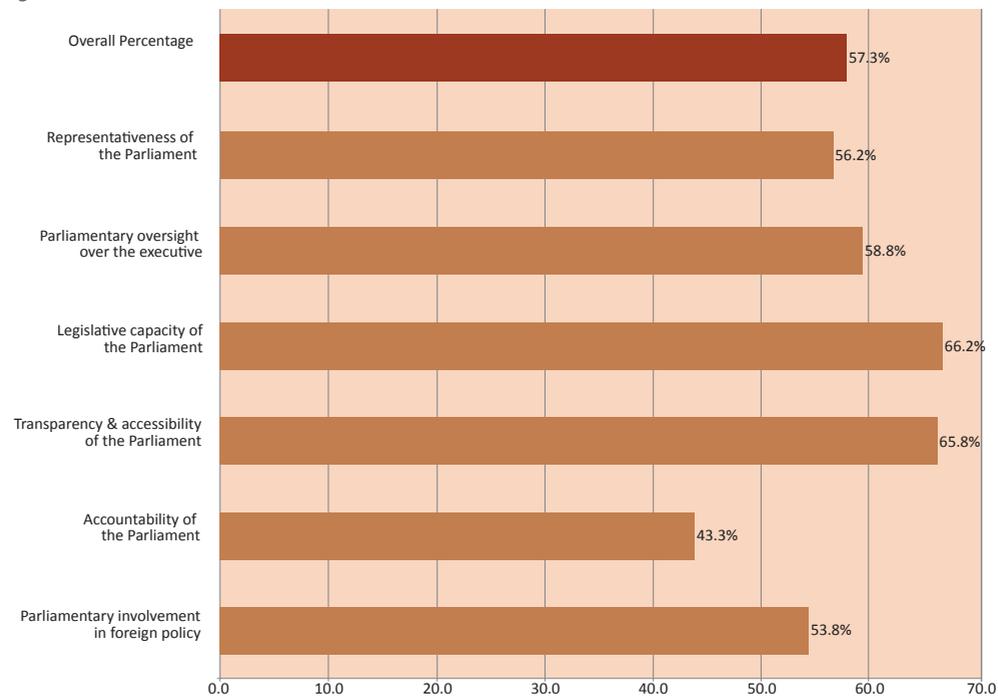
The evaluation is split into six areas or categories, and the broader six areas are further split into 48 sub-areas. The areas are:

1. Representativeness of the Parliament;
2. Parliamentary oversight over the executive;
3. Parliament’s legislative capacity;
4. Transparency and accessibility of Parliament;
5. Accountability of Parliament; and
6. Parliament’s involvement in international policy

The weakest area of the parliamentary evaluation is accountability of Parliament category with a score of 43%. The strongest area under evaluation is the legislative capacity of the Parliament with a score of 66%.

The overall score for all six areas under evaluation is 57%. Areas representativeness of Parliament, accountability of Parliament and Parliamentary involvement in foreign policy are below average with 56%, 43% and 54% respectively. Parliamentary oversight over the executive, legislative capacity of Parliament and transparency and accountability of Parliament are above average with scores of 59%, 66% and 66% respectively.

Figure: Overall evaluation results



5.2 Representativeness of the Parliament

The first area under evaluation is the representativeness of the Parliament. Nine sub-areas were evaluated to determine the representativeness of the Parliament. These sub-areas include: the ratio of female MPs versus male MPs; the representativeness of marginalized groups, the ease with which a person of average means be elected to Parliament, adequacy of internal party mechanisms for improving imbalances within Parliament, arrangements for ensuring opposition and minority parties/ groups to contribute to the work of Parliament, the conduciveness of Parliamentary infrastructure and unwritten mores to the participation of women and men, the right of all members to express their opinions freely and protection from executive or legal interference, and the effectiveness of the parliament as a forum for debate on questions of public concern.

The weakest aspect evaluated under the representativeness of the Parliament is the representation of women in Parliament with a score of 30%. The sub-area scored the least of all the sub-areas under evaluation. The Parliament of Maldives has five female MPs of the total 77 MPs. The representation of women is below the average score for overall representativeness of the Parliament, which is at 56%.

