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PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING PROGRAM (PSP)

[QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2012]

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Authors: Laurie Knop and Fabrice Dugas

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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

During this quarter, the political landscape changed considerably with the ratification of a new prime minister, Mr. Laurent Lamothe. Upon the positive vote for Mr. Lamothe in the Senate on April 10, 2012 (19 votes in favor, 3 against, and 1 abstention) and again in the Chamber of Deputies on May 3, 2012 (62 votes in favor, 2 against, and 2 abstentions) this paved the way for Mr. Lamothe to be appointed as the new Prime Minister. In his policy statement, Prime Minister Lamothe indicated that he wants to focus on the earthquake reconstruction efforts by rebuilding the Palace of Justice, the Legislative Palace, the city hall of Port au Prince, and the Superior Court of Auditors and Administrative Disputes with funds that IMF has pledged towards the reconstruction effort. The prime Minister also intends to strengthen the status of the Housing and Public Building Construction Unit by providing technical assistance in order for this unit to function properly. Prime Minister Lamothe also has promised that his government will hold both Senatorial and local elections before the end of this year.

Upon taking office, Prime Minister Lamothe increased his government with four new ministries bring the total number of ministries to twenty-two. The newly created ministries include: the Ministry of Human Rights and the Fight against Extreme Poverty, the Ministry for

the Promotion and Restoration of Farmers, the Ministry of Communication, and the Ministry of Defense. It is important to note that the latter two Ministries have existed in the past in Haiti; they were merely being reinstated.

By mid-May the 2011-2012 Finance Bill was finally passed by both houses. The Finance Commission had made the following recommendations in relation to this bill:

- That the government immediately carries forward the draft law in relation to the 2011-2012 budget of new taxes, particularly the bill on "National Funds for Education";
- The Ministry of Economy and Finance must report the financial information on budget expenses to Parliament at the end of each month;
- When implementing the budget, no change without parliamentary approval should be made to the 2011-2012 Budget, otherwise it is a violation of the law;
- The approach of the budget is scheduled with the implementation of the next budget in relation to a three year (minimum) strategic development plan;
- An independent body should be established to measure the economic impact of the budget before the establishment of another structure capable of auditing the public expenditures;
- A work plan with expected indicators and results is submitted by each Ministry and autonomous and decentralized government institutions (such as Camep) every three months to the Parliament;
- The regulation law must be tabled in Parliament within the statutory period, that is to say that the Superior Court of Auditors and Administrative Disputes provides advice to Parliament in a timely manner;
- All Petrocaribe funds are managed through the National Budget, including interest earned by these funds;
- That the financial management is streamlined so that available funds are solicited and disbursed promptly to enable officers to effectively execute their budgets;
- The audit of public accounts must be conducted within a reasonable amount of time by the Superior Court of Auditors and Administrative Disputes (CSC / CA);
- The issuance of Treasury bonds in place of BRH bonds must be done seamlessly as in other Caribbean countries;
- In the next budget (2012-2013), a fund of four million gourdes per semester must be available to each committee of the Senate to allow them to more effectively fulfill their mission.

Other important bills/amendments that were passed/ratified:

On April 12, 2012 the Senate passed the *Responsible Parent and Affiliation Act* without any changes to the text that was previously passed in the House of Deputies. Several high profile leaders of the Haitian women’s movement were present as the Senate voted on this historic bill.

On June , 2012 the text amending the 1987 Constitution became official when it was published in *Le Moniteur*. Meanwhile, this amendment continues to be debated. Many voices against the publication of this amendment are being raised in parliamentary circles, politicians, and civil society organizations. The spokesperson for President Martelly, Mr. Lucien Jura, stated that the President took into consideration the wide range of opinions and points of views from all sectors before taking the decision to publish the corrected version of the amendment in the June issue of *Le Moniteur*.

1. Technical Accomplishments

1. Budget Training Workshop with Staff From the finance & Economic Committees of both Houses of Parliament

In order to continue to support the capacity building of the staff from the Economic and Finance Committees of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies in Parliament, PSP conducted a three day training workshop from May 28 – 30, 2012 at “Club Indigo” with thirty-two committee staff. This workshop focused on critical training on budget function, the government budget cycle, and analysis of key budget figures so that these committee staff members are able to improve their budget and financial analysis skills.

A second workshop is to be scheduled for the month of July 2012 and will focus on providing budget and finance committee staff members with additional tools for them to be able to more comprehensively analyze the national budget.

