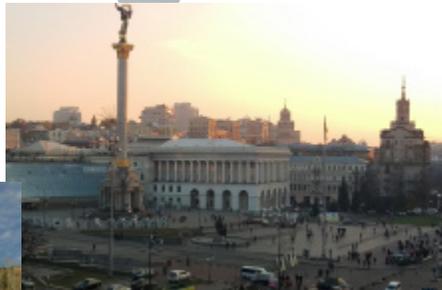


THE PARLIAMENTARY CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT **2014-2015**



Parliamentary Centre
Le Centre parlementaire



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THE PARLIAMENTARY CENTRE

The Parliamentary Centre is one of the leading and longest serving non-governmental non-partisan organizations dedicated to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy around the world.

Democratic systems and good governance rely on strong and vibrant legislatures that will voice the interests of the people and hold governments to account. The Parliamentary Centre's mission is to *support legislatures in their lawmaking, oversight and representative roles to better serve the people they represent.*

We believe that every citizen has the right to participate meaningfully in the decisions of government and to hold government to account for those decisions, and that effective, democratic legislatures which engage with civil society and represent citizens are crucial to democratic governance and sustainable development.



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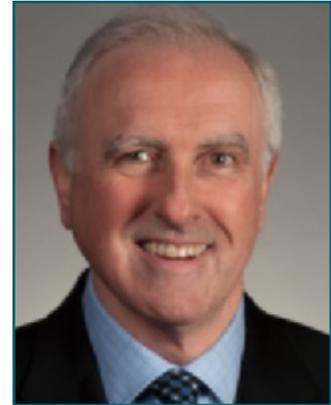
Staff

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Highlights of the year gone by

Democratic development has seldom faced so many global challenges. In this context, the Parliamentary Centre's achievements over the past year are remarkable. We owe this to the staff at the Centre, whose perseverance and leadership are truly exceptional.

Together with our Indonesian partner, the Women and Youth Development Institute of Indonesia, we won the top award in the Grand Challenge for Development: a global innovation competition which included open online voting, peer review and selection by a jury of donors. Our proposal was picked from 241 innovation ideas from around the world. Our pilot project used SMS technology to allow women's voices to be heard in decision-making on delivery of public services. The impact was significant: the village where the pilot took place has now adopted this methodology, and discussions have begun about its use in other villages.



The Centre's ability to adapt to a rapidly changing environment was recently tested in Ukraine where we delivered a project in support of the Verkhovna Rada¹. As a result of this initiative, 60 Ukrainian researchers trained in public policy and legislative processes are now working for the Verkhovna Rada and for civil society organizations connected to it. This contribution was highlighted recently in Brussels on the occasion of "Ukraine Week" at the European Parliament.

Our work in Ukraine also included facilitating the first ever meeting of parliamentarians with officials of the Ministry of Defence on the subject of parliamentary oversight of defence and security matters.

Our capacity to offer creative support in fast evolving political environments was also demonstrated by our work in Burma/Myanmar. The end of the five-year term of the country's first multiparty parliament in almost 50 years, and the November 2015 elections that followed, presented us with a unique, historic opportunity to capture the views of both outgoing and newly elected parliamentarians. The results of our survey are helping new parliamentary leaders make decisions on how to strengthen parliament.

Canada's federal elections in October 2015 also had an impact on our organization. During the writ period the Parliamentary Centre focused on evaluating its performance against the Strategic Plan. The Centre also worked on a proposal to the Canadian Government to establish a rapid response mechanism that would facilitate the delivery of timely, focused governance support to countries that find themselves in fragile situations.

The Centre continues to research and prepare project proposals for consideration by the Government of Canada.

¹ The unicameral parliament of Ukraine.

I would like to take this occasion to thank the management team and the staff of the Parliamentary Centre, under Jean-Paul Ruszkowski's very capable leadership as President and CEO, for their unwavering determination to maintain the Parliamentary Centre's worldwide reputation in very challenging times. I am confident that our continuing efforts to work with the new government in Ottawa will ensure a positive future. I would also like to offer my thanks to all the members of our Board for their ongoing contributions to the success of the Centre. Their efforts continue to be vital to our collective success.



Michael Murphy
Chair / President Parliamentary Centre
Board of Directors / Conseil d'administration du Centre parlementaire

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Quo vadis?

