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Donor support to parliaments and political parties: An analysis prepared for DANIDA

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March 2008

Executive summary

In recent years donors have become increasingly concerned about the relationship between the quality of governance and their economic development aims. Parliaments and political parties are vital actors in securing representative and accountable systems of governance. However, donors have been slow to engage in a meaningful way with either. Assistance to parliaments and parties still forms a small part of the budget devoted to democracy assistance efforts. Projects have been characterised by unclear objectives, inappropriate techniques and uneven results. In short, both areas of donor support have been amongst the most disappointing in terms of impact and effectiveness.

These limitations have been acknowledged in the last few years, and donors are starting to address them. Although traditional forms of donor support focussed primarily on technical assistance, there is a growing recognition that changing the quality of governance means engaging at a deeper, more political level. Rather than simply trying to shape the structure of institutions, donors are instead seeking to shape the behaviour of different political actors. Ensuring that political institutions have adequate powers and resources is only one half of the equation, the other half is in ensuring those tools are used.

This presents difficulties for donors. Creating effective parliaments and political parties means making governments more accountable which, in turn, means a redistribution of political power. There is an understandable wariness about interfering in the domestic politics of sovereign nations.

This paper looks at the way in which donors are seeking to deal with these issues. It first assesses international assistance to parliaments, then efforts to support political parties. In each case it addresses the reasons why donors are seeking to work in that area, the sorts of activities they have engaged in, the reasons for their limited effectiveness, and the emerging strategy that is likely to shape political engagement in the coming years. There are five key themes that run through the paper.

First, there is considerable agreement amongst donors that the weakness of previous assistance efforts lay in their failure to understand and adapt to the local political context. As a result they lacked sufficient focus, were naïve about the incentive structures that shaped political activity, and methods were poorly matched to objectives.

Second, in an effort to overcome these weaknesses, donors in both areas are seeking to develop more rigorous forms of monitoring and evaluation. There is a particular concern to find commonly-accepted indicators and benchmarks which may insulate donors from charges of partisanship. These are further advanced in the field of parliamentary assistance, largely due to the higher level of donor co-ordination.

Third, the principles that underpin the emerging strategy for engagement emphasise the need for assistance to be driven and owned by local partners. Projects should be designed according to the local political context and focused on achieving a tangible effect in the quality of governance. They should also be aligned with other donor aid objectives.

Fourth, although these strategic insights and greater donor co-ordination are positive developments, the more difficult challenge is to find ways of operationalising them. It is one thing to describe what a beautiful house looks like, but another thing to build it. There are, as yet, few tangible examples.

Fifth, despite the similarities in objectives and overlap between legislative assistance and support for parties, the two areas remain almost entirely separate disciplines. There is a need for far greater co-ordination between objectives in the two areas, to improve understanding, synergy and impact. Critically, they must also be aligned with donor efforts in other forms of democracy assistance, not least to building civil society.

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1.1 Parliamentary strengthening: The purpose of donor support

In recent years parliamentary strengthening has become an important part of international democracy assistance strategies. National parliaments are one of the key institutions of governance and, critically, the principal forum for representing and expressing the will of the people. The increasing concern amongst donors about the role that governance plays in achieving development objectives has seen this traditionally neglected field of endeavour grow in importance. And although parliamentary strengthening still takes up a relatively small part of aid budgets, the amount of resources and attention devoted by donors is increasing.

Parliaments are the buckle that links the public to government, and in that role they perform three core functions around representation, legislation and accountability. In their representative function parliaments should seek to ensure that all shades of opinion within society are articulated to government. As the branch of government closest to the people, it is important that they combine links between voters and individual MPs, as well as with the institution. Parliaments play a critical role in the legislative process by scrutinising and amending government bills, but also in their ability to propose and shape legislative priorities. Finally, they are the main way in which government is held to account between elections, ensuring that government departments are run efficiently and that ministers are regularly called to account for their actions and policies.

In emerging democracies parliaments play an especially important role. It is in the early stages of democratisation that the standards which underpin a political culture are set. Parliaments not only have a role in improving the quality of governance by ensuring transparency and accountability, but they also play a critical role in shaping the public's expectations and attitudes to democracy. By their interaction with the electorate and their performance in holding government to account, parliaments help to establish the norms and values in the democratic culture. These functions are especially important in post-conflict societies where parliaments are the key forum for national dialogue, mediation and reconciliation.

Yet in many parts of the world legislatures fall far short of such expectations. In emerging democracies, parliaments are frequently ineffective against a powerful executive, and have little public legitimacy and authority. The reasons for such weakness vary from country to country. Parliaments often lack the basic tools to perform their core functions. With limited staffing and resources they can be poorly-organised and without much internal structure. This may mean that the rules of parliamentary business are under-developed, the committee system weak and the legislative process ineffectual. MPs themselves may lack basic skills, education or understanding of the institution and their job within it. But the performance of parliaments is also conditioned by the political environment in which they operate, including the constitutional framework, the parliament's formal powers and the relationship between legislature and executive.[1]

Donors have, for some time, recognised the important role that parliaments play, and the need to direct assistance to helping them perform more effectively. However, traditionally such support has been characterised by its limited nature, its tentativeness and its failure to form part of a broader strategy.

A UNDP analysis from 2007 stated that, in comparison with other areas of development support to good governance, the parliamentary sector remains badly underfinanced.[2] It suggests four possible reasons for the reluctance amongst donors to engage with parliamentary institutions. Firstly, development programmes tend to be worked out by the executive branches of government on both the donor and recipient side. The natural starting

point for governance work is therefore the executive, particularly as this part of government is most able to put development plans directly into action.

Secondly, recipient governments may give parliamentary strengthening a low priority because, by definition, a stronger parliament exercising its scrutiny function will make the executive's job more difficult, or at least more time-consuming. For that reason donors may also regard parliamentary strengthening as a politically sensitive area which could be interpreted as interfering in the domestic politics of a sovereign nation.

Thirdly, many of the international agencies suffer from a lack of expertise and experience in developing parliamentary strengthening programmes.

Fourthly, there has been a preference amongst donors to fund projects that develop civil society rather than political institutions. This complaint is common to both parliamentary and party assistance where many analyses suggest that donor interaction with civil society is easier because it is inherently less politically sensitive, but also that it offers the prospect of more tangible outcomes.[3] Some have even suggested that donors believed political society could be replaced or bypassed by building civil society.[4]

However, interest in forms of participatory democracy which work solely with civil society appears to be waning. A number of donors have suggested that too great an emphasis on civil society can distort the representative process and run the risk of capture by the most dominant and well-educated groups in society.[5] Instead there is general recognition that participatory democracy is most effective where it is used to reinforce representative democratic structures.[6] The use of public budgeting strategies in Porto Alegre and elsewhere provides the best example of how participation and political representation can be combined.[7] For all the weaknesses of parliaments and political parties, they are generally more effective at ensuring that a wide spread of political opinion is represented, and in articulating the interests of minority groups.

Rather than regarding support to civil society as an alternative to support for political society, donors now recognise that the two should complement and reinforce one another. It is impossible to have a strong political system without it being rooted in a vibrant civil society and assistance efforts are increasingly being aimed at both.

In short, donor support to parliaments has historically been limited in its scope and ambition. However, economic development actors have increasingly come to regard accountable, representative and transparent institutions as influencing economic development.[8] As the goals of economic and democratic development are being integrated, so parliaments are being seen as playing a critical role in the quality of governance, and as especially useful allies in the development process, through the development of poverty reduction strategies, in ensuring aid budgets are properly spent and accounted for, and in developing anti-corruption measures across all branches of government.

The following sections of the paper look at how the approach to parliaments has changed in recent years and the features that are likely to characterise future assistance efforts. Chapter 1.2 examines the main players in the parliamentary development field, the activities they undertake and the recent shift in emphasis. Chapter 1.3 looks at the extent to which donor strategies have had the desired impact and the way in which they are monitored and evaluated. Chapter 1.4 highlights the next stages for international assistance, and in particular the implications of a more political form of engagement with parliamentary institutions.

1.2 Parliamentary strengthening: The range of donor activity

There is a wide variety of organisations involved in parliamentary strengthening activities around the world. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list in a paper of this length, and this chapter examines the approach and activities of the most influential government agencies and other institutions.[9]

1.2.1 Organisations involved in parliamentary strengthening

The main actors can be grouped into four categories. Firstly, the bi-lateral donors, which include government agencies such as USAID, DFID, SIDA and CIDA. Secondly, there are the multilateral development agencies such as the UNDP, the World Bank Institute (WBI) and the EU. Thirdly, there are a range of NGOs, foundations and party-affiliated organisations including the National Democratic Institute (NDI), International Republican Institute (IRI), the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), International IDEA, the Canadian Parliamentary Centre and the Institute for Democracy in South Africa. Finally, there are the parliamentary networks which include the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), and the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank (PNWB).

Of the bi-lateral donors the most active are USAID and SIDA. USAID in particular has been involved in parliamentary strengthening since the 1970s in Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe and now, principally, Africa. As well as working directly with parliaments it produces a wide range of resources and publications. SIDA's activity is more recent, but built steadily during the 1990s working with a range of countries in similar areas as USAID. However, much of their work is run through other organisations. For example, USAID supplies much of the funding for NDI and IRI, while SIDA has worked extensively with the UNDP and the parliamentary networks (accounting for around 75% of their budget in 2005).[10]

The UNDP and WBI are the leading multilateral organisations in the field. The UNDP's work combines front-line support to parliaments and parliamentarians such as technical assistance, capacity-building, training and induction, with guides and handbooks for parliamentarians on their roles and responsibilities. This work is principally through the UNDP's Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening, the first phase of which ran from 1999 to 2003, the second phase runs until 2008, and plans for an expanded third phase of the programme are currently being developed.[11] The WBI is responsible for the World Bank's parliamentary work, and conducts most of their activity through training workshops or seminars, they also publish papers on a range of parliamentary topics and have supported a number of the parliamentary networks.

