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“Support to the Legislative Assembly in Liberia”

**Baseline Study on the Access to Information and Resources of the Liberian
Parliamentarians in the Legislative Process**

A. Introduction

Access to information is a key component for good governance. Previous rubber stamp legislatures needed little information other than the time and place to vote. The present emerging Legislature of Liberia needs a lot more information in order to participate effectively and efficiently in the legislative process.

Talking about the US Congress, Frantzich¹ stated that legislators need several basic types of information: Firstly, Congress as a whole and individual congressmen need information to coordinate and plan their work schedule and that of their staff. Secondly, as a decision making body Congress needs to track legislative activity and record aggregate and individual voting behavior. Individual legislators need to track constituent demands, improve their efficiency in dealing with them, and develop means for following up constituent interests in both the legislative and non legislative realms. Legislators in their legislative role need improved information for monitoring problems, developing solutions, predicting consequences, and facilitating influence strategies. Finally, legislators need to monitor the success of ongoing programs and to identify areas of weakness.

There is a direct link between the performance of a legislature and its access to reliable, independent information and its research capacities. The Legislature of post-war Liberia needs to perform its vital democratic functions of representation, oversight and lawmaking in order to cope with the challenges ahead. Thus, the

¹ Frantzich, Stephen E., „Computerized Information Technology in the U.S. House of Representatives, Legislative Studies Quarterly, vol. IV, n. 2., 1979, pp. 255-280

Legislature needs access to information and resources, especially in the legislative process.

Background

Since 2005 the EU project “Support to the Legislative Assembly of Liberia” (implemented by KAF) has significantly contributed to the development of the Legislature’s capacity. The main achievements of the project activities so far served their purpose: they made the members aware of their basic rights and duties as representatives and provided them with necessary material. But the project committed itself to further support. The transfer of knowledge should be continued and deepened according to the needs of the Liberian Legislature.

The purpose of this study is to review existing information resources and research capacities of the Liberian Legislature and to suggest possible solutions to help make legislators more informed and better prepared to perform their tasks.

B. Methodology

The following activities have been carried out for the baseline study:

- site visits inside the Parliament: physical facilities, assessment of general infrastructure, assessment of library, archives, office rooms, press office etc.
- site visits outside the Parliament: Universities, Liberian Bar Association, Law Library, Temple of Justice, Ministries
- Discussion with legislators, local experts, lawyers, University lecturers, members of the Governance Commission, international donors, national and international NGOs and other members of civil society

C. Key Findings

II. Inhouse Research Capacities and Information Resources:

The inhouse research capacities of the legislators are extremely poor. This goes for the infrastructure and the equipment of the Parliament building (the “Capitol”) itself, the offices of the MPs and their staff, the administration of the two houses as well as for the organisation of research division or similar services to the MPs.

The Parliament is lacking almost everything. The building was destroyed and looted during the war. As it has been stated in previous mission reports, there is neither enough office space for the MPs, staff and committees nor electricity, furniture or any technical equipment or supplies.

1. Office rooms/information material:

The office rooms of the MPs, their staff and the administration of the two houses have no internet access or computers. Nor are they equipped with books or any other research material. In the section of the House of Representatives you find on the upper floor a room with 11 computers, all with internet access, one printer, light and

air condition. It has to be noted though that the room is relatively small. The Senate does not have an equivalent computer/internet centre.

The legislators have no overview over the existing Liberian laws. Example: The Parliament will have to debate and decide on a proposed law, repealing a provision of the existing labor law. But the MPs do neither have the provision to be repealed nor the whole text of the labour law at hand. Liberian laws are partly available in the Law Libraries in town but they are not at hand for the legislators in their offices. The archive of the Capitol also has a collection of Liberian laws but they are not catalogued or indexed. There is no archival system. It is almost impossible to quickly find a certain law in the archive. Additionally, there is no photocopier neither in the archive nor in the Law Libraries so that copies cannot be made.

The Liberian Laws are codified in the book "Liberia Code of Laws" which contains all laws up to 1958. The "Liberian Code of Laws Revised" replaced the "Liberia Code of Laws" and contains all amendatory changes up to the date of the enactment of the statute (1973 vol. 1). Prof. Banks from Cornell University/US produced Vol. 6 1979 of the "Liberian Code of Laws Revised" and Vol. 1 to 27 of the Liberian Law Reports (collection of Supreme Court Rulings). Both are not available in public libraries or in the library or archives of the Parliament. The expert has been told by local experts that these publications can be bought on the black market or in the United States. Some lawyers have them in their offices.

