



*Parliamentary Centre
Le Centre parlementaire*

“Celebrating 40 years: Engaging Parliaments, Promoting Democratic Governance”

40th Annual Report of the
Parliamentary Centre
2007-2008

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PART I: MESSAGES

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Michael Murphy

It has been an interesting time to serve as interim Chair of the Parliamentary Centre in 2007-08. The Centre undertook a strategic re-assessment of its mission in the midst of a rapidly changing political and economic environment and the heightened expectations brought about by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development report “Advancing Canada’s Role in International Support for Democratic Development.” The Centre participated actively in the consultations leading to this report and welcomed its recommendations and acknowledgement of Canada’s expertise and accomplishments in this area. The Centre is proud to be part of these efforts and remains committed to promoting parliamentary democracy and strengthening the capacities of legislatures to perform their representation, legislation and oversight functions.

There were significant milestones for the Centre in 2007-08. During this period, we began our preparations for celebrating the Centre’s 40th Anniversary; we were a catalyst and strong advocate for the initiatives led by the Democracy Council; we expanded our partnerships in program delivery, we concluded successfully our legislative cooperation projects in Russia and Cambodia and we launched a range of capacity-building and institutional support activities for the new parliament of Haiti. On the organizational front, a diagnostic of our business model was completed to address our significant financial challenges and lay the groundwork for developing new operational strategies.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank William Corbett who was the Chair of the Board until July, 2008 and who ably guided us through our strategic reviews. I would also like to thank Robert Miller who retired as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Centre in October 2008. We are deeply appreciative of Bob’s valuable contribution in transforming the Centre from an organization providing services to the Parliament of Canada to a well-respected Canadian-based organization providing parliamentary strengthening services to countries in key regions of the world. I would like to also welcome Amelita Armit to the post of President and CEO following Bob’s retirement. The Centre will benefit greatly from Amelita’s experience and leadership as we move forward to meet our objectives.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the many accomplishments of the Centre, as outlined in this Annual Report. I am impressed by the dedication and hard work of our staff, associates and partners. I look forward to continued success in our efforts to enhance the Centre’s reach and capabilities and adapt to new realities.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Robert Miller

In December 2008 we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Parliamentary Centre with an online forum, Parliament Hill workshop and reception hosted by the Hon. Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House of Commons. There was much to celebrate apart from the fact that the Centre has lasted far longer than many not for profit organizations. In particular, we celebrated the continued dedication of the Centre to the strengthening of legislatures around the world, a mission essential to the task of building transparent and accountable government. We also celebrated the fact that there continues to be strong demand for the services of the Centre as more and more parliaments develop plans and the will to strengthen their role in promoting democratic governance.

The 40th anniversary celebrations were especially valuable coming as they did at the end of an unusually difficult year in the history of the Centre. We confronted financial pressures at the same time the policy environment was changing in ways difficult to understand or anticipate. The result was that staff had to live with a high degree of uncertainty, a situation they handled remarkably well while continuing to carry out their work in a highly professional way. During this period the strength and commitment of the Board, especially the Executive Committee, became vital resources sustaining the Centre. To those who demonstrated their continuing commitment to the important work of the Centre, I express my personal appreciation.

We live in what is known euphemistically as “interesting” times but such times can reveal opportunities that normally elude us. Financial pressures may compel us to think more creatively and act more boldly than we might do in comfortable times. We have already begun to open our minds to new business models involving partnerships and joint ventures with organizations like the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians. We have taken important steps to develop more cost effective ways of delivering our services and tough times are pushing us to explore new fundraising opportunities. Without minimizing the challenges that lie ahead, I would say this is far too good a crisis for us to waste.

Speaking personally, I look forward to being a friend and supporter of the Parliamentary Centre for many years to come. Since my retirement in October 2008, I have begun to teach at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs and to write and speak on international democracy support. In all of these undertakings, I benefit enormously from the exceptionally interesting and diverse experiences that came my way at the Parliamentary Centre. I will always be thankful for that day many years ago when Peter Dobell invited me to join this vital and dynamic organization.

PART II: PROGRAMMING— A YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2007-08, the Parliamentary Centre provided parliamentary strengthening services to more than twenty countries around the globe. Accountability was a common theme explored in our capacity building activities, in particular how parliamentarians can exercise their oversight functions through a better understanding of their countries' budget and budget processes. Following are highlights of activities and results from projects executed by the Centre.

