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REPORT

World e-Parliament Conference 2010

Pan-African Parliament
Gallagher Estate
Midrand, Johannesburg
21-22 October 2010

Report

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Disclaimer

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Introduction

The World e-Parliament Conference 2010 took place at the Pan-African Parliament in Midrand, Johannesburg, on 21 and 22 October 2010. The Conference was co-organized by the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliament of South Africa, the Pan-African Parliament through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The event brought together over 80 delegations from legislatures around the world, including Speakers and Presiding Officers, members of parliament, Clerks and Secretaries General, and senior parliamentary staff. Representatives of governments, research centres, universities, civil society and international organizations also attended and contributed to the discussions.

The conference built on the outcome of three previous conferences held respectively in Geneva (2007), Brussels (2008) and Washington D.C. (2009), as well as on the findings of the World e Parliament Report 2010. It provided a platform to exchange views on the latest trends and different modalities of implementation of new technologies in legislatures with a view to identify good practices in the areas of representation, transparency, accountability, accessibility and effectiveness. During two days of intensive discussions more than 300 participants had the opportunity to contribute to presentations and debates, learn from each other's experiences, network with peers, and build partnerships in an international setting.

This report summarizes the presentations and practices showcased during the different sessions of the conference, and it highlights the main points of discussion. In the document the proceedings are grouped under six chapters with the purpose of reflecting the overall structure of the conference while keeping the focus on the specific nature of the sessions.

The first chapter of the report features the official remarks by the representatives of the co-organizing institutions. They are followed by a chapter dedicated to the two keynote presentations which helped set the conference framework.

The third chapter is dedicated to the three plenary sessions which addressed policy issues related to (1) the impact of the digital divide on parliaments and democracy, (2) websites for transparency and accountability, and (3) strengthening trust between parliaments and the people.

The fourth and fifth chapters present respectively the main sessions and the specialized sessions which covered a broad spectrum of topics of a more technical nature ranging from the use of new media in the parliamentary environment to the adoption of open standards for parliamentary documents.

The last chapter of the report offers the closing remarks.

Video clips of the sessions, along with presentations, are available on the website of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament: www.ictparliament.org.

Opening addresses

Mr. Thomas Stelzer, Assistant-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations

Honourable President of the Pan-African Parliament,
Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly of Lesotho,
Honourable Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa,
Honourable Minister of Public Service and Administration of South Africa,
Excellencies,
Distinguished members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the World e-Parliament Conference 2010. On behalf of the United Nations, I wish to thank our hosts, President Ndéle and Chairperson Mahlangu for hosting for the first time this important Conference in Africa.

The presence today of over 300 participants and delegations from more than 80 legislatures representing the five continents testifies how important information and communication technologies have become for representative institutions, and how critical inter-parliamentary dialogue is to those at the service of the representative, law-making and oversight functions of parliaments.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have become a key enabler of economic and social advancements. They are also bringing about changes to the global landscape at an unprecedented pace.

The pervasiveness of ICT has not only revolutionized the way production, market access and distribution of goods and services are organized, but it has significantly modified business models and the way enterprises relate to consumers. The Internet and the use of web-based instruments have led to new communication modalities that have forced traditional media – TV, radio and newspapers – to devise new strategies and alternative scenarios for the future of mass communication.

In sectors like trade, education, health, banking and agriculture, technology developments have transformed the way users, consumers, producers and clients connect to each other. ICT have also made it possible for people to acquire and exchange information in an increasing variety of formats, and to collaborate with one another across national boundaries.

In the next ten years, millions of young people born in the technology era will enter the age of active participation in politics, by expressing their views through voting and by choosing their political representatives. For them, Internet-based communication technologies, mobile phones, and continuous connectivity are an essential and natural aspect of their life.

But the dynamic growth and continuous evolution of the Information Society is already having important consequences for public institutions, politicians and officials, civil society organizations and ordinary citizens, in both developed and developing countries. The last years have seen the emergence of a new kind of public sphere – based on new forms of

social connectivity – that is leading to an expansion of the democratic arena and to a potential renewal of the relationship between the governing institutions and citizens. New technologies and the use of networks have provided tools for increased participation of the public in political life. Citizens have more opportunities to be informed, and greater possibilities to organize themselves into groups and social movements. It is within this new environment that legislatures will have to find their own way to adapt. They will need to better fulfil their deliberative role in a society in which technology increasingly provides the means for citizen engagement, and to call for increasing transparency, openness, accountability and effectiveness.

The World e-Parliament Report 2010, recently released by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, provides relevant insights to parliaments willing to exploit the means provided by ICT to establish a stronger linkage between citizens and their representatives. It underlines that modern parliaments must work and communicate in ways that are congruent with the ways in which their citizens work and communicate, without remaining too far behind from the communication capacity of their own constituencies. And for countries that are currently less advanced in their use of ICT, parliaments should not hold back but rather demonstrate leadership in using ICT tools to reach out to their citizens in ways not previously possible. Parliaments should lead the way in promoting the outcome of the UN World Summit on the Information Society through policy development.

By focusing on communication, social media and access to information, the World e-Parliament Conference 2010 is timely in providing an international platform to discuss the challenges ahead and the possible solutions, and to exchange ideas and practices among peers. I encourage all participants to take part actively in its proceedings and to fully share their knowledge and experience.

Let me conclude by noting the progress accomplished to date by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, an alliance of many partners launched at the end of 2005 by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Centre helps to mobilize the expertise of advanced parliaments to respond to the needs of peer institutions, thereby reinforcing inter-parliamentary cooperation and future bilateral partnerships.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Division for Public Administration and Development Management and the Centre, will continue to play its part. It will provide a framework for inter-parliamentary cooperation, exchange of experience and capacity-building, to effectively use ICT to enhance legislative and oversight processes and to strengthen the capacity of public administrators serving the parliament.

We strongly believe that parliaments that are better informed, able to legislate and debate more effectively, and to perform sound oversight over the executives, will provide a greater contribution to the advancement of the UN development agenda, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

I look forward to a successful outcome of the Conference.

Thank you.

Ms. Ntlhoi Motsamai, Speaker of the National Assembly of Lesotho

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, has asked me to deliver these opening remarks on his behalf. Dr. Gurirab is very sorry that he can not be here today, as he is hosting a regional parliamentary conference on Children and AIDS in his home country, Namibia. However, I would like to join him in extending warm greetings to you all and expressing sincere thanks to the hosts of the conference, the Parliament of South Africa and the Pan-African Parliament for their excellent welcome.

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. As most of you know, the Global Centre is a partnership initiative of the IPU and the United Nations. It was set up in 2006, as a follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society. It is a framework where parliaments can come together to learn lessons about the strategies for successful use of ICT. The Centre also aims to stimulate the policy-making role of parliament in layout the framework for the development of the information society in each country.

After four years of activity, I think that it is the right time to consider the political impact that the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament has had. We know that the Global Centre has played a pioneering role in organizing the World e-Parliament Conferences and preparing two World e-Parliament Reports, among many other activities. Its efforts are testimony to the energy of its small but devoted staff, and the political leadership of the members of the Board of the Global Centre.

If we look at the impact of the Global Centre's work, I think that there is much to be proud of.

The Global Centre has enhanced inter-parliamentary cooperation. It has enabled the creation of a global community of parliamentary ICT professionals that is able to operate virtually or face-to-face, as we are here today. It has in particular encouraged parliaments from the South to share their experiences with their peers, while also providing a forum for the most technologically advanced parliaments to be in contact and to work together.

- The Global Centre has drawn our attention to the crucial linkage between technology, parliament and democracy. Research by the Centre has very clearly explained how technology can not be an end in itself. It must serve the parliament, so that parliament is better able to carry out its constitutional duties. But it has also informed us about how citizens are using technology to develop new forms of political organization. And it has shown how parliaments themselves are beginning to adapt to this reality, as citizens seek new ways to interact with their governments.
- The Centre has made it clear that political will is a key driver in the use of ICT in parliament, and described how that is put into practice in different parliaments. The decisions we take about the openness and transparency of our institutions have a direct influence on the ability of citizens to participate in politics. As parliamentarians, we all have a responsibility to be attentive to making parliament as accessible to the people as possible.

- And the Global Centre has provided an evidence base to inform decision makers about future ICT directions. The World e-Parliament Report has highlighted the huge gap between the parliaments in different regions and different income levels. This gives us a clear indication of where our collective efforts should be directed, so that all parliaments are able to participate in the information revolution that is taking place.
- Lastly, the Board of the Centre has set objectives for the global development of e-parliament over the next ten years, by adopting a set of strategic goals that will require concerted effort from parliaments and the international community to achieve.

Naturally, there are also areas where the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament has not yet been able to exercise significant influence in the four years of its existence.

- The biggest gap is certainly our failure to engage parliamentarians in policy debate about the Information Society. These debates are taking place in national parliaments, but there are so many issues such as cybercrime that really need to be dealt with at the regional and international level. We have seen the Global Centre take some first steps towards creating a global community of parliamentarians with expertise in ICT issues. So this should be one of the priorities as we move ahead.
- On the other side, we still need to mobilize the political leadership in our parliaments more strongly in support of using information and communication technology in parliament to strengthen relations with our citizens.
- We need to make long-term commitments to building our capacity by investing in staff and training for parliamentarians.
- I think that The Global Centre can do more to bring about greater cooperation between donors, international organizations and parliaments. This would lead to more effective support to parliaments, and better results for our citizens.
- In this regard, we as a community should make a commitment to mobilize our expertise and goodwill in favour of the parliaments that most need it.

My view remains nevertheless that the Global Centre is delivering a lot of value to parliaments around the world. I call on all of us here to continue to contribute to the work of the Centre and to make the best use of this opportunity to cooperate with each other and share knowledge.

I can not end without saying a few words about my own continent, Africa. The theme of using ICT to communicate with citizens runs through this year's World e-Parliament Conference. I agree that this is important and that ICT can offer an additional channel for reaching out to our constituents. But I barely need to recall the simple truth that for many Africans, access to the Internet remains impossible. The notion of communicating with parliamentarians through ICT seems very far away. I should point out however, that sometimes the most creative solutions emerge when the challenges are the greatest.

Our duty as parliamentarians is to work for access to education for all, to enable our citizens to attain the highest standards of health and to develop the economic possibilities available to them. Extending the information highways and connecting our citizens is one of the forward-looking means that can help us to prepare for Africa's future development. I hope that the international efforts to reduce the digital divide, which at times seems so large, will increase in intensity with the support and efforts of our parliaments.

Thank you.

Mr. Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu,
Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa

President of the Pan-African Parliament,
Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations,
Representative of the IPU President,
Speakers, Presidents and Leaders of Parliaments,
Representative of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament,
Secretaries-General,
Distinguished guests,

The parliament of the Republic of South Africa is honoured to cohost the World e-Parliament Conference 2010 at its first sitting in the continent.

The conference is the annual forum of the community of parliaments which addresses, from both policy and technical perspectives, how the use of information and communication technology can help improve representation, transparency, accountability, openness, and effectiveness in the complex parliamentary environment.

As custodians of democracy, parliaments have a responsibility to facilitate the nurturing and promotion of democratic practice. This includes ensuring that the views of the people are taken into account in decision-making in regard to laws and policies that govern them.

Writing in 1964, long before the advent of the portable cellular phone and Internet, in his book *The Governors and the Governed*, William A Robson emphasised the link between knowledge residing among the people and the promotion of democracy. He said that government cannot operate successfully if its activities were veiled in ignorance, misunderstanding and mystery.

He said, in his words: ``Public authorities must come into the market place and tell people simply and clearly what they are trying to do and why''.

Parliaments have the responsibility to ensure that there is transparency and accountability in governance. If public representatives are elected by the public, the public has the right to know ``what they are trying to do and why''.

In 2010, the character of the market place has changed with the proliferation of information and communication technologies. ICT tools are changing the way we have always looked at democracy. They are bringing back the notion of direct democracy, a common feature for facilitating decision-making in ancient Greece through the market place, albeit in new and unprecedented ways.

ICT provides parliaments with an opportunity to ``tell people simply and clearly what they are trying to do and why''. And to do so on time. At the same time, we must remain vigilant against the negative impact of technology on society. While ensuring openness, we must proactively design legislation that promotes responsible use of technology.

Governing at a time of technological changes requires of us to embrace change. It requires of us to ensure that we use technology to improve the quality of democracy.

However we have challenges that we still need to deal with to ensure that ICT can be used to facilitate democratic engagement. One of these is the issue of ensuring access to ICT for many African people. Many new technologies are out of reach of the poor because of cost, inappropriate design, lack of infrastructure, education, human resources and in some instances lack of support from government. There is no doubt that cost is the most crucial of these limiting factors.

The good thing however is that, in recent years, the mobile industry has grown exponentially, covering areas which were previously unreachable by fixed telephone lines. Despite these developments, telecommunication costs in Africa remain among the highest in the world.

In order to ensure vital participation and the inclusion of the citizenry in the information age, as well as the input of citizens in democratic processes, the parliaments of the Southern African Development Community, at a conference in Cape Town last year, agreed among other things:

to ensure that legislative and regulatory frameworks exist and are effectively implemented to address the ICT needs of our nations;

to review institutional mechanisms and structures to allow for effective co-ordination and integration of ICT across sources.

Research[1] has shown that one of the challenges facing Africa with regard to efforts at using ICT for democratic participation and citizen empowerment is that women are not equally able to access ICT. This is due to factors such as income, education and social position.

