

KENYA

PROGRAM PROFILE



History of Partnership

The House Democracy Assistance Commission approved a legislative strengthening program with the National Assembly of Kenya in 2006. Since then, it has worked with the Assembly to improve their budgeting and oversight capacity, library and research services, and committee operations.

The Commission has encouraged development on these fronts through visits to Kenya from delegations of current and former Members of Congress, Congressional staff visits to Kenya, and independent training seminars in the U.S., both for Kenyan members of parliament and parliamentary staff. The Commission has also organized independent programs for Kenyan MPs visiting the United States Congress.

Accomplishments

- Advised Kenya National Assembly leadership on the creation of a budget committee and a Fiscal Analysis Office to support the committee's work.
- Trained staff of the Fiscal Analysis Office and organized a seminar in Nairobi to enable Kenyan and U.S. budget staff to share their experience with their counterparts in other legislatures.
- Consulted with Kenyan parliamentary leadership and senior staff on reforms to standing orders in 2007 that gave parliament greater control of its agenda.
- Ongoing consultations on proposed reforms that are needed by 2013 for the transition to a bicameral legislature, as provided in the new constitution.
- Training seminars for committee clerks on how to organize public hearings following rule changes that opened committee meetings to the public.

Background

The Kenya National Assembly is currently a unicameral body with 210 elected seats and 12 seats appointed by the president. All members serve five-year terms. In August 2010, 69 percent of Kenyans supported a constitutional referendum to limit the powers of the presidency, empower local authorities, establish a Kenyan bill of rights, and create a second chamber of the legislature.

Congressional Delegations

Representative David Dreier led a delegation of six Members of Congress and the House Parliamentarian to Kenya for a two-day program in July 2012. The visit began with a visit to parliament for a meeting with Deputy Speaker and Chairman of the Liaison Committee, Farah Maalim, and Liaison Committee Members where the institutional priorities of the Kenya National Assembly were discussed. The vice-chair of the Parliamentary Service Commission then led a meeting with the delegation to discuss the changes to be implemented under Kenya's new constitution ahead of elections expected in March 2013. For its third meeting in the parliament, the delegation split into three groups: one met with Members of the Procedures and House Rules Committee; one met with the Public Accounts, Budget, and Finance Committees; and a staff delegation met with the Task Force on the Review of the Standing Orders for the National Assembly/Senate

and Projects Implementation Committee. The delegation also met with the Kenya Women's Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), where the number and priorities of women Members of Parliament was discussed, as well as the new constitutional requirement that no more than 2/3 of the National Assembly be of the same gender, potentially creating opportunities for more women to enter politics.

Representative David Price led a delegation of seven Members of Congress, the Clerk of the House, and the House Parliamentarian, to Kenya for a weeklong program in July 2010. The delegation met with the Speaker of the National Assembly, various party leaders and committee chairs, and members of the Women's Caucus and the Reform Caucus. Roundtable meetings were held with the committees on budget, public accounts, and finance. Simultaneous staff-level meetings were held to discuss institutional development, including budget analysis, legislative oversight, and the principles of bicameralism.

During the July 2010 congressional delegation, staff from the Congressional Budget Office and House Committee on Appropriations met with staff of the Kenyan budget committee and fiscal analysis office to discuss budget analysis for the legislature. Staff of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, House leadership offices, and the House officers met with committee staff to discuss the role of committees in organizing hearings and conducting oversight. The Clerk, Parliamentarian, and staff of the House Rules Committee also discussed how to track bills through the legislative process and prioritize legislation for floor consideration.

A congressional delegation of six Members of Congress, led by Representative David Price, traveled to Nairobi, Kenya, in July 2008. The delegation met with the Speaker of the National Assembly, and met with MPs from both major political parties. Members held an extended discussion with the parliament's Liaison Committee, made up of the chairs of committees, while U.S. Congressional staff met with their Kenyan counterparts to discuss budgetary analysis, legislative research, and parliamentary oversight of the executive branch.

Representative David Dreier led a delegation of seven Members of Congress to Kenya in July 2006 to meet with the Kenyan National Assembly. In particular, the delegation offered guidance on the importance of parliamentary independence from the executive branch and the need for strong oversight capacity. A working session with the Public Accounts and Public Investment Committees to discuss the budget process was held. The National Assembly passed legislation authorizing the creation of a Budget Committee and independent Fiscal Analysis Office during the delegation's visit.

In addition to the congressional delegations, a group of former Members of Congress traveled to Kenya in November 2009 on the Commission's behalf to lead a week-long program with the Kenyan National Assembly. The delegation, led by former Representative Martin Frost, highlighted the role the National Assembly could play in resolving the precarious political situation in Kenya. In addition, the former U.S. Members met with MPs, civil society leaders, media representatives, youth groups, and business leaders.

