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PAKISTAN LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING PROJECT

Quarterly Report (April 1 – June 30, 2008)

Contract No. DFD-I-00-04-00129-00
(Twelfth Quarterly Report for Task Order 01)

July 2008

This report was produced for submission to the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Development Alternatives, Inc., submitted by Christopher Shields, Chief of Party.

Development Alternatives, Inc.

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This quarterly report is submitted to the project CTO Humaira Ashraf of the Office of Democracy and Governance of USAID-Pakistan Mission under the guidelines as stated in Clause A.6 of the contract.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This quarter was framed by the political and legislative actions of the newly elected National Assembly and four provincial assemblies of Balochistan, NWFP, Punjab and Sindh, all of which saw huge turnover of membership in the February 2008 elections ranging from 52 to 73 percent of new Members. The National Assembly has struggled to hold together the national coalition of PPP and the PML(N) parties, which have been divided over the methods to reinstate judges previously dismissed by President Musharraf.

In June, the National Assembly (NA) named committees (though as of this writing they have not announced the Chairs owing to internal political wrangling), and began the process of budget debate. Despite the turmoil over the judges' issues, the parliament is asserting its authority in both symbolic and substantial ways. Namely, for the first time in more than four decades, details of the defense budget for the current as well as the next financial year were placed before parliament amid applause from both treasury and opposition benches. The defense budget details were put before the Senate on the last day of a general debate on the budget, which was passed 23rd June. While Senators were given only two hours for discussion on defense spending, *any* debate opportunity marks an important shift in attitude concerning budget transparency on a previously "taboo" subject and signals the assertion of parliamentary authority over other institutions, including the presidency and military. Further, the Finance Minister stated at the end of this Budget Session that the 2009-2010 Budget discussions would begin in March rather than in June, to ensure the Parliamentarians' access and oversight of the next budget. The Speaker, who has been a past participant in PLSP committee and other trainings, has publicly announced that parliamentary committee strengthening will be a top priority of this parliament, and also that the national parliament intends to proceed with live coverage of proceedings. The former will not be evident until naming of the Committee Chairs, which per the Rules of Procedure is nearly a month overdue.

The DAI PLSP team responded by continuing Member Orientation 2008 (MO8) for all new houses, to improve both legislative and oversight functions. The eight introductory Member Orientation for five houses finalized in April, were followed by in-depth MO8 Phase II budget process training for all five houses beginning in mid-May. We note that based on the Legislative Watch record released by local NGO PILDAT, length of and participation in budget debate has been significantly enhanced year over year since PLSP implementation (see PMP narrative.) Committee training and proposed Rules Changes to strengthen committees will be implemented early in the next quarter.

The long-awaited Lawyers' "Long March" finally took place on the 12th to 14th of June, culminating in a 2:00 am rally/festival in front of the National Assembly. However, the expected sit-in failed to materialize. Heavy security marked the days prior to the late night rally, effectively sealing off the Parliament and Parliament Lodges from all but MNAs and Senators. This unfortunately forced the Project to cancel its follow-up Budget Process Orientations for MNAs, although in its place project staff members have been meeting one-on-one with individual Members to assist with the budget analysis.

On the representation front, the project made a major advancement – The NA leadership stated in a letter to USAID in unambiguous terms its support for live telecasting of parliamentary proceedings. A further example of that commitment was provided when the Speaker of the Assembly instructed that Assembly Sessions would be broadcast live via Pakistan state Television (PTV) with specific emphasis on live broadcast of Question Hour. This is a stopgap measure, in that Pakistan (public) television (PTV) retains editorial control, but the Assembly leadership's plans to move to direct feeds to all television channels, ensuring greater transparency. In the past parliament, political commitment to this issue was wavering. The PLSP project has been preparing technically for this eventuality – and pushing its importance for transparency to the leaders of the Secretariats and Members – almost since the very inception of project. Now the project and USAID are placed to respond to the new-found political will for transparency through provision of updated equipment and technical expertise necessary to enable the proceedings to be fed to all television outlets without the possibility of any editorial control by any state agency.

Finally, upon interventions and recommendations from PLSP, the National Assembly has included the funds for the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Studies (PIPS) land transfer in its 2008-2009 National Budget. It is a notable and positive sign that getting this budget request approved by the Ministry of Finance involved the direct intervention of the Speaker of the NA. Once those funds are released from the Government in July 2008, USAID will be able to initiate the design phase of the new Parliamentary Institute building. This building will permanently and physically house the training modules, additional parliament staff and research support that PLSP has built throughout the project to enhance the Secretariat's institutional support for members and staff.

With regards to project management, Christopher Shields was promoted from acting to permanent Project Director on April 1 as the new cost extension (through 31 December) took effect; new Deputy Director Carmen Lane joined from DAI's home office in mid-April.

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The **Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project (PLSP)** is a three and one-half year initiative funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI). The project is working with the National Assembly and Senate and the provincial assemblies in NWFP, Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab. The project will operate from September 2005 through December 2008. DAI IQC subcontractors include the National Conference of State Legislatures, Social Impact and the State University of New York Center for Legislative Development.

Program activities in each of the legislatures focus in four general technical areas. While some activities are common to each house, PLSP is responsible for ensuring that implementation is tailored to the specific needs of each assembly. The main areas of PLSP work include:

Representation – Assisting Pakistani parliaments provide information to the public and receive input from citizens during the legislative process. Key tasks include: media coverage of parliament, public hearings, parliamentary websites, dissemination of legislative records, parliamentary public relations strategies.

Law Making – Assisting Pakistani parliaments, including members and staff, improve the structures and mechanisms by which legislation is analyzed, debated, and passed. Key tasks include: committee structures, library and research, legislative drafting and development of a Pakistan Institute for Legislative Studies.

Oversight/Accountability– Assisting Pakistani parliaments oversee government operations, particularly in the area of budget formulation and implementation. Key tasks include: budget formulation, budget process, question time, and public auditing

Management/Infrastructure – Assisting Pakistani parliaments improve the day to day management and operation of the legislative process. Key tasks include: equipment and hardware and software improvements, archiving and legislative records management.

The Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) will be the key institutional legacy of the project. All training and technical assistance activities will be designed to support the future operations of PIPS.

Each assembly has identified “focal persons” to coordinate with PLSP staff and each has established a Legislative Development Steering Committees to develop work plans and prioritize institutional needs. The Steering Committees serve as the formal interface with the PLSP.

This activity supports USAID/Pakistan mission’s Strategic Objective (SO) 4.0 seeking the promotion of a “More participatory, representative and accountable democracy in Pakistan,” and specifically Intermediate Result (IR) 4.1 “Improved Representation and Responsiveness of National and Provincial Legislatures.”

