

**36<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
PARLIAMENTARY CENTRE  
for the year  
ending 30 September 2004**



*Parliamentary Centre  
le Centre parlementaire*

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# PART I: MESSAGES

**The Executive Director,  
Robert Miller**

## **New Approaches to the Annual Report**

The Parliamentary Centre is in the process of completing a new strategic plan for the period 2005-2010. Key objectives of the plan include strengthening the Centre as a learning organization and reporting by lines of business that run across all of the geographic divisions of the Centre. Although the plan nominally goes into effect in the fiscal year 2005, the Centre has been pursuing these objectives for some time. Accordingly, we have decided to present the annual report for 2003-2004 in a fresh way that highlights lessons learned on the one hand and the results achieved in our main lines of business on the other. This approach to the Annual Report replaces the previous detailed listing of program activities organized by geographic division.

In this spirit, I will report on a lesson learned in the development of the strategic plan. Despite having read numerous articles on strategic planning, I set off in 2003-2004 to do what many of the articles advised against. I began by writing up my own thoughts in the form of a draft strategic plan which I then passed around to my colleagues. The document received some support but a lot of criticism reflecting the feeling that the draft had been produced with very little consultation. In the old days of top down organization, the Chief Executive Officer could decide on the vision, pass around the orders and everybody got on with it. No more. In his fascinating new book *It's a Flat World*, American journalist Thomas Friedman says that in the old world genius was singular but now its collective. By the end of



2003-2004 I had begun to grasp the fact. In January we organized a retreat for the Directors to discuss the strategic plan, shared our findings with all staff in Ottawa and in our field offices and organized working groups to make recommendations on key areas of programs and organization. The results were not the usual bland porridge that comes from committees. Instead, the working groups produced sharp, to the point recommendations. With these in hand, I was able to prepare a draft strategic plan for submission to the Board that was much richer than my own original reflections and far more likely to generate commitment and a sense of ownership on the part of the staff. What started as a somewhat theoretical exercise has become a real team enterprise.

I would like to say a few words about the Chairman of the Board who is retiring. David Golden has practiced a very high quality chairmanship of the Parliamentary Centre as long as I have known him. He has been intensely - and insistently - concerned with the financial and other performance of the Centre but has never meddled in day-to-day operations. As a former senior executive, he has always understood the

importance of letting the managers run the organization. I feel that his greatest service to the Centre came during our darkest days in the mid 1990s when much of the work and income of the Centre derived from services provided to the Canadian Parliament came to an end virtually overnight, it having been decided that the House's budget for external services should be largely eliminated as its contribution to reducing the deficit. There were some who felt that our work was over and the Centre should shut down. But David was one of those who saw our international work as another exciting chapter in the evolution of the Centre. He strongly supported this new mission as an outgrowth of our work in Canada, subject of course to our being able to pay our bills. The rest as they say is history and I have been a big fan of David Golden ever since.

## **The Founding Director Peter C. Dobell**

### **A Tribute to David Golden**

In my remarks this year, I would like to give my warmest thanks to David Golden, who is retiring as chair of the Parliamentary Centre's Board of Directors next year. David has been a member of the Board for 37 years and chair for 33 years. That is an extraordinary record. We will miss the support and advice that he has always given so generously.

Let me assure you, David has not lost interest in the Centre. He is retiring because he and his wife Molly are moving in November 2005 to Victoria, British Columbia to be near to family and to escape the cold winters of Ottawa.

I recollect my first meeting with David. He was at that time head of the Air Industries Association. I had called on him to ask if the Association would make an annual contribution to support the idea of the Centre. So immediate and generous was his response and so obvious was his interest in the objectives of the Centre that I immediately invited him to join the board. He accepted and three years later, when our first chair, Arnold Heeney died, he succeeded him. He has been with us ever since.

He has brought vast experience, excellent judgment and energetic commitment to the task, which is why he has been re-elected each year. He has been a tower of strength in difficult periods, always making sure that we kept our eye on the ball, counseling us on how to adjust our focus and to think ahead clearly.

David is truly one of Ottawa's great public servants. Coming to Ottawa was not his life's ambition. After graduating from law school he joined the Winnipeg Grenadiers and was shipped off to Hong Kong just weeks before the Japanese invasion. After four years in a Japanese prison of war camp he returned to Canada, passed the bar exams and then went off for a year to Oxford to take up a Rhodes Scholarship. On his return he practiced law in Winnipeg. Then in 1951 he was asked to come to Ottawa for a year to serve as legal adviser to the newly formed Department of Defence Production. But instead of leaving he stayed on as its deputy minister. His minister until his defeat in 1957 was the legendary C. D. Howe. After a decade in that job and with no indication that he would be moved to a more interesting position, he resigned to head the Air Industries Association. One year later when the Liberals formed the government, he was asked by Mr. Pearson to become deputy-minister of the newly formed Department of Industry. This time David was firm. He agreed to take the position for only one year. Then he resigned and went back to the Air Industries Association, where he stayed for about a decade, after which he was appointed CEO of Telesat.

