

# A F R I C A N P A R L I A M E N T A R Y S T R E N G T H E N I N G P R O G R A M F O R B U D G E T O V E R S I G H T

## REGION Africa

COUNTRIES  
Benin, Ghana, Kenya,  
Senegal, Tanzania,  
Uganda and Zambia

DURATION  
April 2009—  
March 2014

FUNDER  
The Canadian  
International  
Development Agency  
(CIDA)

PARTNERS  
Member Parliaments

STATUS  
Closed



Parliamentary  
Centre

802-255 Albert Street  
Ottawa, ON K1P 6A9

T + (613) 237-0143  
F + (613) 235-8237  
E [parlcent@parl.gc.ca](mailto:parlcent@parl.gc.ca)

[parlcent.org](http://parlcent.org)

## *the* PARLIAMENTARY CENTRE

Is a Canadian, not-for-profit, non-partisan organization, celebrating 45 years in 2013 as one of the leading and longest serving organizations dedicated to strengthening parliamentary democracy in Canada and around the world. Our assessments, strategic planning and training programs, combined with research products and networking channels, help legislatures and related stakeholders measure their performance, build capacity, tackle key issues and promote mutual learning.

In short—our mission is to support legislatures in their lawmaking, oversight and representatives roles to better serve the people they represent.

## *the* PROJECT

The African Parliamentary Strengthening Program (APSP) for Budget Oversight is a 5 year capacity strengthening program for seven partner Parliaments: Benin, Senegal, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia.

The APSP program, implemented by the Parliamentary Centre's Africa office, helps partner parliaments develop and implement strategies to strengthen their overall role and engagement in the national budget process. The aim of APSP is to strengthen partner parliaments' financial accountability, through training to enhance their role and authority in the budget process, as well as provide space for increasing participation of citizens. Additionally, the project aims to increase the capacity of the Africa Office and its Budget Advisory Unit to provide continued support to African Parliaments on budget oversight. The APSP also supports partner Parliaments' anti-corruption work through the African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption (APNAC).

## *the* ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As a result of this partnership and planning, all partner parliaments have signed a memorandum of understanding which guides the relationship between the parliaments and the Centre throughout the project. This demonstrates everyone's commitment to achieving APSP objectives. The MOU also commits all partner parliaments to contribute in kind towards project cost.

Important groundwork has been done with the completion of both the Baseline Study and the Capacity Building Assessment for all seven partner parliaments, and the reports have been crucial in the planning and development of annual work plans as they related to each partner parliament. In addition, gender assessments have been conducted in all seven partner countries that will also serve to guide the program.

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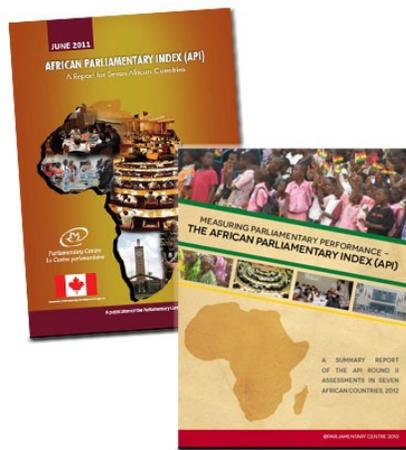
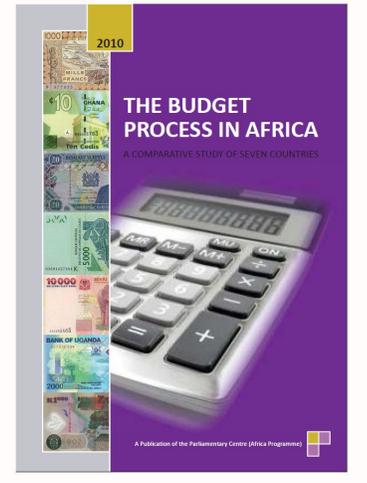
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In the program's first two years, 118 activities have taken place involving over 1600 participants. The activities have included capacity building for MPs and parliamentary staff linked to budgetary oversight; various meetings, networking and conferences on issues such as climate change and anti-corruption; research and publication of studies on pertinent issues for MPs, such as *The Budget Process in Africa - A Comparative study of Seven Countries*.

In addition to the baseline studies and gender assessments, the Parliamentary Centre has designed a tool called the *Africa Parliamentary Index (API)*, a self assessment tool which provides a set of indicators that shows the level of engagement of selected African Parliaments in the budget process as well as other functional areas. The tool has been developed in line with identified best practices and is based on categories of indicators which defined Parliaments' three core functions of representation, law making and oversight of public expenditure and finance. It aims to provide a standard and simplified system for self assessment of the performance of Parliaments in the whole African continent.



Assessments have been carried out in all seven partner Parliaments involving both MPs and Staff. The resulting information was subsequently validated by key stakeholders including, independent research institutions, civil society organizations and university academics in order to ensure an alternative perspective and increased objectivity, at the same time as it is truly country-owned.

The findings point to obvious capacity strengths as well as demonstrable weaknesses of participating Parliaments. It is hoped that partner Parliaments find this information useful in designing their strategic direction including capacity strengthening plans for their individual Parliaments.

Though the API initiative is not the first of its kind in Africa, the added value in this initiative lies in the fact that

Partner Parliaments were the key drivers of the assessment process. The high level of interest demonstrated by all the participating Parliaments gives cause for optimism with regard to the sustainability of the API process.

The official launch of the first API report took place on June 7, 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya. A second round of assessments followed in the years after, and the official launch of the second API report took place on August 16, 2013 in Kampala, Uganda.