The world has never seen so many countries with democratic regimes. Yet, at the same time, the world has seldom seen so many challenges to democracy.

The Middle East will continue to be a region in need of attention, while Asia faces challenges in managing its increasing heft on the world stage. Some global concerns, like climate change, are becoming endemic. Are we going to be successful in mitigating and adapting to its impact? Meanwhile, Africa faces major challenges in creating jobs for its surging youth population. On a brighter note, we are hopeful that Colombia will soon have a peace agreement after decades of internal strife.



Canada appears blessed in comparison to so many other countries. This brings a great opportunity for Ottawa to play a positive and constructive role.

At the Parliamentary Centre, we strive each day to make our work more relevant to the challenges facing our world, for example by helping to strengthen governance not only at the national level but also in sub-national jurisdictions that have recently been given greater responsibilities for public services like security, education and health. Today, more than ever, we need to support good governance to mitigate climate change, to empower Indigenous peoples and to continue enhancing the participation of women in achieving sustainable goals.

The Parliamentary Centre is ready to contribute to a constructive dialogue with the Canadian Government on how Canada should deliver democratic support in a rapidly changing world.

In the new Sustainable Development Goals the international community has made a very clear commitment to improve governance: effective, accountable, and transparent institutions are paramount.

Legislatures are in fact the only elected pluralistic institutions positioned to peacefully reconcile the interests and aspirations of diverse stakeholders in modern societies. It is vital that, as practitioners, we highlight the importance of a balanced approach when it comes to strengthening governance.

It is essential that the body that legislates and approves the expenditures of government be well-equipped to contribute to public policy through the legislative process and to oversee the quality of programs and expenditures that make a difference in the lives of people.

In the coming year the Parliamentary Centre will focus its attention on Burma/Myanmar, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Haiti, Indonesia, Uganda, Ukraine and Zambia.

I am very grateful for the support of the members of the Board, the team at the Parliamentary Centre, and our partners who are making our lives more meaningful and helping us do a better job.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'JP Ruskowski', written in a cursive style.

Jean-Paul Ruskowski
President and CEO / Président-directeur général

ADAPTATION AND INNOVATION: INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE IN A CHANGING WORLD

Perspectives on the Parliamentary Centre's Work

The challenges and opportunities we face in this increasingly dynamic and complex world are unprecedented. We are deluged daily with new technologies and inventions, yet the trendlines of the global economy are harder to predict than ever. Overall standards of living have grown, but so have gaps between rich and poor. People are healthier and living longer than ever, the world population is growing at an unprecedented rate, but so are concerns about climate and the environment, posing big questions about our future. As noted in the President and CEO's message, there have never been so many countries with democratic regimes around the world, yet rarely have we experienced so much instability and conflict in so many corners of the planet.

How can humanity steer its way through this maze of opportunity and challenge? Throughout history our survival and well being has depended on our success in reaching collective decisions and consensus on norms and institutions to help steer us as groups. "Governance" is perhaps the best word to describe this process. As our world changes we need to keep pace by improving and adapting the way we govern our societies. Ever-increasing numbers of people demand and expect better inclusion in this process.

The international community has made a very clear commitment to improve governance in the new Sustainable Development Goals. Building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels is a key target. For the first time the SDGs are universal and apply to all countries, not just developing ones.

As an organization with a mandate to support legislatures, we realize that constant innovation and adaptation is a must if legislatures are to keep pace with our changing world and realize their unique potential to be the most pluralistic and inclusive among institutions of governance.

We have been investigating optimal ways to harness the potential of communication technologies for more inclusive governance. A unique opportunity materialized last year, when, as mentioned by our Chair, the Parliamentary Centre collaborated with the Women and Youth Development Institute of Indonesia to develop an innovative approach to making women's voices heard through the use of an SMS polling platform.

When we put this approach into practice in the Indonesian village of Tunjunkturto, the results were tangible and meaningful. Through an SMS survey, women and men provided their views on how village authorities should formulate and implement local development projects. People's eagerness to engage was striking: in a matter of a few months survey response rates reached 76% among women and 75% among men. For women who are typically less inclined to get involved in decision-making through traditional means, technology provided a useful tool for voicing their views. As a survey respondent put it: "I know that there are many women in my sub-village who don't have the courage to speak in the village forums but have very good ideas. With (this) SMS program, I can freely share my concerns." Village authorities were also quick to realise the potential: in April 2016 the Village Head announced a plan to set-up an SMS Centre where villagers will have the opportunity to express their opinions about various issues.

