



ADVISORY GROUP TO THE IPU COMMITTEE ON UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS

PARLIAMENTARY FIELD MISSION TO SIERRA LEONE AND GHANA FOCUS ON UNITED NATIONS REFORM

30 May – 3 June 2011

Participants:

- ❖ **IPU Advisory Group**
Ms. R. Green (Mexico), Mr. M. Traore (Burkina Faso), Ms. S. Sani (Nigeria), Ms. K. Komi (Finland)
- ❖ **ECOWAS Parliament**
Mr. K. Garba
- ❖ **Parliaments of Sierra Leone and Ghana**
Ms. A. Foyah (Sierra Leone), Mr. G.K. Essilfie (Ghana)
- ❖ **IPU Secretariat**
Ms. A. Filip

I. INTRODUCTION

United Nations reform

1. Faced with ever growing demands from its membership, the United Nations has resolved to deliver its services in a way that is more attuned to the needs of the 21st century. This means working with greater efficiency and in a less fragmented fashion, in close coordination with government, donors and multilateral funding institutions. It also means adapting to a new reality in which UN financial assistance to development projects is significantly lower than that of others. Thus, its relevance at the national level is defined more by its role as an honest broker that has unique expertise in a number of areas.
2. In November 2006, the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-Wide Coherence (in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment) issued a report entitled *Delivering as One*, which served as the basis of the "One UN" approach to development cooperation. As the title of the report suggests, the intention is to deliver better services and expertise by harmonizing, at the country level the work of the various agencies, funds and programmes that work under the UN banner.

3. In 2007, the governments of eight countries — Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, and Viet Nam — volunteered to become "Delivering as One" pilots. The pilot countries agreed to work with the UN system to capitalize on the strengths and comparative advantages of the different members of the UN family, and experiment with ways to increase the UN system's impact through more coherent programmes, reduced transaction costs for governments, and lower overhead costs for the UN system. The One UN approach is currently the basis for the re-organization of UN work in a variety of other countries, including Sierra Leone and Ghana.
4. A significant part of the reform involves the United Nations becoming a more effective partner to the national government. National ownership and the capacity of the United Nations to align itself to support the development priorities identified by the national authorities are therefore central themes to this exercise. Likewise, strong political and financial support is required from all the development partners in order for the One UN reform to succeed. Meaningful change within the United Nations at the country level will depend on sustained political support by Member States and bold decision-making at UN Headquarters.

Purpose of the IPU field mission to Sierra Leone and Ghana

5. The 2011 field mission to Sierra Leone and Ghana was the third in a series of IPU missions aimed at examining the implementation of One UN reform at the national level. It followed previous missions to Tanzania (2008) and Viet Nam (2009). In both cases, the mission assessed the comparative advantages of the new approach, including in terms of the implementation of the "Five Ones" (One UN Programme, One Office, One UN Budgetary Framework, One set of Management Practices, and One Leader).
6. The purpose of the IPU visit was to gather first-hand information about the progress made in the One UN reform and, more generally, to gain a better understanding of the complexities of UN work at the national level. The mission also sought to assess the involvement of parliament in the formulation of national development strategies and the oversight of aid, and to identify modalities to address any possible shortcomings in this area. The mission's long-term objective therefore was to help lay the foundations for greater parliamentary involvement in the improved planning and use of development funding.
7. In both Sierra Leone and Ghana, a national legislator had been designated (Ms. A. Foyah in Sierra Leone and Mr. G. Esiilfie in Ghana) to follow and fully participate in all the meetings held by the IPU delegation with the national parliamentary leadership, government officials, UN country team, development partners, civil society organizations and local authorities.

II. MISSION TO SIERRA LEONE (30-31 MAY 2011)

Sierra Leone and the UN presence

8. Sierra Leone is located in West Africa and has an estimated population of 6.4 million, of which over 51 per cent are women. Following its independence in 1961 and the adoption of its Constitution in 1971, Sierra Leone is now a constitutional republic comprising four geographical regions and 14 districts. Sierra Leone is home to some 16 ethnic groups, each with its own language and customs. Despite the fact that the country is very rich in resources (including diamonds, titanium, bauxite, iron ore, gold offshore oil, rutile and tropical timber), Sierra Leone is currently among the poorest countries in the world, with the vast majority of its people living in abject poverty.

9. Sierra Leone is a country at a defining moment in its history. The people of Sierra Leone have high expectations of the Government and Parliament that sweeping reforms will be implemented after a decade of brutal civil war. Sierra Leone has come a long way since the conflict, but is in a fragile middle ground where the violence of war has ended but the ways of peace have yet to be fully restored. The 2012 elections will be an important test for the stability and continued progress of the country.
10. The UN Country Team in Sierra Leone comprises the following UN agencies, funds and programmes: FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN Women, UNDP, UNODC, WFP, WHO, UNIPSIL, the African Development Bank, as well as the World Bank and the IMF. The UN engagement in Sierra Leone is particularly strong. It comprises both a political mandate of transition from peacekeeping to peace-building to sustainable peace and development, as well as a mandate for the UN specialized agencies to come together in support of the country's development agenda. The head of the UN Country Team in Sierra Leone is also the Executive Representative of the Secretary General, Head of the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, UN Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Representative of UNDP.
11. Sierra Leone's Agenda for Change (Poverty Reduction Strategy for 2008-2012), along with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2004), in vital areas such as the protection of human rights, fighting corruption, security sector reform and improving the democratic participation of youth and women, serve as essential blueprints for the building of a new Sierra Leone.
12. Sierra Leone's Agenda for Change, issued by the country's President in December 2008 and endorsed by the United Nations, the World Bank and Sierra Leone's other development partners, articulates the vision and strategies to be put in place in order to consolidate peace and set the country on a course towards sustainable socioeconomic development. Priority areas of action include agriculture and food security, infrastructure and transportation, energy and water resources, and human development. As evidenced by President Koroma in the presentation of the plan, "It is a production-and-employment-oriented approach to poverty reduction as well as a development-driven approach to trade, rather than a trade-driven approach to development".
13. In response, the United Nations has formulated a Joint Vision for Sierra Leone, which sets out a number of joint planning, implementation and coordination mechanisms aimed at enhancing the impact of UN assistance towards the achievement of Sierra Leone's Agenda for Change. The UN Joint Vision is centred on four programmatic priorities: the economic integration of rural areas, the social and economic integration of the youth, equitable access to health services, and an accessible and credible public service. In addition, the UN system proposes to work together in promoting a series of cross-cutting issues: capacity-building, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), human rights, gender equality, poverty reduction and subregional cooperation.
14. The UN family is part of a much larger community of bilateral and multilateral development partners in Sierra Leone. In order to enhance the relevance of its interventions, the United Nations relies on a series of comparative advantages in designing and implementing its programmes in Sierra Leone: (1) linking political and development mandates as part of the mandate of the UN integrated peacebuilding mission in Sierra Leone; (2) the wide range of UN expertise which allows the United Nations to undertake more labour- and risk-intensive activities which, if proven viable, could later be replicated in larger investment projects by

other donors; (3) provincial outreach, facilitated by four UN joint regional field offices and four subregional field offices throughout the country; and (4) social outreach, as the United Nations is the partner with the largest number of national professionals, familiar with local traditions and values.

15. The Joint Vision for Sierra Leone - http://www.sl.undp.org/1_doc/joint_un_vision_sl_final.pdf - includes a series of programme benchmarks, designed to measure progress in the achievement of proposed objectives. Under the chapter on the consolidation of peace and stability, the top UN priorities relate to the establishment of a peaceful and democratic climate that makes it possible to have: (1) free, fair and non-violent presidential and parliamentary elections in 2012; (2) a regular and constructive political party dialogue on all major national, political, social and developmental issues facilitated by the Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC); (3) a Sierra Leone that has credible and effective institutions of governance, including a parliament that exercises its constitutional mandate of oversight over all branches of government; and (4) a public debate that prepares for the adoption of a new constitution for Sierra Leone.

The Parliament of Sierra Leone

16. The Parliament of Sierra Leone is a 124-member unicameral body elected for a five-year term. Of the total number of members of parliament, 112 are directly elected in single-member constituencies. The remaining 12 are indirectly elected from among Paramount Chiefs representing the provincial districts of the country. There are 16 women legislators in parliament, accounting for 13.2 per cent of the total number of MPs. The most recent general elections took place in August 2007. The next elections are therefore expected to take place in the latter part of 2012.
17. The parliament has 32 committees. This number seems to be very high for a membership of 124. The committees are serviced by only six committee clerks. The Parliamentary Service Act of 2007 provides for the establishment of eight key support departments as follows: (1) Office of the Clerk of Parliament; (2) Committees; (3) Official Reports; (4) Library, Research and Documentation; (5) Finance; (6) Parliamentary Counsel; (7) Public Relations; and (8) Human Resources. Various development partners have pledged financial support towards the establishment of these new structures. Due to delays in the hiring of permanent staff, however, for the time being it has not been possible to translate this legislation into a functioning parliamentary service.
18. The Parliamentary Service Act also aims to secure the separation of the parliamentary service from the public service, and hence enhance the independence of the legislative branch of government. Implementation of the Parliamentary Service Act is therefore an area of particular importance and one where significant effort should be directed in the coming years. In 2007, the IPU and UNDP conducted a needs assessment for the Parliament of Sierra Leone. While some aspects identified in the needs assessment report have been addressed, many others are still in limbo pending adequate funding.
19. The parliamentary leadership and individual MPs in Sierra Leone have expressed their appreciation for IPU's efforts to provide capacity-building and technical assistance to the national parliament. The outreach programme supported by IPU, whereby members of parliament from different political parties travel together to their constituencies and engage with citizens on priority issues, also received kudos. The IPU was requested to assist in further developing and expanding this programme.
20. During the week the mission was in Sierra Leone, the IPU, in cooperation with the German Technical Assistance and Development Services (GIZ), was organizing a training session for MPs in Sierra Leone on modalities to enhance parliamentary oversight of the extractive

industries. The parliament is mandated by statutory provision to oversee the government's management of the country's resources, in particular through the review and ratification of agreements concluded with the private sector, as well as through monitoring compliance with the terms and conditions of ratified agreements. In view of the very low level of parliamentary technical expertise and capacity, this activity was expected to help enhance parliament's capability of to effectively fulfil its oversight role.

