

PERU

PROGRAM PROFILE



History of Partnership

The House Democracy Assistance Commission approved a legislative strengthening partnership with the Congress of Peru in June 2009. The partnership prioritizes improving constituent relations, legislative oversight, legislative research and analysis services, and increasing the utilization of information technology to improve inter-governmental and constituent communications.

Accomplishments

- HDP raised the visibility of the Modernization Committee's work within the Peruvian congress, including a nationally televised inauguration of the partnership in 2009, increasing awareness of internal efforts to make the legislature more effective.
- The HDP visit to Arequipa highlighted a nascent effort to develop constituency offices for Peruvian MPs.

Background

Peru is a presidential democratic republic with an active multiparty system. The legislature is a 120-seat Congress whose members are elected for a five-year term. Both the Congress and the President can introduce legislation, but the approval of both is required for bills to become law. The Congress is also responsible for ratifying treaties, approving the budget, and authorizing government loans.

Congressional Delegations

A five-member Congressional delegation visited Peru in November 2011, which has been one of the commission's most active partners since the HDP program began in 2009. National elections in July 2011 led to high turnover in the Peruvian Congress, and the visit allowed HDP members to reintroduce the program to their Peruvian counterparts and renew discussions about the key challenges they face. In a meeting with Speaker Daniel Abugattas and members of his leadership team, the delegation emphasized the importance of making the legislature more accessible and accountable to the public and discussed ways in which the U.S. and Peruvian legislatures could work together to address this and other challenges.

The delegation then held seminars on three key areas of legislative strengthening with Peruvian MPs: one on ethics with the Ethics Committee, one on oversight and committee operations with committee chairs, and one on constituent relations and media outreach with members of various political parties. The delegation also attended a lunch hosted by Speaker Abugattas and the Women's Peruvian Parliamentary Caucus, where Chairman Dreier signed a new Memorandum of Agreement reaffirming HDP's partnership with Peru, and a reception for Peruvian MPs and civil society leaders hosted by the U.S. Ambassador. Concurrently, HDP staff met with senior staff from the Peruvian Congress to discuss common challenges faced at the staff level and areas of future cooperation.

A Congressional delegation of seven Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, led by Representative David Price, visited Peru on behalf of the Commission in August 2009. The delegation began its visit in the southern city of Arequipa, where it toured the constituency office of a local member of Congress to stress the importance of a strong constituent relations program. The centerpiece of the delegation's visit was a two-day program with the Peruvian Congress in Lima, which included a nationally televised inauguration of the partnership between the U.S. House of Representatives and the Peruvian Congress. The U.S. delegation also organized peer-to-peer working groups on constituent services and committee oversight, held a meeting with the Congressional Modernization Commission, and participated in discussions with the President of Congress and the Congressional Women's Caucus.

The U.S. Members also met with Peruvian President Alan Garcia, Prime Minister Javier Velasquez, and Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism Martin Perez to discuss issues of bilateral concern. Concurrently, staff from the Commission, the Library of Congress and Congressional Research Service, conducted a week-long training program for their Peruvian counterparts focused on legislative research services and the utilization of information technology in the legislative process.

Staff Delegations

In April 2010, staff from CRS and the House Committee on Veterans Affairs joined Commission staff on a trip to Peru to consult with officials and staff of the Peruvian legislative research service and committees of the Peruvian Congress. The delegation also met with the Peruvian Congress Modernization Group to discuss ongoing parliamentary reform efforts.

MP Seminars

In June 2012, HDP invited four female MPs to participate in its inaugural Women's Seminar. The week-long program brought together women MPs from four partner countries (Peru, Indonesia, Kosovo, and Macedonia) to discuss economic and political issues relevant to women. The seminar began with presentations from think tanks and NGOs on topics including advocacy, economic empowerment, and using research to further policy. Later in the week, the MPs met with female Members of Congress, including the Co-Chairs of the Congressional Women's Caucus and a member of the House Leadership Team, to exchange ideas about particular challenges faced by elected female representatives and strategies for furthering women's advancement into leadership positions.

In October 2011, six Members of the Peruvian Congress joined a three-country program in Washington focused on committee operations, particularly the importance of public hearings and legislative oversight of the executive. The Peruvian MPs met with over a dozen Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Congressional Research Service, the Congressional Budget Office, and support staff to discuss the operation of committees in the U.S. system and how it may be applied to circumstances in Peru.

Peruvian legislators visited Washington in October 2009 to attend a week-long legislative strengthening seminar. The program began with an overview of the U.S. Congress and its committee structure 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. Approximately a dozen Members of Congress spoke to participants to

offer their personal experiences of using committees to advance legislative and oversight priorities. The Peruvian Members of Parliament were briefed on the organization and conduct of committee hearings and observed a hearing in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Staff Seminars

In December 2012, two staff members from the Peruvian Congress 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 Peruvian Congress 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, Peruvian staff took part in a staff institute focused on committee operations, where they held meetings with CRS, 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 Peruvian Congress 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 CBO, CRS, and staff from the House Committees on Budget and Appropriations, and the Joint Committee on Taxation. Additionally, budget analysts from the Kenya National Assembly shared their experience in establishing and developing a parliamentary budget office.

The December 2009 staff institute was organized in conjunction with CRS. The Institute hosted 27 participants from 12 partner countries, including Peru, 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, Peruvian 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.