Law offices and lawyers in Liberia have copies of certain laws. As some lawyers teach at the Law School in Liberia, they provide the law school with free copies of the laws they have. So for the legislators the Law School could be a source of information when existing laws are needed for the legislative process.

The expert has been told by the legislators that the Foreign Office is in charge with the printing and publication of new laws. The problem is that the legislators do not get a free copy of the new law from the Foreign Office. In case the legislators want a copy, they have to pay a fee for duplication.

2. Library of the Parliament:

The library of the Parliament is of no use and provides no source of information for the legislators. 18 persons belong to the staff of the library (!). You find some versions of the "American Law Reports" up to 1972 in bad shape, old editions of "US Codes" and books about China (donated by the Chinese government). Neither the lawmakers nor their staff is using the library at present. About 18 persons belong to the library staff.

3. Legislative Archive:

The archive of the Parliament is located on the ground floor of the building. It has also been looted during the war. Before that, the documents kept in the archives were systemized by a cardsystem which does not exist anymore. It has to be noted though, that the archive stores numerous documents such as, for example:

- Liberian laws (handbills, not complete)
- International laws
- reports and documents of the Ministries
- committee reports
- reports from the counties
- Journals of the Parliament
- Resolutions of the Parliament, protocols and minutes of plenary sessions

Most of these documents stem from previous legislatures, even before the war. So they could serve as a valuable source of information for the legislators, especially with regard to the legislative history of the country. At present, they are of no use for the legislators because the material in the archive is not indexed or catalogued. It is just kept in piles and boxes without any system. Documents of the present legislature are all put in one box as well as documents submitted from the executive. Moreover, the room of the library has neither light nor air condition. Due to its location, the archive is sticky and has hardly any air supply. Thus, it is impossible to use the archive as a source of information at present. About 17 persons belong to the archive staff.

4. Administration of the two Houses (Chief Clerk and Secretary of the Senate):

Parliamentary documents and records are also a source of information for the MPs. Parliamentary documents, such as, e.g., official committee reports, reports required to be made to the Parliament, the Journal, bills, resolutions and non-current records of the two houses and other documents shall be kept and maintained by the administration and distributed to the members of Parliament. Later on all documents should be forwarded to the legislative archive and be available to MPs and staff at all times. Although bills are distributed to the members of the houses, the administration system is lacking supplies, equipment and effective procedures for producing, keeping, maintaining and forwarding the parliamentary documents. For example, according to the Deputy of the Chief Clerk of the HoR committees do not always submit reports. Documents forwarded to the archive are not easily accessible due to the deficiencies of the archival system (see also 3.).

5. Press and Information Office:

The Press and Information Office of the Parliament serves more as a source of information for the media and the public. It is mainly responsible for the dissemination of legislative information to the media. Members of the press office record sessions of the parliament or hearings, maintain contacts with journalists and the media and provides them with information.

The Press Office used to publish the "Legislative Review" for the public but also for the legislators. The "Legislative Review" was a weekly publication, containing, for example, committee reports, major legislative issues of the week and anything what was of news in the Capitol. Due to a lack of resources (printing, computers etc.) this publication does not exist at present.

If the Press Office would be better equipped, trained and supported, it could also serve as a source of information for the legislators. Legislative publications, such as

the “Legislative Review” and press clippings could be produced, distributed to all members of the two houses and kept in the archives and library.

6. Research Staff

The MPs are entitled to staff of up to 15 people, 6 of which are attached to the office. Officially, each of the lawmakers has one person of its staff responsible for research. In fact though, not much research has been done yet on proposed laws. In most cases, the personnel is not trained to deliver services to the legislators effectively and efficiently. During interviews and discussions the expert had with the lawmakers and the staff it has been pointed out that the staff, including the research person, is underpaid. So apart from the missing infrastructure, equipment and resources, the staff of the legislators is not qualified to assist them in obtaining information. There is also no central research division in the Parliament.

III. Outside research capacities and Information Resources

The expert did an assessment of possible outside research capacities and external sources of information such as Universities, the Liberian Bar Association, ministries, civil society organisations or experts.

