

**The Role of the Legislature in  
Consolidating Democracy**

**A National Democratic Institute for International Affairs Seminar**

**National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire  
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire**

**October 7 - 9, 1997**

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This report covers the legislative training program conducted by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) in Côte d'Ivoire in October 1997. West Africa Program Officer Linda Maguire wrote the bulk of the report as well as the analysis of the seminar evaluation questionnaires that is found in Appendix C. The report was edited by Regional Director for West Africa Christopher Fomunyoh, Director of Governance Programs Susan Benda, and Senior Program Officer for West Africa Tim McCoy.

NDI originally planned to conduct this legislative training seminar immediately following the legislative elections of November 1995. However, the delay in completing those elections until December 1996, and the ensuing difficulty in coordinating a date for the event, necessitated delaying the training until the fall of 1997. This proved to be good timing, however, as it coincided with the beginning of the National Assembly's second ordinary session during which many contentious issues related to constitutional and electoral reform were expected to be addressed. NDI would like to extend its thanks to the leadership of the National Assembly and to the presidents of the three parliamentary groups -- PDCI, FPI and RDR -- for their patience in planning this event and for their constructive suggestions on the program's content. NDI also thanks the Ivorian deputies who attended the seminar and participated actively in the discussions.

Special thanks also go to the international experts, some of whom had committed to the program as early as June 1995. These six individuals gave freely of their time and energy during the training session. The NDI staff members who worked on this program in Washington and in Abidjan -- NDI Program Assistant Susan Kupperstein, Development Assistant Alison Majors, and Logistics Coordinators Ken Morley and Nhien Le -- are recognized for their invaluable assistance.

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## I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From October 7 to 9, 1997, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) organized a seminar at the National Assembly in Abidjan on the Role of the Legislature in Consolidating Democracy. The program was designed to assist Ivorian members of parliament (MPs) -- approximately 65 percent of whom are first time members -- become more familiar with their roles as legislators in the National Assembly. Topics of discussion included the role and responsibilities of members of parliament, relations between governing and opposition parties in parliament, outreach, transparency and ethics of the legislature, and the central role of committees.

One hundred and ten of the 175 members of the Ivorian Parliament attended the three-day seminar. NDI invited an international delegation of former and current legislators from both established and emerging democracies to present the topics and to facilitate discussion during plenary and question and answer sessions. The international delegation of experts comprised six members: Peter Barca, former member of the U.S. Congress from Wisconsin (Democratic Party) and current regional director for the U.S. Small Business Administration, Lise Bourgault, former member of the Canadian Parliament (Progressive-Conservative Party), Mata Sy Diallo, vice president of the National Assembly of Senegal (Socialist Party), Colin Eglin, member of the National Assembly of South Africa (Democratic Party), Maria Leissner, former member of the Swedish Parliament (Liberal Party), and Fernando Marques da Costa, former member of the Portuguese Parliament (Socialist Party) and current political advisor to the president of Portugal. Dennis Delaney, a former U.S. state senator from Vermont (Republican Party) and current NDI/Ghana legislative advisor, also attended the seminar.

NDI had anticipated organizing this seminar immediately following the November 1995 legislative elections. However, due to timing concerns and the delayed legislative by-elections, the seminar was finally scheduled for October 1997. Prior to organizing the seminar, NDI conducted an assessment mission designed to gather information on the structure, capabilities and needs of the Ivorian National Assembly. This assessment, which took place in April 1997, resulted in a report detailing areas in which NDI could offer assistance in strengthening the legislature as an institution. The seminar agenda was based in part upon the findings of the assessment mission, and in response to requests made by Ivorian members of parliament. In designing the seminar agenda, NDI consulted regularly with the leadership of the National Assembly, including the president of the Assembly and the presidents of the three parliamentary groups. This enhanced communication resulted in an agenda that took into consideration the interests and needs of the National Assembly, it also increased the level of confidence between NDI and the leadership of the Assembly. Thus far, NDI and other Côte d'Ivoire observers have noted significant results from the seminar in the form of unprecedented parliamentary initiatives during the second legislative session of 1997.