Inclusiveness and adaptation are not concepts limited to the interaction of institutions with people. Within a pluralistic governance body comprising elected representatives from all parts of a country or region, it is crucial to be able to take into account the experiences and views of all members in deciding how to shape the future. The Parliamentary Centre's work in Burma/Myanmar speaks to this issue. The results of our survey of outgoing and newly elected parliamentarians, conducted in the wake of the November

2015 elections which brought the first democratically elected government to power, are helping the new parliamentary leadership determine how best to strengthen the institution of parliament.

In today's hyper-dynamic world, speed and flexibility in the formulation and delivery of support programs are essential to respond to the needs of the recipients of support. The Centre has had to tackle this challenge on numerous occasions in recent years. As an example, in Ukraine during the winter of 2015-16, we successfully delivered a substantial project in support of the Verkhovna Rada. The project included, among other tasks, the facilitation of the first ever meeting of parliamentarians with officials from the Ministry of Defence to discuss parliamentary oversight of the security sector.

Looking to the future, we will continue to build an organization capable of developing innovative, flexible and timely interventions in support of more inclusive governance equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.



Photo: Making All Voices Count

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS AND TARGETED SERVICES

AFRICA

Ghana

Project: *Knowledge Exchange on Budgetary Oversight and Parliamentary Administration*
Funder: *Parliament of Ghana*

The Parliamentary Centre facilitated a three-day knowledge exchange in Ottawa for Mr. Emmanuel Anyimadu, Clerk of the Parliament of Ghana and Mr. George Brace, Senior Parliamentary Reporter and Secretary to the Clerk of Parliament. The purpose of their visit was to study Canadian and international experience with parliamentary oversight and the work of the Parliamentary Budget Office. Another focus was the organization of parliamentary administration and support services in the Canadian House of Commons, with specific attention to the office of the Clerk.

Nigeria

Project: *Professional Development Course on Taxation in a Federal State*
Funder: *Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) Nigeria*

Professional Development Course on Taxation

The professional development courses provided participants with an opportunity to explore numerous topics in the field of taxation through meetings with many of the most experienced academics and practitioners in the Canadian tax system, including the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the Ministry of Finance.

The Parliamentary Centre continued its long-standing partnership with the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) of Nigeria by hosting another delegation, consisting of five senior Directors from FIRS. This delegation was the fourth to participate in the Professional Development Training Course on Taxation offered by the Parliamentary Centre in collaboration with Carleton University's Centre for Governance and Public Management.



Zambia

Project: *Support to the National Assembly of Zambia*
Funder: *European Union*

The Parliamentary Centre, as a member of a consortium led by ECORYS, launched work on a EU-funded project in support of the National Assembly of Zambia. The project aims to enhance economic governance through improved public financial management, strengthened accountability processes, and support for the establishment of a Parliamentary Budget Office in Zambia.

The project aims to strengthen the ability of the National Assembly of Zambia to perform its role as the apex of the accountability process in public financial management by creating in-house technical expertise (Parliamentary Budget Office); by enhancing the ability of the Committee on Estimates and the

National Assembly to analyze the draft budget during its formulation; and by enhancing the ability of the Public Accounts Committee to scrutinize the implementation of the budget. One of the Parliamentary Centre's most experienced African experts serves as a Project Team Leader.

ASIA

Bhutan

Project: *Capacity Development for the National Assembly and National Council of Bhutan*

Funder: *Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International IDEA*

Activities:

Legislative Drafting

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan gives parliamentarians the authority to initiate legislation. To do so, they need to be able to rely on competent technical support from parliamentary staff.

The Parliamentary Centre and International IDEA partnered to deliver training on legislative drafting in Thimphu, Bhutan for members and staff of the two Chambers of Parliament. The approach was to provide the participants with an opportunity for learning-by-doing through a series of practical exercises. 11 parliamentarians and 21 staff participated.



Following the training, the Centre offered guidance and inputs in a locally driven process to prepare a Legislative Drafting Manual that will be used by the National Assembly and National Council of Bhutan to draft legislation initiated by Parliament.