The political and parliamentary environment in Ottawa when David arrived here was more civil than it is today. Relations between ministers and senior public servants were also more candid and direct than they are now. A man of enormous integrity, David contributed to maintaining and strengthening that environment. Howard Green, who succeeded C D Howe as David's minister, used to tell his colleagues that he had a deputy minister who not only told him what to do, but went ahead and did it. If David were faced with a suggestion from a minister that an inappropriate action be taken, he is reputed to have said bluntly: "Minister: you can't do that." Can you imagine a deputy minister doing that today?

To commemorate David's contribution and support of the Parliamentary Centre, we have decided to establish the David Golden Democratic Development Award, which will be given annually to a high-achieving student at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs. Spending one day a week at the

Centre, the winning student will contribute to research and analysis and prepare a paper in an area related to the work of the Centre in the field of parliamentary development. The Centre will offer a grant to cover the cost of tuition for that term.

## PART II:

# REPORTING BY LINES OF BUSINESS

The Parliamentary Centre currently focuses its expertise and institutional capacity building programs in a limited number of areas – lines of business – that appear to varying degrees in all geographic areas in which the Centre works, Canada included. The following represents the first time in which we have reported on our work by these lines of business.

### Strengthening Committee Oversight and Lawmaking

Going back to its founding in 1968, the Parliamentary Centre has consistently focused much of its work on strengthening parliamentary committees. They represent the institutional space in parliament where Members have the best opportunity to work together across party lines, get into the substance of policy and oversight and have the greatest influence on government. In addition, committees are among the most promising parliamentary channels for engaging citizens and opening up policy making for public scrutiny and accountability. During 2002-2003, the Parliamentary Centre continued to devote considerable energy to strengthening the work of committees as illustrated by these examples drawn from Canada, Ghana and Serbia.

- **Canada:** In 2004, the Parliamentary Centre was invited by the Public Accounts Committee of the Canadian House of Commons to review the Committee's practices. The Sub-Committee encouraged the Parliamentary Centre to look at its performance over several years, including its experience with the Sponsorship Program study. Senior Parliamentary Associate, Martin Ulrich produced an interim report entitled "Public Accounts Committee: An Interim Summary



Report on its Roles, Products and Results.” The Parliamentary Centre completed a second publication aimed at strengthening committees in the Canadian parliament, authored by then Senior Associate, Amelita Armit. The publication is entitled “The New Member of Parliament and Committees”, and serves as a guide for new members of Parliament and their work in committees, focusing on creating the conditions that enable MPs to perform their tasks and play their role more effectively. Mrs. Armit recently accepted a position at the Centre as Director of Asia and Eastern and European Programs.

- **Ghana:** In 2003-2004 the Parliamentary Centre began the second phase of a support project with the Parliament of Ghana, aimed at strengthening the oversight and lawmaking capacity of 6 parliamentary committees in the area of poverty reduction. The Parliamentary Centre has been working with the Parliament since 1994. The second phase builds on past achievements through several core initiatives, with the Committees as a central hub of these efforts and as the main beneficiary of its results. One such

initiative makes use of a longstanding partnership between the Parliamentary Centre's local office and a local policy institute, the Institute for Policy Alternatives. The two work together to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to gather information and respond to the needs of Committees on the local effects of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy. A notable success in 2004 and an example of project sustainability was the documenting of lessons learned by Committees on committee oversight, to pass onto their counterparts following the elections last year. Other key results included the publication of a report for new Committee Members for use in the new parliament. The establishment of a local field office with dedicated Canadian and local staff has proved invaluable in generating the credibility and support so crucial for achieving program results.

- **Serbia:** The Serbian National Assembly, like many parliaments around the world, has focused more in the past on its legislative functions than on its oversight role. This is partially due to the fact that oversight capacity in Eastern Europe is generally weak - a legacy of the former Soviet-style system in which parliaments rarely had any effective oversight role over the executive branch. During the summer of 2004, roundtable sessions were held with MPs, key parliamentary staff, and other interested parties to raise awareness regarding the importance of a State Audit Institution (SAI). The Parliamentary Centre also held an information session, in cooperation with the OSCE, that presented several models of State Audit Institutions and their corresponding relationship to parliament. All parties who participated supported the creation of an SAI, as did the Speaker of the National Assembly. As a result, the Finance Committee of the Serbian National Assembly created a multi-party Sub-Committee to draft an SAI law - an important achievement in Serbia, where legislation is often presented by the executive branch. Similar to our

experiences with our offices in Cambodia, Ghana, Russia, Senegal and elsewhere, the Parliamentary Centre office in Serbia has proven invaluable in contributing to local credibility, ownership and project results.