Honorable delegates,

The proposed new Draft Amendments to the Pan-African Parliament Protocol make provision for the PAP to have legislative powers (that is with reference to the new Article 12). One of the areas that the PAP will have legislative powers on is ICT.

This is a very important area as we all agree that technology is changing the way we do things and the way we behave. It has forced governments to rethink how they communicate with people. Technology is therefore of strategic importance to development globally and to Africa in particular.

The African Union, through Nepad, has taken some steps to deal with the ICT challenges faced by the continent by promulgating the policy and regulatory framework to accelerate development of ICT broadband infrastructure in Africa (commonly called the Kigali Protocol). The protocol was signed in August 2006 and came into operation in February 2008. It is aimed at addressing the challenges regarding ICT connectivity on the continent. However, for it to work the signatory states need to amend their national policies and regulatory frameworks to be consistent with it, which simply means that they must be harmonised.

Initially it was only meant for eastern and Southern African states, but it is now being amended to cover all African states. What the AU is asking regarding this Protocol is that all African states ratify. So I also echo the AU's call for all African states that have not acceded

1 Gillwald, A et al. 2010. Gender Assessment of ICT Access and Usage in Africa

to this Protocol to do so and ratify it. This is for the betterment of the whole continent technology-wise.

On behalf of the parliament and the people of South Africa, I extend a warm welcome to all of you as we officially open the World e-Parliament Conference 2010. Welcome to South Africa!

May your deliberations, informed by your experiences, assist our parliaments to continue to improve democratic participation in the information age. Governing at a time of technological changes requires of us to also utilise the other market place, the ICT market place, to communicate the content of our work with the people, especially the young.

Thank you.

Mr. Moussa Idriss Ndélé, President of the Pan-African Parliament

Honorable Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa,
Honorable Speaker of National Assembly of Lesotho,
Assistant Secretary General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations,
Honorable Speakers of Parliaments,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure for me and an enjoyable duty to take the floor on occasion of this World e-Parliament Conference which is being held at Midrand in South Africa. This conference, which follows the previous ones in Geneva in 2006, in Brussels in 2008 and Washington DC in 2009, is organized jointly with the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliament of South Africa through the Global Center for ICT in Parliament.

Allow me to thank you very sincerely; leaders of Parliament, experts, and clerks of Parliament for your presence and for replying to the invitation to be here at the World e-Parliament Conference. This really marks a turning point for the Pan-African Parliament. I would like to thank in my own name and in the name of all the members of the Pan-African Parliament, all our honorable guests and the delegations that accompany them and hope they will feel very welcome at the seat of the Pan-African Parliament and will enjoy their stay in South Africa.

Dear guests,

Less than 25 years ago it would have been impossible to imagine that citizens could be informed about policies and politics and get involved in public affairs by means other than traditional media or by meeting those they elected face to face. Today it is obvious that Parliament can no longer allow itself to stay away from the technologies that can be used to inform the electorate about public affairs using new tools. ICTs have changed the whole social and economic environment, along with the whole world. And the constant expansion of ICTs is carrying important consequences for governance, for public institutions, politicians and for officials and ordinary citizens, both in the developed and in the developing countries.

The World e-Parliament Conference is the annual world forum that aims to bring together Parliaments to discuss how to use ICT. Ladies and gentlemen, this event which brings together lawmakers, politicians, business people and experts, allows the Pan-African Parliament to make the most of its experience and show all the advances that have taken place in the ICT area. With its strategic and political position, the Pan-African Parliament is now able to use modern tools to carry out its objectives.

The Pan-African Parliament participates actively in the works of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to improve inter-parliamentary cooperation on these themes. This engagement will allow the Pan-African Parliament to take the lead in becoming a factory of knowledge and facilitate democracy in the continent. But in order to do this, we must also take into consideration the institutional change that can take place.

Setting up an interactive website for citizens of the various regions of the continent, for

example, could help members of the Pan-African Parliament to reduce the democratic deficit. At this moment, the Pan-African Parliament is not well known, but thanks to ICTs the Pan-African Parliament can open itself up to the continent and the world and, with the constant development of ICT in society, use technologies to establish strong links between citizens and their representatives.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Honorable members,

With these final words, I would like to declare this 4th World e-Parliament Conference open and wish you fruitful discussions.

Thank you very much.

Keynote addresses

Governing at a time of technological changes

Keynote speaker, **Mr. Radhakrishna Lutchmana Padayachie**, Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration of the Republic of South Africa, focused his address on the role that ICT can play towards "good governance" in developing countries and regions, specifically the African continent, though he repeatedly emphasized the work needed to make ICT services widespread enough to bring about the necessary changes. Despite the rapid expansion in Internet use all over the globe, developing countries are still well behind in several respects. Mr. Padayachie cited statistics that predict that by the end of 2010 only 21% of populations in developing countries would be online, compared to 71% in developed countries. Such statistics highlight the challenges that emerging and developing economies face in closing the digital divide.

In talking about the key role that ICT must play for parliaments, Mr. Padayachie stressed the following principles of good governance: *democratic participation*, a government's ability to be *responsive* to constituents' needs, the degree to which governments must be *effective* and *efficient* in carrying out policy, *accountability*, *transparency* and, finally, the *rule of law*. Technology must ensure that these principles are upheld, as they are fundamental towards creating sustainable economic and social development where it is most needed and towards the mission of alleviating poverty in the world.

Mr. Padayachie made note of how in South Africa ICT is seen as a catalyst towards making government more effective in communicating with and consulting its people, as well as in making government more accessible to citizens. As a result, in South Africa, implementing and integrating ICT into government has become a priority. Providing members of parliament with computers, registering Facebook profiles for public officials and installing broadband and wireless systems in offices has been part of this effort. The Parliament of South Africa is seeking to make the recording, distribution and dispensing of internal information more fluid, as well as to make external communication (via the Internet, social networking services and mobile phones) more prevalent, thereby strengthening, among other things, parliament's oversight functions. In delivering on ICT technology, the Parliament of South Africa is also forming relationships with businesses, non-governmental institutions and academia. ICT can also play an integral role in making the allocation of natural and economic resources more effective and, in fact, pressure is mounting in South Africa to take full advantage of ICT for these purposes as well.

The media, in particular, have benefited from the more rapid flow of information that ICT permits. In South Africa this trend has better equipped the media to report on parliamentary activities, though investments are necessary to bring information channels to more rural regions.

Mr. Padayachie concluded by elaborating on the necessity of bringing affordable ICT services to developing regions, principally via the diffusion of broadband to areas where it is as of yet unavailable. He added that it was important that digital content also be available in native, local languages. Such efforts, he affirmed, will be critical to promoting good governance and to social and economic development in Africa.

An overview of the findings of the World e-Parliament Report 2010

Keynote speaker, **Mr. Jeffrey Griffith**, Senior Advisor of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, presented an overview of the findings of the World e-Parliament Report 2010. The report focused on six major areas of ICT in parliament, with particular attention being paid to *the need for better communication with citizens* and *the increasing demand for transparency and accountability*. Communication and transparency are built on the foundation for e-Parliament, which includes the additional four areas focused on by the report: *document systems and standards*, *ICT support for library and research services*, *technical infrastructure*, *strategic planning for ICT*.

Mr. Griffith began with a summary of major findings, starting with the area of *communication with the public*. The survey found that there has been some improvement in this area since 2007. Of the parliaments responding to the survey, 78% reported that some or most members use e-mail to communicate with citizens (these percentages represent an improvement from the 2007 survey). However, only 51% reported that most or at least some members use websites to communicate with citizens. This may be because members do not need to stay in touch with constituencies, feel that websites are not a useful way to communicate with citizens, or lack the technical knowledge and/or resources to create and maintain useful websites.

With respect to *communication with the public*, the survey also found that audio and video technologies will be predominant in many parliaments during the next few years. Technologies that permit two-way exchange between parliaments and constituents (in ways that video and audio cannot), such as online discussion groups, online polls, e-petitions, e-consultation on issues, and e-consultation on bills, are currently used by only 10-15% of parliaments, but projections put these technologies as among the fastest growing. Mr. Griffith was cautiously positive about a statistic stating that 85% of parliaments reported an increase in communication from citizens using ICT-supported methods, as it suggests that ICT is helpful in improving communication with citizens. However, more research and also more sharing among parliaments concerning the most effective ways to use these latest social media tools to communicate with citizens is necessary. The survey also found that certain obstacles, such as *parliamentary members not being familiar with technology* and *citizens not being familiar with the legislative process* indicate that further education of both groups continues to be necessary.

Mr. Griffith then addressed the Report's findings on *transparency* and *accountability*. Websites have become one of the primary means by which parliaments strive to achieve the goals of transparency and accountability and nearly every parliament now has a website. Despite this fact, the survey found that many parliaments do not yet meet some of the most important recommendations of the "IPU Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites." For example, one third do not provide the text and status of proposed legislation and 55% have not implemented standards for access by persons with disabilities. A more glaring example of difficulties concerns the clarity of information presented (the survey asked whether the parliament provided any explanatory material about proposed legislation): 18% rarely provide explanations

and 43% never provide them. This means that over 60% of parliaments rarely or never provide citizens with an explanation of bills. Based on the data from the survey, the report concludes that while it has become easy for parliaments to put up a website, it is, in fact, difficult to build a *good* one.

Concerning *document systems and standards*, the Report concludes that while a document management system and document standards are important for improving the efficiency of a parliament's operations, and are one of the key building blocks for achieving transparency and accessibility, little progress has been made in this area since 2007. One promising statistic is that 73% of all parliaments have systems for managing plenary speeches and debates – a key parliamentary document for supporting transparency (this includes 40% of parliaments in low income countries).

ICT has also increased the demands on parliamentary *library and research services* for faster and higher quality information support. This is another of the foundation areas for e-Parliament. Some parliamentary libraries have become leaders in integrating technology into their work in new and innovative ways, but many continue to face challenges that stem from: inadequate resources for training, limited availability of technology and, in some cases, lack of understanding of the contribution they can make to the effectiveness of the parliamentary business.

Parliaments require a robust and flexible *technical infrastructure*; this includes up to date hardware, software, systems, and services. There has been some improvement since 2007 in the technical infrastructure of many parliaments, though challenges remain: although 96% of parliaments report having a LAN (local area network) only 72% state that all members and committees are connected, applications to support legislative and oversight work are lagging in many parliaments.

Finally, Mr. Griffith discussed the Report's findings on *strategic planning*, defining it as a process that results in: *the statement of an organization's most important goals*, the *formulation and implementation of plans to achieve them*, *the continual assessment of progress*, *revision and updating of goals*, *objectives, activities*, *resources and schedules*. Taken together, findings suggest that in parliaments in which it is utilized, strategic planning is providing good results. However, it needs to be implemented on an urgent and effective basis in many more parliaments.

Mr. Griffith concluded by distilling the key issues surrounding e-Parliament going ahead, which the Report brought to light: a) there has been some but clearly not enough progress since 2007; b) most parliaments are still not making the best use of technology; and, c) there is some indication that the gap between technically advanced parliaments and those that are not is growing larger. In talking about possible solutions to move forward, Mr. Griffith paid particular attention to the important role that inter-parliamentary dialogue and collaboration could play, stating that to achieve the goals of democratic representation and openness parliaments must be able to share experiences, knowledge, and ideas with each other in regional and international settings in a collaborative global environment.

Plenary sessions

Mind the gap: the impact of the digital divide on parliaments and democracy

The Chair of the session, **Ms. Rose Francine Rogombé**, President of the Senate of Gabon, highlighted some of the social and political transformations that ICT has brought about, specifically with regard to how parliaments function and interact with citizens. She stressed that while ICT has improved the ability of parliaments to represent their constituents, there is still work to be done, especially in bringing ICT to regions and individuals without access, a challenge that is frequently referred to as the "digital divide."

Mr. Lasse Bertzen, Professor at Vestvold University College, drew on his research on ICT and its impact on political environments to make several assessments about the current state of e-Parliament and to outline some of the social and political conditions surrounding the digital divide.

Mr. Bertzen defined the question of the digital divide as being about who is able to stay informed and participate in a digital word. He began by emphasizing the extent to which this digital divide depends on small, local contexts in a given society. Inadequate infrastructure in developing regions may contribute to, or be a primary cause of a lack of information channels, but even if technology is available factors such as gender, disease, disability and insufficient training may play a role in determining who has access to ICT and who does not. Mr. Bertzen pointed out that even in countries where ICT is diffuse, strong feelings of political disassociation may exist, indicating that ICT alone can not be relied on to remedy political apathy and disenchantment.

In Mr. Bertzen's opinion, it is useful to think of the problem in terms of *two* gaps: one may exist as a result of a lack of technology infrastructure in a society; the second may exist as a result of disaffected citizenry resisting political participation. In the case of the second, failure to implement ICT may not be the problem, but ICT could be a part of the solution. Electronic participation may create more public engagement, though such efforts must be accompanied by a change of attitude in which parliaments invite and encourage their citizens to participate in democratic processes.

Mr. Bertzen concluded that the task for parliaments lagging in the Information Society must be: 1) to secure funding for technology infrastructure; 2) to provide legislation that guarantees that ICT's potential for connecting elected officials and citizens is fully realized (this legislation may include provisions for accessibility and legislation related to education and training); and finally, 3) to guarantee that human rights are protected and respected in their society. Regulation of the ICT industry may be important for ensuring that citizens are not taken advantage of.