2. Support to the National Assembly

The National Assembly is the joint body of both houses of Parliament (Senate and Deputies). Their mandate, per Articles 98-3 of the Haitian Constitution includes: approving the Legislative Agenda, approving or rejection international treaties, among other things. At the request of both Presidents of the houses of Parliament as well as the President and Vice-president of the National Assembly, PSP will provide both material and technical support to the National Assembly. The objectives of this activity includes:

1. Provide technical assistance to draft the rules and procedures of the National assembly;
2. Strengthen the administrative structure of the National Assembly;
3. Provide equipment (office and IT) to a newly constructed office (financed by MINUSTAH);
4. Provide technical assistance to strengthen the legal structures of Parliament

3. Press and Communications Office

As part of strengthening the accountability and transparency of the Haitian Parliament, PSP will provide both technical and logistical support to facilitate the organization and a Press and Communication office that will be structured at four levels:

1. Writing, publication, and documentation section;
2. Audio-visual production section;
3. On-line communication (website, etc.) section;
4. Public relations section

The specific objectives of this activity are:

- Provide expertise to the development of internal and external communication vis a vis parliament;
- Provide technical assistance to the media activities of Parliament to allow for a better visibility of Parliamentary proceedings at the central Parliament level and also at the constituency level;
- Provide audio-visual equipment and technical training to the IT staff of Parliament in order to establish a functioning mini-production studio;
- Assist in the organization of a Press and Communication service for both houses of Parliament;
- Strengthen the capacity of journalists accredited to Parliament as well as editors/staff of Parliament's Press Office in order to have a better coverage of Parliamentary activities and events.

4. Capacity Building of the Protocol and Public Relations Section of the Haitian Parliament

This activity provided critical capacity building training to the Protocol and Public Relations Office of the Haitian Parliament. PSP provided all day bi-weekly training sessions over the course of one month to thirty-five staff of this office. This training aimed to develop the skills of these staff members in order for them to be able to provide top quality protocol coverage at official Parliament

events and meetings, help them better understand their roles and responsibilities, and enhance their public relations and performance skills.

The topics covered during this month long training included:

- Ceremonial protocol
- Proper protocol at the institutional level
- The main rule, etiquette and customs of protocol
- The organization of official ceremonies, receptions, and public events
- Public relations protocol
- International relation protocol and correspondence
- Uniform and dress
- Logistical management of official processions

5. Legislative Agenda Retreat (Chamber of Deputies)

In order to strengthen the institutional capacity of parliament and its transparency initiatives, PSP in collaboration with IDEA (an international NGO) organized a retreat for the Chamber of Deputies at Club Indigo outside of Port au Prince near St. Marc from June 8 to June 10, 2012. The purpose of this retreat was to:

- Help the Parliamentarians more comprehensively understand the issues and challenges for the 2012 legislative year; particular in reference to the newly selected Prime Minister's policy statement;
- Work with the Deputies for them to better understand the organization of Parliamentary work;
- Explore possibilities for strengthening the various structures of Parliament;
- Design a draft Legislative Agenda for the Chamber of Deputies;
- Briefing on the rules and ethics of Parliamentary protocol

On the last day of this retreat, Prime Minister Lamothe participated in the closing ceremony which demonstrated a positive step forward in fostering a stronger relationship between the Executive and Legislative branches of the government. President Levallant of the Chamber of Deputies summed it up best when he said, "This is an important moment whose benefits will be felt very soon in the Chamber of Deputies in particular and Parliament in general."

1- Donor Coordination

Donor Coordination is one of PSP/DAI's cross-cutting activities and over the past several months DAI/PSP has actively been working to establish a more active and constructive donor coordination.

- 1) Since February, 2012, PSP/DAI has been hosting the weekly working meetings with the Donor Coordination Committee at the DAI/PSP office;
- 2) DAI/PSP has spearheaded the drafting of a table that details each donor's activities in respect to the Haitian Parliament. This will allow donors to not only avoid duplication of activities, but to better coordinate their activities and increase the level of coordination and cooperation amongst the donors.
- 3) Secretariat - DAI/PSP is acting as the secretariat for the joint Steering Committee meetings and is in charge of organizing meetings and creating the agenda to discuss project developments, upcoming activities, donor coordination, and findings of key studies, activities, or events.

2- Memorandum of Understanding:

Once PSP/DAI has received official approval of the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from USAID and recognizing that a formal MOU involving a possible public ceremony needs to take place, the PSP/DAI will submit a draft MOU to the Parliament's Steering (Support) Committees of both houses of Parliament that were expressly established for PSP. Once the draft is finalized, PSP/DAI will organize an official MOU signing ceremony between the Parliament and USAID.

3- Formal Work Plan / Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:

The work plan has been finalized and will be submitted to USAID. This work plan will be shared formally with Parliament once it has been approved by USAID. In the meantime, meetings have taken place with the two Steering (support) Committees of both houses of Parliament to review and discuss activity implementation plans for the upcoming months. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Work Plan will be submitted to USAID for approval once the Program Design has been approved.