The strongest aspect of the representativeness of the Parliament is the right of all MPs to express their opinions freely, without executive and legal interference. This sub-area scored 68%.

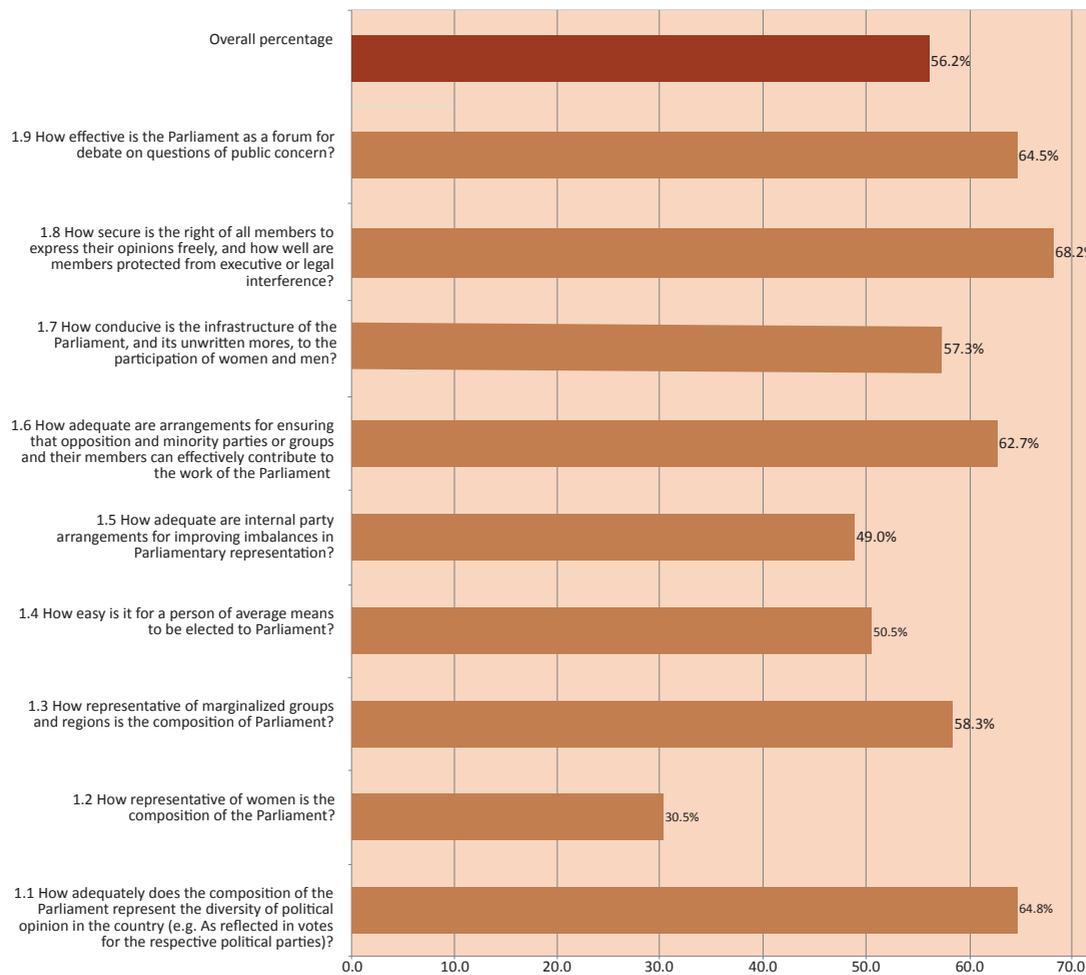


Figure: Representation of Parliament

5.3 Effectiveness of Parliamentary oversight over the executive

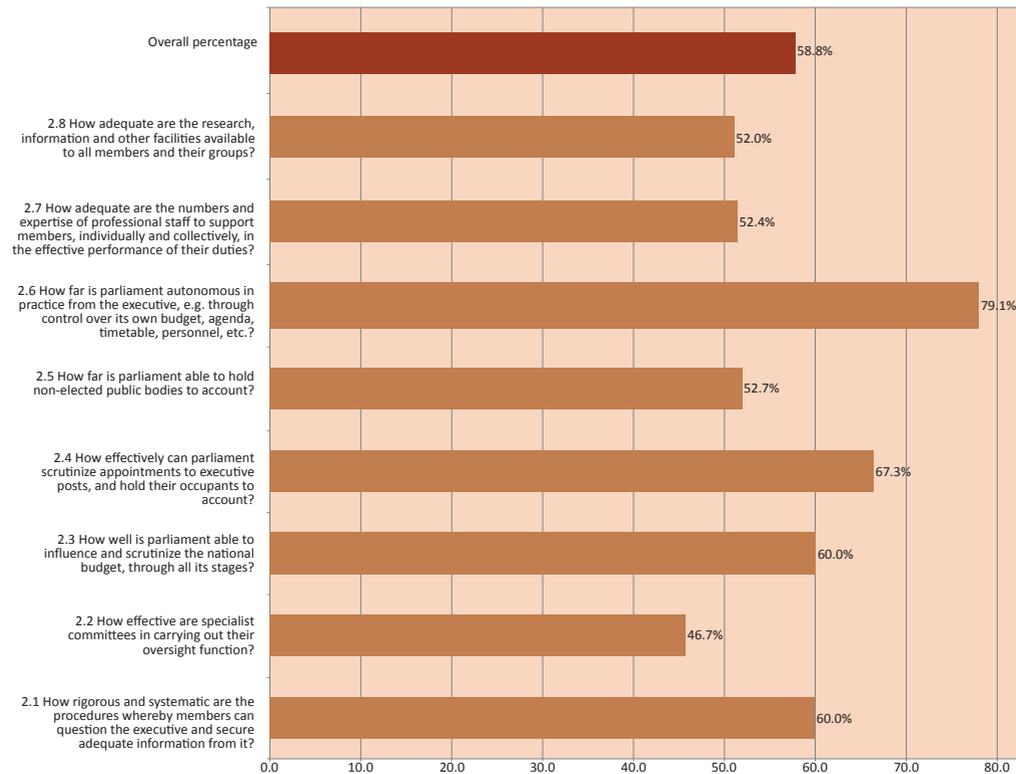
Area two under the evaluation looks into the effectiveness of Parliamentary oversight over the executive. Eight sub-areas were evaluated to gauge the effectiveness of Parliamentary oversight over the executive. The eight sub-areas include: the rigorousness of Parliamentary procedures to question and secure information from the executive; effectiveness of Parliamentary committees in carrying out their oversight functions; the ability of the Parliament to scrutinize the state budget; the effectiveness of the Parliament to scrutinize appointments to executive posts; the ability of the Parliament to hold non-elected bodies to account; the extent to which the Parliament is autonomous from the executive; the adequacy of the expertise and support staff of Parliament; and the adequacy of research, information and other facilities available to MPs.

The weakest aspect of the effectiveness of Parliamentary oversight over the executive area is the effectiveness of the Parliamentary committees in carrying out their functions. The sub-area scored 47%.

The strongest aspect of the effectiveness of Parliamentary oversight over the executive is the autonomy of the Parliament from the executive through control over its budget, agenda, personnel etc. This sub-area scored a maximum of 79%.

The overall score for the effectiveness of Parliamentary oversight category is 59%.