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III. NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL LEVEL PROGRAMMING

NOTE: This section is organized by national -- and cross-cutting provincial -- activities followed by highlights specific to each assembly, where relevant.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This quarter, the PLSP completed Members Orientation Introductory Sessions in all Houses, with participation of approximately 300 Members, one-quarter of which were women Members. In addition, the project completed Phase II in-depth Budget Process trainings and consultations, which were held between mid-May and the prime budget month of June.

The project continued providing assistance in the establishment of the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS). The National Assembly requested the funds for the PIPS land transfer in its budget, which is expected to be allocated by the Government in July 2008. Legislation to formally establish the PIPS as an autonomous body reporting to the National Parliament has been drafted, reviewed by the Ministries of Parliamentary Affairs and Law. Upon discussion of some proposed amendments in the first LDSC meeting, we anticipate the bill will be introduced in the next session (now expected in mid-August). The issue of the recruitment of the PIPS Executive Director also will be taken up as soon as the new Legislative Development Steering Committee meets (expected in July.)

In the meantime, the project continued to manage the PIPS interim facility at Parliament Lodges, providing research support services and utilizing the facility for Member Orientation.

Key Activities and Accomplishments

Improved Representation

- The National Assembly provided on its website key information about the Assembly sittings and proceedings for the first time in the history of the country. The National Assembly website now carries the Orders of the Day (Daily Agenda of the Sittings), details of the Legislative Business and the Questions-Answers of the Question Hour. These reflect parliamentary website best practices the PLSP project has introduced and supported over the last two years.
- The project launched the Balochistan Assembly media center with Honorable Speaker Muhammad Aslam Bhootani. The PLSP had provided equipment, furniture and assistance with space renovation for an improved space for Member-journalist interaction. The Speaker himself has since followed up by providing additional equipment for close circuit monitoring of house proceedings.
- The Punjab Assembly has designated a new facility for the Press Gallery, and PLSP is supporting with the layout and furniture procurement.
- Project helped verify data for new Punjab Assembly Website, to be launched next quarter.

Improved Law-making and Oversight

- The Project began the second phase of its Members Orientation with the first of the Budget Process Orientations for the National Assembly, which took place at the PIPS interim facility on 17th May. Visiting USAID-DCHA Assistant Administrator Michael Hess addressed the 44 participating Members - representing three different political parties – concerning the importance of their fiscal oversight roles. A total of eight Budget Process Orientations have been held in Islamabad, Karachi, Quetta, Lahore and Peshawar, with considerable active involvement of assembly leadership.
- With intervention of the project (and eventually the Speaker), the National Assembly requested the funds for the PIPS land transfer in its budget, which is expected to be allocated by the Government in July 2008. This will allow USAID to move forward on procurement for design and construction of a PIPS building.
- The Project successfully hosted a study tour of members of the Secretariat of the Bangladeshi Parliament, who came with support of the USAID/Bangladesh PROGATI project to study the Pakistan Budget Process and the Project's successful implementation of its Budget Process seminars. This activity benefited both projects' budget activities, as outlined below.
- All 26 Policy Resource Guides are completed and are being distributed via CD's so that Members and staff may reproduce them (reflecting PLSP budget limitations for professional printing).
- The PLSP Internship program was reduced through attrition at the end of the existing last quarter to await formation of the new LDSCs in each House. Eleven interns finalized their research assignments. Punjab Assembly held an intern graduation ceremony, hosted by the Speaker.

Improved Infrastructure/Management

- The new Legislative Development Steering Committee was named for the national parliament, and the Balochistan Assembly. The national (NA and Senate) LDSC will be chaired by NA Speaker Honorable Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi. MPA Dr. Ruqaya Saeed Hashmi (a returning woman member) will Chair the Balochistan LDSC. PLSP has sent all new LDSC members background information on the project accomplishments and an invitation for the first meeting as soon as the budget session is completed.
- Upon USAID's receipt of a letter from the Deputy Speaker of the NA confirming the national parliament's commitment to telecasting, the project gathered updated data concerning equipment/IT requirements.
- PLSP provided training for basic computer and IT skills, and on Urdu language software. This included basic computer training for 24 Assembly staff in Sindh and five MNAs in Islamabad, and training on Urdu font software for 28 Senate staff members of Printing, Reporting, and Editing sections.

The following local short-term consultants completed assignments during the quarter:

- Chief Technical Advisor Khan Ahmad Goraya, who gave overall advice to the Project including facilitating the budget request for the PIPS land transfer and advancing the PIPS bill.
- Zane Green, Publications Design Consultant – instructional design services for PIPS training modules, Members Orientation materials and Policy Resource Guides.
- Dawood Khan, Budget Process Consultant – co-led four of five workshops on the budget process and budget analysis tools.

SUMMARY OF PLANS FOR NEXT QUARTER

- The project will facilitate the meeting and operations of the new Legislative Development Steering Committees. Top agenda items will include finalization of the PIPS land transfer, passage of PIPS bill, selection process for new PIPS Executive Director and telecasting.
- Given both the need for, and apparent political commitment, support for committee operations in the Local Government and Defense sectors will become the training priority. This includes continued training for Members by our international expert former MP Tony Worthington, technical support to committee chairs, and facilitation of a Conference of Committee Chairs to reinvigorate recommendations for additional committee resources/powers and related Rules of Procedure changes.
- The project plans to conduct a policy dialogue for national and provincial parliamentarians and ministries on local government/decentralization reform, in cooperation with USAID's Districts That Work project.
- We will hold a fourth Meeting of the Secretaries of all Houses, with the AJK Legislative Assembly invited to participate.
- Formal launchings of all Provincial Assembly websites will occur in August.

Crosscutting/Supporting Tasks

Task 0.1 Regular Meetings of the Legislative Development Steering Committees Instituted

Insomuch as the elections brought forth complete changes of leadership in all houses, coupled with the fact that many LDSC members from the previous Assemblies were not returned in the election, all LDSCs have had to be reconstituted. During this quarter, the new LDSCs for the national parliament (NA and Senate) and the Balochistan Provincial Assembly were announced by the respective Speakers.

The National Assembly officially named Deputy Speaker Faisal Karim Kundi, PPP, as Chair of the National Legislative Development Steering Committee (LDSC) for the Project. The Members of the new LDSCs are shown below.

LDSC, National Parliament	Party	Status
Senator Ch. Muhammad Anwar Bhinder*	PML Q	Returning
Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar*	PML N	Returning
Senator Muhammad Azam Khan Swati*	MMA	Returning
Senator Engr. Rukhsana Zuberi*	PPP	Returning
Secretary of the Senate Raja Mohammad Amin*	PPP	Returning
MNA Mrs. Yasmeen Rehman	PPP	New
MNA Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho	PPP	New
MNA Sardar Ayaz Sadiq*	PML N	Returning
MNA Ms. Bushra Golhar	ANP	New
MNA Mrs. Asiya Nasir	MMA	New
MNA Syed Haider Abbas Rizvi	MQM (Leader)	New
MNA Sheikh Waqqas Akram	PML Q	New
Karamat Hussain Niazi	PPP	

LDSC, Balochistan Assembly	Party	Status
Dr. Ruqqaya Saeed Hashmi (Chair, LDSC)	PML Q	Returning
Ms. Raheela Durrani	PMLQ	Returning
Mr. Sahfiq Ahmed Khan	PPP	Returning
Mr. Jan Ali Changezi	PPP	New
Dr. Fouzia Nazeer Marri	BNP-A	New
Uzma Ahad Piralizai	ANP	New
Zahoor Ahmed Buledi	Independent	New
Mr. Jaffar George	PPP	New

The Project and USAID representatives are also members of the LDSC, with the Project Focal Persons of both Houses serving as Ex-Officio members.

