

**QUARTERLY REPORT NUMBER TWENTY
DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE:
DELIBERATIVE BODIES IQC**

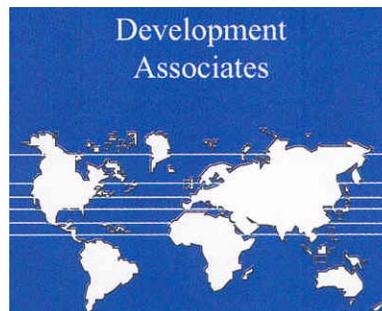
Submitted to:



U.S. Agency for International Development
Under Contract No. AEP-I-00-00-00004-00 (CLIN 007)

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Submitted by:

Development Associates, Inc.
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April 2005

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April 25, 2005

Mr. Keith Schulz
Democracy Center, Global Bureau (G/DG)
Room 6.07-071, Ronald Reagan Building
Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C. 20523-2052

Dear Mr. Schulz:

The Deliberative Bodies IQC (CLIN 007) that Development Associates is currently implementing for USAID stipulates that we provide a Performance Monitoring Report to our COTR on a quarterly basis.

Development Associates herewith submits our report covering the quarter just ended. We believe this meets our responsibility under Section G.9 (a) of the contract. Included in it is the Quarterly Financial Report required under Section G.9 (b). A copy also is being sent to the USAID/W Contracting Officer.

If you have any questions or comments about this submission, please be in touch.

Sincerely,



George F. Jones
Director
Democracy and Governance Programs

cc: Joseph Lentini, USAID/M/OP/G/DGHCA

Enclosure: As stated

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**QUARTERLY REPORT (JANUARY 1 – MARCH 31, 2005) ON THE
DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE
DELIBERATIVE BODIES IQC (CLIN 007)
AEP I-00-00-00004-00**

I. BASIC DATA ON THE ACTIVE TASK ORDERS

- ▶ **Uganda/Legislative Support Activity.** *Contract No. OUT-AEP-I-00-00-00004-00, Task Order No. 804. Period of Performance: 5/1/02 – 6/30/06. Amount: \$3,143,642.*

The 7th Parliament of Uganda took office on July 3, 2001, for a five-year term. Its most serious problems include size (it has 305 members) and management (made more difficult by size and by lack of political party representation); lack of skills; lack of information; poor legislative drafting; and poor credibility, both with the public and with the Executive Branch. All of these problems are compounded by the fact that over half of the MPs are newly-elected, and cannot rely on the institutional memory and informal networks that helped their predecessors.

Development Associates and its partner, Development Alternatives, were competitively awarded this Task Order under our Deliberative Bodies IQC, in order to advance the Mission's Strategic Objective of More Effective and Participatory Governance. The TO assigns five tasks to the contractor: 1) building human and institutional capacity through training; 2) fostering increased constituent services and dialogue; 3) strengthening legislative drafting; 4) promoting ethics and anti-corruption measures; and 5) fostering systems for free and fair elections. Approximately half of the total effort is to be devoted to the first task. The tasks will be carried out through short and long-term technical assistance; organization of in-country and third-country workshops, conferences, training, and observation tours; collection and dissemination of information on legislative norms, standards and practices from democratic countries; procurement and installation of necessary information systems hardware and software; and organization of conferences and seminars to bring together MPs and civil society and local government representatives.

DA has an office in Kampala staffed by an experienced American professional and a skilled Ugandan staff of six. On March 21, 2005, the project was extended from March 24, 2005, to June 30, 2006, and the contract value was increased from \$1.94 million to \$3.14 million.

Client references: Marie-Claire Sow, Contracting Officer, USAID/Uganda, tel. 256-41-387-387, email mcsow@usaid.gov, and Susan Cowley, Cognizant Technical Officer, USAID/Uganda, tel. 256-41-387-387, fax 256-41-387-293, email scowley@usaid.gov.

- **Armenia/Legislative Strengthening Program I.** *Contract No. OUT-AEP-I-00-00-00004-00, Task Order No. 803. Period of Performance: 4/1/02 – 8/31/04. Amount: \$2,301,804.*

This project seeks to encourage the development of a more responsive and effective Parliament in Armenia by improving its internal management systems and increasing citizen access to the legislative process. The project grows out of a USAID review of National Assembly operations, needs identified by the National Assembly, and planned other donor programs. It is focused on three areas:

- 1) strengthening the internal capacity of the National Assembly to support the legislative process, focusing particularly on the financial and economic analytical aspects of that process;
- 2) improving National Assembly systems for constituency relations and outreach; and
- 3) increasing public and media access to information about the National Assembly's operations.

Strengthening the National Assembly's capacity in these three areas will directly contribute to the Mission's strategic objective of "More Transparent, Accountable and Responsive Democratic Governance," as well as indirectly support the Mission's legislative and policy reform objectives across the range of sectors in which the Mission is working.

Although the National Assembly has taken steps to become a more effective branch of government, nonetheless it needs to refine further its operations, especially in terms of its legislative function and related internal procedures. In addition, in order for citizens to make informed decisions, they need greater access to the National Assembly, both to information about the Assembly and to the deputies themselves. To assist with this process, deputies need to understand the importance of, and have the ability to handle, constituent relations.

Employing a mix of technical assistance, training, and limited inputs of commodities, and face-to-face consultations with National Assembly members and staff, Armenian think tanks, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the Armenian diaspora community, and other USAID implementing partners, the Development Associates/Development Alternatives team in Armenia seeks to build internal legislative capacity and establish sound governance, while promoting sustainability, local ownership, and effective outreach to the public.

The project was granted a cost extension in June 2004, extending its life through August 31, 2004.

The client references are: Technical Officer, Bella Markarian, email: bmarkarian@usaid.gov, and Contracting Officer, David Brown, email: dbrown@usaid.gov, USAID/Yerevan, Phone: 37410-52-99-75, 58-61-63, 543-835, fax 374-10-543-874.

- ▶ **Armenia/Legislative Strengthening Program II.** *Contract No. OUT-AEP-I-00-00-00004-00, Task Order No. 805. Period of Performance: 9/1/04-8/31/07. Amount: \$2,483,853.00.*

This project focuses on:

Task One — Facilitating and institutionalizing the involvement of Armenia’s legislative community to advocate, lobby and advise the National Assembly on policy and legislative issues;

Task Two — Improving the functioning of key committees and departments of the National Assembly by having them work closer with the legislative community in jointly analyzing, researching, commenting on and drafting legislation;

Task Three — Improving the ability of select units and individuals within the National Assembly to be more transparent, representative and responsive to citizen priorities, interests and concerns; and

Task Four — Developing the National Assembly’s ability to improve oversight of the executive branch through existing mechanisms and, to the extent possible, through assisting in the creation of new mechanisms via Constitutional and legislative amendments.

This activity supports the USAID/Armenia’s 2004-2008 Strategy, specifically Strategic Objective 2.1, “Improved Democratic Governance.” This activity will directly contribute to IR 2: “Targeted Governance Institutions Strengthened” and sub-IR 2.1.2: “More Responsive and Effective Parliament”. It will also contribute to IR 1: “Civic Participation Expanded”.

It is recognized that certain constraints on legislative strengthening exist in Armenia. In particular, working to improve the ability of the National Assembly to practice better oversight of the executive will probably yield only limited results until constitutional amendments and new or modified legislation allows for more oversight mechanisms. Opportunities for large-scale improvements in the National Assembly’s ability to be more representative and accountable to the Armenian people are also limited. Nonetheless, the project has identified targets for increasing openness and improving representation and especially in increasing public participation in the legislative process.

Employing a mix of technical assistance, training, and limited inputs of commodities, and one-on-one consultations with National Assembly deputies and staff, Armenian policy analysis centers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the Armenian diaspora community, and other USAID implementing partners, the Development Associates/Development Alternatives team in Armenia works with the elected deputies and appointed staff to increase public participation, increase transparency of the legislative process, and develop a capacity for legislative analysis to improve legislation and oversight. These efforts will build internal capacity and promote sustainability. ALSP Phase II conducts its activities in close coordination with the other international organizations providing assistance to the Assembly in order to avoid overlap and duplication of efforts.

The client references are: Technical Officer, Bella Markarian, email: bmarkarian@usaid.gov, and Contracting Officer, David Brown, email: dbrown@usaid.gov, USAID/Yerevan, Phone: 37410-52-99-75, 58-61-63, 543-835, fax 374-10-543-874.

II. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT AND PROGRESS MADE

UGANDA

A. PROGRESS THIS QUARTER

1. Introduction and Summary

The most important event of the quarter was that on March 21, the project was extended from March 24, 2005, to June 30, 2006, and the contract value was increased from \$1.94 million to \$3.14 million. The extension not only extended the project by 15 months and increased its funding by more than 60 percent, but it significantly revised the project's objectives and tasks. The three new objectives are:

Objective 1: Improved Representation

As stated in the RFP, DA/LSA "will work to strengthen linkages among legislators, constituents and civil society" in three key areas, the fight against corruption, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the efforts to improve communication between Parliament and the public. We will seek to increase the frequency of contact and dialogue between MPs and their constituents, and thereby increase MPs' knowledge of issues in the three key areas and their awareness and understanding of conditions in their districts. We will build the capacity of Parliament to communicate more effectively with the public, particularly the CSO community, and work to improve CSO and public access to Parliament and to information about what it is doing – or not doing.

Objective 2: Increased Lawmaking

As stated in the RFP, DA/LSA "will work to increase the capacity of legislators to actively [and effectively] participate in the lawmaking process," especially in three key areas: improved election laws and improved implementation, improved anti-corruption laws, and improved HIV/AIDS legislation. We will build on the successful work we have done under the current project to teach legislative analysis and drafting and debating skills. We will provide technical assistance in drafting private members' bills. Our objective is to complete the extension period with significant improvements in the three key legislative areas and in the legislative skills of MPs.

Objective 3: Enhanced Oversight

As stated in the RFP, DA/LSA "will work to strengthen the oversight capability of the legislators and key parliamentary committees," with particular attention to the government budget process, anti-corruption activities, and the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the North. We will build on our successful work to date to strengthen the Budget Committee, increase its flow

of information, its analytical skills, and its familiarity with conditions at the district level. We will continue our efforts to build capacity at Parliament, with particular attention to the Board of Management, but also to committee clerks and secretaries, to help ensure that the 8th Parliament gets off to a smoother start with the help of a better-trained Parliamentary Staff. In the North, we will give particular attention to People with Disabilities, which will not only meet a humanitarian need but also will strengthen CSO advocacy with Parliament. We will conduct training in the more effective use of question time in Parliament and in better internal management and organization of Parliament. Our objective by the end of the extension period is to have contributed to improved internal functioning of Parliament and improved Parliamentary oversight of the Executive and local government.

In implementing these new objectives, Development Associates' Uganda Legislative Support Activity (DA/LSA) continued to work in close partnership with the USAID/Uganda Mission and the Planning and Development Coordination Office (PDCO) of Parliament.

During the quarter, LSA planned, coordinated, organized, facilitated, attended and participated in a number of activities, including:

- a. a pre-field trip briefing and a fact-finding field trip for the Parliamentary Committee on HIV/AIDS,
- b. the last of four radio talk shows that were part of LSA's anti-corruption National Media Campaign,
- c. printed and distributed four *Parliamentary Briefers*, our periodic newsletter on events and activities in Parliament;
- d. edited, printed, bound and distributed the Report on the Proceedings of the Parliamentary Roundtable on Uganda's Electoral Law Reforms,
- e. attended and participated in USAID's two day workshop on USAID's Commitment to Include People with Disabilities into Current USAID Programming, and
- f. attended and participated in USAID's one day HIV/AIDS Emergency Plan Partners Information Meeting.