Staff Delegations

A delegation of two Congressional Budget Office staff traveled to Kenya in July 2012 to meet with the Kenya National Assembly's staff from its fiscal analysis office. The CBO analysts conducted training on budget analysis for their Kenyan counterparts.

A congressional staff delegation traveled to Kenya in June 2008 to work with their Kenyan counterparts in specific areas of legislative and administrative operations. Staff from the House Committee on Rules addressed procedural issues, staff from the House Budget Committee discussed the importance and nature of budget analysis, and staff from the Congressional Research Service met with staff of the Kenyan parliamentary research service. About 150 Kenyan staff in total attended the daylong seminars.

In February 2007, staff from the House Office of Legislative Counsel and the former Parliamentarian of the House traveled to Kenya for a week-long staff training seminar on legislative drafting and rules of procedure for Kenyan staff. Later in the year, three staff from the Congressional Budget Office participated in a November training institute in Kenya on budget analysis and parliamentary research.

MP Seminars

The Commission organized a seminar in Washington for members of parliament from four countries, including Kenya, in October 2009. The week-long program began with an overview of the Congress and its committee structure presented by the Congressional Research Service. Committee staff and former Members of Congress spoke to participants about various aspects of committee operations, including the role of staff and the organization of public hearings. Roughly a dozen Members of Congress spoke to participants in each seminar, offering their personal experience in using committees to advance their own legislative and oversight priorities. The Kenyan participants were briefed on the organization and conduct of committee hearings and observed a hearing in the House of Representatives.

In July 2008, the Commission arranged a week-long seminar for MPs from four countries, including Kenya, to discuss the importance of an independent research service and how to structure committees. House committee staff and Members of Congress spoke to participants about various aspects of committee operations, including the role of staff in organizing public hearings, and how committees are used to advance policy and oversight priorities.

In September 2006, a delegation of 11 Kenyan MPs traveled to the U.S. for a weeklong program organized by the Commission. The program began with a visit to the Alabama district of Representative Artur Davis, where they met with his district staff and community leaders from the Birmingham area to learn more about constituent relations and federal-local government interaction. The delegation then traveled to Washington for a customized program on the workings of an independent legislative budget office.

Staff Seminars

In June 2012, the Commission welcomed a delegation of five Kenyan parliamentary staff members to Washington for a two-day program focused on America's bicameral legislature. This was prescient in light of Kenya's adoption of a new Constitution in 2010, which called for the creation of a Senate. While in Washington, the staff members attended presentations and discussions on management and workings of committees, legislative drafting, the Office of the Clerk, and Parliamentary procedure. The staff members also had the opportunity to visit Wisconsin's State Legislature and to meet with state representatives and staff.

Staff from the Kenyan parliament have also participated in all nine Legislative Staff Institutes organized by the Commission since 2007. In December 2012, two staff members from the Kenya National

Assembly participated in a staff institute focused on committee operations. The seminar, which included participants from 12 HDP partner countries, was focused on developing the capacity of legislative committee staff and expanding the use of public hearings and committee oversight. The delegates met with representatives from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Congressional Research Service (CRS), and former Members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Sessions were held on coordination between different committees, developing a committee agenda, nominations and confirmations, coordination with the executive branch, utilizing press to advance committee agendas, and legislative drafting.

In October 2012, two staff members from the Kenya National Assembly participated in a staff institute to strengthen legislative budget analysis. Twenty-three staff from twelve partner countries participated in the program, which included meetings with officials from the Congressional Budget Office, the Congressional Research Service, and staff from the House Budget, Appropriations, Agriculture, and Ways and Means Committees. Participants also met with representatives from the Government Accountability Office, the World Bank Institute and the International Budget Partnership.

In January 2012, two staff members participated in a training seminar on legislative research and analysis. They were joined by colleagues from 12 other HDP partner countries. The parliamentary staff institute included presentations and discussions with Members of Congress and top officials from the Congressional Research Service (CRS). Current and former CRS staff provided the participants an overview of basic legislative research and analysis techniques including identifying sources of information, basic policy analysis, developing alternatives for the legislature, and conducting impact analysis.

In December 2010, Kenyan staff took part in a staff institute focused on committee operations, where they held meetings with the Congressional Research Service, staff from several House committees, and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Commission. In addition, committee staff from the Republic of Macedonia shared their experience in developing procedures to begin using oversight hearings as an element of the work of their parliamentary committees.

In October 2010, staff from the Kenyan National Assembly participated in a staff institute that focused on strengthening legislative budget analysis capacity. Twenty-one staff from 11 partner countries participated in the program, which included meetings with or presentations by officials from the Congressional Budget Office, the Congressional Research Service, and staff from the House Committees on Budget, Appropriations, and the Joint Committee on Taxation. Additionally, budget analysts from the Kenyan National Assembly shared their experience in establishing and developing a parliamentary budget office.