## **II BACKGROUND**

### **A The Post-Houphouet Period**

Since achieving independence in 1960, Côte d'Ivoire was ruled by Felix Houphouet-Boigny as a one-party state until 1990 when multipartism was formally legalized. Houphouet-Boigny's death in December 1993 was followed by a peaceful transfer of power to then-President of the National Assembly, Henri Konan Bedie, according to Article 11 of the Ivorian Constitution which provides for the order of presidential succession. Political developments during late 1994 and early 1995 centered on preparations for presidential and legislative elections scheduled for late 1995. The adoption in December 1994 of a new electoral code, some provisions of which proved controversial, galvanized the major opposition parties. The *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) and the *Rassemblement Des Republicains* (RDR), a breakaway party from the ruling party, the *Parti Democratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI), joined forces with a grouping of six other opposition parties to call for the revision of the electoral code and the establishment of an independent election commission. These and other complaints regarding the organization of the elections eventually led to an opposition boycott of the October 22, 1995 presidential election. After political tensions sparked widespread protests and some violence, the government set up a commission to verify the voter lists and opposition parties agreed to participate in the November 26 legislative elections.

### **B Legislative Elections of November 26, 1995 and December 29, 1996**

With the full participation of opposition parties, the legislative elections of November 1995 and December 1996 were two of the most contested multiparty elections ever organized in Côte d'Ivoire. International observers, including a joint delegation sponsored by NDI and the African-American Institute (AAI), monitored the November 26 legislative elections and concluded that despite minor insufficiencies and disputes in some locations, those elections took place in an orderly and calm fashion. In three areas in the western part of the country, residual tensions from the presidential election prevented elections from being organized as planned. In three other cases, the elections were voided by the Constitutional Court because of irregularities and petitions filed by different parties contesting the results.

By-elections to choose deputies to the six remaining seats in the National Assembly took place on December 29, 1996. The constituencies in which elections were held -- Gagnoa, Guiberoua, Ouragahio, Adzope, Seguela and Korhogo -- were in the north and the west of the country, both areas which have traditionally been opposition strongholds. Elections in Gagnoa, Guiberoua and Ouragahio resulted in the election of three FPI deputies, including Laurent Gbagbo, the president of the party. The elections in Adzope, Seguela and Korhogo were won by the PDCI.

### **C The Current National Assembly**

The current composition of the National Assembly is as follows: PDCI -- 149 deputies, FPI -- 13, and RDR -- 13. Approximately 65 percent of the deputies elected are newcomers who are

relatively unfamiliar with the workings of the legislative branch of government and their roles and responsibilities as elected representatives

The administrative framework within the legislative branch in Côte d'Ivoire is highly centralized under a leadership that is heavily weighted in favor of the ruling party. The leadership comprises a president, 12 vice presidents, 24 secretaries, and two *questeurs*<sup>1</sup>. Of these 39 people, two vice presidents and three secretaries belong to opposition parties.

The Ivorian Assembly is divided into four committees comprising general institutional affairs (with jurisdiction over the ministers of interior, information, national defense and justice), economic and financial affairs (public works, transportation, agriculture, fish and forests), social and cultural affairs (education, youth, sports, public health and population), and external relations (international relations, foreign affairs and international conferences). Although the committees represent the doorway through which bills reach the parliament, the committees have not played a significant role in the formation of policy, nor have they accumulated expertise on policy issues. As laid out in the parliament's rules of procedure, bills originate from the executive branch and are introduced by a member of parliament, then referred to the appropriate committee for study and review. Amendments are submitted for debate in committees before re-submission to the full Assembly for a vote in plenary session. In practice, however, the overwhelming majority held by the PDCI in the Assembly has meant that amendments proposed during committee meetings by opposition deputies have seldom, if ever, been submitted for debate in plenary session. No opposition-sponsored amendment or bill has ever been adopted by the Assembly, with the exception of one that proposed raising salaries for deputies.