### **Supporting global and regional inter-parliamentary networks**

One of the areas in which the Parliamentary Centre has distinguished itself over the past decade has been in supporting the development and operations of inter-parliamentary networks. Such networks - of which there are now many examples around the world - represent one of the most creative responses of parliamentarians to globalization. Faced with deepening economic, political and social integration across national borders, they have built forums and networks to share information and views with colleagues regionally and globally, and to cooperate in tackling such issues as corruption, poverty, environment and security. The Parliamentary Centre serves as the Secretariat for GOPAC and FIPA and has played an important role in building African regional networks on poverty reduction, gender equality and anti-corruption. During 2003-2004, we continued to deepen and expand this work as these examples illustrate.

- **FIPA** - The Parliamentary Centre acts as Secretariat to the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA), which entered its third year of operation in 2003-2004. This year included significant achievements for the network in facilitating the sharing of lessons learned and best practices among parliamentarians in the region. Of particular note was the success of FIPA's 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Assembly, held in Chile in April 2004, and attended by more than 100 parliamentarians from 23 countries of the Americas. Participants worked in 3 groups—examining, sharing insights on, and developing combined approaches to issues of common concern for the region; including terrorism, fiscal systems, women in parliament and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). In the fall of 2004 FIPA Executive

Members also took part in the FTAA Ministerial Summit in Miami, raising the capacity of the network to engage diverse stakeholders and advance common objectives. At the Summit, FIPA met with trade ministers, business representatives and civil society leaders to present the recommendations of FIPA parliamentarians related to this important regional trade agreement.

- **GOPAC** : The Parliamentary Centre acts as Global Secretariat to the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC). 2003-2004, GOPAC's initial period of operations clarified its mission: peer support; education and sharing experiences; and working with multi-lateral organizations on specific anti-corruption initiatives. Peer support, which comes from a credible organization with global (and regional) voice and engaged members supporting each other, was the principal result. The greatest success was the enhanced capacity at the regional level. In addition to the development of APNAC, described below, chapters in Latin America, Northeast Asia, and the Arab region were formed and established work programs. Increasingly, parliamentarians are not only sharing experiences within their regions but also are inviting colleagues from other regions and experts from international organizations to strengthen their knowledge base and add to their tools. For example, an African Anti-Money Laundering workshop included the integrated participation of the IMF and a Canadian GOPAC member. An Arab Region workshop invited both Latin American and Southeast Asian parliamentarians to join with OECD and WTO experts. Strong regional chapters working together with colleagues and expert multilateral organizations globally provide parliamentarians with the confidence and additional tools for the always tough fight against corruption. With the growing capacity, we believe 2005-2006 will prove to be an even more successful year for parliamentarians in contributing to the global fight against corruption.

- **APNAC**: The African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC) is Africa's foremost network of MPs dedicated to fighting corruption and promoting good governance. In 2003-2004, APNAC increased its membership base by 64%. This increase was fueled by the leadership of a strong chair, Hon. Augustine Ruzindana, MP, and new cross-continent executive, the commitment of national chapters, the hard work of a Secretariat housed at the Parliamentary Centre, new funding from the Danish development agency, DANIDA, and the continued support of the Canada Fund for Africa. APNAC draws together network members on a regional basis to share lessons learned, undertake training together and advance their anti-corruption agenda. This regional approach is complemented by capacity building activities that are tailored to the more specific needs of national parliaments and parliamentarians.

### **Building the Capacity of Parliamentary Secretariats**

Although much of the interest in parliamentary strengthening is driven by the desire to support parliamentarians, the institutional capacity of parliament rests in large part on the competence and capacity of its professional staff. Without a competent parliamentary secretariat, it is extremely difficult for even committed parliamentarians to be as effective as they need to be. Accordingly, the Parliamentary Centre assigns a high priority in its work to training parliamentary staff in such areas as strategic planning, financial administration, human resource management, information services and committee services. During 2003-2004, the following were three good examples of our work in this area.

- **Bosnia**: The Parliamentary Centre began programming with the Bosnian State Parliament in July of 2004 to support the capacity of the Secretariat to provide professional, expert, and non-partisan research services to Members of Parliament. In order to enhance local ownership

and capacity, the Centre plans to help establish a Research Centre housed in the Bosnian Parliamentary Assembly to provide research assistance to four key committees—the Legal/Constitutional and Budget/Finance Committees of both houses of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Research Centre will be staffed by 3 highly qualified locally-engaged researchers, who are currently undergoing professional development training to continually improve services to Members.