The most active and respected of the NGOs and party-affiliated bodies are the NDI, the WFD and the Parliamentary Centre of Canada. The NDI tends to focus on building the professional skills of parliamentarians and offers technical assistance on subjects such as committees, constituency relations, legislative drafting and rules of procedure. The WFD, funded by the UK Foreign Office, was established in 1992 as a multi-party body aiming to promote democracy, specialising in strengthening both parliaments and political parties. It has recently sought to re-focus its parliamentary activities and is working increasingly in Africa and the Middle East. The Canadian Parliamentary Centre is mostly funded by CIDA and works extensively in Africa. Its main strength comes from the fact that it has regional actors and offices, and has built up effective networks in many countries in which it works.

Lastly, the parliamentary networks provide both a source of expertise and a route for parliamentarians to engage with each other. Of these the IPU's network is the most extensive and over the last ten years it has worked increasingly closely with the UNDP to deliver specialist support and guidelines for MPs and parliaments. The CPA is, by definition, more limited in scope and based on shared principles of commitment to parliamentary

democracy. Both organisations have an inherent value in their ability to draw together a wide range of legislators to examine and deliberate on specialist areas.

Although not assistance actors as such, it is also worth mentioning the range of parliamentary networks that exist in specific regions of the world. For example, on the African continent there are several including the African Parliamentary Union, the Pan-African Parliament and the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, while the Americas have the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas and the Latin American Parliament. Although the idea of greater parliamentary co-operation has been mooted in Southern Asia formal organisations appear to be limited just to the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum. Such organisations vary in terms of the quality and content of their work. However, they have an undoubted value for parliamentarians in providing a regional context on political and parliamentary developments, and furthering regional cohesion, understanding and cooperation.

1.2.2: Types of parliamentary assistance
The previous description gives some sense of the diversity of support activities targeted to parliaments and parliamentarians. Each of the organisations tend to categorise their activities in different ways but tend to incorporate elements such as improving technical and staff capacity; enhancing executive oversight; legislative development and institutional organisation to ensure sound management and infrastructure.[12] For the purposes of this paper the simplest description is by dividing the various activities into three broad areas.

Firstly, there are the *structural* support programmes, designed to improve institutional infrastructure and technical capacity. These stretch from the very basic provision of computers, audio recording equipment, and office furniture through to support for management systems, staff training and library and research services.

Secondly, *procedural* support relates to the powers and procedures of the institution. A lot of donor effort has been aimed at improving parliamentary procedures, to develop an appropriate framework for both committees and plenary sessions, and in some cases, to extend the powers of parliament over legislation or scrutiny of the executive.

Lastly, the *functional* approach is designed to improve MPs' ability to understand and perform their representative, legislative and oversight functions. Training and induction for MPs is a key feature of most support programmes and often is targeted at new members of parliament, covering aspects such as committee oversight, constituency service or legislative drafting and analysis.

1.2.3: Changes in the direction and volume of parliamentary activity
It is difficult to find any reliable figures which give a more tangible sense of the scope of parliamentary activity as many donors fail to distinguish between the different elements of democracy assistance, and bundle parliamentary support with their other activities.[13] It is clear that the volume of funding earmarked specifically for parliamentary strengthening is a relatively small part of the democracy assistance totals, a fact which is frequently bemoaned by those working in the field. However it does appear that the work is quickly growing in size.[14] For example, the third phase of the UNDP's Global Project on Parliamentary Strengthening is likely to see its budget more than double to around €13 million, and according to DFID, their work on parliaments is 'expanding rapidly' and now accounts for around £14 million annually.[15]

The increase in volume also appears to be prompting a change in focus. As the activities described above make plain, many parliaments in emerging democracies have relied on international support to supply the most basic items so that they are able to carry out their

duties. Partly for that reason a large proportion of assistance has been on the administrative and technical side of parliamentary work. However, in the last few years donors have started to question the impact of this sort of assistance, and according to one analysis, for some donors "the initial '100% technical (equipment)' period has given way to the '100% political' dimension, focusing on activities aimed at developing the capabilities of MPs."[16]

This change in focus is partly to do with concerns about the effectiveness and strategic value of technical support. In addition, the greater sums involved are increasing donor expectations of what they should achieve. However, this new, more political approach to parliamentary strengthening has numerous implications for the way in which donors design, deliver and evaluate parliamentary support programmes. These issues are examined in the next two sections.

1.3 Parliamentary strengthening: Impact and effectiveness

Most analyses of international parliamentary assistance strategies tend to cite Tom Carothers comment from 1999 that, "asked to name the area of democracy assistance that most often falls short of its goals, I would have to point to legislative assistance."[17] Almost a decade after his analysis, it is clear that a high proportion of parliamentary projects still fail to meet their objectives. A more recent analysis conducted for SIDA, was even more damning about the effectiveness of such projects. It stated,

> "All too often, however, legislative aid efforts have barely scratched the surface in feckless, corrupt, patronage-ridden parliaments that command little respect from the public and play only a minor role in the political process. Legislators emerge unchanged from repeated training seminars. The training sessions for legislative staff do not deal with the facts that the trainees are beholden to powerful political bosses and are not given much of a role. Shiny new computers sit unused on legislators' desks or disappear. New parliamentary committees are formed at the urging of outside advisers but end up as fiefdoms of the senior legislators who are the root cause of the parliament's poor performance. More public hearings are held, again on the advice of aid providers, but they are mostly for show."[18]

The summary goes to the heart of the problem for donors. Parliamentary assistance has been characterised by unclear objectives, inappropriate techniques and uneven results. This chapter explores the reasons for poor performance, and the way in which donors are attempting to improve their monitoring and evaluation of projects so that they are more effective in the future.

1.3.1: The difficulty of developing parliamentary support programmes
Parliamentary strengthening is not alone in achieving limited results. The second half of the paper shows that a similar situation exists with party assistance efforts. And, both disciplines display traits that are common to all forms of democracy assistance, including a lack of coherent intervention strategy, limited donor co-ordination, the short-term focus of donor agencies, bureaucratic delays and limited ownership.[19]

However, there are two sets of specific factors that have undermined donor assistance in this area. The first set of factors relate to the innate difficulties of working with parliamentary institutions because of their character and composition. The second exist where donors have exacerbated such problems because of the inappropriate design and delivery of programmes.

In terms of the problems inherent in working with parliaments, such projects are, firstly, more sensitive to changes in political leadership than other forms of assistance. A change in composition of the parliament following an election or a change in government may alter the

priorities and level of commitment on the part of the parliament. What looks like an effective parliamentary strengthening project to a party in opposition, may be less appealing once they are in government.

In addition, parliaments in emerging democracies tend to suffer from higher voter volatility and a high turnover of MPs. It is common for such parliaments to lose more than half their members at each election, and in some cases it can be as high as 80%.[20] In these circumstances it is difficult for support projects to have a lasting effect or to build any sort of institutional memory.

A related problem is the general lack of democratic experience, especially in post-conflict countries. Case studies of several post-conflict parliaments suggest that a large proportion of new members have little understanding of what is expected of them, "often unaware of their authority, how to organise their time and conduct their business, or how to deal effectively with citizens and the press", and in some cases could not read or write.[21]

Trying to build public legitimacy and authority for the new institution under such conditions is inevitably difficult. A poorly-organised and poorly-educated parliament is unlikely to demonstrate high levels of competence to an electorate that is waiting to be impressed. Faced with a more powerful and better-resourced executive, the parliament's failure to meet public expectations will reinforce the impression of a weak and marginal institution. The result is a further increase in executive dominance, which itself further limits the potential success of further parliamentary assistance work.

However, donors have frequently compounded such problems by failing to take account of the political context or the specific needs of the institution. There are at least four factors that have contributed to this.

Firstly, there is a tendency for programmes to be supply-driven by donor perceptions of what is needed, rather than by the demands of the parliament itself. As a result aid providers often end up trying to copy or implement the models and practices that are common in their own parliaments or in other established democracies.

Secondly, projects have frequently failed to focus on clear objectives or distinguish between outputs and outcomes. As the quote at the beginning of the chapter makes plain, it is one thing to provide technical assistance or equipment, but they are of little use unless their provision also has an impact on parliamentary performance.

Third, although donors have long recognised that parliaments operate in a political environment which is largely beyond their control, most assistance programmes deal with them in isolation. Without taking account of the surrounding political context it is impossible to anticipate the external factors that will limit a parliament's activity, including the relationship with the government, patterns of authority and public attitudes. Despite donors frequently working in these different areas in one country it is rare to find projects co-ordinated towards common goals.

Fourth, and linked to the previous point, donors have been reluctant to engage directly with the *politics* of parliamentary reform in different countries. One of the prime determinants of whether a parliamentary assistance project succeeds is the extent to which the political will exists within the institution to make such change happen. Enhancing the influence, authority or effectiveness of a parliament means that certain political actors will feel threatened. These are usually people in a position of power who have the ability to block the process. As such, projects need to take account of the various incentive structures which influence politicians' behaviour and seek, as far as possible, to align these in support of the project's overarching aims.

It is the recognition of such deficiencies that has prompted the shift towards a deeper and more political approach to parliamentary strengthening. Chapter 1.4, below, highlights the remarkable degree of consensus amongst donors about the problems that have afflicted parliamentary support programmes and the need to do things differently. But the remainder of this chapter looks at the final factor that has limited the quality of parliamentary assistance programmes, namely the failure to monitor and evaluate the vast majority of efforts in this area.

1.3.2: Monitoring and evaluating parliamentary assistance programmes
Like much democracy assistance work, parliamentary strengthening does not lend itself to easily to measuring performance.[22] As explained above, it is relatively easy to measure 'outputs' such as the number of computers or staff that a parliament has, or to identify the procedures and formal constitutional powers that the legislature holds. However, such measures do not tell us how the institution is using its resources or powers, or how 'effective' it is in representing, legislating and calling to account.

Finding measures that can be applied to the variety of political and cultural contexts within which parliaments operate is a difficult task that requires value judgements at many levels. But also there is the problem of isolating the effect of a specific parliamentary support project, when numerous other contextual factors may be shaping parliamentary activity.

Partly for these reasons the field of parliamentary assistance has been almost untouched by systematic evaluation. Donors have recognised that this is a problem not only for the quality of their work, but also for the parliaments on the receiving end of it, and in recent years there have been three significant developments to address the situation.