2. *Significant Activities During This Quarter*

a. A Fact Finding Field Trip for the Parliamentary Committee on HIV/AIDS

LSA organized and sponsored a fact-finding field trip to Western Uganda for 14 Members of the Parliamentary Committee on HIV/AIDS and technical staff from the Planning and Development Coordination Office (PDCO) of Parliament. The delegation visited 11 districts: Mityana, Mubende, Kibaale, Hoima, Masindi Luwero, Kamwenge, Kyenjojo, Kabarole, Bundibugyo, and Kasese. The focus of the Committee's visit was health institutions and HIV/AIDS, and particularly the role of local government in the delivery of HIV/AIDS services and information.

LSA organized a Pre-field Trip Briefing at Parliament for the Committee (January 27, 2005). Presenters and topics included: Mr. Ssinabulya Zacheas, Regional Project Officer, Uganda AIDs Control Project (Experience in midwestern Uganda); Capt. Talugende, National Forum for People Living with HIV/AIDS (Experiences of Persons Living with AIDS in mid western Uganda); and Mr. Espilidon Tumukurate, Regional Director, AIDS/HIV Integrated Model (AIM) Western Uganda (Experience of AIM in Mid-Western Uganda).

In its report on the field trip, the Committee commended local government officials, CSOs and NGOs for their leadership and work in helping to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Committee cited certain issues and offered recommendations:

ISSUES RAISED BY THE COMMITTEE

- Government needs to scale up the supply of voluntary counselling and testing kits;
- Most health centers lacked CD4 counting machines;
- There were low supplies of Anti-Retroviral (ARVs) drugs and other needed items;
- There was inadequate staffing at health centers and hospitals;
- There was overcrowding in health centers and hospitals, and
- Donor support was fragmented.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMMITTEE

- Districts should procure voluntary counselling and Testing Kits directly from the National Medical Stores;
- Government should procure more CD4 cell-counting machines to enable health care providers to adequately manage the distribution and supply of ARVs;
- There is a need for local governments and CBOs to build public and private partnerships; and
- There is a need for districts to develop ways in which to fundraise and lobby for increased funding for the health sector to enable better implementation, monitoring and evaluation of HIV/AIDS activities in the districts.

The Director General (DG) of the Uganda AIDS Commission subsequently appeared before the Committee on HIV/AIDS at Parliament. The appearance was for the purpose of responding to the Committee's findings and recommendations. The Committee thanked the DG for appearing before the Committee and then cited several specific issues and concerns, in particular:

- Lack of trained staffing at health facilities;
- Lack of condoms in the districts; and
- Broken equipment.

The Director General assured the Committee that the Uganda AIDS Commission is doing its best. The DG cited two particular challenges:

- insufficient resources, and
- inadequate support from the Ministry of Health.

b. Minister of Health's Appearance and Testimony before the Parliamentary Committee on HIV/AIDS

Parliament's HIV/AIDS Committee met with the Minister of Health on March 15, 2005. It was a follow-up to a previous meeting held in December 2004 that was mainly for the purpose of discussing the scarcity and poor quality of condoms. The Committee had requested the Ministry to report back on measures taken to ensure that there were adequate supplies of condoms in the medical stores other than the Engabu type, which was suspected to be defective.

ISSUES RAISED BY THE HIV/AIDS COMMITTEE

1. General status of implementation of HIV/AIDS Programs.
2. The progress of the National Sero-Survey.
3. The ARV Program. The Committee noted that during their field visit to mid Western Uganda, they found that in some places like Bundibugyo district, ARVs had been delivered to the district without training the health workers.
4. CD4 Count Machines. (The MPs pointed out that during their field visit to Western Uganda, they found that many CD4 Count Machines had broken down and had requested the Ministry of Health for a report on this issue).
5. The status of HIV/AIDS testing kits. (The HIV/AIDS Committee field visit to Mid Western Uganda revealed that most Health Centers lacked testing kits. The MPs wanted to know the measures put in place by the Ministry of Health to ensure a constant supply of testing kits.)
6. The impact of the Customs Union taxes on accessibility of ARVs

MINISTER OF HEALTH RESPONSES

1. Forty-two (42) districts have so far been trained about ARVs. The remaining fourteen (14) districts are currently undergoing training. These include Kabale, Kisoro, Kanungu, Rukungiri, Kabarole, Kamwenge and Kyenjojo A total of 45,000 people are currently accessing free ARVs. It was pointed out that if a patient's CD4 Count is not below 200, then he/she is not eligible for ARVs. The Ministry of Health program on ARVs entails three components: providing care, monitoring and providing ARVs.
2. The Ministry of Health was taken aback by the information about the delivery of ARVs to Bundibugyo and stated in response that the drugs had been delivered by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) on the assurance that they had conducted the necessary training. The Ministry acknowledged that they were bound to make errors especially considering that they were implementing their programs at a very fast rate, but that they were going to increase monitoring and coordination to curb the problems. They however restated their resolve to meet their target.
3. The National Sero-Survey was successfully conducted in all the originally identified 417 clusters. There was good response. Over 25,000 people participated instead of the 23,000 earlier estimated. The initial data analysis will be completed by the end of March 2005.
4. Quality and quantity of condoms. The Ministry of Health noted that it had investigated and established that the Engabu condoms were not conforming to specifications and recalled them from circulation. Whereas Government had signed a contract to import 80 million Engabu condoms, 20 million were already in the country but would undergo post-shipment testing before being distributed. The Minister of Health noted that the image of Engabu brand of condom was damaged because it is now associated with poor quality condoms and therefore there was a need to re-label the condoms that passed the post shipment test. A suggestion to re-label Engabu as "New Engabu" was not acceptable to the MPs. The Ministry promised to give feedback to the Committee regarding the way forward on the breach of contract by the company that was supplying the defective

condoms and on their re-labeling. This would be discussed at the April 2005 meeting with the Committee.

Sixty to 80 million condoms are required annually. Ministry of Health has negotiated with USAID for 8 million condoms to be distributed to high-risk groups. It is envisaged that 8.5 million Lifeguard and 10 million Protector condoms will be available for social marketing after post shipment testing. Thirty-five million Lifeguard condoms will be procured through the Global Fund, and a portion of those will be freely distributed to the public.

5. CD4 Count Machines. The Minister of Health acknowledged that the CD4 Count Machines in most districts had broken down because most of them were being operated by Laboratory Assistants who were merely given orientation and not user training. Minister stated that they had conducted a survey on all CD4 Count Machines and they are in the process of handing over their report to the Uganda Aids Commission which had procured the machines. The Ministry recognized the need for user training and promised to discuss with stakeholders putting in place a user training program and ensuring that good machines are procured in future, since there is also an issue about the current machines not being state of the Art. The minister promised to harmonize the procurement of HIV/AIDS drugs and equipment and said he would report at the next meeting about the way forward on the maintenance of the existing CD4 Count Machines.
6. Taxes on ARVs. The Minister promised to refer the matter of taxes on drugs to the Secretariat of the East African Community. It was also pointed out that that the Customs Union exempts from taxation ARVs bought using donor funds. This applies to almost all the ARVs in Uganda except at the Joint Clinical Research Center. The Minister of Health vowed to ensure that ARVs are not subjected to any form of tax. A question was asked about the 0.8% tax on drugs by the National Drug Authority, which was suspected to limit accessibility to ARVs due to increased prices. The National Drug Authority confirmed the existence of an 0.8% tax on drugs but said it neither affected the prices of drugs nor was it charged on ARVs.

c. Planned and Organized a Media Campaign Radio Talk Show

Hon. Zachary Olum, Chairperson, Parliamentary Committee on Commissions, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises, appeared on Choice FM, in Gulu, on 29th January 2005. Hon. Olum had not submitted the required report to LSA by the end of the quarter. Hon. Olum's appearance concluded the initial phase of the anti-corruption Media Campaign organized by LSA. Other media activities are planned and being scheduled.

d. Parliamentary Briefers

LSA printed and distributed four (4) *Parliamentary Briefers*. The *Briefers* are an occasional newsletter designed to highlight issues and activities at Parliament. They are distributed to selected persons among LSA's development partners, diplomatic missions, civil society, academic institutions, and the private sector, as well as to the USAID Mission and the U.S. embassy. Numerous requests are received by LSA – after each distribution – from individuals/organizations asking to be placed on the mailing list.

e. Legal and Parliamentary Affairs: A Report from the Electoral Reform Roundtable

LSA edited, printed, bound and distributed a “Report on the Proceedings of the Parliamentary Roundtable on Uganda’s Electoral Reforms”. The roundtable, held in December 2004, was co-organized and co-sponsored by LSA and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). Hon. Jacob Oulanyah, Chairperson, Parliamentary Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, wrote to LSA that. “the Roundtable was a great benefit to the Committee and truly the consensus built in the process [of its discussions] formed the basis for...the Committee’s Report on Electoral Laws Reform.”

f. Workshop on USAID’s Commitment to Include People with Disabilities in USAID Programming, March 23 and 24, 2005

At USAID’s invitation, LSA attended and participated in a two-day workshop on “USAID’s Commitment to Include People with Disabilities into Current USAID Programing.”

g. Emergency Plan Partners Information Meeting

In response to an invitation from USAID, LSA attended and participated in a one-day workshop which was designed to introduce USAID Implementing Partners to Social and Scientific Systems, Inc., and inform the partners what support services are available from SSI.

h. America Days in Mbarara

At the invitation of USAID and the US Ambassador, LSA organized a display booth for the America Days event in Mbarara (February 9-11, 2005). As noted in the embassy’s press release, America Days in Mbarara was “a three-day series of events and programs that the embassy will host to inform people of western Uganda about several programs and activities that the U.S. government sponsors in Uganda ...” The display by LSA included photos, reports and documents on various LSA events and activities and videos about northern Uganda. LSA’s booth was visited by more than 500 people. More than three hundred documents were handed out to the public.

3. *Activities for Next Quarter*

- ▶ Organize and sponsor a two day capacity building workshop for Clerks to Parliament (“Parliamentary Procedures and the Management of Parliamentary Business in a Multi-Party Setting”).
- ▶ Organize and sponsor LSA’s Second Parliamentary Internship Program. Advertise and conduct meetings and interviews at eight colleges and universities.
- ▶ Draft an Information Guide for the People With Disabilities’ Parliamentary Group and prepare specifications for Invitation to Tender on its publication.
- ▶ Significantly increase the mailing list for the *Parliamentary Briefer*.

- ▶ Revise and submit to USAID the Media Campaign Report (Observations, Findings, Recommendations and Way Forward).
- ▶ Organize and schedule additional radio talk shows. Themes: HIV/AIDS, Northern Uganda, and Social Services (health, education, population and family planning).
- ▶ Advertise for, select and hire a new Deputy Chief of Party and an additional Program Officer.

B. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND REMEDIAL ACTION TAKEN

Due to new USAID rules, regulations, policies and procedures, there is an increasing demand on staff time to attend meetings, read, review and complete forms and reports. The LSA office will re-organize and increase staff as necessary to meet these challenges.

C. UNRESOLVED ISSUES OR CONSTRAINTS ON THE PROJECT

There is a continuing inability of the Planning and Development Coordination Office — PDCO — of Parliament to establish and then stick to time frames for program activities.