1. Law Library of the University of Liberia, Monrovia

The Law Library of the University of Liberia in Monrovia has a selection of books and documents that may serve as a source of information for the legislators. Among others, you find:

Liberian material:

- Liberian Law Reports (case law, Supreme Court Rulings) Vol. 28 – 39 (one copy each)
- Liberian Acts 1938-1965
- Liberian Code of Laws Revised
- Liberian Law Journal 1967-1987
- Reports of various ministries from previous governments, mainly from the 1960's, poor
- A small collection of African books on various issues

US-American material:

- American Books on various fields of law (e.g. commercial, criminal, civil law, laws on civil and criminal procedure, business law, constitutional law).
- Federal Reporter (case law) 3rd series Vol. 118 (1997)
- West General Digest (State and Federal Courts up to 1997)
- US Supreme Court Reports 2nd ed. Vol. 42
- Nichols Cyclopedia of Legal Forms
- Harvard Law Review

2. General Library of the University of Liberia and of the Temple of Justice, Monrovia:

The general library of the University is also on the campus but poorly equipped. You find an old selection of African books and a few old and faded US American books and documents, mainly on humanities, education and social sciences

The library provides 4 computers two of which have irregular internet access. To use Internet a ticket has to be bought.

The court building in Monrovia called "Temple of Justice" has no relevant source of information apart from rulings of the Supreme Court. The lawyers involved in a court trial provide judges and prosecutors with copies of relevant material.

3. Law Library of the Liberian Bar Association

The Law Library is located in the building of the Liberian Bar Association in downtown Monrovia. It has a relatively good selection of legal books and materials, such as e.g.:

- Liberian Law Reports (Vol. 28-39)
- Liberian Code of Laws
- American Law Reports (not up to date)
- Books on US American Law

4. Ministries:

The executive, namely the ministries and the President, seems to be the main source of information for the parliamentarians in the legislative process at present. As most of the proposals for new legislation come from the executive branch, the ministries provide the legislators with relevant information, whereas the quality of information differs.

Likewise, the annual reports by the ministries could serve as a source of information for the legislators. According to Art. 58 of the Constitution the President shall report once a year to the Legislature on the state of the Republic. For the legislators these reports can be a valuable tool for their legislative work. Reports from previous governments – as far as they have not been destroyed or stolen during the war - are kept in the archive of the Parliament.

The equipment of the ministry libraries is not very good. You mainly find materials the ministers brought from visits to other countries and conferences, books donated by organizations or individuals or out-of-date material. Apart from that, the legislators are not actually using the libraries of the ministries. They mainly rely on the information given to them by the executive branch.

5. Civil Society:

Civil society plays an important role in the legislative process. National and international organizations, interest groups, experts, institutes, universities, individuals, affected parties etc. do not only help the legislators to examine whether a new law is suitable to address the policy or problem to be solved and to understand

the positions of the parties affected by the new law. Civil society can also provide the legislators with the technical expertise and knowledge necessary to take action.

From discussions the expert had with parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organizations, it can be concluded, that the participation of civil society in the legislative process has mainly taken place through public hearings in the legislative process. During the expert's stay in Monrovia two public hearings, one on the national budget and one on the new forestry law, took place.

The input of civil society in the public hearing on the draft national budget was low. The Speaker of the House of Representatives said to the media that despite invitation of interested groups and the production of 50 copies of the draft law to political parties and other civic groups only Liberty Party and the University of Liberia Student Union (ULSU) sent comments.

Reportedly, more participants were at the public hearing on the proposed new regulations on the forestry sector including Timber Workers Union, Bassa Advocacy Group, National Bar Association, environmental and conservation groups etc. to testify and comment on the new law. According to newspaper reports, many stakeholders attended the public hearing and Senators and Representatives of the joint house committee and senate committee said that information was provided to the public and input for the formulation of the new forestry law was obtained. But in discussions the expert had after the hearing legislators mentioned that more input and information by the public was expected.

It cannot be said whether the committees provided adequate notice of meetings and whether public hearings were well organised at all. From what the expert has been told the background of the new legislation has not been explained well enough to the public. A legislator stated that sending invitations for public hearings is difficult because a mail system does not exist. Invitations have to be typed and then hand delivered which requires time and money. Although the legislators said to the media that the public input regarding the New Forestry Law helped them for the formulation of the law, it has to be waited to what extent the public actually had an impact on the proposed law.

Apart from public hearings, participation of civil society in the legislative process in terms of providing reliable information and analysis in the decision making process is growing but have to be intensified and developed with regard to the fact that legislators have only inadequate information resources. Forums that do exist for use by citizens and NGO's are usually related to indirect action (see, for example, the University Public Policy Forum that has just been launched at the University of Liberia or a public awareness campaign called "Publish what you pay" launched by a coalition of 300 NGO's). Networking and exchange between civil society organisations and the Legislature on an ongoing and regular basis is being established just one by one. Representatives of some NGO's start to develop working relationships with specific members of the Legislature relevant to their issue of concern.