4- Program Implementation:

Until a formal MOU is signed between USAID and the Parliament, DAI/PSP will begin some activities (May 2012) under a Memorandum of Program Initiation signed by both Houses of Parliament and DAI/PSP.

2. Planned Activities for Next Quarter

For the upcoming quarter (July – September, 2012) there are a total of activities planned.

1. Second Budget Training Workshop with Staff From the finance & Economic Committees of both Houses of Parliament

In order to continue to support the capacity building of the staff from the Economic and Finance Committees of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies in Parliament, PSP will conduct a follow-up budgetary and finance training session with committee staff mid-July 2012 which will focus on providing budget and finance committee staff members with additional tools for them to be able to more comprehensively analyze the national budget.

2. Legislative Agenda Retreat (Senate)

In order to strengthen the institutional capacity of parliament and its transparency initiatives, PSP in collaboration with IDEA (an international NGO) will organize a retreat for the Senate at Club Indigo outside of Port au Prince near St. Marc from July 1 to June 4, 2012. The purpose of this retreat was to:

- Help the Parliamentarians more comprehensively understand the issues and challenges for the 2012 legislative year; particular in reference to the newly selected Prime Minister's policy statement;
- Work with the Senators for them to better understand the organization of Parliamentary work;
- Explore possibilities for strengthening the various structures of Parliament;
- Design a draft Legislative Agenda for the Senators;
- Briefing on the rules and ethics of Parliamentary protocol

3. Support the Strategic Development Plan:

- a- Establish Strategic Planning Committee (CPS) for both houses - identification and recruitment of a national expert - workshop with CPS and Head of Services.
- b- Initial strategic planning retreat to determine the visions, goals and objectives.

4. Initiatives to Support Internal Reform of Human Resource Management:

- a- A comprehensive assessment of the administrative structure of the Senate including the - identification of human resources; develop descriptions and profiles of administrative services and functions of the Secretariat of the Senate by parliamentary experts working in international human resources coupled with local expertise.
- b- Introduction of training programs for staff of both houses to include:
 - Protocol procedures (department heads);
 - How to manage relations with the public (employees who meet the visitors including security staff and constituency);
 - Resource management (directors, heads of service);
 - Logistics, how to prepare reports, parliamentary papers (Legislative unit employees-staff);
 - Preparation and management of labor contracts (all managers involved);
 - Filing, archiving;
 - Any other training identified

5. Promote an extended media coverage of the Parliament:

- a- The first sessions of communication training for Senators and Members will be to improve their skills to communicate with voters, the media and the general public: develop messages - communication with various facets of the Press - interviews (in front of the camera) - use of Internet and new technologies, Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- b- Communication training related to work activities such as Parliamentary media coverage of public hearings, the budget process, legislative agenda, workshops for journalists on how to cover Parliament, how to understand and communicate on political development and parliamentary procedures and functions of the Senate and House of Deputies.

6. Internal Organization of Communication Functions:

- a- Technical assistance to establish a Press Office and Professional Communication Service for Parliament;
- b- Press and Communication , Press and Protocol staff Training - Press Release - Newsletters - Annual Report of Parliament - Management of Website content.

7. Strengthening the Role of Constituency Offices:

- a- Forums (in the North) on social, political and legislative issues.

8. Increase the ICT Capacity in Parliament and Introduce E-Procedures

- a- Analysis of Parliament's website in order to improve and modernize it;
- b- Setting up an ICT development plan and a training curriculum for staff;
- c- Staff training for maintenance and updates of the website.

9. Strengthen the work of the Committees

- a- General training for commission members and staff on best practices relevant to the work of committees, committee reports, and planning of legislative work;
- b- General training complemented by technical assistance (STTA) on specific pieces of legislation.

10. Introduction to Participatory Procedures for Legislative Drafting

- a- Discussion forums, capacity building for members of committees, political groups and administrative staff (legislative committee staff, etc.) and leaders of civil society in participatory techniques of legislative drafting.
 - 1- - Phase I: Identify the social problem (narrowing of the problem) - whose problem you are trying to change?;
 - 2- - Phase II: proposed explanations and justification (what is the problem?).
 - 3- - Phase III: Propose a solution;
 - 4- - Phase IV: Monitoring and evaluation of the new law implementation.

- b- Expert assistance on the development of specific legislation based on priorities identified by the Parliament.

11. Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight of the Budget

- a- Workshop on Parliamentary budget process and budget analysis;
- b- Train new MPs and staff on budgetary functions, the government's budgetary cycle, and basic analysis of key budget figures;
- c- Technical assistance to the Special Budget Committees of both houses;
- d- Professional training of administrative staff of both houses, particularly the staff of the budget and finance committees