



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

First Roundtable on the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments

Building to last: Parliamentary support aims for sustainable outcomes

Geneva, 28 October 2016

Background

Parliament is the central institution of democracy; it represents society in all its diversity and embodies the will of the people. In September 2015, world leaders underlined the importance of strong institutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recognized that parliaments are essential to the implementation of the SDGs. Simply put, transparent, accountable and effective parliaments are fundamental to democracy, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, and economic and social development. This idea underpins the work of providing support to parliaments.

In recent decades, support to parliaments has steadily increased, as have the number of support partners. To draw lessons from this experience and to enhance the effectiveness of support programmes, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the European Parliament, the National Assembly of France, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) worked together to develop the **Common Principles for Support to Parliaments**.¹ Drawing from inputs from parliaments and other organizations, the document identifies ten principles to guide parliamentary support. The Common Principles were formally adopted by the 131st IPU Assembly in October 2014, and have since received the endorsement of 108 parliaments and organizations that provide support to parliaments.²

Objective

As endorsements of the Common Principles continue to increase, user-friendly tools to facilitate their application and improve feedback processes are increasingly needed. To inform the development of such tools, this roundtable will be the first in a series of regular exchanges of experiences providing focused insight on specific elements of the Common Principles.

This first roundtable will focus on **Common Principle 3: *Parliamentary support aims for sustainable outcomes.***

“Sustainable outcomes” implies that external support meets the interests and priority needs of parliaments and that the benefits continue to accrue to the institution even after the assistance ceases. It also implies that parliaments develop the capacity to manage their change and renewal processes.

The roundtable will provide parliaments with the opportunity to:

- Review Common Principle 3 and share their perspectives on what sustainable outcomes and impact means to them;
- Identify lessons learned and challenges faced in achieving greater sustainability in support projects;
- Provide suggestions on tools that would help to ensure sustainable outcomes for support projects, and indicators to measure sustainability.

¹ http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/principles_en.pdf

² Endorsements as of 23 August 2016 <http://www.ipu.org/dem-e/cp-endorsements.pdf>

Agenda items:**1. Introduction to Common Principle 3**

The convenors will briefly present the content and objectives of Common Principle 3: *Parliamentary support aims for sustainable outcomes*.

2. Challenges to achieving sustainable outcomes

Participants will discuss experiences and challenges to ensuring sustainable outcomes while managing change and renewal processes within their respective institutions.

3. Institutionalizing mechanisms and good practices for sustainable outcomes

Parliaments and partners will share ideas and good practices on how to design mechanisms and processes that lead to sustainable outcomes, and indicators for measuring sustainability.

4. The role of parliamentary support partners in achieving sustainable outcomes

Participants will discuss expectations of the role of parliamentary support partners when providing assistance in promoting sustainable outcomes.

Outcome:

The roundtable will result in a report which will inform the development of user-friendly tools and feedback processes to facilitate application of Common Principle 3.

Participants:

Members of parliament, Secretaries general, parliamentary staff, parliamentary support partners and experts from international organizations, civil society, and academia.

Languages:

English, French, Spanish and Arabic

Date and venue:

28 October 2016, on the day immediately following the 135th IPU Assembly.

The roundtable will take place at IPU Headquarters, Geneva at the following address:

Chemin du Pommier 5
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland

Lunch will be provided to all participants.