
EVALUATION OF UNDP SUPPORT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The UNDP has been supporting the Parliament of Sierra Leone since 2007. The support started in an ad-hoc manner focussing on one or two activities in a year. After the peer learning visit to the Parliament of Uganda, which eventually led to the drafting of the Parliamentary Service Bill and its final passage into law was a critical turning point for the future of democratic governance in Sierra Leone. Having triggered this landmark change, UNDP, then went on to plan the future course of the development of the institutional backbone of Parliament, namely, the parliamentary service with the support of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, IOM and other agencies. Eventually, UNDP began to support activities in a more structured and consistent manner through technical support to rebuild the institution.

Evaluation Findings

The following achievements, challenges/limitations are noted:

Achievements

1. UNDP triggered the peer learning visit of key leaders of the House to the Parliament of Uganda which resulted in the drafting of the Parliamentary Service Bill which was then finally passed at the end of the 3rd Parliament as the Parliamentary Service Act, 2007. It made history by disassociating the Parliament from the executive and placing it as a separate arm of the state as envisaged in the Constitution.
2. The initial structure/organogram of the Parliamentary Service, different departments, key positions and management arrangement was developed by UNDP for the Parliament.
3. Recruitment of key staff in all the Departments through a competitive process including, advertising the positions, shortlisting, written test and individual interviews, were undertaken by UNDP. This ensured that qualified persons joined the higher positions in the parliamentary service. This had never been done before at Parliament. In fact, Parliament was managed by a few public service staff and to some it was given more as a punishment posting.
4. In sum, UNDP spearheaded the process of creating a new parliamentary service which has now a distinct status from that of the public service, an aim stated in the PS Act, 2007.
5. Donor interest in Parliament was stupendous immediately after the civil war. However, Parliament as an institution failed to benefit from it nor sustain it. As a response to the assessment of the donor engagement in Parliament and associated issues, UNDP established the Parliamentary Assistance Coordination Office (PACO) – now the Department of Parliamentary Assistance Coordination (DePAC). This office has managed to bring transparency in the donor/partner support made available to Parliament and is successfully managing its dialogue with different partner institutions.
6. The Library of Parliament which was virtually non-existent, was revived through the support of the UNDP and has in the process improved the overall availability of sources of information on the Parliament of Sierra Leone.

7. UNDP changed the operational capacity of Parliament by creating an efficient ICT infrastructure in Parliament. The institution today boasts of a LAN, a functioning Server and a Website which Parliament manages all on its own.
8. Legislative department, a key office in a well-functioning Parliament which makes the legislative process impartial, transparent and rule based was established. It has improved the technical know-how and management of legislative information for the Parliament as a whole.
9. The establishment of a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), in keeping with current modern practice of enhancing budget oversight capacity of Parliaments.
10. Strategic Plan for Parliament designed and developed through an inclusive process which is owned by Parliament.
11. Rules on human resource management of the parliamentary service designed and approved by PSC and made applicable.
12. Exposed MPs to global and regional parliamentary events/discussions and agenda which improved their individual performance in the Chamber.
13. Improved collaboration with Parliaments in the region and encouraging peer learning from other established parliamentary services.
14. Parliamentary Committee on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) set up, possibly one of the few Parliaments in Africa to have done that and definitely the first in West Africa.
15. UNDP invested in a full time position of a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) in Parliament to provide ongoing technical advice – sometimes legal – to Parliament which was noted as useful.

Challenges/Limitations

1. Limited political will and space in Parliament for reform.
2. Limited skills and capacity of Members and some staff as well as limited number of professional staff.
3. A general feeling of opaqueness with regards UNDP budgetary allocations to Parliament as UNDP continues direct implementation modality.
4. Limited engagement of Parliament in recruitments undertaken by UNDP for positions in the parliamentary service.
5. It was difficult to measure performance against baseline data as the project started initially as single activity workplan. There was no overall statement for the whole timeframe on the theory of change for the project. Over the years, the Annual Work plans had baselines, indicators and targets which were in line with the proposed activities for that year but were not aligned to a long or medium term project cycle.
6. Current limitations, constitutional/as per practice, with regard to its budget, is a significant hindrance in the emergence of Parliament as a key institution of good governance. Parliament constitutionally speaking approves the national budget, any withdrawals from the consolidated fund yet is tied in terms of funding. Other challenges such as leadership of some committees, and the exalted role of executive in decision making limits its role and effectiveness.

7. Gender mainstreaming while noted as focus for UNDP, and in spite of the efforts of the CTA has been limited. Notwithstanding the technical support which ensured gender as a policy in the management of staff recruitments and promotions, a larger scale gender focus for Parliamentary political work was missing.
8. There is very limited scope for private members' to engage in law making which is not generally encouraged and minimal in-house capacity available to support private members' in their tasks. UNDP in its support was unable to make it a priority area of support.
9. Even though researchers were initially recruited, UNDP did not invest in parliamentary research as an important aspect of support for MPs.
10. Legislative department, though established, has very limited capacity. The Department requires to be empowered to handle legislative business in an impartial and non-partisan manner.
11. The parliamentary service lacks a robust human resource management system with regular performance appraisal mechanisms in place.
12. There is no training policy/plan for capacity building of technical staff. It is largely ad-hoc and dependent on donor support.
13. Large turnover rate of MPs, potential change in parliamentary leadership especially so during the fifth Parliament in 2018 are going to be major challenges before Parliament.
14. Limited number of technical staff particularly to do research and lack of infrastructure in terms of information resources, meeting rooms severely restricts the work of MPs and Parliament. While UNDP did set up the library and provide some of the essential resources, lot more is required in terms of access to latest information, research journals and books for improving the quality of research and information availability for MPs.
15. Though UNDP tried to push the gender agenda in Parliament, supported the recruitment and promotion of a few female staff, mainstreamed gender in the Conditions of Service for staff, set up the Women Caucus in the 4th Parliament, supported the Parliamentary Committee on Social Welfare, much, much more needs to be done to ensure the equal participation of women in decision-making spheres.
16. There is no strategy to design and develop an on-going, sustained, institutionalized training programme on Parliamentary procedure, processes and roles that could be delivered at the start of each term to MPs. Additionally, there is no sustained programme to educate the public service officials, CSOs and other stakeholders on the parliamentary processes and rules.
17. The concentration of power in the executive may threaten all the achievements to date.

Recommendations

1. This report recommends a next phase of support to Parliament of key strategic areas in coordination with other partners to avoid duplication to get value for money, to institutionalize the results to date and to address some of the identified constraints.
2. UNDP should synchronise its support to Parliament with the Parliament cycle and in that light consider putting in place a more structured project for Parliament for 4 years, with

dedicated funds and technical staff. Partnering with other traditional and non-traditional donors should be the way forward.

3. UNDP has invested in the setting up of the parliamentary service, the institutional arm of Parliament. Now that the basic support structure is in place, UNDP should give attention to the structure and functioning of the Parliament Service Commission, and key roles of Parliament in law making, representation and oversight. It may be worthwhile to look at the work of key committees such as the Legislative Committee, Mining Committee, Energy Committee, Social welfare, Health, etc. and support the process of operationalizing the mechanisms available to MPs to raise matters in the House.
4. Representational role of MPs is very important and has not been the focus of support by partners in Parliament. This is another area begging urgent attention.
5. Structurally, the UNDP must take advantage of and seize opportunities presented by the “unfinished” Constitutional Review Process to ensure that Parliament is strengthened.
6. The UNDP should develop a comprehensive, intensive orientation programme for the 5th Parliament and also make efforts to target staff of the public service so that public service officials are *au fait* with parliamentary procedures and timelines for reporting and appropriation processes
7. The UNDP should develop Parliamentary Procedures Manuals/Handbooks for the 5th Parliament.
8. It is important for the purposes of representation, outreach and incorporating citizens’ voices into the legislative process, that the UNDP support mechanisms to ensure linkages between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Parliament.
9. In the next cycle of support for Parliament UNDP must invest in stimulating interest of MPs in interconnected issues of development- budget analysis-poverty alleviation and thereby holding the government of the day accountable.
10. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the 2030 Agenda is the future of UN’s development work. Goal 16 which pertains to Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is the focus for UNDP and Parliament. UNDP should, keeping in view the IPU Handbook on SDGs, integrate the SDGs into the work of Parliament.

OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The overall objective of the evaluation is for UNDP to document the progress made in the last 10 years of its assistance to the Parliament of Sierra Leone and to understand the impact of the support in terms of achievements and the challenges and its comparative advantages during this period. Specifically, the evaluation will seek to:

- Summarize obtained and expected results – both direct and indirect – in relation to programme documents and logical frameworks; this includes an assessment of efficiency and effectivity including any deviations from original plans and objectives;
- Explore potential for sustainability and scale-up of successful practices;
- Provide recommendations for improving project quality and accountability to stakeholders and beneficiaries, thus contributing to wider learning within UNDP and outside.

The outcome of the exercise is expected to guide UNDP on the way forward. It will assist UNDP to plan its future engagement with the Parliament and whether it would be strategic to design a more a support Project in the context of the new Parliament in 2018.

Evaluation Methodology

The Consultant used a mixture of evaluation methods and tools to elicit appropriate answers to evaluation questions and produce the key evaluation deliverables. Data collection techniques included:

- Documents.
- Interview data.
- Institutional assessment data and benchmarking.
- Focus groups.
- Observations made during the visit.

The combination of these techniques allowed the Consultant to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and triangulate findings.

Limitations

This evaluation presents several challenges, including:

1. Availability of Baseline Data: Because the UNDP support to parliament initially started small, as a single activity work plan, no Project Implementation Plan (PIP) was prepared, and no Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) was found. As a result, it was difficult to measure performance against baseline data. The unavailability of Baseline Data and project information/documents made the task difficult. An evaluation exercise such as this one is simply supposed to measure achievements against targets. Without project documents that set out the targets to be achieved, it becomes difficult to measure achievements.
2. As the project was initiated as a one-off activity initially, no statement of theory of change for the project was available.

3. Attribution: Project impacts on governance are notoriously difficult to attribute as government policy making is complex, responds to multiple inputs and is subject to significant negotiation. In addition, there have been other interventions in governance and parliamentary strengthening in Sierra Leone.
4. Availability of Key Informants: Turn over at Parliament has been high in each election so it was difficult to find Parliamentarians who have benefitted from UNDP support from the beginning in 2007. In addition, it is through the UNDP support in the last couple of years that the parliamentary service has been put in place. Therefore, a few of the senior staff were the only ones who could share critical information with regard to the initial years.
5. Timing of Field Work: The field work in Sierra Leone for the evaluation was conducted during last week of parliament at a time when the whole nation was preparing for the dissolution of parliament. Parliament was very busy with a packed agenda characteristic of the last days of a parliament – sometimes, sittings during that week went up to mid-night. Thus, finding, scheduling and keeping meetings with MPs to the scheduled times and dates was particularly difficult. Notwithstanding that, attending the last week of the Parliament allowed for a critical perspective of the huge challenge in supporting the institutional strengthening of Parliament and the overall political dynamics within which UNDP has been doing its development work in Parliament.

Evaluation Framework

A detailed evaluation framework was prepared as part of the Evaluation Work Plan, which was circulated to key stakeholders. It outlined the issues and questions the evaluation sought to probe into.

Issues

The issues addressed by this evaluation are:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Complementary/Harmonised Approach
- Sustainability and the Way Forward
- Recommendations and lessons learned

Questions

The key evaluation questions are shown below:

On Relevance

1. What is the relevance of programme interventions with respect to a) the needs of key beneficiaries – MPs and Staff; b) the institutional development needs; and c) the national development priorities?
2. Were planned and delivered activities strategically relevant to address identified needs?

3. Were interventions relevant to other UNDP policies: Gender? Governance? Rule of Law? Human Rights? Human Development/SDGs?
4. To what degree are the capacities to manage institutional strengthening processes effectively in place and adequate within Parliament?
5. How have the strategies and interventions been designed to fit with context-specific factors such as specific institutional dynamics, mandate restrictions, conflicting priorities or the social, cultural, political and legal environment?

On Effectiveness

1. To what extent did the programme achieve its stated objectives, as defined by the proposal document and logical framework?
2. To what extent has the programme been able to meet challenges related to implementation and relevance, and incorporate learnings in subsequent phases of the programme?

On Efficiency

1. To what extent has the programme followed principles of cost-efficiency and efficient resource allocation in designing/conducting its activities and interventions?
2. Have interventions of the project(s) provided value for UNDP investment? How?
3. How effective and value-added were partnerships?
4. How does Parliament as a whole and MPs/Staff in particular perceive UNDP's role and influence with respect to their institutional development? With respect to building partnerships and/or engaging with other regional institutions and stakeholders? What do they think is an appropriate role for UNDP and other stakeholders in future?

On Sustainability

1. How has results-orientation and results-based management approaches been applied over the life of the programme? To what extent has the programme contributed to institutional learning within the UNDP in terms of programme design, monitoring, strategic planning and reporting?
2. Which are the characteristics of interventions and approaches that are more successful with respect to institutional support vs. those of interventions and approaches that are relatively less successful? How do these relate to the varying levels of institutional development of each partner? How can funding for each programme be better structured for increased results and effectiveness?

On Recommendations

1. What changes in UNDP future support/project would improve performance?

On Lessons Learned

1. What were the key challenges and constraints and how were they addressed?
2. What operational and managerial lessons learned can be identified for future initiatives?
What should have been done better and how?

Sources of Information

The Consultant used the following sources of information:

- Members of Parliament
- Staff and Senior Officials of Parliament
- UNDP Officials
- Partner Organization Staff
- Other Donor Agencies
- Country, program, project level documents

UNDP SUPPORT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE:

CONTEXT & PROJECT

The UNDP has been supporting the Parliament of Sierra Leone since 2007. The support started in an ad-hoc manner focussing on one or two activities in a year. After the peer learning visit to the Parliament of Uganda, which eventually led to the drafting of the Parliamentary Service Bill and its final passage into law was a critical turning point for the future of democratic governance in Sierra Leone. Having triggered this landmark change, UNDP, then went on to plan the future course of the development of the institutional backbone of Parliament, namely, the parliamentary service with the support of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, IOM and other agencies. Eventually, UNDP began to support activities in a more structured and consistent manner through technical support to rebuild the institution.

Sierra Leone came out of a protracted, violent civil war with a legacy of irreconcilable political divisions, widespread destruction of social and physical infrastructure, severe population displacement and dislocation, collapse of the State and polarized personality clashes of the political elite. To emphasize, the civil war in Sierra Leone not only destroyed schools and bridges, it also destroyed institutions of all kinds. It fatally weakened central government institutions through insecurity, which kept public services from operating, and through economic pressures that distorted or stopped payment of civil servants or the supply of basic goods. In addition, it destroyed social capital and local institutions through population displacement and widening of ethnic divisions. Above all, it created a culture of impunity and breakdown in the rule of law and spurred large-scale migration of skilled personnel abroad.