Figure: Parliamentary oversight over the executive



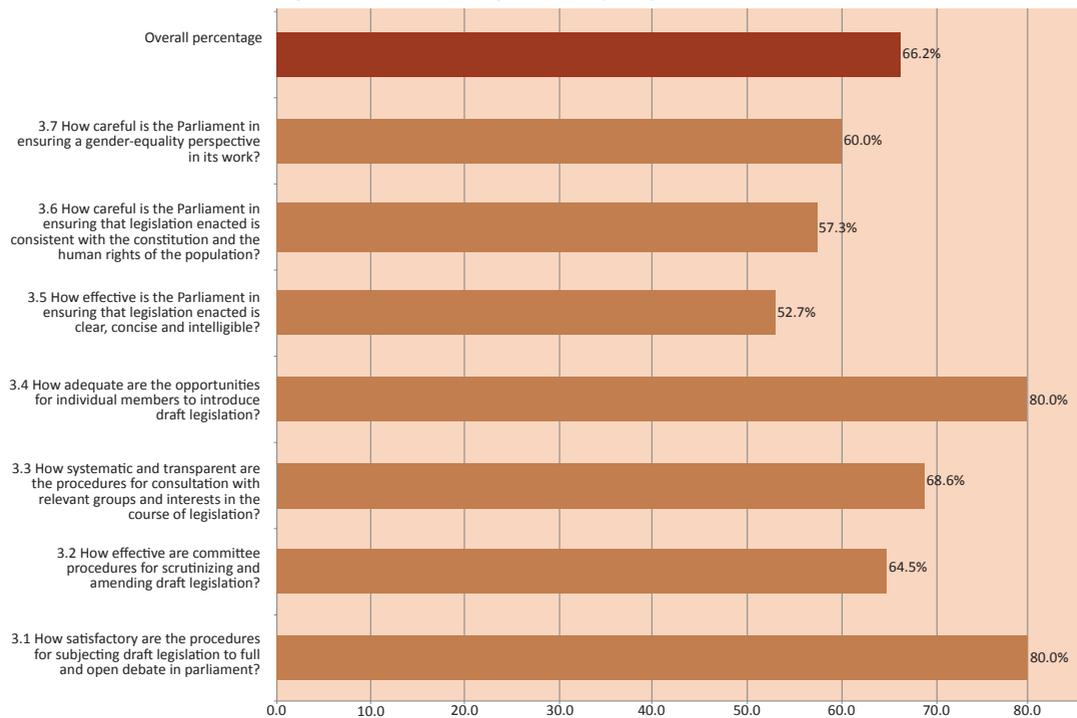
5.4 Effectiveness of the legislative capacity of the Parliament

The effectiveness of the legislative capacity of the Parliament was determined via evaluation of seven sub-areas. The seven sub-areas consisted of the procedures for subjecting draft legislation to open debate in Parliament; the effectiveness of committee procedures for scrutinizing and amending draft legislation; the transparency and systems through which the legislations are subject to consultation with relevant groups and interests; the adequacy of the opportunities afforded to individual members to introduce draft legislation; the effectiveness of the Parliament in ensuring clear, concise and intelligible legislation; the carefulness of the Parliament in ensuring that legislation is consistent with the Constitution and human rights principles; and the carefulness of the Parliament in ensuring a gender equality perspective in its work.

The weakest sub-area for the effectiveness of Parliament’s legislative capacity is the carefulness of the Parliament in ensuring that the legislation enacted is clear, concise and intelligible. The sub-area scored 53% while the average for the effectiveness of Parliament’s legislative capacity is 66%. The effectiveness of Parliament’s legislative capacity category scored the highest of all the main areas under evaluation.

The strongest sub-areas are the adequacy of opportunity for individual MPs to introduce draft legislation and the satisfactoriness of procedures for subjecting draft legislation to open debate in Parliament. Both sub-areas scored 80%.