In June 2010, two staff members of the Kenya National Assembly traveled to Warsaw, Poland, to attend the 20th anniversary of the Frost-Solomon Commission, which was the predecessor to the House Democracy Assistance Commission. They were joined by 22 staff members from 11 partnership countries, along with MPs and research staff from former partners of the Frost-Solomon Commission. While they were in Warsaw, current and former staff of the Congressional Research Service worked with the Kenyan staff to help them further develop their parliamentary research service through workshops, peer-to-peer discussions, and open forums. Speakers underlined the importance of reliable, impartial, timely, and accurate research to the work of democratic legislatures. They also shared tips on how to engage legislators and help them see the value of research, which was a concern shared by a number of participants.

The fifth staff institute was held in December 2009 and was organized in conjunction with the Congressional Research Service (CRS). The Institute hosted 27 participants from 12 partner countries, who were mostly officials and analysts of their respective parliament's research services. The program focused on the role of a research service in providing independent information and analysis to members of parliament and their staff.

In November 2009, Kenyan parliamentary staff participated in a staff institute centered on the third annual World E-Parliament Conference, which specifically addressed the manner in which information and communications technology can help improve legislative representation, transparency, accountability, openness, and effectiveness.

The Commission worked with the Kenya National Assembly in November 2009 to host a weeklong staff seminar in Nairobi for parliamentary staff from partnership countries. The seminar presented the opportunity for the Kenyans to discuss with their counterparts the importance of an independent budget review and oversight process. The program included hands-on workshops and presentations on budgetary modeling, macroeconomic forecasting, and the role of civil society organizations in complementing the legislative oversight function of a parliament.

Kenyan parliamentary staff joined 28 parliamentary staffers from 10 partnership countries in Washington in December 2008 for a staff institute focused on strengthening committee operations. Participants gained an understanding of committee operations in the U.S. Congress and explored topics such as staff roles and responsibilities, legislative analysis, drafting and research, legislative-executive relations, and media relations.

A staff institute in October 2008 that centered on congressional oversight and budgeting again included staff from the Kenya National Assembly. Participants were given an overview of the budget process in the U.S. and the structure, organization, and services provided by the Congressional Budget Office. The program dealt with transparency, revenue estimation, and key budgetary policy issues such as health, defense, agriculture, infrastructure, and education.

Kenyan parliamentary staff were present for the inaugural staff institute in December 2007. The institute offered a two-track program, one for senior parliamentary administrators and the other on research and analysis services for the legislature. The program included a three-day overview of the U.S. Congress, a one-day visit to the Maryland Legislature to learn about state and local government, and a five-day series of meetings and workshops with current and retired Congressional research and administrative staff.

Self-Initiated Parliamentary Delegations

In 2010 alone, Members of the Kenyan National Assembly participated in four programs organized by the Commission during self-initiated delegations to Washington.

Following the Congressional delegation to Nairobi in July 2010, the Commission helped establish a relationship between the Clerk of the Kenyan National Assembly and the Clerk and Parliamentarian of the U.S. House of Representatives. In October 2010, the Commission facilitated meetings in Washington for the Kenyan Clerk and four Kenyan parliamentary staff members with the Chief Administrative Officer of the House, the Secretary and Parliamentarian of the U.S. Senate, the Congressional Research Service, and staff of the House Committee on Rules, the Office of Legislative Counsel, and the Library of

Congress. The purpose of the visit was to learn about bicameral operations and identify partners who can support the Kenyan National Assembly's institutional challenges in adjusting to bicameral model, following the 2010 constitutional reform referendum.

In May 2010, the Broadcasting Committee of the Kenyan National Assembly visited Washington. The Commission organized a briefing by staff of the Congressional Research Service and the Library of Congress on the House's Legislative Information System, which was created to provide Members of Congress and their staffs with access to timely and thorough legislative information. The delegation also met with the Director of the House Recording Studio who provided an overview of the services and products that the studio offers Members of the House of Representatives.

In February 2010, a delegation of Kenyan Members of Parliament visited Washington for a series of meetings organized by the Commission. Staff from the Congressional Research Service briefed the visiting delegation about the Congress and specifically its caucus system. The delegation then met with Representative Donald Payne, of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Congressional Black Caucus. Congressman Payne discussed both the Committee's work with respect to Kenya, and how the CBC operates to advance its agenda in the U.S. political system. The delegation also met with Senator Russ Feingold, Representative David Price, Representative David Dreier, and Representative Lois Capps.

In January 2010, a delegation of Kenyan National Assembly members came to Washington, D.C. for a series of roundtable discussions with staff from the State Department, House Foreign Affairs Committee, and the Congressional Black Caucus.