Against this background, and given the country's major developmental challenges, throughout its more than a decade of support to Parliament, UNDP has focused principally on supporting the country as it embarked on the long and arduous journey of building a democracy from scratch. This was based on the belief that sustainable recovery from violent conflict and autocracy depends on rebuilding all sectors of the society and re-constituting a viable, trusted State authority through the creation of democratic institutions with Parliament as the key symbol. In fact, there is an important causal link between the role of parliament and peacebuilding efforts. In countries coming out of conflict such as was the case of Sierra Leone a decade ago, through the platform for dialogue created by the democratic process, parliaments play a vital role in conflict prevention, resolution and management. They serve as venues where groups that have been fighting each other in the past now sit at the table and attempt to resolve their differences with words instead of bullets.

But these parliaments, because of the recent history of the country, often experience difficult transitions – they have very low capacities and are understaffed. In fact, in some of those cases – and this was true for Sierra Leone – they even lack the most rudimentary infrastructure of a democratic institution - proper meeting places, offices for the MPs or staff, proper washrooms with running water, systems and procedures for handling matters related to MPs.

Institution building, such as UNDP's interventions in the Sierra Leonian parliament is seen to be key to post-conflict recovery because research has demonstrated that many post-conflict recovery efforts are not sustained – over 50% of “post-conflict” countries experience a return to conflict within ten years mainly because of the lack of attention to the role of institution-building in preventing the renewal of conflict. Effective institutions are now widely viewed as critical to address both the “capacity deficit” and “legitimacy deficit” faced by fragile states – since only strong national institutions can ensure that the state is associated with provision of positive services to the population and can be held to account by its citizens. This fact has been recognised by the global community as evidenced by the inclusion of Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions in the SDGs.

The thrust of UNDP interventions was on organizational and human resource development. Organisational development sought to change and strengthen structures, processes and management systems within the parliament in order to improve organisational performance. Human resource development was concerned with how parliamentary staff are trained, how knowledge and skills are transferred to them, how competence is built up and how they are prepared for their current or future careers. This clear sustained strategic focus by UNDP has put in place the basic administrative framework, the parliamentary service, the essential adage to the political side of Parliament. This allows for embedding institutional memory of the work of parliament especially in the law-making process, wholly missing in fragile governance contexts in Africa and elsewhere and a framework for promoting and sustaining reform of the democratic governance processes particularly in terms of transparency and accountability. Additionally, it is now easier for other partners to engage with Parliament.

THE BASELINE

A “baseline” refers to measurements of key conditions (indicators) before a project begins, from which change and progress can be assessed. Sometimes baseline data is available, other times a baseline study is needed to determine baseline conditions. Baseline data provides a historical point of reference to: 1) inform program planning, such as target setting, and 2) monitor and evaluate change for program implementation and impact assessment.

Without baseline data, it can sometimes be very difficult to plan, monitor and evaluate future performance. Baseline data help to set achievable and realistic indicator targets for each level of result in a project's design (e.g. log frame), and then determine and adjust progress towards these targets and their respective results.

It is important to note that in the case of the parliament of Sierra Leone, the baseline was already known at the start of UNDP interventions. The situation in Sierra Leone, post-conflict, was a case of “*terra nullis*” - the parliament was left with nothing and had to start almost from zero. The country was faced with a near-total state collapse and immense physical and human destruction, with an institutional blank slate.

While this may be debatable, the facts point a clear situation of “*terra nullis*”. Parliamentary activities were seriously disrupted by a deadly civil war which began in March 1991. By the time the war ended, parliament, like other institutions in Sierra Leone was reduced to zero. Essentially, parliament only existed in name and was simply an appendage of the Executive.

According to the NDI, the decline of parliament started long before the war – during the period of one-party rule.

On 19 April 1971, the parliamentarians declared Sierra Leone a Republic and two days later voted for an executive presidency. Siaka Stevens, the then Prime Minister, became the country’s first president, with wide executive powers. The next two decades saw a phenomenal rise in the powers and authority of the presidency while those of the legislature continued to decline, as Parliament was reduced to rubber-stamping dictates from the executive branch.

The civil war compounded an already difficult situation. Describing how Parliament has changed in the last 10 years, a staff of parliament noted that:

Staff strength was very limited at the time, very few departments existed, the library in particular, was more of an archive than a library. Today, thanks to support from UNDP, the Library befits its name – there are sitting spaces, newer materials, computers and printers, access to electronic and hard copies of relevant materials etc.¹

By the time parliament was fully reconstituted in the early 2000s, its situation could be described in the following terms:

1. There was essentially no institution. Parliament was run by individuals – either the Speaker or the Clerk or both of them;
2. Weak and non-existent human resource – the institution was not respectable and people preferred to work in the public service rather than parliament;
3. There were only four (4) committee clerks each serving about eight (8) committees of parliament;
4. No administrative departments were in place nor any systems for running an institution;
5. The institution was run in an informal manner with recruitments not based on merit; and
6. No defined conditions of service.

Given that UNDP engaged in the task of supporting Parliament since 2007-08 from a near zero baseline particularly with reference to the parliamentary service which has been the key area of support, in order to make the evaluation more specific and targeted in terms of relevance and impact, the last 3 years will be the period of specific focus, that is, 2015, 2016 & 2017. It is noted that till 2014 the UN Mission was dealing with governance institutions through its political office

¹ Interview, Freetown, December 8, 2017.

and other agencies such as International Office for Migration (IOM) were partnering to support Parliament as part of the UN efforts. The Mission in Sierra Leone ended in 2014 and from then on, UNDP has been exclusively engaged in supporting the establishment of the parliamentary service.

In the years 2015, 2016 and 2017 UNDP spent about USD around USD 975,000 from its resources which included UNDP staff costs and operational costs. In these years primary programmatic focus was in one key area namely, *Policy, Strategic Planning and Communication of the Parliament Service strengthened to enable Parliament to pursue its mandated functions.*

In the period under review, the following are noted:

- Overall, 18 workshops were held in diverse areas including SDGs, financial process and budget, the role of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), the role parliamentary staff as well as on matters related to Constitutional review.
- Meaningful progress in designing/developing policies, systems and structures in the parliamentary service and effective coordination of the assistance to Parliament has been made.
- While the support was based on the annual Work Plan designed in consultation and in agreement with the Office of the Clerk of Parliament activities undertaken in each year had a link with the activities undertaken in the next year which allowed for continuity. For example, while the Parliament of Sierra Leone (Recruitment & Conditions of Service) Rules, 2016 were designed and approved in 2016 support for its application was provided in 2017.
- In terms of policy, in 2015 UNDP supported the design and development of the Strategic Plan 2016-2019 for the Parliament. In 2016, the document was finalized, approved by the parliamentary service Commission and laid on the Table signifying ownership. In 2015, the PBO was part of the work plan however, because of the ban on travel due to the EVD crisis in the region, the peer learning visits were postponed to 2016.
- In 2016, UNDP supported the parliament to undertake peer learning visits to two Parliaments, namely, Ghana & Uganda to understudy their PBOs and it was in 2017 that the House resolved to set up the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) as part of the parliamentary service. It was only after the approval that UNDP supported the recruitment of the economist and then ensured the visit of two experts from the PBO in Uganda to be the Parliament of Sierra Leone to share their experiences and guide MPs and key staff on the challenges and the way forward. Therefore, though UNDP seems to have worked on an annual work plan presented to the Project Board and signed by the Clerk of the House, continuity in terms of programmatic activities was maintained.
- Sustained technical support ensured a gradual build up each year and push for the approval and setting up of key offices in the parliamentary service. However, in some instances, while support was provided it did not continue into the next year. The pilot support to the Committees, namely, Parliamentary Committee on Health and the Parliamentary Committee on Social Welfare for outreach work in 2015 though a good prospective area of parliamentary support, was discontinued.
- On legislative outreach, in 2016, 5 schools were targeted and in 2017 3 schools were targeted. Each time, two MPs from the two parties represented in Parliament and the Clerk

participated in the outreach along with the staff to share their experience and to educate the youth about their role in Parliament. The activity was quite popular with the students and the media covered the event in the national television.