Figure: Parliament’s legislative capacity



5.5 Transparency and accessibility of the Parliament

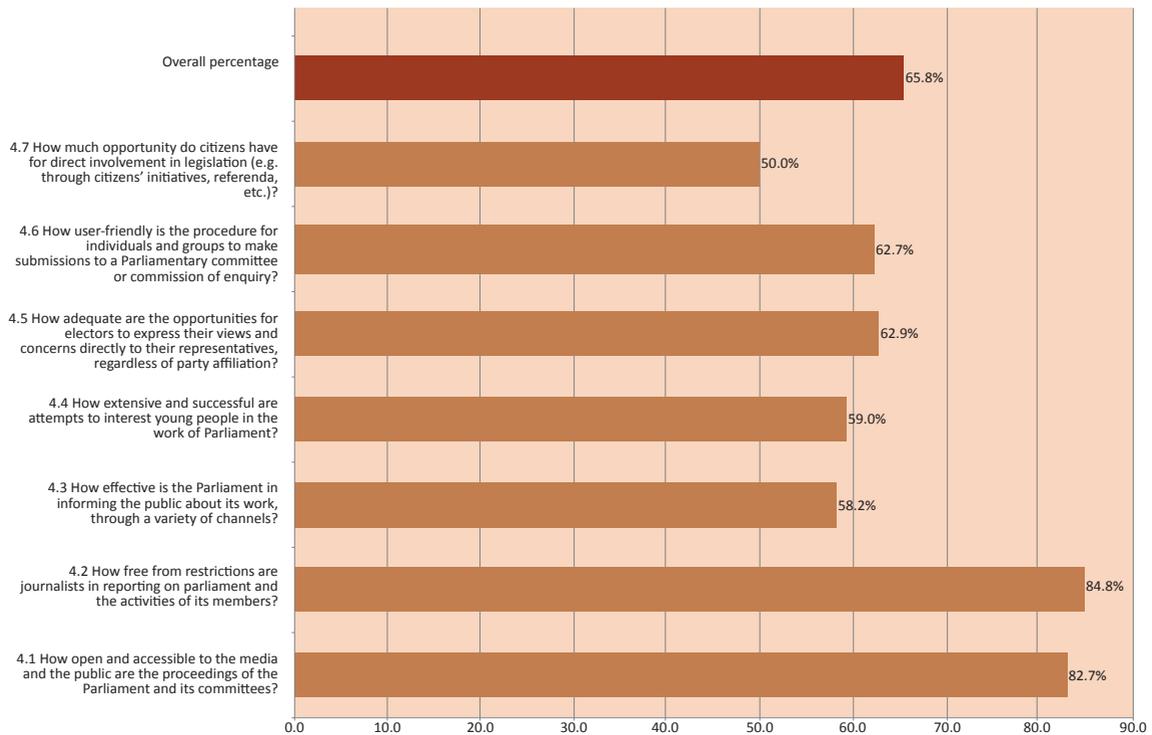
The fourth area under evaluation is transparency and accessibility of the Parliament. The seven sub-areas for the fourth area are the openness and accessibility of the proceedings of the Parliament and its committees to the media; the freedom for journalists to report on parliament and activities of MPs; the effectiveness of the Parliament to inform the public of its work; the successfulness of Parliament in creating interest about its work among the youth; the adequacy for electors to express their opinions and concerns directly to their MPs; the ease of the procedures to make submissions to Parliamentary committees; and the opportunity for citizens for direct involvement in legislation.

The weakest sub-area under the broader transparency and accessibility of the Parliament area is the opportunity for citizens for direct involvement in legislation through citizen’s initiatives and referenda with a score of 50%.

With a maximum score of 85%, the strongest sub-area for the transparency and accessibility of the Parliament area is the freedom for journalists to report on parliament and activities of MPs. Incidentally, this is the sub-area with the highest score.

The overall transparency and accessibility of Parliament evaluation area scored 66%.