As the community in Liberia is small, most of the legislators do know the actors in civil society. They know the relevant interest groups, organisations and experts. From discussions the expert had with legislators and representatives of civil society it can be concluded that the practical difficulties in establishing a functioning cooperation between civil society and the Legislature derive from both sides:

There still is a great amount of distrust among civil society against the government branches. During war and dictatorship the Legislature of Liberia has not been able to perform effectively its duties such as representing the people, controlling the executive branch or making laws of good quality. The citizens have not only lost their trust in the Legislature but also in the Civil Service in general. The civil society is still in the process of understanding the importance of taking part in the legislative process and of interacting with the Legislature.

The Legislature has to continue in developing the awareness of the simple need to obtain information by constant consultation with civil society and to interact with the public. Legislators need to see what is “in it for them” in using information obtained through consultation with civil society.

D. Summary of findings:

Although, progress has been made in the past, the access to information of the legislators is still insufficient. The lack of information resources and research capacities hinders the legislators to carry out their functions properly. Therefore, the Legislature’s ability to use its powers in an effective way is limited.

1.

Firstly, it is a problem of the operating environment. There is a lack of basic facilities such as electricity, furniture, supplies, office rooms, computers and internet access. The only internet facilities are in the House section of the building.

There are neither sufficient inhouse nor outside information resources and research capacities:

2.

As the Legislature of Liberia is the branch of government that introduces and amends bills, a useful source of information for the legislators and staff is the record of the bill-status to track legislative activity. Bill-status records give information about the stage a bill has reached within the legislative process and about amendments been proposed by whom. The tracking of bills in the Liberian Legislature is difficult due to delay in production of bill records. Bill - status records have to be manually produced, copied and delivered to the members of the house for verification and notice. The responsible staff is lacking necessary equipment. The manual process of transcription of parliamentary debates on bills is also tedious and long.

3.

The most common source of parliamentary information usually is represented by parliamentary libraries. A legislative library service should be responsible for the selection, acquisition and compilation of reference materials relevant to legislation. It organizes and maintains various library collections and service facilities to strengthen information and reference services in the Parliament. The present library in the Capitol is of no use for the legislators. There is hardly any material that could serve

as useful information for them. Discussions the expert had with the staff of the library and with legislators showed that many legislators are not familiar with using library services for research and information. At present there is no encouragement for them to do so due to the library's poor condition.

The same can be said about the legislative archives. It has to be pointed out though that the archive stores useful documents and materials. The problem is that all these documents and materials are kept in piles and boxes and are not organized and indexed for effective use. Currently, the legislators are reluctant in using the archive as a source of information.

4.

A functioning research service for the legislators does not exist. There is no internal or external parliamentary institute that could provide the MPs with effective research services or information due to a lack of equipment, information resources and trained staff.

5.

The role of civil society within the Legislature is, while growing, still in its infancy. Historically, in the past 25 years there has been very little room for action or cooperation between civil society and the Legislature. The Legislature was working behind closed doors and reduced to a rubber stamp branch of government. There are no permanent mechanisms of cooperation between civil society and the Legislature. With the conduct of public hearings a step in the right direction has been made. But civil society must be supported to contribute more effectively to public hearings, whereas the Legislature needs more training in conducting public hearings.

Apart from public hearings some legislators seek occasionally legal advice of lawyers. But an ongoing and regular consultation with civil society in all stages of the decision making process would constitute a more valuable source of information for the lawmakers.

6.

By the time this study was finished, most of the information came from the executive branch. This kind of information is of value for the parliamentarians but should not be the only source. For Liberia as a democratising state it is even more important that the Legislature does not exclusively rely on government-generated information. The legislators need independent and reliable information to be able to effectively overseeing the executive, to understand government choices, decisions and policies, to assess whether they are valuable or not and, if not, to criticize them and to propose policy alternatives.

E. Possible Activities to Improve the Access to Information and Resources:

1. General infrastructure assistance

The Legislature urgently needs basic equipment such as furniture, photocopiers, paper, stationary, computers, typewriters etc. With regard to the legislative procedure, especially the committees urgently need information resources and research capacities given the fact that the government will propose a number of reform laws in the near future. These laws are supposed to receive detailed scrutiny in the committees. This should be considered as short-term priority.