- **Cambodia:** The Parliamentary Centre entered its second year of programming with the Parliament of Cambodia in 2003-2004, during what turned out to be a particularly tumultuous political period. In July of 2003, the National Assembly elections were held in Cambodia. In the period following the elections, the parliament ground to a standstill as the party with the most votes but lacking a majority, unsuccessfully tried to negotiate a coalition government with the two main opposition parties. The political situation made it difficult for the project to directly engage parliamentarians in activities. In response, more efforts were placed on training parliamentary staff and senior management in Parliament to build upon the results achieved during the first year. With the strength of a local field office managed by staff tuned to the political context, the project continued to train managers to implement the policies and procedures underlined in the new official documents of Parliament and significant project results were achieved.
- **Serbia:** The Parliamentary Centre has been working with the Secretariat of the Serbian National Assembly to develop stronger institutional management practices in order to improve the performance of the National Assembly, its Members and Committees. Senior management teams were created and supported by Parliamentary Centre experts, and a Secretariat-wide operational plan was developed for 2005—a first for the National Assembly—which outlines

major priorities and an action plan for implementation. The Centre has been working directly with the Secretariat to realize its key priorities, such as: assisting managers in developing and writing job descriptions for all staff; creating a Human Resources Department; strengthening the role of committee secretaries; and drafting human resources management policies.

### **Developing Parliamentary Performance and Reporting Systems**

Over the past twenty years enormous effort has gone into developing practical and meaningful ways to measure and report on the performance of public sector institutions and services. It is only in the past few years that we have seen this same concern for performance being applied to legislatures. The Parliamentary Centre has been among the pioneers in developing indicators of parliamentary performance. During 2003-2004, we completed the development of a framework for measuring parliamentary performance in the area of oversight of the budget process and then field tested the framework in five countries. The Centre intends to collaborate with IFES (a Washington based democracy support organization), to collaborate on the development of a State of the Parliament Report and to partner with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the World Bank Institute to further develop standards for democratic legislatures.

### **Supporting Legislative Development at the State and Provincial Level as well as at the National Level**

To date much of the attention given to legislative strengthening has been concentrated at the level of national parliaments but it is increasingly being recognized that there is a tremendous need for help at the provincial and state level as well. Many countries are trying to decentralize government but finding that the institutions to which this devolution of power will take place are woefully weak. This is certainly the case with many sub-national legislatures in the countries where the Parliamentary Centre is active and according we are devoting greater attention to this area of legislative development. Similarly we are reaching our more than

in the past to build relations with and provide services to provincial and territorial legislatures in Canada. We would cite the following as good examples of the work of the Centre in 2003-2004.

- **Russia** – The Parliamentary Centre has been working with Accounting Chamber of the Russian Federation (Russia’s equivalent of the Office of the Auditor General) and key committees in the Russian Federal Assembly at the national level to strengthen relationships between the two bodies and thereby improve parliamentary oversight of government expenditures. This has included introducing “Value-for-Money” or performance auditing. Programming at the national level proved so successful that during the 2003-2004 period, the Parliamentary Centre integrated its work at the federal level with the regions. The program now is working in cooperation with federal institutions to pass on knowledge and build capacity at the regional level, engaging the regional Accounting Chamber and legislatures. Two pilot regions were selected (Voronezh and Leningrad), and already there is demand for and plans to expand the work to other regions of Russia in the coming year.
- **South Africa** – The Parliamentary Centre’s Legislative Accountability Program has contributed to strengthened systems of accountability in southern Africa through more effective parliamentary committees and organizations (SADC Parliamentary Forum and Association of Public Accounts Committees). The Centre has worked in partnership with provincial legislatures in Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo

and Western Cape to build the capacity of their members to oversee ministries and policy issues. The Project’s flagship in 2003-2004 was the training support provided to parliamentary staff. In partnership with the University of Western Cape’s School of Government, modules were delivered to committee coordinators and clerks from South Africa’s provincial legislatures and from its national parliament. Staff improved their practical skills in organizing and managing the work of committees and developed relationships with one another through which lessons learned can continue to be shared.

### **Strengthening the Role of Political Parties in the Legislature**

The importance of political parties to legislatures is evident. They are the political units of parliament that largely drive the legislative agenda, and the political confrontation between parties in parliament plays a major role in setting the tone for democratic politics. The Parliamentary Centre has in the past paid relatively little direct attention to party caucus and other aspects of party organization and performance in parliament, preferring instead to focus on committees where all parties are represented. In the current strategic plan we recognize that parties are critical to strengthening parliament and so intend to devote more attention to them. During 2003-2004, we took some steps in that direction, particularly in our Canadian program. For example, in collaboration with the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians, the Centre contributed to a study on political nomination reform in Canada. Another example was the completion of a study on parliamentary reform. The study included an examination of how political parties fit into alternative options for parliamentary reform in Canada.

# Part III: Administration, Human Resources and Finance

Parliamentary Centre programming has effectively doubled over the last two years. Revenues went from 2.8 million in 2002 to 6 million in 2004 and are expected to reach 9 million in 2005. Staff increased from just over a dozen to thirty-plus. With this increase, more working space was needed. Renovations were made to maximize the current space to accommodate this increase in staff. In addition, the Centre opened 4 new regional offices in Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and Serbia.