Firstly, there have been combined efforts to develop a set of common benchmarks and indicators against which parliamentary activity can be judged. There are two main strands to this work. The first has been initiated by the CPA and the NDI who have both produced lengthy documents listing characteristics for democratic parliaments.[23] Both are the result of detailed consultation and contain the basic requirements for parliaments in their procedures, organisation, function and values. Indicators include ensuring that committee composition reflects the balance of power in the parliament, that the legislature should be able to override executive veto and that it has reasonable time, appropriate mechanisms and information in its key tasks such as budget scrutiny

At the same time the Inter-Parliamentary Union published its own it 'guide to good practice' for parliaments in 2006, which describes the sorts of characteristics parliaments should display.[24] The values behind the book are very similar to those which drive the NDI/CPA indicators, but the IPU's publication is far more descriptive of what parliaments should do and how to do it.

Each of the publications does though acknowledge the difficulties in establishing and applying one set of measures to parliaments across the world. Although there is a desire to find common indicators and benchmarks, there is also a recognition that they need to be sensitive to local context and public expectations. The second area of development is the efforts by donors, and notably the UNDP to contextualise these indicators and benchmarks. Here the African Peer Review Mechanism, where African states agree to have the quality of their political and economic governance reviewed by fellow nations, may be one means of putting the parliamentary standards project into a regional context.[25] To this end, the UNDP is in discussions with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) parliamentary forum to develop a regional set of benchmarks, and also working with others to develop periodic 'state of parliaments' report that would review issues and trends relating to parliaments.[26]

The third area in which developments are occurring is in the attempt to provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating parliamentary performance that captures qualitative as well as quantitative measures. Here USAID appears to be furthest advanced in developing a widely-applicable framework.[27] Their approach is characterised by a desire to get at 'outcomes not outputs', and to this end suggests a four dimensional approach which covers the representative effectiveness of the legislature, its internal management, its ability to influence policies and budget priorities, and citizen access. In each of these categories there are a combination of quantitative indicators, such as bills passed or questions asked, alongside qualitative measures including 'indexes' of capacity and levels of public confidence in the legislature .

Yet USAID and others recognise that this an imperfect way of measuring parliamentary activity.[28] In the first place it is unlikely that any framework, no matter how comprehensive will fully capture the entire range of parliamentary performance. In addition, the collation of the information will require a greater devotion of resources and time than is currently the case. But also, in trying to find qualitative measures, the analysis uses perceptions of activity as well as actual activity, and is thus subject to value judgements at a number of levels.

However, all three developments are significant. The fact that donors are giving the area such attention is worthy of note. It suggests a recognition that better evaluation is likely to improve both the quality and impact of parliamentary assistance projects. In addition, the need for commonly accepted measures becomes more important as donors engage more deeply in the politics of parliamentary reform. A universally recognised set of benchmarks could help to provide a neutral framework to help contain some of the sensitivities and guide the work. Indicators will need to take account of local conditions, but the hope is that, just as the international community has democratic standards for human rights and elections, so too they can provide a similar set of standards for democratic parliaments.

1.4: Parliamentary strengthening: Next stages for donor support

In every parliament around the world there is a gap between the formal powers that the institution has to hold its executive to account, and the ability or willingness of MPs to use those powers. Improving parliamentary effectiveness means understanding why that gap exists and tackling the causes. They may frequently be linked to the capacity or technical ability of the parliament, but they are invariably also linked to politics. It needs to be acknowledged that the effectiveness of a parliament is determined as much by the attitudes, outlook and behaviour of its members as by its constitutional powers.

Donors' traditional failure to either acknowledge or properly address those facts, means that international parliamentary assistance has not been as effective as it might have. However, the criticism seems to be having an impact. The emphasis on technical support is giving way to a more nuanced view of the factors that determine parliamentary effectiveness. Recent developments suggest that donors are starting to congregate around a shared understanding of the problem and a new strategy that seeks to engage at a deeper level in order to achieve meaningful change.

The outlines of this strategy exist in analyses commissioned by donors such as DFID, SIDA and the UNDP.[29] The papers display a remarkable unanimity in identifying the problems that have troubled parliamentary assistance programmes in the past. They also provide a common agenda, closely linked to the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, as to how parliamentary assistance should develop in the coming years. (The Paris Principles are examined in more detail in relation to both parliamentary and party assistance in the last

section of the paper.) But for the specific purposes of parliamentary assistance, there is great emphasis being placed on projects that are focused on getting tangible results, that are suited to the political context, that ensure ownership by the parliamentary institution and that are based on a long-term commitment by donors.

As the last chapter showed, there is also emerging agreement about the sorts of benchmarks and indicators that parliaments should meet. However, it is one thing to describe what a beautiful building looks like, but it requires different skills to build it. The key for donors is to ensure that their shared experience and strategic insight is translated in to the design and delivery of parliamentary support work on the ground.

This chapter highlights three sets of developments which suggests there is room for optimism on this front. The first is the greater donor co-ordination at a strategic and practical level. The second is the efforts to focus parliamentary support projects on influencing incentive structures and behaviour more than parliamentary procedure. The third is in the development of projects that seek to complement donors' other development objectives, specifically in poverty reduction, financial oversight and anti-corruption strategies.

1.4.1: Improvements in donor co-ordination

Despite the relatively small size of the parliamentary development field, support projects have frequently suffered from the same lack of co-ordination that has characterised other forms of democracy assistance. At the strategic level at least this is changing. In May 2007 a meeting organised by the UNDP, DFID and the WBI brought together the main organisations and individuals working in the parliamentary development field to share experiences and discuss future work.[30]

Unsurprisingly, discussions touched on the need to build agreement around the principles for donor support and the move towards commonly-accepted standards for democratic parliaments. But there was also the concern to ensure that projects complemented other democracy assistance efforts, particularly in relation to elections, political parties and parliaments.

To this end it made a number of key recommendations including the establishment of an informal donor contact group on parliamentary strengthening and regular formal consultation meetings; developing an on-line 'knowledge hub' on parliamentary strengthening; establishing good practice principles for donor support to parliamentary strengthening; and sharing results and good practice principles with the OECD DAC Network on Governance (GOVNET).

Perhaps the bigger challenge though is translating these broad principles into co-ordinated activity on the ground. The participants acknowledged the need for greater donor dialogue and coordination on types of support to parliaments, including support to parliament as an institution, to individual parliamentarians, or to parliamentary organisations and the growing group of parliamentary networks. The existence of the group does not by itself solve these problems, but it does offer an important development in donor co-ordination.

1.4.2: Projects which engage with political incentive structures

One of the biggest challenges for parliamentary support projects is ensuring that the desire to change parliamentary behaviour is translated into projects which specifically seek to do this. Too often parliamentary assistance has tended to regard legislatures as cohesive and monolithic institutions. However, it is very rare for a parliament to speak or act in one, unanimous way, and it is perhaps more helpful to think of parliaments as institutions made up of individuals and groups of individuals.

As one analysis candidly points out, "Individual legislators will naturally give greater credence to activities that further their own political positioning. Attaining the right political incentive system is crucial to ensure that legislators perform their key roles"[31] This insight is increasingly being used in the analysis of parliamentary support work and the development of new projects. Donors are producing a growing number of guides for practitioners to take into account the factors that might influence political behaviour.[32] Factors that motivate political behaviour, such as membership of and allegiance to the political party, the influence of key parliamentary and party figures, the committee structure and the MP's relationship with voters are all important.

However, it is so far unclear how far they are being translated into specific projects. Anecdotal evidence suggests that committee oversight is growing in significance[33] but co-ordinating work on parliaments and parties seems less far advanced. Parties are key allies in ensuring the success of the projects and in unblocking political concerns or objections. Critically, political parties can also be used to overcome some of the difficulties in building up an institutional memory – although many MPs will disappear at each election it is likely that the party structures will continue to shape parliamentarians' activity.

Yet there is almost no overlap between international assistance to parties, and that to parliaments. As one analysis suggests, even where donors have tried to engage with parties, the activities are more to do with formal legal systems than the informal interactions which characterise parliamentary politics.[34] This point is returned to in the final section of the paper.

1.4.3: Alignment of objectives
Donors have also increasingly used 'issue-based' approaches as a way of reinforcing the principles of scrutiny and accountability whilst also building the capacity of the parliament to shape policy. They offer a practical way for MPs to test the limits of their power in pursuit of policies which they care about, but also facilitate cross-party relationships and contact with other branches of government. However, increasingly donors are using 'issue-based' approaches to reinforce their other development aims.

Firstly, there is a growing recognition of the importance of using MPs in the development of poverty reduction strategies. Traditionally, PRSs were conducted between donor agencies and national governments, and overlooked the valuable role that parliaments might play. Yet PRS's not only require legislative approval, they should be based on principles of participation and reflect the country's need. Greater parliamentary involvement would improve the process of consultation by giving parliamentary committees a formal role, improve links between voters and parliament, and give MPs a far greater incentive to extend legislative influence over government finances.

Secondly, and linked, is the specific role that parliaments can perform in monitoring government spending. [35] As donor interest in governance has increased so too has their focus on parliaments in securing budgetary oversight and financial accountability. This has two dimensions to it, the first is the role of the parliament in scrutinising and amending the budget, the second in parliaments ability to monitor government spending and call ministers to account. The desire to strengthen parliaments' financial capabilities was a key feature of the donors' meeting in Brussels last year, and there are indications that both SIDA and DFID will be devoting more resources to this particular area.[36]

Thirdly, parliaments can play an important role in the drive against corruption. The Global Organisation of Parliaments Against Corruption was established to build a network of parliamentarians to combat corrupt practices by introducing legislation, creating oversight committees and developing codes of ethical conduct. Since its inception it has attracted much donor interest and funding, and region-specific branches have sprung up in the Middle

East and Africa. GOPAC is planning to launch a series of task forces related to corruption, and it has been suggested that this will form part of the UNDP's next stage of its Global Programme on Parliamentary Strengthening.[37]

1.4.4: Conclusion – the challenges for parliamentary assistance projects
The last few years have seen positive developments in the analysis and delivery of parliamentary strengthening at the strategic level. However, it should be stressed that these start from a very low base. Until recently parliamentary assistance programmes were largely derided as inappropriate, ineffective and lacking in any rigorous analysis. The situation has improved, but it is far from perfect, and huge challenges remain.

