

Parliamentary Staff Institute

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David Price, Chairman • David Dreier, Ranking Republican Member

Strengthening Budget Analysis Capacity in the Legislature

Developing the capacity of legislative staff is a central component of the House Democracy Partnership's work with its partner legislatures. From October 18-22, 2010, the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) organized a weeklong Parliamentary Staff Institute on budget analysis for staff from 11 HDP partner countries: Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Kosovo, Liberia, Macedonia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Peru, and Timor-Leste. This program was organized in cooperation with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Parliamentary Staff Institute included roundtable discussions with officials from the Congressional Budget Office, Congressional Research Service, and key committees of the U.S. House of Representatives with jurisdiction over fiscal policy, including the Committees on Budget and Appropriations and the Joint Committee on Taxation. The program also featured a



Congressional Budget Office officials discuss budget forecasting methods with staff from 11 HDP partner legislatures.



Participants from Indonesia and Pakistan during a round of questions and answers.

presentation by budget analysts from the National Assembly of Kenya, which recently established an independent budget office with support from HDP.

The intensive, five-day program provided participants with a general framework of the budget process in the United States and the role of the congressional committees and support agencies that take part in it. It also strengthened participants' understanding of the specific tools and procedures used to analyze and modify budget submissions, such as economic forecasts and budget oversight hearings.

The presence of budget experts from a diverse range of countries also allowed participants to share experiences and best practices for confronting the common challenges faced by legislatures in developing democracies. The program closed with a brainstorming session in which participants were asked to develop specific action plans for implementing their ideas.

This was the sixth Parliamentary Staff Institute organized by HDP since the commission was established in 2005, and it will be followed by a seventh Staff Institute focused on committee operations in December 2010. In addition to its Parliamentary Staff Institutes, HDP's programs for legislative staff have included combined Member/Staff training seminars in Washington, Regional Staff Institutes in Kenya and Macedonia, and delegations of current and/or retired U.S. congressional staff to advise HDP partners in targeted areas of development.