Responsible management of this growth has been an important theme this year. Balancing prudent fiscal management with the need to ensure adequate infrastructure to support growth has been the challenge. We believe we have risen to the challenge but have more work to do. The Centre has achieved balanced budgets for three consecutive years and



employee turnover was less than ten percent. Audits conducted by our key funder indicate we have sound financial management systems. The collaborative work we have started in building a strategic planning process will put us on the right track to evaluating resource management needs over a longer time period and ensuring we have the resources necessary to carry out our mandate.

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# Part IV:

## Lessons Learned

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**Amelita Armit**  
**Program Director**

### **Asia and Eastern Europe Program**

The Centre's global reach and the diversity of its programming provide it with a unique vantage point to observe and absorb governance and democratic development in real time. This perspective allows us to shape and refine our legislative capacity-building



activities. We learn as we go, and we get refreshed insights, to the benefit of our partners and stakeholders. This certainly was evident in the activities we undertook in Asia and Eastern Europe in 2003-04. Some of our lessons learned (or re-learned) include the following:

- 1. Mastering the basics.** In Cambodia, we assisted legislators in various public consultation activities to enhance their capacity to reach out and hear views from civil society and other interest groups and stakeholders. We conducted a seminar on public engagement trends and an international comparative perspective on issues and trends. These events resulted in a dialogue that sharpened the identification of a more basic capacity building need: constituency outreach and relations. Members of the Senate and the Legislative Assembly expressed a need to learn how to use their constituency offices as outreach and issue-tracking mechanisms. Members recognized the need to balance current promotional and site visit activities with a systematic way of listening to constituency issues and being able to reflect them in their policy and legislative activities.

2. **Learning from peers, learning in pairs.** Learning from expert resources with practical hands-on experience in their areas of expertise is a defining element of the Centre's program delivery. Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff are delivery partners in our learning programs, working jointly in analyzing policy issues, understanding parliamentary processes, exchanging case studies and lessons learned. This is considered to be one of the most positive aspects of our programming. For example, the Africa-Asia Dialogue organized by the Africa Programs was an innovation singled out as a best practice by our Asian partners. Parliamentarians from both regions benefited from the knowledge transfer and exchange on common issues, which took place during the seminar. Women parliamentarians from Cambodia, in particular, noted that their confidence was bolstered by the knowledge that their counterparts in Africa shared a common challenge of enhancing their voice and leadership skills in their male-dominated environments.
3. **Nurturing relationships and balancing competing interests.** The Accountability Strengthening Program with the Russian Federation Council and the Council of Accounting Chambers is a good example of a balancing wire act strategy in delivering activities. We are engaged in introducing performance audits or value for money auditing in two regions of the Russian Federation at the same time that we are transferring knowledge and experience on how a legislature might effectively perform its oversight role when they receive the audit reports. As expected, the perspectives of auditees, auditors and overseers do not necessarily coincide, even if they share the common objective of using public funds wisely. In this activity, it was essential for the Centre to maintain active involvement of all sides, ensuring focus on common objectives. Relationship-building took

the form of regular discussions behind the scenes, brokering contentious issues and getting on top of personalities and their respective roles in the hierarchy, while ensuring support for a holistic approach to the project.

4. **Preparation, preparation, preparation.** Our recently concluded study visits for the Budget Affairs Commission and Research Committee of the National People's Congress of China attest to the well-worn adage that planning and preparation make for successful events. In this instance, our Chinese partners prepared a comprehensive and detailed list of questions they wanted answered in their site visits and meetings with counterparts in Canada. The challenge to the Centre was how to condense the equivalent of "lifelong knowledge and experience" into a one-week program. In this instance, the Centre opted for a strategy of commissioning overview research papers from Canadian experts and sending them ahead of time to the study visit participants. These gave participants a good background on the Canadian context, allowing the time in Canada to be focused on clarifying concepts and exposing participants to the examples outlined in the overview reports. The keen interest and motivation of our Chinese partners were remarkable and this attitude contributed significantly to the learning environment.
5. **Attention to the sensitivity of politics and the politics of sensitivity.** Our programs in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are delivered in an environment where political volatility is a norm. We have learned from the muted progress we have had in this environment the importance of constant vigilance on the relationship between the political dynamics of the host country and bilateral relations with Canada. Our learning reinforces the importance of strong guidance from the Centre in maintaining continuous risk assessment of its ground presence and ground

intelligence in informing its program strategies. This is a lesson that will be useful in many other areas of Centre involvement, especially as we pursue activities in failed and failing states.

**Marilyn Aniwa**  
**In-Field Coordinator**

**Ghana Parliamentary Committee Support Project**

The Ghana Parliamentary Committees Support Project Phase II (GPCSP II) is presently over a year old, and builds on work by the Centre in Ghana since 1994. A new field office was opened last April to host the two programmes, namely the Africa Canada Parliamentary Strengthening Programme and the GPCSP II. Working from this office, we have been learning lessons more effectively than ever.