In the first place, although parliaments are increasingly being recognised as an important actor in all aspects of the development agenda, the resources devoted to parliament remain too small. Secondly, the development of a more political agenda for parliamentary engagement is an important step forwards, but donors need to ensure that their analysis is effectively translated from the strategic level and into practice. This more political role may be uncomfortable, but it offers the best hope for their efforts to achieve meaningful change. Thirdly, it is important that donors have realistic expectations of what is achievable. Ultimately, enhancing the influence of a parliamentary institution is a political endeavour. To this end it relies on political will and needs to find the right openings. This is not always easy, but projects which start by acknowledging the political incentives that shape behaviour have a greater chance of achieving that objective. Fourthly, the biggest challenge for parliamentary strengthening exists where some of the most positive developments have been made. The growing consensus around benchmarks and indicators for parliaments is a very important development, and bodes well. However, the challenge is to turn these principles into operationally viable principles that shape and inform all the donors' efforts on the ground.

2.1 Party assistance: The purpose of donor support

The first half of the paper highlighted the fact that, until very recently, support to parliaments has been fairly low down on donors' priorities. International assistance to political parties has arguably suffered from even greater neglect. One estimate from 2004 put the amount of aid to political parties at 0.64% of the total budget for overseas development.[38] Donors appear to have been even more wary about the overtly political nature of support to political parties and have sought to find other routes for achieving their objectives. However, as is the case with parliamentary support, recent years have witnessed a recognition of the vital role that political parties can play in achieving effective governance, and with it has come a change in emphasis.

In the first place, it is now widely accepted that political parties perform a unique role in any democracy. The functions of political parties are even more dependent on the social and political context of a particular country than parliaments. As a result there are a variety of descriptions of those different roles, but general agreement that parties exist to aggregate and articulate public opinion, and develop sets of policies on that basis. They serve as the main route for recruiting political leaders and provide alternatives for government at elections. They provide an important link between the public and the government, and are responsible for managing conflicts of interest in the wider society.

Perhaps the most succinct and useful summary of party functions is offered by the Netherlands Institute of Multi-Party Democracy (NIMD), which suggests that political parties are necessary for democracy because they are i) the main vehicle for the representation of political interest, ii) the main mechanism for the organisation of government and iii) the key channels for maintaining democratic accountability.[39]

All such functions have an obvious and direct link to the functions of parliament. The extent to which political parties effectively carry out their core tasks will have an impact on the influence of the parliament, and on the overarching quality of governance. But this impact runs both ways. As one author speaking in the African context has noted, "while political parties are a critical asset to a vibrant, dynamic and thriving democracy, they also have a great potential to become a democratic liability."[40] Or, as the head of party programming at the NDI has commented, when countries experience political crisis, it is often the troubled state of political parties that lies at the heart of the problem.[41]

It is for these sorts of reasons that parties are frequently described as the weakest link in the democratic chain. All over the world, in democracies old and new, parties appear to be suffering from a crisis of legitimacy. In every country they invariably turn up amongst the least trusted institutions in society, and scepticism about the value and reliability of parties appears to be almost universal.

Such factors take on a specific dynamic in emerging democracies where parties play a pivotal role in the development of a democratic culture and linking the public with the political system. Whereas political parties in older democracies tend to be rooted in social movements and therefore have various links to the wider population, in newer democracies parties are frequently weakly instituted, often lack any defining ideology and tend to be driven by charismatic personalities rather than policies.

Research recently published by IDEA into the state of parties in developing democracies graphically highlights the nature of the problems for strengthening democracy. The problems vary between continents and from country to country, but often the picture is one of problems at extreme ends of the scale: either debilitating instability because of the proliferation of parties and fragmented nature of the party system, or a lack of choice and representation

caused by the crushing dominance of one party. The description of the situation in Asia sums up the difficulties being faced by many parties, in that while democracy "has become broadly-based, parties have become more and more leader-centred and authoritarian … while people's trust in the democratic form of government is high, their trust in parties is low … while people's expectations of parties have mounted, the capacity of the parties to deliver has declined."[42]

It is only in the last decade that donors have started to recognise the nature of these problems and the need to work with political parties in order to address them. Traditionally donors have preferred to work with civil society,[43] however, there is now a general acceptance amongst donors that support for the institutions of civil society can not be regarded as a proxy for engaging with political parties. While civil society might offer alternative ways in which to articulate, aggregate and represent public opinion, they cannot offer the link to the executive or the governance role that is integral to parties.

These trends have been sharpened by the increased role of international assistance in post-conflict countries. Here political parties play several critical functions in creating stable political systems, managing tensions and facilitating dialogue between previously warring factions. The challenge of supporting and engineering party systems presents donors with a particular set of problems in this context. But underpinning most of these challenges is the importance of ensuring that political parties properly reflect and represent public opinion in the political system. Many donors now recognise the need to balance and integrate support to civil society with that to political parties.[44]

As a result, in the last five years there has been a remarkable growth in interest as to how international support can aid political parties. Political party assistance remains a hugely sensitive area. Supporting particular parties is perceived as overtly partisan and opens donors to accusations of interfering in the domestic politics of sovereign nations, and even political engineering to promote other foreign policy objectives. But the general trend amongst donors is towards engaging with parties. The steps in this direction remain tentative, but it is possible to detect a change in the form and content of assistance to political parties.

The following sections of the paper map the broad outlines of donor support for political parties and the efforts being made to engage at a deeper – and, it is hoped, more effective – level. The next section provides an overview of the main players in the field of party assistance and the types of support in which they have been engaged. The third section examines the impact of that assistance and, in particular, the central weaknesses of the current approach - as well as the dire lack of any coherent monitoring and evaluation. The final section of this part of the paper assesses the desire amongst donors to develop new forms of support that deal with the causes rather than the symptoms of the problem, and what this means in practice. Underlying these new movements is a recognition that parties are undoubtedly part of the governance problem in many emerging democracies, but for that reason they must also be regarded as part of the solution.

2.2 Party Assistance: The range of donor activity

This section provides a brief overview of firstly, the main actors in party assistance efforts, secondly, the areas of party support in which they have been engaged, thirdly, the types of support activity this has involved and, finally, the changing nature of support in key areas following the arrival of new actors.

2.2.1: Organisations involved in party aid

Until very recently there was almost no analysis of the work of different organisations in supporting political parties. Thomas Carothers, one of the leading thinkers in this area, has suggested that aside from one article in the early 1990s, there had been no systematic attempt to analyse party work before 2004.[45] Since then there have been several thorough analyses[46], not least by Carothers himself.[47] However, as the discipline is at a relatively early stage there is still a lack of coherence in definition and typology, with each author using different ways of distinguishing between actors and their activities. No attempt is made here to consolidate the various approaches, but rather to draw out the most significant features of each.

In terms of the main actors in party assistance they are generally broken down into three or four categories. These include; international bodies such as the UNDP and EU; bi-lateral support by government agencies such as DFID, USAID and SIDA which forms part of their wider democracy assistance work; foundations that engage specifically in party-to-party support such as the German *Stiftungen* who generally work with sister parties; and institutes that pursue multi-party projects such as the IRI, NDI and the Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party democracy.

Reliable figures for party aid are difficult to establish, but in terms of size, the largest are the *Stiftungen*, the US institutes (IRI and NDI) and the UNDP. In 2004 the *Stiftungen* had a combined budget of $418.7 million, of which around $40 million was devoted to party support. Figures from 2005 suggest that the IRI and NDI combined spent around $68 million on party assistance. The UNDP, by far the biggest actor in terms of resources to support democratic governance ($1.4 billion in 2005), does not have a separate budget line for party aid, but it is estimated to be somewhere between $10 million and $30 million. Other significant actors are the Palme Centre, the Luxemburg Stiftung, NIMD and WFD. In total it is estimated that the total spent on party aid is somewhere between 5 and 7 per cent of total democracy assistance.[48]

2.2.2: Areas of party support
The method and objectives of party assistance projects vary according to organisation, but the simplest and broadest description of what party support should do is provided by USAID, which states three objectives; 1) the establishment and organizational development of viable, competing democratic parties at national, regional, and local levels; 2) the provision of organized electoral choices to citizens through political parties; and 3) the democratic governance of societies facilitated by political parties in government and opposition.[49]

However, under those headings it is possible to draw out six different forms assistance that the different organisations undertake. In the first place most emphasis seems to be placed on helping parties with their *internal organisation* and processes. One of the weaknesses of political parties in emerging democracies is their tendency to 'hibernate' between elections. Support for internal systems might include organisational structure, membership development and internal communication.

The second area is help with running *election campaigns*, including strategic planning, candidate selection, and campaign funding. The third area is to promote the *participation of women* in party politics, focussing again on recruitment as well as education on equal rights and the electoral value of selecting more women candidates. The fourth area relates to the *legislative function* of parties including training of legislative staff and the improvement of the parliamentary infrastructure.[50] The fifth area is the *legal and regulatory framework* for parties, usually developing the elements of the constitution which provide for electoral and party law. And the final area is that of *interparty dialogue and collaboration*, which is a critical feature in post-conflict societies.