21. In the delegation's meeting with the parliamentary leadership, it was underscored that its effective autonomy – including financial autonomy - was key to meeting citizens' expectations of the legislative branch. In terms of budgetary allocations, parliament was treated like any other government ministry, which greatly limited action and initiative by MPs. Parliament was expected to adopt national budgets, but it did not have the possibility of seriously amending budget proposals submitted by the executive. Weak capacity, moreover, continued to undermine parliament's involvement in the elaboration and oversight of national development strategies in a meaningful way.
22. The delegation met with the Women's Caucus in the Sierra Leone Parliament and discussed efforts currently under way to enhance the political participation of women. The delegation was informed that the Head of State had expressed his support for instituting affirmative action measures (30% quota for women in elected office) ahead of the 2012 general elections. A private member's bill was being drafted with a view to being passed by parliament before the end of the year.
23. The delegation also discussed the country-specific challenges to gender equality in Sierra Leone. These include widespread violence against women, the high level of illiteracy among women, and traditional cultural norms. According to statistics, 62 per cent of girls in Sierra Leone get married before the age of 18 years, and between 91 and 94 per cent of girls and women between the ages of 15 and 49 undergo female genital mutilation. Legislative reform to curb underage marriage and criminalize domestic violence, for example, has yet to be adopted. Mentoring programmes to encourage the active participation of women in public life – including in the peace-building process, as well as a more structured dialogue with traditional leaders and Paramount Chiefs, are areas of particular relevance that will require special attention and support. The Women's Caucus in Parliament would also stand to gain from greater international support and expertise.
24. The discussions in parliament were frank and open, a fact greatly appreciated by all the members of the IPU delegation. The members of the delegation underscored the joint responsibility of parliamentarians to show commitment and active leadership in promoting the broader interests of parliament and of society at large. In a situation where financial resources are scarce, these should be invested wisely with a view to having a longer-term impact. It was agreed that parliamentary allocations were better spent towards permanent staff than towards individual offices and vehicles. Similarly, training and capacity-building programmes abroad should be accompanied by mechanisms for the broader dissemination of knowledge and experience among other MPs and within committees.
25. The delegation was informed of parliament's intention to have its members adopt a code of ethics based on recognition of the need for public trust in the parliament and confidence in the integrity of its members. A draft code has already been drawn up with IPU assistance, and will be debated by parliament in the coming months. With practical guidelines relating to leadership, declaration of interests, abuse/misuse of office, gifts and paid advocacy, and equality of treatment for all MPs irrespective of political affiliation, the proposed code of ethics can help pave the way for greater transparency, accountability and integrity in the exercise of the parliamentary mandate.

Meetings with government officials in Sierra Leone

26. The IPU delegation met with Foreign Minister Joseph M. Dauda and was briefed on United Nations support for peace-building and reconciliation efforts in Sierra Leone. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission had recently concluded a high-level mission to Freetown. The mission's agenda had included a meeting with the parliamentary leadership, and much of the discussions had focused on preparations for the 2012 elections and the need to take measures to prevent electoral violence.
27. The Sierra Leone authorities were committed to stay on the path to economic development and good governance. A successful, violence-free electoral process in 2012, accompanied by the subsequent withdrawal of the UN integrated peace-building mission, would thus be a major achievement.
28. Further to the first major outbreak of violence after the end of a devastating civil war, the United Nations was credited with securing the compromise Joint Communiqué of 2009, whereby the two main political parties in Sierra Leone (the ruling All People's Congress – APC and the opposition Sierra Leone People's Party – SLPP) undertook to work together to develop bipartisan policies and strengthen major State institutions, including the police, the judiciary, the National Electoral Commission, the Political Parties Registration Commission, and the National Human Rights Council.
29. Since then, the United Nations has played a crucial role in helping meet the agreements contained in the communiqué and further advancing the process of peace consolidation in Sierra Leone, including through the mobilization of financial support for the implementation of the UN Joint Vision for Sierra Leone and the launch of the UN Multi-Donor Trust Fund. The Executive Representative of the UN Secretary-General (ERSG) in Sierra Leone has continued to play an active mediation role among the various political parties. Joining the ERSG for a working dinner at his residence, the IPU delegation had an opportunity to convene at a round wooden table under an African thatch roof, built specifically for all-party talks. As democracy in Sierra Leone takes root, the IPU expects that political problems will be resolved within, and not outside, a credible and effective parliament.
30. Sierra Leone has submitted itself to examination under the African Peer Review Mechanism - a mutually agreed instrument founded in 2003 within the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and voluntarily acceded to by the Member States of the African Union as a self-monitoring mechanism. An African Union delegation was in Sierra Leone at the same time as the IPU mission to examine Sierra Leone's performance on a wide spectrum of political, economic and governance indicators and standards. The conclusions and recommendations of this exercise were expected to give further direction and impetus to Sierra Leone's democratization and development efforts.
31. At the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the delegation was briefed on the budgetary process in Sierra Leone and the role of parliament. In terms of a general framework, parliament can demand unlimited access to relevant information on national revenues and budget execution, take part in the elaboration of budget estimates and proposals (as part of the budget preparatory process), and monitor the implementation of programmes and projects. As far as the executive is concerned, parliament needs to develop its own capacity and resources so as to become more involved in all of these processes (including the national consultation mechanism on development cooperation).
32. As also evidenced in Sierra Leone's Agenda for Change, corruption remains endemic and a major challenge for the national authorities. An Independent Anti-Corruption Commission

has been put in place, which has scored some important successes in the prosecution of corrupt officials, including civil servants and MPs. Legislation is also key to securing an enabling environment for public transparency and accountability. As was the case in Nigeria, major pieces of legislation such as the Fiscal Responsibility Bill and the Extractive Industry Bill (where all oil revenues need to be reported and on budget) have helped to ensure better oversight in the allocation and use of public funds.

Meetings with the United Nations Country Team and other development partners

33. The IPU delegation met with the UN Secretary-General's Executive Representative to Sierra Leone, Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, the UNDP Country Director, Ms. Mia Seppo, as well as with the heads of the other UN offices comprising the UN Country Team in Sierra Leone. Given the country's troubled history which, since independence, included no less than 13 military coups and 11 years of civil war, the transformation the country is currently undergoing is quite amazing. Demilitarization and integration of former combatants is almost complete, the crime rate is among the lowest in the region, and Sierra Leone is becoming a provider of security in its own right, with nationals serving in UN peacekeeping operations abroad. The 2012 elections are widely viewed as a major test for the country on the road towards peace and sustainable development.
34. At the same time, however, the United Nations considers that the country's greatest vulnerability is its capacity to manage its significant natural wealth (rare metals and minerals, oil and gas, seven rivers spanning the country and rich arable land, natural harbours and vast fisheries). If managed well, these riches can generate an increase by 5 to 10 times of the country's revenues over the next five years. If not, they can generate huge social and political tensions. The danger is real, particularly given the fact that the institutions of democratic governance are still weak. The African Minerals Contract, for example, was approved by parliament in one day. Strengthening parliamentary capacity, in particular its oversight function, remains an important objective.
35. As the United Nations has been transitioning from peacekeeping in Sierra Leone to peace-building, the benefits of this new type of engagement have been evident, underscored in discussions with the national officials. In terms of cost benefits, peace-building operations represent only a fraction of peacekeeping costs (an estimated 2% in Sierra Leone, with the costs of 6 months of peace-keeping supporting an equivalent of 30 years of peace-building work). Despite these benefits, once a UN peacekeeping operation has concluded, it is very difficult for the United Nations to provide the adequate funding of the peace-building activities that inevitably follow. This is an issue that needs to be better addressed at UN Headquarters, so that peace gains are preserved and the counties in question do not relapse into conflict.
36. As far as the implementation of One UN reform in Sierra Leone is concerned, the UN Country Team has chosen to take a more nuanced approach, combining the specificities of an integrated UN peace-building mission with the comparative advantages of the Delivering as One system. In the process, the UN Country Team seeks to ensure greater flexibility, underscoring the notion that their programme of work is "vision-driven, rather than mandate-driven". As was evidenced in the previous IPU missions to Tanzania and Viet Nam, the fragmentation and bureaucracy projected by the culture of work at UN Headquarters can serve as a barrier to timely and effective action at the national level. Special focus in Sierra Leone is given to joint projects and integrated teams under one leader, and less on overcoming the difficulties inherent to harmonizing business and administrative practices.