COUNTRY PROGRAMS

AFRICA PROGRAMS – A FOCUS ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE BUDGET PROCESS

The Centre's regional office in Ghana is the focus of the Centre's efforts to decentralize programming and delivery to the field and build local capacity for democratic development. Under the leadership of Dr. Rasheed Draman as Director of Africa Program based in Ghana, the Accra office is now a well-functioning unit of the Centre out of which all our Africa Programs are directed. The Ghana, Pan-African, Sudan, the Economic Community of West African States Parliament projects are all run out of the Accra office. Key achievements of some of these projects are outlined below.

During the year under review, the focus of most the Africa programs has been on strengthening the capacity of MPs and committee staff in the budget process. This has particularly been the case with the Austrian Development Agency support program - **the Pan Africa Project**. Working via the Africa Parliamentary Poverty Reduction Network, oversight work of key poverty-related committees from *15 African countries* – **Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Mali, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe** – has been strengthened by providing them with tools and skills to analyze their national budgets. Through our targeted trainings on the budget process and financial oversight, the capacity of MPs has been enhanced, enabling them to effectively perform their oversight functions as well advocate for pro- poor policies in their various countries. Other key achievements include:

Development of 'Learning Tools', such as an improved budget training manual to better serve the needs of MPs and a separate training manual targeted to the needs of committee staff. These learning materials have been used for training in Ghana, Uganda and Sudan.

Support to key oversight committees in Ghana, specially the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), has helped improve the contribution of MPs to national decision making. The PAC held a number of public hearings which have been acknowledged as a first step by PAC to improve transparency and accountability in the use of public resources.

Technical assistance to the Parliament of Ghana in establishing a professional, independent budget office. The Centre organized a study visit to several countries, including Canada for leaders from the Finance Committee, to learn about 'best practices' in parliament's role in the budget process. With the help of the Centre, a draft bill to this effect is currently being prepared.

Progress towards building a solid knowledge base to understand and support parliaments that are emerging out of conflict. Through the project on ‘Strengthening the Capacity of the **ECOWAS Parliament** to Prevent and Manage Conflict’, the Centre is currently developing handbooks and other learning materials to help improve the understanding and awareness of ECOWAS Parliamentarians of the underlying causes of conflict as well as approaches to prevent and manage conflicts at the regional and national levels. A strong emphasis is being placed on the gender dimensions of conflict in the region.

In **Sudan**, the Centre’s project designed to promote peace and the practice of parliamentary democracy, created mechanisms for the Sudanese political elite to have a dialogue to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE - NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF TOOLS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In **Serbia**, the Centre is partnering with ProConcept, a Serbian not-for-profit organization devoted to capacity-building and leadership development of CSOs to implement the project Parliament in Transition – Strengthening Accountability in Serbia. The Project, funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), is designed to strengthen the capacity of the National Assembly of Serbia to oversee government spending and policy implementation and develop related internal policies and procedures for parliamentary oversight. The Project focuses on engaging Members of Parliament, parliamentary staff, and civil society organizations in working together in this endeavour.

Over the course of the last year, the Centre implemented a training session for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff on conducting public consultations; designed a study visit for key committees of the National Assembly of Serbia to the Polish Sejm to compare and contrast approaches to Committee work, and provided training for parliamentary staff and CSOs on strategic planning for committees, in anticipation of the restructuring of Committees following the parliamentary elections of May 2008.

A hectic pace of activities characterized the Centre’s programming under the **Canada-China Legislative Cooperation Project (CCLCP)**. Activities focussed on improving legislative process such as the public hearing process, the legislative drafting process and the budget process. All these processes were examined through the lens of the National People’s Congress’ priorities in agriculture, rural development and fiscal reform.

A significant feature of the 2007-08 activities was the extensive participation of representatives from the Provincial and Municipal People’s Congresses of China (The People’s Congresses of the provinces of Shangdong, Hubei, Hebei, Guangdong, Qinghai, Autonomous Region of Tibet, Shanxi, Jiangsu, and the Municipal People’s Congresses of Qiqihaer, Beijing, Qingdao, Changqing, Shanghai). The study visits, workshops and parliamentary exchanges between deputies and officials from these congresses and Canadian MPs and Members of the Legislative Assemblies of B.C and Ontario and their officials, were on the topics of agriculture technology extension and rural financing, transparency and accountability in provincial and municipal budget processes, norms and techniques for legislative drafting, information access and transparency in the parliamentary process and monitoring and evaluating legislative implementation.