The creation of PDCO and the recruitment of five (5) new staff members — including a director — were expected to enable it to plan, organize and coordinate all Parliamentary staff training. However, there are still internal challenges for PDCO to act in a timely fashion. LSA's concerns have been presented to the Deputy Clerk of Parliament, and asked that he set up a meeting of PDCO, LSA and USAID. LSA was informed by the Deputy Clerk that the Director and Coordinator for PDCO will leave for a ten (10) day trip to Japan on Friday, April 15th 2005. The Deputy Clerk agreed to: 1) try and arrange a meeting before the Director and Coordinator depart for Japan, and 2) try and make sure someone is left in PDCO with full authority to act on behalf of the office and Parliament.

TABLE 1
LSA PMP QUARTERLY REPORT JANUARY 1, 2005 – MARCH 31, 2005

LSA PMP QUARTERLY REPORTING FORM						
	Baseline FY 05	Target FY 05	Actual Jan-March 05	Actual April-June 05	Actual July-Sept 05	Actual Annual FY 05
SO -9 LEVEL						
1. No. of CSOs submitting written comments to parly. committee hearings	42	50	51			
2. Number of Parliamentary Committee invited by CSOs for briefings and dialogue	4	6	1			
IR-9.1 LEVEL						
3. Number of bills substantively reviewed by parliamentary committees before enactment	10	13	6			
4. No. of Private members Bills introduced by MPs	1	1	0			
5. No. of Bills amended			0			
IR 9.1.2 LEVEL						
6. Number of target CSOs having a legislative agenda with Parliament	28	40	20			
7. No. of target CSOs with legislative agenda items reflected in Parly. Bills	13	18	11			
IR 9.1.3 LEVEL						
8. No. of Parly. Committees that request info. from the PBO	11	13	11			
9. No. of Parly. Committees that request info. from the Parly. Research Service	8	12	6			
10. No. of Bills on which budgetary impact analysis is drafted by PBO	9	11	4			

* **The CSOs may not be the same in all quarters or years.**

TABLE 2
LSA PMP QUARTERLY REPORT JANUARY 1, 2005 – MARCH 31, 2005

No.		ACTUAL
1	<p>Number of Civil society Organizations submitting written comments to Parliamentary Committee hearing:</p> <p>1) Bunyoro Tobacco Growers' Association, 2) African Parliamentary Network against Corruption, 3) Kampala City Traders Association, 4) Action Aid International, 5) Action for Development (ACFODE), 6) Akiika Embuga Women's Self Help Association, 7) Akina Mama wa Africa, 8) Associates for Change, 9) Association of Women Medical Doctors (AUWMD), 10) Association of Women Judges, 11) The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U), 12) Bukedi Development Foundation, 13) Bahai Faith, 14) Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA), 15) Disabled Women's resource Network Organization (DWRNO), 16) East African Post Beijing Sub Regional Support Initiative, 17) Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), 18) Community Development Rural Network (CDRN), 19) Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), 20) Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), 21) Hope After Rape, 22) Human Rights Network (HURINET), 23) Council for Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa (CEEWA), 24) MIFUMI, 25) Uganda Debt Network, 26) Uganda National Tax Organization, 27) National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPO), 28) Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), 29) Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (ISIS WICCE), 30) Law and Advocacy for Women in Uganda (LAW-U), 31) Mpigi Women's Development Trust (MWODET), 32) National Association of Women's Organizations in Uganda (NAWOU), 33) Uganda National NGO Forum, 34) Uganda Change Agent, 35) Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA), 36) Uganda Women's Finance Trust (UWFT), 37) Women Engineers, Technicians and Scientists in Uganda (WETSU), 38) Women in Law and Development in Africa-Uganda Chapter (WILDAF), 39) Women Spacee, 40) Pan African Movement (PAWLO), 41) Uganda Land Alliance, 42) Uganda Law Society, 43) Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), 44) Uganda Local Government Association, 45) Central organization of Free Trade Unions (COFTU), 46) Forum for Promoting Democratic Constitutionalism, 47) Veterans Concern Uganda, 48) Tororo Civil Society Network (TOCINET), 49) Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), 50) Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), 51) Coalition for Freedom of Information.</p>	51
2	<p>Number of Parliamentary Committee invited for briefings and Dialogue by Civil Society Organizations</p> <p>1) Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee which was invited by:</p>	1
3	<p>Number of Bills substantively reviewed by Parliamentary Committee before enactment</p> <p>1) Access to Information Bill, 2) National Agriculture Research Bill, 3) Uganda Broad Casting Corporation Bill, 4) Domestic Relations Bill, 5) Constitutional Amendment Bill, 6) Local Governments Rating Bill</p>	6
4	Number Of Private Members Bills Introduced By Mps	0
5.	Number of Bills amended	0
6	<p>Number of Target Civil Society Organization with Legislative agenda with Parliament:</p> <p>1) Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), 2) Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), 3) Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), 4) Uganda Law Society, 5) The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U), 6) Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), 7) Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (ISIS WICCE), 8) Law and Advocacy for Women in Uganda (LAW-U), 9) Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), 10) Hope After Rape, 11) Human Rights Network (HURINET), 12) Council for Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa (CEEWA), 13) MIFUMI, 14) Action Aid International, 15) Action for Development (ACFODE), 16) Akiika Embuga Women's Self Help Association, 17) Akina Mama wa Africa, 18) Associates for Change, 19) Association of Women Medical Doctors (AUWMD), 20) Association of Women Judges.</p>	20

No.		ACTUAL
7	<p>Number of Target Civil Society Organization with Legislative Agenda items reflected in Parliamentary Bills 1) Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), 2) Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), 3) Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET), 4) Uganda Law Society, 5) The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U), 6) Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), 7) Women’s International Cross Cultural Exchange (ISIS WICCE), 8) Law and Advocacy for Women in Uganda (LAW-U), 9) Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), 10) Hope After Rape, 11) Human Rights Network (HURINET)</p>	11
8	<p>Number of Parliamentary Committees that request information from the Parliamentary Budget Office 1) Social Services Committee, 2) Public Service and Local Government Committee, 3) Trade, Tourism and Industry Committee, 4) Natural Resources Committee, 5) Defence and Internal Affairs Committee, 6) Finance, Planning and Economic Development Committee, 7) Agriculture, Animal, Industry and Fisheries committee, 8) Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, 9) Works, Housing and Communications Committee, 10) Presidential and Foreign affairs Committee, 11) Budget Committee</p>	11
9	<p>Number of Bills for which budgetary impact analysis is drafted by Parliamentary Budget Office 1) Budget Supplementary Schedule 1/2005, 2) Performance of the Budget for the first half of the financial year 2004/2005, 3) Agricultural Sector Releases, 4) National Budget Framework Paper for financial years 2005/2006 – 2007 – 2008</p>	4
10	<p>Number of Parliamentary Committees that request information from the Parliamentary Research Service 1) Natural Resources Committee, 2) National Economy Committee, 3) Social Services Committee, 4) HIV/AIDS Committee, 5) Select Committee on Pornography, 6) Select Committee on National Economy</p>	6

ARMENIA

A. PROGRESS THIS QUARTER

1. Introduction and Summary

As the quarter commenced, the National Assembly prepared for a new legislative session which would be held under newly amended Rules of Procedure. The most significant change was that plenary sittings will take place for four days every three weeks (as opposed to the three-day sittings every other week under the old Rules of Procedure).

During this quarter, ALSP experienced a number of personnel changes. Kregg Halstead began his work on the project as Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP). The departure in late January of ALSP's Constituency Relations Specialist Arsen Stepanyan provided an opportunity to re-evaluate the staffing needs for the project and it was determined that a full-time Public Policy Specialist would better meet the need to identify and work with a broader legislative community which could better inform the National Assembly in its deliberations. Edward Safaryan began work as Public Policy Specialist on March 1. Finally, at the end of the quarter, ALSP was finalizing selection of a new Office Manager as Nona Alikhanyan prepared to leave the project to move to a private sector opportunity.

While the staff changes provided challenges, they also provided an opportunity for ALSP to make courtesy visits to all of the project counterparts. In January, COP Eleanor Valentine and DCOP Halstead met with each Standing Committee chair and each head of department of the National Assembly and presented the ALSP II Year 1 Implementation Plan. They also met with individual factions and deputies. While no formal Legislative Strengthening Advisory Group has yet been formed, these meetings established an opportunity to ensure that all potential stakeholders had an opportunity to ask questions about the work plan and the project's goals and objectives.

In January, ALSP submitted to USAID its Performance Management Plan (PMP). This plan provides a context for reporting and measuring programmatic results. The ALSP awaits USAID/Armenia's approval of this document as it is anticipated that in the coming quarter, some of the key PMP activities will be launched. A post-session questionnaire to assess the National Assembly's effectiveness in the legislative process and citizen access was sent out to the NA deputies, staff and panel members outside the National Assembly.

No expat STTA were engaged during this quarter. However, four local STTA's enhanced the project team. Tigran Zagaryan continued to work with National Assembly staff in the design and maintenance of informational databases using the ISIS systems. Mihran Grigoryan worked with the National Assembly staff in addressing bugs in the existing design of the National Assembly website (www.parliament.am) and how best to incorporate new features — especially those required by recent changes in the Rules of Procedure. Areg Baregsaryan completed his assignment by submitting a report on the National Assembly's consideration of the State Budget 2005 including details of which requests by the deputies were accepted by the government and which were rejected. And finally, ALSP engaged Armen Aivazyanyan as a consultant to conduct a feasibility study regarding the National Assembly's expressed wish to acquire an off-set printing

facility. The study will provide guidance to USAID and the National Assembly on this matter. This report was still in process at the close of the quarter.

In the interest of improving the National Assembly's oversight of the executive branch, ALSP continued to provide assistance to the Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures in its discussions of the constitutional amendments submitted to the Assembly and reviewed by the Council of Europe's Venice Commission. ALSP prepared a number of documents comparing the drafts, providing comparative information on legislative authorities and legislative-executive relations, and drafting a guide to the procedures and timeline of the consideration of the constitutional amendments to enable the interested public to have an opportunity for significant participation.

In cooperation with the British Embassy, ALSP facilitated two workshops at the National Assembly on using the gender impact assessment tool to review policies and legislative proposals in terms of equal treatment and opportunity for men and women. Additionally, ALSP helped to facilitate the participation of government deputy ministers and NGOs in similar workshops. ALSP staff also assisted in the visit of a delegation from the British Embassy in Warsaw interested in identifying possible interlocutors in the National Assembly for exchanges connected with the expansion of the European Community.

In March, ALSP facilitated the participation of the NA Director of Human Resources in a week-long study tour in the United States at the Maryland General Assembly and the US Congress on "Legislative Human Resource Management." This program was organized by Development Associates Home Office according to the design proposed by the ALSP field team. It was greatly enhanced by the input of volunteers from the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) who arranged appropriate meetings on Capitol Hill and provided excellent interpretation.

ALSP staff facilitated the introduction of innovations to the procedures of public hearings by legislative standing committees on several occasions during this quarter. Working closely with the staff of the Standing Committee on Social, Health and Economic Affairs, ALSP assisted in the organization of a public hearing on Family Medicine. Working hand-in-hand with the subcommittee and staff of the Foreign Relations Standing Committee, ALSP helped to introduce a number of innovations to its procedures in conducting the two-day public hearing on Nagorno Karabakh March 29-30.