## **D Proposed Reforms**

On August 8, 1997, President Bedie announced a series of proposed reforms that sought to render the political and electoral processes in Côte d'Ivoire more open and democratic. Included in Bedie's proposal were a decentralization plan to cede more authority to local administrators, the creation of a second legislative chamber -- the Senate -- that would include regional representatives, the creation of an official status for opposition party leaders, provisions for limited state funding of political parties, a change in the line of succession to the president, a prolongation of the presidential mandate from five to seven years, and the creation of a supervisory electoral commission to monitor the administration of elections. Most observers believed that some of these reform proposals would eventually be submitted to parliament for debate and approval.

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<sup>1</sup> A *questeur* is an administrative or financial officer in the French parliamentary system.

### III PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

In planning and implementing the legislative training seminar, NDI expected that the following broad objectives would be accomplished

- Participating deputies, from the opposition and ruling parties, would acquire a greater understanding of their roles as elected representatives, particularly in a political system in which the legislature has traditionally played a diminished role *vis-a-vis* a strong executive branch, and
- Deputies would acquire new skills that they could use to make the legislature more effective by focusing on citizen input and interest in parliament, and on legislative oversight, transparency and ethical standards within the institution

## **IV SEMINAR ACTIVITIES**

NDI's seminar provided deputies in the National Assembly with an opportunity to address the challenges they face in trying to make their legislature more effective and responsive to the needs of Ivorian citizens. The agenda included a briefing day for the international experts, and three days of deliberations and a program evaluation session. NDI selected the topics for discussions in plenary session based on its April 1997 assessment of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire, and on consultations with the leaders of the three parliamentary groups. Areas of interest identified by the mission and Ivorian legislators included the role and responsibilities of members of parliament, parliament's relationship with the executive branch, relations between governing and opposition parties in parliament, outreach, transparency and ethics of the legislature, and the central role of committees in the legislative process.

Before the seminar, NDI organized a full day of briefings in Abidjan for the international experts. These briefings provided the experts with the political context of Côte d'Ivoire and a review of the seminar agenda. NDI also organized informal discussions between the international experts and Ivorian political and civic leaders to share experiences and thoughts on the democratization process in Côte d'Ivoire. Among the civic and political leaders invited to the briefing were Honore Guie, president of the National Elections Observatory (ONE) domestic observer coalition, Mathieu Bile, secretary-general of the Ivorian League for Human Rights, Dr. Lenissongui Coulibaly, chief of staff for the minister of state for national integration and member of the ruling party leadership, Amoakon Edjampan Thiemele, president of the PDCI parliamentary caucus, Emile Boga Doudou, president of the FPI parliamentary caucus, and Nibi Zana Adama Coulibaly, president of the RDR parliamentary caucus.

### **A Seminar Plenary Sessions**

The formal opening ceremony was chaired by the vice president of the National Assembly and attended by the U.S. ambassador and other invitees. Members of the news media were invited to attend the opening ceremony and the closing ceremony held after the last session on the third day of the seminar. However, NDI and the National Assembly decided not to invite the press to attend the entirety of the seminar so as to allow the deputies to focus on frank and open discussions. The seminar was divided into five plenary sessions, each followed by an in-depth question and answer period designed to give the participants an opportunity to explore the plenary topic in an interactive setting.

Organizing the seminar around plenary sessions that kept the deputies together as a large group, rather than dividing them into smaller discussion clusters, was important because it gave the deputies the opportunity to address together, in a frank and open manner, the questions or issues they had regarding the presentations of the experts. It also allowed all of the international experts to explain their presentations and experiences in greater detail.