In addition, during the quarter Project and USAID staff met with UNDP staff of the Strengthening Democracy Through Parliamentary Development in Pakistan (SDPD) project to discuss ways of coordination of the projects' respective parliamentary Steering Committees at the national level (SDPD does not work at the provincial level).

In May, a joint memo was prepared by PLSP, shared with UNDP for comment and edits, and then forwarded to USAID for review and possible action in early June. The memo includes several possible recommendations, including the creation of a forum now where the two steering committees' participants meet together on a regular basis (such as quarterly and/or two times over the next six months as the project's both come to an end in December). The primary purpose of these meetings would be information sharing and general agreement on common goals for donor parliamentary assistance by the representative members and staff leadership. This forum would enable all donors and counterparts to be fully aware of all projects and would encourage programming that is complimentary.

The experiences in running such a forum will inform whether/how to establish a single parliamentary legislative development steering committee in 2009 (when both current international projects are expected to be reconstituted – for PLSP with a new vision and with UNDP possibly with a new type of management modality more conducive to cooperation with USAID.)

PLSP awaits the comments from USAID concerning this recommendation, and plans to move forward accordingly during the next quarter.

Task 0.2 Coordination of Project Activities with Secretaries

The project maintained good and regular relations with the Secretaries of each house. The National Assembly and Senate Secretaries met with the parliamentary study tour from Bangladesh, in selection of staff for International Federation of Libraries study tour, and were kept apprised of/consulted on key meetings and decisions regarding PIPS land transfer and PIPS bill.

Task 0.3 Project Monitoring and Evaluation

A quarterly update of Monitoring and evaluation of PLSP results is appended, along with a qualitative narrative. We note here that we had planned to conduct a semi-annual follow-up to the committee effectiveness survey, the baseline for which was conducted in October 2007. Given that elections were delayed until February 2008, and accordingly to date committees have not met, we plan to conduct the survey at the end of the next quarter.

COMPONENT 1: Representation Improved

Summary and Impact

PLSP has been working with the LDSC and the secretariats on both telecasting – and related web-casting – since 2006. The technical assessments and preparations were completed with good cooperation from the National Assembly and Senate secretariats. However, PLSP, in concurrence with USAID officials, felt that the past parliamentary political leadership did not demonstrate clear political commitment for such a potentially costly endeavor. Political commitment is critical to ensure that necessary Rules of Procedure (such as those that restrict moving cameras in the chamber) will be changed. In addition, there are on-going commitments required from the secretariats to operate and maintain the telecasting equipment provided – such as better and additional IT staff.

After lobbying these points repeatedly with the secretariats at every opportunity, and with the new Deputy Speaker, this quarter the project achieved a milestone. The Deputy Speaker sent a clear and unambiguous letter to USAID in support of the telecasting. This followed upon the Speaker of the National Assembly's official speech, where she promised live broadcast of parliamentary proceedings (in addition, this was included in the government's "100 Day Plan"). PLSP is finalizing updated technical requirements, which USAID will review for possible additional funds to the Project for facilitating procurement, HR development and installation of state of the art telecasting equipment.

Live broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings – without any possibility of editorial control by state television – will provide the most dramatic and visible change with the new parliament, in terms of public access and transparency.

Task 1.1 – Access to Legislative Information

Transparency of Legislative Calendar: PLSP's proposal to prepare legislative calendars for the Senate and National Assembly was met with general consent at the 27 November 2007 Secretaries' Meeting. In response, both the Senate and the new National Assembly have created draft calendars for the next session and distributed to members. Based on that, the Project has developed a pocket calendar that will be printed and distributed in the next quarter. The project will continue to promote the idea of a permanent calendar to the new LDSCs.

Digitization of Parliamentary Records: PLSP had previously researched all known companies offering digitization equipment that accommodates Urdu text-search capacity in PDF format, which would meet the needs of each house to create and edit legislative documentation in electronic format. In previous quarters, PLSP staff had identified and received information on the only US-based company who is sourcing/developing optimal character reading software for Urdu. In June, after further inquiries, we received information from the company that the software is now complete and we obtained an updated quotation for the necessary software and equipment. We note that maintenance costs for the digitization process are high, and that the secretariats must make the necessary human and financial resource commitments to make this sustainable.

Per agreement with USAID, funds to support equipment and software for digitization were *not* included in the PLSP cost extension. Accordingly, the project is under discussion with USAID concerning the possibility of adding this to a supplemental budget, possibly packaged with the telecasting. The above-mentioned quotation was forwarded to USAID in late June for consideration (this will likely be a sole-source as there are no other companies with Urdu capability).

Task 1.2 -- Website Developments

Parliamentary Institute Website: PLSP has completed a pilot project to create a Website for Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, which is being updated to reflect the new Parliament. This website will provide easy access to users and parliamentarians about working of the Institute, research reports, and articles related to Parliament. Email facility is provided to staff members of PIPS which will enhance communication between the Institute and Members.

Sindh Assembly Website: PLSP supported updating of website, for example adding biographical information of new members; the new website will be launched next quarter.

Punjab Assembly Website: PLSP helped verify new data and the website is ready for launch during the next quarter.

Parliamentary Committee Websites: There was a drop this quarter in the number of unique visitors (30 vs. 100 during the last quarter) recorded at the three Senate Standing Committee websites (Defense Committee, Education, Science and Technology Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee).

- Defense Committee – www.senatedefencecommittee.pk
- Education, Science & Technology Committee – www.ssc-est.gov.pk
- Foreign Affairs Committee – www.foreignaffairscommittee.org

We note that the first two websites are not being updated on a regular basis by the counterparts. The website of the foreign relations committee is regularly updated, though the number of visits has remained relatively low. One explanation for this is that Senators Nisar Memon and Razina Alam, heading Defense and Education committees respectively, will both be up for re-election next March and are likely distracted by this fact, and the apparent loss of their PML (Q) party national popularity.

The process of setting up a website for the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly is on hold until the new parliament is sitting and the appointment of the new Public Accounts Committee Chairman is named in order to ensure that the new committee leadership has ownership of the website development process.

Task 1.3 -- Broadcasting of Parliamentary Sessions

At the beginning of June, the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (who has since become the head of the new LDSC) provided a letter of intent from the National Assembly to USAID specifically assuring its commitment to live broadcast of parliamentary proceedings in clear and unambiguous terms. This overt political support was lacking in the previous parliament.