Local context must also be considered when setting out to achieve such aims as investments in technology may not be appropriate given the other challenges that a society faces. Mr. Bertzen pointed to cost-effective initiatives in Africa, such as the establishment of local communication and service centers that provide access to ICT and the construction of cheap, radio-based infrastructure for students in rural areas, as examples of the kinds of steps that governments can be taking to better connect their citizens with their elected officials, and vice-versa.

Ms. Paula Turyahikayo, Vice Chair of the ICT Committee of the Parliament of Uganda, spoke primarily about her country's accomplishments in implementing ICT for the purpose of enhancing the political effectiveness of parliament and promoting political engagement by citizens.

She began by outlining the conditions and circumstances that currently surround the problem of the digital divide, but she also made note of Africa's progress in bringing the continent's ICT capabilities up to date with those of developed regions: new undersea cables are being installed, facilitating connectivity between Africa and the rest of the world (as well as reducing service prices), and the mobile phone industry is expanding at twice the rate of the rest of the world.

The Ugandan government, having established that information is a key component to development in the country, has set up a policy framework that ensures the optimum utilization of ICT towards social and economic development. There are three areas of focus to this policy: 1) information as a resource for development; 2) mechanisms for accessing information; and, 3) ICT as an industry including e-business, software development and manufacturing.

Uganda has made significant progress in enabling and creating ICT development, largely due to a free market economy that has attracted many players into the sector. The Ugandan government hopes to take advantage of this nascent ICT infrastructure to simplify procedures, bring transparency and accountability and make timely information available to all citizens. To this end, the government has created a ministry that is responsible for ICT, established both an e-Government infrastructure (EGI) and a national data transmission infrastructure (NBI) and formed a relationship with China's Huawei, a major player in the area of global technology services and products. Connecting all ministries via a single wide area network (EGI), establishing a government data center and connecting all media districts in the country are among the short term goals for these initiatives. The government has also established the National Information Technology Authority Uganda (NITAU) to coordinate, promote and monitor IT development within the context of national, social and economic development.

Ms. Turyahikayo concluded by noting how, despite progress, low-income levels, the high cost of communication via telephone and e-mail, the high energy costs and a lack of a common, unifying language still present major obstacles in realizing ICT's potential towards social and economic development. Further investment and initiatives are still required to make that goal a reality.

Mr. Stanislav Dovhyi, Member of the Parliament of Ukraine, began by making note of Ukraine's commitment to fairness and openness in government, as demonstrated by a parliamentary vote for the creation of an open and manageable system of government as a top state priority for Ukraine's short term development. Mr. Dovhyi highlighted the role that ICT can play towards attaining such goals. Mr. Dovhyi himself has been instrumental in the implementation of an e-Parliament programme that will ensure both transparency and public accessibility to legislative processes via ICT. The system provides for, among other things, e-conferencing, e-voting, e-consultations, and e-library and archives access.

Mr. Dovhyi also emphasized the Ukrainian government's focus on youth and youth education in the development of ICT and towards the goal of e-governance. A scientific base, modern technologies, and an educated staff, he reminded, will be necessary for the successful integration of

ICT into Ukrainian government. In fact, restoring the competitiveness of Ukrainian science is considered critical for vaulting both Ukrainian government and society into the digital age, therein lies the importance of attracting youth to scientific and technical research.

In Ukraine the Minor Academy of Sciences, of which Mr. Dovhyi is also president, has been successful in performing this mission. The academy supports scientifically gifted students by giving them the opportunity to conduct research under the supervision of qualified mentors. A new educational program, the Future of Ukraine, is designed to create a system of continuous professional education at all levels and to make possible the formation of a youth parliament.

Further initiatives in education have included the participation and collaboration of the German, French and Swiss embassies in forming international universities for youth. This new model of study, based on an international perspective, is aimed at encouraging those Ukrainian youth who demonstrate an inclination towards innovation and invention to study at an international level. Such experiences allow students to form relationship abroad, and learn how to solve problems, collaboratively, in an international environment.

Mr. Anant Voratitipong, Member of the Senate of Thailand, talked about the difficulties that his country is facing in closing the digital divide. He outlined the five factors that are presenting obstacles: a generation gap, lack of education support, poor access to Internet, a lack of occupation diversity and poor access to technology in general.

While ICT use among the youngest of Thailand's population is growing, it still remains very low among adults, particularly in individuals over 50, for whom computer use is only at 5,2% and Internet use at 4%. Computer donations to schools and training programmes are only two initiatives that have sought to correct the problem of the generation gap .

But Mr. Voratitipong cited poor access to Internet as the primary challenge facing his country when it comes to the digital divide. While urban areas are fairly well equipped with broadband and access to wifi, outside of the city there is very little infrastructure to make accessing the Internet possible (Internet penetration stands at only about 24% of the population, only 40% of which is "high speed," two megabit/sec and up). He also noted that Internet use is limited to specific job categories, which does not promote national strength or unity.

The ICT 2020 and National Broadband 2015 initiatives are part of a government attempt to expand ICT infrastructure in the country with the goal of 80% broadband penetration by 2015. On a positive note, Mr. Voratitipong remarked that mobile use currently stands at around 100%. Also, Parliament is working to equip all schools with computer laboratories and pushing for further education initiatives so as to make ICT use more prevalent, also among the country's senior population.

During the **open discussion**, the representative from China intervened to affirm that greater international cooperation is a necessary condition for building the Information Society. While developing countries should rely primarily on their own efforts to seek and explore development models suited to their own national conditions, developed countries' duty is to support developing countries in their effort to address inadequate infrastructure as soon as possible in order to develop national economies and eliminate poverty.

Websites for transparency and accountability

In his introduction to the session, the Chair, **Mr. Abdel Aziz Moustafa**, Deputy Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt, highlighted that parliamentary websites are one of the most important tools for transparency and accountability in parliament and a kwy instrument for modern legislatures.

Ms. Christine Leston-Bandeira, Professor, Senior Lecturer in Legislative Studies at University of Hull, spoke about her research project on the decision-making process behind the information posted on a parliamentary website.

Ms. Leston-Bandeira pointed out that a parliamentary website reflects the image that a parliament wants to project. Increased media visibility has raised the challenge for parliaments to maintain popular credibility and interest. Before the boom in Internet use, parliaments used to be a closed institution but they are now more accessible. This new accessibility creates a problem of legitimacy and poses a number of challenges.

One of the difficulties in managing parliamentary websites is due to the uniqueness of the parliamentary institution. Parliament is collective in that it represents a variety of points of view; it is visible because in one way or another people have always kept in contact with what Parliament does; and it is accountable because people have always seen Parliament as their institution. In addition, Parliaments have no single institutional voice, have different and often opposing agendas and speak to multiple audiences.

Ms. Leston-Bandeira pointed out the difficulty in combining parliamentary processes, which are slow and consultative, with technology that moves very fast. She also stated that it is difficult for parliaments to give a single corporate image and to send out neutral and fair messages often about controversial and complicated topics. An effective parliamentary website needs to link the work parliaments do, the services it provides and the political context surrounding it.

In conclusion Ms. Leston-Bandeira stated that parliaments are very complex institutions and this is often transmitted in their webpage, making it a difficult task for citizens to contextualize parliament business in their daily life.

Mr. Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, began his presentation by stating that almost all political initiatives, and particularly those that want to have an impact, need to rely on information technology. This can be seen in electoral campaigns, in the work of parliamentarians, in the liveliness of political blogs and in the birth of political web communities.

The speaker highlighted some figures. He stated that the global web penetration rate is 30%, In North America web penetration is 77% while in Europe it is 59%. The greatest increase in the web penetration rate in the last years has not been in America or in Europe but in Africa with an astounding 2,357% increase.

Mr. Lupi stated that parliamentarians need to ask themselves what link there exists between modern democracy and information technology. This question has become more radical than ever because public policies and the very way of engaging in politics are undergoing transformational changes. Either new technology helps politicians find new ways to communicate or technology will pass parliaments by.

According to Mr. Lupi, the five key elements for a new way to engage people are: openness, participation on an ever more level playing field, transparency, concrete language and meritocracy. These are the models and values that successful political experiences should follow.

Mr. Lupi stressed that the web represents an instrument of democracy which in many contemporary democracies has taken over some responsibilities that formerly belonged to political parties.

The speaker then underlined the transformation of the parliamentary website in Italy, which started as merely an internal instrument and then became a source of information for citizens about Parliament. This aspect has further developed so that now the website has become an external parliamentary working tool.

Mr. Lupi concluded by highlighting that the website is the most potent vehicle for parliaments to convey their political message. A successful parliamentary website can create a bridge between politics and society. The great challenge that parliamentary websites of the future will have to overcome is not only about providing citizens with services, but about communicating the wealth of knowledge, ideas and visions of parliamentary institutions.

Mr. Ernest C. Mwansa, Second Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chairperson of Committees of the Whole House of the National Assembly of Zambia, spoke about the parliamentary experience in his country.

In Zambia reforms are happening to make the Parliament more representative, efficient and accessible. According to the speaker, the National Assembly of Zambia has become more responsive. Every constituency in Zambia has a parliamentary office with computers and can communicate directly to the National Assembly. Stakeholders are made aware of what legislation is being discussed and the agenda of each day, and documents and committee discussions are open to scrutiny. This easy availability stimulates public participation, and politicians can measure the mood of their public. In addition, the schedule of committee meetings is published so the public is encouraged to come and listen to the work of the National Assembly. Where there is a prevalence of radio use, the National Assembly transmits using the radio and where there is more Internet use, it uses this channel.

Mr. Mwansa stressed that the Parliament faces many challenges. It needs to try to attract an audience but at the same time needs to keep its information factual and to maintain the dignity of the House. In conclusion he stated that in a resource constrained country like Zambia the goal is to leave no one out and to inculcate a sense of confidence in the elected people.

Strengthening trust between parliaments and the people: the role of information and communication technologies

The session was chaired by **Mr. Hammi Laroussi**, 3rd Vice President of the Pan-African Parliament.

Mr. Julio César Valentín, Chair of the Committee on Justice and Human Rights, Senate of the Dominican Republic, stated that the crisis of legitimacy of Parliament is due to the gap between people's perceptions and what they see that Parliament is actually doing, as well as a lack of institutional organization.

According to the speaker, it appears that citizens trust the institution, but not individual members of Parliament. Polls conducted in the Dominican Republic on the issue of public trust showed that in Latin America those countries with "more democracy" rated worse in public trust. One cause of this lack of trust is that parliamentarians often respond to the calls for transparency and accountability typical of the digital society with the traditional approach of the industrialized era. Parliament needs to give an adequate response to their citizens; otherwise people feel that politicians do not fulfill their role.

Mr. César Valentín highlighted that the Dominican Republic, being a young democracy, needs to be innovative and creative, and to inform its citizens about its willingness to work towards transparency. In fact, ICT can help with the issues of openness and transparency, but there still remains the need to inform citizens about the political will to increase transparency through the use of ICT. Parliamentarians have found that people do participate in what is going on in Parliament and their response is immediate, as well as that ICT make the work of Parliaments more efficient, and people appreciate that.

Mr. Sikhumbuzo Eric Kholwane, Member of the National Assembly of South Africa, stated that the lack of trust in parliaments is a phenomenon that affects all countries, both rich and poor. A survey of 2007 stated that in the United Kingdom only 34% of the population trusts their parliamentarians. In South Africa politicians are the least trusted professions and trust in parliamentarians has declined to a rate of 46%. According to Mr. Kholwane, the problem is also that the media tend to report only on the negative happenings of Parliament, and the corruption and wrongdoing of politicians.

The speaker underlined that ICT will increase the ability to inform the public about what politicians do, but politicians need to convince people that with ICT their lives will improve. ICT will also improve the oversight capabilities of both Parliament and the people because with ICT they can keep track of what the Executive is doing.

Since in South Africa 31% of the population is under 15 years of age, legislators have to face the challenge of focusing on ICT that respond to the needs of a very young population. Mr. Kholwane shared with the audience that the previous day he had posted information on his Facebook page about the Conference and in twenty minutes he had more than fifty responses mostly from young people.

Mr. Kholwane stated that to advance openness through ICT South Africa has established the Parliamentary Communication Service, an institution which deals with the management of the parliamentary website and the documentation of meetings. He also reported that all members of Parliament were given

laptops and printers, and efforts are under way to make the parliamentary building wireless. Besides using ICT for involving citizens in the work of the Parliament, South Africa has also paid attention to the physical meeting between politicians and citizens by organizing the Youth Parliament and the Women's Parliament, where each of these groups came and debated on issues that interested them.

However, the biggest challenges to the spread of ICT in Parliament is that first of all many parliamentarians do not know how to use ICT and secondly many citizens do not have digital access.

The speaker concluded by proposing the idea that the problem of trust in parliament stems from the power relationship between Parliament and the Executive, more specifically regarding the way resources are allocated to Parliament to be able to perform its duties. If Parliament does not have sufficient resources, it is bound to fail people's expectations.

Mr. Jorge Fernández Díaz, 3rd Vice President of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, focused his address on the unquestionable need to strengthen trust between Parliament and citizens regardless of the form of representation of the different countries.

Mr. Fernández Díaz highlighted that citizens feel distant from their parliamentarians and called upon only to vote and then forgotten. ICT has helped increase citizens' participation by facilitating the dissemination of information, especially through the advent of Internet. Despite the progress, however, the distance between the population and their representatives remains. A digital divide still exists among countries and within the same country that prevent many people from accessing the Internet and ICT tools.

