



Study On the Welcoming of New Parliamentarians

*Summary of the Study done between 1st December 2023 and 16th February 2024 on
How Parliaments are Preparing to Welcome New Parliamentarians*

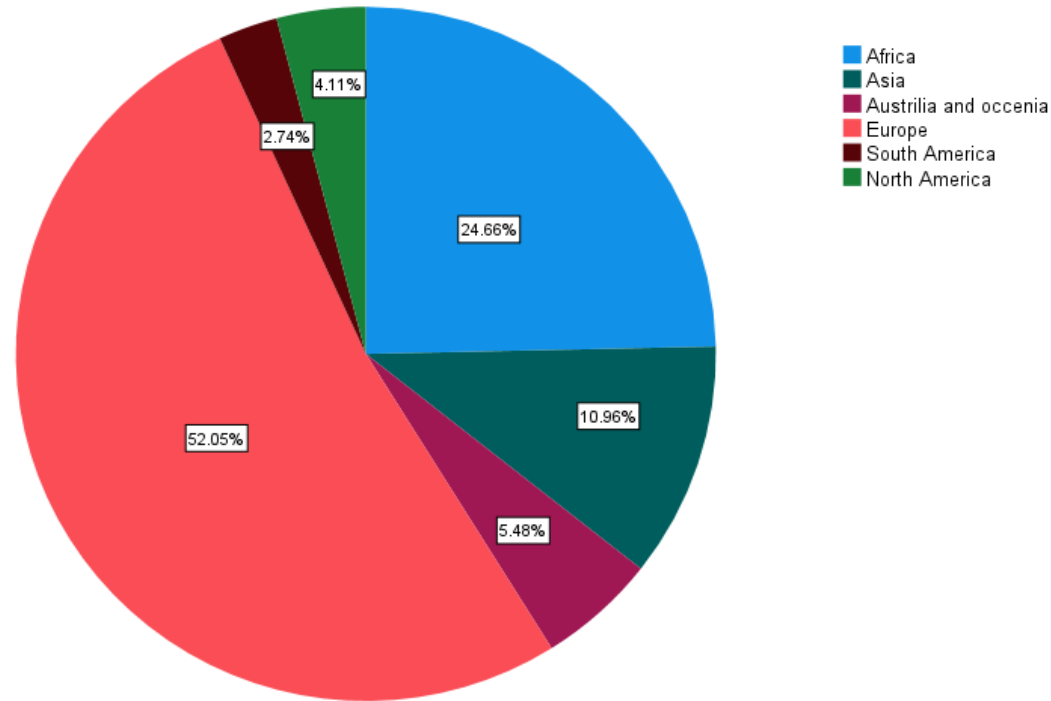
Introduction

- At 145th IPU conference and ASGP on the 15th March 2023 at Bahrain, there was a presentation on the welcoming of new Members of Parliament which was meant to share the results of a survey implemented in Chad (2021) and Haiti (2022).
- During the discussion, it was noted that different Parliaments have different strategies hence the decision to conduct a major survey to collect information on the law, procedure, practice and working methods of different Parliaments in the welcoming of new MPs and to propose measures for improving those methods.
- You will recall that at the previous meeting of the ASGP in Luanda (Angola) on the 24th October 2023, another presentation was made to update you on the pre-testing of the tools and also to encourage you to participate.
- Today, we present to you the results of the main survey which has been done as a joint venture with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) under the coordination of Parliament of Botswana and the IPU Project Leader.

Study Objectives

- It is important for Parliaments to organize structured orientations for newly elected MPs to ensure that they start on the right footing.
- This study therefore seek to:
 - Establish the uniformity and uniqueness of Parliaments regarding capacity building for new Members of Parliament and staff.
 - To check the effectiveness of capacity-building activities offered during such orientation.
 - To check relevance and appropriateness of the programmes put in place.
 - To document best practices for benchmarking purposes.

Study Methodology



The study targeted all legislative bodies which are members of the ASGP and out of these only 78 responses were received starting from the 3rd December 2023 and the last batch received on the 16th February 2024.

Completion Rate

- The above figure shows that majority of the respondents are from Europe (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Slovakia, Sweden, Slovenia, UK, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Luxembourg and Iceland), with a total of 52%,
- 25% of the respondents are from Africa (Botswana, Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Libya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Madagascar and Tanzania).
- 11% of respondents are from Asia (Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, Kingdom of Bahrain, Republic of Cyprus and Republic of Korea),
- 6%, 4% and 3% are from Australia and Oceania (e.g. Fiji, Australia and New Zealand), North America (Canada and Trinidad and Tobago) and South America (Guyana) respectively.
- Kindly note that not all of the responses were fully completed. Of the 78 responses received, 69 were fully completed while 9 were partially completed.