Fellowship Program

The Parliamentary Fellowship Program was a joint venture between the National Assembly of Bhutan (NAB), the National Council of Bhutan (NCB), the Parliamentary Centre and International IDEA aimed at providing overseas fellowship opportunities for parliamentary staff.

The Parliamentary Centre designed and delivered a two-and-a-half week fellowship program for two parliamentary staffers to gain practical knowledge on the administrations of the Parliament of Canada and the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, which is approximately the same size as the Parliament of Bhutan.

Communications and Media Training

Since 2008, the Parliament of Bhutan has made considerable progress. However, the capacity of the members to fully represent their constituents, especially in voicing their concerns and needs, was highlighted as a key area for further development. The Members wanted to improve their ability to disseminate information to the public, as this would enhance the Bhutanese people's participation and

involvement in cultural, economic, environmental, and social development. To assist Bhutan in meeting this need, the Centre delivered a two-day training session on media and communications. The practical approach enabled participants to build skills immediately applicable to their work. 14 parliamentarians and two senior parliamentary staff participated.

Burma

Project: *Building Representative Governance in Burma, Phase III*

Funder: *Global Affairs Canada (GAC)*

Activities:

Training for Members of the Planning and Financial Development Committee

In March 2015, the Chair of the Planning and Financial Development Committee (PFDC) of the House of Representatives asked the Parliamentary Centre for support in building the knowledge and capacity of committee members and staff to perform their roles in the budget process, including how to prepare or amend a budget, analyze its contents, and deal with its approval. In response, the Centre offered a two-day workshop comprising presentations and practical exercises. 14 parliamentarians took part in the training sessions.

Roundtable Discussion with the Public Accounts Committee

Legislative oversight of how public funds are spent by the executive is one of the essential functions of a legislature. The Chair of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Pyithu Hluttaw asked the Centre for support in improving the capacity of his committee to play a more effective oversight role.

A roundtable with the PAC was organised. Canadian and international best practices were shared on questions committee members should be asking as they investigate how budgets are spent. Another objective was to improve government responses to recommendations made by the PAC. 10 members of the Committee, including the Chair, took part.

Training for the Staff of the Planning and Financial Development Committee and Public Accounts Committee

Parliamentary staff typically provide support to parliamentarians, helping them achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in their work. More importantly, they also serve as the institutional memory of parliament. In Burma, all key parties identified building up the skills of staff as a critical need in the wake of the November 2015 elections, given the anticipated high turnover of elected Members.



Two training sessions for committee staff of both the PFDC and PAC were delivered to improve their knowledge of the key functions of typical Finance and Public Accounts Committees as well as the role of each committee in the budget process. The ability of staff to conceptualize the role of their committee in the budget process was necessary to understanding their roles and responsibilities, and to assist committee members more effectively. In total, 46 committee staff, 85% of whom were women, participated.

Training for Senior Parliamentary Staff

The staff in Burma's first multiparty parliament in over 50 years have had to start without prior knowledge or the skills required for their jobs. As a result, senior parliamentary staff play a key role in crafting and coordinating a long-term approach for staff training.

The Centre offered training sessions for senior parliamentary staff focused on the importance of having clear job descriptions. Participants also learned about the importance of qualified staff in organizational structures, including a traditional bureaucracy and a modern organization, and the effects on communication within these structures. The training sessions were attended by 22 senior Parliamentary staff, of whom 65% were women.

Training for the Staff of the Parliamentary Research Units

This week long training employed a mix of introduction to the fundamental concepts of parliament's role in the budget process and the approaches to conducting and presenting relevant research to parliamentarians, followed by a series of practical peer-to-peer training exercises. The session reinforced the key components of briefing notes, while also introducing the parliamentary research staff to the elements needed to prepare a brief on the budget process. An impressive 89% of participants said the training session improved their knowledge of how to support MPs during the budget process.

First Needs Assessment Survey of the Outgoing Cohort of Parliamentarians

In the wake of the November 2015 elections, which ushered in the first democratically elected government in five decades, the Centre launched a survey to capture the views of both outgoing and newly elected parliamentarians. Respondents included representatives from all parties, including military members. The results are helping the new parliamentary leadership in decision-making on initiatives to strengthen parliament.