Again there are a limited number of sources describing how much is allocated to each of these tasks. The most comprehensive survey was conducted by de Wersch and de Zeeuw for the Clingendael Conflict Research Unit which examined assistance from political foundations in Europe. This found that around a third of the budget of the foundations is dedicated to internal party organisation, 17% on election campaigns, 14% on parliamentary activities and 13% on strengthening the overall party system.[51] From other studies it appears that the two main forms of assistance tend to focus either on help with election campaigns or building the internal organisation of the party, with other forms of assistance taking a relatively small proportion.[52]

2.2.3: Types of assistance
How these translate into on-the-ground activities again varies according to organisation, situation and context. The Christian Michelson Institute's analysis describes seven types of activity; financial and commodity assistance; technical assistance, including bookkeeping and auditing; assistance with workshops, seminars and meetings; training of political leaders and party functionaries; advice and technical assistance to outreach, media and promotion; research and polling capacity; and visits and foreign tours.[53]

Each of these categories is fairly self-explanatory and does not need further elaboration here. However, the balance between the different activities is a source of concern for many, and in particular the over-reliance on training as the principal method for aiding political parties. In a paper from 2004 Carothers suggested that training might account for as much as 75% of party assistance.[54] The research by de Wersch and de Zeeuw put the proportion lower, but training still took the majority of assistance efforts by European foundations, accounting for 56% of expenditure, followed, a long way behind, by advice and technical assistance (14%), and conferences and seminars (12%). The implicit criticism, which is examined in more detail in subsequent sections, is that this type of party assistance is determined more by the perceptions of the providers than by the needs of the recipients.

2.2.4: The creation of the NIMD and the changing nature of aid to political parties
Given the relative size and age of the German *Stiftungen* (most were established in the 1960s) it is not surprising that they have dominated the field of party work, especially in Europe. Their model has been followed in other countries such as Sweden, Norway and the United Kingdom. Yet this model of party-to-party assistance has come in for increasing criticism in recent years, and especially the German *Stiftungen* as representing a staid and complacent attitude to political party support. A recent evaluation by SIDA questioned the way in which their own 'party-affiliated organisations' approached assistance work[55], the Norwegian Centre for Democracy's party focus has been harshly criticised[56] and even the Westminster Foundation for Democracy's party-to-party activity has been questioned.[57]

The sister-party model has a number of well-documented weaknesses, but its applicability has also been tested by the increasing importance attached to support for political parties in post-conflict societies. In such situations a far greater emphasis needs to be placed firstly on helping rebel movements transform themselves into functioning political parties, ensuring that electoral and party law is adequate, and developing multi-party collaboration and dialogue. The *Stiftung* model is not ideally suited to such tasks.

Partly for these reasons the Dutch parliament established the Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (NIMD) in 2001. It was created, and is managed by all the political parties in parliament, and its focus is on promoting dialogue, co-operation and engagement between political parties in the partner countries. Its aim is to engage directly with the politics in the countries in which it works, recognising that political parties are key actors in the 'dynamization' of the reform process.[58] It blends direct party support with cross-party support, but the objective is to ensure the development of a multi-party political system, and is thus well-suited to meeting the needs of parties and parliaments in post-conflict situations.

It also prides itself on being demand-driven so that the partner parties have ownership of the projects. The NIMD's pattern of activities is thus in contrast to the general trend. For example, whereas de Wersch and De Zeeuw identified that training took up 56% of all actors assistance, it forms less than 15% of the NIMD's work, whereas around 60% is taken up with conferences and seminars promoting dialogue.[59]

The impact of the NIMD has been marked - according to the director of another agency it has 'put the cat amongst the pigeons' – and it is widely regarded as a very successful innovation. One analysis has described it as "one of the world's best functioning organisations for democracy and multi-lateral party-to-party support".[60] The result of such success is that it has expanded rapidly, and the most recent figures suggest its annual budget now stands at around €10 million.[61]

There is undoubtedly still a place for more traditional forms of party to party assistance, and both multi-party and single-party assistance have their strengths and weaknesses.[62] But the arrival of the NIMD has challenged some of the accepted tenets of party aid. As is explored in more detail in subsequent sections, its approach seems likely to have a wider impact on the way that party assistance develops. (Given the potential for emulation by other donors an appendix is attached to the report which provides a brief overview of the NIMD approach and structure.)

2.3 Party assistance: Impact and effectiveness

The limitations in measuring the impact and effectiveness of political party assistance fall into two main areas. The first is the reliance on a 'standard approach' to party aid, and the second is a lack of strategy and analysis in what donors are trying to achieve. Both are linked to failure to conduct meaningful monitoring and evaluation.

2.3.1: The weaknesses of the 'standard approach'
Much criticism of party assistance techniques revolves around the tendency to use Western models of political parties as benchmarks for what parties should do. As a result projects have often failed to take account of the political context in which they operate. A list of these traits might include systems to ensure that they are competently managed, internally democratic, financially transparent, inclusive of women, ideologically coherent, deeply-connected with the electorate, enjoy a broad membership base and are driven by ethical principles rather than opportunism.[63]

These are certainly laudable objectives, but they present an idealised version of a political party that rarely exists, if at all, in any democratic system. As Carothers argues, "Western party aid seems to be based on a old-fashioned idea of how political parties were in some earlier, more virtuous era, before the rise of television-driven, image-centric, personality-driven politics, the diminution of direct links between parties and voters, the blurring and fading of traditional ideological lines, and the growing cynicism about partisan politics that characterize political life in many established democracies."[64]

The implication of this is two-fold. Firstly, for those engaged in efforts to improve the effectiveness of political parties in emerging democracies it is difficult to identify specific examples to which they should aspire. Secondly, they do not necessarily reflect realistic or achievable objectives, and frequently do not address the situation in which parties find themselves.

The analysis conducted by IDEA of political parties in central and eastern Europe, Africa and Asia highlights the extent to which parties face distinct problems according to their specific

history and political context. For example, the situation in central and Eastern Europe is characterised by instability in many countries, as parties appear and disappear reflecting abrupt swings in voter behaviour.[65] In Southern Africa while democracy is working at the macro-level, internal party democracy is often lacking with dominant parties displaying a deep intolerance of internal dissent.[66] In other parts of Africa it is party finance and the politics of succession that are most pressing.[67]

Yet, one of the most common criticisms of party assistance is the tendency towards a standard approach. As the previous section highlighted this is reflected in an over-reliance on training seminars and workshops, which suffer from two sets of problems. Firstly, they frequently fail to attract the right people, tending to get junior members of political parties rather than those who are in positions of influence and can make change happen. And secondly, the style and content of such sessions has been criticised for being too vague, based too much on the 'ideal', and too reliant on lecturing rather than more activity-based workshops.[68]   Linked to this is a further criticism that too many of the trainers have a limited knowledge of either country or the specific political context in which the political party operates. And, as a result, the assistance programmes frequently fell short of the expectations of participants.[69]

Most analyses acknowledge that techniques have improved markedly in recent years with greater attention being paid to developing local trainers or using trainers from other emerging democracies. However, party assistance appears to be particularly prone to projects that are unfocussed, supply-driven and ineffective.[70] As a result there is not only a lack of the local ownership that is crucial to making such projects succeed, but they also often fail to take into account the importance of tailoring projects to the political incentives of political parties.[71] In countries where parties are clientilistic, have little ideological coherence and voting is on the basis of personality rather than policy, the obstacles to reform are political rather than technical. The strongest incentive for parties to make change happen is the realisation that "popularly responsive, accountable and non-corrupt party behaviour will ultimately provide them with the best chance to be elected into power."[72] But this requires a highly-contextualised approach to party assistance.

2.3.2: The lack of strategy, alignment and evaluation
The second broad area of criticism is related to and overlaps with the first. It is underpinned by the failure in many projects to develop a coherent set of strategic objectives, to ensure that activities are linked to those objectives, and an almost entire absence of monitoring and evaluation once those projects have been completed.

In the first instance there appears to be a common tendency, especially amongst the party-affiliated organisations working in the field, to assume that assistance to political parties is, by definition, a good thing. Often motivated by a desire to enhance the position of their sister party it seems to be taken for granted that party support will be meaningful and constructive in the long-term, regardless of content or context.[73]

Yet party assistance projects have reflected failings at a more basic level of simply ensuring that the projects were in line with the desired outcomes. In a thorough-going report for SIDA, the party-affiliated organisations in Sweden were strongly criticised for the lack of connection between activities and outcomes, and that "the effect on democracy is both vague and, at best, very long-term."[74] As other authors have noted, these problems are not confined to Sweden, the German *stiftungen* have been criticised for their lack of a specific strategy for party assistance,[75] and as Krishna Kumar has argued, the approach to party support in the international community has been governed more by opportunism than a coherent strategy, where donors have "selected specific areas of assistance largely on the basis of local openings, available resources and their own interests."[76] This may partly be a reflection of the limited funds that have been available for party assistance in the past, which were

perhaps more suited to small-scale and opportunistic interventions than the development of a longer-term strategy.

Even if that were the case, what is most striking about the field of party assistance is the almost complete absence of monitoring and evaluation. As with the evaluation of parliaments, there are inherent difficulties in finding measures that assess the quality of party performance. Given the variety of roles that parties perform and the varied contexts within which they exist, it is arguably even more difficult to find generally accepted and 'neutral' measures against which they can be scored.

The absence of indicators makes it difficult to determine the impact of party assistance, to ensure that the activities are resulting in the desired outcomes, and to find ways of improving them. To this end there is a growing interest amongst donors and agencies in finding forms of evaluation based on more rigorous analysis. This requires that greater attention is paid, firstly, to ensuring that project design reflects the needs of the recipients in the first place and, secondly, that its delivery achieves the objectives it is intended to meet. Both though require that far more time and resources are devoted to analysis and evaluation.

This section has deliberately concentrated on the weaknesses rather than strengths of current forms of party assistance. The world of party aid is not all bad, the problems are not unique, and there are an increasing number of exceptions to the general conclusions outlined above. Organisations like NIMD, for example, place great emphasis on their work being demand-driven, focused on clear objectives and giving more attention to analysis. Other providers of political party support are seeking to integrate their work into a broader programme of democracy assistance, as part of a more strategic approach which places greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation. Many of these are at an early stage, and it is not yet clear what their long-term impact will be. What is clear, is that the outlines of a new approach to party assistance are emerging. This is the subject of the next section.

2.4 Party assistance: Next stages for donor support

As mentioned at the outset, parties have long been regarded as the weakest link in the democratic chain. But now political parties are increasingly being acknowledged as key actors in determining the quality of governance, and therefore pivotal in democracy assistance strategies. The issue for most donors is not whether they should be working to improve the quality of political parties in developing democracies, but rather how.