37. In practical terms and by way of example, the UN programme on child and maternal health is devised in such a way as to meet the needs identified in the corresponding chapter of the Agenda for Change. The UN lead agency administering the programme is UNICEF, working in close cooperation with four other UN agencies (WFP, WHO, UNFPA and FAO), five government counterparts (Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender & Children's Affairs, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, and Ministry of Local Government) and five development partners (AfDB, DFID, EC, Irish Aid and WB). The programme, estimated at US\$ 68 million, aims to help Sierra Leone meet the MDGs as they relate to maternal health and child mortality and malnutrition.
38. According to UN data, there are more than 60 development partners engaging with the Parliament of Sierra Leone. The Government of China, which is funding the construction of a new wing (to house shared MP offices and additional committee meeting rooms) is the parliament's largest investor. The IOM (with resources from the UN Peacebuilding Fund) and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (with DFID funding), were the parliament's largest capacity-building partners in 2010.
39. Development partner assistance is fragmented and takes on a multitude of forms: technical expertise (trainings for MPs and parliament's limited staff); study trips/invitations to seminars; funding for MP/constituent consultations at the local level; the provision of equipment (computers and vehicles); and donations of resource materials for committee libraries, etc. The establishment of a Parliamentary Assistance Coordination Office (as approved in 2010) as part of the parliament's internal structure can play a very important role in providing greater coherence and enhancing the impact of development assistance, as well as in better aligning support from development partners with parliament's own needs as identified in its Strategic Plan.
40. For the time being, and as confirmed earlier in the meeting at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, parliament is not involved in any meaningful way in the national consultation mechanism among the government, development partners and civil society (Development Partners Committee – DEPAC) regarding the content and disbursement of international aid. Not only has parliament not been invited to join such consultations, but it has not claimed such a role.
41. This reality is further evidenced by the mechanism that has been put in place for the evaluation of progress in the implementation of the Agenda for Change. As part of this process - in which parliament plays no role whatsoever - it is a pre-selected group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - most of them recipients of UN support - that makes amendments, provides input and formulates recommendations on the national progress reports. The same group of NGO representatives also plays a key role in the final validation of the document, which is ultimately endorsed by the executive and showcased at the UN Peacebuilding Commission. While acknowledging the important role of civil society, such a practice cannot substitute the legitimacy that only an elected parliament can provide. Ultimately, transparency and accountability can only be achieved by giving due attention to the role and responsibility of the national parliament in the oversight of aid effectiveness.
42. Indeed, at the level of donors and other development partners, parliament is not seen as particularly active or forceful in the area of aid effectiveness. Parliament is not even mentioned, for example, in the Aid Policy, developed by the government and approved by DEPAC, which is used by all donors as the basis of their work in Sierra Leone. With the process of decentralization under way in the country, the monitoring and oversight of local project implementation is being taken up by the district councils (with support from

development partners to consolidate this role). There clearly is scope for better and more effective cooperation between legislators and local councils in addressing the specific needs of local communities.

Meeting with civil society organizations and field visit to a local project

43. The IPU delegation met with a group of civil society organizations and was impressed by their level of energy, competence and passion in their work to transform Sierra Leone and its society. There seems to be a growing involvement by civil society organizations (CSOs) in various aspects of public life, accompanied by a greater demand for more direct engagement with policymakers, including MPs. The United Nations, recognizing the importance of a free and strong civil society for a peaceful and democratic Sierra Leone, has done much to support CSOs throughout the country.
44. In a few cases, NGOs work with MPs as candidates, as well as in efforts to bring about legislative reform. This takes place, for example, in the area of human trafficking, where good practices from countries like Ghana and Nigeria have been integrated into new laws for Sierra Leone. Similarly, given the widespread practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), and in keeping with Sierra Leone's formal endorsement of international commitments in this area, there are efforts to establish a legislative framework whereby young girls will have the option to express their consent to FGM upon reaching the age of 18. Such efforts will need to be accompanied by sustained programmes of engagement with traditional leaders.
45. During a brief working lunch with representatives of prominent women's organizations in Sierra Leone, the IPU delegation continued the discussion on the main challenges and opportunities for gender equality and the political empowerment of women in Sierra Leone. In addition to the undeniable value of special affirmative action measures (quota law), special attention will need to be given to the mentoring of women leaders, as well as to gradually changing the mindset of women themselves. Many women in rural communities, for example, have said that they would not vote for women that are not FGM-initiated. The sharing of experiences among African women leaders, as well as a more open discussion within communities and with traditional leaders on such issues, might help overcome some of the existing barriers and misperceptions.
46. As a general observation, there seems to be much mistrust between civil society activists and legislators. Several CSOs expressed concerns regarding the "inaccessibility" of legislators, whereas some MPs are sceptical of the "hidden agenda" of various NGOs. A joint objective for parliamentarians and CSOs alike should be the development of regular dialogue and closer cooperation, in an environment based on mutual respect and shared responsibilities. Members of parliament suggested that simple confidence-building measures could include the publishing of MPs' attendance records in formal parliamentary sessions, as well as the scanning and posting of official documents and relevant parliamentary reports on parliament's website. Civil society organizations should make a greater effort to engage with elected representatives, both in constituencies as well as on policy issues at the national level.
47. Once again, given the weak capacity of State institutions, the point was made that to a large extent, Sierra Leone's development programmes are "donor driven", with limited national ownership. Having the national authorities in the driver's seat implies inter alia a stronger and more engaged parliament. Associating parliament in the elaboration and monitoring of development cooperation schemes, and developing a more "healthy" relationship between the MPs and CSOs (including projects implemented at the local level, in the constituencies of concerned legislators) can help the country move in this direction.

48. At the end of its mission to Sierra Leone, the IPU delegation went on a field visit to a UN-assisted youth project in Makeni, the largest city and economic centre in northern Sierra Leone. The delegation met with the Mayor and members of the local Council, who, with the ongoing process of decentralization, are gaining greater responsibilities in the management of the local budget and local development projects. As youth employment has been identified as one of the top priorities in the development strategy of Sierra Leone, the United Nations is assisting several projects aimed at providing practical training to various categories, including young women and physically-challenged youth. In the process, the young people involved develop skills in various areas (arts and crafts, agricultural production, mobile phone repairs, market intervention, etc.) that can then help them find employment and become valuable members of their community.
49. Many challenges remain, particularly since very little support from donors and the international community is channelled to youth projects. In terms of the scale of outreach, the UN youth programme in Makeni reaches only a fraction of the over 800,000 young people in Sierra Leone who would stand to benefit from such activities. Youth participation in public life is an area where sustained attention and intervention will need to be provided in the years to come.

Conclusions and recommendations

50. The IPU Advisory Group on United Nations Affairs is grateful to Speaker Abel Stronge, the Honourable Alice Foyah, MP and the Parliament of Sierra Leone for their warm hospitality and constructive engagement throughout the IPU mission to Sierra Leone. The Group also appreciates the valuable assistance provided by the UN Country Team in helping set up meetings with the various development partners and sharing their time and views. A special word of thanks goes to ERSG Michael von der Schulenburg, UNDP Country Director Mia Seppo, UN Strategic Planning Adviser Philip Dive and UNDP Parliamentary Adviser Stephen Kooshak.
51. After this third mission to examine the implementation of UN reform and system-wide coherence at the national level, the Advisory Group is more convinced than ever of the value of the Delivering as One approach. This is an approach which, as evidenced in Sierra Leone, can take on various forms, depending on the specificities of the country concerned.
52. A huge gap remains between the organization of UN work in the field and the capacity of UN central bodies (in particular Executive Boards) to adequately respond and support the Delivering as One approach. Member States also have a special responsibility in this regard, and should be better attuned to the needs and expectations of the host countries, allowing for greater flexibility in the organization of UN work at the national level.
53. While promoting the Delivering as One approach, the United Nations as a system should also be prepared to provide clearer guidelines as to how UN country teams can best engage with the national parliament on various policy issues. As observed by the IPU mission and as highlighted in the responses to the IPU Survey on how parliaments organize their work vis-à-vis the UN system (July 2010), this relationship varies from country to country, depending on a wide set of variables. UN General Assembly Resolution 65/123 specifically calls for "a regular annual exchange between the UN system Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the senior leadership of the IPU, with a view to building greater coherence in the work of the two organizations, maximizing parliamentary support for the UN and helping to forge a strategic partnership between the two organizations". This provision should be acted upon without further delay.