Indonesia

Project: *Our Voice*

Funder: *Making All Voices Count*

SMS Survey to Engage Women in Village Planning

The country's new Village Law, passed in 2014, allocates resources to village authorities for use in local development projects. This has provided a new opportunity for Indonesian women and men to engage in local governance issues and for local leaders to govern in a more open, transparent and responsive way. To help this become reality, the Women and Youth Development Institute of Indonesia and the Parliamentary Centre collaborated to develop an innovative approach to making women's voices heard, through the use of an SMS polling platform.

Four SMS surveys were implemented in Tunjuktirto from October 2015 to March 2016 with a final round taking place in April 2016. About 550 respondents (65% women and 34% men) took part. Survey response rates reached 76% among women and 75% among men. The high response rate can be seen as confirmation that SMS surveys can be a useful tool for enabling women, traditionally less inclined to participate actively in decision-making, to voice their views.



EUROPE

Ukraine

Project: *Support to the Rada*

Funder: *Global Affairs Canada (GAC)*

Following the Euromaidan events in November 2013, Ukraine embarked on a new path and the Parliamentary Centre was pleased to support this transition.

The Parliamentary Centre's project in Ukraine responded to immediate needs by strengthening democratic practices and processes while asserting Canadian values and experience. By helping to strengthen the Ukrainian Parliament and its interactions with civil society groups, our project not only increased the capacity of citizens to hold their government accountable for their actions

and support the rule of law, but also helped promote a stronger and more inclusive parliament that can more adequately represent the needs of various groups of society and find ways to permit their participation in the governance of the country.



Activities:

Strengthening the Capacity of Parliamentary Staff to better support the work of Parliamentarians

Both newly elected parliamentarians as well as the “old cohort” have realised the need for adequate support from parliamentary staff, including quality, non-partisan research services. To address the gap, the Centre led a two-week workshop in Kiev last December on how to conduct parliamentary research and provide analytical support to MPs. The training provided practical hands-on guidance and support to 42 participants, including one MP, 35 parliamentary assistants and six interns.

Workshop on Executive – Legislative Relations

One of the challenges to the ongoing reform process in Ukraine is the legislative process, riddled with uncertainty and tension between the executive and legislative powers, particularly in terms of where the centre of policy-making should be. This has resulted in an enormous amount of draft legislation (and counter legislation) proposed by individual MPs, groups of MPs and the executive.

The Centre offered a one-day workshop in Kiev, Ukraine on Canadian and international experiences in relations between executive and legislative branches. A mix of presenters from Ukraine and Canada, representing the executive and legislative experience, offered examples and lessons learned from both countries' experience. This workshop attracted 17 MPs as well as representatives from the Presidential Administration and Deputy Ministers.

LATIN AMERICA

Colombia

Funder: Canadian International Resources and Development Institute (CIRDI)

Building Legislators' Knowledge and Skills for Better Governance of the Extractive Sector in Colombia

While extractive sector governance is recognized as an important topic and discussions have been held in the past with several stakeholders, the Colombian Congress has not had many opportunities to take part in these discussions.

In an effort to address the lack of inclusion of Colombia legislators in stakeholder dialogues, especially on extractive sector governance, a one-day workshop was held in Bogota. The workshop brought key Congressional representatives into the same room with other Colombian stakeholders, including representatives from two of the main ministries involved in extractive industries, as well as local organizations and interest groups. Workshop organizers included the Parliamentary Centre, the Escuela Superior Administración Pública (ESAP), the Canadian International Resources and Development Institute (CIRDI), the National Assembly of Quebec, and the Colombian Congress.



PARTNERSHIPS & FUNDERS

The Parliamentary Centre would like to acknowledge and give thanks to all our partners and donors, who have contributed greatly to the success of our programs, and for their generous support in 2014 – 2015.

Agency for Legislative Initiatives, Ukraine

Altair Asesores, Spain

Canadian International Resource and Development Institute (CIRDI)

Centre for Governance and Public Management, Carleton University

Ecorys

European Union

Institute of European Russian and Eurasian Studies, Carleton University

Federal Inland Revenue Service, Nigeria

Global Affairs Canada

Government of the Kingdom of Norway

International IDEA

Making All Voices Count

National Assembly of Zambia

Oxford Policy Management, United Kingdom

ParlAmericas

Parliament of Bhutan

Parliament of Canada

Parliament of Ghana

Parliament of Myanmar (Burma)

Parliament of Nigeria

Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Women and Youth Development Institute (WYDII), Indonesia

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