Just as with the development of parliamentary assistance, the emerging priorities are characterised by a desire to engage with parties at a deeper level. In other words, projects should seek to understand and tackle the causes of the problems, rather than simply treating the symptoms. There are a number of parallels with the developing trends in parliamentary strengthening work, including a desire to find more rigorous forms of measuring and evaluating. Here the aim has been described as trying to find a balance between systematisation and contextualisation. In other words, party assistance needs to have more structured frameworks and better planning, but also needs to be flexible enough to adapt to the specific contexts in which parties operate.

This final section examines the developments in three parts. Firstly, the ways in which assistance copes with the overtly political nature of party support. Secondly, ways in which programmes adapt to different political environments and the needs of individual parties. Thirdly, the efforts that are being made to create more effective indicators and more thorough forms of monitoring and evaluation.

2.4.1: Addressing the politics of party assistance
Donors have been traditionally very wary of engaging directly with political parties, for the entirely understandable reason that is a highly politically sensitive area. Yet as the quality of governance has risen in the order of donors' priorities so the need to work with parties has become more pressing – and to do so in an overtly political way. The limitations to the previous, alternative approaches – trying to bypass parties by going direct to civil society or concentrating on technical assistance – are all too apparent. Ultimately the role that parties play is governed by a set of political decisions which determines how they behave. Party assistance needs to identify and seek to influence the incentive structures that shape that behaviour. Or, as one author has put it, in order to be regarded as relevant by political parties, support projects need to be political.[77]

Donors are, of course, right to be wary about accusations of interfering in domestic politics or seeking to promote the fortunes of one party at the expense of another. However, there is a growing sense that donors need to be more explicit about the fact that party support is not only political, but also partisan. Democracy assistance work, in so far as it seeks more transparency, accountability and representation, means a redistribution of political power; some political actors will benefit while others will see their influence constrained. But as Carothers argues, acknowledging the partisan nature of support is not by definition a bad thing if it forces donors to accept the implications of their activity.[78]

The increasing importance of working with parties in post-conflict societies graphically illustrates this point. Where international democracy assistance is aiming to ensure that a society does not slide back into conflict, the programmes must actively seek to engineer the political and party system to avoid emphasising division and ensure all interests are represented. But this involves political decisions at many levels. And, as a recent conference on party assistance in Burundi and Afghanistan acknowledged, party aid organisations cannot remain neutral in such circumstances, but must "continuously reflect" on their underlying assumptions and "the lens through which we look at the role of political parties in a democratisation process."[79]

Such overtly political work is arguably more easily conducted by multi-party institutes. The UNDP, for example, frequently points to the fact that its motives are less questioned when working with parties than those of individual nations. However, the rapid growth of the NIMD in the last seven years suggests they have found ways of overcoming sensitivities around political interference. The organisation is explicitly political in its approach, but as highlighted above, prides itself on being more demand-led and strategic than other organisations.

Party-to-party work is unlikely to disappear. It has some distinct benefits in that it can allow a greater candour and frankness amongst ideologically similar political actors, that is unlikely to emerge from multi-party discussions. But the success of the NIMD suggests that there is room for further growth in the multi-party model and for other actors to become involved, especially in post-conflict societies. The likelihood is that, the success of party assistance will need a more overtly political approach that sees greater co-ordination between multi-party and bi-party support.

2.4.2: Adapting party assistance to context
The second feature of the developing approach to party assistance work is to ensure that content matches context. The previous chapter examined the tendency to rely on standard methods for party assistance which were frequently unsuited to the parties' needs. If donors are seeking to generate meaningful change by engaging with parties at a deeper level, then it means that understanding the complexities of local politics becomes even more important.

This has four implications in terms of the way donors conduct such work. Firstly, donors need to ensure that assistance is driven by the parties themselves. Again the NIMD process

has much to commend it in this regard. Political parties are invited to bid for funds, but are obliged to put forward their projects as a part of a broader strategic plan which is assessed by the NIMD. Once approved, staff from local political parties are charged with managing the projects and delivering the results. The NIMD suggests that in this way local parties are given both ownership and responsibility, and more importantly, such 'home-grown' agendas provide the framework for assistance.

Second, donors need to expend more time and energy on detailed needs' assessments of the countries in which they plan to work. Given the limited budgets that still characterise much party assistance some of the interventions may be on a small-scale, but they should still seek to contribute to broader objectives of democracy support in that country or region. Again this emphasises the need for local involvement at an early stage in the planning process.

Third, numerous authors have pointed to the dearth of useful research in the field of political party assistance. Although the literature is expanding, there is still a gap between the pre-occupations of the academic community and the sorts of analyses that practitioners find valuable. The problem is essentially a practical one; that those who are doing the work on the ground generally do not have time to write it down, whereas those who do have time to write it down tend not do front-line assistance. Kumar and de Zeeuw have highlighted a particular need for deeper investigation of post-conflict societies - where conditions are frequently not conducive to academic examination and reflection - to ensure that analysis and programming can be combined with local understanding and interest.[80] But more generally the research itself needs to be conducted at more political and practical level. Writing in the African context Salih and Nordlund note that while there is an increasing body of literature on political institutions, there is still relatively little understanding of what goes inside them. For example, understanding the factors and incentives that shape how political coalitions are formed and what goes on inside institutions between elections would dramatically enhance the quality of support to politicians and parties.[81]

Fourth, all of this requires a different outlook on the part of donors. Many authors have been critical of the short time horizons of party assistance work, and the unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved by such limited interventions. Engaging in detailed research means allocating far more time to both analysis and evaluation, and thus extending the time-frame within which they are funded. As a recent analysis for SIDA suggests, "The insight that institutional reform requires deeper changes underscores how slow and difficult change will be. We will most probably, therefore, have to revise our notion of long-term change from five to ten years, as at present, to several decades at a minimum."[82]

2.4.3: Frameworks for monitoring and evaluation
Both of the previous elements are likely to contribute to a more strategic approach to party aid which seeks to ensure that methods of delivering assistance are matched to desired outcomes. Few actors in the world of democracy assistance can claim great credit for the way in which monitoring and evaluation has been conducted,[83] but those involved in party aid appear to be particularly poor. The problem is universally recognised and most donors are at least paying lip-service to the need to develop more thorough sets of indicators and other analytical tools. However, there is little tangible so far.

Suggestions for the content of benchmarks include financial transparency, membership base, internal democracy, and women's participation.[84] Yet these again fall in to the trap of assessing parties according to an idealised model of a political party which rarely exists in established democracies. But the question of monitoring and evaluation also reflects some of the inherent problems for assessing parliamentary strengthening work. At one level, the quantitative measures suggested above might tell us something about party structure, but little about the way a party behaves. Secondly, there is the problem of causation – how does

evaluation isolate the effect of party assistance efforts from wider changes in the political context which may influence party performance.

Efforts to define commonly accepted indicators of party performance are not as far advanced as similar endeavours for parliamentary assistance. There is as yet little basis from which to work. NIMD offer one possible framework which uses indicators in three areas, namely; 'institutional development criteria'; the 'political party-party system nexus'; and the 'party-civil society' relationship.[85] More recently, the task has been taken up by International IDEA which is seeking to develop a form of evaluation more closely linked to needs assessments, drawing on evaluative tools from the business world. IDEA also draw attention to the possibility of developing the UNDP's capacity diagnostics methodology. These are at an early stage so far, and will be built on during 2008.[86]

2.4.4 Conclusion
There are undoubted similarities in the problems facing assistance to parties and parliaments. But, in many respects, party assistance still lags behind. It has particular dynamics which make it perhaps the most difficult area of democracy strengthening for donors to engage with. However, as has been stressed throughout, political parties can determine whether a democracy succeeds or fails. The challenge for the international community is best expressed by Michael Johnston,

> the emergence of sound party politics cannot be programmed or mandated, but supportive incentives can be set up and unnecessary roadblocks can be removed …, we must harness self-interest rather than seek to suppress it, … Close attention must be paid, also, to the conceptions of justice, fairness, national and group identity, leadership, good politics, and indeed democracy … within the societies one seeks to advise. Such influences cannot simply be rewired, but policies can and should be designed to fit with their more democratic elements. Then, perhaps one of the most important—if also one of the toughest—moves is to step back and allow citizens to build parties and political processes that they can use to advance the sorts of interests and values that they themselves believe to be of paramount importance.[87]

3: Conclusion – Principles for engaging with parliaments and political parties

The quality of parliaments and political parties is integral to the development of an emerging political culture. The task for donors has been described as changing the way people engage with the political system from highly personalistic forms of interaction to collective representation revolving around broad-based policies.[88] This cannot be achieved without meaningful change in the way that both parliaments and political parties behave, and are perceived, in emerging democracies.

As the paper has shown, donors have faced similar problems in their work with parliaments and parties. Neither form of assistance has been particularly effective – both have been hampered by a lack of clarity over objectives, an over-reliance on technical forms of support, a tendency to use inappropriate techniques and a failure to match support programmes to the local political context.

However, in recognition of the limited impact of programmes so far, donors are now seeking to engage at a deeper, and more overtly political, level on both fronts. There is still an understandable wariness about the political sensitivities involved in this kind of work. Making parliaments and parties more effective will have an effect on the pattern of political influence, and this is unlikely to be universally popular with some governments. How donors manage their diplomatic relationships while taking a much more active role in the political sphere will determine how effective these new forms of assistance are.

There are positive signs in this regard. The moves to develop common forms of monitoring and evaluation, and in particular the greater levels of co-operation amongst donors working on parliamentary support, highlight the seriousness with which they are addressing such concerns. The paper has also highlighted the emergence of a common analysis of the problem and the underpinning principles that should guide future work. Authors have characterised these in different ways, but for the purposes of this paper it is probably most helpful to set out these principles within the framework of the Paris Principles.

Paris Principles on Aid Effectiveness

- *Ownership*

Donors need to ensure that the content of parliamentary and party assistance is driven by the demands and needs of the recipients. Projects should involve key stakeholders in the design, delivery and management from an early stage. In short, the recipients should have as much interest in the project's success as the donors. Too frequently in the past this vital element has been missing.

Models already exist that could be emulated. In the field of party assistance the NIMD's projects are largely demand-driven with local parties bidding for funds and responsible for managing projects. Similar techniques could be used in parliamentary assistance, promoting the development of cross-party committees to develop and manage programmes for reform.