54. In the case of countries emerging from conflict, and particularly in situations where UN peacekeeping operations have been deployed, the UN Security Council and General Assembly should seek to identify modalities to ensure a smooth transition to peace-building, including in terms of securing relevant financial support. The UN Peacebuilding Commission may play an important role in this regard, given its structural connections to the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Security Council.
55. Parliament remains insufficiently engaged in efforts to establish a coherent and accountable mechanism of development cooperation among national authorities, the United Nations and other development partners. Neglecting parliament prevents real national ownership and undermines the authority of the legislature and its ability to hold government to account. The balance of powers is hence adversely affected, as are the prospects of achieving good governance and greater aid effectiveness.
56. From a policy perspective, the UN Country Team should enhance its efforts to engage in a more structured and substantive way with the parliamentary leadership and the select committees. It should also more closely examine opportunities to expand capacity-building and other projects in support of parliament, in keeping with the recommendations formulated by the joint UNDP-IPU needs assessment mission of 2007. Including parliament in national consultation and development evaluation and validation mechanisms should become a clear objective.
57. In working with national parliaments, the United Nations should also seek to engage with regional and subregional parliamentary organizations, such as the Pan African Parliament and the ECOWAS Parliament. These can provide relevant expertise, while also helping to disseminate good practices among other parliaments in the region. International organizations and think tanks such as the Parliamentary Centre and the International Budget Partnership (IBP) also have valuable expertise to share, including in key areas such as parliamentary oversight and mechanisms for budget transparency and accountability.
58. Parliament has a special responsibility to claim and exercise its prerogatives. The IPU welcomes the intention of parliamentary leaders to adopt a Code of Ethics and encourages its swift implementation. The 2007 Parliamentary Service Act should also be implemented as soon as possible, so as to better equip the institution with the tools it needs to become more effective. The proposed Parliamentary Assistance Coordination Office operational can also be most helpful in maximizing the impact of support from other partners. Parliamentarians themselves should lead by example. Greater transparency in the exercise of the parliamentary mandate and the utilization of public resources, as well as a more open and active engagement with civil society, can help build greater public trust.
59. The conclusions and recommendations set forth in the Parliamentary Action Plan adopted on the occasion of the National Seminar on the Contribution of the Parliament of Sierra Leone to the National Reconciliation, Institutional Reform and Development Agenda (Freetown, April 2009 – text attached) are as relevant today as ever. In working towards the implementation of these commitments and recommendations, engagement with the UN Country Team and other development partners can indeed be mutually beneficial.
60. Gender equality and the political empowerment of women are key to the achievement of the MDGs. Legislative initiatives such as the forthcoming private member's bill on quotas for women in elected and executive office should be supported and encouraged. The 2012 elections are not an end in itself, but rather an important milestone in the continuous efforts to train and mentor women leaders. The Women's Caucus in Parliament can play an important role in laying the foundations for a fundamental shift in the standing of women in society, and as such it should receive strong support in carrying forward its initiatives.

III. MISSION TO GHANA (1-3 JUNE 2011)

The United Nations presence in Ghana

1. The IPU delegation was in Ghana from 1 to 3 June. The delegation was well received by the Honourable Speaker, Joyce Bamford-Addo and the leadership of the Ghanaian Parliament, as well as by the UN country team, led by UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Ruby Sandhu-Rojon. The discussions with the parliamentary leadership, government officials, representatives of the UN country team, development partners CSOs, allowed the delegation to gain valuable insight into UN operations in Ghana and how parliament as an institution relates to these processes.
2. Ghana, with a population of over 24 million inhabitants, is one of the fastest growing economies in the world today (20.15% economic growth in 2011, according to Economy Watch with data from the IMF), placing Ghana well on its way to becoming a middle-income country). The first sub-Saharan African nation to gain independence from the United Kingdom in 1957, Ghana is a constitutional presidential republic with an elected unicameral parliament of 230 members, 19 of which are women (8.3%).
3. The progress in Ghana's economic, social and political development is relatively recent. Successive military coups after Ghana's independence had kept the country in a state of instability for several decades, with parliament functioning only sporadically. It was only over the last decade that Ghana has enjoyed increasingly stable and deepening democratic governance. Successful electoral processes in 2000, 2004 and 2008 have consolidated inclusive governance and strengthened the effectiveness of key national institutions, enhanced investor confidence and anchored the new economy in an environment for positive growth.
4. Since 1997, Ghana has been guided by a sequence of medium-term development frameworks. During this period, the country has experienced substantial progress in macroeconomic stability and towards sustainable poverty reduction. However other challenges have emerged, including large fiscal and balance of payment deficits, a decline in remittances, high food prices and more limited access to external financing as a result of the global financial crisis. In spite of the strong GDP performance recorded over the 2003-2009 period, data indicates that key sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing did not perform very well and that, in some regions of the country, poverty levels increased. This has had a negative impact on efforts aimed at achieving the MDGs.
5. The current national development strategy – the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA), 2010-2013 – provides the framework for tackling the difficulties posed by a rapidly changing socioeconomic and aid environment. With a focus on the structural transformation of the economy over the next decade through industrialization, modernized agriculture and sustainable exploitation of Ghana's natural resources, the GSGDA identifies seven key objectives: (1) ensure and sustain macroeconomic stability; (2) enhance private sector competitiveness; (3) accelerate agricultural modernization and sustainable resource management; (4) oil and gas development; (5) infrastructure, energy and human settlements; (6) human development, productivity and employment; and (7) transparent and accountable governance.
6. The UN Country Team in Ghana is composed of 17 agencies, programmes and funds: FAO, IFAD, ILO, IMO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNU, UN Women, WFP and WHO. Although Ghana is not a One UN

pilot country per se, the UN country team conducts its activity on the basis of a joint annual work plan which has as its main objective the achievement of all the MDGs in Ghana by the target date of 2015.

7. In so doing, the UN country team has drawn inspiration from the local culture and adopted the Adinkra symbol "NKONSONKONSON" as the expression of its joint vision. NKONSONKONSON, or "In Unity Lies Strength", stands for oneness and mutual responsibility as a foundation of collective strength, growth, progress and well-being. It captures the belief that, by planning and working together across all areas (including development programming, humanitarian operations and joint advocacy and communication activities), UN agencies can achieve more and better results. From this perspective, the UN approach in Ghana is very much in line with the Delivering as One philosophy of UN action at the national level.
8. The foundation for NKONSONKONSON in the area of UN development programming in Ghana is the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Action Plan 2012-2016. This is the fourth UNDAF for Ghana and it encapsulates the collective results that the UN system seeks to achieve in support of the key priorities of the Government's development agenda. In keeping with the new integrated UN approach, the UNDAF thematic areas are fully aligned with the thematic areas of the Ghana Development Agenda (GSGDA).
9. The UNDAF framework aims to bring greater programmatic coherence and articulate joint UN programmes in support of key national priorities. Taking into consideration the United Nations comparative advantages and the areas where it is best placed to make a difference, UNDAF places special focus on four of the seven thematic areas identified in the GSGDA: food security and nutrition; sustainable environment, energy and human settlements; human development and productive capacity for improved social services; and transparent and accountable governance. In the process, and given the MDG-based nature of the Ghana Development Agenda, the United Nations seeks to address the key MDG issues which run the risk of not being met in Ghana by 2015: food security and nutrition, child and maternal health, and sanitation.
10. In terms of resource mobilization, a recent request from the Vice-President of Ghana to establish a multi-donor MDG Fund for the UNDAF, exclusively dedicated to supporting MDG achievement in those areas that are still lagging behind, seeks to attract additional resources for an MDG-driven UNDAF in the next cycle, 2012-2016.
11. As part of the package to deliver support to Ghana in the timely achievement of the MDGs, the UN Country Team has also developed a "UN-Parliament Partnership in promoting MDG attainment". Signed in August 2010 by the Parliament (Office of the Clerk) and the heads of 14 UN agencies in Ghana, the joint initiative proposes to help reduce poverty by enhancing good governance. In this process, three key joint programme outcomes have been identified: (1) constitutional provisions reviewed to ensure effective legislative, oversight and financial control roles of Parliament; (2) MPs, parliamentary committees, clerks and research directorate effectively perform their roles and functions; and (3) national development goals, including the MDGs, attained through parliamentary advocacy.
12. With an initial estimated budget allocation of US\$ 525,000, the joint initiative proposes to contribute to: an enhanced legislative function by parliament for budget planning, implementation and monitoring; strengthened oversight and budget review capacity for

MDG compliance budget allocation and utilization; the creation of an enabling environment for the budget review process; and enhanced engagement by parliament with key actors, including civil society and development partners for the achievement of the MDGs.

13. As indicated by the UN Country Team, this new approach has led to a more structured engagement between the United Nations, government ministries and parliamentary select committees with a view to enhanced legislative response, policy integration and review in various fields, including poverty reduction, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, adoption of the mental health and tobacco bills, HIV/AIDS anti-stigma legislation, etc.
14. This is the first UN system-wide programme of engagement with a national parliament that the IPU Advisory Group has come across. Although the project is still in the very early stages, the delegation was keen to get a better sense of how it operates and its expected results. The working modalities are still in the process of being finalized, however, this is potentially a significant practice from which many other parliaments may stand to learn. The Advisory Group would therefore wish to be kept abreast of developments in the implementation of this UN-Parliament partnership.
15. As evidenced by IPU Advisory Group member Saudatu Sani, who until very recently has served as chair of the Nigerian parliamentary Committee on the MDGs, it is crucial for the United Nations to work in a more integrated manner with national parliaments. This is particularly true in countries working hard to meet the MDGs by the 2015 target, given the importance of raising political awareness and support for the MDGs, and making sure that parliament as an institution as well as national budget processes are indeed MDG-sensitive. The good practices developed in several countries – and certainly in Ghana - are relevant, and should be shared more widely, with assistance from both the IPU and the United Nations.

The Parliament of Ghana

16. The Parliament of Ghana has made huge strides in establishing itself as an open and effective legislature. The transformation has been a swift one: 90 per cent of bills today come out of parliament after extensive debate and amendment, as compared to the situation only 15 years ago, when 90 per cent of laws were adopted without further consideration, in the form presented by the executive. Although resources are still required to meet some evident needs of parliament (the institution, for example, still does not have its own premises, and Committee and office space is lacking), the plans to advance in this direction seem to be well on track. By the time the next elections take place at the end of next year, it is foreseen that all MPs in Ghana will have their own office and staff.
17. According to joint documents produced by parliament and Ghana's development partners, remaining challenges include: (1) Parliament's capacity to critically analyse budget allocations and their linkage to national development strategies; (2) the capacity of Committee clerks and research staff to produce analytical papers, write reports and prepare terms of reference; (3) the lack of timely access to quality data by MPs; and (4) inadequate engagement between parliament, other State institutions and civil society.
18. Over the past decade, the United Nations has been providing technical assistance and capacity building to the Parliament of Ghana. Individually, various UN agencies have been extending support to select parliamentary committees (UNFPA and UNICEF organizing orientation sessions and induction seminars at the commencement of new legislatures, UNAIDS and UNESCO providing expertise to relevant parliamentary committees, UNDP developing and implementing a regular programme of work in support of parliament, etc).