Figure: The transparency and accessibility of the parliament



5.6 The accountability of the Parliament

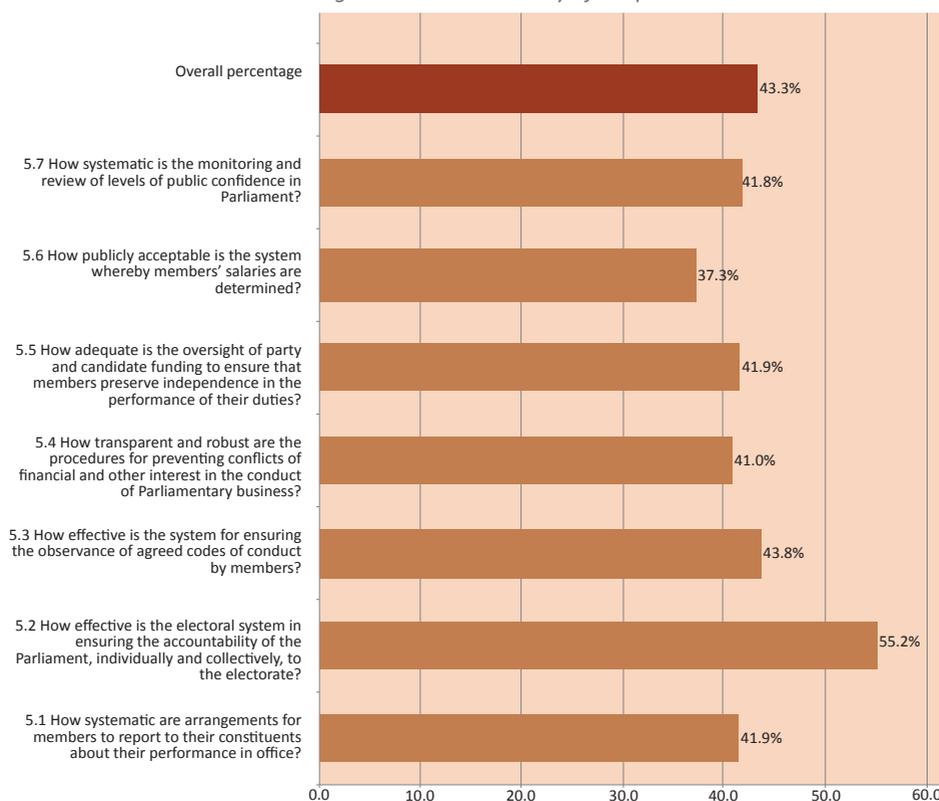
The interviewees were asked seven questions to evaluate the accountability of the Parliament. They are: systematic arrangements for MPs to report to their constituencies of their performance in office; effectiveness of the electoral system in ensuring the accountability of parliament; effectiveness of the system for ensuring adherence to agreed codes of conduct by MPs; the robustness and transparency procedures for preventing conflict of financial and other interests; adequacy of the oversight of party and candidate funding in ensuring MPs preserve independence in the performance of their duties; public acceptability of the system of MP's salary determination; and systems to monitor and review levels of public confidence of the Parliament.

The weakest sub-area of the category is the public acceptability of the system whereby MP's salaries are determined. The sub-area scored the minimum score of 37%.

The strongest sub-area under the category is the effectiveness of the electoral system in ensuring the accountability of Parliament individually and collectively to the electorate with a score of 55%.

The average score for the accountability of Parliament category is 43%. This is also the area that scored the least of all the main six areas under evaluation.