Mr. Fernández Díaz urged a reflection upon social networks which are increasingly used as an instrument of social communication, especially among young people. According to the speaker, a connected society demands participation and parliaments must be connected to social networks so that their citizens feel that their voice is being heard.

Mr. Diaz concluded that the use of technology can improve legislative procedure and promote change to arrive at a more direct democracy. Mr. Diaz pointed out, however, that a direct democracy is not one that does away with representative democracy, rather it is a democracy that goes out and meets its constituents directly and face-to-face.

During the following **open discussion,** Mr. Valentin reiterated the fact that ICT can only be valuable in establishing trust if a parliament is already functioning well and appropriately. Therefore, in addition to setting out to communicate better with citizens, parliaments must also promote honesty and ethics, and be willing to engage in a process of reflection and self-criticism. In the same vein, Mr. Kholwane made clear his belief that politicians must also strive for a moral and ethical coherence between their public and private lives, and that this is also key to regaining public trust in legislatures. Mr. Dìaz also affirmed the need for parliaments to remain grounded in their work and in a commitment to transparency and to resist the temptation to see ICT as a kind of universal cure to the problem of political disenchantment among the public. He made the point that, in fact, ICT can also be a tool for deception and corruption and governments need to see that it is used to benefit society, not harm it.

Main sessions

Parliaments and the media in the information age

The session was chaired by **Mr. Dan Kidega**, Member of the East African Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Zweledinga Pallo Jordan, former Minister of Arts and Culture of the Government of South Africa, opened the session by reiterating the important role that ICT can play in e-governance and by relating some of his governments' accomplishments towards making ICT more available and widespread. Given that the Government of South Africa has been successful in laying the basis of an Information Society, he posed the following question concerning the relationship that ICT and the media will have in an Information Age: to what extent can the media, as a player and as a center of power in a plural society, assist in enhancing the capacity of parliament to communicate with ordinary citizens and for ordinary citizens to hold parliamentarians accountable?

While he left the question open, he did make note of the media's limitations, suggesting that the media is often selective in choosing which news items should "make headlines" and that in some ways this may be a disservice to citizens. Mr. Jordan observed that events are often distorted or not represented adequately by news media outlets because there is a commercial need to emphasize only the most sensational topics.

Mr. Jordan offered examples of how the media is being transformed by ICT in positive ways. For example, ICT allows for "citizen journalism" via blogs and for parliamentarians to blog directly to citizens, in both cases communicating to one another unmediated news.

Mr. Jordan concluded by emphasizing that ICT allows for unmediated and uncensored communication and is therefore an invaluable tool for legislatures whose mission is to represent their citizens. He reiterated the need to train parliamentarians and public officials so that they may take full advantage of ICT in fulfilling their obligation to serve a society.

Mr. Abdelhamid Saadaoui, Member of the House of Councillors of Morocco, stressed the important role that ICT can play in creating linkages between different national agencies and parliament. ICT also allows for the reduction and acceleration of bureaucratic processes and for the easy distribution and archiving of documents without occupying space unnecessarily. These advantages must make the integration of ICT a strategic goal for parliaments.

Mr. Saadaoui also stressed the importance of e-Parliament at an international level, speaking at length on the initiatives required to make global e-Parliament a reality. Some such initiatives include bringing Internet access to marginalized peoples and regions, training and education, making information available in multiple languages and the establishment of networks among unions and parliaments to facilitate e-Parliament at an international level.

In looking at some of the long term requirements for the construction of a sustainable and authentic Information Society, Mr. Saadaoui also urged carrying out the following: the gradual establishment of an information oversight entity, implementation of a framework for protecting privacy and for setting standards for websites, administrative reforms that take ICT into account, creating timelines for

making procedures and documents digital, and finally defining how e-documents and information will be treated legally in a digital age.

Mr. Saadaoui affirmed that in his country the House of Councillors is taking steps towards making all this possible, including the formation of a technology partnership that has allowed for the recording and transmission of legislative proceedings and meetings. Citizens are able to access this information via the House's website as well as take questionnaires that let citizens provide feedback on social and political issues.

Ms. Wavinya Ndeti, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Youth and Sports of Kenya, focused on the role of the media in political affairs and the media's relationship with legislative bodies.

Ms. Ndeti began by stressing the important function of media in a given society: media expounds government policies to citizens, exposes corruption in government, enhances leadership integrity by keeping policy makers on their toes, links citizens to policy makers, and is often on the forefront in fighting for the public good. She made note, however, that there is a tension between the political sphere and the media, albeit a productive tension: parliaments raise concerns that media reports are biased in favor of interested parties (media owners), and they point out how media outlets frequently devote a disproportionate amount of energy to sensational stories or controversial public figures.

Ultimately parliaments and media need each other and societies stand to gain by their working on issues together. Journalists may be frustrated by restrictions on access to parliamentary proceedings or by laws that restrain what can be reported. Therefore, Ms. Ndeti urged parliaments to take steps towards making information more accessible. Setting up media centers and employing media officers to help repackage information for media, and advising and training members of parliament on how to relate with media can be part of this reconciliation.

She also observed that informing the public of a legislature's activities is not only the responsibility of media but of the legislature itself, and therefore she urged parliaments to adopt new strategies in the dissemination of information. Some of the strategies she touched on are the live coverage of legislative proceedings (a strategy already being used in Kenya), press briefings of proceedings as news items, regularly broadcast interviews with Ministers in which the public can submit questions directly, use of local languages for parliamentarian debates and official documents, use of new media such as websites and emails to communicate with constituents and media, and creating information centres in schools and rural centers where there is a wide information gap.

She concluded that, ultimately, legislators must collaborate with the media to ensure that public policy, legislation and relevant information is disseminated appropriately, as an enlightened community makes better choices for society's good.

During the **open discussion** Mr. Pallo Jordan took the opportunity to clarify his position on the media and rounded out his criticism of a tendency by the media to not represent, or under-represent parliament's activities. He made his case by noting that, for example, as media outlets are businesses that make money via ad-revenue, their news content frequently targets wealthier segments of the population at the expense of representing issues relevant to the poorer classes.

Expanding access to information: implications for parliaments, the civil society and the public

Mr. Henk Ramnandanial, Member of the National Assembly of Suriname, opened the session by reiterating the necessity of investigating the transformations taking place as a result of ICT use and its expansion throughout the globe and finding solutions to best harness its potential for improving societies.

Mr. Obed Bapela, House Chairperson, National Assembly of South Africa, gave an overview of the state of ICT and e-governance at present. He observed that while there are 3 billion Internet users in the world, and that figure is projected to stand at 4.5 billion by 2015, Africa continues to lag behind the rest of the world in terms of Internet use. A lack of infrastructure, illiteracy and a lack of content in indigenous languages are some of the obstacles that Parliaments must face if they want to bring the Internet to greater segments of the population. He made note, however, of the fact that mobile penetration is relatively high and growing quickly, with an estimated 600 million of Africa's 1 billion people using mobile technology.

He underlined the need to work towards achieving the millennium development goals, in terms of closing the digital divide, and to continue to promote transparency, openness and accountability in Parliaments, also via ICT. He brought up the point that churches and sports organizations are using technology to improve the quality and effectiveness of their message and that this fact should inspire and incite parliaments to do the same. The benefits to Parliaments are clear, ICT allows for more transparency and political participation on the part of citizens. It is also a cost effective investment, allowing legislators to reach a vast audience without having to travel or organize elaborate events.

Mr. Bapela concluded by reaffirming the need for all countries to work towards closing the digital divide and to open channels of communication between legislators and citizens. He also cautioned lawmakers to protect their citizens from cyber-crime and to pass legislation that will allow law enforcement to effectively combat terrorists who use the Internet and ICT to conduct malicious acts. Laws must ensure that ICT also respects the safety of a society.

Mr. José Pedro Montero, Secretary General of the House of Representatives of Uruguay and Vice President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament, spoke briefly about the way forward in using ICT to improve bi-lateral communication between parliament, civil society and the world. He stressed how important it is that legislatures incorporate online transmissions, Twitter, social networks, blogs, forums, podcasts, and communication via mobile technology in communicating with civil society. The goal of reaching younger generations depends on these initiatives.

Making the changes necessary for the successful integration of ICT also requires a certain reorganization of Parliament. There must be high standards for both transparency and the quality of the information being issued. To reach these goals tasks should be carried out by moderators, editors, administrators and others with different responsibilities to ensure that the process of gathering and distributing information is the fruit of an administrative and political mission that is applied effectively and in real time, ensuring that clear and accurate information reaches the public.

Uruguay has taken steps towards improving its ability to communicate with civil society via ICT, for example, by overhauling the parliament's web page. In improving the website's functionality, objectives were to: improve communication with society (e-mail had been the only tool for communicating with parliament), provide technology transfer training to members, integrate audio and video, include a higher number of technology tools for communication with civil society, provide access for people with different technical skills, allow the navigation to other pages, make the page available in Portuguese and English and also available for navigation by mobile technologies such as smartphones.

Mr. Andy Williamson, Director of the Digital Democracy Program, Hansard Society, brought to light many of the ways that parliaments may be erring in how they approach the use of ICT in trying to improve how they and constituents communicate and interact.

He began by reminding the members of parliament present at the conference that, for the most part, citizens are deeply distrustful of them and their colleagues in government. The fact of citizens distrusting or being uninterested in legislatures creates major difficulties towards the ultimate goal of creating more public engagement with politics in general. Rather than blaming a lack of ICT infrastructure, Mr. Williamson tied the problem first and foremost to a lack of education or familiarity with how parliaments work on the part of ordinary citizens. He pointed to statistics to make the case that most societies do not do a very good job of educating young people in the workings of governments and parliaments.

Yet political literacy and learning in general, he argued, is socially bound - learning comes primarily from our peers and communities at the most local level. Parliaments can make information and resources available (also digitally), but such initiatives will only be so effective.

Mr. Williamson made note that 50% of traffic to UK's parliamentary website comes from a 2 square km radius around parliament itself (indicating that the website is not a preferred source of information by the public at large). A similar statistic puts interest in the UK parliament's television channel well below that in entertainment programming. Such statistics indicate that parliamentary websites and television are not very effective in creating political engagement. Initiatives are needed to educate communities directly, also by weaving political issues into areas that do matter for communities, thereby raising awareness and building interest.

Once the interest is there, Mr. Williamson continued, Parliaments need to develop ways that make it easy for information to be accessed and also passed along to peers. He reminded the audience that the information produced in a legislative environment belongs to the people, and so the people should decide the terms on which they obtain it. For example, if citizens want to be able to share information about a political issue with others, in whatever way or form, that should be possible from the outset (pointing out that frequently governments do not allow documents and information to be easily shared). Mr. Williamson used the example of a smartphone application in London that allows individuals to know if a train is running on time. The same principle could be applied to political events and decision making: parliaments make the information available to everyone so that individuals can use their own resources to create interesting and relevant applications and ways of sharing that information around the web.

Mr. Williamson cited the success of the "Lords of the Blog" project in talking about an initiative involving ICT that has had a positive outcome. Members blog across party lines about life in the House of Lords, thereby creating a space for a public dialogue on political issues. This kind of two-way communication presents clear advantages over modes of communication in which parliament is merely broadcasting out from a central position without giving citizens a way to respond.

Mr. Williamson concluded by urging parliamentarians to begin breaking down the barriers that have kept the public at a distance, even if this requires overhauling processes and tradition. Citizens need to be allowed to get involved, directly, in political and legislative proceedings. He reminded the conference attendees that getting citizens involved is not a linear process. A higher level of participation happens when citizens already feel that they are being heard.

During the **open discussion** Mr. Williamson responded to comments concerning his own findings and suggestions on the subject of ICT and the media. When legislators asked how to best use social networks for establishing a dialogue with citizens, he stressed that such tools are most effective when a legislator is "a real person" who exhibits a real personality. Mr. Williamson also made clear that when it comes to raising awareness and building interest in politics among the public, he believes that parliaments should strive to work at a local level, through community networks and organizations.

Can social media improve political participation?

The Chair of the session**, Mr. Esau Chiviya**, Secretary General, SADC Parliamentary Forum, reminded participants that the issue under discussion was the impact of social media on the political participation of ordinary citizens, a topic of great interest to many parliaments and legislators.

Mr. Ramon Farias, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile, gave a talk about the use of technology to involve citizens in the work of the Chamber of Deputies.

Mr. Farias stated that politicians should use social networks as a way to get closer to their constituents and to allow people to understand their work. He stressed, however, that some politicians are reluctant to use social networks to communicate with citizens for fear of the negative comments that they may receive.

While the Chamber of Deputies of Chile has many web pages that illustrate in detail its work, it does not offer information about individual members of parliament and their daily work. A digital communication system exists but it is more of an internal communication system which informs members about which sessions are going on and who voted on what issue. The Chamber of Deputies also has a type of log-book that allows citizens and politicians to keep track of requests and petitions made, what the politician is doing and the results achieved. This log-book sends both sides an e-mail with status updates about their communication. Again though, this is not personal information in the true sense.

Mr. Farias talked about a web page he created with more personal information. He stressed that creating a web page is not complicated or expensive as most people think but it is a way to capture the interest particularly of young people so they have a better sense of how their Chamber of Deputies actually works. He also underlined how he created a system for citizens to send comments and news items posted by them.