The Project is following up with the Deputy Speaker and the Director General for Media & Public Affairs of the National Assembly with regard to the provision of telecasting equipment. While the IT department of the National Assembly has provided a draft list of equipment following the Deputy Speaker's letter, it is incomplete, many of the items are obsolete, and the list of equipment needs to be priced. Telecasting expert Daniel Shellenbarger, who had conducted a previous review of telecasting needs for PLSP, began the process of reviewing and updating a list of the proposed equipment. Mr. Shellenbarger is also making recommendations concerning the technical qualifications for personnel necessary to maintain the proposed systems. We expect this technical review, associated budget estimates, and a draft RFP to be completed and submitted to USAID early in the next quarter.

Task 1.3 – Press Gallery Enhancements

Balochistan: In May, PLSP staff attended the Plaque Unveiling and Ribbon-cutting for USAID-funded Balochistan Provincial Assembly Media Center, which was hosted by the Speaker of the Balochistan Provincial Assembly. PLSP had supported the refurbishment of the space for the new Center, and provided high-speed computers and internet access.

The event was attended by approximately 50 people, including MPA's and members of the media. USAID counterparts were invited, but could not go at the last minute due to security protocols. In his remarks, the Speaker profusely thanked USAID for all of its support.

The new Media Center is providing real-time access for reporters to the proceedings of the assembly, which will enable them to provide better coverage to the public. In June, the Speaker showed his commitment to the sustainability of the Center by placing – from the assembly's own budget -- two 29" LCD television sets in the Media Center, and arranging for Close Circuit cameras to cover the proceedings. This allows journalist to cover the proceedings both from the Press Gallery above the floor and from the Media Center. This is important as there are occasions when security concerns dictate that only members can enter the assembly hall.

Punjab: The project helped design the layout for equipment and furnishings of newly designated area for the Assembly's Press Gallery. The new facility is expected to be fully functional in July.

Task 1.5 Public Hearings

The new leadership of the National Assembly has publicly called for opening up the committee process, and laying the political groundwork for the conduct of public hearings in which citizens and advocacy groups can have access to the legislative process.

Standing Committee Hearings: PLSP is prepared to conduct training with committee Chair's on Committee public hearings, and to partner with key committees to support the conduct of hearings. Unfortunately, during this quarter, committee members were only named in June, and to date, the Chairs of the Standing Committees for the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies have not been elected. PLSP staff hope Chairs for the NA committees will be named early in the next quarter. We note however, that the leadership of the Provincial Assemblies have told PLSP staff it may be months before their respective committees are formed owing to the complicated nature of the large coalitions constructed in each provincial house following their formations in early April. The assignments to committees, and more importantly, the chairs of those committees are the focus of intense negotiations made difficult by the broad array of political players who must be placated as part of the coalition deals. Further problems are possible in Balochistan owing to the fact that the considerable number of Ministries available in the Province means that two-thirds of the Members are also Ministers, raising the question of how oversight can be properly conducted in such a situation.

Policy Dialogues: Public hearings involving key legislative or oversight issues -- which may have a broader and less formal focus than committees – are moving forward.

PLSP and the staff of the USAID Districts that Work (DTW) project have met several times this quarter to discuss joint action on a policy dialogue for local government reform. The current constitutional package which is expected to go to the National Assembly shortly after the budget session may address two issues that will affect the framework for local governance and decentralization. The first is a provision to remove the 6th Schedule of the Constitution – which refers to a set of laws not to be altered without the “Previous Sanction of the President”, including the Local Government Ordinances; the second is a provision to amend and/or remove the Concurrent Legislative list, which outlines federal vs. provincial powers. In anticipation, the Provincial Governments have begun to hold their own dialogues on local governance, where they apparently see little role, even one of necessary coordination, for the federal government.

PLSP will support DTW's agenda to ensure that dialogue on local government reform is inclusive, transparent and as fact-based as possible regarding the potential outcomes of reform. As such, PLSP is preparing to co-host a Policy Dialogue – at the Parliamentary Institute facility – which will bring together MNAs and relevant government officials. The outcome/recommendations of those discussions will ideally be referred for specific action by the Standing Committee on Local Government and Rural Development (which presumably will be fully functional in the coming months). In that case, PLSP will assist the committee to facilitate necessary research and/or a public committee hearing.

SUMMARY OF PLANS FOR NEXT QUARTER

- Complete expert review of equipment, installation and necessary training for telecasting. Submit to USAID.
- Hold Policy Dialogue on Local Government Reform in cooperation with DTW.
- Hold workshop on Media Relations for Members in Provincial Assemblies; Hold workshops for journalists on Member-Media Relations.
- Train CSOs and Media on new website resources.
- Train New Members during Phase Two of the Members Orientation on the use of the new websites and electronic governance modules.
- Print 6-month pocket legislative calendars for National Assembly and Senate.
- Complete design for the Public Accounts Committee website and launch.

C. COMPONENT 2: Improved Lawmaking

Summary and Impact

Conduct Members Orientation 2008

During the last quarter, PLSP initiated a three-phased plan for member training which includes an introductory sessions, in depth sessions and thematic seminars/policy dialogues (mentioned above).

This quarter, PLSP staff and experts finished the last of five (Phase I) Introductory Sessions (in **Punjab** and **Balochistan** in April) on Constitutional Authority of Parliament, Parliamentary History, Rules and Procedure (such as Motions and Notices, Question Hour, and Privileges), the Committee System, the Legislative Process, Parliamentarians as legislators, Parliamentarians and the Budget, Research support for legislators. The introductory sessions in total served 300 members from the NA and four provincial assemblies, many of them new members, and a third of them women.

On May 17, PLSP kicked off Phase II of MO8 with an in-depth training on the Budget Process, leading up to and during the Government's introduction of the budget in June. The details of this event and the six budget process trainings that followed are *included under the section on Component 3: Oversight, Task 3.2 Improved Accountability of the Budget Process*. In total, budget process training and individual technical support was given to 244 members in five houses.

During the quarter, the staff began to prepare for in-depth training on committee processes and strengthening, also as a part of Phase II MO8 training. The staff summarized into "one pagers" comparative documentation and past recommendations regarding relevant Rules and Procedure changes in each house. These documents will be useful to the parliamentary leadership, particularly the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the NA.

Punjab: The Punjab MO8 Introductory session was attended by more than 100 MPAs from all the major parties, nearly 50 percent of them women members. The event was attended by the Principal Officer US consulate Mr. Bryan D.Hunt, Ms. Traci Mell, PRO-US Consulate, Mr. Michael Hryshchyshyn and Ms. Humaira Ashraf, USAID Governance office.