- In these three years south-south cooperation was promoted with peer learning visits to other Parliaments in the region – peer learning visits on PBO to Parliament of Ghana and Uganda; organizational management peer learning visit to the Parliament of Uganda for key staff of ICT, Human resources, Finance and Audit to integrate their information database; two staff, one from Committees and the Monitoring & Evaluation officer were supported to visit the Parliament of Ghana to understudy their monitoring mechanisms. These visits have triggered new thinking and perspectives on the way forward and ownership of the intended change. The challenge going forward is to sustain the new perspectives on institutional reform and to carry it forward.
- Also, UNDP encouraged participation of MPs in key global conferences. The Deputy Chair of the Legislative Committee was supported to attend the Global Legislative Conference in Kiev, Ukraine in 2017 and the IPU Rapporteur was supported to attend the high level meeting on SDGs at New York. Exposure to a first time MP to a global event led him to take serious look at his task as Deputy Chair of the Legislative Committee and helped him to invest more time and energy into his assignments within the chamber. While this is a notable change, it remained at the individual level and did not cascade to the larger group of MPs.
- A key achievement of 2017 has been the setting up of the Parliamentary Committee on SDGs and the series of workshops conducted to brief MPs and staff on the Goals, targets and indicators and the development of the national framework of targets and indicators.
- While gender agenda was a focus area not much was achieved because of the lack of political will to push for the reform either through an Act or through the Constitutional review process.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Overall, the UNDP's interventions in the Parliament of Sierra Leone is credited with some major achievements despite starting from a base that was challenging. Specific notable achievements of the UNDP include:

1. The promulgation of the Parliamentary Service Act, 2007. Following a peer visit to Uganda supported by the UNDP, the Parliament of Sierra Leone passed the Parliamentary Service Act, 2007, leading to the setting up of the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC). One key importance of the Act is that it separated the Parliament from the public service. In most African countries and emerging democracies, Parliaments are confronted with the issue of independence, particularly from the Executive. One "cure" to the malaise of Executive dominance has been the establishment by Parliaments, of a PSC which works to ensure at the very least, that a Parliament has autonomy not only to determine its staffing but also its finances. The establishment of the Parliamentary Service Commission in Sierra Leone has ensured that the Parliament has taken the first giant step towards its autonomy. While autonomy may not come without a continuous struggle with the Executive, the PSC provides a solid foundation has been laid.
2. Through the efforts of the UNDP, an organogram was developed for the Parliament. The organogram clearly delineated various positions and key functions of various departments of the institution. Following the development of the organogram, the UNDP supported the recruitment of key professional staff to fill some positions identified in the organogram. (Lakshmi, kindly help here with the positions that were filled). The quality of the output of a Legislature, to a very large extent, depends on the quality of support that Members receive from the parliamentary service. It is for this reason that an effective and efficient parliamentary service, made up of very qualified staff, is critical for the proper functioning of the Parliament of Sierra Leone. The recruitment of qualified staff helped ensure that the Parliament has the core staff it needs to begin carrying out its functions. Without doubt, the most important assets of every institution are its human resource. Without them, the institution cannot deliver on its mandate. It is against this background that the recruitment of key professional staff is viewed to have significantly impacted on the performance of the Parliament of Sierra Leone.
3. Following a comprehensive assessment of various donor support to the Parliament of Sierra Leone with their attendant overlaps and duplications, the UNDP helped set up the Parliamentary Assistance Coordination Office (PACO) – now the Department of Parliamentary Assistance Coordination (DePAC). In the last decade, there has been growing interest in the work of Parliaments around the world, with the emergence of various agencies/donors/institutions willing to support the work of Parliaments in various ways. Sierra Leon is no exception to this phenomenon. In order to maximize the support received and the growing interest from these institutions, PACO was set up and it has

evolved into DePAC. In terms of impact, DePAC has managed and harmonised all support coming to the institution; ensured that support is targeted and monitored. It also ensured that interventions are fairly distributed and not duplicated. Most importantly, it ensured linkages between development partners, the leadership of Parliament and the administration of Parliament. Overall, DePAC support to Parliament responded to the capacity and resource needs of Parliament as per the strategic objectives identified in Parliament's Strategic Plan.

4. The Library of Parliament which was virtually non-existent, was revived through the support of the UNDP. Parliamentary Libraries are important in supporting MPs and staff to carry out their duties through the supply of information which is the 'life blood of parliaments'. It should be noted that access to and use of information is fundamental to parliamentary performance in all three core areas of legislation, representation and oversight. MPs' ability to perform their roles all along the policy and legislative cycle is shaped by their access to authoritative and reliable information. However, in many African Parliaments such as Sierra Leone, parliamentary libraries do not have access to up-to-date collections and journal subscriptions. This can make it difficult to inform debates with the latest research, especially in the content of increasingly complex and highly specialized policy issues. By reviving the Library, the UNDP has laid the groundwork and prepared the institution to position itself to provide information needed for the execution of the duties of MPs and staff. It is expected that as the Library's resource base increase, it will be in a position to respond to requests for information as well as assist users find relevant evidence for their work.
5. Given the importance of technology in the effective running and functioning of every modern institution, the UNDP supported the creation of an efficient ICT infrastructure in Parliament. The institution today boasts of a LAN, a functioning Server and a Website which Parliament manages on its own. Improvements in Parliament's ICT capabilities has helped the institution properly keep its records and plans are afoot to create a system through which, at the touch of a button, staff will know the movements of records and in whose custody such records are. Most importantly, the system will guarantee the safety and security of documents and records, particularly those related to the Bills. In addition, today, thanks to ICT improvements, communication between committee secretariats and committee members has been improved. It is expected that in the future, the time spent producing and circulating important documents to members will significantly reduce. Most importantly, through an improved website, interface between Parliament and citizens has improved thereby enhancing representation.
6. Through the support of the UNDP, the Legislative department was established not only to provide technical support but also keep records, document votes and proceedings of the Parliament. The corporate memory of most developing country parliaments is deficient

because of poor management of records, particularly legislative records. This was the case in Sierra Leone. UNDP's support was aimed at ensuring that Parliament's legislative records are not only properly kept, it should also be possible to track legislative file movements. While the department is still in its infancy, the basic structures are in place to ensure that Parliament manages its legislative records and help MPs perform one of their most important roles – Lawmaking.

7. Through a resolution of Parliament, at the instance of the UNDP, a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) was established, in keeping with current modern practice of enhancing budget oversight capacity of Parliaments. While the Office is yet to be fully operational with its full complement of technical staff, its potential value is immense. Through the establishment of the PBO, Parliament has positioned itself to have a unit that will provide independent analytic budget information to put it on a more equal footing with the executive branch. If the Parliament of Sierra Leone is to play a substantive role in the budget process, it will be well served by the information that the PBO will provide. While the information produced by the Office may be more valuable to the Parliament as a whole, as a means to balance the executive's budget power, as the Office ages, the information it produces may be of more value to minority parties in Parliament in their relationship to the majority party.
8. The UNDP also funded the development of a Strategic Plan for Parliament. The Plan has helped provide a sense of direction for Parliament, with measurable goals. It has been a useful tool that has guided the day-to-day decisions of Parliament. In addition, the Plan has served as a guide for the development of new partnerships with Parliament. Specifically, the Plan has informed the European Union in the development of its current support to Parliament.
9. UNDP has promoted South-south cooperation and peer learning initiatives with noticeable achievements starting from the Parliamentary Service Act to the visit of the PBO experts from the Parliament of Uganda.
10. The UNDP also supported the pilot effort to open Parliament to the youth by providing opportunities for taking parliament to the schools. This civic education of school children was led by staff of Parliament with technical and financial support from UNDP. By all accounts, this has been an experience which can surely be expanded to even local communities. At the heart of every democracy is the concept of representation. Parliamentarians are elected and appointed to represent the diversity in society and to articulate the voices, opinions and perspectives of citizens in the public policy making space that Parliament creates. Parliament offers the forum for issues of local and national importance to be debated and for those debates to be translated into sound policies. Effective representation requires that citizens are able to contribute to the work of Parliament. Getting young people, the future leaders abreast of what is happening in Parliament has a significant impact not only on representation but the overall quality of democracy.