ALSP continued its regular meetings with the National Assembly leadership, including National Assembly Chief of Staff Haik Kotanian, Deputy Chief of Staff Hovanness Zargarian, and Head of the Secretariat Tatul Soghomonian, as well as meetings and consultations with the Chief of the Human Resources Department Varduhi Khachatryan, Chief of the Public Relations Department Anahid Adamian, Chief of the Legislative Analysis Department Ashot Khachatryan, Deputy Chief of the Regional Analysis Department Hovik Ohnanjyan, and Chief of the Information Department Marusia Assatryan, as well as the Deputy Chief of the Social Policy Analysis Department Navasardyan and the three heads of divisions of that department. At the same time, working meetings were held with the Web Division of the Secretariat, the IT Division, the Citizen Letters Division and standing committee staff of the National Assembly. These meetings varied in nature; however, they all served the overall purpose of facilitating program activities, and many also related to specific activities.

2. Significant Activities/Events

General Program Activities

Several personnel changes took place during the quarter, including the departure of the ALSP Constituency Relations Specialist Arsen Stepanyan at the end of January and the re-engineering of that staff position into the “Public Policy Specialist.” At the end of the quarter, the ALSP incumbent Office Manager tendered her resignation to take an offer with a private company. COP Ellie Valentine and DCOP Gregg Halstead solicited and reviewed resumes and conducted interviews to fill both of these full-time ALSP positions, as well as two short-term local STTA’s conducting a cost-benefit analysis/feasibility study and updating, trouble-shooting, and training relating to the National Assembly website, and an open Intern position covering spring and summer, 2005. Edward Safaryan was hired as Public Policy Specialist and began working with the ALSP team on March 1. The two new local STTA’s Armen Ayvazyan (Printhouse feasibility study) and Mihran Grigoryan (website design and troubleshooting) were engaged, and Intern Anush Seyranian began her duties.

ALSP provided the National Assembly with a proposal for the establishment of the Legislative Strengthening Advisory Group including the proposed members and the rationale for those candidates. The establishment of the LSAG is related to USAID and the National Assembly negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding. That process is ongoing.

In the absence of the LSAG, however, the ALSP used the occasion of introducing the new DCOP to project stakeholders to introduce them as well to the ALSP YEAR I Implementation Plan. Each of our counterparts had substantive comments on the work plan and as a result some small adjustments were made.

ALSP continued and expanded its Information Technology Assessment to encompass the relatively newly created Social Policy Analysis Department (SPAD) and Regional Policy Analysis Department (RPAD). Additionally, an IT assessment of the Information Technology and Communications Department (ITCD), Human Resource Management Department (HRMD), and the Legislative Analysis Department (LAD) was also completed. Correspondingly, recommendations for procurement of an additional server, computers, printers, photocopiers, and other related types of information technology were expanded to include upgrading the work capacities of these departments as well as the standing committees of the National Assembly. Furthermore, the ALSP project team identified a number of conditions which should be required before any more equipment is purchased for the National Assembly. These primarily relate to budgeting for technical personnel (adding lines into the National Assembly technical support departments) and planning for proper equipment maintenance and consumables (paper, toners, cartridges) which the equipment will require. The National Assembly should agree to and demonstrate readiness to implement these conditions prior to the actual equipment procurement.

During the previous quarter ALSP had been assisting the National Assembly to explore the possibility of purchasing refurbished computers from the London based NGO “Digital Links.” After discussions with the National Assembly Chief of Staff Kotanian and Head of the Secretariat Soghomonian about the ALSP-prepared written projections relating to the unit-by-unit costs, working capacity and quality, and terms of delivery. Based on these projections and the knowledge that refurbished computers could also be procured locally for a comparable price,

the National Assembly ultimately decided not to purchase refurbished computers through the London-based NGO. The National Assembly is currently evaluating the role that the purchase of used computers will play in improving deputy and staff working capacities.

Working with Control Chamber staff, ALSP solicited preliminary bids from three local information technology (IT) vendors for extending the Local Area Network (LAN) of the Control Chamber (USAID/ALSP sponsored the initial LAN establishment in 2003). The bids have been reviewed and negotiations commenced with the expectation that, upon USAID approval of this recommendation for procurement, the vendor will begin working on the LAN extension within the coming weeks.

ALSP engaged local STTA Armen Aivazyan to conduct a cost-benefit analysis/feasibility study on the options of installing an offset printing facility at the National Assembly juxtaposed against the current practice of outsourcing certain large or technically complex orders to the private print houses. Possessing substantial knowledge of and experience working in the local printing sector, Aivazyan conducted a series of information gathering interviews with the leadership of the National Assembly, the chairpersons of standing committees, representatives of various factions, and officials from relevant NA departments and divisions in order to assess current capacity and the envisioned needs for expanded printing capacity in the National Assembly. The preliminary report of the STTA's study found dubious prospects for realizing in-house printing-related cost savings and a blurry publications strategy manifested by a lack of central coordination of current printing and publications distribution. Furthermore, there is evident lack of trained personnel at the National Assembly to manage the proposed offset printing facility. Preliminary indications are that it will likely be more cost-effective and feasible to continue outsourcing the printing of National Assembly publications. The final draft of the study will be submitted to USAID for review before sharing with counterparts at the National Assembly.

Task One — Facilitating and institutionalizing the involvement of Armenia's legislative community to advocate, lobby and advise the National Assembly on policy and legislative issues.

ALSP worked with the Citizen Letters Division to collect data on citizen appeals and how inquiries have been processed and whether a response has been issued. The Public Inquiry Tracking System (PITS) was introduced into daily practice in the division. Approximately 500 items have been entered each month and at the end of this quarter, much of the old data had been entered into the database. The staff is particularly challenged because there are only two computers in the division and there was a technical problem that was not allowing data input from both computers simultaneously. ALSP Constituency Relations Specialist Stepanyan worked with the local STTA Tigran Zargaryan and NA IT department staff to identify the problem. As it turned out, the problem was not a network sharing problem (which the NA IT division staff could have fixed) but rather a problem with the server settings which was fixed by a contracted IT specialist from the network service provider. When the problem was identified and the specialist applied appropriate settings, he also trained the NA IT staff so that they would be able to handle such problems in the future. A similar problem was remedied in the National Assembly Archive where the same type of database is used so that now it can also be accessed from two computers simultaneously.

The ALSP team continued to attend the Friday meetings of National Assembly standing committees (State and Legal; Finance, Budget and Economic Affairs; Social Policy, Health, and Environment; Science, Education and Culture; and Foreign Affairs) in order to be able to make recommendations regarding the conduct of the meetings, the opportunities for greater transparency and public participation.

ALSP continued its efforts to assist standing and Ad-hoc committees in conducting public committee meetings and public hearings. Artur Baghdassaryan, Speaker of the National Assembly, made a statement in his welcoming speech at the opening of the spring 2005 legislative session that the new schedule offers an opportunity to take more time in committees to review pending legislation and that each “mother law” would go through a process of parliamentary hearings. The ALSP team worked with the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs suggesting procedural innovations for their two-day public hearings on the Karabakh issue March 29-30. Most significantly, this included early public notification of the hearing in order to solicit participation. As a result more than 45 experts from academic centers and NGOs were invited to participate. Innovations introduced to control the process of asking questions (one innovation was to provide “question cards” for people to submit written questions in advance to the person reporting at the hearing), for example, greatly facilitated Minister of Foreign Affairs Oskanian’s ability to answer questions, and in one hour he replied substantively to more than 20 questions.

ALSP also provided assistance to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Health and Environmental Affairs which conducted a hearing on Monday March 14 on family medicine which was a preliminary hearing in preparation for future hearings to discuss the draft Law on Healthcare.

There is now a clear indication among standing committee chairs, members and staff that there is an understanding of the utility of public hearings in the various legislative processes — for both reviewing pending legislation and for overseeing current laws in force. They also understand that hearings are an excellent mechanism to emphasize the power and authority of legislative committees. During the legislative process it is in the committees — formed from the representatives of all parties represented in the National Assembly as well as independent deputies — where differences are discussed and a consensus achieved through public deliberations. Deputies now realize that public hearings can be used both to inform deputies and the public on the variety of approaches and perspectives on legislative acts and provide a forum for many different representatives of society as a whole to weigh in with their suggestions. Now that the basic importance of public hearings has been recognized, it opens the door for the ALSP team to work with counterparts at the National Assembly in looking for innovative solutions to make the various types of hearings in the National Assembly more effective.

ALSP staff continued to work with NA standing committee staff and deputies on identifying appropriate draft legislation for circulation as a newspaper insert. At the end of the quarter, the best candidate was the Draft Law on Healthcare which had been submitted for National Assembly Consideration in the first reading. As a “mother law,” it would benefit from broad public input from both citizens at large and from healthcare professionals. This could also be tied in to the Standing Committee on Social, Health and Environmental Affairs’ intent to conduct public hearings on this legislative initiative.

On January 20, ALSP convened a meeting of the “Coordinating Council of Constituency Groups” (CCCG) to discuss proposed constitutional amendments and various participation mechanisms that civil society organizations could use to participate in the process of discussions of the draft constitutional amendments in the National Assembly. ALSP Constitutional Law Specialist Lousineh Abovyan provided NGOs with detailed information on the procedural steps that constitutional drafts submitted as “Deputy Initiatives” have to go through, with emphasis on the discussions of the constitutional drafts within the NA Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures. COP Valentine and DCOP Halstead met with Deputy Chairman of the National Assembly and Chairman of the Ad-hoc Committee Tigran Torosian on February 9 to discuss the constitutional amendment process, particularly means for securing and improving NGO access to Ad-hoc Committee meetings. As a follow up to this meeting, Ms. Abovyan drafted and submitted for use by the Ad-hoc Committee, a sample questionnaire for determining the substantive and participatory interests of NGOs in relation to the constitutional amendments. ALSP also met several times and closely cooperated with National Democratic Institute (NDI) staff to update the latter on Ad-hoc Committee-related developments to guide NDI’s efforts in helping NGOs to participate in the constitutional amendment process. Several NGOs that regularly participate in ALSP CCCG meetings attended the sittings of the Ad-Hoc Committee and successfully participated in the discussion of the constitutional amendments by both raising questions and concerns before the committee and to the authors of the drafts.

The Committee Staff Working Group on Public Participation (CSWGPP) was established and the first meeting was held on March 31, 2005. NA standing committee staff nominated by their standing committee chairs to participate in the CSWGPP include: Edita Abrahamyan, State and Legal Committee; Ruzanna Hambarzumyan, Foreign Relations Committee; Nerses Avetisyan, Finance and Budgetary Committee; Yelena Nanooshyan, Social Affairs Committee; Vahagn Gevorgyan, Defense Committee; Geghecik Grigoryan, Science and Education Committee. During the first meeting of the group, the concept of the CSWGPP was introduced and the timeline of work and expected outcomes of the group were discussed. The cooperation within the group and involvement of public activist groups and experts into the legislative process through NA standing committees was also discussed. Communication channels for the group members were identified. As new practices are introduced into the work of standing committees, these practices will be captured by the members of the CSWGPP and then shared with the group for possible inclusion in a procedures manual for Standing committees of the National Assembly. An important aspect of the work of committees is having that work appropriately recorded. At the meeting, a presentation was also given on the template developed for committee reports. A suggested template for such reports was presented by ALSP’s Information and Communications Specialist Anna Hovhannesian. This template can be used both for preparing reports to be printed and disseminated, as well as for posting reports on a committee’s page on the National Assembly’s website

In order to facilitate effective participation in the legislative processes, ALSP staff worked with the NA Secretariat and print-house staff to produce calendars with information on the National Assembly’s legislative sessions. This was particularly important as the calendar reflected the new work regime of the National Assembly in light of the changes to the Rules of Procedure now requiring the National Assembly to meet for four-day sittings every three weeks (as opposed to three-day sittings, every two weeks). Ostensibly, this also provides more time for Standing committees to work between sessions, though at the time, it was envisioned that standing committees would meet only on Fridays.