Figure: The accountability of the parliament



5.7 Effectiveness of the Parliament's involvement in international policy

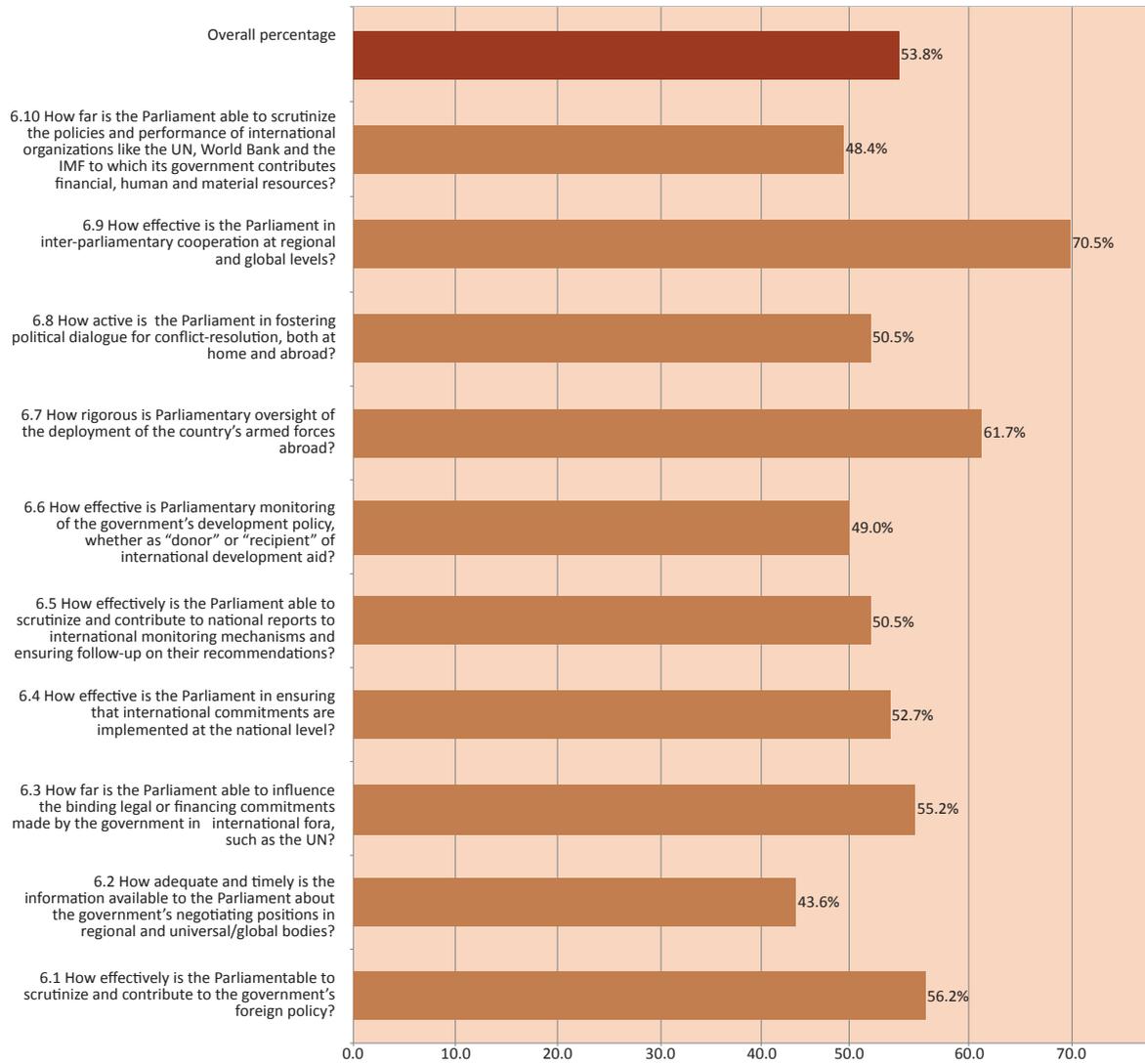
Ten sub-areas were evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the Parliament's involvement in international policy. The sub-areas include: the effectiveness of the Parliament to contribute and scrutinize the government's foreign policy; timeliness and adequacy of the information available to the Parliament about the governments negotiating positions in regional and global bodies; the ability of the Parliament to influence legal or financing commitments made by the government in international forums; effectiveness of the Parliament in ensuring that international commitments are implemented at national level; effectiveness of the Parliament in scrutinizing and contributing to national reports to international monitoring mechanisms and its follow-up; effectiveness of the Parliament's monitoring of the government's development policy; rigorousness of Parliamentary oversight of deployment of the states armed forces abroad; effectiveness of the Parliament in inter-parliamentary cooperation at regional and global levels; and the ability of the Parliament to scrutinize the policies and performance of international bodies to which its government contributes financial and human resources.

The weakest sub-area under the effectiveness of the Parliament's involvement in international policy category is the adequacy and timeliness of information available to Parliament about the government's negotiating position in regional and global bodies. This sub-area scored 44%.

The strongest sub-area under the category is effectiveness of the Parliament in inter-parliamentary cooperation at regional and global levels with a score of 70%.

The overall score for the main area under evaluation is 54%.

