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PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING PROGRAM (PSP)

[QUARTERLY REPORT: OCTOBER 1, – DECEMBER 31, 2011]

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CHAPTER I: SUMMARY OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The U.S. Agency for International Development Parliamentary Strengthening Program for Haiti (Haiti PSP) is a second generation program of legislative strengthening that will use a participatory approach to focus on stepping up the Haitian Parliament's desire and ability to work for and with the country's citizens for improved democracy, rule of law, and delivery of basic rights and services. This program will help the Parliament to improve its own internal processes, its lawmaking abilities as well as interact better with constituencies and the public writ large. This program which started in October 2011 is a five year program broken into two phases of two and half years

The intermediate objectives for Phase I of the program are:

- **Representation** – *Assisting Haiti's legislatures to provide information to the public and receive input from citizens during the legislative process.*

Illustrative issues include: media coverage of parliament, public hearings/meetings, parliamentary public relations strategies, and continuation and enhancement of the parliament website.

- **Law Making** – *Assisting members and staff to, improve the structures and mechanisms by which legislation is analyzed, debated, and passed.*

Illustrative issues include: committee/commission deliberations, research skills and facilities, participatory legislative drafting and support for constitutional review.

- **Oversight/Accountability** – *Assisting legislatures oversee government operations, particularly in the area of budget formulation and implementation.*

Illustrative issues include: budget process and scrutiny and the role of committees in conducting legislative oversight, and question hour.

- **Management /Infrastructure** - *Assisting legislatures improve the day-to-day management and operation of the legislative processes.*

Illustrative issues include: human resource improvements, ICT systems development and management, hardware and software improvements, archiving and legislative records management, internal budget planning and management, review of Rules and Procedures.

OVERVIEW AT THE END OF THE QUARTER

General Political Context

The ongoing political stalemate between the Executive and Legislative branches of the Haitian government has set the stage for, what will be more than likely, a highly contested 2012 parliamentary session. Although President Martelly was elected with a significant majority, his new political party, "Repons Peyizan", did not win any seats in the Senate and only has three seats in the House of Deputies. The lack of majority of the President's political party in the Parliament means that the Executive's power is somewhat limited. It is also creating repeated clashes between the Executive and the Legislative branches. This has created an almost complete paralysis at the Parliamentary level which is putting at risk many important legislative measures that are intended to facilitate the reconstruction process and jumpstart the Haitian economy.

Since the inauguration of the 49th Legislature, the Parliament has only voted on the amendments of the Constitution of 1987 and the ratification of Prime Minister Garry Conille and his policy statement. After the ratification of the Prime Minister in late 2011, the members of Parliament went on vacation until the re-opening of Parliament on January 9, 2012.

During this period, three different crises have created an increasing amount of discord between the Executive and Legislative branches thereby keeping them mired in deadlock. These crises include: the arrest of Deputy Anel Belizaire, the publication of the Act to amend the 1987 constitution, and the issue of dual citizenship of members of the Executive. These conflicts have resulted in a delay by the Parliament to initiate preparatory activities for the drafting and adoption of a Legislative Agenda for the new session of Parliament.

Meanwhile, President Martelly dissolved the Provisional Electoral Council without any public announcement of plans for the organization of Senatorial elections for one third of

the Senate, whose terms are set to expire in early May, 2012, as well as the mayoral elections, whose terms have long since expired.

Currently, the Senate is in total paralysis with essentially no work being conducted at the committee level. Many laws remain on the Senate's legislative table awaiting discussion even though some Senators are actively engaged in the development of other legislative proposals including construction, residency, education, social security for farmers, etc.

The new year promises to be preoccupied with the elections of the new office leadership of the both chambers of the Parliament, the discharge of the management of the two outgoing offices, the ongoing crises between the Executive and Parliament, the publication of the amendments of the Constitution, the Legislative Agenda, the renewal of the mandate for the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti (CIRH), the adoption of the Finance Act for the fiscal year and the establishment of a new CEP and the overhaul of the electoral law.

1. Technical Accomplishments

1.1. Start up of the Program

On September 29, 2011 DAI signed a Cooperative Agreement with USAID for the Haiti Parliamentary Strengthening Program (PSP), a follow on program to PAPH – a parliamentary strengthening program that was also funded by USAID. Plans were immediately put in place for a quick start-up. DAI PSP DCOP, Laurie Knop, and Start-up Manager, Christy Martins, arrived in on Haiti on October 10, 2011 to begin the logistical start-up phase of the program. By October 15, 2011, the office space had been secured, local bank accounts set up, communications (including both internet and cell phone capability) as well as a connection to the DAI home office server established. Office furniture and supplies also were procured during this time and the office was fully functioning within the first week of being on the ground. By October 17, 2011, the Chief of Party, Geraldine Pelzer and the Assessment Team Leader were on the ground in Haiti setting the ground work to begin the Assessment Phase of the program.