Balochistan: Balochistan MO8 Introductory session was held on April 9, 2008 at the Serena Hotel for 34 members, including nine women members. Ten topics were covered in overview form, including on Budget Analysis, Research Services, Parliamentary Privileges, Committee Effectiveness and Business of the House. Presenters included former Deputy Secretary Balochistan Assembly Mr. Gorezai. Representatives of the US Consulate in Karachi also attended.

Task 2.1 Continue to Develop PIPS Research Services

Development of Training Modules and Capacity: A detailed Module on parliamentary **Conflict Resolution** was developed, which not only provides a useful tool to enhance Members' skills of managing a conflict but more importantly enables them to undertake effectively conflict resolutions through the Parliament in particular during committee meetings. The Module will be used in the Phase II of the Members Orientation 2008 for members of the National and Provincial Assemblies.

Policy Resource Guides: PLSP staff and outside consultants finalized all 26 Policy Resource Guides, which offer committees resource information on key sectoral issues. Due to budget limitations for printing, the guides are being put on CD and are being distributed through the PRC and PITRCs as well as included on CDs for new member orientation Phase II.

Task 2.4 Internship program

The intern program cycle came to a close in March, with the exception of three interns who were kept on until June to complete on-going projects for Senate Committee Chairs, and one who finalized her assignment with the **Punjab** Assembly in June.

SUMMARY OF PLANS FOR NEXT QUARTER

- Phase Two Orientations to provide in-depth sessions on Committee Effectiveness, Media Relations, Question Hour, Business of the House and Assessing Legislation in all houses
- Policy Dialogue Sessions on Electoral Reform and Local Governance Reform.

COMPONENT 3: Oversight/Accountability

Summary and Impact

Improving the oversight function of the Pakistani assemblies is not just a matter of imparting knowledge, but of changing over time deeply instilled norms of behavior within both the elected membership and the bureaucracy of the assemblies. PLSP has worked through various methods to strengthen both capacity and norms since its inception – including multiple trainings on a variety of oversight mechanism; skills development, for example on how to elicit detailed responses from the government during Question Hour, recommendations regarding changes to or enforcement of Rules of Procedures, studies on international comparative best practices, and one-on-one consultations with parliamentary leadership. The project has identified political champions – particularly within the Assemblies’ Legislative Development Steering Committees – who could affect change within their parties as well as their respective assemblies.

During this quarter, these collective efforts (combined with an apparent political will of the newly-elected assemblies) began to pay off with visible results:

- For the first time, Standing Committees of the NA were named within the 30 day deadline accorded by the NA Rules and Procedures (although committees have not been formalized as chairs are not named.)
- Pakistan Finance Minister and former PLSP Legislative Development Steering Committee member Naveed Qamar announced to the NA that **next year the government plans to begin budget deliberations with the national parliament as early as March**, and that the budget will be referred to the standing committees. These recommendations reflect the first two of 12 key recommendations dating back to 2006 to strengthen oversight – which came out of PLSP budget process consultations with the national and provincial parliaments. They are necessary changes to allow the parliaments both proper fiscal oversight, and deliberation on related sectoral priorities.
- The new national budget included the **first-ever expansion of Defense Budget line items**, which included a breakdown of defense spending according to labor, operating expenses, physical assets and civil works. Historically, Pakistan’s national parliament has only received the total military spending as a single line in government accounts – this large portion of the budget has been considered an “untouchable” issue for parliament. PLSP has included discussions on this issue through budget trainings, as well as through support of the Senate Defence & Defence Production Committee. While the change is mostly symbolic at this time, it opens a door that in the future will likely lead to further questions and demands for information concerning spending priorities – a door that will be difficult to close once opened.
- Although this year the total number of days allocated for general discussion by parliament did not improve, participation was strong. This year, 229 of 339 NA members participated in the budget debate – this accounts for 68% of the parliament vs. 55% during last year’s budget session.

Task 3.1 Enhance Oversight Mechanisms

Question Hour Training: Question Hour training is to be conducted by our international expert, Tony Worthington, in conjunction with Committee training during the next quarter.

Committee Operations Training: During this quarter, PLSP with DTW conducted a preliminary briefing on devolution for four NA Members that had been named to the Local Government and Rural Affairs Committee. PLSP also took the opportunity to brief the members on the role of committees within Pakistan parliamentary system and rules of procedures. Three of the four participants were new to parliament, and showed vague understanding of the role or potential powers of committees.

The project decided to delay in-depth committee training until Committees – whose members have been named, barring a few last minute changes -- are formalized and Chairs are named. Due to political negotiations among the party coalition partners, naming of Chairs continues to be delayed. The project will go forward with committee training by consultant Tony Worthington in early August focusing on committee members, and then following up with new Chairs with consultations.

Enhance Other Non-Legislative Oversight Mechanisms: The project responded to the National Assembly Public Accounts Committee's request to help the committee develop a website (See Task 1.2) to include the reports of the committee, notification of committee meetings, and to also post the documents the committee receives for review (including the Auditor General's report). In response to this request, the project developed a scope of work for the design of the website and solicited bids from Website Designers.

Unfortunately, last year the Committee Chair became gravely ill (and has since died.) With the approaching elections, PLSP had decided to postpone this assistance until the new Chair was selected (which did not occur this quarter). As soon as the new Chairperson takes office, PLSP will request for new bids and develop the website with mutual understanding of the Committee Chair.

Task 3.2 Improved Accountability of the Budget Process

On May 17, PLSP kicked off Phase II of MO8 with an in-depth training on the Budget Process, leading up to the Government's introduction of the budget in June. This was a one-day workshop for members of the National Assembly on Budget Process & Gender Responsive Budgeting, conducted in partnership with UNDP's Strengthening Democracy through Parliamentary Development (SDPD) project. A total of 50 participants, including 44 Members from three political parties actively participated in the event (representing all parties in the NA except ANP, who were holding a party conference on the same day). A majority of the participants were new to the parliament; for most, this was the first time their budget review role, oversight powers, and available budget analysis tools were fully explained and examined. One Member said the session had given them "the confidence (to oversee) the upcoming fiscal year budget."

Before the lunch break, Mr. Michael Hess, Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, addressed the participants on the importance of a legislature's role in the budget process. He and Dorothy Taft, Director of the Office of Democracy and Governance -- both visiting from USAID Washington -- also stayed for lunch to interact personally with the Members.

This orientation was followed by six additional budget process trainings in five assemblies. Nearly 250 members were trained during a one month period, during which the budget was tabled in each house. The overall turn-out, and the strong level of active participation witnessed, are noteworthy given the political and logistical issues surrounding the judiciary crisis combined with the unpredictability of the legislative calendars.

PLSP Oversight Advisor Aizaz Asif and subcontracted budget expert Dawood Khan led all of the trainings as a team, with the exception of the second NWFP training, where we utilized a local expert. PLSP also utilized former Members and government budget officials to share their experiences. Table I summarizes each training event, including results.

