



KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION (KAF)

“Support of the Legislative Assembly in Liberia”

9th European Development Fund (EDF)

OFFICE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN LIBERIA

Module:

**Strengthening the Parliamentary Practise –
Regulations and working procedures of the Legislature**

Justification 1st Foreign Expert Mission

Mrs. U. Hoffmann-Riem

01 – 10 November 2006

The work plan for the 2nd year contains 6 major tasks, of which the international expert, Mrs. Hoffmann-Riem, is supposed to tackle during her 1st mission (01-10 November 2006) two, i.e. task 2 and 6, within the scope of altogether three missions. She is a constitutional lawyer and a former Director of Parliamentary Administration, City State of Hamburg.

(The activities of the 1st mission are in boldface.)

Task 2: Regulations and working procedures of the Legislature

In close cooperation between foreign parliamentary work experts and the Liberian stakeholders a complete review and updating of the working statutes and internal regulations of both chambers of the Liberian Legislature has to be initiated. Within the framework of the project for this purpose the following activities have to be scheduled:

- **Baseline study (assessment) of the existing rules and regulations;**
- **A round table with foreign experts and parliamentarians and leading Liberian MPs and representatives of the parliament's administration has to be organized in order to discuss the results of these studies;**
- New updated and efficient regulations have to be drafted by working groups at the Senate and the House in close cooperation with international parliamentary experts;
- After presentation of these drafts in a workshop with Liberian stakeholders and international experts final drafts have to be worked out and presented to the two chambers of the Legislature for discussion and adoption;
- Simulations and training courses should qualify the Legislators and key staff of the two chambers to be able to implement these new regulations in their daily parliamentary work.

Purpose of the activities: The Senate and the House have approved internal regulations/statutes on working procedures, which support an efficient and effective work of the two chambers of the Legislature and fair rules of involvement of the different political groups/parliamentary parties in the work of the Legislature. Legislators and key staff of parliamentary administration are able to implement the new regulations.

Task 6: Support to the work of the Parliamentary Reform Coordination Committee

The newly established committee with members from both chambers of the Legislature in charge of the reform agenda of the parliament and the cooperation with the donor community shall be supported in its work. For this purpose

- A study on the role and function, mission, structure, working procedures and support needs;
- A training course on how to draft legislative agenda and how to moderate reform discussions and meetings between local stakeholders and representatives of the donor community will be organised for the members and the administrative support staff of the committee.

Mrs. Hoffmann-Riem will be supported by two local consultants in the names of Cllr. Frederick Cherue and Mr. Morris Dukuly.

Status Report **On the** **Parliamentary Reform Coordination Committee ¹**

Introduction

During the 4th Quarter of 2005, following Liberia's National elections and prior to the official seating of the 52nd Legislative Assembly, the UN Community advised incoming legislators that it would be to their advantage if a Committee of Legislators was organized to (a) Coordinate assistance for the Legislature in its entirety and (b) Serve as a single point of contact through which international partners could coordinate assistance. As such, an interim committee was formed with then Senator-elect Blamo Nelson as its Chair.

Committee Composition and Function

This interim Committee transitioned into an "Ad Hoc" Committee once the Legislature was sworn-in January 2006. Its members were pulled from both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Legislators included serve on key Statutory Committees in their respective branches of the Legislature (Ways, Means and Finance/Rules and Order/Foreign Affairs). They are members of leadership.

¹ The designated name of this Committee in the Legislature is the "Legislative Modernization Committee". The consultant needs to be mindful of the fact that Liberia's Legislative Assembly is indeed a Legislature. Liberia's Constitution makes no reference to a Parliament. A key difference is that Legislators do not serve in the President's Cabinet (The Vice President is President of the Senate and presides when the Senate is in session. However, he only votes to break a tie.)

<i>Members</i>	<i>Party Affiliation</i>	<i>County Represented</i>
Sen. Blamo Nelson	APD	Grand Kru
Sen. John Ballot	Unity	Maryland
Sen. Clarice Jah	Liberty	Margibi
Rep. Bhofal Chambers	Unity	Maryland
Rep. Alomiza Ennos	CDC	Montserrado
Rep. Mohammed Ware	LAP (COTOL)	Grand Cape Mount

Since the official induction of the 52nd Legislative Assembly in January 2006, the Committee has worked closely with the World Bank (World Bank Institute), UNDP, UNMIL (Political, Policy & Planning Section) and other international partners. These donor organizations have also organized themselves into a “Legislative Donor Coordination Committee” -- L-DCG, to more effectively liaise with the Legislative Modernization Committee. EC/KAF is a founding member of the L-DCG.

To date, the Modernization Committee has provided input on capacity building workshops and issues related to the renovation of the Capitol Building. International Partners regard this Committee as the group that will be responsible for spearheading an effort to also formulate a strategic multi-year plan for the entire Legislature. In fact, UNDP has already sourced funding (approximately \$120,000) for this planning exercise. In November 2006, USAID will begin a 7 month, multi-million dollar renovation of the Capitol Building.

Political Climate

Currently, the relationship among the Legislative Modernization Committee members appears to be strained. There is suspicion among the Representatives on the Committee that the internal Committee transparency is lacking. Another constraint is that typically joint Committees of the Legislature usually have (2) two chairs, one from each house. Additionally, since this group does not have offices or secretariat support, communications is a challenge. There is also no evidence that this Committee meets regularly on its own. It appears that the only time it meets is when it is contacted to do so with a partner agency, i.e. UNDP, etc.

Complicating this scenario is the fact that the activities of this Committee are not well known within the Legislature as a whole. This was evidenced during KAF/EC’s workshop on Law Drafting and Legislative Procedures in August 2006. Legislators from a cross section of Committees in the House and Senate on Rules and Order, The Executive and Information were in attendance. Also present were senior Staffers from the House and the Senate. When facilitators queried those present about the Legislative Modernization Committee, many were unaware of their activities and insisted that it was an Ad Hoc committee operating without much transparency or oversight from the body.

Although international partners regard the Committee as key to the proper channelling of development assistance and a healthy exchange at the Legislature, there still appear to be some challenges.

General Recommendations:

- International Partners should meet with all members of the Committee. Additionally, instead of depending on one member to contact others. Members should be contacted individually.
- Legislative leadership must be encouraged to formalize this Committee's standing within the Legislature. Again, International partners should encourage meetings with Legislative Leadership and the Committee so that all move forward in unison and transparency.
- The Committee should be restructured to include both Senate and House Chairpersons.