Mr. Francisco Vergara, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Ecuador, gave a presentation on the situation in his country. In 2007 and 2008, Ecuador experienced a period of serious political conflict particularly with Parliament. The popularity index for the National Assembly of Ecuador was extremely low so, from that moment, all parliamentarians realized that something needed to be done to improve the legislative structure. In a Constitutional General Assembly it was decided to create a system of accountability between Parliament and citizens. Politicians wanted to be closer to citizen's expectations and improve their image. One of the ways to do this was to use all available resources of technology to improve the link with the citizens.

According to Mr. Vergara all interventions on IT infrastructure and legislative process need first of all to be recorded in norms. The National Assembly approved an organic law of legislation which included norms about transparency and the obligations all parliamentarians have. This law also specifically mentioned that citizens can communicate with Parliament using Internet and e-mail and that there can be communication using mobile phones and instant messaging systems.

All parliamentary meetings in Ecuador are public and the public is encouraged to participate. All the information, results and debates from these meetings appear on the National Assembly's web page. The parliamentary web page interacts with all of

the social networks. Each social network has certain characteristics, so to each different type of social network information is given in the way that will be best used by that specific network. The National Assembly of Ecuador is trying to increase public interest in these social network sites and to improve the number of visits to their pages.

Mr. Garreth Ferguson, Information System Manager of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, talked about his work in increasing the connectivity of the Parliament.

In the past, before the advent of social media, participation in politics depended on income and education, and politicians tended to be older. Everyone obtained their information about Parliament from print newspapers, TV or live debates. The 2008 Obama election campaign was a turning point. Social networks were used massively for electoral campaigning and to encourage people to actually go out and vote. Elections since then have depended on social networks to track voters and measure voter participation.

In Trinidad and Tobago, members of parliament have their web pages, and use social networks during elections. Social media are particularly suited to politics because through networks content can be placed online in different formats depending on the designated audience. Also videos can give an accurate visual account of what is going on. For politicians, working through social networks is convenient because they can reach and respond to many people at the same time.

The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago is well connected. It has two websites plus a regional website, and two Facebook pages. It broadcasts on TV and radio, uses Twitter and YouTube to deliver content and there is also live streaming of Parliamentary sessions.

Tests run by the Parliament have shown that visits increased during important debates or events. Mr. Ferguson stressed that the increase of public participation in the work of Parliament is a positive development because it improves accountability and transparency.

Mr. Ferguson underlined that human resources are very important in this process as an efficient information system needs people to update and monitor information and news. Moreover, with massive Internet use, there needs to be guidance and great care needs to be taken about what is written and put on the Internet. He stressed that to encourage the use of social network to know more about Parliaments, it is useful to create content that elicits comment and reaction but it is also important to inform citizens about what is available to them.

During the **open discussion**, it was reiterated that technology is essential to allow people to participate. Some delegates, however, highlighted that digital communication can not replace face-to-face contacts and debates. One delegate also pointed out that technology only reaches a very small sector of society and much needs to be done on this front.

How video and mobile technologies are changing parliamentary communication

Mr. Jakes Jacobs, Secretary to the National Assembly of Namibia, opened the session by presenting statistics on the most popular technologies used by parliaments to make their work known to citizens: 43% of parliaments use live video streaming and 25-30% of parliaments have TV or radio stations dedicated to their activities.

Mr. Jacobs then offered an example of successful use of new technologies in Namibia to interact with citizens. For the 2009 Elections a campaign was launched under the aegis of the Parliament to gather the opinion of youth and particularly of first time voters regarding the issues that affect their lives through an interactive voice response system.

Mr. Robert Reeves, Deputy Clerk, House of Representatives of the United States of America, presented *House Live*, a system that offers streaming video feeds of the House floor proceedings.

Launched in April 2010, *House Live*'s ultimate goal is to engage more citizens in the democratic process. Users can search specific House floor proceedings using keywords and/or dates. They can also find links to voting results and legislative documents through the Library of Congress. Through the system, citizens can have a full view of what happened on a specific legislative day.

One of the concerns the House of Representative had when launching this initiative was the issue of availability and bandwidth, to be able to handle the largest number of visits.

The project received positive response and feedback for improvements. The external comments were to expand search capabilities and to make it simpler to use. Internal comments touched upon the ability to clip videos for use on personal Facebook pages.

Now the House of Representatives is working on improving the system to make it more efficient by integrating, for example, House floor discussions with debates in committee sessions. The ultimate goal is to allow the public to follow the complete path of a bill from conception in a committee to approval on the House floor debate.

Mr. Antonio Saad, IT Director, National Assembly of Panama, presented the experience of the National Assembly of Panama in using electronic tools to reach out to citizens. The challenge was how to replace face-to-face communication with digital contact, but at the same time make the citizen feel comfortable with this change.

The National Assembly developed a communication strategy that mainly uses ICT tools and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to draw citizens' attention on what is going on in parliament. The Assembly also offers streaming video feeds of plenary and committee sessions, parliamentary TV news and special coverage.

While all plenary sessions are online, committee sessions are posted online only if they are on subjects deemed to be of social interest.

Mr. Carlo Marchetti, Head of the Information Systems Development Office, IT Department, Senate of Italy, gave a

presentation on the impact of the use of mobile technology in the case of the Senate of Italy.

The speaker explained that parliamentary communication can be split in internal and external communication. Internal communication is defined as the secure communication among members, staff and political groups. External communication is with citizens. Italy provides members of the Senate with an internal communication system by using a corporate service for mobile phones and provides an external channel of communication through a website that can be accessed by citizens.

In 2002 the Senate of Italy started giving its members laptops so they could connect to customized software, then in 2003-2004 changed and gave senators PDAs equipped with special software. The operation was meant to provide mobility services to senators, but it proved to be cumbersome and complicated. In 2005 Italy suspended the distribution of electronic devices but began to provide secure mobile services accessible by any mobile device.

This internal system of communication needs the authentication of the user to give access to a wide range of services such as e-mail, Internet, press releases and documents. The internal system is quite popular, receiving about 4,000 visits per month.

The external communication system is a simplified version of the complete Senate webpage accessible to mobile phones.

The speaker concluded by highlighting that these communication systems have improved efficiency and made convocation to meetings, for example, faster and cheaper.

Specialized sessions

Building an ICT-based parliamentary library

Ms. Raissa Teodori, Secretary of the IFLA Section on Libraries and Research Services for Parliaments and Head of the Special Collection Office of the Library of the Senate of Italy, began the session by presenting IFLA and highlighting its positive collaboration with the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. Ms. Teodori stressed that parliamentary libraries rely on ICT to provide their services more effectively and need ICT to find better ways to help parliamentarians in their work and to promote transparency.

Ms. Soledad Ferreiro, Director of the Library of the Congress of Chile, began her speech by reminding the audience that the world has changed and people are no longer simply consumers of information but they are now active participants. In this new context, libraries must constantly rethink how to deal with their audience.

Ms. Ferreiro mentioned two different types of parliamentary libraries based on their audience: 1) libraries for members of parliament, parliamentary staff and the general public; and, 2) libraries only for members of parliament and parliamentary staff. She pointed out that some countries do not have a parliamentary library, a situation which Ms. Ferreiro felt was a risk as knowledge management could be less efficient internally or insufficient for the public. In the speaker's opinion, in case of a bicameral system it is not necessary to have a library for each chamber because this could mean duplication, waste and a segregated view of the political process.

Parliamentary libraries must use ICT to better respond to the needs of members of parliament. A good library needs to stimulate members to actually make use of it. According to her, the strategy is to use ICT to provide a positive experience for users. As a way of example, Ms. Ferreiro gave a detailed outline of what the Library of the Congress of Chile offers in terms of services to members of parliament.

In her conclusion Ms. Ferreiro stressed that before embarking on a significant costly system it is critical to conduct pilot projects and perform constant evaluations in order to improve and develop the system prior to its deployment.

Ms. Sari Pajula, Director of the Library of the Parliament of Finland, began by pointing out that a unique feature of the Finnish parliamentary library is to be open to the general public and to offer legal, political and parliamentary information to all.

Ms. Pajula described in detail the development of the website of the parliament of Finland over time and how it has been increasingly visible and accessible. The library website has been integrated with the parliamentary website, realizing that new tools were needed to deal with the wealth of information available. A lesson Ms. Pajula shared with the audience was that in Finland library staff contributed directly to setting up the website. Therefore they can now assist users more easily as they themselves know how the website works in detail, and can make changes to the website directly if that is necessary.

Talking about the main challenges in setting up a digital parliamentary library, Ms. Pajula mentioned the important issue of access rights and the difficulty of converting old content into different digital formats. The

challenge for the future, according to Ms. Pajula, is how to inform the public at large about the electronic services the library can offer.

The last speaker of the session, **Ms. Roxanne Missingham**, Librarian of the Parliament of Australia, talked about connecting members of parliament through ICT. She began her talk describing the "new member of parliament" who wants to be connected 24/7. The role of a modern parliamentary library is to connect members of parliament so that they can then talk to their constituents and disseminate information about the work they are doing, which in turn allows them to engage with the public in ways that previously were impossible.

Libraries use news services as a pathway to inform the public and to allow members of parliament to gather knowledge about the world around them. Libraries can connect parliamentarians to experts and to research reports by offering easy access to the available information.

The parliamentary library in Australia uses Web 2.0 which is a convenient way to deliver information. The library also makes wide use of social networks using RSS feed, which are not an integral part of the internal ICT infrastructure of the Parliament, but represent a low cost option that offers more channels of communication.

Recently, the Australian parliamentary library has carried out a survey on public opinion about the parliamentary website to gauge what people wanted and what they were interested in seeing on the website. The survey results showed how important is for members of parliament to be connected to their community.

According to the speaker, there are some key issues to be addressed to establish an efficient library. First, libraries need skilled and diverse staff, and not only librarians. Today, libraries require expertise in different areas on hand to help parliamentarians access different types of information. Secondly, libraries need to keep up to date and rely upon external systems of information which are changing constantly. Finally, it is extremely important to share ideas and experiences among parliamentary libraries on how to improve services to avoid waste of resources and starting from scratch each time.

During the following **open discussion** a delegate asked whether the speakers had encountered resistance to new technologies introduced in libraries. Ms. Missingham responded that the Australian parliamentary library had carried out extensive meetings with members of parliament so that when new technology was introduced things went smoothly. Ms. Ferreiro stated that in her experience library staff had to first try new things, stick to them, but if they did not work be ready to change.

Capturing and reporting parliamentary proceedings

The session was chaired by **Mr. Dick Toornstra**, Director of the Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy of the European Parliament.

Mr. Assem Genedy, Director of the Information Centre, People's Assembly of Egypt, provided a brief description of the procedures and systems in place to capture and report parliamentary proceedings. The process is divided into five phases: 1) preparing the verbatim transcript; 2) initial review of the transcript; 3) final review; 4) electronic indexing; and, 5) publication. Reporters sit at a central table in the plenary chamber. The staff is divided into groups formed by two people to record the verbatim transcript. The head of the groups then compiles all transcripts into a preliminary version and reviews it for spelling and correctness. In the final review phase, the preliminary version is presented for approval to the Secretary General. During this phase, members of parliament may also review their statements for accuracy. After approval by the Secretary General, the record is indexed electronically by a team of specialists. It is then posted in PDF format on the Parliament's website. IBM CM (content management) software and Omni search are used for the process.

Ms. Saseeta Ramsahye-Rakha, CIO/ Acting PICT Manager, National Assembly of Mauritius, presented the new digital recording system of the National Assembly. The system, which has been in operation since 2009, is part of the Assembly's effort to become an e-Parliament in the context of the National ICT Strategic Plan (NICTSP) 2007-2011. The system was designed to address several problems: 1) the sound system of the Assembly was 26 years old and at risk of crashing at any time; 2) there was no examining body to certify shorthand reporters and therefore the post of Hansard Reporter could not be filled; and, 3) as of 2009 there was a backlog of 18 years of official Hansard reports. The Deputy Clerk suggested an approach combining a voice-to-text dictation system with a digital recording system.

After researching the options, the staff chose the following technologies: Recording and transcribing – Murf/VIQ version 4.1; Voice-to-text dictation – Dragon Naturally Speaking version 10; Conference/meeting management – Bosch, Digital Congress Network version 2.6; Page layout and pre-press – Quark Express. The contracted cost of system development and implementation was approximately US$ 500,000; the cost for maintenance has averaged US$ 50,000 per year for the last three years.

The Hansard cycle begins with a speech by a member of parliament, which is captured by the digital recording system, tagged and annotated with information such as the date, time and location of the meeting; the name of the speaker; and keywords identifying the subject. The recording is divided into 10 minutes "takes" or segments and transcribed using the voice-to-text system. The initial transcription is then edited. If needed, clarification is sought from members regarding their speech, and the transcript is linked to the documents laid in the chamber. An unrevised version of the report of proceedings is published on the website within 24 hours. This version is also sent to the pre-press unit where it is proof read, laid out in Quark Xpress, printed within two weeks and also published online.

The voice-to-text dictation software is network based, thereby allowing login and call up of a user's profile from multiple locations. The software has to be "trained" to transcribe accurately by associating the tone and accent of a specific person as they speak with the correct printed words. Ms. Ramsahye-Rakha reported accuracy rates of

98-99%. Reporters use pedals to move the recording forward and backward and an integrated microphone when transcribing.

Staffing includes the following positions: a Hansard unit of seven reporters for transcribing and eight reporters for sub-editing and editing; a PICT unit of three IT officers and two A/V operators; a Pre-Press Unit of four officers; and a Printing Unit of two officers.