Two CIDA-funded parliamentary strengthening projects were completed in 2007-08--- the Accountability Strengthening Program (ASP) in **Russia** and the **Canada –Cambodia Legislative Support Project (CCLSP)**.

In Russia, the conclusion of the ASP project also culminated the Centre's fifteen-year involvement in Russia, which began in 1992. The early years of PC engagement concentrated on parliamentary exchanges and visits which served as a familiarization context for each country's institutions of governance and for the development of working relationships and appropriate models for cooperation. This evolved into more specific programming aligned with Russia's internal institutional reform priorities: parliamentary oversight and performance audit and internal financial and administrative management in parliament.

The Centre's parliamentary strengthening initiatives were carried through the Canada Russia Parliamentary Program (2001-04) and the Accountability Strengthening Program (2004-08) funded by CIDA. In partnership with the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, the Centre's projects resulted in the introduction and institutionalization of performance auditing at the federal level in Russia and in several regions (Leningrad, Voronezh, Tyumen and Tatarstan). In addition, our Russian partners adopted many features of the Canadian system in the Federal Assembly's internal management systems, such as the institution of individual budgets for legislators and the essential roles of a Board of Internal Economy in the management and administration of a parliament

The impressive results from the Canada-Russia cooperation project was recognized by an independent evaluation commissioned by CIDA and was celebrated by both Russian and Canadian partners in a one-day Canada-Russia Conference on Strengthening Government Accountability organized by the Centre with the Institute of European Russian and Eurasian Studies at Carleton University in November 2007.

Impressive results were also a hallmark of the five-year Canada-Cambodia Legislative Support Project (CCLSP) in Cambodia which officially ended in 2007. This bilateral Project is a major CIDA initiative in cooperation with and support of the Parliament of Cambodia, and has been the largest parliamentary development program in Cambodia. An evaluation report commissioned by CIDA and released in January 2007, concluded that significant results were achieved which contributed to the democratic development of Cambodia. The evaluation report remarked on the more than fifty manuals, guidebooks and tools developed by the Project for the use of parliamentarians and staff as its sustainable legacies. The Centre brought together guidelines and tools prepared during the course of CCLSP into a comprehensive Parliamentary Handbook in Khmer, which was shared with all parliamentarians, including newly-elected Members of Parliament following the July 2008 parliamentary elections.

As the Project was expected to draw to a close, the Centre has spent the bulk of 2007-08 consolidating the tools and lessons learned developed throughout the course of implementation of the CCLSP.

A high-level Presidents' Forum was held in Phnom Penh in December 2007 focusing on the lessons learned from implementation of the CCLSP over the last 6 years and the way they could contribute to increasing effectiveness of other capacity development projects for the Parliament of Cambodia stem in Cambodia.

The Centre is pleased to report that it has received a one-year cost extension from CIDA to continue implementing this project in Cambodia. The focus of programming during this period will be a series of orientation and training programs for new Members of Parliament, as well as assistance in the development of an internal training and capacity-building unit for Parliament.

A critical element of the Centre's success in implementing the CCLSP is the dedication of its project office in Phnom Penh. Its leadership was recently honoured by the Cambodian government. In early June 2008, His Majesty King of Cambodia Preah Bat Samdech Preah Norodom Sihamoni signed a Royal decree awarding Mr. Bunleng-Men, Field Manager of the Cambodia-Canada Legislative Support Project, and Mrs. Sokhayouk Mom, Deputy Field Manager, with the Royal Order of Monisaraphon, with the rank of "Mohasena" and the rank of "Thipdin" respectively. The Royal Orders are awarded in recognition of the great contributions Mr. Men and Mrs. Mom have made to the development of the public institution of Parliament in Cambodia. Mr. Men and Mrs. Mom were recommended for the awards by the President of the National Assembly and the President of the Senate of Cambodia.