Assistance has also been provided in the form of construction of committee and office space, research and documentation, as well as ICT development, including through the establishment of an electronic legislative tracking system.

19. In 2006, parliament adopted its own Enhanced Strategic Plan (ESP), aimed at enhancing parliamentary performance and management. In support of this Strategic Plan, UNDP together with the parliament developed a multi-year programme of work with multiple components: commissioned research on issues of importance to MPs, including policy research on MDG-related areas; quarterly meetings of the expanded leadership of parliament on the state of the MDGs in Ghana; elaboration of modalities for private members' bill development; development of parliamentary information technology (IT) and records management policy; supply of IT equipment for minority and majority secretariats; improved electronic access to proposed legislation through direct notification to distribution lists; monitoring and evaluation, etc.
20. In terms of Committee work, the specialized UN agencies have been invited on occasion to provide technical guidance and expertise when considering specific legislative drafts. Earlier this year, for example, the Parliament of Ghana adopted Act 818/2011 establishing the National Peace Council, a new body designed to harmonize and coordinate efforts at the national and local level to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and build sustainable peace in the country. This major piece of legislation had benefitted from expertise provided by the United Nations.
21. As in the case of Sierra Leone, Ghana's emergence as a significant oil producer raises the challenge of parliament relatively quickly developing its capacity to oversee the effective registering, distribution and use of potentially large oil revenues for the public good. The UN country team in Ghana, and in particular UNIDO, have provided assistance in this regard, including in the form of a study tour for parliamentarians from the relevant select committees to some of the countries that have performed well in the management and oversight of natural resources (Japan, Malaysia, Norway and Qatar).
22. The new UN-Parliament partnership provides an opportunity for greater coherence in how the United Nations organizes its work vis-à-vis the parliament. At this early stage, there is little evidence of the type of traction this new approach can have, and of the measurable results that it can yield. As the initiative advances, it will be important to show progress in terms of "buy-in" and meaningful engagement from both sides in the implementation of the plan.

A Parliamentary Platform for engagement with development partners

23. There is a growing awareness among the United Nations and other development partners in Ghana of the need to engage in a more structured way with parliament. This involves providing support to parliament where needed, but also responding adequately to parliament as it exercises its oversight function. During the meeting with representatives from the donor community, the IPU delegation learned of the establishment last year of a "Parliamentary Platform" for engagement between parliament and development partners.
24. The objectives of the Parliamentary Platform are: (1) to provide a forum for long-term engagement on the legislative implications of policy initiatives as contained in budget statements; (2) to strengthen the partnership for parliamentary governance and to harmonize support for parliament; and (3) to share/exchange information on the implementation of the new Strategic Plan for Parliament with links to the proposed Medium-Term Development Framework and other initiatives.

25. The Parliamentary Platform is designed to be spearheaded by parliament through its leadership. Participation is of a tripartite nature, bringing together parliament (leadership, chairs and ranking members of parliamentary committees, other nominated MPs and staff of the parliamentary service), development partners (heads of missions, heads of cooperation agencies, Multi-Donor Budgetary Support Core Group and other nominated individuals), and the executive (Ministry of Finance and the National Development Planning Commission as standing members, other ministries and agencies invited to participate depending on the agenda).
26. The Parliamentary Platform is expected to meet three times during the year, with its meetings formally included as part of the annual calendar of parliament. Proposed topics for discussion include policy dialogues, parliamentary oversight (including monitoring and reporting of public projects), strengthening of parliament (including constitutional/institutional issues and international support to parliament), oil and gas (including the proposed Oil Revenue Management Bill), public financial management and auditing (including programme-based budgeting and Auditor General's Reports), the New Medium-Term Development Planning Framework, constitutional reform, multi-donor budgetary support (MDBS) and sector budget support, active participation of women in parliament and gender mainstreaming as well as other emerging issues.
27. One year after the launch of this ambitious initiative, little information is available as to how it is actually performing, and as to the level of ownership displayed by the parliament. The IPU Advisory Group proposes to continue the discussion with the Working Group of the Parliamentary Platform (consisting of MPs, parliamentary staff and representatives of bilateral donors) on lessons learned, with a view to possibly sharing this practice more widely with other parliaments.
28. In addition to this new platform, which will be tested over the coming years, development partners continue their bilateral initiatives in support of parliament. Over the years, development partner support to parliament has covered a variety of issues and has been delivered using various approaches, ranging from the provision of office equipment and infrastructure, to capacity building for committees, MPs and staff, to helping strengthen parliamentary outreach and civic engagement. The main development partners involved in parliamentary strengthening in Ghana include CIDA and the World Bank (working together through the Parliamentary Centre), DFID, the African Development Bank, GTZ, USAID and DANIDA.
29. One very interesting joint programme that was presented to the delegation is entitled STAR-Ghana (Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana). STAR-Ghana serves as a multi-donor pooled funding mechanism (currently bringing together funds provided by the United Kingdom, the European Union, Denmark and Canada), which aims to support parliament and civil society in enhancing their ability to influence policy, monitor change, and ensure greater transparency, accountability and responsiveness from government and the private sector. With a total value of some GB£ 20 million to be disbursed over the next five years, parliament is called upon to play a leading role in the design of the funding windows that concern it directly.

The constitutional review process in Ghana

30. The capacity of parliament to fully exercise its oversight function (including in terms of monitoring implementation of projects and programmes by the United Nations and other development partners) ultimately depends on the constitutional framework that is in place

in any given country. As part of the ongoing process of democratization in Ghana, the constitutional review process now under way aims to address some key issues relating to the powers and function of parliament.

31. The current Constitution of Ghana was adopted by referendum in 1992, after many years of military rule. Chapter 10 of the Constitution is devoted to the parliament, and its provisions reflect the strong will of the people to move towards legitimate and effective civilian rule. Article 94, for example, clearly stipulates that a person shall not be eligible to be a member of parliament if he is a member of law enforcement agencies, such as the police service, armed forces, or the internal revenue service.
32. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana represents a compromise between the Westminster and the American Presidential systems of government, with at least half of all ministers coming from parliament. Despite the successes gained by the political system in Ghana over the past two decades, a series of governance deficits have emerged, some with constitutional implications. Among these, the fact that the separation of powers is undermined and parliament's oversight responsibility is limited in a situation where government ministers with control over significant national resources also wield considerable influence as sitting members of parliament.
33. In an effort to address such issues, the President of the Republic appointed in 2010 a nine-member Constitutional Review Commission, with a mandate to: (1) ascertain the views of the citizens of Ghana on the operation of the 1992 Constitution, in particular its strengths and weaknesses; (2) articulate the concerns of the people on amendments that may be required for a comprehensive review of the 1992 Constitution; and (3) make recommendations to the government and provide a draft bill for possible amendments to the 1992 Constitution.
34. During their mission to Ghana, the IPU delegation met with Commissioner Jean Mensa and Commission Executive Secretary Raymond Atuguba. As explained during the meeting, flaws in the Ghana constitutional design and practice have led to too much power being concentrated in the Presidency, thus undermining systems of checks and balances. Executive dominance has limited the oversight role of parliament, making it a less-than-equal partner in national policy-making. These transparency and accountability deficits have been further exacerbated by consistent under-resourcing of institutions that should act as counterweights to the executive. There is also a lack of effective devolution of authority to democratic local government bodies.
35. The 1992 Constitution has no clear provisions on the financial autonomy of parliament. Such impediments deprive the parliament of the legislative authority to exercise the "power of the purse" and influence budget allocations and utilization. At present, parliament cannot engage the executive during the budget-formulation stage to amend sector allocations. During budget reviews and the approval process, parliament is faced with limitations in the time and capacity to analyse the budget effectively. Moreover, constitutional provisions prohibit parliament from introducing a bill or a motion if that would require funding from the Consolidated Fund (Article 108).
36. According to the Constitution, parliament may take care of any outstanding issues, including constitutional reform. It is an expression of the weakness of parliament as an institution that the current constitutional reform process is taking place elsewhere.

37. The national consultation process on constitutional reform has been a huge undertaking. In the course of 2010, the Commission spanned the country, organizing consultations, listening to ordinary citizens, holding hearings and town hall meetings. Social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter have been used extensively. Over 85,000 submissions have been received from the general public. A national conference held earlier in 2011 with some 3,000 participants increased the number of issues under discussion fivefold, from 500 to almost 2,400. Parliament is one of the 12 big themes under consideration by the Commission, and the process thus far has indicated strong public support for an enhanced role of parliament. The Commission is expected to deliberate over the summer, and present a report to the President by late August.
38. It is expected that constitutional changes aimed at enhancing the role parliament will also create momentum for further improvements to the way the institution organizes its work. Parliament's Standing Orders, for example, prevent parliamentary committees from commencing hearings or investigation into a matter unless the matter has been referred to it by the plenary. Control of the parliamentary majority and the executive by the same party means that government can easily prevent parliament from having a committee investigate a sensitive matter. Ultimately, as in the case of many other emerging democracies, it is up to the parliament to claim the type of role it believes it can play within society.