In addition to the budget orientation members were briefed on the Budget Analysis Tools (BATs) and were given presentations on how these could be used as an effective instrument of oversight of sectoral budgets for which the BATs have been created¹.

TABLE I

Date	House	Status	# of Members Attending	Notes	Results Reflecting a Shift in Norms of Behavior
5/17/2008	National Assembly - 1	Completed	50	A pre-budget session held in partnership with UNSP SDPD program, focusing on both budget process and analysis, and gender budgeting. PPP, PML-N and PML-Q members attended. USAID DHCA head Mr. Michael Hess addressed the group.	Mrs. Shahida Rauf (JUI, returning Member) utilized the figures and percentages from the budget analysis tools in her presentation to colleagues. New MNA Marvi Memon, requested personal consultations with PLSP staff during a budget recess day, who helped her conduct a critical analysis of communication and infrastructure line items (especially mega projects involving dams etc) budget, which she then included in her budget speech.
5/31/2008	Punjab Provincial Assembly - 1	Completed	36	Budget process and analysis workshop including practical exercises in budget analysis. It was attended by both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker.	This was the first time the Punjab Assembly Secretariat took active initiative to ensure the members' participation, upon direct instructions of the Speaker.
6/3/2008	NWFP Provincial Assembly - 1	Completed	39	Budget process and analysis workshop including practical exercises in budget analysis. The Speaker attended.	
6/5/2008	Punjab Provincial Assembly - 2	Completed	23	On request from the Assembly this was a second round of Budget process and analysis workshop including practical exercises in budget analysis. It was attended by the Deputy Speaker.	Political leadership recognized the importance of the training and specifically requested an additional session. Requests for repeat training also came from Members who due to conflicts missed the original training.

¹ BATs have been developed for 8 federal sectors which include Education, Health, Food Agriculture and Livestock, Population Welfare, Communications, Environment, Labour Manpower Overseas Pakistanis and Women Development. Health and Education tools have also been developed for each of the 4 provinces.

Date	House	Status	# of Members Attending	Notes	Results Reflecting a Shift in Norms of Behavior
6/9/2008	National Assembly - 2	cancelled		The training was planned during the period of the Lawyer's March; due to security issues limiting all access to Parliament the event had to be cancelled. Instead, PLSP staff provided one on one consultation to interested members during the budget process.	n/a
6/17/2008	Sindh Provincial Assembly 2	Completed	34	This was a budget advisory session, where PLSP staff and experts advised MPs on interpreting the actual budget and helped them prepare their budget speeches.	The Assembly requested an additional session.
6/18/2008	NWFP Provincial Assembly - 2	Revised	14	The post budget recess days coincided with that of Sindh. However, PLSP engaged a local budget expert, Mr. Shehzad, to hold a focused training with several of the most interested members.	Members who missed the first training specifically requested a follow-up session.
6/23/2008	Balochistan Provincial Assembly	Completed	12	Budget process and analysis workshop followed by a budget advisory session, where PLSP staff and experts advised MPs on interpreting the actual budget and helped them prepare their budget speeches.	Mrs. Nasreen Khethra (PML Q, returning Member) -- who attended the training -- emphasized on the floor that "the budget is usually prepared by bureaucrats, while ignoring the elected representatives. Elected representatives have more knowledge about ground realities of their constituencies" She emphasized that after the preliminary preparation, the budget must come to the standing committees.
6/7/2008	Sindh Provincial Assembly	Completed	40	Budget process and analysis workshop including practical exercises in budget analysis. It was attended by the Deputy Speaker. The former Finance Minister and a former Senator also participated as resource persons to share their parliamentary experience.	

Study Tour of Bangladesh Parliamentary Staff

At the request of USAID Bangladesh, and with the support of USAID Pakistan, PLSP hosted a delegation of three members of staff the Bangladesh Parliament, who are stakeholders of the parliamentary strengthening component of the USAID Bangladesh PROGATI (anti-corruption) project. Both PROGATI and PLSP are managed by DAI. The delegation was supported by PROGATI's Parliamentary Advisor, Dr. Obaidullah.

The legislative strengthening focus of the PROGATI program the establishment of a Budget Analysis and Monitoring Unit within the Secretariat. Once there is a permanent Parliament (expected elections by the end of December 2008), the project will also support the strengthening of oversight functions by the Standing Committees. The visitors therefore

were interested in several PLSP initiatives, including the Budget Process and Analysis curriculum for Members and staff; work with Budget Analysis Tools; Senate success with last year's mid-term budget review; and mechanisms to provide budget analysis to Members.

PLSP arranged the agenda for the five-day study tour, provided logistical support, and conducted training sessions on the budget process. PLSP staff, including Aizaz Asif – Oversight Specialist, Carmen Lane – Deputy Director, Imran Khan – Parliamentary Institute Training Manager, accompanied the delegation to meetings and tours at the parliament houses and lodges. The agenda of the study tour is attached as Appendix X.

The study tour had direct value to the PLSP project:

- Preparing the presentations and meetings encouraged PLSP staff to think very critically about the budget systems, and the strengths and weaknesses of existing PLSP training material and budget tools.
- Meetings within parliament gave PLSP additional and positive exposure to key Pakistan parliamentary leadership.
- Discussions of similarities and differences between Pakistan and Bangladesh systems and politics gave the PLSP new perspectives on possible comparative approaches.
- Dr. Obaidullah has deep knowledge of comparative Westminster systems within South Asia and beyond. He raised a few issues of interesting best practice from India and New Zealand which PLSP can incorporate in its materials.
- The meetings gave PLSP and the delegation the opportunity to check the level of knowledge members and key Secretariat staff members have about the budget and committee oversight processes. These meetings drove home the fact that the Pakistan parliament as an institution has improved, but has not fully internalized these powers. Many members still focus on the budget as a two-week exercise, and don't see the potential connection between on-going committee oversight and fiscal policy/budget priorities.

SUMMARY OF PLANS FOR NEXT QUARTER

- Committee Effectiveness (and Question Hour) workshops are planned for Standing Committee members at the national and provincial level involving former member of the House of Commons, Tony Worthington, former parliamentarians and experts. Ideally chairs will be named – at least in the national parliament – before committee training. However, the project plans to go forward in August to train committee members, should naming of chairs continue to be delayed.
- Government Assurances Briefing Paper will be developed to support the Government Assurances Standing Committees in the parliament and the provincial assemblies.