11. The UNDP also supported the first African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)-European Union (EU), ACP-EU regional conference in Sierra Leone. Following this conference, Sierra Leone got the vice presidency of the ACP-EU.
12. Finally, and most importantly, the UNDP permanently stationed a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) in Parliament to provide ongoing technical advice – sometimes legal – to Parliament. Beyond technical support, it is worthy of note that the trust and confidence in the CTA increased communication between Parliament and the UN System and enabled resolving key outstanding policy issues/decisions.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation findings are outlined under the evaluation issues of relevance to the priorities and needs of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, effectiveness in achieving set objectives, efficiency in managing the resources provided to achieve these objectives, harmonisation and coordination with other programming in the sector, and sustainability and the way forward.

Relevance

In terms of relevance of the UNDP support to the Parliament of Sierra Leone, the key questions of interest were: What was the relevance of the interventions with respect to: a) the needs of key beneficiaries – MPs and Staff; b) the institutional development needs; and c) the national development priorities? Were planned and delivered activities strategically relevant address identified needs?

The main thrust of the UNDP support to parliament through the years has been to address the key needs of the institution in particular. Given the situation of parliament, there was the need to focus on:

- (a) building institutional capacity; and
- (b) putting in place, systems and processes to create a functioning institution.

In terms institutional capacity, first, UNDP focused on technical support to build functional capacities within parliament. A Technical Advisor was stationed in parliament to provide on-going support and advise to the Leadership of Parliament, to the Parliamentary Service Commission, to the Office of the Clerk, to the various Departments of Parliament as well as to the key oversight committees of Parliament.

Secondly, there was a focus on organizational change, leadership and social cohesion. The UNDP supported the operationalization of aspects of the Parliamentary Service Act, 2007, which established a Parliamentary Service, separate and distinct from the civil service and to be managed by a Parliamentary Service Commission. According to the Act, the Commission is tasked with the task of formulating policy for the Parliamentary Service, determining the conditions of service for the Service as well as preparing the budget of Parliament, among many other functions (see Annex 1 for the full list of functions of the Commission).

The UNDP might not have been solely responsible for the establishment of the Commission but because of the important role bestowed on the Commission and potential impact of that role in institution building and cohesion, the UNDP has been instrumental, through the on-going support of the UNDP Technical Advisor, to a large extent, in helping the Commission in properly discharging its duties, particularly those that relate to ensuring that systems and procedures are in place to ensure the smooth functioning of the institution. Building institutions from a situation where virtually no systems and procedures exist can be daunting. Thanks to the support of the Technical Advisor, systems related to Human Resource and Finance were put in place as very important

steps of institutional building and renewal. In addition, the Technical Advisor, based on her parliamentary experience, provided day-to-day guidance to the Commission based on best practices from different parts of the continent and beyond. In the words of the Deputy Speaker – Hon. Cherno Bah, “the presence of Lakshmi helped the Commission and Parliament tremendously”.²

Third, UNDP support focused on functional and system capacities creating key structures within parliament to enable the institution function. UNDP provided support to parliament to create and make operational, nine (9) departments. These departments include the Hansard Department, ICT Department, Public Relations Department, Committees Department, Legislative Department, Library Department, Finance Department, the Public Affairs Department and Human Resource Department. This was guided by the belief that a strong, dynamic, and effective Parliament cannot exist without a parliamentary administration of equal quality. The organization of the parliamentary administration is a key component of a successful parliamentary institution. The human resource management and policies, internal administration and finance management, internal audit processes and the provision of modern facilities and improved information technology (IT) system are critically essential for building a strong Parliamentary institution.

The creation of the departments required requisite human resources to perform their functions. The UNDP recruited and, in some cases, paid the salaries of staff for a transitional period, after which parliament took over. In particular, the UNDP was instrumental in hiring, in one instance, 20 researchers and committee clerks. This singular act, permanently changed the human resource dynamics and capacity in parliament and ensured that the institution has the most important resource – technical people - it needs to function properly. Rebuilding and renewing institutions requires systems and procedures but most importantly, the technical people who can make the systems work effectively.

Fourth, the UNDP with support from international consultants, through the project and technical inputs from the Chief Parliamentary Technical Advisor, developed the following tools for the parliament of Sierra Leone:

1. PoSL (Recruitment & Conditions of Service), Rules, 2016
2. Set of booklets on the Parliament for information of MPs and other visitors;
3. A Financial Manual;
4. Strategic Plan 2016-2019

These tools are aimed at building the broader policy framework for running the institution professionally, based on rules, regulations and principles and that decisions are not made based on kinship, personal relationships and guess work.

Fifth, Communication. Communication is pervasive in all areas of organizational life. It is generally the process of transferring information from one source to another. Proper and good

² Interview in Freetown, December 8, 2017.

communication skills in terms of verbal, written and contractual are very essential at all stages of a project from inception till completion. One of the aspects of the UNDP support has been to streamline parliamentary communication. Apart from the support for ICT department to set up the website, UNDP had also supported in bringing out the parliamentary newsletter. After two issues, due to lack of other funding support it was discontinued. One practice which has continued is the press releases which are brought out regularly by the department of Public relations and also placed on the parliament website. In addition, the UNDP ensured that internal communication within was standardized so was communication between Parliament and other institutions – standard letterheads were developed, memos and structure of official communication were standardized. This is to ensure that, in particular, communication coming from Parliament is accorded the respect and seriousness it deserves.

At critical times, UNDP supported the Department to air radio programmes. One such instance was during the EVD crisis, when messages, jingles, etc. were created in the local languages and distributed to local community radios. Another innovation introduced was to have a phone-in programme for parliamentary committees during outreach visits so that local communities could give feedback and also attend the stakeholder meetings. This without doubt, ensured that Parliament connected very well with the people, particularly during a very difficult period in the life of Sierra Leone. The impact of such an intervention was it rebuilt citizens' confidence in a key institution of state and an arm of government. The programme also afforded Parliament the opportunity to get first hand feedback from the people regarding government interventions, particularly on the EVD crisis. Though several new initiatives were undertaken and found to be successful, these were not sustained as the expectation was that Parliament would take them forward.

Sixth, gender. Even though difficult, efforts were made to support gender initiatives both at the level of MPs and the parliamentary administration. Women Caucus, an initiative supported from the beginning, did take shape in the third Parliament and was able to garner support from the UN Mission as well as UN Women. However, in the fourth Parliament, due to political wrangling there were initial difficulties in setting up of the caucus. With UNDP intervention, negotiation and dialogue it was formed, and some activities were even supported. However, again, the party politics overtook the gender agenda and as a result there were hardly any instance where the women MPs could take a stand cutting across party lines. Overall, it may be said that though there has not been much success at the level of MPs, but some limited success was achieved within the parliamentary administration. For the first time in the history of the parliament, by dint of the efforts of the UNDP, a woman was appointed Director, to head the Department of Parliamentary Assistance Coordination. Another woman was appointed to the Table Office to join what has over the years, been an all male "face of parliament" during parliamentary sittings.

