



Inter-Parliamentary Union

Technical Cooperation Programme

ACTIVITY PROFILE:

SEMINAR ON THE FUNCTIONING OF PARLIAMENT IN A DEMOCRATIC MULTI-PARTY SETTING



(SOUTHERN AFRICA SUBREGION, ENGLISH SPEAKING)

Created 6/09/2006

Project Details

Title:	Seminar on the Functioning of Parliament in a Democratic Multi-Party Setting
Status:	Closed
Duration:	3 days (21-23 June 1995)
Budget:	US\$ 90'120
Donor Partner:	Friedrich Ebert Foundation, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)

Background

For several years the IPU had been implementing various projects in the southern Africa sub-region. A common difficulty that had emerged regularly in the context of these projects was the lack of proper understanding, on the part of many parliamentarians, of their role as law makers and controllers of government action. In some Parliaments, the misunderstanding of the relationship between the government and the opposition for instance, had led to an impasse in the business of parliament. At times this had even threatened to unravel the fragile democracies put in place.

Areas of activity

At the request of several parliaments in the sub-region, the IPU conducted a preparatory mission in February 1995 and eventually prepared a seminar for Parliamentarians from all mainland countries in the area mentioned.

The seminar was held in Lusaka and jointly organized by the IPU and the National Assembly of Zambia.

Participants came from parliaments in 13 countries, namely: Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The objectives of the seminar were to provide an opportunity for parliamentarians to come together and attend lectures on basic notions relating to the functioning of a modern, democratic multi-party parliament.

The following topics were treated and discussed during the course of the seminar:

- Parliament and the Executive
- Oversight of Executive Action
- The operation of a modern Parliament
- The role and duties of the Opposition
- MPs and the citizen

- The role of Parliament in the Protection of Human Rights
- Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation



The participants of the seminar

Target Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries were first and foremost the participating members of parliament but it was also intended to generally contribute to the advancement of democracy that has been taking root in the Southern Africa sub-region.

Results

The main outputs of the seminar were increased knowledge and awareness of members of parliament on their role and responsibilities but also concerned the working methods and procedures of democratic parliaments. They were thus better equipped to perform their functions in their respective parliaments.

Besides it was possible for them to share the knowledge and experience gained with their colleagues either within their individual parliamentary groups or within the context of the parliament in general.

Experts who took part in the seminar included:

- Dr. Mosé Tjitendero, Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia
- Mr. Coling Eglin, Member of Parliament, National Assembly of South Africa
- Mr. Lavu Mulimba, Member of Parliament, National Assembly of Zambia
- Mr. Tam Dalyell, Member of Parliament, House of Commons the United Kingdom
- Mr. Philip Laundry, retired Clerk Assistant, Canadian House of Commons