Task Two — Improving the functioning of key committees and departments of the National Assembly by having them work closer with the legislative community in jointly analyzing, researching, commenting on and drafting legislation.

The report on the National Assembly's in the role 2005 budget consideration (prepared by ALSP STTA Areg Barghseyan) clearly shows improvements in the level of engagement of the National Assembly in the budget process. The committees and deputies of the National Assembly pointed out several examples of programs which had been under-funded and a number of inconsistencies in the government's substantiation of budget requests. Where these deficiencies were pointed out, the government adjusted the final budget.

ALSP assisted the Human Resource Management (HRM) Department of the National Assembly in soliciting feedback from heads of departments to complete and implement the 2005 training plan. The main regulatory procedures used by the HRM Department were elaborated, based on the requirements of the Law on Civil Service of the National Assembly. These included:

- The procedures of the Civil Servant Certification Committee for the civil servants holding staff positions at the National Assembly;
- The procedure for organizing attestation for civil servants on staff at the National Assembly;
- The procedures of the Civil Servant Competition Committee for organizing competitions for the civil servants on staff of the NA;
- The procedure for organizing open and closed competitions to recruit staff for civil service positions;
- The procedures for developing tests for organizing competitions and attestation; and
- The procedure for organizing training for civil servants of the National Assembly.

Building from this, the NA HRM staff members together with the ALSP Communications and Information Systems Specialist Anna Hovhannesyanyan worked with NA Chief of Staff Kotanian to communicate to all departments the necessity of their input into the development of a comprehensive training plan.

The first draft training plan was submitted to the Chief of Staff who suggested that there were really two types of training (and associated financing of the training program):

- Obligatory training to be delivered by the School of Public Administration (this would be eligible for special government subsidies and a contract for these trainings is already in place with the National Assembly);
- In-house (and off-site) professional training delivered by international organizations as well as NA staff;
- General training organized in-house

Approaching the development of the training plan in this manner meant that it was worked out taking into consideration of the needs of the institution. Additionally, it meant that the Human Resource Management Department could begin to evaluate the staff capacity and closely collaborate with other departments. Finally, the process stimulated staff to begin thinking in terms of what their training needs really are and how they might be met.

This does not mean that problems were not identified during the process as well. For example, the National Assembly does not have full discretion over its budgetary resources and the training budget is still quite limited. Additionally, closer analyses of the training process shows that when the concentration is on the curricula, there is more emphasis on the subject and less to what might be the appropriate techniques and methodologies. Finally, there are many training segments connected to the Civil Service training which duplicate the curricula of the Law Department of Yerevan State University.

The National Assembly Human Resource Management Department issued the notice of a competition for Staff Innovations Fellowships (under USAID ALSP sponsorship) for National Assembly staff to visit their colleagues at other CIS parliaments in order to observe their procedures and practices and identify those which could innovatively be adopted and adapted and put into practice at the National Assembly. Twenty-one National Assembly staff applied for the NA Staff Innovations Fellowship to mentor with colleagues from other CIS parliaments. A review committee of deputies and staff will be formed to review the applications and select participants.

ALSP provided assistance in the further development of the Staff Policy Manual and the Staff Procedures Manual. A plan was worked out to make the process more participatory in terms of the role of each department, the role of the Human Resource Management Department representative as well as the Legislative Analysis Department which would be tasked in reviewing the policies for consistency with the Rules and Procedures of the National Assembly as well as the NA Staff Charter. The concentration is initially on the National Assembly Policy Manual after which further work on a procedures manual will follow.

The Director of the NA Human Resources Department Varduhi Khachatryan, participated in a one-week study tour “Human Resource Policies for Legislatures” March 19-25 in the USA visiting the Maryland General Assembly and offices of the US Congress. At the US Congress she was especially impressed with the US House of Representative’s Chief Administrative Officer and with the Office of the House Parliamentarian. She found interesting the emphasis on strategic planning, especially that each department had someone who was responsible for that department’s strategic plan. She understood the importance of this process for perspective planning with implications for budgeting, for developing rules and charters, and for identifying human resource needs (both the quality and quantity of personnel).

Ms. Khachatryan also understood that certain structural changes at the National Assembly require going back to the basics of the strategic planning process and that evaluation is one of the most important steps in the process. We discussed the plan to further develop the staff survey for the purpose of assisting the NA in that evaluation process.

Another aspect of the program that impressed her was how each department representative was ready to describe their work in an organized and detailed manner and that each department had some short descriptive brochure that outlined their services. She identified that such brochures or info-sheets would help the deputies within the National Assembly to understand that the services of the staff were first and foremost to benefit them.

Regarding the legislative process both in the Maryland General Assembly and the US Congress, Ms. Khachatryan was also impressed by the fact that work on draft legislation goes on

simultaneously in different departments, committees and by individual deputy assistants. She thought it was helpful that all suggestions were directed to committees and then the committee incorporates those into the consideration of a bill (and in these bicameral legislatures submits these points to a joint committee or the upper house).

She found the guidelines and procedures for different departments interesting and surmised that the query intake forms developed for the NA Information Department could be expanded to practices in other departments.

Ms. Khachatryan further understood that the tenets of legislative research and analysis services of confidentiality and objectivity are principles which cannot be compromised if the service is to be taken seriously by the elected deputies. She felt that these principles should not only be stated up front (for example, in departmental brochures) but that they should be followed and enforced.

The Office of the Parliamentarian of the House of Representatives was a function that Ms. Khachatryan recognized as similar in part to the role the Head of the Secretariat plays during a plenary session, but really that is much more institutionalized in terms of authority within the House of Representatives. She felt that this non-partisan arbiter and interpreter of the rules was an institution which might find resonance in the National Assembly.

Ms. Khachatryan was appreciative of the encouragement that staff received in both the US Congress, the Maryland General Assembly — and even in the private sector — for promotion and professional development as a high priority in these organizations. She also was impressed with the orientation programs that were developed for new employees of these organizations and the importance of having a probationary period for new employees.

ALSP continued its work with the National Assembly Research Division of the Information Department. DCOP Halstead conducted a workshop on March 16 on “Conducting Legislative Research Related to United States Laws and Regulations.” In an interactive session with researchers, Mr. Halstead explained and spoke on: the role and function in the US constitutional system of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; the legal and practical relationships between the three branches of the federal government, states, counties, and cities; noteworthy examples from recent and past US history illustrating laws, executive orders, administrative regulations, and judicial decisions; the role that citation and defining applicable terms plays in legislative research; and methods and informational sources (including key Internet sites) useful in conducting legislative research.

ALSP continued to work with the staff of two new research departments at the National Assembly: the Regional Policy Analysis Department (RPAD) and the Social Policy Analysis Department (SPAD). Regarding the former, ALSP discussed their plans for regional meetings in different localities throughout Armenia and the methods by which they were planning to conduct interviews and then analyze the results of those interviews. The RPAD staff indicated an interest in building on the initiative of setting up regional Citizen Information and Communication Centers (CICC) and how they might also be able to access these centers as information feedback gathering points. Work with the SPAD was somewhat more systematic in that the department was tasked with soliciting opinion from various NGO sources on what the current legislative gaps are in the social, health, education and culture sectors. Part of ALSP’s effort was in promoting the collaborative work of these SPAD divisions with their colleagues among the

Standing committee staff. Part of the resistance on the part of the staff to these units is that they were perceived of as being partisan units because they were created by the Speaker of Parliament. That said, they did convene several successful meetings, not the least of which was a meeting on traditional health care in preparation for the planned public hearings on the draft Law on Healthcare. After the meetings, ALSP staff worked with this department to prepare a written report on the meetings that could be disseminated to all factions and all members of relevant standing committees. As others see the potential value of the activities of these departments, it is hoped that there will be more of a demand for their services from all factions in the National Assembly. Other positive outcomes from these meetings were that civil society organizations participating in the meetings became aware of another channel for their feedback to the National Assembly; Committee staff were able, through this process to identify potential participants to be included in future hearings; and finally, the department was able to try some new organizational tools (such as the checklist for the organization of public meetings) developed by the ALSP team for the National Assembly.

ALSP continued through the quarter to promote and recruit a Gender Initiatives Working Group within the National Assembly. ALSP cooperated with the British Embassy to invite two gender equality trainers (Louise O'Meara and Marie Crawley) from Northern Ireland to conduct a series of workshops on Gender Impact Assessment of Legislation and Policy for National Assembly elected deputies, NA staff and separate workshops for government deputy ministers and NGOS. Recognition of the importance of gender considerations in all aspects of the legislative process was manifested in an announcement made by Deputy Hermine Nadalian, a member of the government coalition's Republican Party Faction informing deputies of the establishment of the Gender Initiatives Working Group in the National Assembly and inviting deputies from all factions as well as independent deputies to participate in the half-day workshop on gender impact assessment. During the workshops in the NA, the workshop participants emphasized the importance for gender impact assessment not only of pending legislative proposals but also in overseeing current laws in force. The result of the four days of training was a summary meeting with participants from all four training groups where next steps were identified under the general title of "Gender Mainstreaming towards Gender Equality" Suggested actions were grouped under the headings of the "Gender Equality Framework" which was developed by Mr. Ashot Yesayan, Deputy Minister of Social Security. The Gender Equality Framework includes issues related to:

- (A) Policy;
- (B) Legislation;
- (C) Institutional Structures;
- (D) Human Resources;
- (E) Education/Awareness Raising;
- (F) Funding; and
- (G) Information Technology.

ALSP continued to work with USAID implementing partners PA Consulting regarding their work with the Standing Committee on Social, Environmental and Health Affairs in preparation for the submission of the draft Law on Potable Water as well as with the PADCO implementers of the USAID Armenia Social Transition Program on their participation in the public hearings in the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Health and Environmental Affairs on family medicine.

ALSP also collaborated with NDI, ABA/CEELI on opportunities for civil society input to the process of constitutional reforms.

Task Three — Improving the ability of select units and individuals within the National Assembly to be more transparent, representative and responsive to citizen priorities, interests and concerns.

The Citizen Information and Communication Center (CICC) established during ALSP I at the National Assembly reception area at 19 Baghramian Avenue in Yerevan was a first step towards proactively informing citizens addressing the National Assembly how to do this more effectively. The concept of CICC establishment was developed in discussions with the senior leadership of the National Assembly, and in particular with the Head of the Secretariat who oversees the departments mainly responsible for facilitating citizen inquiries to the National Assembly (Citizen Letters Division). The main idea was to provide citizens and NGOs with greater access to and additional information on the work and activities of the National Assembly as an institution including current legislative proposals and on the Deputies themselves.

As the CICC proved over time to be a success, the ALSP again working with the Head of the Secretariat developed the target of establishing such centers in three additional *marzes* in Armenia to facilitate greater communication between and increased awareness of the National Assembly by citizens and NGOs. Pursuant to this target, ALSP completed a process to identify an important *marz* location with an already existing advantageous physical infrastructure set up to host the first of these three targeted regional CICCs.

Working with the USAID/Armenia Social Transition Program (ASTP) implemented by PADCO, ALSP staff visited the large northern city of Vanadzor in Lori *Marz* where the ASTP had previously established an Integrated Social Services Center (ISSC). The ISSC is located on a main street not far from Vanadzor's central square and is housed on the first floor of a Vanadzor City Administration secondary building. The ISSC consists of five customer service windows entitled "Social Insurance Fund", "Socio-Medical Expertise Commission", "Regional Social Service Agency", "Regional Employment and Labor Service Agency" and "NGO Center."