- Plenary I      *The Role and Responsibilities of Members of Parliament*  
Presenters      *Fernando Marques da Costa / Lise Bourgault / Peter Barca*  
Moderator      *Maria Leissner*

The opening plenary session was designed to assist deputies to better understand their roles within the institution. Marques da Costa presented an overview of the role of legislators in transitional democracies, focusing on lawmaking, representation and oversight. Bourgault provided details on the oversight function and how the Canadian parliament serves as a forum for policy debate, while Barca spoke on the importance of constituency relations in the American model.

The Ivorian deputies inquired about how the legislatures of the respective experts had carved out relevant roles for themselves *vis-a-vis* the executive branch. In response, the experts discussed oversight mechanisms such as budget review, committee hearings, bill markups and questioning of ministers in parliament. Marques da Costa underscored that, even in systems with a strong executive and weak legislature, oversight is possible. He elaborated by noting that deputies could assert a degree of independence by calling members of the executive branch to testify before legislative committees.

The Ivorian deputies were interested in learning how they could fulfill their roles and responsibilities with limited resources and staff support. Bourgault explained that, as a member of the Canadian parliament, she had four staff members at her disposal. Leissner, on the other hand, told the deputies that four Swedish deputies shared one staff member. Diallo noted that, in Senegal, it is not unusual for her to have no staff support at all, even as a Vice President of the Assembly. Despite the differences in their experiences, the three internationals agreed that, with some creative staffing and resource allocation, deputies could still conduct their activities efficiently.

- Plenary II      *Parliament's Relationship with the Executive Branch*  
Presenters      *Colin Eglin / Fernando Marques da Costa*  
Moderator      *Mata Sy Diallo*

During this plenary session, Eglin and Marques da Costa discussed the interaction between parliament and the executive branch on national policy initiatives. Eglin spoke on the separation of powers at the national level in South Africa, both Eglin and Marques da Costa made presentations on the legal mechanisms that facilitate productive and efficient communication links between the legislature and the executive branch in their respective countries, and Marques da Costa discussed how deputies use these mechanisms to initiate or influence the design and implementation of government policy.

Ivorian deputies -- especially those from opposition parties -- wanted to know how they could overcome the weak role attributed to the legislature by a constitution that provides for a strong executive. For example, one of the opposition deputies pointed to Article 51 of the Ivorian Constitution that gives the government the power to overrule the legislature if the National Assembly votes against the government's budget. On the other hand, some ruling party deputies wanted to

know how they could address potential conflicts between their interests as legislators and their loyalty to the party hierarchy and the executive branch

Eglin listed six key elements that strengthen every functioning democracy, even in cases where the ruling party dominates both the executive and the legislature. These elements include supremacy of the constitution over individual institutions, limitation of power for officials, decentralization of power, separation of powers between the branches of government, transparency and accountability of the government, and genuine representation of the people. He explained further that legislatures function as “watchdogs” and that, even in cases where they lack the legal power to prevent certain executive measures from taking effect, they can still be the source of initiatives, raise issues for debate and call the government to account for its policies. Eglin also spoke of his personal experience as a member of the opposition in South Africa (both during and after the apartheid regime), and underscored his belief that minority parties play a vitally important role in the process of democratic governance. For Eglin, the opposition’s role is to make the majority party and the executive branch aware of the minority views in a critical but constructive way. As the South African said, “it is the minority’s role not only to oppose, but to offer positive counter proposals and initiatives of its own.”

Bourgault also acknowledged that elected officials may find it difficult to be critical of the government while serving as a member of the ruling party. Therefore, she reasoned, opposition party members are sometimes good conduits for such criticism. Eglin echoed her comments by saying that the South African parliament makes use of its committees -- which comprise members of parliament and civil society -- to call ministers to the parliament to explain the provisions of draft laws. Through this mechanism, committee members, even if they are from the ruling party, have an opportunity to register their disagreement with government policy at an early stage in the lawmaking process. Diallo added that in Senegal -- a country with a strong executive branch similar to the Ivorian model -- committee members from the ruling party often return bills to the executive with amendments and revisions that reflect bipartisan discussions.