Recruitment of local staff also began immediately. By the end of October, the finance, administration, and operations teams were in place as well as the majority of the technical team.

Even though the Parliament has an overall positive view of US government support and generally favored a new program to provide technical support to the Haitian Parliament, there was still some hesitation on their part as to whether or not the assessment and subsequent program was going to be truly a collaborative process.

To ensure true ownership of the program by the Parliament and an understanding of the participatory nature of the program, PSP, in conjunction with the AOTR, initiated a series of informative meetings with members of Parliament for them to better

understand the participative nature of this program and to make sure that they were completely invested in the program by involving them from the very beginning. In this context, individual meetings with the leadership of both houses of Parliament took place as well as group meetings that consisted of approximately a dozen senators and more than half of the House of Deputies. These meetings were used to present the overarching themes of the program, the assessment phase, and the importance of this process being as participatory as possible.

In order to ensure that the Parliament was not only actively involved in the Assessment phase of the program, but also to allow for better transparency and underscore the participative process throughout the program, PSP proposed the creation of two Steering Committees, one from the Upper House and one from Lower House, composed of both elected members, General Secretaries and representatives from the administration. These committees were not only dedicated to support the assessment process, but also the subsequent program and are considered the official interface between the Parliament and PSP.

1.2. Assessment

A participatory evaluation of the legislative capacity and functions of the Haitian parliament was conducted between October 26 and December 17, 2011. The process of data collection was based on the administration of two standardized questionnaires¹, individual interviews, and focus groups.

Information gathering was long and laborious for reasons partly related to the political context² as well as the reluctance by Parliament to widen the evaluation beyond the Presidents of both houses, General Secretaries, and Heads of Services.

The assessment phase began with several meetings between PSP, the Presidents and Secretaries of both houses (regular and repeated contact throughout the process) and was followed by individual interviews and focus groups in the following chronological order:

- Heads of Services of the Senate;
- All Administrative Services of the Senate;

¹Questionnaires: The indicators that were used in these two questionnaires were based on assessing the effectiveness of Parliament and a grid to measure the compliance of certain governance practices for democratic transition.

²The case of Deputy Belizaire has entrapped the Senate in a long drawn out investigative process which has led to the resignation of the Minister of Justice who was suspected in the involvement of the arrest of Deputy Belizaire whose parliamentary immunity had not been stripped.

- Members of the Steering Committee of the House of Deputies (to organize the agenda of meetings and validate tools for use with the staffs and members);
- Individual meetings with members of the Senate (twelve);
- Members of the Steering Committee of the Senate;
- The heads of Services of the House of Deputies
- The administrative services of the House of Deputies;
- Individual meetings with members of the House of Deputies
- Individual meetings with leaders of the political blocks in the House of Deputies
- A meeting chaired by the Honorable President Jacinth Sorel who was designated to collect all of the questionnaires filled out by the deputies.

Additional meetings were also conducted with relevant donors, civil society representatives, and USAID.

PSP also conducted two additional assessments: one to identify the specific ICT needs in Parliament and the second, with the support of Spectrum Media, to identify the perceptions of members of Parliament about their ability to communicate with the public and preferred tracks to enhance the transparency of parliamentary work.

The findings of the assessment align in general with the illustrative activities outlined in the original RFA from USAID as responded to in the DAI proposal, albeit with more detail regarding member and staff priorities, existing capacity, most effective approaches, entry points, and possible road blocks. For the members of both the Senate and the House of Deputies, the assessment findings most consistently revolved around the desire for greater “public visibility” and improved public/constituent perceptions of parliament and parliamentarians. The leadership and the other members surveyed collectively recognized the variety of ways this could be done, include through greater public dialogue, more professional constituency offices and services, and strategic communications directly, and through and enhanced website and the radio. The House of Deputies also recognized that this would require enhanced institutional press and communication services run by staff.

Secondly, the deputies and Senators recognized the role of and the need for strengthened parliamentary committees (commissions) and political blocs, in both their government oversight role and legislative review or drafting functions. To do this successfully, collectively the members of each house recognized both the need for related capacity building for members, and a better, equipped, organized and trained staff, including in research techniques and functions. In particular, the Senators related improvements in this area to the creation of a professional research service.

The assessment also reveals weakness in all areas of administration, but particularly there is a perception among staff in both chambers that lack of equipment including computers is a severe hindrance in their work. In addition, lack of training – and systems to provide recurrent professional training on an as needed basis – is a serious issue. The Senate in particular has requested assistance in wholesale reorganizing and realigning a core group of 250 staff who will provide key functions in the new building.