THE AMERICAS – NEW BEGINNINGS IN HAITI

Following Haiti's Presidential, Parliamentary and municipal elections in 2006, the Centre received approval from CIDA to provide a comprehensive program of institutional support and capacity building activities to the new Legislature. The four year Project is expected to continue until the end of 2010. The Haiti project is the first country program undertaken by the Centre in the Americas. The Project will work with Parliament to strengthen its capacity to perform the three basic functions of Parliaments – law making, oversight of government, and representation of the public interest.

The first year 2007-2008 essentially constituted the Project's development phase. Most initiatives were dedicated to establishing a field presence in Haiti, building relationships with the leadership structure of Parliament, validating their needs and requirements and harmonizing project plans and activities with the various donors funding governance projects relating to the Haiti Project. Specific activities were also undertaken such as the first ever live public broadcasting of parliamentary debates and related activities, technical assistance to support Parliament's adoption of Haiti's first Electoral Law, training and provision of modern communications equipment for transcription of parliamentary debates and hearings, publication of a Guide on parliamentary terms and practice in both of Haiti's official languages (French and Creole), the formulation of a gender equality strategy covering all aspects of parliament's work, and the creation of a unit within Parliament's administrative structure to ensure its effective coordination of all external assistance programs.

Planning began for future activities such as the creation of a specialized research and advisory services centre to assist the legislative work of Parliamentary Committees, organizational reforms to restructure Parliament's administrative services, including the creation of a distinct parliamentary public service, complementary to that of the regular public service.

As part of the Centre's entrée into more active programming in the Americas, and to complement the Haiti project, the Centre was involved in a comprehensive regional study of the multiple processes for citizen engagement with legislatures in Latin America and the Caribbean under the auspices of DFAIT.

The conclusions from this study identified a number of opportunities for developing and delivering programs to enhance greater citizen engagement in particular countries of the Andean region this year, a process that is currently underway.

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PROGRAMS

The Centre serves as a Secretariat to two parliamentary networks that address current and emerging issues of concern to parliamentarians, as well as promote the critical role of parliaments in good governance. These network organizations, the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) and the Interparliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) have on-going linkages to Centre-wide programming and sharing of resource expertise.

Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)

2007-2008 was a year of consolidation for the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA), which entered its seventh year of operation. On the one hand, the network intensified efforts to strengthen its position as the voice of parliamentarians in the inter-American system. On the other, it pursued the development of a capacity-building program for parliamentarians of the region, building on the success of the workshop on trade-related matters held the previous year.

The financial year started with a special mission to Washington D.C. in the fall of 2007, during which the FIPA Executive Committee undertook important discussions with the Organization of American States (OAS) under the leadership of its Chair, Brazilian Congressman Luiz Carlos Hauly, in order to deepen cooperation between the two institutions. This led to FIPA's second participation as "special guest" in the annual OAS General Assembly, held in Medellin, Colombia, in June of 2008.

In terms of strengthening FIPA's membership, a highlight of the year was the creation of a national section of FIPA in Brazil – the first one in South America. The Canadian section was very active, with the organization, in particular, of a mission to Trinidad-and-Tobago and Barbados to consolidate FIPA's presence in the Caribbean region. Also worth noting are the promising discussions that the FIPA Executive Committee undertook with the Sub-Committee on the Western Hemisphere of the US House of Representatives in order to engage US parliamentarians in the FIPA network.

Finally, the FIPA Secretariat continued to implement an active communication strategy to keep its members and stakeholders informed about activities and relevant developments in areas of hemispheric interest. In addition to regular website updates, four issues of ParlAmericas, FIPA's official newsletter, were published in 2007-2008, and the Secretariat is currently working on a new blog for parliamentarians of the Americas, expected to be launched at the end of 2008.

Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)

The Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) assists parliamentarians in combating corruption through their core democratic roles. CIDA, together with the World Bank and USAID, have funded GOPAC's Core Global Program throughout its development period which ended

in September of 2008. Funding was secured for the next two and half years from CIDA in the amount of \$3.05 million dollars Canadian.

During the 2007/8 year, GOPAC accepted an invitation by the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to organise a second, one day Parliamentarians Forum during the 2nd Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CoSP) – in Nusa Dua, Indonesia January 28th to February 1st, 2008. Working with staff and experts from the U4 Anti Corruption Resource Centre and the UNODC, the Forum brought together parliamentarian and interested parties from around the world to discuss the important role that parliamentarians play in ensuring the success of the UNCAC. This meeting developed a detailed agenda for parliamentarians to support the effective implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and was formally presented to the CoSP by the UNCAC Global Task Force (GTF) Leader (Dr Naser Al Sane, GOPAC, Vice Chair), as well as to the IPU and parliamentarians generally.