It has to be taken into account that USAID is willing to finance the renovation of the whole Parliament building. The renovation should have started Sept/Oct this year. As far as the expert have been told, USAID is just doing the structure of the building. It does not finance equipment, computers and supplies. The problem is that the legislators have not yet concurred on a plan for the renovation which might procrastinate the things.

2. Legislative Records

Activities may also include the improvement of procedures regarding legislative records. The procedure itself is regulated in the Standing Rules of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Together with the legislators and the key staff procedures could be reviewed in order to detect deficits. If deficits have been detected, the regulated procedures may be redrafted. Funds could be provided for equipment that help fasten the production and distribution of legislative records. Training of responsible staff is necessary to optimise the production of legislative procedures according to the Standing Rules.

3. Internet facilities/ Legislative Resource Center

The world wide web is undoubtedly a valuable source of information for the legislators. The so called "Resource Center" in the lower house section of the Capitol has a room with computers and internet access. Internet facilities need to be enhanced though so that more legislators and their staff get the possibility to use them. Computers with internet access could be part of a centralized Legislative Resource Center in the Parliament used by both houses. Training should be given to the staff of the Legislative Resource Center to enable it to run and maintain the Center, to assist the legislators and their personnel as well as the public with the retrieval of useful online information and to identify valuable online resources (see attachment).

If adequate space is available in the Capitol, the library and the archive could be integrated into a Legislative Resource Center instead of separating them. This combination of services and resources would provide centralized access to the Internet, library services and archival services, all published documents originated and produced by the two houses and to public disclosure documents.

The development of a legislative web site is recommended. This website does not only serve as a source of information for the public but also for the legislators. Websites of other legislatures may serve as a model. A website may include, among others, the following information:

- background information on the Legislature

- legislative activities
- information about committees and schedules
- current status of bills and petitions
- House calendars
- contact details of members (“write to your representative”)

Technical assistance in system design and computer equipment might be required as well as training in the use and maintenance of the system. Web sites must be updated to remain useful, which means that legislators must be able and willing to support a legislative website with necessary information.

4. Library

The MPs as the direct representatives of the people need objective, factual and timely information with a view to ensuring executive accountability to the Legislature. It should be considered as imperative that a Parliament have its own parliamentary library. The library in the Capitol starts from “zero”. A functioning library must be developed for the Liberian legislature. A specialised team should develop a plan setting out the steps to be taken (short-term, mid-term and long-term). It has to be taken into account though that the library has to meet the specific information needs of the legislators. If holdings of a library are not designed for the information needs of the lawmakers, they will not be used by them. Outside and local experts in library management may first study the information needs and then assist the Legislature in developing and carrying out the plan. Assistance may also be given in terms of funding a basic collection of useful books and other materials. A basic equipment of the library may include the Liberian laws, newspaper clippings (produced by the press office), statistic information about the country and its counties etc. The development of a library must be in close cooperation with the legislators to make sure that they use the services at all.

The establishment of a library has to be accompanied by training of library staff. Training must also be provided to legislators and research staff to make sure that the library will become a efficient source of information for them.

5. Liberian Laws

Each legislator needs a complete collection of existing Liberian laws (indexed and organized) on hand. Therefore, legislators should be provided with consolidated laws of Liberia, either physically or – even better – electronically on CD ROM. Short-term priority should be given to this activity. All the necessary laws are available in Monrovia, either in the Parliament (handbills), in the libraries of the University or the Bar Association or in the law offices of some lawyers. Besides that, the Liberian Code of Laws Revised can be purchased on the black market or in the United States (contact Cornell University).

6. Archive

The archive of the Parliament needs to be restored. The rooms have to be renovated and equipped with furniture, electricity and air condition. With the assistance of local and international specialists an archival system should be developed (the administration of the two houses should also be involved). A specialised team should

carefully review all documents stored in the archive. Especially historical documents are in bad condition. It may be considered to microfiche those and to provide the archive with a microfiche system. Documents should be ordered according to the newly created archival system. Activities must also include sufficient training for the archive staff. Legislators and their staff should also be trained in using the archive properly.

7. Legislative Research Service

It is recommended to set up an Legislative Research Service (LRS) that provide a wide range of research services to assist committees and individual legislators in obtaining information. Research services are usually rendered upon request by an individual legislator or by a committee, although work during the interim, such as the conduct of a study on a particular issue or providing assistance to an interim committee, may also be requested through the adoption of resolutions during the preceding legislative session. Ideally, the LRS prepares opinions, analyses, briefing papers and other forms of technical research assistance in response to queries or requests from the legislators, their staff or committees.

