



Project Fact Sheet

Last update: 1 November 2002

Number and title : LEB/99/008 - Strengthening of the Structures of the Lebanese Parliament

Location : Parliament

Executing Agent : UNDP/NEX

Start Date : September 1999

Type of Project :

Policy	Capacity building	X	Management & Coordination	X
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Target Beneficiaries : Parliamentarians, Parliament staff
 Parliamentary Committees, Parliament Library, The General Directorate of Information and Studies of Parliament;

Ministries, Public agencies, local governments. Civil society groups and NGOs.

Partners : The French Senate, The Francophone Parliamentary Assembly, The French Embassy and Cultural Center, The Canadian Government, The Arab inter-Parliamentarian Union, The Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR), UN agencies operating in Lebanon (UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF, ESCWA), The UNDP Programme for Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR)

SUMMARY:

This project aims at sustaining the efforts of the Lebanese Parliament in setting up the structures, mechanisms and human resources, in order to increase its efficiency in terms of legislation, control and representation. The reformed structures will promote a more favorable environment in good governance as well as facilitate Arab and international parliamentary cooperation beneficial to all parties concerned.

SUMMARY PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Objective 1: To strengthen the capacity of the parliamentarians to access the necessary information for the exercise of their legislative functions.
- Objective 2: To improve the capacity of the parliament in the monitoring/control of governmental activities.
- Objective 3: To develop the participation of the civil society in the discussions of laws concerning the issues of interest to society
- Objective 4: To reinforce inter-parliamentary international exchanges.

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENTS

Enhancing legislative functions through a dynamic platform for information sharing, expert advice and dialogue:

The project focus is on promoting informed representation, decision-making and planning capacity among Parliamentarians starting with issues of regional/rural development and including other sectoral needs. UNDP emphasizes the project's relevance and ability to answer to a real need in Parliament: that of promoting the legislative functions of Parliamentarians through access to information and networking between them and with other counterparts in government, civil society, UN and other development agents in the country. This has created some examples of Parliamentary oversight on the executive branch through the communication of expected outputs and guidelines for project implementation in certain sectors.

This dynamic platform for information sharing among parliamentarians, central/local government bodies, NGOs, civil society groups, private sector, the donor community and development agencies was established and strengthened through a series of seminars around key national development and sectoral issues. The project responds to demand of Parliamentary Committees to organize topical and sectoral seminars/round table discussions with multi-stakeholders participation. Seminar topics have included: regional/rural development needs and programmes, basic education, higher education, health, environmental legislation, water, transportation, poverty, decentralization, tourism, agriculture, youth and child labor.

The structure of the seminars/round tables, totaling approximately 15 a year, consists of:

- A situation analysis of the development theme and/or sector under discussion presented by an independent expert;
- A review of relevant on-going and planned development programmes of the concerned Ministry (ies) presented by the Ministry itself;
- A "tour de table" of similar interventions and initiatives of NGOs, UN agencies and local governments in this domain;
- A open discussion
- Wrap-up with the identification of priorities and the identification or proposal of legislative action where needed;
- In some cases, a working committee is identified to pursue the follow-up finalization and implementation of the proposed recommendations.

The role of the project team is to:

- Define the objective of the seminar with the concerned Parliamentary Committee;
 - Prepare a research paper for the seminar, i.e. the collection and consolidation of background
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- data and studies;
- Advise on and select independent experts and speakers for each session,
- Manage invitations and logistics to ensure wider participation and diversity of proposed approaches/solutions.

Capacity Building through coordination of technical cooperation and of new partnerships:

The aim is to consolidate and build permanent and sustainable capacities that sustain legislative and oversight functions. This requires the project to focus on expanded objectives aiming to: 1) transfer skills to permanent staff; 2) assist in the re-activation of internal structures and department, notably the General Directorate for Studies and Information and; 3) strengthen inter-parliamentarian exchanges and partnerships.

The UNDP Project Manager and the National Coordinator of Parliament, jointly identify the targeted capacity building needs of Parliament. The process for developing a plan of action, mobilizing resources and forging partnerships for this end, is pursued through direct UNDP assistance, including the identification of potential donors, funds and/or service providers, and establishing contact with them. This component also takes into consideration links with related UNDP-supported projects and partners.

Outputs in this context aim to allow the transfer of sustainable capacities to Parliament, notably:

- Capacity building - Parliamentary Committees, Parliament staff
- Institution-building – with emphasis on the revitalized Directorate of Information and Studies
- Inter-Parliamentary partnerships, exchanges and linkages

In this context, UNDP brokered a partnership between the Lebanese Parliament and the French Senate to build capacity through training, study tours and parliamentary exchanges. The agreement stipulates that Directors of Parliament departments, Secretaries of the Parliamentary Committees and parliament support staff will travel to Paris for training in the following areas:

- Legislative functions;
- Budget monitoring and oversight;
- External affairs and the organization of conferences;
- Research and development and documentation;
- Public relations: promoting inter-parliamentarian relation

Simultaneously, an agreement was made between the project and the French Cooperation in Lebanon to provide language courses for the beneficiaries, prior to their participation in the training courses offered by French Senate.

Institution-building

Outputs towards enhancing access to services, tools and funds to develop the institutional ICT infrastructure and capacity of the Parliament, through:

- Installation of a simultaneous interpretation system for Parliament by forging a partnership with the Canadian Embassy and mobilizing the necessary funds in the context of the Francophone Summit;
- Facilities, equipment, and books were secured for the library in addition to tp support for the restoration of old books;
- Coordinated the mobilization and implementation of parallel funds (\$1 ml.) from the Office of the Minister of State for administrative Reform (OSMAR) aimed to install IT network and secure the necessary equipment. The assistance includes:
 - Automation of the archives of Parliament
 - Development of a database in Parliament

- Automation of the library system
 - Provision and installation of computers and office equipment in the Directorate General and the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Committees
 - Installation of audio visual systems in the General Assembly Hall
 - Installation of audio-visual systems in the Parliamentary Committees meeting rooms.
 - Installation of a Print Shop in parliament
 - ICT training for Deputies and Parliament staff
 - Equipping the offices of the Deputies
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- Developing the Parliament webpage through technical support from the UNDP Programme for Governance in the Arab Region

Inter-parliamentarian international exchanges

In this context, the project is liaising with the UNDP Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR), to organize:

- Inter-regional legislative training (2003);
 - Arab Symposium on the Role and capacities of Arab Parliament in addressing development deficiencies as depicted in the 2002 UNDP Arab Human Development Report (2003); this will build on the Arab Inter-Parliamentarian symposium held in 2000
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