- Plenary III *Relations between Governing and Opposition Parties in Parliament*  
Presenters *Maria Leissner / Colin Eglin / Mata Sy Diallo*  
Moderator *Lise Bourgault*

The third plenary session examined why it is critical to involve opposition representatives in the democratic process, and how to provide the parliamentary opposition with avenues for full participation. Eglin spoke from his more than 40 years of experience in the South African opposition and how it has taught him to “fight” strategically. He told the opposition deputies that their role is to challenge policies vigorously and provide another perspective on policy issues, even if there is no foreseeable hope that their party will attain power.

Eglin then cautioned that, despite their important role, minority parties have “no special rights, only ordinary democratic rights,” and that they must realize that the population, having elected another party to govern, sent them into the legislature as a minority. He also warned that

minority parties that persist in simply obstructing the process risk being marginalized by the majority party and the electorate. Eglin explained how his party, the Democratic Party, had been invited by South African President Nelson Mandela to join the government but had declined, citing its desire to remain a pure opposition force working within the system but outside of the executive branch. Eglin underscored that cooperation between majority and minority deputies can sometimes be an essential element of constructive and efficient governance.

Barca explained the need for civil discourse within the legislature, citing how members of the U.S. Congress strive to remain cordial, addressing each other as “the gentleman from Wisconsin,” and “my esteemed fellow member,” even though the debates can often become quite acrimonious. The challenge, he said, is to avoid personalizing the debate or drawing such sharp party lines that discussion and compromise become impossible.

During the question and answer session that followed, opposition party deputies openly criticized the ruling party for not giving the opposition enough of a role, while ruling party deputies said that “the opposition is overly fond of grandstanding and poisoning the waters.” As one deputy noted, “our problem is that each party thinks it is the purveyor of the truth.” Marques da Costa and Leissner acknowledged that the ruling party/opposition party divide is difficult to bridge, but that a parliamentary opposition is crucial to a healthy democracy. The Portuguese and Swedish former MPs both emphasized that a constructive opposition gives voice to societal elements that represent a perspective other than the political status quo, and needs to articulate arguments as to how and why that status quo should change.

- Plenary IV     *Outreach, Transparency and Ethics of the Legislature*  
Presenters     *Lise Bourgault / Colin Eglin*  
Moderator     *Dennis Delaney*

During the fourth plenary session, participants addressed the issue of the National Assembly’s public image. As the NDI legislative assessment mission found, the Ivorian Assembly has in the past lacked visibility and been unable to attract the extensive interest and input of citizens. Some parliamentarians told the NDI mission that they failed to see how outreach initiatives, transparency measures and ethical standards are important for the development of the institution when other concerns, such as resource and staff needs, are far more immediate.

Eglin and Bourgault drew extensively on their experiences in South Africa and in Canada in making the case for public involvement in the legislative process. Bourgault stressed the importance of including the views of civil society in relevant legislation for two reasons that go to the heart of representation: 1) civil society often reflects the will of the electorate, and 2) civil society often possesses the issue expertise that deputies sometimes lack, but need, to draft good legislation. Even beyond lawmaking, the experts underscored the need for legislators to be easily accessed by constituents. Bourgault told the deputies how she instituted constituency outreach committees, comprising a selected group of constituents, to establish two-way communication with those she represented. This mechanism permitted her to know the issues that most concerned her constituents.

Additionally, the outreach committees allowed constituents to track how their MP was representing their interests at the national level

Eglin and Bourgault stressed the importance of transparency in all parliamentary actions. They presented different procedures available for making legislatures more open, such as public voting records, published draft legislation and open committee meetings. The two experts noted that, in both South Africa and Canada, draft laws are released to the public three weeks before being debated in parliament. As a result, the general public can become familiar with a proposed law's merits and drawbacks. Eglin also said that selected debates in the South African Parliament are televised each day. These daily snapshots of the parliament give the public a sense of what the legislature is doing and remind deputies that they are representatives of the people. As a result of this initiative, South African deputies have become more aware of their public profiles and have begun to use the media to bring their individual activities and opinions to the public's attention.

