

## Research for the second Global Parliamentary Report on *Parliament's power to hold government to account: Realities and perspectives on oversight*

### Questionnaire for parliaments

16 November 2015

This questionnaire is addressed to all parliaments. Its purpose is to collect information about the procedures and tools that parliaments use to carry out oversight and hold government to account. The data collected will inform the preparation of the second Global Parliamentary Report. More information about the second Global Parliamentary Report is available at [www.ipu.org/gpr2](http://www.ipu.org/gpr2).

**Note on terminology:** This questionnaire uses the term “oversight”. Some parliaments use different terms, such as “scrutiny”, “control”, “evaluation of public policies”, to describe what are essentially similar functions. “Oversight” can be defined as any activity that involves examining (and being prepared to challenge) the expenditure, administration and policies of the government of the day. Oversight activities include such things as questioning ministers, holding public hearings, reviewing reports from government departments, examining audit reports, etc. For the purposes of this questionnaire, oversight does not include activities related to law-making, such as pre-legislative scrutiny.

The data from this questionnaire will be published online in an open data format as part of the Global Parliamentary Report, unless parliament specifically requests that its answers are not published. No information that identifies any individuals will be published.

This questionnaire is one part of the research activities for the report; others include a *Call for written input*, surveys and interviews with parliamentarians, and multi-stakeholder focus groups.

The questionnaire is available in English, French and Spanish. It can be completed online (preferred method), in Word or in hard copy.

In bicameral parliaments, each chamber should normally respond to the questionnaire separately.

The deadline for completing the questionnaire is **20 January 2016**.

When completing the questions:

- Please indicate your answers by placing an "X" in the appropriate place
- Please also provide additional information where relevant.
- Where indicated, please provide data for the whole of 2015. If data is only available for part of 2015, please indicate the dates covered.

Detailed guidelines for completing the questionnaire are available at [www.ipu.org/gpr2](http://www.ipu.org/gpr2).

For all questions, please contact the IPU Secretariat at [gpr@ipu.org](mailto:gpr@ipu.org).

**Information about the parliament responding to this questionnaire**

<b>1. Country:</b>	
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<b>2. Parliament or chamber</b>	
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**3. Your answers are for:**

A unicameral Parliament	
A lower chamber	
An upper chamber	
Both lower and upper chambers	

**4. Whom can we contact if there are questions about the responses to this questionnaire?**

First name, last name	
Job title/role	
Email Address	
Phone Number	

## Authority for oversight

### 1. Please check the box if parliament's oversight role is set out in:

Constitution	<input type="checkbox"/>
Act of parliament	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rules of parliamentary procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tradition and practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe):	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 2. Please check the box if parliament:

Has a system to monitor how effectively it performs its oversight role	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has done a review of performance of its oversight role in the last five years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a plan to increase parliament's institutional capacity for oversight in coming years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publishes an annual report on its oversight activities	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Opportunities for oversight

### 3. Where does the majority of oversight activity take place?

In plenary	<input type="checkbox"/>
In committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equally in plenary and committee	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 4. What are the main opportunities for oversight in the plenary?

Please list up to five main activities, the time that is devoted to them and how frequently they occur

Activity	Time	Frequency
<i>Example: Question time with ministers</i>	<i>1 hour</i>	<i>Every sitting day</i>

**5. Please list opportunities specifically created for the opposition to carry out oversight in plenary**

*Please briefly describe up to five main opportunities for the opposition. Please do not repeat information already provided in previous answers.*

Name	Description
<i>Example: Opposition motions</i>	<i>Up to 22 allotted days for consideration of opposition motions</i>

**6. Are there specialized parliamentary committees whose main purpose is oversight?**

Yes	
No	

**7. If yes, please provide details of these committees**

*Please provide the names of up to five committees, and briefly describe their area of responsibility and particulars of the current chair*

Committee name	Area of responsibility	Is the current chair a member of the Government or Opposition party(ies)?	Is the chair male or female?
<i>Example: National Finance</i>	<i>Estimates: public accounts, reports of the Auditor General and government finance</i>	<i>Opposition</i>	<i>Female</i>

**8. Please list other parliamentary bodies or procedures whose main purpose is to support parliament’s oversight work**

Please briefly describe up to five main bodies or procedures

Name	Description
<i>Example: “Accountability Day”</i>	<i>On the third Wednesday in May, all ministers must provide accountability reports to parliament that detail the management of their budgetary allocations from the budget of two years previously</i>
<i>Example: Access to Information Commissioner</i>	<i>Investigates complaints about government’s handling of access to information requests</i>

**9. Please list any specific mechanisms to ensure oversight of government action in relation to gender equality**

Name	Description

**10. Please list any specific mechanisms to gather input from citizens to support parliamentary oversight**

Name	Description
<i>Example: Petitions</i>	<i>Members of the public can petition parliament to address a particular issue</i>

## Tools for oversight

*This series of questions is about the existence and use of oversight tools.*

### **Written questions**

#### **11. Is there a deadline for government to respond to written questions?**

Yes	
No	
Not applicable	

#### **12. How many written questions were asked and answered in recent years?**

	2013	2014	2015
Asked			
Answered			
Answered within the deadline			

### **Review of government departments through committees**

#### **13. Please check the box if:**

Government departments are required to submit annual activity and financial reports to parliament	
There is a deadline for government departments to submit annual reports to parliament	
Parliament has a clearly established procedure for reviewing annual reports from government departments	

#### **14. How many annual departmental reports were submitted and reviewed in recent years?**

	2013	2014	2015
Submitted			
Submitted within the deadline			
Reviewed by parliament			