Seventh, in 2015, UNDP supported the development of the Strategic Plan for Parliament 2016 – 2019, providing direction and focus to the work of Parliament. The Strategic Plan was prepared with a focus on four (4) key Strategic Goals that were aimed at helping build on its recent achievements but also its long-term development. The Goals were interconnected and aimed at helping Parliament achieve its vision of being a beacon of peace, hope, democracy and good

governance for the people of Sierra Leone. These include: Building the Institutional Capacity of Parliament; Strengthening Lawmaking; Strengthening Oversight; and Making Parliament Representative and Accessible to citizens. The document was laid on the Table signifying ownership. This document is expected to provide a direction to other development partners willing to support Parliament.

Effectiveness

In terms of effectiveness, key questions were: To what extent did interventions achieve their stated objectives? To what extent has the programme been able to meet challenges related to implementation and relevance, and incorporate learnings in subsequent phases of the programme? Most importantly, how big was the effectiveness or impact of the interventions compared to the objectives planned (Comparison: result –planning).

The following table shows the expected results and the level of achievement for each of the key outputs. Outcome and impact level results are also indicated.

Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Establishment of and support to Parliamentary Service Commission.	Improved organization and management of the administrative arm of Parliament.	Streamlined administration of Parliament.
Establishment of the position of a Senior Parliamentary Technical Advisor who was attached to Parliament.	Availability of In-House technical/legal support that enhanced the activities of the Parliamentary Service Commission and various departments	Improvement in the performance of the administration and built continuity and trust with the UN after the closure of the UN Mission in SL in 2014.
Support to parliament to create and make operational, nine (9) departments. Some of these departments included the Hansard Department, ICT Department, Public Relations Department, Committees Department, Library Department, Legislative Department and Human Resource Department.	Beginning of a professional service with diverse skills to handle the work of Parliament and to provide services to support the work of MPs	A parliamentary service distinct from the public service has been created and entrenched which is irreversible.
Recruitment of and in some cases, payment of the salaries of staff for a transitional period, after which parliament took over. In particular, the UNDP was instrumental in hiring, in one instance, 20 research and committee clerks.	Functional departments with minimum to relatively adequate staffing requirements	Improved Human Resource capacity of Parliament.

Capacity building/training and exposure programs for staff that were recruited as well as existing staff in order to appropriately support MPs in discharging their duties.	Enhanced capacity of staff to provide the needed support to MPs	Support to committees and MPs enhanced.
Development of for the parliament of Sierra Leone: 1. PoSL (Recruitment & Conditions of Service), Rules, 2016 2. Set of booklets on the Parliament for information of MPs and other visitors; 3. A Financial Manual;	Operational efficiency linked to the streamlining of operations within the parliament	Systems and procedures in place to ensure the smooth administration of Parliament.
Development of the Strategic Plan for Parliament for 2016 – 2019, providing direction and focus to the work of Parliament. The Strategic Plan was prepared with a focus on four (4) key Strategic Goals that were aimed at helping build on its recent achievements but also its long-term development.	Guided institutional development and external support/assistance	Parliament’s priorities clearly defined and streamlined.

Efficiency

Staff of parliament, along with some MPs, all conveyed a strong knowledge of the project as well as its activities. Participants in workshops, study tours and training sessions were able to describe what they had learned and how they used what they had learned. Many participants in study tours were able to provide examples of ideas that had been brought back to Sierra Leone and they are in the process of adapting them to suit their needs.

Planning and preparation of study tours were said to have been well coordinated and facilitated. Staff who went on various study tours were given requisite training and equipped with relevant knowledge to help them in their work.

In general, staff had a good opinion of the work and effectiveness of the UNDP, particularly the Chief Parliamentary Technical Advisor. Many staff commended her for her professionalism, organisation, follow up, reminders and flexibility in scheduling, timely information and resource support. The interventions of the UNDP and the various activities undertaken as part of its partnership with parliament were seen as addressing the priority needs of the institution.

The efforts to ensure gender balance, particularly in the administration of parliament led to the appointment of the first female Director to head the newly created Department of Parliamentary Assistance Coordination (DePAC) as well as the appointment of a female to the Table Office are commendable and tie in very well with global development priorities, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While gender representation in parliamentary administration is not adequate, it is a very good start.

Complementarity/Harmonised Approach

The Paris Declaration identified alignment, harmonization, results management and mutual accountability as key pillars for aid effectiveness. The Paris Agenda implies that more support should harmonise to support national strategies for poverty reduction and/or for a sectoral strategy or programme, in order to lower transaction costs and improve coherence by providing harmonised and flexible donor support to the entire programme of the cooperation partner rather than to a series of discrete projects.

In the case of Sierra Leone, through the efforts of UNDP and other donors, the Parliamentary Affairs Coordination Office (PACO) was created with the sole purpose of ensuring the harmonization of donor support to parliament. The UNDP technical advisor is attached to this office to mentor the key staff and ensure that there is no duplication. The office was recently transformed into a department and renamed Department of Parliamentary Assistance Coordination (DePAC). The UNDP has actively sought to make more effective use of its assistance to parliament by finding ways to complement and harmonise its support to parliament. Specifically, UNDP has collaborated with the CPA U.K. Branch, African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) and other partners who have/are currently supporting Parliament.

SUSTAINABILITY, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

As demonstrated in the previous section, there has been useful progress in strengthening the Parliament of Sierra Leone, but there is still significant work to be done as Parliament faces on-going constraints. While this evaluation shows some progress in terms of parliament's trajectory towards an ability to perform its representative, legislative and oversight functions, fully performing these roles is still a challenge. This is demonstrated by a parallel assessment conducted alongside this evaluation, to document the achievements and challenges of the parliament from 2012-2017. For instance, most of the MPs interviewed during the assessment were of the view that most Bills were rushed and not effectively scrutinized, few oversight activities were conducted due to lack of funds and where they did, oversight reports were often

not tabled and not debated. Most importantly, there is a serious challenge to representation – most MPs argued that citizens did not understand their role. What is clear is that there is awareness and interest on the part of the Parliament of Sierra Leone to continue to collaborate with the donor partners.

Both institutional and individual efforts to strengthen Parliament, if systematized, will sustain the efforts of the UNDP for long-term benefits. With the development of a strategic plan and the establishment of the Department of Parliamentary Assistance Coordination, Parliament is better prepared to take a leading role in harmonizing and coordinating collaboration with donors and there is a high probability that capacity building responding the Parliament's stated priorities will be institutionalized. Skill development, infrastructural improvement and institutional structures are critical for sustainability. Needs include:

- Strengthening of key units of the Parliamentary Service to complement the work of the House such as Public Affairs, ICT and Research sections, through long and short-term training, could allow them to serve as useful springboard for the continuous development of MPs and the specific Units;
- The setting up of a Parliamentary Budget and Research Office will institutionalize budget analysis and research, which are key to Parliamentary business for sustained action and effective policy development function;
- The setting up of the Office of Parliamentary Legal Counsel and a Legislative Drafting Unit will potentially be useful in supporting the Legislative function of parliament – Bill analysis as well as drafting of Private Members' Bill; and
- Physical infrastructure in the form of office space for MPs will be of immense benefit in supporting the work of future MPs;

Many **challenges** remain, some perceived at the level of Parliament and some beyond the scope of Parliament and the project which may pose as threats to the sustainability of the achievements, including:

