

## **Workshop: Parliament and Development Assistance**

### **Briefing Note for GOPAC Members**

Parliamentary engagement in development assistance initiatives was discussed at the GOPAC Global Conference in Arusha in 2006. At that time a resolution on this matter identified the need for GOPAC to encourage development agencies to include provisions in their lending and grant agreements to:

- ensure parliaments are informed of their provisions;
- where practical, engage parliamentarians in the approval process; and
- require that all reports by recipients to the donors or to others pursuant to the lending or grant agreement be tabled in the recipient country parliament.

In addition, GOPAC was to encourage donors to consider funding complementary initiatives to strengthen oversight. The resolution also identified a need for GOPAC to review standards of parliamentary oversight of development funding and propose further steps GOPAC could propose to strengthen the involvement of parliamentarians.

Due to resource constraints, the anticipated task force to help deliver on these actions was not established, however the GOPAC Chair did encourage donor actions as described in the resolution. While positive steps have been taken by several donors, it is our impression from anecdotal information that parliamentary oversight of development assistance funding and activities remains weak in many recipient countries. Also development assistance funding for parliamentary capacity building remains focused more on support services and less on the capacity of the parliamentarians themselves. More information is needed and points to a potential research area for GOPAC to undertake.

Since 2006 there have been a number of other developments that now need to be factored in.<sup>1</sup> In particular, there has been a follow-up conference to the Paris Declaration, creating the Accra Agenda for Action (September 2008) which calls for, among other things, parliamentary engagement in development assistance.

Another important development is the rapid increase in the number of ratifications of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). This convention provides an engine for change to drive, among other things, governance improvements and the reduction of corruption in development assistance. Furthermore, the Conference of State Parties (CoSP) will be establishing a review mechanism to follow up on implementation of the UNCAC which will provide further momentum as an international institutional vehicle.

#### **A GOPAC Perspective**

For the Kuwait 2008 workshop, this note suggests some potential actions for parliamentarians in recipient countries, i.e. parliamentarians could call for:

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<sup>1</sup> A background note (English only) is available on the Kuwait 2008 Conference web site for this workshop.