The NGO Center combines the work of more than 100 NGOs to serve the public each working day from 9 am to 6 pm. Members of the public may stop by without an appointment and receive advice-based consultations on issues ranging from children's, health, and medical to employment, education, and environmental issues. The NGO Center is staffed by an employee of the Vanadzor City Administration and two persons associated with separate NGOs. It is in this final customer window, the NGO Center that the Lori *Marz*/Vanadzor CICC has been established also making use of a 4th floor NGO resource room in the same building.

Having identified a host site for the CICC, ALSP organized an introductory visit to the National Assembly on March 17 for the three persons who will staff the Lori *Marz*/Vanadzor CICC as volunteers. During the National Assembly visit, the CICC volunteers accompanied by ALSP staff conducted discussions on how best to structure and focus the ensuing work of the CICC with the Heads or Deputy Heads of the Secretariat, Regional Policy Department, Information Department, Public Relations Department, Citizen's Letters Division, and the Web Division. Informational and reference materials on the function and operations of the National Assembly were provided for the CICC (including posters on the legislative calendar and the legislative

process printed in the National Assembly Print House). The volunteers were able to grasp in a short time the basic functions of the National Assembly, and more importantly — in addition to the National Assembly deputies, factions, and standing committees — to which staff departments they might turn to regarding various questions.

ALSP was in contact with Habitat for Humanity (HfH) regarding a constituency relations connection for National Assembly deputies. A sister-community HfH build opportunity in Michigan where former US President Jimmy Carter will participate provides a backdrop for a potentially powerful connection with constituents in the region in which a similar build will be ongoing in Armenia. At a meeting facilitated by ALSP with the NA Speaker Artur Baghdassaryan, “Parliament Build” was preliminarily scheduled for June 19, 2005.

ALSP worked with the National Assembly Public Relations Department to identify ways in which the NA “Communications Strategy” could be advanced. In its work with the Secretariat, the ALSP team engaged an STTA to address the changes in the National Assembly Website which were required in order to comply with the amended Rules of Procedure. Significantly, this included public posting of deputy voting records for the first time. Additionally, work with the PR Department and standing committee staff on more effective use of the website by standing committees commenced during this quarter.

Task Four — Developing the National Assembly’s ability to improve oversight of the executive branch through existing mechanisms and, to the extent possible, through assisting in the creation of new mechanisms via Constitutional and legislative amendments.

ALSP staff, particularly DCOP Halstead and ALSP Constitutional Law Specialist Lusine Abovyan attended and participated in six meetings convened during the quarter of the Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures (the “Ad-hoc Committee”) charged with considering and making recommendations relating to constitutional amendments. During each meeting, ALSP staff took copious notes of the proceedings and discussions which were then written up as comprehensive Ad-hoc Committee meeting reports and distributed to the USAID Armenia Mission, the US Embassy, USAID sponsored projects, and other interested western donor organizations.

ALSP was particularly persistent regarding the need to remove or at least increase the constitutional limitation on the number of permanent standing committees in the National Assembly (currently set at six). In this regard, ALSP both verbally and in writing presented to Ad-hoc Committee members strong comparative and substantiated examples why, as a core legislative prerogative for exercising oversight over the executive branch, this number should be established not in the constitution but in the National Assembly’s Rules of Procedure.

COP Valentine and DCOP Halstead met with Deputy Chairman of the National Assembly and Chairman of the Ad-hoc Committee Tigran Torosian on February 9 to discuss the constitutional amendment process, particularly means for securing and improving NGO access to Ad-hoc Committee meetings. As follow up to this meeting, Ms. Abovyan drafted and submitted for use by the Ad-hoc Committee, a sample questionnaire for determining the substantive and participatory interests of NGOs in relation to the constitutional amendments. ALSP also met several times and closely cooperated with National Democratic Institute (NDI) staff to update the

latter on Ad-hoc Committee-related developments so that NDI could work with and encourage NGO participation in the constitutional amendment process.

Ms. Abovyan also drafted and submitted to the Ad-hoc Committee an informative analysis comparing and contrasting on a substantive issue-by-issue basis the three main drafts of the constitutional amendments (the Coalition draft, the United Labor Party draft, and the Deputy Arshak Sadoyan draft). Ms. Abovyan and Mr. Halstead also prepared and widely-distributed an informational piece on the procedural and minimum amount of day requirements mandated by the constitution and Armenian law as well as the Rules of Procedure in relation to the initial submission of drafts of constitutional amendments through the first, second, and third parliamentary readings to Presidential signature and the ultimate holding of a public referendum.

ALSP took part in discussions and preliminary meetings that resulted in the creation on January 30 under the auspices of the USAID Legal Reform Program implemented by ABA/CEELI of a “Task Force on Constitutional Amendments” made up of judges, attorneys, academicians, and other specialists charged with developing and drafting chapter by chapter, article by article recommendations on improving the drafts of the constitutional amendments. As the quarter concluded, the Task Force had completed its recommendations with particular attention paid to issues of legislative authority, legislative-executive relations, human rights, and the independence of the judiciary. Ms. Abovyan served as a member of the Task Force and was the primary drafter of the recommendations related to the authority, jurisdiction, and competence of the National Assembly.

Mr. Halstead and Ms. Abovyan participated during March in an informal Working Group of experts which included Deputies from several political factions of the National Assembly as well as experts from legal-sector NGOs. The goal of the Working Group was to increase the authority and role of the National Assembly in the draft constitutional amendments relating to how the Government of Armenia is formed, dismissed, and legislatively overseen.

Ms. Abovyan presented remarks analyzing the drafts of the constitutional amendments and explaining the procedural process at a forum attended by 15 NGO representatives held on February 3. Ms. Abovyan also moderated a roundtable held at the American University of Armenia (AUA) on March 31 during which NA Deputy Grigor Ghonjeyan on behalf of the United Labor Party and NA Deputy Arshak Sadoyan presented remarks about and answered questions related to their drafts of the constitutional amendments. More than 75 faculty, students, and NGO representatives attended the roundtable which was organized by the AUA Center for Comparative Law with support from ALSP.

3. Summary of this Quarter’s Milestones and Outputs

Cross-Cutting Tasks

As part of the process of introducing the new Deputy Chief of Party Kregg Halstead to the counterparts at the National Assembly, during courtesy visits with all chairs of standing committees and all heads of departments, the ALSP II Year 1 Implementation Plan was discussed in detail with all potential stakeholders.

ALSP provided the National Assembly with a proposal for the establishment of the Legislative Strengthening Advisory Group.

The Performance Management Plan was submitted to USAID for approval.

Personnel changes included the departure of the ALSP Constituency Relations Specialist and the creation of a new position “Public Policy Specialist” and hiring Edward Safaryan in that position.

ALSP expanded the Information Technology Assessment to encompass numerous recently established or reorganized departments within the National Assembly and developed equipment maintenance-related conditions that the National Assembly should agree to prior to additional procurements being made.

ALSP solicited and received preliminary bids from three local IT vendors for extending the LAN at the Control Chamber and prepared a procurement recommendation for USAID’s review and approval.

ALSP engaged a local STTA to conduct a cost-benefit analysis/feasibility study on the options of installing an offset printing facility at the National Assembly juxtaposed against the current practice of outsourcing certain large or technically complex orders to private printing services.

Task One — Facilitating and institutionalizing the involvement of Armenia’s legislative community to advocate, lobby and advise the National Assembly on policy and legislative issues.

ALSP worked with the Citizen Letters Division in their use of the Public Inquiry Tracking System (PITS) used to collect data on citizen appeals and tracking the history of how each inquiry was answered.

ALSP continued its efforts to assist standing and Ad-hoc committees in conducting public committee meetings and public committee hearings. The ALSP team worked with the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs suggesting procedural innovations for their two-day informational hearings on Karabakh March 29-30. ALSP also provided assistance to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Health and Environmental Affairs for its legislative hearing on March 14 on family medicine.

ALSP convened the Committee Staff Working Group on Public Participation (CSWGPP) at the end of the quarter to identify challenges and opportunities connected with the recent changes to the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly and opportunities for capturing best practices for improved public meetings at the National Assembly.

ALSP assisted the National Assembly in preparing outreach materials explaining the changes to the National Assembly’s legislative calendar as a result of changes in the Rules of Procedure.

ALSP convened a CCCG meeting on constitutional amendments and opportunities for public participation in the process of their consideration. Subsequently several NGOs were invited to

attend and contribute to the preliminary discussions of constitutional amendments of the NA Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures.

ALSP worked with the Standing Committees of the National Assembly to identify legislation for dissemination for public comment using the newspaper insert mechanism. The Draft Law on Healthcare was identified during this quarter as the most appropriate draft law for this mechanism.

COP Valentine made a presentation to a group of youth being trained by the Center for Civil Society Development. The focus of the presentation was on never losing sight of opportunity. In the course of the presentation. She used examples of the National Assembly's work to illustrate certain points, she thus exposed the participants to the information systems in place at the National Assembly.

Task Two — Improving the functioning of key committees and departments of the National Assembly by having them work closer with the legislative community in jointly analyzing, researching, commenting on and drafting legislation.

ALSP assisted the Human Resources Department of the National Assembly in soliciting feedback from Heads of Departments to complete the schedule and implement the 2005 training plan. A draft training plan was developed and submitted for approval to NA Chief of Staff Kotanian. This was done as a collaborative process engaging each department with the training team of the HRM Department.

The Staff Innovations Fellowship Competition was announced to National Assembly Staff and 21 applications were received. The competitive fellowship allows for National Assembly staff to design their own program to work for a short period of time with their colleagues at other CIS parliaments in order to observe their procedures and practices and identify those which could innovatively be adopted and adapted and put into practice at the National Assembly.

ALSP provided assistance in the further development of the Staff Policy Manual and the Staff Procedures Manual. The first departments to participate in the process of writing their policies are the Information Department and the Social Policy Research Department.

Departments of the National Assembly each produced an annual action plan at the beginning of the year. Some of the departments modeled this on the action plan which ALSP had helped the Information Department to develop in the previous year.

The Director of the NA Human Resource Management Department, Varduhi Khachatryan, participated in a Study Tour "Human Resource Policies for Legislatures" in the US for one week in March visiting the Maryland General Assembly and offices of the US Congress.

ALSP DCOP Gregg Halstead conducted a workshop for the Research Division of the Information Department on "Legal Research in the United States" on March 16.

The Gender Initiatives Group was established in the National Assembly. Gender Impact Assessment Training was conducted for the National Assembly deputies and staff on March 23 by two specialists from Northern Ireland (in cooperation with the British Embassy). The morning

session was devoted to work with deputies (seven attended from four factions) and the afternoon was focused for National Assembly staff from 10 departments.

ALSP staff provided assistance to the Social Policy Research Department to organize a meeting of NGOs and academic specialists on the topic of traditional medicine, helping the department to identify potential experts in this field.

ALSP cooperated with several USAID implementing partners during the quarter, most notably the PA Consulting Water Resource Management project relative to the draft Law on Potable Water, and the PADCO/ Armenia Social Transition Program on the pending draft Law on Healthcare.

ALSP staff also met with the USAID Political Party Programs assessment team.

Task Three — Improving the ability of select units and individuals within the National Assembly to be more transparent, representative and responsive to citizen priorities, interests and concerns.

The first pilot Citizen Information and Communication Center (CICC) site was established in Vanadzor at the Integrated Social Services Center. A one-day orientation was organized at the National Assembly for the volunteers to meet with principles of various staff departments regarding their work and contributions to informing the citizens of the work of the National Assembly and/or facilitating communication back to deputies. Information Posters for the CICC were produced in the NA Print House.