Civil society engagement with the United Nations and parliament

39. One of Ghana's greatest assets is its vibrant civil society. The delegation met with a small cross-section of CSOs, which shared their perspectives on achievements and challenges ahead. They considered that creating an enabling environment for smooth and peaceful elections in 2012 to be a major test for the country. Time is short, the danger of political violence is real, lessons have not been drawn from the experience of 2008, and real targets (such as biometric voter registration and electoral reform) have yet to be met. As a result, all forces, including civil society and Ghana's development partners, need to work together to defuse electoral tensions and prepare for a successful outcome of the process ahead.
40. The Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG) is one organization at the forefront of civil society efforts to support nation-building and consolidate democratic gains in Ghana. It has expertise which allows it to work closely with State institutions and produce research, such as the Ghana country chapter of the 2011 Assessment of implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. It also gives voice to public concerns, as was the case in early 2010, when it challenged the IMF on "inimical" conditionalities which have led to increased taxes, reduction in public employment and other measures perceived to have caused recent socioeconomic hardship in Ghana.
41. Other organizations such as the Parliamentary Centre (an international NGO) and the Legal Resource Centre (national) have developed a substantive working relationship with the parliament. According to these organizations, their input (research, documentation, advice) is well received by MPs and parliamentary committees. When it comes to the consideration of draft bills, they often help generate public discussion and analysis of the various legislative proposals, and revert to parliament with their findings and recommendations.
42. There does not appear to be a structured mechanism for policy discussions between the UN system and CSOs in Ghana (one exception that was invoked is in the area of ICT for development). There are multiple, parallel platforms of engagement between the United Nations and CSOs (usually at the operational level, with various CSOs implementing internationally-funded projects), but little opportunity for consultation on strategic directions and interventions for Ghana.

43. One area that came up in the discussion was the situation of women's participation and representation in public life, including politics. Civil society organizations feel that they have been pushing for guidelines, policies and legislative frameworks for over 20 years now. They fear that, with the upcoming elections, the situation will only get worse. It is not so much a question of cultural barriers as one of political will. The time has come, they argue, for resolute action.

Gender equality in Ghana

44. As in the case of the mission to Sierra Leone, discussions between the IPU delegation in Ghana and the various stakeholders also touched on the issue of political participation by women. The members of the delegation were surprised to find that, according to many representatives of the national authorities, MDG 3 on gender equality was not viewed as an area of priority action, despite the evidently low number (among the lowest in all of Africa) of women in elected office. In the discussions on the MDGs, the unifying factor of UN intervention in Ghana, there was very limited acknowledgement of the direct relationship between gender equality and the achievement of all the other MDGs.
45. In February 2011, as an initiative of UN Women and in collaboration with the UN Joint Programme with Parliament, a comprehensive gender assessment of the Parliament of Ghana (parliamentary structures, systems and processes) was conducted by the Gender Development Institute (Ghana), a local think tank. A draft of this Gender Assessment was shared with the IPU delegation. The delegation felt that this was a very valuable initiative, one that other parliaments may wish to consider, when seeking to evaluate the gender sensitivity of their institutions.
46. The proposed objectives of the UN-commissioned Study, still to be taken up for discussion in Parliament, are: (a) to provide a historical overview of the evolution of the parliamentary system in Ghana under a gender lens; (b) to identify critical needs in order to plan effective interventions; (c) to develop ways of working with MPs and parliamentary staff that would enhance the quality of parliament's work in the area of gender; (d) to generate information for the development of a gender policy for parliament; and (e) to make recommendations that will help the UN plan interventions that will tackle the gender development gaps of parliament.
47. The meeting with the members of the Women's Caucus in the Parliament of Ghana evidenced the high level of talent, competence and commitment among women professionals in Ghana. While it may not be a large group, as long as it is united the Caucus is seen as a potentially powerful agent of change. The UN-led assessment may provide an opportunity for substantive discussions in parliament itself, which in turn may lead to the elaboration of a gender policy for the Parliament of Ghana.
48. The partnership with CSOs was particularly important in such an exercise. The Women's Caucus and the Gender Committee in Parliament were looking to establish a regular consultation mechanism with relevant NGOs, with a view to identifying good practices and possible avenues for future action, but also so as to help build confidence among women themselves (candidates and voters alike). Greater focus on education and modalities to secure the empowerment of women at the local level were generally viewed as areas of priority action in the years to come. In the short and medium term, though, special measures were necessary in order to reverse the current downward trend.

49. As Advisory Group member, Katri Komi (Finland), outlined mechanisms where a proportion of State funding for political parties (12% in Finland, for example) reserved for gender-related activities (training, mentoring, campaign support, etc) can be effective tools in bolstering the political participation of women. Such practices may be relevant in the case of Ghana, which has also experimented with special measures in the past. It was recalled that in the 1960 elections held on the heels of Ghana's independence, ten seats were reserved for women in the National Assembly. Paradoxically, the percentage of women in the Parliament of Ghana was higher in 1960 than it is today. Unless special measures are taken soon, the number of women in elected office was expected to continue to decrease.
50. Political parties constitute an important part of the equation and need to be engaged in the effort to enhance women's political representation. Having women as candidates on political party lists, for example, was not effective unless they were included in the top positions for winnable seats. As underscored by delegation leader Rosario Green of Mexico, practices where political parties are encouraged to present "alternate lists" (lists in which men candidates alternate with women candidates) have been successful in many instances.
51. The Women's Caucus also raised a number of concerns, including the question of who was in the driver's seat of the various initiatives involving women in parliament. For several years, this had been the United Nations, CSOs or other international partners. Having a home-grown and integrated strategic plan for gender was a first major step in empowering the parliament to play its role to the full. Continued capacity building and resource allocation were also required, as was greater and more coherent international exposure. Due to parliament's limited budgetary role, for example, resources were not made available to allow for Ghana's participation in the IPU meetings held during the annual sessions of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). That issue needed to be addressed as soon as possible.
52. The constitutional review process is potentially an important avenue to bring about swift and meaningful change in the area of gender equality. The nation-wide consultations on constitutional reform had shown that women's rights, alongside other human rights-related issues such as the death penalty and sexual freedoms, had generated very strong and opposing views. This issue will require further consideration and, as such, may not be included in the first set of recommendations to be submitted to the President of the Republic. On the other hand, any information on constitutional and legislative provisions for gender equality in other countries that the IPU could provide would be well received by the Commission.

Conclusions and recommendations

53. The MDG-based joint United Nations programme of work offers a valuable experience that other countries may wish to examine and take inspiration from. It is a unique example of how international commitments are mainstreamed into national development strategies, with precise targets and objectives.
54. Judging by discussions with UN officials in Ghana and the relevant documents shared with the IPU delegation, the UN Development Assistance Framework is designed in such a way as to align UN efforts to support the strategic objectives defined by the national authorities in the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA). This is also the main purpose and benefit of the Delivering as One approach.

55. The IPU delegation was impressed by the conscious effort made by both the UN Country Team and the group of bilateral donors to develop structured frameworks for cooperation with the national parliament. Though very new, such mechanisms have the potential of revolutionizing the way development partners organize their work vis-à-vis parliaments at the national level. The success of these initiatives will depend to a large extent on the level of ownership and leadership shown by parliament.
56. The constitutional review process under way in Ghana is an expression of the concern manifested in many countries to ensure an effective separation of powers and equip the institutions of democratic governance with the tools they need to deliver their mandates effectively. Enhancing the independence and oversight function of parliament in Ghana will also allow it to play a much more active role in monitoring aid effectiveness and the work of development partners in the country.
57. The experience in both Ghana and Sierra Leone – both in terms of parliamentary development and in relation to One UN reform - is relevant for many other parliaments in the region and around the world. Regional parliamentary organizations such as the ECOWAS Parliament can play an important role in disseminating good practices and generating further reflection and action. In the case of the ECOWAS Parliament, this is also in line with current initiatives to strengthen the independence and role of the organization vis-à-vis the inter-governmental structures.
58. The IPU is called upon to play a more active role, as appropriate, sharing information and expertise from other parliaments in support of ongoing constitutional reform processes. In the cases of both Ghana and Sierra Leone, good practices and model legislation from other countries, in areas such as gender equality, can be useful in advancing national reform efforts.
59. The IPU is also invited to facilitate exchanges between regional parliamentary organizations – as a first step, specifically between the ECOWAS Parliament, the African Parliament and the Latin American Parliament – on interaction between parliaments and the UN system at the national level.
60. Other national parliaments also stand to gain from examining more closely the experiences of countries such as Ghana and Sierra Leone in their efforts to enhance aid effectiveness and secure a greater role for parliament in the sphere of development cooperation.