Following from the opening of the office in April, the program held its annual workshop retreat in July, 2004. The retreat on the theme “Preparing Parliament for The Transition, Post Election” was to serve as a platform for reviewing activities of the committees during the first phase of the project, lessons learnt and the way forward. The proceedings of the retreat were published. This publication was highlighted in the Parliament of Ghana’s Newsletter the “Legislature”.

But the commencement of campaigning towards the December Elections proved a major set back for implementing activities with members of Parliament. For about six months no major activity could be carried out directly with the committees. Planned field trips were shelved because a good number of Members of Parliament were campaigning. Additionally Members feared that their involvement in particular initiatives may be perceived and or misconstrued differently. This was very much the case with the Special Committee on Poverty Reduction. The IRCs in collaboration with the Chair and Clerk of the Committee had planned a series of field visits to monitor the implementation of the GPRS.

Earlier, the Chair of the GPRS committee had queried Government on disbursement of GPRS funds and its implementation. This did not go down well with the government, especially when the Chair,

a member of the majority, was seen to be criticizing his own party. This almost cost him his seat in parliament, but he sailed through the elections. He has however been relegated to the background and is no longer chairing any Committee in Parliament. This is a loss to the project because Hon. P.C. Appiah-Ofori was a very cooperative Chair who was prepared to participate in all activities. He has decided to carry on the crusade against corruption within his party and the Government, and is still a member of the Finance Committee.

Another key point: Following from the elections, Parliament experienced high turnover which included key members of committees the project had worked with. Others also decided to retire from active politics. This was a disappointment because we lost members whose capacity we’d built over the years. Some of these Members were used as resource persons for the 2005 workshop retreat in February and in the case of Hon. Steve Akorli, his improved capacity is being utilized by the ACPSP. New committees have been established and we’re beginning to see a committed and enthusiastic few who are ready to push forward the project’s agenda.

Additionally, the role of the Information Resource Coordinators in the Ghana Program has been quite significant. The IRCs continuous interaction with Parliament and specifically the committees has been invaluable. They have developed effective relationships with the Committees and the Leadership of Parliament. By their presence in Parliament, they have been able to set up appointments, schedule workshops and build up relationships and in some cases directly provided timely relevant information to the committees.

The Parliamentary Centre’s contribution to the Parliament of Ghana is appreciated though not clearly obvious. For example, a chance meeting with Hon. Kwadwo Baah-Wiredu, Minister for Finance, revealed that the Hon. Member had not forgotten his past membership of the Public Accounts Committee and subsequent visits to Canada in 1999, and acknowledged the capacity building effort for

Ghanaian MPs by the Centre. He also referred to some critical issues that had been raised by Dr. Langdon in previous workshops related to the budgetary cycle and monitoring. The Hon. Finance Minister said he would apply such principles to his work as Minister of Finance. That, in a way, shows that the work being done by the Centre is applied beyond the project. Additionally, heads of the information units in Parliament appreciate suggestions offered by IRCs in their attempts to institutionalize effective information mechanisms.

We have also noted that our continuous reference to issues of gender and gender mainstreaming has not been unproductive. The Majority leader in several sessions and meetings made references to gender though anecdotal, but a clear demonstration that the message is getting across. The gender training for staff of Parliament was also quite significant. It was the first time staff had been exposed to the subject and the ensuing Gender Assessment of staff carried out early this year proved this point.

Another significant input to the Parliamentary Centre's activities was the joint collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in February this year to host the workshop retreat on the theme "Strategies for Pro-poor Budgeting". This was a workshop aimed at sensitizing MPs in the run-up to the reading of Ghana's Budget. The collaboration was practical and very useful in the sense that the CPA contributed half the budget for the workshop and expressed interest in future collaborations.

The major challenge for us now, as a project, is how to assist the Parliament of Ghana bridge the political divide and to get both sides of the house moving beyond their political differences to debate vital issues concerning the development of the Country from a cross-partisan perspective.

**JOSEPH KIRA**  
**Program Director**  
**Canadian Program**

In the wake of the June 2004 Federal Election that ushered in the 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament, the Canadian

Program submitted a proposal in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) from the Library of Parliament to design, plan, organize, chair and report on a professional development Seminar Program for the newly elected members of Parliament. In terms of expectations, little detail was given in the RFP about what the program should be besides a reference to the fact that the Seminar Program for new MPs had to be construed in the spirit of the "reform of parliament" agenda.

As we were waiting for the Library to announce the winner of the contract, it occurred to us that more time had to be devoted to consultations with the client groups (new MPs and parliamentary leadership) for a needs assessment than had been planned by the contract's timeline. Yet, until we had confirmation that we had won the contract, we could not start a needs assessment or more substantive work on the Seminar Program without a mandate. The latter was required for us to fully understand that which was expected, and to arm us with the necessary authority to approach MPs, their caucuses and the parliamentary leadership as part of the consultative process.