In close cooperation with the legislators it has to be determined whether an internal or outside research service is to be developed. There are pros and cons to either alternative. Assistance in establishing an internal research service means more politically involvement of the donor, though, which always is a sensitive issue.

- Training of research staff: In any case, trained research staff is needed. Candidates for training may be recruited from the outside or from among the existing parliament staff. In workshops they should receive intensive training on research methods whereas training must consider the specific Liberian situation.
- List of experts: The legislators, especially the committees, need technical expertise in their areas of jurisdiction. Experts in the respective issue of concern could provide the legislators with expert knowledge, opinions and other information on proposed legislation on request. Possible experts that are qualified and willing to assist the Legislature in obtaining non-partisan information on proposed laws have to be found and be linked with the legislators to figure out the conditions of cooperation. Cooperation could be on a contractual or pro bono basis. Assistance could be given to the Legislators in developing a directory of experts on hand. Another option is to make the experts work for an outside research center that provides research assistance to legislators.
- University: The universities in Liberia should be included in research services for the Legislature. By the time the expert carried out this study the importance of universities has repeatedly been stressed, not only by the President. The country needs qualified people for further development. It also seems that students are becoming more and more active in politics. Students may produce research studies on proposed laws and internships programs with the Legislature could be established. Qualified students may work for the Legislature after graduation.

8. Civil Society

Obtaining information through cooperation and consultation with the civil society needs to be improved further developed, e.g., by the following measures:

- Training in conducting public hearings for the legislators
- Training for citizen organizations in participating in public hearings
- Training for civil society organizations and special interest groups in legislative advocacy(input and feedback on proposed legislation). Those organizations can serve as a valuable source of information for the Legislature.
- Supporting the direct exchange between civil society and the legislators by organising by organizing a public forum. EC/KAF could fund the organization of such a forum
- Link the legislators with civil society: Civil society organizations may host an exhibition for legislators to become acquainted with their work and expertise. Organizations working on a variety of reforms and public policies can place their lobbying and advocacy agendas directly before those empowered to enact the nation's laws. Now, when MPs want to learn more about the implications of a specific policy, they will know where to turn for more information.

F. Strategy

- **Ownership**

It is of utmost importance that a plan to improve the access to information and research capacities is owned and politically supported by the Liberian Legislature. The legislators have to be involved in designing activities for improving access to information and research capacities. As already discussed with the lawmakers, an overall legislative reform agenda should be developed by the Legislature at an early stage. From discussions with high-ranking legislators it can be concluded though that the Legislature is currently reluctant in adopting a development plan. Legislators are of the opinion that they have already made their needs very clear to the international community on many occasions in the past. For example, a concept paper to establish a Legislative Resource Center at the Capitol Building has been submitted to international donors. At present, not all of the legislators see the need to first adopt a legislative development plan. An African NGO is said to fund the development of a Legislative Development Plan and to provide assistance.

Despite this, it is recommended to continue the dialogue with the Legislature on the Legislative Development Plan. For the time being, one could also focus on the very urgent needs regarding the infrastructure and research facilities (such as library, archive, press office etc.) of the Capitol. This would not only be a positive signal for the Legislature but would also lead to the continuation of the existing good cooperation and to the implementation of further program activities.

- **Special Commission in the Legislature**

The expert has been told that the “Legislative Reform Coordination Committee” (?) was only an ad-hoc committee not operating on a permanent basis. The Legislature has not yet implemented a permanent commission for legislative reforms. In the roundtable discussion the participating legislators agreed to set up a permanent body responsible for the coordination of reform activities. Assistance could be given to the Legislature in implementing one body that is responsible for the modernization of the Parliament. The goal is to have one contact partner in the Legislature for activities.

The Governance Reform Commission (or Governance Commission, GC) deals with all three branches but currently focuses more on the executive branch. For the time being, the GC undertakes a lot of public hearings in preparation of a National Visioning exercise.

- **Donor Coordination**

Several international donors are dealing with the Legislature. For example: USAID will renovate the Parliament building. UNDP carried out a needs assessment for the Legislature and an African association provides assistance regarding the Legislative Development Plan. Apart from that it is not clear yet which donor is planning what. In order to avoid duplication donor coordination is required.