The project has achieved several important technical objectives, such as the installation of a digital recording system that links to the microphones in the chamber and an archiving system that stores records both online and offline in a storage area network (SAN). The project has accomplished a number of important strategic goals, including: 1) the publication online of an unrevised version of the Hansard within 24 hours; 2) the printing of the final version of the Hansard within two weeks; and, 3) the clearing of the multi-year backlog.

Mr. Sergio Falcão, Analyst, IT Centre, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, presented drafts of an Information Model and a process model of capturing and reporting procedures. Mr. Falcão said the model is not yet finalized and that they must be adapted to the needs of each parliament. They are intended to be presented to, and understood by, non-IT staff. He invited comments and suggestions from anyone engaged in capturing and reporting parliamentary proceedings.

The Information Model contains several main entities (*Member*, *Sitting*, and *Subject*), each with its own sub-entities. The sub-entities associated with *Member* include, name, bio information, political group (i.e., parties), and political bodies (i.e., committees). The sub-entities associated with *Sitting* include meeting identification (date, room, political body); agenda; main actors (president, secretary, etc.); type (hearing, voting, and speech); openness (secret or public). The sub-entities associated with *Subject* include the documents considered during the sitting and their texts (bills, amendments. interpellations, motions); oral statements; actors and roles (author, reporter, etc.); and votes. The Information Model can support a variety of views or displays of data. Displays of information about *Members*, for example, could include their contact information, bios, and photos; membership in various political groups and bodies; their speeches in text, audio or video; their proposals (as author or reporter); and their votes. Displays about *Proposals* could include the text of bills and amendments; discussion during sittings; and votes, by each member and final result; and links to the law. Displays about *Sittings* could include date, room, agenda, political body and main actors; results; attendance, votes, subjects, and final version of texts; and legislative records in multiple formats.

The Process Model includes the following actions: 1) maintaining information on political organizations; 2) preparing the sitting; 3) preparing records of the sitting; 4) publishing records; and, 5) managing those records. These actions have the following associated entities or actions: *Maintain information on political organization:* legislature, members, political groups, political bodies (committees and plenary). *Prepare legislative sitting:* set date, hour, room, agenda, and resources needed; define the type of sitting (hearing, debate, or speeches); prepare the speaker list; and publish/distribute the agenda and related documents. *Prepare records*: capture (audio, video, meeting context, photos); generate text (stenography, shorthand, voice recognition); text post-production ("clearance", translation, cataloging and indexing, and summarization); prepare results (attendance, bills {process amendments, prepare final text}, register votes. *Publish records:* web portal (verbatim records, audio, video, final results, bills); publish official record/journal. *Manage legislative records:* store, preserve, and report errata.

Advances in XML at the international level

The session was chaired by **Mr. Jean-Marc Laforest**, Director-General for Innovation and Technological Support, European Parliament.

The first panelist to present was **Mr. Richard Ware**, Director of Programmes and Development, Parliament of the United Kingdom. Mr. Ware began by providing a brief background on the way XML had been employed by the UK Parliament since 2003, when it was adopted as an official standard.

Mr. Ware pointed out that for many years, given certain technical limitations, XML had not been particularly instrumental in producing and printing documents related to parliamentary proceedings. Then, a desire to improve parliament's information structure gave way to an initiative called "the procedural data programme," which Mr. Ware described as a "substantial investment over three years to renew most of the tools and systems used by the UK Parliament in capturing the core procedural data that parliament produces." It was then decided to use XML for realizing the programme's main objective: streamlining parliament's information architecture for the purpose of making information more service oriented and accessible to the public.

To illustrate the project's successes, Mr. Ware showed upgraded document templates to the session participants and explained their advantages over earlier versions. He also offered an example of how XML can be utilized to make a user's experience of the Parliament website more complete: individuals can interact with a Parliament member's profile to see if she or he may have personal interests in a topic or issue being treated in Parliament. Thanks to close and responsive collaborations between software developers and parliament insiders, Mr. Ware is hopeful that the programme's goals will be met by 2012.

Mr. Michael M. Murungi, Chief Executive Officer, Kenya Law Report, provided a brief overview of the way Kenya had been publishing laws on the web, before moving to XML. Given that Kenyan law spans about 28,000 pages of printed text, the consolidating and updating of laws that existed only in printed form proved a daunting task. After struggling for years with a rudimentary, paper-based system, in 2006 Kenya unveiled a digital, MySQL database that also allowed users to browse legislation online. In addition, a process of converting laws into downloadable PDF format had begun. About half of Kenya's 600 chapters of law had been deposited at the time, in PDF format.

Mr. Murungi noted that the current web platform was in the process of being upgraded, due to user complaints about text flow issues. Also, it was discovered that the PDF format has limitations: large text files, a lack of both text versatility and options for navigation had convinced developers that XML represented a superior alternative. To this end, the National Council for Law Reporting in Kenya had partnered with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA) and the Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan to help convert the database of laws of Kenya into XML format.

Mr. Murungi then introduced **Mr. Ashok Hariharan**, Software Development Coordinator, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, UN/DESA, who described the project in further detail.

Mr. Hariharan explained that in addition to the problems already mentioned, the earlier system had other major limitations. It failed to organize and represent legislation

according to its often complex hierarchical structures, and to accommodate the fact of legislation evolving and changing over time. The system was poorly adapted to search engines like Google, which had difficulty knowing where to include it in search result indexes. Also, the system did not permit the publication of legislation to mobile phones or smart phone apps. The new system sought to remedy these issues by migrating the existing data/legislation into a more current, XML based system. Mr. Hariharan made note that about 90% of the work consisted in building a conversion tool for transferring the data from the old system to the new one. While it was still only a prototype, Mr. Hariharan illustrated how the new system promised greater simplicity and usability, easy and guaranteed long-term archival, and a text format that would allow for a more fluid and free exchange of content.

During the **open discussion** delegates demonstrated particular interest in knowing what future features XML may be able to offer in the realm of e-Parliament. The possibility of speeding up the process whereby legislative content is made available to the public via XML and using XML to involve citizens in drafting amendments were among the possibilities discussed. Mr. Laforest closed the session with a plea for politicians to take more seriously the potential that XML represents and the impact it can have in improving the way governments and parliaments work.

Supporting the work of MPs through chamber technologies

The session was chaired by **Mr. Austin M. Zvoma**, Clerk of the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Juha-Pekka Leskinen, IT Manager, Parliament of Finland, opened this specialized session by explaining the installation process of the Finnish Parliament's IT system, which has been in use since 2008. The system was built into parliament's session hall, and was designed to deliver interactive, real time information about daily proceedings via touch screens, to members of parliament. It also serves as a voting device for members of parliament and provides the session hall with sophisticated conferencing tools.

Mr. Leskinen pointed out that a ready-made conferencing system would have been inadequate, given the unique needs of their parliamentary body, and so it became necessary to design a custom system, specific to parliamentary functions and to the session hall itself. This was an undertaking of significant magnitude, given that all software and hardware would have to be custom built and therefore require extensive testing before final installation. Mr. Leskinen attributed the fact of the project costing more than what had originally been projected to the complexity of its Linux-based software, which required customized development. The project was also finished one year later than expected, requiring four years in all (2004 - 2008, plus one year for research).

Despite setbacks and budget issues, Mr. Leskinen expressed satisfaction with the final result. The system is robust, powerful and largely automated, permitting for the easy recording and transmission of data (both internally and to external news sources and the parliament website) with minimal operating costs (the system requires only one operator during parliamentary sessions). Backup servers ensure functionality in the event of server failure, and yearly software updates guarantee that the system will continue to work properly well into the future.

It was Mr. Leskinen's feeling that the firm that had been outsourced to develop the system software may have made the process (and code) unnecessarily complex (resulting in missed budget targets and delays in the final installation). To avoid repeating Finland's experience, Mr. Leskinen suggested countries involved in similar efforts to involve an external auditor that might oversee the software development phase and guarantee that resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Mr. Arik Fischel, Director of IT, Knesset if Israel, provided a brief overview of the way his department had gone about integrating IT into the legislative process in Israel. This project saw the creation of a system designed to facilitate the proceedings carried out by members of parliament in the legislative chamber itself, the formation of an internal network connecting members of parliament, the various offices of the legislature and the ministries involved in lawmaking, and the creation of channels for delivering information generated by Knesset to the general public.

While Mr. Fischel suggested that there is reason to feel enthusiastic about the possibilities that IT represents in assisting lawmakers and citizens who want to participate in the democratic process, he also brought to light some of the risks posed by a parliament's dependence on a technological system. For example, Knesset was temporarily paralyzed by a power failure that effected system servers for some minutes. Those responsible for developing and implementing IT systems for governments and legislatures should be

prepared to anticipate and minimize such risks. Mr. Fischel suggested that one way to address such problems is to avoid systems that are unnecessarily complex. Developers should also give users more of a voice in determining how a system delivers and provides information, this will ensure that the system functions effectively and reduces the risks of dependence.

Mr. Fischel closed by touching on the future of their system, cloud technology, which centralizes information storage, management and distribution, strengthening the integration between ministries and government/legislative offices. This cloud technology will also further facilitate public involvement in legislative processes by guaranteeing full transparency at every stage of information production and distribution.

Mr. Dan Landau, Director General and Chief Executive Officer, Knesset of Israel, explained that he would offer the conference participants and audience members a more "philosophical point of view." In this regard, Mr. Landau's main point was that IT can not and will not do anything fundamental to change the political role and powers of national legislators, but will have a significant impact on how the public interacts with those legislators. Mr. Landau pointed out the progress that had been made in raising interest in political affairs, in Israel, thanks to the availability of online content. Mr. Landau's presentation included a description of some of these past successes, as well as his department's plans for expanding the Knesset website. New streaming and searchable content and the possibility of viewing detailed members of parliament profiles (with voting records, attendance, speeches, etc.) will be among the services offered.

Mr. Landau also outlined some of the principles that underpinned the way the department had gone about developing and integrating IT, both for internal purposes and for delivering information to the public. A desire to make Knesset relevant to the people and to ensure that IT was used responsibly and justly by members of parliament had driven this process. Indeed, Mr. Landau reminded conference participants of an incident where a member of Israel's parliament was caught trying to vote twice on a measure. The member of parliament voted on his own voting panel and then used his neighbor's to vote a second time. For Mr. Landau, the episode should remind us why we need to think twice before implementing new technologies in parliaments and parliamentary chambers. Another episode where a power failure interrupted Knesset proceedings offers further motivation to take precautions when moving forward with new technologies.

Mr. Landau closed by asserting that, in his mind, IT systems in parliamentary chambers should be kept simple, as, despite there being some resistance to the idea, parliaments will eventually have to accept personal technological devices in the chambers, given the high demand and current trends towards the use of such devices. In fact, these devices will, ultimately, render complex systems unnecessary.

Most of the audience questions during the **open discussion** concerned technical aspects of the various systems discussed, specifically recording techniques for capturing parliamentary proceedings (both in audio and text formats) and methods for making that content available on the web. Delegates also expressed interest in whatever security issues may be raised by "cloud technology," which Israel, in particular, had indicated was being pursued for data storage and management needs. They also discussed how parliaments intended to keep data secure and separate, for example, when having to maintain separation between the legislative and executive branches of government.

The challenge of archiving parliamentary records in multiple formats

The session was chaired by **Mr. David Addow-Quarshie**, Director of the ICT Department, Parliament of Ghana.

Mr. Enrico Seta, Head of the International Office, Studies and Research Department, Chamber of Deputies of Italy, discussed how the Chamber of Deputies of Italy has dealt with the challenge of multiple format archiving of parliamentary records. He identified four challenges facing parliaments to keeping parliamentary records on file. The first is the creation of digital text for the website. Then there is the challenge of the conversion of parliamentary records from paper to digital, followed by the audio and visual registration of the work of the Parliament. Finally there is the challenge of the long term preservation of records, which is the most difficult and problematic issue.

When Italy published the first edition of digital text on the Chamber of Deputies' website in 1996 the problem of multiple formats was immediately evident. Parliamentary knowledge is based on four pillars and each of these needs to be dealt with in a different manner. There is a database of parliamentary proceedings, a database of parliamentary debates, a database of bills and a central register of members of parliament and the Executive. The problem is integrating these databases which are interlinked, form the basis of parliamentary information and support the work a parliament does.

The parliamentary proceedings database is divided into sections on the basis of what goes through Parliament. The debates database is managed by the library using HTML, PDF and metadata. The bills database is supplied with information from all the departments involved in the life cycle of the bill and it contains all the information regarding that bill. A central register of members of Parliament is crucial and is constantly updated to reflect the political composition of the government and membership in committees.

Italy has also had to deal with the problem of paper accumulation since there were millions of pages to convert to digital text. In 1996 the Italian Chamber of Deputies did a feasibility study on the reconversion of old papers into digital text but work on this issue only got started six years later because it was never deemed a priority. The digitization project started in 2002 with papers produced since 1943. This project has been completed, but there still remains to create a cross-legislative search engine. A future project is to digitalize all the papers from 1848 to 1943.

Mr. Seta also explained that since 2001 all parliamentary floor debates in the Chamber of Deputies of Italy have audio and visual recordings, and since 2008 there is a parliamentary TV channel. Live video streaming started in 2010.

Mr. João Batista de Holanda Neto, IT Analyst, Senate of Brazil**,** discussed the issue of legislative memory, what it is and how it is important for the life of a nation.