List of acronyms (in alphabetical order)

AfDB	African Development Bank
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DEPAC	Development Partners Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
IBP	International Budget Partnership
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
STAR-GHANA	Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN - HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNU	United Nations University
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

MEETINGS HELD IN SIERRA LEONE

Parliament of Sierra Leone

1. Hon. Justice Abel N.B. STRONGE, Speaker of Parliament
2. Hon. Victor Chukuma JOHNSON, Deputy Speaker of Parliament
3. Hon. S.B.B. DUMBUYA, Majority Leader (APC)
4. Hon. Momoh PUJEH, Minority Leader (SLPP)
5. Hon. Thomas MANSARAY, 'Minority Leader' (PMDC)
6. Hon. Suffian KARGBO, Deputy Majority Leader (APC)
7. Hon. Alice FOYAH
8. Hon. Chernoh BAH
9. Hon. Abdul Rahman KAMARA
10. Hon. Philip T. TONDONEH
11. Hon. Elizabeth ALPHA-LAVALIE
12. Hon. Philip T. TONDONEH
13. Hon. Mathew TEAMBO
14. Hon. Hassan B. SHERIFF

Sierra Leone Women Parliamentarians Caucus

1. Hon. Rev. Marie YANSANEH (SLPP), President
2. Hon. Elizabeth ALPHA-LAVALIE (APC), Vice-President
3. Hon. Bernadette LAHAI
4. Hon. Alice FOYAH
5. Hon. Bintu MYERS
6. Hon. Emilie Safula MOIJUEH
7. Hon. Marie Marilyn JALLOH
8. Hon. Mabinty FORNAH
9. Hon. Frances ROGERS
10. Hon. Nenneh LEBBIE
11. Hon. Emma KOWA
12. Hon. Florence KOMBE-BUNDU
13. Hon. Veronica K. SESAY
14. Hon. Victoria Sylvia SAIDU-KAMARA
15. Hon. Salamatu TURAY

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

1. Hon. Minister Joseph Bandabla DAUDA
2. Mr. Michael MASSAQUOI, MoFAIC Liaison Officer to the Peacebuilding Commission

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

1. Mr. Alhazi Banie Eillah SESSAY, Deputy Financial Secretary
2. Ms. Abie Elizabeth KAMARA, Deputy Director, Development Assistance Coordination Office (DACO)

United Nations Country Team, World Bank and African Development Bank

1. Mr. Michael von der SCHULENBURG, Executive Representative of the Secretary General, UNIPSIL
2. Ms. Mia SEPPO, Country Director, UNDP
3. Mr. Mahimbo MDOE, Country Representative, UNICEF
4. Ms. Ratidzai NDLOVU, Country Representative, UNFPA
5. Mr. William Howard HART, Country Representative, WFP
6. Mr. Gabriel RUGALEMA, Country Representative, FAO
7. Dr. Wondimagegnehu ALEMU, Country Representative, WHO
8. Mr. Nega BERHANEMESKEL, Head of Political Section, UNIPSIL
9. Mr. Sanusi SAVAGE, Officer-in-Charge, IOM
10. Mr. Akkali HEMARAJ, Officer-in-Charge, UNHCR
11. Ms. Mulunesh TENNAGASHAW, Country Coordinator, UNAIDS
12. Ms. Eunice NJOVANA, Country Representative, UN Women
13. Mr. Stephen B. KARGBO, Country Representative, UNIDO
14. Ms. Beatriz BALBIN, Country Representative, OHCHR
15. Mr. Sam ONWONA, Country Representative, African Development Bank
16. Mr. Vijay PILLAI, Country Manager, World Bank
17. Mr. Omar MJENGA, Country Representative, UNOPS
18. Mr. Philip DIVE, Strategic Planning Advisor, UNIPSIL
19. Ms. Olajumoke OSODE, Executive Assistant to the ERSG, UNIPSIL
20. Mr. Stephen KOOSHAK, Parliamentary Technical Advisor, UNDP

Development Partners

1. Ms. Virginie Ramey, European Union (EU)
2. Mr. Abdulai Jalloh, USAID
3. Ms. Akiko Tatsuta, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Civil Society Organizations

1. Mr. Joe DALTON, St. Georges Foundation
2. Mr. Joe WILLIAM, Network Movement for Justice & Development
3. Mr. Gilbert NHABAY, Child Fund SL
4. Mr. Moses NDOMAHINA, National Transparency, Accountability & Human Rights
5. Ms. Bernadette UDO, World Hope International
6. Mr. Sulaiman JABATI, Coalition for Justice & Accountability
7. Ms. Hawa SAMAI, Advocacy Movement Network
8. Ms. Rosemarie BLAKE, Society for Democratic Initiatives
9. Mr. Solomon CONTEH, Action Plus
10. Mr. Edward John BULL, Arch Diocese Development Office

Women's Organization Representatives

1. Dr. (Ms.) Neemata MAJEKS-WALKER, Founder, 50/50 Group
2. Ms. Haja Saiminatu KASSIM, President, 50/50 Group
3. Ms. Irene KARGBO, National Coordinator, 50/50 Group
4. Mrs. Aissatu J. KABBAH, President, All Political Parties Women's Association
5. Hon. Marie Marilyn JALLOH, Vice-President, All Political Parties Women's Association
6. Ms. Patricia MACAULEY, National Coordinator, NEWMAP
7. Ms. Elizabeth SAM, Member, NEWMAP
8. Dr. (Ms.). Aisha Fofana IBRAHIM, Ag. Director, Gender Research and Documentation Centre (GRADOC)

9. Dr. Alphaeus KOROMA, Lecturer and Gender Specialist, Gender Studies Programme, GRADOC
10. Ms. Barbara BANGURA, Coordinator, Women's Support Solidarity Group (WSSG)
11. Ms. Olivia LIWEWE, Gender Advisor, UNDP
12. Ms. Adama THORLIE, Gender Team, UNDP
13. Ms. Nabeela TUNIS, Political Officer, UNIPSIL

Field Trip to Makeni: Youth Project visit

1. Mr. Moses SESAY, Mayor of Makeni
2. Eric DURA, District Council Chair
3. Mr. Keith WRIGHT, Head of Recovery for Development Programme, UNDP
4. Mr. Patrick LAMBOI, Focal Point for IPU Delegation Visit to Makeni, UNIPSIL

MEETINGS HELD IN GHANA

Parliament of Ghana

1. Rt. Hon. Justice Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo, Speaker
2. Hon. Cletus A. Avoka, Majority Leader
3. Hon. Osei Kye- Mensah-Bonsu, Minority Leader
4. Hon. Abdul Rashid Pelpuo, Deputy Majority Leader
5. Hon. Ambrose Dery, Deputy Minority Leader
6. Hon. George Kuntu-Blankson, 2nd Deputy Majority Chief Whip
7. Hon. Appiah Pinkrah, MP, Akrofoam Constituency
8. Hon. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, MP, Weija Constituency
9. Hon. Simon Osei-mensah, MP, Bosomtwe Constituency
10. Hon. Owusu Afriyie Akoto, Ranking member – Agriculture & Cocoa Affairs Committee
11. Hon. Ameyaw Kumfi, Ranking member – Environment, Science & Technology
12. Hon. Gabriel Kodwo Essilfie, MP, Shama Constituency

Women's Caucus Group – Parliament of Ghana

1. Hon. Mary Salifu (Hajia) Boforo, Chairperson
2. Hon. Gifty Ohene-Konadu, Vice- Chairperson
3. Hon. Akosua Frema Osei-Opore, Member
4. Hon. Akua Sena Dansua, Member
5. Hon. Boateng Beatrice Bernice, Member
6. Hon. Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Member
7. Hon. Catherine Abelema Afeku, Member
8. Hon. Elizabeth Sackey, Member
9. Hon. Elizabeth Amoah-Tetteh, Member
10. Hon. Elizabeth Agyeman, Member
11. Hon. Esther Obeng Dappah, Member
12. Hon. Gifty Eugenia Kusi, Member
13. Hon. Grace Addo, Member
14. Hon. Gifty Klenam, Member
15. Hon. Irene Naa Torshie, Member
16. Hon. Halutie Rafatu Alhassan Dubie, Member
17. Hon. Juliana Azumah-Mensah, Member
18. Hon. Samia Yaba Christina Nkrumah, Member
19. Hon. Shirley Botchway A., Member

Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

1. Ms. Mary-Anne Addo
2. Mr. Oliver Ahiati
3. Mr. Allan William
4. Ms. Evelyn Ocansey
5. Ms. Naira Yaw Yamkah
6. Mr. Dennis Apreku

Constitution Review Commission

1. Mrs. Jean Mensa, Commissioner
2. Dr. Raymond Atuguba, Executive Secretary

United Nations Country Team

1. Ms. Ruby Sandhu-Rojon, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP
2. Mr. Kamil Kamaluddeen, Ph.D., Country Director, UNDP
3. Dr. Frank L. Bartels, Representative of UNIDO in Ghana & Togo
4. Mr. Tirso Dos Santos, Representative a.i., UNESCO
5. Mr. Ismail Omer, Representative, WFP
6. Dr. Daniel Kertesz, Representative, WHO
7. Dr. Iyabode Olusanmi, Representative, UNICEF
8. Dr. Leopold Zekeng, Country Coordinator, UNAIDS
9. Mr. Musa Saihou Mbenga, Country Representative, FAO
10. Mr. Ishac Diwan, Country Director, WB
11. Mr. Michael Luguje, Regional Coordinator, IMO
12. Ms. Sharon J. Cooper, Representative, UNHCR
13. Mr. Jude Edochie, Representative a.i., UNFPA/Africa/Ghana-Accra
14. Ms. Dyane Epstein, Chief of Mission, IOM
15. Ms. Mary-Jean Ndlovu, Country Manager, IFC
16. Dr. Elias Takor Ayuk, Director, UNU-INRA
17. Mr. A.E. Wayne Mitchell, Resident Representative, IMF
18. Mr. Wolfgang Haas, Head, Resident Coordinator Office, UNDP
19. Mr. Francis Markwei, Parliamentary advisor, UNDP
20. Ms. Myra Togobo, Resident Coordinator Office, UNDP