At the same time donors need an intimate understanding of the political context in which they are seeking to achieve change. Opportunities for meaningful political reform exist only where there is already a degree of political will for change. Donors need to be better at identifying these opportunities and being realistic about what is achievable in a given political context. As well as working in partnership with local political actors, donors need to place greater emphasis on detailed needs assessments of the problems they seek to address and the context in which they will work.

- *Alignment*

Donors need to ensure that support for parliaments and parties contributes to their broader development objectives. Both are potentially valuable allies in enhancing the prospects for development, and chapter 1.4 highlighted the role for parliaments in poverty reduction strategies, financial oversight and anti-corruption measures. Political parties can play an equally valuable role in each of these areas.

Another aspect to alignment within the Paris Principles is the need to ensure that support strategies for parliaments and political parties are firstly aligned with each other, and secondly with the broader strategies for governance. In numerous publications it is recognised that parties are integral to the functioning of parliament, and that the effectiveness of a parliament is intimately linked to the quality of the party system.[89] Almost every analysis suggests that the two endeavours should be integrated. Combining party development with parliamentary development would address some of the weaknesses inherent in both, especially when it comes to shaping political incentives, building an institutional memory in parliament or building a political culture amongst MPs. Yet they remain almost entirely separate disciplines in terms of analysis, evaluation and practice.

While there has been a noticeable shift in the rhetoric contained in governance strategies that sees parliaments and political parties as integral, in practice there is little evidence that this has, so far, had a tangible effect. As a recent report commissioned by Irish Aid[90] argues, the links between democracy assistance and the wider governance agenda are often complex and pull in different directions. Assistance to political parties and parliaments does not necessarily fit neatly with support for the justice sector, rule of law or other public institutions. As a result the programmes tend to be regarded as discrete exercises under the governance strategy rather than as overlapping and interrelated programmes. Yet if effectiveness of such support is to improve donors need to address the inherent tensions that exist in delivery.

- *Harmonisation*

The importance of donors harmonising their support to parliaments and parties operates at three levels. The first is at the strategic level where recent developments, especially amongst those involved in parliamentary assistance, suggest donors are recognising this. The simple exchange of information in the first place is invaluable and the DFID/UNDP/WBI-initiative is a positive development which, it is hoped, will continue to flourish.

Second, the development of indicators, benchmarks and frameworks for monitoring and evaluation can only be done by donors collaborating and co-ordinating their experience. It is an essential area of activity for the improvement of parliamentary and party assistance programmes, and the work being pursued by the various organisations on parliamentary indicators, and by IDEA on party assistance, provides a basis from which to work.

Third, there is much more that donors could do to ensure that their on-the-ground activities complement one another. Collaboration between donors on joint projects to support a parliament or parties in a particular country is also likely to reduce the impression of partisanship or political interference.

- *Managing for Results*

One of the most significant movements in donor thinking about support to parliaments and parties is the common agreement that programmes should be judged by outcomes rather than outputs. This implies, firstly, engagement at a much deeper level than the traditional technical assistance, and that projects should seek to address causes rather than symptoms. As mentioned at several points in the paper, the effectiveness of parliaments is determined by the behaviour of politicians, therefore projects need to seek to shape the incentive structures that influence them. These incentives might exist in the MP's relationship with the

executive or the electorate, in the committee structure of the parliament or their party's prospects at the next election. However, it is important that projects do not regard parliaments or parties as monolithic institutions, and instead seek to identify the various drivers of individual activity.

Secondly, getting meaningful results also relies on better monitoring and evaluation, so that lessons are learned and improvements made. This is a promising area of activity, with donors recognising the value of more thorough evaluation not only for their efforts, but also for parliaments and parties themselves. However, using qualitative measures is time-consuming and expensive, and it will require donors to put much greater resources into this aspect of their work.

Thirdly, political behaviour cannot be changed quickly. Parliaments and parties operate in a much wider political culture, on which they have only limited impact. If donors are serious about meaningful reform of the political system, this will take time. Donors will need to make longer-term commitments to projects, and reduce the number of short-term interventions.

- *Mutual Accountability*

If elections provide the main form of accountability by government to the people, then it is the task of parliaments and parties to ensure that the executive is held accountable to the public between elections. Projects which seek to enhance their links with the public, their ability to represent those interests in parliament and their role in developing policies on that basis (and especially in relation to poverty reduction strategies) are central to the quality of accountability.

Accountability should though be horizontal as well as vertical and it may be that the variety intra-regional networks provide the basis on which to build greater interaction and peer review around development objectives. As mentioned in chapter 1.2 there are a range of parliamentary networks in existence, and amongst political parties the NIMD is seeking to develop multi-party forums in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia. The value of this sort of peer-to-peer engagement exists at three levels. Firstly, it offers a way of further developing and applying international benchmarks and indicators according to local context. Secondly, initiatives such as the APRM provide a route for greater regional ownership and responsibility in the evaluation of democratic practice. Thirdly, interaction between regional actors on this basis is likely to provide a greater momentum behind the movement towards democratisation itself.

In conclusion, it is important to note that none of these principles will guarantee a dramatic improvement in the quality of parliaments or parties. Neither will increased donor assistance solve all the problems of governance. The characteristics of parliaments and parties in developing nations are in many respects very similar to those faced in established democracies. For example, low levels of voter trust in parties, limited ability of parliamentarians to hold government to account and the prevalence of patronage and client networks can be found in many established political systems. But the impact of these problems is far greater in emerging democracies, and the fact that there is a marked difference in the quality of governance in established democracies is not solely to do with the amount of powers a parliament has or the internal organisation of the political parties. It is the wider political culture within which they sit that also prevents misuse of executive power. Donor assistance to parliaments and parties needs to be based on a realistic assessment of what is achievable, and form part of a wider strategy which engages not just parliaments and parties, but all elements of political and civil society towards the common goal of improving the quality of democracy and development.

Appendix: The NIMD and the multi-party support model

Since its creation in 2001 the NIMD has had a marked impact on the way donors think about support to political parties as it has shifted the emphasis away from bi-party support to a multi-party model. The interest from donors is partly due to the emphasis on the strategic and demand-driven nature of the NIMD's work, but also because it offers an alternative way of engaging with political parties for donors who cannot channel this sort of work through party foundations or *stiftungen*.

Structure of the NIMD[91]
The NIMD was established by the seven political parties represented in Dutch parliament. The institute is governed by a board which contains a representative from each of the parties, and is chaired by an impartial president who is usually an elder statesman. There are three features to the way the NIMD is structured and run that are worth highlighting.

Firstly, the institute is run by a combination of its own staff who are responsible for the management of the programmes and the staff of the participating political parties who are charged with the management of the overall policy priorities of the programmes. The political party staff are also responsible for identifying and utilising the expertise that exists within their own political parties for specific projects.

Secondly, it has not sought to set up offices in partner countries, preferring instead to encourage local capacity in running projects. This has resulted in an institution with limited overheads, which in turn means that more funds can be used directly on programmes rather than staffing.

Thirdly, the institution is funded on the basis of a four year strategic programme. This enables it to engage in multi-year projects and a longer-term commitment to party development that is more likely to yield tangible results. The funding comes from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to whom the institute is accountable via a twice-yearly 'narrative report', its annual accounts, and an annual work programme.

Characteristics of the NIMD approach
The strategic approach to party support is carried over in to the content of the NIMD's work with political parties, which can be characterised by three principles.

Firstly, the NIMD seek to ensure full ownership of projects by the parties in the partner country. Parties in those countries are encouraged to identify their own needs and draw up strategic plans to address them. The parties are also responsible for the management and delivery of the projects, and are required to account for the development of the project through "timely delivery of narrative and financial reports and achievement of the objectives in the strategic plan."[92]

Secondly, the NIMD seeks to promote and facilitate cross-party dialogue with the aim of reducing polarisation, increasing political stability and institutionalising political parties within a democratic political system. The emphasis on dialogue has the explicit objective of embedding the principles of a democratic political culture, so that the process through which assistance is delivered is as important as the focus on results.

Thirdly, it encourages collective participation by political parties in developing projects. The involvement of many political parties not only encourages dialogue and discussion across party lines but also fosters a common understanding of the problems that need to be addressed and strategies for their resolution. In this way it creates a sense of collective

endeavour in improving the quality of the party system as a whole, rather than individual parties.

A model for emulation?
The NIMD's approach may provide a model for other donor governments seeking a greater role in this area of democracy assistance. Most recently the Canadian Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development published a comprehensive report on that country's role in supporting democratic development.[93] One of its key recommendations was that Canada should establish a centre for multi-party and parliamentary democracy through which to pursue work with political parties.[94]

The rationale behind the recommendation is instructive for other donor countries contemplating such an approach. It notes that although Canada has never been involved in aiding political parties, this should change and that the promotion of political parties should be an important part of their democracy assistance efforts.

Recognising the inherent difficulties in this area of assistance the report argues that, firstly, work with political parties should be conducted at arm's-length from government, in order to address some of the political sensitivities. Secondly, it notes that in other countries the initiative for a body supporting political party development has tended to come from legislators and political parties themselves. As such it proposes the that parliament establish an institute to be run by a board which includes representatives of all the political parties in parliament.

The report suggests that the centre should start with 'modest' funding and would be evaluated after its first two years of operation. After that time, if regarded as worthy of continued support it could move to the sort of multi-year funding that characterises the NIMD's projects.

Given concerns amongst donor governments about the inherently political nature of working with political parties the multi-party model is attractive. By operating at a distance from government it removes some of the direct political sensitivities, and is focused on improving the quality of the party system as a whole by encouraging dialogue amongst parties in recipient countries. As mentioned in the main body of the paper there will always be a role for discrete forms of bi-party support, but the multi-party approach provides a way for countries with few routes for sister-party activity to tie support for political parties into their wider democracy assistance programmes.