1.3. Program Design

With the assistance of Carmen Lane, as a (DAI) consultant, the PSP submitted to USAID a draft of the Program Design on January 18, 2012 which is based on the results of the participatory assessment of the Parliament.

While design focuses on Phase I, the activities and intermediate results are geared toward the achievement of longer-term results at the end of a possible Phase II (total 5 years), which include:

- Well-managed resources, both human and financial, that will enable each house to better draft and analyze legislation and to deliberate evidence-based laws and policies that reflect the population's priorities;
- Systems whereby parliamentary discussions, reports, deliberations, and draft legislation will be regularly accessible to the public and media and used by civil society to report on and monitor legislative activities;
- Ingrained attitudes and practices in both houses that lead to Members holding regular public hearings and serving the needs of constituents, beyond a narrow patronage network.

Each activity component includes intermediate results, and benchmarks the stakeholders should meet to achieve them.

1.4. Illustrative Activities during the First Quarter

Although PSP was still in the assessment phase of the Parliamentary Strengthening Program, it was important to recognize that there were activities, such as continuing to promote a greater interaction and transparency of activities with the public that could be implemented at the same time that we were conducting the assessment. Not only did these activities aim at bridging the gap between the first and second generation of this parliamentary strengthening program, but it also helped us to actively engage the members of parliament and produce some tangible results during the assessment phase.

In this respect, PSP successfully implemented two activities during the first quarter including:

I. Promotion of Expanded Media Coverage of the Parliament through the Production of a film of the Inauguration of the New Parliament Building

Summary Justification

This activity engaged a film crew to produce a short film of the inauguration ceremony of the Haitian Parliament building slated for November 21, 2011 and post it on the parliament's website for the public to access it.

Objectives:

1. To produce one short film of the inauguration of the new provisional Haitian Parliament building, financed by USAID (OTI) and upload it to the Haitian Parliament website;
2. To provide greater public access and transparency to the Parliament and their activities

Beneficiaries:

The greater Haitian public

Context:

This activity produced a short film of the inauguration ceremony of the new provisional Haitian Parliament building, including interviews with various parliamentarians to garner their reaction of the new building and what it represented to them. The raw footage was then used to produce a short film that was uploaded onto the Haitian Parliament website where anyone from the (Haitian) public can view it. This activity was aimed at both stimulating and increasing the interaction between parliamentarians and their constituents

PSP's Parliamentary Liaison Officer, also provided support to the Protocol Services of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this event to ensure that this inauguration ceremony was well coordinated.

II. Promotion of Expanded Media Coverage of the Parliament through the Production of a film of the Opening Session of the Parliament

Summary Justification:

DAI PSP had just finished with the assessment phase of the program to strengthen the Haitian Parliament and was in the process of finalizing the program design. As DAI PSP is in a transition phase, awaiting both the approval from USAID and the Haitian parliament in order to move forward with the program activities, it was important to stay engaged with the Parliament. This activity engaged a film crew to produce a film of the

opening day of the new session of parliament on January 9, 2012 which included members of parliament presenting their priorities for the year ahead and post it on the Parliament's official website. By producing a video of this session and disseminating it to a wide public audience, this activity supported the promotion of a greater transparency and expanded media coverage between the members of parliament and their constituents, which is one of PSP's main program objectives.

Objectives:

1. To produce one short film of the inauguration of the opening of the Haitian parliament and upload it to the Haitian Parliament website;
2. To provide greater public access and transparency to parliament and their activities.

Beneficiaries:

The greater Haitian public

Context:

This activity produced a short film focused on the opening session of the Parliament on January 9, 2012, including interviews with several members of parliament to gather information on the priorities of the New Year, planned projects and the challenges that they will face in 2012. This film was then uploaded onto the official Haitian Parliament website for greater accessibility to the (Haitian) public. This activity created more transparency in the work of the parliamentarians to the general public, especially to their constituents

2. Planned Activities for Next Quarter

2.1. Memorandum of Understanding

Once PSP has received official approval of the Program Design from USAID, PSP will present an outline of the program design. Recognizing that a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) involving a possible public ceremony, the project will submit a draft MOU to the new Steering Committees and proceed with initial project activities. This will be amended based upon feedback from the Parliament and USAID and a MOU signing ceremony will happen as quickly as schedules allow.

2.2. Formal Work Plan / Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Work Plan will be submitted to USAID for approval once the Program Design has been approved.

2.3 Program Implementation

The implementation of activities will begin as soon as all documents (Program Design, M&E Plan, and Work Plan) have been approved and a draft MOU has been officially approved by both Steering Committees of Parliament.