## Parliamentary committees

**15. Please provide the current number of committee chairs held by each political party.**

Name of party	Number of committee chairs	Party role
<i>Example: National Party</i>	6	<i>in government</i>

**16. How are committee chairs and members selected?**

Selected by	Committee chair	Members of the Committee
Parliament as a whole		
The Speaker or parliamentary leadership		
Political party leadership		
Political party members		
Members of the committee		
Other (please specify)		

**17. How are committee agendas decided?**

Parliament as a whole	
The Speaker or parliamentary leadership	
Political party leadership	
The chair of the committee	
Members of the committee	
Other (please specify)	

**18. Please check the box if:**

Committees require authorization from parliament to initiate studies/reports/inquiries	<input type="checkbox"/>
Committee reports are usually adopted by consensus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government ministers can be a member of the committee with responsibilities for their own portfolio	<input type="checkbox"/>

**19. How frequently do committees usually:**

	Every week	Every month	A few times a year	Infrequently	Never
Meet when parliament is in session					
Hold hearings when parliament is in session					

**20. Who participates in committee hearings?**

Ministers	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never
Departmental officials	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never
Interest groups	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never
Non-government organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never
Women's organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never
Academics / specialists	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never
Members of the public	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never
Other, please describe below	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never

**21. Please check the box if committee hearings:**

Are usually open to the general public	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can take place outside the parliament building	<input type="checkbox"/>

**22. How many committee hearings took place outside parliament in recent years?**

	2013	2014	2015
Number:			

***Special committees of inquiry***

**23. Can parliament set up special committees of inquiry?**

*Special committees of inquiry are usually established during the course of a legislative term or during a parliamentary session to investigate a specific issue. They typically have special powers of investigation which can be used only in relation to the immediate matters of inquiry.*

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**24. How many special committees of inquiry were set up in recent years?**

	2013	2014	2015
Number:			



**25. Please provide details of recent special committees of inquiry**

Please provide details of up to five recently completed special committees of inquiry

Subject of inquiry	Number of hearings	Number of submissions received	Was a report produced?	Was the report made public?
<i>Example: Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis</i>	4	850	Yes	Yes

**Motions**

**26. How many of the following motions were moved and passed in 2014?**

Type	Moved in 2014	Passed in 2014
	<i>Total number</i>	<i>Total number</i>
Urgency (national importance) motions		
Censure motions		
No confidence motions		
Other _____		

**Budgets**

**27. Please check the box if parliament:**

Holds a debate on priorities and fiscal policy before the budget is drafted	
Receives the draft budget at least three months prior to approval	
Examines the draft budget in one or more committees	
Has a system for ensuring gender impact analysis of the draft budget	
Has unrestricted power to amend the draft budget	
Receives regular updates on expenditure and revenue during the fiscal year	
Receives audit reports from the Supreme Audit Institution	
Has clearly established procedures for reviewing reports from the Supreme Audit Institution	
Has internal capacity to conduct budgetary analyses	

**28. How many SAI reports were submitted and reviewed in recent years?**

	2013	2014	2015
Submitted			
Reviewed by parliament			

**Legislation**

**29. Please check the box if parliament:**

	Yes, for all legislation	Yes, but only for certain legislation	No
Has a system for monitoring the implementation of laws			
Uses tools to ensure that implemented laws do not discriminate against women or men (e.g. checklist of questions, certification from department)			

**30. How many implemented laws were reviewed in recent years?**

	2013	2014	2015
Number:			

**31. How frequently does legislation contain a provision that:**

	Always or almost always	Mostly	About half the time	Occasionally	Never or almost never
Requires <u>government</u> to report to parliament on implementation of legislation					
Requires <u>parliament</u> to review implementation of the legislation after a certain period					

Please provide one specific example of this kind of provision

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**32. Does parliament have a system for monitoring compliance with the following international obligations?**

<i>Obligation</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes, but the system is ad hoc</i>	<i>No</i>
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women			
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination			
Convention on the Rights of the Child			
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities			
Millennium Development Goals (pre 2015) / Sustainable Development Goals (post 2015)			

***Other oversight institutions***

**33. Please check the box if:**

There is an ombudsman in your country	
The ombudsman is appointed by parliament	
The ombudsman regularly reports to parliament	
Parliament has clearly established procedures for reviewing reports by the ombudsman	
There is a national human rights institution in your country	
The national human rights institution regularly reports to parliament	
Parliament has clearly established procedures for reviewing reports by the national human rights institution	

**Support for oversight**

**34. Please check the box if parliament provides the following research support:**

Library and information resources	
Procedural research staff	
Committee research staff	
Budgetary analysis	
Gender analysis	

**35. What is the total number of researchers working for parliament?**

Number:	
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**36. Please check the box if parliament provides training for parliamentarians in:**

Oversight tools and procedures	
Budgetary analysis	
Gender analysis	

**37. What percentage of parliamentarians took part in training in recent years?**

*For example, 50% of parliamentarians*

	2013	2014	2015
Percentage:			

**Outcomes of oversight**

**38. Please check the box if:**

Parliamentary committees regularly make recommendations to government	
Government is formally required to respond to committee recommendations	

**39. Does parliament have a system for tracking:**

	Yes	Yes, but the system is ad hoc	No
Recommendations made by <u>parliament</u> to government			
<u>Government</u> responses to parliamentary recommendations			
Assurances, promises and commitments made to parliament by <u>ministers</u>			

*Please briefly describe the systems*

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Thank you for your considered responses.