ALSP worked with the Public Relations Department in the National Assembly to assess the Communications Strategy and outline systems and mechanisms to be further developed. This included working with standing committees to provide more information prospectively on the work of committees. This has already been incorporated into the weekly Parliamentary Hour TV show as well as coverage of the weekly committee meetings under the “NEWS” section of the NA Website. This quarter, ALSP worked with the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations to pilot new features on their site.

ALSP produced a report on the results of the NGO Questionnaire conducted in November 2004 at the NGO fair. The results reflect the knowledge of and attitudes towards the National Assembly of those in civil society organizations. The results were compared with the results of surveys conducted in the previous two years.

ALSP engaged a Website programming specialist to work with the NA Web Division to de-bug and introduce new features on the website required by the changes in the NA Rules of Procedure. Most significantly, this included the posting of individual votes of deputies at plenary sittings.

Task Four — Developing the National Assembly’s ability to improve oversight of the executive branch through existing mechanisms and, to the extent possible, through assisting in the creation of new mechanisms via Constitutional and legislative amendments.

ALSP worked with the members of the Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures to assist the committee and its members with all necessary resources for efficient work on consideration of constitutional amendments.

ALSP actively participated during six meetings of the Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures and verbally and in writing advised members and the drafts' authors on strengthening the authority and ability of the National Assembly to exercise oversight over the executive branch through including specific mechanisms in the constitutional amendments.

ALSP prepared an analysis comparing and contrasting on a substantive issue-by-issue basis the three main drafts of the constitutional amendments as well as an informative piece on the procedures and timeline requirements necessary to enact constitutional amendments from submission to the National Assembly through public referendum.

ALSP staff served as key members of the Constitutional Amendments Task Force composed of Armenian legal professionals that formulated and prepared improvements to the drafts of the constitutional amendments in areas including legislative authority and legislative-executive relations.

ALSP also participated in a working group of NA deputies and NGO representatives which looked at ways to increase the authority and role of the National Assembly in the draft constitutional amendments especially related to how the Government of Armenia is formed, dismissed, and legislatively oversight can be practiced.

ALSP staff moderated or participated in and offered professional remarks at outreach events aimed at increasing citizen input into the constitutional amendment process.

ALSP analysis of the three draft constitutional proposals was included in the handbook "Constitutional Reforms in Armenia" published in the framework of roundtables "Legal Professionals for Constitutional Reforms." The handbook incorporates analytical materials, draft constitutional proposals officially circulated in the summer and fall of 2004, the 2001 constitutional draft, as well as the Venice Commission Interim Opinion delivered in December of 2004. The handbook was also distributed to National Assembly deputies and staff.

COP Eleanor Valentine met with the Council of Europe Temporary Representative to Armenia Inkeri Aarnio-Lwoff to discuss potential cooperation should the CoE Venice Commissions experts be invited to Armenia to discuss their comments on the three draft constitutional amendments submitted to the National Assembly.

ALSP helped to facilitate public discussion of the constitutional amendments in the National Assembly with academics, NGOs, etc. as a member of the Constitutional Amendments Task Force — a group of Armenian legal professionals, and in cooperation with the American University of Armenia's Center for Comparative Law.

ALSP assisted counterparts within the National Assembly regarding the implementation of new provisions of the National Assembly Rules of Procedure— most notably, assisting the Secretariat in preparing a new printing of the Rules of Procedure for the spring session as well as the Web

Division to accommodate the changes required by the new Rules of Procedure (addition of individual deputy voting records, for example).

ALSP assisted the Control Chamber in preparing an informational brochure and identifying documentation to be posted to the NA Website. ALSP met with representatives of the Hessen Court of Accounts (Germany) which is GTZ's partner in assistance to the Control Chamber.

4. Results This Quarter

A specific reportable results framework will identify precise measurements which will reflect significant progress made during the course of the three years of the ALSP (2004-2007) reflecting results gained due to the combined efforts of the ALSP team and the work of the National Assembly. However data for this reporting framework will be collected annually. In the meantime, specific results can be reported only in some program areas. Results achieved during this quarter are indicated below as they relate to specific program task area.

Task One — Facilitating and institutionalizing the involvement of Armenia's legislative community to advocate, lobby and advise the National Assembly on policy and legislative issues.

- 1) *The NA will have established and institutionalized mechanisms for involving the legislative community into the policy and legislative processes.*

While the National Assembly has not yet institutionalized the practice by requiring it in the Rules of Procedure, Speaker of the National Assembly Artur Baghdassaryan declared at the opening meeting of the Spring 2005 plenary session that all "mother laws" would require a process of public hearings in the lead committees. This is a positive step towards eventually requiring this under the Rules of Procedure.

- 2) *NA implements these mechanisms for ensuring citizen input.*

Several of the public hearings conducted this quarter in committees of the National Assembly incorporated mechanisms for broader public participation. The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs issued advance notice on the NA website and in the print media soliciting participation from civil society representatives. The committee also requested that those applying to participate in the hearing submit an abstract of their planned presentation at the hearing. Reviewing these abstracts allowed the committee to make a more structured agenda for the two-day informational hearings on the Karabakh conflict. As a result more than 45 individuals were able to actively participate in the hearings.

- 3) *NA effectively utilizes the capacity of the legislative community (NGOs, academicians, interest groups, regional representatives, think tanks) to provide expertise and opinions on draft legislation and feedback on implementation of existing laws.*

As a result of the efforts of ALSP to work with NGOs on the processes and procedures for providing input into the legislative process, and the discussions with the Mr. Torosian, Chair of the Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures, during the preliminary discussions in that committee of the three drafts of constitutional amendments, a number of NGOs were invited to participate. Furthermore, this led to more engagement of committee members in various public forums, not only the discussions in the committee.

During a February 9 meeting of COP Valentine, DCOP Halstead, and National Assembly Deputy Speaker and Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures Chairperson Tigran Torosian the role of NGOs in the constitutional amendment process was discussed. Specifically, the Deputy Speaker was concerned about the quality of input which NGOs could have to the constitutional amendments process given that most experts in constitutional reform in Armenia had already had an opportunity to have their input into the process. However, as NGOs were encouraged to contact the committee in order to ask for an invitation to sit in on the meetings of the committee, more NGOs began to participate in the meetings as the discussions of various chapters progressed during February and March 2005. While the participation of NGOs in the discussions was limited to comments after all deputies had been given the opportunity to ask questions of the authors of the three constitutional amendments drafts, the questions asked and comments made by those NGO representatives present had resonance. Perhaps most significantly, Mr. Torosian after initially expressing criticism (in December) of one of the major NGO coalitions, “Partnership for Open Society,” for their proactive stance regarding the constitutional amendments process, agreed to and actively participated in a public forum of that organization discussing the constitutional drafts. The comments which emerged in this discussion among NGO representatives were eagerly considered by the deputies of the lead committee. Related ALSP follow up activities positively contributed to the inclusion and participation of NGOs in subsequent meetings of the Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures.

Task Two — Improving the ability of select units and individuals within the National Assembly to be more transparent, representative and responsive to citizen priorities, interests and concerns.

- 1) *The NA will have established and institutionalized mechanisms for informing the legislative community on its deliberative and legislative processes.*

That the Ad-hoc Committee was prepared to communicate with those interested NGOs was partly a result of the efforts of ALSP in drafting and submitting for use by the Ad-hoc Committee, a sample questionnaire for determining the substantive and participatory interests of NGOs in relation to the constitutional amendments. ALSP also cooperated with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) staff and the staff of ABA/CEELI to support their efforts to promote the inclusion of NGO participation in the constitutional amendment process.

Several NGOs that participated in ALSP CCCG briefings regularly attended the February and March sittings of the Ad-Hoc Committee and successfully participated in the discussions of the constitutional amendments by raising questions and concerns before the committee and authors of the drafts.

- 2) *Information flow to and from the National Assembly is regularized to better reflect citizen input.*

One of the most significant achievements of this quarter was the implementation of the new Rules of Procedure which required public disclosure of individual votes of deputies during a plenary sitting — and specifically, posting those voting results on the National Assembly’s website. This required work on the part of the National Assembly Secretariat and specifically the Web Division to adjust databases which feed the website. First of all, the Session Agenda needed to be adjusted from a three-day sitting to a four-day sitting. Secondly, a mechanism had

to be developed by which the voting records could be posted without fear of manipulation. It was decided in the end to post the voting results for each vote as a HTML file linked to the aggregate vote information posted from the agenda of the sitting.

A review of the Website Usage statistics for this quarter show that the weeks when the National Assembly is in session the number of hits per day is fairly constant at approximately 80,000 and usage is highest between 9 am and 6 pm. “Legislation” is consistently the most frequented URL in terms of hits as well as in terms of Kbytes downloaded from the site. The new requirement to publish voting records went into effect February 28 (the last day of the month). In March, there were two plenary sittings (from 1-3 and from 21-24). The link to the voting records is through the Plenary Sitting Agenda pages. In March, the URL for the Plenary Sitting Agenda was among the top 30 URLs accessed on the site (in February and January this URL was not among those most accessed). Furthermore, among the top 30 URLs of the NA Website accessed in February, were the Rules of Procedure — in the very month that the new Rules took effect. While these statistics are still speculative, they do bear further monitoring to ascertain whether in fact, the use of these URL’s increase as more citizens become aware of the fact that the votes are available to the public and more familiar with the steps to take to access them.

It bears mentioning that in an internet article reporting on a survey conducted by specialists at Yerevan State University, the National Assembly Website is among those most accessed in Armenia. The article points out that the NA website consistently is among the top sites receiving hits on Google and Yandex search engines (in Google it is the 6th most accessed, and in Yandex it was the third most accessed Armenian website). In comparison to the sites of the other South Caucus parliaments, the National Assembly’s site is the most referred by the Google search engine.

B. SUMMARY OF PLANS FOR NEXT QUARTER

Cross-Cutting Tasks

USAID will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Assembly and the first meeting of the Legislative Strengthening Advisory Group will be convened.

ALSP will solicit cost bids from local vendors for the attendant recommended equipment and submit this information accompanied by the Information Technology Assessment to USAID and the National Assembly’s Legislative Strengthening Advisory Group (LSAG) for their review and comment.

Complete the extension of the LAN at the Control Chamber.

Submit the local STTA’s cost-benefit analysis/feasibility study on the options of installing an offset printing facility at the National Assembly to USAID and the LSAG for their review and comment.

ALSP will conduct Performance Management Plan — related activities, including working with the Human Resource Management Department to conduct a staff survey in the National Assembly and solicit bids to conduct a survey of elected deputies in June 2005.

Task One — Facilitating and institutionalizing the involvement of Armenia’s legislative community to advocate, lobby and advise the National Assembly on policy and legislative issues.

ALSP will continue its work with the National Assembly Citizen Letters Division on the developing the Public Inquiry Tracking System (PITS) and install PITS in the Speakers’ offices and one standing committee and train staff to use the PITS.

Continue assistance to the standing and ad-hoc committees in organizing public hearings. Specifically, ALSP will work with the Standing Committee on Social, Health and Environmental Affairs on a series of public hearings on the draft Law on Healthcare as well as on the draft Law on Potable Water. Additionally, the ALSP will work with the staff of the Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs on a hearing on the amendments to the Local Government Law.

A meeting of the Coordinating Council of Constituency Groups will be convened with NGOs who had participated in recent hearings to solicit their feedback on how the new innovations introduced to the practice of parliamentary hearings are working.