- Limited political will and space in Parliament for reform. MPs and the leadership of Parliament have a strong attachment to party, thereby making decisions not in the interest of the institution but rather the party and executive. This is true with the majority as it is with the minority. This is partly due to their parochial interests and partly due to some of the legal restrictions in the Constitution, i.e. article 77(K), based on which Members could be expelled from their party and eventually from House. This provision in particular, is said to be key factor, together with the strong whip system, that has dampened MPs' enthusiasm as they are constantly reminded of the implications of statements they make on the floor, their actions in general and the potential of being expelled from their parties. Parliament and the nation will significantly benefit if MPs assert themselves, make decisions that enure to the benefit of the nation and not party;
- Limited skills and capacity of Members and some staff as well as limited number of professional staff. Even though the UNDP has supported the recruitment of some technical staff, there is still a dearth of skill, particularly for research and analyses; writing;

legislative drafting and most importantly administrative skills within the senior leadership of the administration of Parliament. On the part of MPs, the selection process by their various parties ends up with MPs who come to the House not because of their skills but because of their popularity and potential to attract votes. In addition, the high attrition rate that normally comes with elections means that sometimes, more than 50% of experienced MPs do not make it back to the House; new MPs come in with little or no skills. The implications of these is the fact that once the 5th Parliament is in place; some efforts will need to be devoted to filling up these skills gaps;

- A general feeling of opaqueness with regards UNDP budgetary allocations to Parliament as UNDP continues direct implementation modality. Parliament would like to have clarity in terms of planned activities, the budget allocations and how funds are disbursed. Most importantly, the Office of the Clerk in particular, would like to be part of the financial decision-making processes;
- Limited engagement of Parliament in recruitments undertaken by UNDP for positions in the parliamentary service. There is general feeling that when decisions about recruitments are made, Parliament is not actively involved – it only gets informed about the recruitments even though in the end, those recruited are going to work in Parliament and not at the UNDP;
- Current constitutional/legislation limitations of Parliament regarding independent funding, leadership of some committees, private members' actions and the role of executive in decision making limit sustainability. Even though now Parliament has a PSC, thanks partly to the support of the UNDP, the institution still relies on the 'benevolence' of the executive particularly for decisions regarding its funding. This makes decision making and setting Parliament's priorities difficult thereby impacting sustainability, particularly of some of the results achieved by the UNDP;
- The lawmaking function of Parliament is still beset with some challenges. The UNDP has helped establish a Legislative department. As indicated earlier, this has helped in streamlining lawmaking, albeit, more remains to be done. One other dimension of the challenge to lawmaking is the role of the Clerk, appointed by the President and a custodian of Bills before they become law. It is important that the Office operates in an independent manner, free from executive pressures so that laws that are passed by Parliament are the ones that make it to executive;
- Large turnover rate of MPs, potential change in parliamentary leadership (especially so during the fifth Parliament in 2018) combined with the low involvement of Parliamentary Service Staff in training and capacity building to institutionalise training programmes that could be delivered at the start of each term, threaten sustainability;
- Training and monitoring activities remain ad hoc and/or poorly budgeted for in Parliament's vote resulting in over dependence on donors who work on limited term projects;
- Although donor support for Parliament, particularly UNDP's, has yielded results in terms of creating the basic institutional infrastructure, it is still insufficient. An effective parliamentary service requires a set of extremely professional team with expertise in key areas for providing the necessary support to MPs;

- In addition, the constitutional constraints, and the concentration of power in the executive may threaten all the achievements to date. The Constitutional Review Process, currently inconclusive, will be an important issue for the 5th Parliament. If handled well, particularly at the beginning of its mandate, there will be huge opportunities to bring about major reforms that have the potential to disperse power amongst the three arms of government instead of the current concentration in the hands of the executive;
- Though the project managed to create the Department of Human Resources, Conditions of Service, etc., the parliamentary service lacks a robust human resource management system with regular performance appraisal mechanisms in place. There is lack of standardization in all areas of parliamentary service management;
- Machines to record the attendance of staff put in place but not used to effectively monitor staff; and
- PACO, now, DePAC created for donor coordination, however, internal mechanisms/architecture for overall planning and priority setting is still very ad-hoc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For countries that are fragile and coming out of war, institution building and setting up systems has been proved to be one of the best approaches to helping them get back on the path of sustainable recovery. The UNDP support to parliament through the years has had that thrust.

It must be noted that UNDP support to Parliament has created the Parliamentary Service Commission framework/architecture and managed to establish the parliamentary service which is here to stay. It has put the Parliament on a trajectory towards an enabling setting to perform its representative, legislative and oversight functions. However, while this is a significant achievement, for UNDP there is need to consolidate the achievements and firm up the institution to ensure that Parliament is enabled to perform its constitutional role of law making, oversight and representation. In order to move in that direction for UNDP there is an urgent need for a structured, programmatically well planned medium-term, 3-4-year project. In that context, any project for future support to the Parliament must focus on innovative ways on how to deal with the four major issues, namely, Weak Capacity for oversight and lawmaking; Zero political will for oversight; the fear for representation; and the gender challenge – at least 30% gender representation in Parliament.

Further, it is important to keep in context some systemic issues that are characteristic of Parliaments especially given the fact that change within the Legislature is often convoluted, unpredictable and never fully meeting the expectations of any of the interested parties. Development is disjointed as members incrementally add new institutional mechanisms without dismantling pre-existing ones which renders such development programming ever-ongoing and open-ended. This, I believe has been the context within which the UNDP has operated over the years. For future programming, it will be important for the UNDP to:

- ***Synchronize Support with Parliamentary Cycle***

Given that politics characterizes all activities in Parliaments and given the often-unpredictable nature of the institution, planning is difficult. To address this challenge and get the most out of any support to Parliament, donors/partners must take account of the electoral cycle. This is important for three main reasons:

First, there is the need to initiate programmes at the beginning of the election cycle to take advantage of the normal four-year cycle for visible change to occur.

Second, because of the high attrition that characterize this particular election, new MPs are also more likely to be enthusiastic about the opportunities to enhance their career through change. As a result, there is usually an early opportunity to establish new patterns of behaviour and practices amongst MPs.

Third, and related, it normally takes time for MPs to establish ways of working in committee, plenary and in constituency. Thus, programmes designed at the start of a new Parliament have a better chance of building collegiality between MPs.

- ***Recognize Resistance to Change***

Governance projects, particularly, parliament support projects which seek to institutionalise democratic governance suffer from resistance to change by the elites. Lyndon Johnson, US President (1963 and 1968) suggested that “You can put an awful lot of whiskey into a man if you just let him sip it. But if you try to force the whole bottle down his throat at one time, he’ll throw it up.” In the same vein, in designing and supporting Parliaments, donors/partners need to be mindful of the possibilities of “push back” and be sensitive to such potential resistance. Against this background and recognizing the potential for resistance, there is the need to develop a political strategy for reform that is built from the attitudes and expectations of MPs themselves and respond to issues as they arise.