A needs assessment is a necessary first step in professional development program for adults. By inquiring directly of selected groups and individuals, needs assessment provides critical and timely information about their needs and priorities, which in turn allows for a better assessment of the alternative ways in which they can be met and/or delivered. In other words, for training or learning programs to be delivered in the most effective way, a needs assessment is necessary to define training opportunities or problems, as well as to identify alternate solutions or to select the most suitable approach, solution or schedule from a number of alternatives.

Furthermore, there is a lot to be said about the consultative process itself and the way it is undertaken. Asking the client groups and individuals (i.e. the newly elected MPs, the political and administrative leaders of Parliament) for needs assessment information not only invites their input, but it also raises their awareness and

influences their opinion about the proposed training/ learning initiative.

An important lesson-learned for 2003-2004 is that, in so far as it is possible, needs assessment should be an integral part of the Canadian Program's on-going work, so as to be in tune with the most current learning needs and priorities of our parliamentarians. This objective can be achieved through a number of methods, such as surveys, focus groups or studies.

**Bunleng Men**  
**In-Field Program Manager**  
**Cambodia-Canada Legislative Development Project**

On July 27, 2003, the National Assembly elections were held in Cambodia. The Cambodian Peoples Party (CPP) won 73 out of the 123 seats in the National Assembly, while the royalist FUNCINPEC and opposition Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) took 26 and 24 respectively. Although the CPP held onto the most seats, it fell short of the two-thirds majority required by law to create a government on its own. After the election results were delivered, the opposition parties refused to enter into a coalition with CPP. Instead, both parties formed an alliance of their own. The result was paralysis. Parliamentary governance ground to a standstill in Cambodia while the CPP unsuccessfully tried to negotiate a coalition government with the two main opposition parties. At the end of the second full year of the project, a resolution to the impasse had still not been negotiated.

It goes without saying that these proved to be difficult circumstances in which to manage a project designed to engage and build the capacity of parliament. It turned out to be a year fraught with challenges. But we survived and made progress, and at the end of this year we emerged with a few lessons learned in how to approach capacity-building in a difficult political environment.

Our overall approach was to shift activities to staff training, while maintaining key relationships with parliamentarians and parliamentary committees. We found that the political crisis made it difficult to work with parliamentarians as they were preoccupied

with the dynamics of the crisis and their political sensitivities were heightened (not to mention that the milieu for engaging these key partners was missing since parliament wasn't sitting). We chose wisely to concentrate the bulk of our activities with staff of the Secretariat.

But at the same time, we were reluctant to cease all activities with MPs and Senators since we had spent the first year forming important working relationships that we couldn't afford to let go. Accordingly, an extra dose of sensitivity was added to our approach, in a few different ways. First, we were especially attentive to ensuring that all partners were actively involved in shaping project activities, paying particular attention that the goals and timing were realistic for all participants. Second, we consulted our partners well in advance and kept our expectations optimistic, but realistic. The local speakers and experts that were used for project activities were carefully chosen and we made sure that results were recorded in the form of handbooks and materials that could be used in future parliaments, regardless of how the political situation might unfold.

While each context is different, these approaches can be applied to future Parliamentary Centre programming. When things are politically fragile, be extra sensitive to needs, select your focus carefully, and at all times, remain neutral.

**Martin Ulrich**  
**Executive Secretary,**  
**Global Secretariat**  
**Global Organization of Parliamentarians**  
**Against Corruption (GOPAC)**

GOPAC faced challenges during the year that are easy to understand – a membership that uses just about all the available time zones of the world; a new organization with diverse expectations and few traditions; aggressive under-funding; and the need to shape an organization that is really an organization of independent organizations, while aspiring to an integrated program and real results. So what did we learn, or what is etched ever more firmly in our consciousness? Our approach was to build alliances,

networks and credibility while trying to be astute and persevere, all the while recognizing that ultimately it's pretty much in the hands of the Gods. Nonetheless, a couple of lessons .....

**Alliances with the multi-laterals are helpful:**

Building relationships with credible regional and global organizations proved crucial in GOPAC's mission of strengthening the anti-corruption capacity of parliamentarians. UNDP, the International Compliance Association, Latin American Financial Intelligence Council, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the European Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), Stability Pact, Westminster Foundation, and International Association of Business and Parliament have all contributed to educational planned or completed learning events for parliamentarians. And in all cases, Parliamentarians are both shapers and participants. Leveraging by adding value seems to work.

**Parliamentarians are the value added, but need face-to-face contact to build trust:**

GOPAC is an organization of parliamentarians, not one simply managed by parliamentarians. If reportable results were enough, we could seem to do more by seeking periodically their concurrence and proceeding. But where is the value added in that? The point of GOPAC is engaging parliamentarians in enhancing their own effectiveness. And – at least for the current generation of parliamentarians – that requires face to face meeting and trust building. The Chair's considerable travel remains crucial, but it is now complemented with the more active regional chairs carrying the message and extending the personal links of trust. Maybe we really turn "parliamentary tourism" into "value added."

GOPAC remains a struggle, but if the Gods smile,...