Figure: Parliament's involvement in international policy



6) Recommendations

1. Increase participation of women in the Parliament and bring gender perspective into legislation.

Of the total 77 MPs in Parliament, only five are women. Political parties need to work proactively to reduce the barriers for women to enter the political sphere. The Parliament should introduce measures in the legislation that encourage women participation. The Parliament must also take the gender perspective into consideration in the development of legislation.

2. Develop infrastructure and human resource capacity of the Parliament.

Most of the MPs interviewed for the evaluation noted that the infrastructure of the Parliament and the human resource capacity of the Parliament as insufficient for the functions of the Parliament. As a long-term strategy, the Parliament must develop its infrastructure, including increasing office space for the functioning of Parliamentary standing and temporary committees. Building the human resource capacity of Parliament's staff is also important.

3. Improve the documentation and the accessibility of the documents of the Parliament.

The documents produced in Parliament need to be improved. Inconsistencies and documents not being produced in a timely manner is an issue of concern. The consistent accessibility of these documents – such as draft bills, committee reports, agenda's and minutes of meetings – need to be improved.

4. Conduct financial/ governance impact of legislation before passage of bills. The bills must ensure non-conflict with other legislations.

The Parliament must incorporate a process at the committee stage to determine the financial and governance impact of legislations before their passage. The Parliament must institutionalize proper mechanisms for review of legislation before passage to ensure non-conflict with other legislations. Some of the legislations, such as parts of the Decentralization Act that deals with finance and the Public Finance Act passed by Parliament in the year 2010 have conflicting clauses.

5. Increase consultation with relevant interest groups during the different stages of legislation.

Increased consultation with stakeholders of legislation will ensure the tenability of legislation and eliminate issues in the implementation of the law. In addition, consultative processes produce better legislation and ensure inclusiveness. Mandatory consultation with target/relevant stakeholders must be institutionalized in the Parliamentary processes.

6. Prioritize bills and issues of national interest.

The Parliament must prioritize issues and work of draft legislation at committee stage that are of national interest over other work of the Parliament. Key bills that relate to the functions of

the state and preservation of justice such as the evidence bill, right to information bill, political parties bill, penal code bill and drugs bill remain stagnated at committee stage. In addition, the Parliament must produce an action plan for each sitting in consultation with the government, political parties and others involved.

7. **Conduct education programs for the public on the work of the Parliament**, with a specific focus on newly passed legislation and the integrity mechanisms of the Parliament.
It is important to conduct education programs for the public and other stakeholders since almost all the legislations enacted introduce completely new systems. It is also important to educate the public on the integrity mechanisms of the Parliament and on the general functioning of the Parliament to increase public trust and interest in the works of Parliament.
8. **Improve the accessibility of the documents produced by Parliament** through betterment of the Parliamentary website, use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook.
9. **Fulfill the Parliament's constitutional duty by publicizing financial and other interests of MPs.** The Parliament currently does not disclose the financial and other interests of MPs that the constitution mandates MPs submit to Parliament. The Parliament should fulfill its constitutional duty by disclosing this information to the public. The disclosure of financial and other interests should also extend to the immediate children of the MP and spouse as well as the MPs' parents.
10. **Improve the functioning of the Parliamentary committees.** The Parliament must allocate a time frame for specific works, including time frames for scrutiny of draft legislation before presentation to the Parliament floor. This is to prevent bills from stagnating in Parliamentary committees.
11. **Employ more resources**, including renting extra office space for Parliamentary committees to expedite its work. External professional and technical expertise must also be utilized in the functioning of the committees to produce robust legislation.
12. **Political parties should resolve contentious issues** prior to commencement of sittings to prevent disruptions/cancellation of Parliamentary sittings. A total of 22 of 95 sittings were disrupted, leading to waste of Parliamentary time and resources.
13. **The Parliament should adopt in its Rules of Procedures measures to incentivize MPs to consult their respective constituencies** in drafting, debating and voting on legislations and motions. Parliamentary Rules of Procedures must also accommodate provisions that ensure monies/ allowances provided to MPs is spent for its actual intended purpose. For example, MPs are provided an allowance for establishment of an office. Few MPs (if any at all) operate offices.