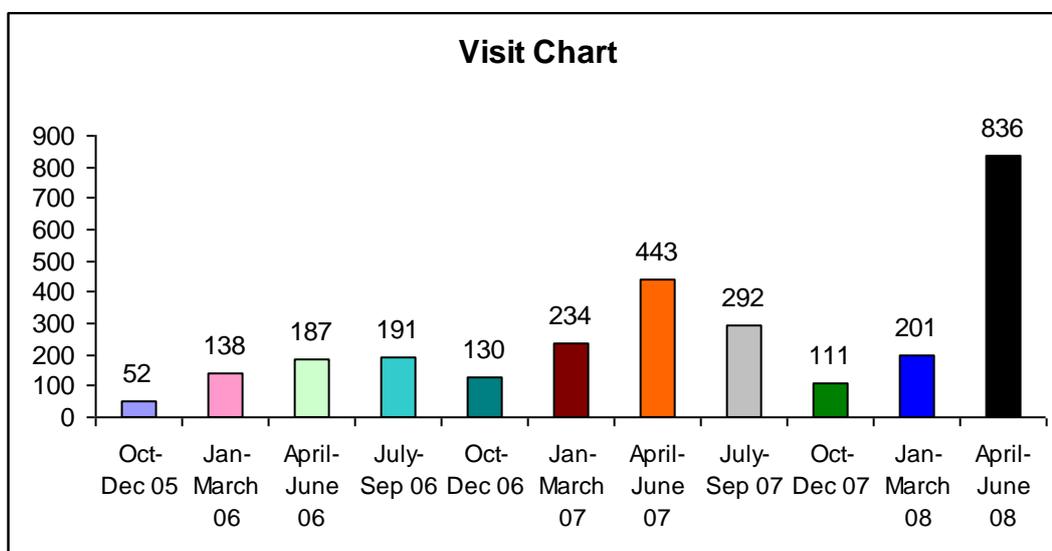
COMPONENT 4: Improved Management/Infrastructure

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES / EVENTS

- **Parliamentarian’s Resource Center** – During this quarter, the PRC obtained the highest number of member visits in its history – a total of 123 unique visitors and over 800 visits.
- **Equipment Installation Enhancements** – Proceedings Reporting Units, Print Shops and Press Gallery installations were reviewed and some revisions made to maximize efficiency during this quarter.
- **Balochistan PITRC** – Nine of the twelve women MPAs from Balochistan held a comprehensive session to develop ideas for gender-sensitive training.
- **Senate IT Capacity Building Trainings** – Senate IT staff received additional equipment, software and IT Network Management and Post LAMP training this quarter.

Task 4.1 Parliamentarian’s Resource Center (PRC)

MPs continued to utilize PRC facilities for Internet, photocopying faxing, printing, scanning and reading periodicals, and meeting facilities. During this quarter, there were a total of 836 member visits to the PRC, with an average daily high of 13 during the budget month of June. This includes a total of 123 different MPs visiting the center (Compared to 65 last quarter), which is the highest quarterly total in the history of the project. We believe this improvement is due to a combination of factors – the large number of new members, the budget process which spurred more participation than usual in general, and concerted marketing efforts of PRC facilities by the project.



In addition, PRC Manager Bushra Navqi, on her own initiative, submitted a paper to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) annual conference on

the development of the PRC as a parliamentary resource institution. Her paper was selected as one of only five for presentation at the event. Ms. Navqi is accompanying the parliamentary staff delegation to the conference, as outlined in Section IV.

With regard to training, a number of members asked for continuation of English Language Courses. In light of limited funding, the PRC staff arranged for free online English courses.

PITRCs (Provincial Level): The PITRCs of the four provincial assemblies remained a central point for providing services and skills enhancement opportunities for Members and Assembly staff during this quarter. The PITRCs continued to provide meeting space, venues for Computer Training for Assembly Staff and members, research services, and expanded Internet Service to key officers of the Houses.

Balochistan: The Provincial Coordinator gave an overview of the project in the PITRC to the new Speaker Mohammad Aslam Bhootani. He showed great interest and asked that communication concerning project cooperation be directed to his office, rather than the Secretariat. He asked that the PITRC continue to hold English classes, which he has made mandatory for staff officers. He intends to request TADA for this purpose for next year's budget as a cost share with PLSP. Additionally, the Assembly has committed to installing 35 inch LCD TVs in the PITRC to provide CCTV access during Assembly sessions, as well as outside news channels.

Deputy Project Director Carmen Lane met with a group of nine of 12 women MPA's in the PITRC during her visit to Quetta to inaugurate the new **Balochistan** Assembly Press Center. The purpose of the meeting was to illicit ideas for gender sensitive training, and to understand better the particular needs of women Assembly members through current and future training.

The women came from various political and cultural backgrounds. Five were new to parliament, and four had served in the previous term; one is the new Minister of Women's Development and Minority Affairs. All but one were selected as part of the quota system. The majority (owing to the nature of the quota system) were closely connected to political families.

The women's recommendations for current or future activities:

- Media and public speaking training geared particularly to women (note that not only are many of the women not experienced with the media, but the media themselves treat the women differently – also there are issues to be considered that are gender specific, such as whether or not to cover ones head while being broadcasted)
- Meetings or exchange programs that expose the women to the national parliament and other PA's
- Forums where all women MPAs can meet (cross provincial)

NWFP: The PITRC provided a venue for budget trainings and meetings amongst the project, Secretariat staff and MPAs, including a discussion on Rules of Procedure. PITRC staff assisted three members in improving basic IT skills, and formal training was arranged for six secretariat staff on Advanced Computer Skills. A core group of 16 members utilized the facility repeatedly.

Punjab: The Resource Center remained very active, with an average of 20 to 25 members per day visiting during the last (budget) session. While out of session, eight members per day have visited the PITRC utilizing internet, fax and telephone services.

Sindh: At the request of the U.S. Consulate, PLSP organized at the PITRC a meeting for select women members with Dr. Josie Bass, President of ALVA CONSORTIUM. Ms. Bass is a consultant on public affairs and parliament. Participants included Deputy Speaker Syeda Shela Raza (PPP); Nadia Gabool, Minister for Human Rights (MQM); Syed Sardar Ahmed, Parliamentary Leader (MQM); and Nusrat Bano Sehr Abassi (PML-F).

In May, after utilizing the research assistance of the PITRC, Member of the Sindh Provincial Assembly Ms Humera Alwani, Pakistan People's Party (PPP), introduced a Private Members bill on Gender Discrimination and Harassment. Specifically the Provincial Coordinator helped the MPA research related laws on n dowry, inheritance, child and mother health, HIV AIDS, and domestic violence. MPA Alwani held a related press conference in the PITRC facility.

Installation of Print Shop Equipment

During this quarter, PLSP assisted in the reorganization of the logistical relationship of the Senate Print Shop and Proceedings Reporting Sections, which involved the relocation of part of the Print Shop to an office adjacent to Proceedings Reporting Unit.

Installed Proceedings Reporting Equipment

PLSP has installed the digital audio equipment in the reporting and audio sections of the National Assembly and Senate and it is now in operation.

SUMMARY OF PLANS FOR NEXT QUARTER

- Formal Launching of Provincial Websites in late August adjacent to Assembly Sessions and Project trainings..
- Joint IT and PRO Forum meeting on Website maintenance and sustainability
- Oracle training for Punjab Assembly IT officers.