Footnotes

[1] See for example USAID, (2001), *USAID's Experience Strengthening Legislatures*, Washington: USAID; Hudson, A., & Wren, C., (2007), *Parliamentary Strengthening in Developing Countries: Final report for DFID*, London: ODI; IPU/UNDP, (2003), *Ten Years of Strengthening Parliaments in Africa 1991 – 2000: Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward, Report of a Joint IPU/UNDP Survey*, Geneva: IPU

[2] Murphy, J., & Alhada, A., (2007), *Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening II: Mid-Term Evaluation Report*, UNDP, p. 141

[3] Murphy & Alhada, *ibid,* p. 119; Carothers, T., (2004), *Political Party Aid*, Paper prepared for the Swedish International Development Agency. P.7

[4] Doherty, I., (2001), 'Democracy out of balance: Civil society can't replace political parties', *Policy Review,* No. 106*, pp. 25-35

[5] See Mansuri, G, & Rao, V., (2004), 'Community-based and –driven development: A critical review' *World Bank Research Observer*, Vol 19, No 1

[6] For examples see Gaventa, J., (2006), *Triumph, Defeat or Contestation? Deepening the 'deepening democracy' debate*, Brighton: Institute for Development Studies; Smith, G., (2005), *Beyond the Ballot, 57 Democratic Innovations from Around the World: A report for the Power Inquiry*, London: Power Inquiry

[7] See for example, Graham Smith's description, *ibid*, pp. 63-6

[8] Hubli, S., & Schmidt, M., (2005), *Approaches to Parliamentary Strengthening: A Review of SIDA's Support to Parliaments*, Stockholm: Department for Democracy and Social Development, p.20

[9] For a more thorough analysis see Hudson, A., & Wren C. (2007), *op cit.,*

[10] Hubli, S., & Schmidt, M., (2005), *op cit,* pp. 27-8

[11] See Murphy, J., & Alhada, A., (2007), *op cit*

[12] See for example, USAID, (2001), *op cit*, p. 6; IPU/UNDP, (2003), *op cit*

[13] For example, USAID, CIDA and IDEA provide figures for their overall democracy work, but not specifically for parliamentary strengthening.

[14] PREM (Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network), NOTE 74, World Bank, October 2002, www1.**worldbank**.org/prem/PREMNotes/premnote74.pdf

[15] http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmintdev/64/64we09.htm

[16] IPU/UNDP, (2003), *op cit.*, p. 30

[17] Carothers, T., (1999), *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, Washington: Carnegie Institute for International Peace, p. 181. However, as the second half of the paper makes clear, he also regards party strengthening as a particularly poor area for international assistance.

[18] Hubli, S., & Schmidt, M., (2005), *op cit.*, p. 47

[19] Kumar, K., & de Zeeuw, J., (2007), *Supporting Political Party Development in War-Torn Societies*, Paper presented at the 57th PSA Annual Conference University of Bath 11-13 September 2007, p.13; Hudson, A., & wren C., *op cit,* pp. 44-46; SIDA, (2002), *The Political Institutions*, Stockholm: SIDA, *passim*

[20] Saif, A. A., (2005*) Strengthening Parliaments in Conflict/Post-conflict Situations Case Study on Yemen*, http://www.parlcpr.undp.org, p. 18

[21] See Pajibo, E., (2005) *Strengthening Parliament in Post Conflict Situations: Liberia Case Study,* http://www.parlcpr.undp.org/

[22] See for example the methodological problems faced in the analysis of the UNDP's GPPS; Murphy, J., & Alhada, A., (2007), *op cit*. pp. 149-153

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[26] DFID/UNDP/WBI, Donor Consultation on Parliamentary Development and Financial Accountability Report, May 21-22 2007, Brussels http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls/docs/Final%20Report%20-%20DFID-UNDP-WBI%20Donor%20Consultation.pdf, p. 19

[27] Schulz, K., (2004), 'Measuring the Impact of Donor Funded Legislative Strengthening Programs on Legislative Oversight Performance', in Stapenhurst, R., et al, *Trends in Parliamentary Oversight*, World Bank Institute: Washington; Schulz, K., (2007),*USAID's Legislative Strengthening Performance Measurements*, Presentation to the DFID/UNDP/WBI donor consultation on legislative strengthening, 21 May

[28] See also Murphy, J., & Alhada, A., (2007), *op cit.*, p. 152

[29] Hudson, A., (2007), *Parliamentary Strengthening in Developing Countries: Final report for DFID*, London: ODI; Hubli, S., & Schmidt, M., (2005), *op cit.*; Murphy, J., & Alhada, A., (2007), *op cit.*

[30] DFID/UNDP/WBI, (2007), *op cit.*

[31] Dutta, N, *et al.*, (2006), *Strengthening Legislatures for Conflict Management in Fragile States*, Princeton University Woodrow Wilson School, p. 1

[32] See for example, UNDP, (2003), *Parliamentary Development: Practice Note;* UNDP, (2006), *Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery: Guidelines for the International Community*, New York: UNDP; NDI, (2000), *Guidebook for Implementing Legislative Programmes.* DFID has also recently produced its own set of guidelines for staff on parliamentary strengthening.

[33] Private conversations with practitioners at UNDP, WFD, NDI, DFID and FCO.

[34] Hubli & Schmidt, (2005), *op cit.*, p.23

[35] See, for example, Santiso, C. 'Budget Institutions and Fiscal Responsibility: Parliaments and the Political Economy of the Budget Process in Latin America', World Bank Institute: Washington, DC, 2005 Brosamle, *et al.*, (2007), *Improving Fiscal Scrutiny Through Legislative Strengthening: Report to DFID*, unpublished

[36] DFID/UNDP/WBI, (2007), *op cit.,* pp. 34-5

[37] Murphy and Alhadel, (2007), *op cit.,* p. 113

[38] van Wersch, J., & de Zeeuw, J., (2005), *Mapping European Democracy Assistance: Tracing the Activities and Financial Flows of Political Foundations*, Clingendael Conflict Research Unit Working Paper 36, The Hague: Clingendael, p. 35

[39] Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (NIMD), (2004), *A Framework for Democratic Party-Building*, The Hague: NIMD, p. 9

[40] Matlosa, K., (2005), *Political Parties and Democratisation in the Southern African Development Community Region: The Weakest Link*, Johannesburg: EISA, p. 47

[41] Doherty, I., (2001), *op cit.,* p. 29

[42] IDEA (author Suri, K. C.), (2007), *Political Parties in South Asia: The Challenge of Change*, Stockholm: IDEA, p.125

[43] Doherty, I., (2001), *op cit.*

[44] See in particular Carothers, T., (2006), *op cit.*

[45] *Examining Political Parties and Aid for Parties in New Democracies*, Debate hosted by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 30 November 2006, video and audio recording at: http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/index.cfm?fa=eventDetail&id=939&&prog=zgp&proj=zdrl

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[47] Carothers, T., (2006), *op cit.*

[48] All figures from Carothers, *op cit.,* (2006), pp.84-6

[49] USAID, (1999), *USAID Political Party Development Assistance¸* Washington: USAID

[50] It is not clear that the delineation between party support and parliamentary support is clearly made in this area. Much of what is described as party support appears to belong more under the heading parliamentary strengthening, with the parties as tangential to those efforts.

[51] De Wersch & de Zeeuw, *op cit.,* p. 30-1

[52] See Carothers (2004), *op cit.,* p.7; Kumar, K., (2004), *op cit.*, p. 17

[53] Amundsen, I., (2007), *Donor Support to Political Parties: Status and Principles*, Bergen: Christian Michelson Institute, p.13

[54] Carothers, T., (2004), *op cit.,* p. 7

[55] SIDA, (2002), *op cit.*

[56] Amundsen, *op cit*, p. 26

[57] It is important to make a distinction between the WFD's parliamentary support activity which is increasingly highly-regarded, and their party support activity which is run by the various political parties.

[58] NIMD, (2004), *op cit,,* p.7

[59] De Wersch and de Zeeuw, *op cit.,* pp. 31-2

[60] Amundsen, *op cit.*, p. 18

[61] Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, (2007), *Advancing Canada's Role in International Support for Democratic Development*, House of Commons Canada, p.135

[62] See Carothers, T., (2006), *op cit.* pp. ??

[63] Carothers, T., (2006), *ibid.,* p.97

[64] Carothers, T., (2004), *op cit.,* p. 10

[65] IDEA (authors Stojarova, V., et al), (2007), *Political Parties in Central and Eastern Europe: In search of consolidation*, Stockholm: IDEA, p. 69

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[68] Kumar & de Zeeuw, *op cit.,* p. 13

[69] Kumar, K., (2004),. *op cit.,* pp. 21-2; Carothers, (2004), *op cit.*, p.10

[70] Caton, M., (2007), *op cit.,* p. 18

[71] Kumar & de Zeeuw, *op cit.,* p. 13

[72] Kumar & de Zeeuw, *ibid.,* p. 16

[73] See Ohman, M., *et al.*, (2005), *op cit.*, p.9

[74] Ohman, M., *et al.*, (2005), *op cit.,* p. 8

[75] See Erdman, G., (2005), *Hesitant Bedfellows: The German Stiftungen and Party Aid in Africa*, CSGR Working Paper no 184/50, Warwick University

[76] quoted in Caton, M., (2007), *op cit.,* p. 16

[77] Burnell, P., (2004), *op cit.*, p. 16

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[79] Hoove, L., (2007), *Political party assistance in post-conflict societies: What to do in Afghanistan and Burundi? Report of an Expert Meeting July 2007*, The Hague: NIMD p.4

[80] Kumar and de Zeeuw, (2007), *op cit.,* p. 16

[81] Salih & Nordlund, (2007) *op cit.*, p. 130

[82] SIDA, (2002), *op cit.*, p. 38

[83] Burnell, P., (2007), *Evaluating Democracy Support: Methods and Experiences*, Stockholm: IDEA, pp. 219-20

[84] See Burnell, P., (2004), *op cit.,* p. 23; Amundsen, I., (2007), *op cit.,* p. 28

[85] NIMD, (2004), *op cit.,* pp. 20-3

[86] Caton, M., (2007), *op cit.,* p. 32

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[91] For more information see, NIMD, (2004), *op cit.*; NIMD, (2005), *op cit.*

[92] NIMD, (2005) *op cit.* p. 8

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[94] *Ibid.,* pp.128-139

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