GOPAC's GTFs were the organisations' highest priority activity in 2007-2008. The GOPAC Board of Directors assigned priority to four of eight GTFs: (i) United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), (ii) Parliamentary Oversight, (iii) Anti-Money Laundering, and (iv) Parliamentary Ethics and Conduct. In each of these four areas GOPAC established alliances with expert agencies or teams of experts that contributed to GTF work along with the drafting of a number of practical tools for parliamentarians use in fighting corruption (which will be finalized in the 2008/9 fiscal year i.e. Financial Oversight Handbook for Parliamentarian and the Parliamentary Ethics and Code of Conduct Handbook for Parliamentarians,

The GOPAC Secretariat also organised or participated in a number of regional and national chapter events including a Parliamentary Immunity event in Bogota, Colombia (in partnership with USAID), formation of a North American Chapter (in partnership with the U.S. Former Congressman's Association) and the formation of an Albania Chapter (also in partnership with USAID).

PART III: CORPORATE PROGRAMS – IMPLEMENTING THE CENTRE’S STRATEGIC PLAN

ENHANCING CENTRE SKILLS AND CAPACITIES

The past year was an important year for the Centre as we moved full speed ahead with implementation of our Strategic Plan (2005-2010). In 2007, the Centre received funding from CIDA’s Office of Democratic Governance (ODG) to assist the Centre in realizing its goal of transitioning to a globally networked centre of excellence that designs and delivers programs to improve the performance of parliamentary institutions.

The Project is intended to help the Centre establish regional centres of excellence in Africa and Asia with strong authority and capacity to design and deliver programs, and at the same time, strengthen the capacity of PCI Headquarters to become a global learning and accountability centre for parliamentary development programming and aid effectiveness.

Over the past year, the Centre has taken steps to improve its knowledge management capacities by consolidating its global and regional training products. For example, we have begun developing a comprehensive training curriculum on *Parliamentary and Budget Oversight*, as well as a Reference Guide on *Building Research and Information Services in Parliaments*. Additionally, we began a collaborative applied research initiative with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in the UK in order to generate evidence about the effectiveness of donor support to parliamentary strengthening.

The past year has also seen some big developments with respect to the strengthening of the Centre’s accountability capacities. For example, in Spring 2008, we launched the implementation of an internal Management Information System (MIS), tailored to the Centre’s requirements, in order to assist us in sharing information across regions. Steps are also underway to develop a comprehensive quality control system, in order to document and develop internal guidelines for resource planning, financial and administrative management, and programming. These tools are expected to move us forward as a first-class player in the field of parliamentary development.

LEADERSHIP WITHIN CANADA’S COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The Parliamentary Centre is a founding member of the **Democracy Council**, a group of key Canadian organizations that deliver Canadian democracy support abroad. The Council serves as a collaborative forum for exchange, dialogue on policy and program implementation issues related to Canada’s democratic development approaches.

The Centre is an active catalyst and advocate for the Democracy Council’s potential to exercise leadership in the democratic development community of practice. In February 2008, the Centre participated in the design and organization of the Democratic Dialogue on the Americas. In April 2008, the Parliamentary Centre led a Democracy Council assessment mission to Pakistan, with the purpose of (i) identifying and advising the Government of Canada on short-term democracy support initiatives that Canada could undertake in Pakistan; (ii) recommending mechanisms for delivering Canada’s short-term democracy

support initiatives to Pakistan; and (iii) identifying local organizations that might undertake democracy support initiatives in Pakistan. Since the mission, the Parliamentary Centre has partnered with PILDAT, an independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit indigenous research and training institution with the mission to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan, and is currently developing a joint proposal for programming in this precarious democracy.

The Centre continues to work with other Democracy Council members in working with government and other non-governmental organizations in sustaining Canada's contributions to democracy support abroad and in bringing to fruition the initiatives outlined in the Government's Response to the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, *Advancing Canada's Role in International Support for Democratic Development*.

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