IV. COOPERATION WITH OTHER DONORS/INTERNATIONAL ENTITIES

- PLSP secured nearly \$50,000 funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for seven parliamentary library and research staff (one nominated by each house, plus Bushra Naqvi of the PRC) to attend the World Library and Information Congress of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) in Québec City as well as the Pre-Conference Meeting of the Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section (LRSPS) being hosted by the Parliament of Canada in Ottawa. The events will take place in August. PLSP has been providing all of the logistical support for the trip, and assisting with visa processing of seven additional staff funded directly by the Assemblies.
- Project Director Christopher Shields met with DFID officials in London during his leave period, to brief them on PLSP activities. They also requested information about USAID activities in FATA, particularly the FATA CBP project which DAI also manages.
- PLSP staff and Michael Hryshchyshyn of USAID conducted a meeting with Marvi Sirmed and Farhan Sabih of the SPDP project, as well as Mikiko Tanaka of UNDP, to discuss cooperation through joint LDSC meetings. The group prepared a memo for USAID on the subject, and recommended that – given the different execution modalities and the fact that both projects are currently scheduled to end in December – representatives of each group be included informally in LDSC meetings on at least a quarterly basis. A more formal joint framework will then be assessed for the new phases of each project.
- PLSP distributed several hundred election manuals – one on election complaints and another on election dispute resolution -- on behalf of the IFES electoral reform program. Manuals were given to members of each Assembly via the PRC and the PITRCs.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- Christopher Shields was promoted to Project Director, and Carmen Lane joined from DAI's home office as Deputy Project Director.
- Operations Manager Kiram Shah announced his departure towards the end of June. After 2.5 years with PLSP, he is taking an opportunity with another USAID-funded project in Peshawar. We would like to note the excellent professionalism and positive attitude Mr. Shah has brought to the PLSP project. PLSP began the process of selecting an internal replacement.
- PLSP interviewed candidates and hired a new IT manager – Zahoor Ahmad -- to replace Sher Shah who had moved to the FATA CBP project.
- The cost extension work plan was completed and submitted at the end of April.

VI. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND REMEDIAL SOLUTIONS

Legislative Development Steering Committees

Problem: Since elections, the new parliament has been busy establishing itself and also distracted by political issues. The Deputy Speaker was required to finalize the new LDSC for the national parliament. LDSCs are still being named at the Provincial level. Accordingly, the LDSCs did not meet during this quarter.

Remedial solution: After some meetings on the subject, the Deputy Speaker officially named the new LDSC in June, and has committed to holding the first meeting in July. The Balochistan Provincial Assembly also named its LDSC, to be chaired by MPA Dr. Ruqaya Saeed Hashmi. Project is talking to the other

Budget Workshop for Journalists in National Parliament

Problem: The PLSP had postponed a series of Parliamentary Procedure and Rules Workshops for Journalists at the National Parliament from July, originally with plans to conduct the workshop in this quarter.

Remedial Solution: These trainings are scheduled in the next quarter as part of the Phase Two Member Orientation activities.

Public Relations Officers (PRO) Working Group Meeting

Problem: The Public Relations Officers (PRO) and Media Working Group had planned to meet this quarter, but this meeting was again postponed due to the political situation following the establishment of the new Assembly and the subsequent budget session, which consumed the attention of most journalists throughout most of the quarter.

Remedial Solution: The Public Relations Officers and Media Working Group is now scheduled for mid-September in conjunction with the IT Forum to discuss how both can work together to continually enhance the websites.

IT Forum

Problem: PSLP intended to conduct an IT Forum during this quarter but those efforts were hampered by the delay in reorganizing the Houses, which again postponed the meetings.

Remedial Solution: The IT Forum is now rescheduled for mid-September in conjunction with the next PRO working group to discuss how both can work together to continually enhance the websites.

Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS)

Problem: Political delays leading up to and after elections, the lengthy period taken to organize the National Assembly, and the preparation and conduct of the budget session meant that the PIPS bill did not come to the floor.

Remedial Solution: The legislation is currently at the Law Ministry awaiting response from the LDSC on two recommendations made by the Ministry. Once the LDSC meets in the next quarter, it will resolve those issues so that the final text will be returned to the National Assembly and for introduction in the next session. The Land Transfer for the PIPS permanent facility currently lies with the Cabinet Division, which is responsible for the CDA, the current holder of the land. Funds for the Land Transfer have already been provided in the

new National Budget, passed in late June. These two items will top the agenda of the first LDSC meeting of the new Assembly, to be held in July.

Secretaries Meeting

Problem: The delay in organizing the Houses, coupled with several top changes in Secretariat staff in Punjab Assembly, the Secretaries' schedules could not be coordinated to conduct a Meeting in this quarter.

Remedial Solution: Meeting to be held in the next quarter, just after the August Sessions and just before the onset of Ramazan, with a tentative date of September 2.

Orientation to Public Hearing

Problem: During this quarter it was planned that an orientation session on Public Hearing would be held with Standing Committee Chairs of the Senate. This was postponed since Senator Nisar Memon, who had agreed to facilitate the meeting had been appointed in the interim government as Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

Remedial Solution: The project will return to this activity during the Phase Two sessions of the Members Orientation, including a session on the "Use of Public Hearings in Parliamentary Committees". Senator Memon and other Senators will be invited to share their experiences in those sessions.

VII. ONGOING ISSUES

Selection for Executive Director – PIPS

The selection process for the post of Executive Director would have been complete had it not been for the judicial crisis and the election of the President as a result of which the interview committee could not meet, since the National Assembly was immediately prorogued after that vote, and met again only for the dissolution vote.

The current status is that another round of candidates was short-listed last year. We are in the process of contacting them regarding availability to be interviewed by the newly constituted LDSC. This will be on the agenda for the first meeting in July.

Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) Bill

Senator Ch. Anwar Bhinder last year submitted the PIPS Bill as a private member's bill to the Senate Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs. The committee endorsed the bill and after some minor amendments. Simultaneously, the caretaker government recommended that the bill be submitted as a government bill instead with some minor amendments from the Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights to the National Assembly. We have taken up this matter with the NA Secretariat, who have identified specific amendments to be considered during the first LDSC meeting.

Once these issues are resolved (which include adding the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to the PIPS Board – PLSP will recommend him as an ex officio member only – and language concerning the financial responsibilities of the NA vs. the Senate), the draft bill will go back to the Law Ministry for final vetting. It should be placed on the agenda for vote/approval during the next session. However, it could be delayed further if the next session is considered a special session for a particular purpose -- such as if they call the next session particularly for the passing of the constitutional package. In that case, often no other votes are allowed to be taken.

We recommend that USAID raise the status of the PIPS Bill with the Speaker.

Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) Land

The status of the land transfer issue is explained above. In order to ensure that the government actually transfers the money in a timely manner, the NA Secretariat needs to keep pressure on. Accordingly, we will continue to raise this at political levels so it does not stall in the bureaucracy.

Appendix I: Success Stories