**Sonja Vojnovic  
Program Coordinator**

**Canada-Russia Parliamentary Support Program**

2004 marked the tenth anniversary of the Canada-Russia Parliamentary Program, the Parliamentary Centre's first international program. Over the years,

the Program has benefited from numerous partners, first working with the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, and later expanding to the regions of Russia's vast north. While other contributions in this section reflect on a lesson learned over the last year, I would like to highlight two key lessons learned over the last ten: the critical importance of trusting relationships and deep local ownership.

At the beginning of the program, Russia was searching for solutions to vast political, economic, and social problems related to its transition. Although there was commitment from many inside and outside the Federal Assembly, the political environment for change was fragile at best. In response, the Parliamentary Centre and the participating Federal Assembly committees avoided placing emphasis on a particular piece of legislation, which by shining a light in one area could have jeopardized the program early on. Instead, a cautious approach was adopted by focusing on the development of a broad knowledge base for committee engagement in the policy process; including strengthening committee capacity for policy analysis and the development of draft legislation.

As time went on, trusting relationships between the Centre and its partners meant that paying attention to particulars was less touchy. The project added an accountability component to its program, designed to improve parliamentary oversight by strengthening linkages between the Accounting Chamber of the Russian Federation and financial oversight Committees in the Russian Federal Assembly. A pilot project was developed in order to strengthen the role of the Federal Assembly in monitoring government expenditures. As part of this project, with the assistance of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, the Accounting Chamber developed "Value for Money" methodology, that was successfully employed in test audits of two Russian federally-funded programs. The pilot audits were tabled in the Federation Council (Russia's upper chamber) in Spring 2004 and hearings were conducted.

To summarize the lessons learned. First, relationships are everything, but they take time to develop. In the

earlier stages of engaging the Russian parliament, the focus needed to be kept broader, touching on less specific—and thereby less-sensitive—areas of capacity-building support. However, once relationships of trust developed, it was possible to move onto more specific areas of programming. In the Russian context, relationships have proven absolutely crucial.

Second, you have to get your partners involved meaningfully in developing and implementing a program. The Russian partners played a large role in developing program goals and activities and they also invested tremendous time, money, and energy into seeing its realization. Local ownership is key, and it never would have worked had it not been for the tremendous support and engagement of our Russian colleagues at all levels.

Although the original Program came to a formal close in 2004, its legacy will carry on with a new CIDA-funded program in September 2004. Building on our lessons learned, the new program has been developed in full cooperation with our Russian partners.

### **Charity Wakaba** **Senior Program Officer** **Kenya Parliamentary Support Program**

Staff development: Everyone talks about it, few legislatures provide enough of it, and even fewer mandate it. Yet, knowledgeable, skilled and motivated staff members are essential for parliamentarians to be able to perform their duties effectively, and have a key continuity role in carrying forward the institutional memory of parliaments, come new elections. This is why the Africa Program has made staff development an important focus for work and learning in recent years.

As Senior Program Officer responsible for our new Kenya staff training project, I would like to share with you some of the lessons learned in the past year.

The first crucial lesson was the importance of confidence-building with our partners – the Parliamentary Service Commission of Kenya, and the

senior staff responsible for leading parliamentary efforts at staff training. Detailed discussions took place to plan how to proceed, and setting the agenda (in terms of timing for meetings and workshops) was left in parliamentary hands.

Second, we relied on an intensive needs-assessment study of all departments of parliament across the board, led by an experienced Kenyan expert. What we discovered was that there was a wide gap when it came to the skills of staff and the demands of the jobs they are supposed to handle. In the Kenyan context for instance, the whole parliament has been fitted with computers but the staff (and the MPs, for that matter) cannot operate these. In short, “Parliament is wired, Staff is not.” This was just one example of many specific gaps discovered that have to be filled.

### **Promoting Peer Mentoring**

A third key point—our experiences training staff in parliaments of South Africa, Ghana, Ethiopia, Nigeria and elsewhere suggest that learning from other staff members and from other parliaments may be the best way for staff to advance. Last November, we invited staff from the parliaments of Uganda and Tanzania to participate in a regional Symposium on staff training that we organized in the context of the Kenya project. Important lessons and experiences were shared in terms of training approaches and strategies and these greatly helped to shape the Centre’s program in Kenya.

We have also learned that planning and implementing parliamentary staff development is time consuming. It takes time to acquire skills, time to become acquainted with the research, and time to organize. But, it is time well spent as you apply theory, detailed research and broad knowledge into successful practice. Thus the first stage of the Kenya project took longer than we anticipated, but led to very positive responses from all parts of the Kenyan parliamentary service—and from Canadian, European, British and US donors who will now participate in funding parts of the ongoing training.

What is the implication for the Parliamentary Centre? The Parliamentary Centre Africa program has concluded we should be at the forefront when it

comes to parliamentary staff development, working with African partners to achieve ongoing results. We have been learning important lessons that will help us do this.

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