Development Partners

1. Dr. Cheryl Gopaul, Senior Governance Advisor, CIDA
2. Ms. Vibeke Gram Mortensen, Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)
3. Mr. Christian Joly, Attaché for Cooperation, Embassy of France
4. Ms. Katerina Sternbergova, Counsellor, Embassy of Czech Republic
5. Mr. Michael Ohene-Effah, Political Officer, British High Commission Accra

Civil Society Organizations

1. Dr. Richard Boateng, Pearl Richards Foundation
2. Dr. Kwabena Ananan, Institute for Democratic Governance
3. Mr. Gifty Adika, Parliamentary Centre
4. Ms. Angela Dwamena-Aboagye, The Ark Foundation
5. Ms. Daphne Lariba Nabila, Legal Resource Centre

**SEMINAR ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PARLIAMENT OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, INSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

Organized jointly by the Parliament of Sierra Leone and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Sierra Leone, 29 -30 April 2009

Bintumani Hotel



Parliament of Sierra Leone



Inter-Parliamentary Union

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ACTION PLAN

Background

This Seminar attests to the longstanding cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliament of Sierra Leone and the commitment they share to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Sierra Leone. The meeting was an initiative of both institutions and fits in with the efforts of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to build parliamentary capacity in post-conflict countries and thus help to advance their national peace building and reconciliation agenda. As such this seminar is part of a larger, two-year, IPU project to support parliaments in English-speaking Africa in their efforts to promote inclusive political processes, institutional reform and reconciliation. The project was kicked off in June of last year with a regional seminar which the Parliament of Sierra Leone hosted in Freetown. On that occasion, Members of Parliament from Sierra Leone and five other countries discussed challenges facing post-conflict societies and the role of parliament in meeting those challenges in the overall context of rebuilding societies based on the rule of law.

The seminar was a follow-up to the regional meeting and provided Members of Parliament of Sierra Leone with an opportunity to share, in a frank and open manner and with the valuable contribution of expert parliamentarians from other countries in Africa, important parliamentary experiences in promoting reconciliation, institutional reform and development. It allowed participants to take a closer look at the specific challenges Sierr Leonean Members of Parliament face in order to lay out a blueprint for parliamentary action.

Participants identified a series of concrete steps that the Parliament of Sierra Leone can take that are contained in this plan, which we intend, with the assistance of the 15-member parliamentary focus group set up for the seminar by the Parliament of Sierra Leone, to present to Parliament for formal adoption and implementation.

We acknowledge the valuable ongoing assistance of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and its readiness to provide direct and concrete support to the implementation of the parliamentary action plan, which is all the more crucial as the latter defines capacity-building and the provision of adequate resources for the Parliament of Sierra Leone as an overarching recommendation.

The action plan is based on the overall premise that Parliament has a crucial contribution to make in the fields of reconciliation, institutional reform and development in view of:

- (a) its nature as the institution representing the people across the country;
- (b) its role as legislator;
- (c) its role of overseeing the Executive in the implementation of legislation and creation of effective institutions of governance.
- (d) its role in allocating the necessary resources for the effective implementation of policies.

Strengthening effective working relationships within Parliament

Participants stressed that Parliament should work as a team in a collegial atmosphere motivated by the interests of the nation and that Members of Parliament should be treated fairly regardless of political affiliation.

Overall goal	Specific recommendations	Time-line for implementation
Strengthen Parliament's overall functioning as well as inter-party dialogue, tolerance and cooperation	Secure the necessary funding for the immediate implementation of the Parliamentary Service Commission with a view to obtaining basic facilities and services, including in the areas of salaries and transportation, for Members of Parliament to carry out their mandates diligently and effectively	
	Establish a mechanism of dialogue and consultation between the Speaker of Parliament and the leaders of the political parties	
	Enhance the role and duties of the opposition through the adoption of a code for the opposition	
	Encourage that, per year, 6 to 10 constituency visits by small teams comprising members of the both the majority and opposition parties are carried out	
	Encourage a review of Article 77(K) of the Constitution which spells out that the expulsion from one's political party automatically entails the loss of one's parliamentary mandate	

Strengthening cooperation between Parliament and civil society

There was a clear consensus that Parliament and civil society have complementary roles and stand much to gain by working together. While there is increasing cooperation between Parliament and civil society in Sierra Leone, much more can be done to make it a truly beneficial relationship and take away some of the mistrust that continues to exist.

Overall goal	Specific recommendations	Time-line for implementation
Strengthen cooperation between Parliament and civil society	Create a parliament / civil society consultative forum	
	Engage with civil society organizations on the need for parliamentary capacity building and to request their assistance in providing the necessary expertise and funding	
	Strengthen, with the assistance of civil society, the link between Parliament and local government, including through the organization of joint forums	

The role of Parliament in engaging and empowering the youth

Participants agreed that the full integration of the youth into Sierra Leonean society remained urgent, in particular by ensuring that youngsters were given the skills and financial means to have a productive life as early as possible.

Overall goal	Specific recommendations	Time-line for implementation
Strengthen Parliament's engagement with the youth and its contribution to their empowerment	Ensure that a comprehensive youth policy and the necessary legislation are in place	
	Carry out effective oversight of the youth ministry and other ministries so that their programmes are coherent	
	Give serious consideration to the establishment of a compulsory national youth service for youngsters above 18 years of age	
	Encourage the setting up of leadership training for the youth	
	Help establish vocational training centres and, where already available, to ensure their full use, especially the Obasanjo vocational training centre	
	Encourage that a fixed and adequate percentage of government spending is set aside for youth development, including through the establishment of a future constituency development fund	

Strengthening the fight against corruption and a culture of ethics and service: how can Parliament contribute

Parliament is the first pillar in the fight against corruption and has a special responsibility to ensure that its own members comply with the highest ethical standards and that corruption in public service and in society at large are eliminated.

Overall goal	Specific recommendations	Time-line for implementation
Strengthen Parliament's contribution to the fight against corruption	Ensure that the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Auditor General are properly resourced and fully independent, discuss their reports in a timely manner and take all the necessary follow-up action that may be required	
	Consider legislation to bar corrupt officials from holding public officials	
	Ensure the full incorporation into domestic law of the anti-corruption conventions of the United Nations and the African Union which Sierra Leone has ratified	
	Adopt an effective freedom of information act	

Overall goal	Specific recommendations	Time-line for implementation
Strengthen Parliament as a role model in the promotion of a culture of ethics	Members of Parliament, as role models for society, should be beyond basic material needs to carry out their work effectively. Parliament should ensure that its members enjoy the necessary financial means and facilities in this respect, thus diminishing the likelihood of corruption (see also recommendation regarding Parliamentary Service Commission)	
	Conduct a comprehensive review of integrity legislation and ensure its coherence with requirements for combating corruption	
	Consider the adoption of a code of ethics for Members of Parliament	
	Have a member of the opposition chair one or more of the parliamentary committees addressing financial questions, in particular the public accounts committee	
	Adopt adequate political party funding legislation setting out the parameters for such funding	

Parliamentary involvement in the promotion of civil and political rights

Since the end of the war in 2002, the human rights situation in Sierra Leone has continued to improve with the concerted effort of government, parliament, the Human Rights Commission, civil society and the United Nations. Parliament's contribution is crucial to ensure that further progress is made in raising awareness about human rights standards, promoting a human rights culture and ensuring accountability when human rights abuses take place.

Overall goal	Specific recommendations	Time-line for implementation
Strengthen Parliament's contribution to human rights awareness-raising and accountability	Ensure the speedy adoption of a rights-based disability bill	
	Ensure that the National Human Rights Commission is properly resourced to carry out its mandate and to table its report which is due to be issued by June 2009 - for discussion in Parliament in a timely manner	
	Parliamentary human rights committee should carry out field visits to discuss the report with their constituents	
	Ensure a direct working relationship with the National Human Rights Commission, through regular interactive meetings, joint programme activities, including field monitoring of human rights	
	Call for the speedy establishment of the Follow-up Committee entrusted with the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission	
	Ensure enactment of the Omnibus Bill on Reconciliation to implement the imperative recommendations contained in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission	
	Ensure full implementation of the reparation programme for victims of the conflict	
	Members of Parliament should carry out regular visits to prisons, schools and hospitals to identify abuses	
	Members of Parliament should carry out outreach visits in particular around election times to promote political tolerance	
	Members of Parliament should become involved in the United Nations human right treaty bodies reporting procedures by insisting with the Government that Parliament be consulted and offered an opportunity to provide input to the draft national reports to the treaty bodies and to be informed about their concluding observations and their implementation	
	Ensure that the optional protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture becomes part of Sierra Leone's national legislation	

The role of Parliament in strengthening the social and economic agenda

Sierra Leone faces significant challenges to lift its people from poverty and provide it with the opportunity to lead their lives in dignity. The parliament as the direct inter-face with the people is well placed to know their most basic needs and to ensure that a comprehensive development vision is in place and implemented.

Overall goal	Specific recommendations	Time-line for implementation
Strengthen Parliament's contribution to the social and economic agenda	Take the lead in ensuring that the multiple international and national strategies to promote the reconciliation, good governance and pro-poor and sustainable development agenda are fully harmonized	
	Set up a constituency development fund to carry out constituency development projects and to set up a parliamentary implementation committee to this effect	
	Ensure fair distribution of resources to all the constituencies	
	Scrutinize donor aid to the development agenda	
	Ensure that programmes for micro-credit and the development of entrepreneurial skills are in place	
	Engage the Minister of Finance to ensure early consultation on the proposed budget allocation so as to ensure parliamentary involvement in the full budget process	