In light of the above and based on what has been achieved through the UNDP support over the years as well as the challenges likely to be faced by the fifth Parliament in 2018, the following specific recommendations are proposed:

1. Structurally, the UNDP must take advantage of and seized opportunities presented by the “unfinished” Constitutional Review Process to ensure that: first, some of the “nuisance” provisions that affect the independence of Parliament are removed; second, that the independence of Parliament and the PSC is guaranteed; and third, mechanisms are put in place to ensure that Parliament gets the right budgetary allocation to carry out its constitutionally mandated functions. In sum, there is the need to work towards removing the restrictions on Parliament’s formal powers by constitutional provisions which have had the effect of making the Parliament of Sierra Leone a less-than-equal partner with the Executive in the governance process;
2. Address MPs’ capacity and knowledge gaps with regards to their legislative and oversight functions. This could be done by designing a long-term, robust program that addresses the needs of the institution based on the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan and based on the emerging needs of the new Parliament. It is also important to strengthen the legislative department so that it can perform the full complement of its roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, there will be the need to ensure that the Budget and Research Office is fully operational with the right technical expertise needed so that it can provide the much-needed technical support to MPs and staff in the area of oversight and lawmaking;
3. In line with the above, it is important that the UNDP develops a comprehensive, intensive orientation programme for the 5th Parliament. Today, the role of an MP can be a nebulous one and the accountabilities unclear. As statutory office-holders, they are not in a simple employer – employee relationship. They are not contractually obliged to perform specific tasks to particular standards, nor are they required to meet minimum skills and

qualifications criteria. And yet the public's expectations of what they could and should be doing are sky-high and any failure to meet these expectations means considerable disappointment or criticism. While it is difficult to argue against the value of an induction program for parliamentarians, it is important to point out the fact that there are barriers to successful implementation and uptake that Parliaments need to address. A key one is the engagement and motivation of members themselves. Parliaments and partners may develop stimulating, varied and useful programmes for members but these will mean nothing if members do not avail themselves of opportunities.

4. Furthermore, it is important for the UNDP to help develop Parliamentary Procedures Manuals/Handbooks for the 5th Parliament. In a situation of high turnover, low levels of skills on the part of MPs and parliamentary staff, such Manuals will provide guides to basic parliamentary information in an easy-to-read format. They will simply be primers on parliamentary fundamentals.
5. It is important for the purposes of representation, outreach and incorporating citizens' voices into the legislative process, that the UNDP support mechanisms to ensure linkages between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Parliament. It is generally argued that globalization and other issues of importance to the public are prompting non-governmental organizations to become more active in shaping policy agendas. Parliaments and CSOs both work in the same sphere, which is independent from the government and perform the same tasks relating to the oversight and critique of the government. Hence, there are in-built complementarities between parliament and CSOs, which, when nurtured and developed, ensures to the benefit of society.
6. Finally, a need to focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), recognizing the missed opportunities by Parliaments on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), have been pro-active in developing a toolkit to enable parliamentarians identify good practices, gaps, opportunities and lessons learned. It is also aimed that equipping parliamentarians to effectively institutionalize the new agenda and mainstream the various goals into the legislative process. The UNDP should invest in awareness creation, find a way to encourage the use of the IPU toolkit in the 5th Parliament as well as ensure that the SDGs are mainstreamed in every aspect of the work of the 5th Parliament and broadly into the national discourse, led by MPs.

CONCLUSIONS

The UNDP has, in the last ten years, been the most consistent partner of the Parliament of Sierra Leone. Its support has been, and remains, relevant to the needs and priorities of the parliament of Sierra Leone. It has produced some good results at all levels. In general, the impressions of UNDP support are positive: it has been responsive to the needs of the parliament, staff and MPs as well as the committees and departments it has supported over the years. The UNDP support, particularly the Chief Parliamentary Technical Advisor, is well known to other donors and in general, interventions have complemented rather than duplicated the efforts of other parliamentary support efforts.

Nonetheless, it had weakness in its design as mentioned earlier in the text. Due to lack of data on the structure of the UNDP's interventions, it has not been possible to determine the major risks identified at the beginning of the interventions and whether or not they have materialized in ways that have dramatically affected project performance. There is a clear need to invest more on risk management, monitoring and evaluation and related programmatic issues.

Most staff and MPs have been committed to working with the UNDP to improve their performance, and while partisanship, reported to be on the increase, has not really affected overall project performance.

Systemic and structural problems, such as the influence of political parties, Executive dominance of Parliament, prevent the Parliament of Sierra Leone from full effectiveness in its legislative, oversight and representational roles. These problems place the overall goal of making parliament the lead in ensuring accountability and transparency at risk. There is widespread recognition of these problems within Sierra Leone and discussions on how they should be addressed. The initiative for change must come from Sierra Leoneans, but UNDP can and should provide support and assistance to Parliament of Sierra Leone if requested to do so.

Therefore, this report recommends a next phase of support to Parliament on key strategic areas in coordination with other partners to avoid duplication, to get value for money, to institutionalize the results to date and to attempt to address some of the identified constraints. It is recommended that it cover at least 3-4 years of the 5th Parliament and mobilize resources through the partners on ground and others who support parliamentary development globally.

Further, on the way forward, it is recommended that the support should be well-structured and focussed on two-three identified focus areas and very specific. Adequate attention should be paid to generate baselines, targets and indicators clearly for the project.

Gender mainstreaming while noted as focus for UNDP, and in spite of the efforts of the CTA has been limited. Notwithstanding the technical support which ensured gender as a policy in the management of staff recruitments and promotions, a larger scale gender focus for Parliamentary political work was missing. Therefore, a clear gender focus for parliamentary work must be an integral part of the next phase.

Technical advisory support is, no doubt, being appreciated by the leadership, MPs and staff. Dedicated technical support requires to be continued particularly on the focus areas of the new cycle of support.

There is also a need to enlarge the scope and pay more attention to the political side of Parliament. This is being proposed in view of the expectation of a more diverse Parliament and the potential for relatively more political space for reform. This may also be important in the context of the finalization of the outstanding Constitutional Review Process which may come before the 5th Parliament.

For UNDP, it may also be of relevance to engage with other stakeholders- take a comprehensive perspective of Parliament's role in law-making, oversight and representation and to that extent engage with other key departments/agencies such as Law Officers Department, MDAs for oversight work and CSOs and communities for representational issues depending on the specific activity being supported. This may call for commitment of more resources, financial and technical.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the 2030 Agenda is the future of UN's development work. Goal 16 which pertains to Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is the focus for UNDP and Parliament. UNDP should, taking advantage of its presence in Parliament, keeping in view the IPU Handbook on SDGs, work towards integrating the SDGs into the work of Parliament. This will require a wholesome effort to update the new MPs and the Staff on the agreed SDG framework of targets and indicators for the country and relate it the work of specific parliamentary Committees. Further, investment would be require from UNDP to ensure other independent sources of information on the targets and indicators of the SDGs are generated and aligning the work within Parliament with other on-going progress reviews on SDGs.

By 2021, the UNDP has an ambition to catalyse tangible progress on:

1. Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, and keeping people out of poverty;
2. Accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development, especially through innovative solutions that have multiplier effects across the Sustainable Development Goals; and
3. Building resilience to crises and shocks, in order to safeguard development gains.

Linking the work of Parliamentarians to poverty eradication issues will be key in the coming years. The interconnected issues of development, budget formulation/analysis and effective representation should be the way forward. Investing in and deepening UNDP's Parliamentary engagement in Sierra Leone with a clear focus, will help the institution to achieve these noble goals.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Functions of the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC)

1. Appoint persons, other than the Clerk of Parliament, to hold or act in office as members of the Parliamentary Service and exercise disciplinary control over such persons, including suspending or removing any of them;
2. Determine the conditions of service including the grading, promotion and training of the members of the Parliamentary Service;
3. Determine and formulate the policy of the Parliamentary Service and in particular the administrative, human resource and operational procedures of the Service;
4. Cause to be prepared each financial year estimates of revenues and expenditure for Parliament and the Parliamentary Service for the next financial year including expenditure on foreign and local travels and purchases necessary for the various departments of the Parliamentary Service
5. Ensure the provision of such services and facilities as are necessary for the proper functioning of Parliament and the Parliamentary Service;
6. Make recommendations to the States Salaries Committee established by the State Salaries, Pensions and Gratuities Act, 2003, regarding the salaries, allowances, pensions and gratuities of Members of Parliament;
7. Generally, do such other things as may be necessary for the smooth operation of the Parliamentary Service.