He began his discussion but talking about the important work parliaments carry out and the repercussions this has in the media and on the public. He stressed that a register of legislative memory is important because it is necessary to have a collective memory to create a background for what is going on in Parliament. A register of legislative memory is also important because it can help to measure how effective a law was.

To build a register of legislative memory a wide variety of information needs to be gathered. It is useful to use different registration methods, such as text, audio and visual recordings, and to update and revise them regularly. Traditionally it was the work of librarians to index information. The speaker pointed out that archiving has changed greatly over the years and the public needs to be prepared for these changes. Most information is now born digital so reconversion is not necessary but preservation is. Mr. Neto strongly recommended the use of open-sources and standards to avoid the problems of a commercial interest in digitalization.

One of the things Mr. Neto urged his listeners to reflect upon is the cost and value of creating a legislative memory. This value must be made clear and explained publicly so people see the importance of financing such projects.

The decision of what needs to be preserved, according to Mr. Neto, depends on people and resources available. There needs to be some centralized decision-making authority.

Closely related to the process of legislative preservation are the issues of authenticity (documents are not changed or compromised as they are stored), and sustainability (what is done today does not compromise the future).

Mr. Neto finally offered some recommendations: 1) parliaments should raise awareness on the issue of legislative memory; 2) they should ensure that they have skilled people to deal with it; and, 3) they should develop priorities and strategies.

The last speaker of the session was **Ms. Fariza Emra**, IT Analyst, House of Representatives of Indonesia. Ms. Emra highlighted that the parliamentary information system in Indonesia needs to be more integrated. There is a need to create reliable access and coordination among all parliamentary departments to ensure the transparency of the work of members, and better communication between members of parliament and the community. As of now, every department has its own system, using either Word, Excel or PDF. It becomes hard therefore to archive data and often the consequence is the creation of a paper trail.

There also needs to be a good indexing system for parliamentary records so that someone looking for data does not need to listen to entire speeches but must be able to find the paragraph or sentence they are looking for easily. Digital archiving in Indonesia was paper based in the past, then a process to scan all documents was implemented but later deemed wasteful. Now the House is using OCR, a character recognition system.

In the House of Representatives of Indonesia, broadcasting is done internally. Video archiving is done by the TV department and it is saved in raw format which has now created the problem about space to store all the video records. Bills and laws are kept in text files, but they must be well indexed. Ms. Emra identified two main challenges: 1) the lack of qualified IT people; and, 2) the resistance to use computers by many senior members of parliament.

During the following **open discussion** participants addressed the issues of the selection of those in charge of digital record preservation and the importance of national archives. The moderator summed up the session by pointing out that, due to the importance of parliamentary documentation, it is crucial to store information in formats that can be read by everyone, at all times.

Assessment tools and strategic planning for ICT in Parliament

Mr. Eastmond, Clerk of the Assembly of Barbados, began the session by stating that strategic planning is an important vehicle for the development of an e-Parliament and an assessment tools that can give a clear view of the state of current technology in the institution.

Ms. Fatima Boltman, MSP Programme Manager, Parliament of South Africa, shared her experience in developing an ICT strategy for the Parliament and overseeing its implementation and governance.

First, she provided the audience with some context. South Africa has a population of about 48 million people and in 2009 had its fourth democratic Parliament. The Parliament of South Africa is made up of two Houses and has an administrative staff of 1,200 people, of which 64 are ICT staff.

In 2004 the ICT department started working on developing an ICT strategy. In 2007 the strategy became the mechanism to create an e-Parliament by developing a system to make parliamentary administration more efficient. The future strategy will address how to move from an e-Parliament to an e-Democracy, with the goal of being in closer touch with the citizens of South Africa and to encourage more public participation.

Ms. Boltman explained that the purpose of the strategic planning process is to offer the public a more representative, more accountable and more accessible parliament so that the institution can inform its citizens better and engage them in its work. The use of technology by a parliament creates an organizational change which must be managed by the ICT staff effectively. The strategic plan needs to communicate that technology is a positive resource, and must respond quickly to needs. During the strategic planning stage a great deal of time must be spent on understanding the institution of parliament in detail. Once a strategic plan has been drafted, a budget must be drawn up that is aligned with the plan. Subsequently once the plan is implemented, ICT staff need to show results and tangible benefits, because if for future projects funding is needed, it is vital to show fundraisers the past benefits.

In South Africa, ICT staff has used a phased approach using several stages to introduce ICT in Parliament. The first phase was to engage all stakeholders in discussions, followed by the identification of cost estimations. In doing so, ICT staff used assessment tools and met with stakeholders to understand their 'imperatives' and how to align available technology with their requests.

Mr. Mahesh Perera, IT Director, Parliament of Sri Lanka**,** talked about the experience of introducing ICT to the Parliament.

The speaker stressed that in order to overcome the challenges brought about by the introduction of ICT it was important to think strategically. Certain fundamentals needed to be clear to parliamentarians before ICT could be successfully introduced. In fact, the aim of an e-Parliament must be to transmit its values particularly to the nation, which must be defined by its constituents and stakeholders together. These are the ones who will then decide if the ICT strategy has worked or not.

Mr. Perera underlined the importance for any new ICT initiative to start at the highest level by bringing the parliament's leadership on board and to make sure the institution is ready for any new developments. Only after, ICT staff needs to make sure available resources are aligned with the planned initiative.

Finally, he highlighted that to effectively communicate their ICT strategy, the ICT staff in the Parliament of Sri Lanka felt that they needed to improve their information and human capacity, as well as to measure the strategy outcome by evaluating if things had improved with the use of ICT.

Mr. João Viegas Abreu, Senior Programme Expert, Global Center for ICT in Parliament, talked about the Centre's approach and work related to ICT strategic planning.

He stressed the importance of having an institutional plan in place because the values, goals, mission and vision of a nation are defined by the parliament and not by ICT. If this institutional plan is never defined, the ICT plan will not fit the institution. Therefore, according to Mr. Abreu, an overall institutional plan should be established as a priority. Later, the core vision of the parliament as an institution identified in the overall plan must be kept in mind by the ICT planners, along with the local culture of the nation, in order to improve the performance of the use of ICT in Parliament.

To create an effective ICT strategic plan, the current situation of ICT in Parliament needs to be assessed by engaging with all stakeholders, including members, staff, and the public when needed. Then, a gap analysis must be undertaken to look at the difference between where ICT stands at the moment and where it should potentially be to better serve the institution.

Mr. Abreu also stressed that once a strategy has been defined it is very important to inform all stakeholders about its mission and goals. ICT staff must then engage in the oversight of projects and follow-up assessments.

Mr. Abreu then described the Global Centre's methodology for assisting parliaments in the development of their ICT strategic plans. The first step is to conduct, together with the staff, a thorough research about the parliament that has requested assistance. The second step is to field a first visit to the country, during which Parliament's internal stakeholders are interviewed, at all levels, to obtain a clear view of the reality. After a period of exchanges with parliamentary ICT staff for the finalization of the assessment, a second visit is organized to address the strategic plan and the prioritization of ICT use for the next years. Mr. Abreu then highlighted the current technical assistance projects the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament is involved across the world.

The last presenter, **Mr. Sergio Falcão**, IT Analyst, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, underlined that to be effective a strategic plan needs to be established taking into account the perspective of all people involved in the parliamentary business and the technology available. The specific internal process of the Parliament must also be kept in mind as this is the client's perspective and the institutional perspective.

Mr. Falcão described the steps to create a strategic plan and reminded the audience that after each step is completed all steps must be validated. He stressed the great importance to be attached to communication, both with internal ICT staff and external stakeholders. Mr. Falcão then described in detail the model the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil has used to achieve the latest ICT Strategic Plan for the institution.

The benefits of parliamentary networks: the APKN case

The session was chaired by **Mr. Zingile Dingani**, Secretary to the Parliament of South Africa.

Ms. Cecilia Matanga, Programme Officer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, UN/DESA, presented the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN). The network is a way of exploiting ICT and economies of scale to address various issues, such as the exchange of information, strengthening cooperation among parliamentary services, and increasing capacity building and collaboration on technological development.

The APKN portal provides a space for all African parliaments to share information and experiences to develop services and build capacity. The idea of APKN is to have one hub through which encourage regional and continental collaboration and provide a wealth of information on all the individual African parliaments, such as contact information, members of parliament profiles and digital repositories.

APKN fosters the exchange of ideas and experiences by offering work spaces, where participants can register to discuss issues and upload available content.

Ms. Matanga illustrated all the possibilities available on the portal. For example, APKN offers on-line educational resources and e-learning technology to be used for training sessions. It also offers a federated repository for parliamentary documents and has a news monitoring service which shows news on, by and about African parliaments.

One of the aims of the APKN portal is to create common services such as federated libraries; which would bring together all the collection of African parliamentary libraries so a person can search them all without having to go to each individual country's Parliamentary website.

The APKN portal also addresses the issue of the many languages present in the African continent; it uses Google translator that while not perfect allows for a back and forth discussion in Arabic, French, English, Swahili, etc.

Mr. Simon Engitu, Chair of the APKN Working Group on Parliamentary Libraries, and Assistant Director, Library Services, Parliament of Uganda, stated that APKN was created for the purpose of fostering cooperation on the exchange of information. He urged all parliamentarians to embrace this possibility.

The speaker pointed out that APKN is unique in that it has many activity areas of which there are four principal ones: legislative processes, information and research, ICT and communication with the public. To implement these important activity areas working groups have been created.

APKN offers some benefits to the African continent: it helps to share resources, avoids duplication, uniforms parliamentary standards, creates accountability to the public and pushes for more ICT use. Mr. Engitu concluded by stressing that the collaborative environment created by APKN has positive implications for the African continent.

Ms. Mireille Eza, Director of Noria, Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie, explained that Noria is a networking tool for parliamentary administrators, offering specialized support to the work of parliaments on five continents in French speaking countries. The name Noria refers

to an ancient word for a type of irrigation wheel, which symbolizes that countries circulate and disseminate parliamentary information.

Noria is meant to improve and make more understandable and accessible the work done by parliaments in these French speaking countries. Its aim is also to modernize Information Systems use in Parliaments and foster francophone solidarity among parliaments.

Noria answers to the need to reinforce the capabilities regarding production, management and dissemination of internal parliamentary information. Noria does not only use a generalized approach for countries in which no parliamentary exchange is present, but also works with all departments involved in ICT and creates a specific plan which differs for each country. Noria uses a participatory approach based on four principles; being realistic, taking into account local realities; proximity, using local expertise; efficiency and planning. Noria offers the possibility of joint evaluation of needs by setting up meetings with multilateral and bilateral partners and setting clear responsibilities and competencies.

The speaker concluded by highlighting that for Noria to be effective Parliamentary involvement is vital and also collaboration among partners is helpful.

During the following **discussion** various delegates expressed their wishes for more collaboration between APKN and Noria. In concluding the session, the moderator urged all delegations to make an effort to make APKN work by sharing experiences, educating their members on the work of APKN and by proposing systems that can facilitate their work through APKN.

Assessing Bungeni for Parliament

Mr. Flavio Zeni, Chief Technical Advisor, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, UN/DESA, presented his team's work on Bungeni, a parliamentary information system that allows users to manage the complete work flow of parliamentary documents from draft to submission, revision and up to publication. Bungeni also offers a work group system where users can share space, interact and discuss. In addition, it has a publishing system that functions with different formats.

Bungeni is a new type of IT. It has been conceived to be adaptable, makes information easily accessible anywhere and thanks to its use of open source software is designed to improve with time and use. Mr. Zeni also stated that in the near future his team hoped to make Bungeni mobile.

The Bungeni development team described and demonstrated in detail the main features of the Bungeni system. They went through what one can do with the system and how to use it; the many languages it can work in; the scheduling of sittings; RSS feeds and many other details. They also described how Bungeni can be used to support the transcription of debate and can publish audio and visual content.

Mr. Job Pierre, Chief of IT Services, Chamber of Deputies of Haiti, pointed out that as Haiti is rebuilding after an earthquake, Bungeni could be very helpful to their Parliament and also it could help in fostering interaction with other countries.

Mr. Clement Nyandiere, Director, Information and research Services, National Assembly of Kenya, talked about his country's efforts to implement Bungeni. The Bungeni development team is in fact located in Kenya so their efforts are being closely monitored to be able to learn valuable lessons.

Mr. Nyandiere stated that Bungeni is a massive and very elaborate system which can be very useful in cutting down the paper-work of a Parliament. His presentation focused on the challenges that the National Assembly of Kenya has faced to implement the Bungeni system.

The speaker identified five steps that need to be taken toward implementation. The first step is to understand this new open source system and to help potential users understand it as well. The second step is to move parliamentary information system from a more proprietary to an open-source system. The third step is to present the new system to its users, mainly parliamentary clerks who would greatly benefit from it. Presenting it to users would mean having demonstrations to show how Bungeni is used. The fourth step to implementation is to customize Bungeni for the individual needs of the Parliament and to add data in. The final step would be to link all parliamentary information processes together through this system.

The challenges facing the implementation process are first of all the indirect costs of training staff and customizing the system. Kenya has found a lack of internal capacity to maintain the system, so the Assembly had to find new and skilled people for this task. Another difficulty Kenya has encountered is to overcome the suspicion over the introduction of a new system. For this reason Kenya has chosen to integrate Bungeni with the old propriety based system until its users feel more comfortable. To help the acceptance process, the Assembly has been holding consultations and discussions, but acceptance has been slow particularly by people who are not computer literate.