The Committee Staff Working Group on Public Participation will meet to review drafted Public Hearings Guidelines.

Task Two — Improving the functioning of key committees and departments of the National Assembly by having them work closer with the legislative community in jointly analyzing, researching, commenting on and drafting legislation.

ALSP will work with the Human Resource Management (HRM) Department on the methodological and technical skills training which will introduce modern analyses techniques in the National Assembly.

After appropriate revision of the intranet the HRM will post the training plan on the intranet.

Conduct a workshop on conducting legislative research in countries of the European Union for the National Assembly Research Division of the Information Department.

A National Assembly Staff Innovations Fellowship Review Committee will review applications and 6 NA staff will participate in study tours of their own design to other legislatures in the CIS.

The HRM staff will work with individual units to write with them their policies and procedures. The NA Print House is a logical candidate to engage for this effort.

ALSP and HRM staff will interview department heads, standing committee chairs and deputies about the advantages and disadvantages of the current set up for accepting student interns at the National Assembly and establishing criteria for interns and solicit applications for year-long interns to begin working at the National Assembly in fall 2005.

ALSP will facilitate training of National Assembly staff in cooperation with the Eurasia Foundation Caucuses Regional Research Center.

USAID EREO staff will present their portfolio to NA staff.

Continue observing meetings of standing committees and work with individual committees on the organization of public committee meetings/hearings

As a follow up of the National Assembly staff visit to Polish *Sejm* last December, the two experts from the *Sejm's* Bureau of Studies and Expertise, Miroslaw Sobolewski and Miroslaw Gwiadowicz, will visit the National Assembly June 2-13 2005. Both are environmental experts and they are ready to contribute to the development of the research capabilities of the National Assembly departments (particularly, of the Social Policy Research Department and the Legislative Analysis Department) and share the Polish *Sejm's* experience in developing research/analysis plans and projects to respond to and anticipate from elected deputies their information needs in considering policy options proposed by the government or legislators. They will also address Poland's experience in European legislative analysis, identification of gaps existing in Polish legislation and now under the EU, and examining proposed EU legislation or regulations in certain fields. Other issues to be addressed in their training will be the importance of non-partisan legislative research services, and the process for soliciting expertise which may exist outside the walls of a parliament.

Task Three — Improving the ability of select units and individuals within the National Assembly to be more transparent, representative and responsive to citizen priorities, interests and concerns..

Conduct an assessment of locations in at least one *marz* (preferably two) with already existing advantageous physical infrastructure to set up to host the second of three targeted regional Constituency Information and Communication Centers (CICC)s. In conducting and completing this process, ALSP will utilize selection criteria and ongoing "lessons learned" associated with the operation of the Lori *Marz/Vanadzor* CICC.

Work with Habitat for Humanity to launch "Parliament Build" under the auspices of a June 2005 sister-community initiative with the State of Michigan where former US President Jimmy Carter will be participating in a HfH build. This event provides a unique opportunity for factions of the National Assembly to conduct constituency relations activities.

ALSP will introduce the Public Inquiry Tracking System (PITS) into at least on Standing committee and identify ways that the reports on citizen case work can be used in constituency work.

ALSP will work with the Public Relations staff to train other departmental and committee staff on the National Assembly Communication and Public Relations strategy. Specific emphasis will be on working with the speaker's office on effective public communications.

ALSP will meet with principles at the National Assembly who had been active regarding the issue of drafting a Code of Conduct for National Assembly deputies and ascertain the possibility of further facilitating that process.

ALSP will convene the Gender Initiative group at the National Assembly to discuss next steps based on the Gender Impact Assessment Training held in March. ALSP will also solicit gender impact assessments from NGOs on legislation pending in the National Assembly.

Task Four — Developing the National Assembly’s ability to improve oversight of the executive branch through existing mechanisms and, to the extent possible, through assisting in the creation of new mechanisms via Constitutional and legislative amendments.

Observe National Assembly plenary sitting and committee discussions of draft constitutional amendments through first, second, and third readings and continue to provide consultations to the members of the lead committee as well as to the authors of the draft selected for further elaboration with the goal of improving the ability of the National Assembly to exercise oversight over the executive branch.

Participate in meetings of the Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures and provide technical advice during the expected visit to Armenia and the National Assembly of Venice Commission experts charged with further commenting and rendering final expertise on amended drafts of constitutional amendments.

Interviews of deputies will be conducted regarding how Question and Answer Sessions can be improved and corresponding recommendations will be drafted for distribution within and for use by the National Assembly.

As the spring 2005 session commenced with new amendments in the NA Rules of Procedure in effect, another draft law proposing to change the frequency of the sessions was circulated by the United Labor Party faction. The draft proposed switching to short (two-day) weekly sessions. After consideration in the Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs, the draft did not receive a positive conclusion and was rejected in the plenary session. Active discussions of the National Assembly Rules of Procedure started among the different factions. Based on the several underlying issues on which ALSP legislative-executive consultant David Olson commented when the most recent changes in the Rules of Procedure were still under consideration in December of 2004 (namely how the work of the committees can be improved while the NA is not in session), Deputy Head of the Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs Hovhannes Margaryan asked ALSP to provide further comments and expertise on the issue. In light of this request, ALSP is preparing an additional set of recommendations on how the Rules of Procedure can be improved to ensure the effectiveness of the work of the committees during plenary and non-plenary session weeks.

ALSP will deliver comments on the Rules of Procedure and recommendations on how the work of committees can be improved for increased legislative effectiveness during the non plenary weeks.

ALSP will assist the Control Chamber in further preparation of an informational brochure and in making adjustments to their website. Furthermore, the ALSP team will assist in the preparation of the Control Chamber's Annual Report to ensure that it catches the attention of National Assembly deputies. In the process, ALSP will make recommendations on improved reporting practices. Additionally, the ALSP team will review the issues related to ethics in the Control Chamber using best practices from INTOSAI, EUROSAI and other international examples.

C. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND REMEDIAL ACTIONS

Problem: ALSP was not able to follow up this quarter with the Speaker's Letters Council to identify ways that the system developing within the council can be captured and improved upon as a "best practice" in constituency case work for other units within the National Assembly. This was primarily due to project staff turnover and a period required for staff orientation to the program and counterparts.

Remedial Action: Research on similar structures in other legislative bodies will be conducted.

Problem: The Public Inquiry Tracking System (PITS) is not yet introduced to the Offices of the National Assembly Speaker and on a pilot basis to one or two Standing committees of the National Assembly. The problem with connecting the two computers in the Citizen Letters Division slowed down the progress of data entry from the correspondence received.

Remedial Action: Now that the problem of connecting the two computers for simultaneous data entry has been corrected, ALSP can work with the Citizen Letters Division to further clarify any more bugs before installing the system in the speaker's and deputy speaker's offices.

Problem: ALSP did not convene a CCCG meeting regarding concerns voiced by the CSWGPP regarding public meetings in the National Assembly largely because the CSWGPP did not meet for the first time until the last day of the quarter.

Remedial Action: The CCCG group will be convened with those groups who had participated in the hearings in which the NGOs participated to provide feedback to the CSWGPP.

Problem: The Human Resource Management Department has not yet posted its training plan on the NA intranet and bulletin board. This is mainly due to other pressing priorities in the website update and new features.

Remedial Action: Within the next 45 days, the training plan will be on the NA Website.

Problem: Feedback on effective work of interns in the National Assembly has not yet been solicited from deputies and staff in order to draft criteria for an internship program.

Remedial Action: Interviews will begin in April and criteria will be drawn up within one month.

Problem: Colleagues from the USAID Mission's Economic Restructuring and Energy Office (EREO) did not have an opportunity to brief National Assembly staff on their portfolios.

Remedial Action: The Director of EREO suggested that we wait until USAID awarded the Tax Improvement Project and the Competitive Armenia Private Sector (CAPS) project. Each of these awards are immediately pending. As these activities will no doubt be of great interest to the NA it was suggested to conduct the briefing at the end of May to be able to announce who the implementing partner for each of these programs will be.

Problem: A second CICC site has not yet been assessed in another city of Armenia. Partly this is due to the harsh winter and the difficult driving conditions outside of Yerevan and partly due to the staffing gap in February.

Remedial Action: A second CICC site will be assessed during the coming quarter.

Problem: ALSP was not able to devote as much time to working with the Public Relations Department in the National Assembly to assess the Communication Strategy Plan and outline the systems and mechanisms to be further developed, due to the staffing gaps in February.

Remedial Action: With the Public Relations Department and the Human Resource Management Department, ALSP will help to identify necessary training of NA staff on new communication systems and mechanisms.

Problem: ALSP was not able to assist or co-sponsor an international conference on constitutional reforms (with Council of Europe as scheduled by COE and the NA) because the process of the consideration of the constitutional amendments draft has been slower than was originally envisioned. Similarly, the NA did not submit the second reading version of the draft constitutional amendments package for the final expertise by the Venice Commission.

Remedial Action: ALSP will maintain contact with the Ad-hoc Committee on Matters of Integration in European Structures and the new Council of Europe Special Representative to identify opportunities for when the second reading of the constitutional amendments might be scheduled and when this conference might take place.

Problem: ALSP was not able to interview deputies regarding the Question and Answer Sessions and how they can be improved. This task was delayed due to the need to allow time to observe how effectively Question and Answer Sessions will be conducted within the new four-day parliamentary sittings under the amended Rules of Procedure.

Remedial Action: Interviews of deputies will be conducted during the coming quarter and corresponding recommendations will be drafted for distribution within and for use by the National Assembly.

Problem: Delays have been encountered in establishing within the National Assembly a Legislative Strengthening Advisory Group. The two-month delay in issuing the USAID Mission Director's letter to the Speaker Baghdassaryan explaining the importance of the establishment of the Legislative Strengthening Advisory Group for the success of the USAID legislative strengthening efforts severely delayed the establishment of that group, and was followed by a delay on the part of the National Assembly in responding to the suggestion for the composition of the LSAG.

Remedial Action: The ALSP will continue to advocate that the LSAG is in the best interest of the National Assembly, and immediately after the MOU between USAID and the National Assembly, the first LSAG meeting will be convened.

Problem: One of the major problems of the committees and effective committee meetings at the National Assembly is the physical set up of the rooms, and the relative immobility of the furniture in some of the meetings rooms.

Remedial Action: ALSP will continue to provide detailed options/plans and illustrations to standing committee chairs about the physical set up of the rooms which might improve the interaction between those called to report to committees in parliament.

D. UNRESOLVED ISSUES OR CONSTRAINTS ON THE PROJECT

None.

III. FINANCIAL REPORT

Contractor Name: Development Associates, Inc.
Contract No. AEP-I-00-00-00004-00
Quarterly Financial Report
Cumulative through 3/31/05

To No.	Country	Authorized Expenditures (\$)	Actual Expenditures (\$)	Balances (\$)	Estimated Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
800	EGYPT	274,062	264,998.50	9,063.50	1/11/01	1/11/01
801	BULGARIA	67,284	56,784.99	10,499.01	9/30/00	9/30/00
802	EGYPT	4,464,754	2,937,313.58	1,527,440.42	1/11/04	1/11/04
803	ARMENIA I	2,301,804	2,273,975.99	27,828.01	8/31/04	8/31/04
804	UGANDA	3,143,642	1,880,270.49	1,263,371.51	6/30/06	
805	ARMENIA II	2,483,853	412,326.64	2,071,526.36	8/31/07	
	TOTALS	12,735,399	7,825,670.19	4,909,728.81		

IV. RESULTS FROM COMPLETED TASK ORDERS

None this quarter.