Study Findings and Analysis- Regulatory Environment

- 81.7% of Parliaments have regulatory frameworks that promote the objectives of gender equality, countering the use of abusive, provocative and threatening language.
- 73.2% of Parliaments have rules that set out how their Parliaments are administered.
- 84.1% of Parliaments have codified rules of procedure that guide the installation of new members.
- Most respondents (69%) indicated that there was a specific budget that covers the installation (including swearing in or any other procedure) of newly elected members.

Study Findings and Analysis- Pre-welcome Activities

- 100% from both lower and upper chamber indicated that Parliament sets up a committee to prepare for the welcoming of new members.
- 64% of respondents reported that they have a committee tasked with making the necessary preparations.
- In terms of who presides at the opening session and installation, different Parliaments have different arrangements ranging from the President of the country, former President, Speaker of Parliament, Clerk of the National Assembly, longest serving member of the house, Secretary General and others.
- In terms of information packs that are availed to new members, 68% of the respondents indicated that the information and equipment packs are both hardcopy and electronic while 9% said that all the publications and factsheets have been converted and are available in electronic format.
- 28% stated that the pack is entirely made up of hardcopy documents.

Study Findings and Analysis- Welcome & Installation of Newly Elected MPs

- 48% of the respondents stated that newly elected members are notified about the events leading to the inaugural pre-opening.
- 17% indicated that newly elected members are notified via media announcement.
- 12% indicated that newly elected members are notified through individual calls.
- 52% of the respondents indicated that new members are welcomed for the first time before the inaugural session.
- 5% of the respondents noted that members are welcomed in for the first time by parliament after the inaugural session.

Study Findings and Analysis- Welcome & Installation of Newly Elected MPs Conti...

- 59% reported that the opening day for their country is based on parliamentary custom and practice, while 6% noted that the opening day is mandated by a written rule.
- 32% indicated that a welcome desk or stand is set for new members to receive packed subject-specific information
- 50% of the respondents indicated that new members are issued with travel passes while 22% indicated that new members receive a security pass to access parliamentary estate.
- 76% of the respondents stated that Parliament schedules a guided tour of the parliament building for all parliamentarians
- 2% noted that the tour is designed for elected members with a disability.

Study Findings and Analysis- Welcome & Installation of Newly Elected MPs Conti...

- 50% of the respondents indicated newly elected members are required to provide a declaration of assets while 14.6% stated other requirements which include reporting professional and voluntary activities as well as publishing side activities on the public website.
- 68% indicated that COVID-19 related health regulations did not cause Parliament to change the way it inducts its new members while 32% indicated that changes in the way Parliament inducts its new members due to COVID-19 related health regulations.

Study Findings and Analysis- Capacity-Building Activities

- 33.3% of the respondents stated that the seminars to introduce new members to their parliamentary work are systematically organized at the start of each Parliament by the Secretariat while 30.2% indicated that the seminars are organized by the secretariat with the support from development partners.
- 8.5% stated that the Secretariat can coordinate parts of the program while others are handled by experts from the relevant directorates of House of Administration.
- Training in person was reported to be a very effective mode of delivery by 24% of respondents, while online webinars were embraced by 8%.
- 23% of respondents stated that workshops in small groups were very effective while 1% stated they were ineffective.
- Interactive online seminars were deemed to be very effective by 18% of the respondents, while 3% indicated that they were ineffective.

Study Findings and Analysis- Capacity-Building Activities

Conti...

- The use of manuals, guides and self-assessment tools was considered to be the most ineffective mode of delivery by 8% of the respondents.
- 8% rated self-directed online training tools as very effective.
- Blended capacity building was rated very effective by 13% respondents.
- 67% of the respondents indicated that their parliaments offer specific capacity-building courses to newly elected members while 33% answered in the negative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All parliaments should strive to have regulatory frameworks and codified rules of procedure that guide the installation of newly elected MPs.
- All parliaments should have a specific budget for orientation, swearing in and summoning-of new members.
- Information must be availed to all new members in all the formats that can be easily accessed or used by the members.
- All the Members of Parliament should be given / allocated offices, email address and a travel pass so that they can perform their functions effectively.
- All parliaments should be open to allow journalists to follow newly elected members during the induction sessions.
- All parliaments should strive for 100% establishment of Protocol Teams at the entrance of Parliament buildings on pre-opening and orientation days for easy guidance of new members.

CONTI...

- The plan of the Parliament building must be clearly displayed at the entrance.
- The information system at the entrance of the hall should show the progress of the sessions at which new members are installed.
- All Parliaments should have structured orientation sessions before the first meeting of Parliament which will be complemented by unstructured sessions.
- The orientation sessions must be done physically as they are deemed to be more effective than other delivery modes.
- All parliaments must strive for continuous training of all members on specific topics/issues so as to empower them and enable them to perform their duties and responsibilities effectively.

Thank
you!