In the **discussion** that followed participants raised questions about the customization of Bungeni. Mr. Zeni explained that because the system was designed with the purpose to adapt to local specificities (legal traditions, culture, parliamentary processes, etc.) the customization process is easy.

Closing remarks

In his closing remarks, **Mr. Oped Bapela**, House Chairperson, National Assembly of South Africa and Co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, read a summary statement on the outcome of the Conference (see Annex 1).

The statement reminded conference participants of the promise and the challenges that ICT represents for governments and legislators. In order to fully realize ICT's potential for connecting citizens and their elected officials, inter-parliamentary collaboration continues to be absolutely fundamental. And while progress is being made, as evidenced by the success of APKN, there is still much more work to be done. Collaborative software development is an example of the kind of work that parliaments can be performing together so as to reach ICT development goals, even with limited budgets and resources.

Strategic planning and the continuous engagement of legislators on how to best use ICT in parliament are also necessary if legislatures are to respond to an increasing demand for transparency and accountability in government, and build trust in elected officials.

Mr. Bapela also made note of the diverse backgrounds and national origins of the conference participants, citing this diversity as evidence of how urgent and relevant ICT has become for expanding and evolving democracy in the world.

Mr. Bapela thanked all participants and conference organizers for having made the conference as successful and productive as it was.

In the same spirit, **Mr. Hammi Laroussi**, 3rd Vice President of the Pan-African Parliament, closed by affirming the importance of inter-parliamentary collaboration and cooperation on issues such as ICT, especially for the African continent, which has faced so much political and social adversity in the past. He praised ICT for having made possible a "global village" in which governments and people can communicate freely and openly. He also urged lawmakers to continue to make sure that ICT is being used to best facilitate that communication. To this end, in his words, the Conference represented a "light for the future" in as much as it has contributed to bringing about greater political unity and integration, especially among peoples and societies on the African continent.

Mr. John-Mary Kauzya, Chief, Governance and Public Administration Branch, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, congratulated on behalf of the United Nations the host country, the Parliament of South Africa and the Pan-African Parliament for the warm hospitality extended to all participants and for co-organizing a very successful event.

He underlined how much the work of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, the joint initiative of the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union launched in 2006, is making inter-parliamentary cooperation in the field of ICT strong and noted the importance of the World e-Parliament Conference as a global forum for exchanging parliamentary experiences and discussing innovations and trends.

Mr. Kauzya thanked all presenters and participants for their contribution during this major event and wished all delegations a safe return to their countries.

Summary statement

World e-Parliament Conference 2010

22 October 2010
Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

The World e-Parliament Conference 2010 brought together leaders and members of parliaments, senior parliamentary staff, and experts from around the world to address the promises and challenges of ICT in parliament. The collective engagement of politicians, administrators, and technologists in the conference is evidence of the growing importance of ICT for democracy.

The conference was organized by the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, the Pan-African Parliament through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. Participants included 95 parliamentary delegations from 83 countries, together with representatives from international organizations, universities and institutions.

From the presentations, ideas, and discussions that took place during the Conference, the following issues emerged:

Information and communication technologies offer opportunities to enhance the dialogue between citizens and their elected officials and to engage civil society more productively with parliaments. Legislatures and members must take advantage of the capability of technology to respond to legitimate demands for increased transparency, accountability, and communication, and for improving the level of citizens' trust in parliaments.

The potential value of innovative technologies such as social media, webcasting, and wireless communication has not yet been exploited. There is a need for sharing knowledge and experience amongst parliaments on how these technologies can be used most effectively.

The digital divide between countries and within countries has a serious impact on relations between parliaments and citizens, particularly in emerging democracies and developing countries. However, parliaments in these nations can leverage newer cost effective technologies such as mobile communication systems to extend access and support increased engagement with the citizenry.

Cooperation and collaboration offer parliaments an opportunity to share knowledge and learn from the experiences of others. The progress made by the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN) is an example on how parliaments in the same continent can work together towards common objectives.

Collaboration can be especially helpful as parliaments strive to improve the effectiveness of their legislative and oversight work by incorporating advanced technologies into their core activities that support openness and transparency. These include capturing and reporting parliamentary proceedings; publishing and preserving parliamentary documents; and expanding access to information through parliamentary websites.

Collaborative software development and the use of open standards also provides an opportunity for leveraging limited resources to build parliamentary information systems in countries lacking financial and technical resources, while maintaining high quality and sustainability.

Successful implementation of ICT in parliaments requires strategic planning and the continuous engagement of leaders of parliamentary assemblies and legislators. Members need to contribute to the vision for ICT in parliament, provide oversight, and ensure political support in its implementation.

Parliamentary libraries and research services play a vital role in ensuring an informed legislature. The innovative use of technology can enable libraries and research services to better serve the information needs of members, committees, and the public, as well as to facilitate greater cooperation.

Agenda

20 October 2010

	Arrival of delegations and registration
07:30 pm - 10:30 pm	**Welcoming Reception "Ke Nako – It's Africa's time 2010"** hosted by the Parliament of South Africa at the ICC in Sandton

21 October 2010

	Arrival of delegations and registration
09:00 am - 10:00 am	**Opening Ceremony** • **Thomas Stelzer,** Assistant-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations • **Ntlhoi Motsamai,** Speaker of the National Assembly of Lesotho • **Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu,** Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa • **Moussa Idriss Ndélé,** President of the Pan-African Parliament
10:00 am - 11:00 am	**Coffee break**
	Keynote addresses • **Radhakrishna Lutchmana Padayachie,** Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration of the Republic of South Africa - "Governing at a time of technological changes • **Jeffrey Griffith,** Senior Advisor of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament - "An overview of the findings of the World e-Parliament Report 2010"
11:30 am - 01:00 pm	**Mind the gap: the impact of the digital divide on parliaments and democracy** *Chair:* **Rose Francine Rogombé,** *President of the Senate of Gabon* **Panelists:** • **Lasse Bertzen,** Professor, Vestvold University College • **Paula Turyahikayo,** Vice Chair of the ICT Committee of the Parliament of Uganda • **Stanislav Dovhyi,** Member of the Parliament of Ukraine • **Anant Voratitipong,** Member of the Senate of Thailand *Open discussion*
01:00 pm - 02:30 pm	**Lunch break**

02:30 pm - 04:00 pm	**Parallel sessions**	
Main session	**Parliaments and the media in the information age** *Chair:* **Dan Kidega,** *Member of the East African Legislative Assembly* **Panelists:** • **Zweledinga Pallo Jordan,** former Minister of Arts and Culture of the Government of South Africa • **Abdelhamid Saadaoui,** Member of the House of Councillors of Morocco • **Wavinya Ndeti,** Assistant Minister, Ministry of Youth and Sports of Kenya *Open discussion*	
Specialized session	**Building an ICT-based parliamentary library** *Chair:* **Raissa Teodori,** *Secretary of the IFLA Section on Libraries and Research Services for Parliaments and Head of the Special Collection Office of the Library of the Senate of Italy* **Panelists:** • **Soledad Ferreiro,** Director of the Library of the Congress of Chile • **Sari Pajula,** Director of the Library of the Parliament of Finland • **Roxanne Missingham,** Librarian of the Parliament of Australia *Open discussion*	**Capturing and reporting parliamentary proceedings** *Chair:* **Dick Toornstra,** *Director of the Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy of the European Parliament* **Panelists:** • **Assem Genedy,** Director of the Information Centre, People's Assembly of Egypt • **Saseeta Ramsahye-Rakha,** CIO /Acting PICT Manager, National Assembly of Mauritius • **Sergio Falcão, Analyst,** IT Centre, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil *Open discussion*
04:00 pm - 04:30 pm	**Coffee and tea break**	
04:30 pm - 06:00 pm	**Parallel sessions**	
General session	**Expanding access to information: implications for parliaments, the civil society and the public** *Chair:* **Henk Ramnandanlal,** *Member of the National Assembly of Suriname* **Panelists:** • **Obed Bapela,** House Chairperson, National Assembly of South Africa • **José Pedro Montero,** Secretary General of the House of Representatives of Uruguay and Vice President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament (ASGP) • **Andy Williamson,** Director, Digital Democracy, Hansard Society *Open discussion*	
Specialized session	**Advances in XML at the international level** *Chair:* **Jean-Marc Laforest,** *Director-General for Innovation and Technological Support, European Parliament* **Panelists:** • **Richard Ware,** Director of Programmes and Development, Parliament of the United Kingdom • **Michael M. Murungi,** Chief Executive Officer, Kenya Law Report • **Ashok Hariharan,** Software Development Coordinator, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, UN/DESA *Open discussion*	**The challenge of archiving parliamentary records in multiple formats** *Chair:* **David Addow-Quarshie**, *Director of the ICT Department, Parliament of Ghana* **Panelists:** • **Enrico Seta,** Head of the International Office, Studies and Research Department, Chamber of Deputies of Italy • **João Batista de Holanda Neto,** IT Analyst, Senate of Brazil • **Fariza Emra,** IT Analyst, House of Representatives of Indonesia *Open discussion*

Agenda

22 October 2010

<table>
<tr><td>04:30 pm - 06:00 pm</td><td colspan="2">Parallel sessions</td></tr>
<tr><td>General session</td><td colspan="2">Can social media improve political participation?
Chair: Esau Chiviya, Secretary General, SADC Parliamentary Forum
Panelists:
• Ramon Farias, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile
• Francisco Vergara, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Ecuador
• Garreth Ferguson, Information System Manager of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago
Open discussion</td></tr>
<tr><td>Specialized session</td><td>Supporting the work of MPs through chamber technologies
Chair: Austin M. Zvoma, Clerk of the Parliament of Zimbabwe
Panelists:
• Juha-Pekka Leskinen, IT Manager, Parliament of Finland
• Dan Landau, Director General and Chief Executive Officer, and Arik Fischel, Director of IT, Knesset of Israel
Open discussion</td><td>Assessing Bungeni for your Parliament
Chair: Flavio Zeni, Chief Technical Advisor, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, UN/DESA
Panelists:
• Bungeni Team, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, UN/DESA
• Job Pierre, Chief of IT Services, Chamber of Deputies of Haiti
• Clement Nyandiere, Director, Information and Research Services, National Assembly of Kenya
Open discussion</td></tr>
<tr><td>11:00 am – 11:30 am</td><td colspan="2">Coffee and tea break</td></tr>
<tr><td>11:30 am – 01:00 pm</td><td colspan="2">Parallel sessions</td></tr>
<tr><td>General session</td><td colspan="2">How video and mobile technologies are changing parliamentary communication
Chair: Jakes Jacobs, Secretary to the National Assembly of Namibia
Panelists:
• Robert Reeves, Deputy Clerk, House of Representatives of the United States of America
• Antonio Saad, IT Director, National Assembly of Panama
• Carlo Marchetti, Head of the Information Systems Development Office, IT Department, Senate of Italy
Open discussion</td></tr>
</table>

Specialized session	**Assessment tools and strategic planning for ICT in Parliament** *Chair:* **Pedro Eastmond**, *Clerk of the Assembly of Barbados* **Panelists:** • **Fatima Boltman,** MSP Programme Manager, Parliament of South Africa • **Mahesh Perera,** IT Director, Parliament of Sri Lanka • **João Viegas Abreu,** Senior Programme Expert, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament *Open discussion*	**The benefits of parliamentary networks: the APKN case** *Chair:* **Zingile Dingani,** Secretary to the Parliament of South Africa **Panelists:** • **Cecilia Matanga,** Programme Officer, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, UN/DESA • **Simon Engitu,** Chair of the APKN Working Group on Parliamentary Libraries, and Assistant Director, Library Services, Parliament of Uganda • **Mireille Eza,** Director of Noria, Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie *Open discussion*
01:00 pm - 02:30 pm	**Lunch break**	
	PLENARY	
02:30 pm – 04:00 pm	**Websites for transparency and accountability** *Chair:* **Abdel Aziz Moustafa,** *Deputy Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt* **Panelists:** • **Christine Leston-Bandeira,** Professor, Senior Lecturer in Legislative Studies, University of Hull • **Maurizio Lupi,** Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy • **Ernest C. Mwansa,** Second Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chairperson of Committees of the Whole House of the National Assembly of Zambia *Open discussion*	
04:00 pm - 04:30 pm	**Coffee and tea break**	
04:30 pm – 06:00 pm	**Strengthening trust between parliaments and the people: the role of information and communication technologies** *Chair:* **Bethel Amadi,** *First Vice President of the Pan-African Parliament* **Panelists:** • **Julio César Valentín,** Chair of the Committee on Justice and Human Rights, Senate of the Dominican Republic • **Sikhumbuzo Eric Kholwane,** Member of the National Assembly of South Africa • **Jorge Fernández Díaz,** 3rd Vice President of the Congress of Deputies of Spain *Open discussion*	
06:00 pm – 06:30 pm	**Official closing of the World e-Parliament Conference 2010** • **Obed Bapela,** House Chairperson, National Assembly of South Africa and Co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament • **Hammi Laroussi,** 3rd Vice President of the Pan-African Parliament • **John-Mary Kauzya,** Chief, Governance and Public Administration Branch, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs	

For more information:

United Nations: www.un.org
Inter-Parliamentary Union: www.ipu.org
Parliament of South Africa: www.parliament.gov.za
Pan-African Parliament: www.pan-africanparliament.org