Eglin said further that ethical standards are also crucial confidence-building measures for the legislature to enact. He cited reporting obligations that the Parliament of South Africa placed upon itself, including the requirements that MPs declare their financial status every six months and that all new assets in excess of (approximately) US\$250, including speaking fees and tips, be reported.

Several recommendations for making the Assembly more transparent were put forward during the question and answer session, including designating one person from the National Assembly to serve as a press contact or even appointing one person per parliamentary group to fulfill this role. Other suggestions included televising portions of the Assembly's plenary sessions, publishing draft laws in the print media, and inviting members of civil society to attend parliamentary sessions that are open to the public.

- Plenary V      *The Central Role of Committees*  
Presenters      *Mata Sy Diallo / Peter Barca / Maria Leissner*  
Moderator      *Fernando Marques da Costa*

The fifth plenary session focused on a review of the effectiveness and deliberative nature of legislative committees. Deputies discussed the importance of dividing responsibilities to review legislation, the importance of developing issue expertise as a legislator, the role of committees in the system of checks and balances or legislative oversight of the executive branch, and how committees can provide channels for public input and encourage increased legislative initiative.

The potential for technical and practical application of this session resonated with Ivorian MPs. Diallo described the committee system in Senegal and how it has evolved to assume more autonomy than originally envisaged. Barca explained that, even though in the U.S. House of Representatives there are 20 committees and 89 subcommittees with strong staff resources, legislative committees regardless of size or resources can develop expertise, appoint subcommittees to specialize on issues, and make fuller use of the rules of procedure to become more effective. Barca illustrated the importance of utilizing the committee system to its fullest potential by referring

to a bill drafted in the U S Congress that dealt with the environmental cleanup of rivers. The bill reflected the recommendations of nonprofit organizations, such as the Sierra Club, as well as the recommendations of private businesses and the government. Barca noted that, because its sponsors had taken a consultative approach, the bill was more likely to be adopted. A side benefit of the process was that the committee members who worked on the bill gained considerable expertise in environmental issues.

## **B Seminar Evaluation Plenary Session**

NDI devoted the last session of the seminar to discussing the participants' evaluation of the seminar. During the session, the presidents of the three parliamentary groups gave their impressions of the seminar and recommendations on how the National Assembly could build upon the lessons learned during the seminar. The PDCI parliamentary president emphasized the need to establish mechanisms that would allow follow-up activities on the seminar. He suggested other follow-up seminars for the deputies on more specific, technical issues, such as constituency relations, and regional seminars that would bring together legislators from throughout West Africa to share their experiences, challenges and solutions. He also requested that NDI share with the National Assembly as many documents on legislative processes and governance as possible.

The FPI parliamentary president praised NDI's international experts for being clear, concise and direct. He also thanked the Institute for having consulted the three parliamentary groups on the content of the plenaries and the selection of experts during the planning stages of the seminar. The FPI president stated that the seminar had allowed him and his fellow deputies to see not only the flaws and insufficiencies of their institution, but also its potential. In closing, he agreed with the PDCI parliamentary president's recommendations regarding follow-on seminars.

The RDR parliamentary president also lauded the choice of international experts and said that he had benefitted from both the formal and informal interaction with them during the program. He concluded by noting that the deputies could still use more information on issues such as access to information and political party charters.

NDI distributed evaluative questionnaires to the participants during the seminar. The questionnaire covered each component of the seminar, including the program design and implementation, plenary session topics, international experts, documentation and recommendations for future NDI activities in Côte d'Ivoire. The answers provided by the participants formed the basis of an analysis compiled by NDI (see Appendix C).

## V CONCLUSIONS

NDI began to see some tangible results of its seminar in the weeks immediately following the event. Two "firsts" for the National Assembly -- one at the end of October and one at the end of November -- proved that the Ivorian deputies had put into practice knowledge obtained during the seminar.

In late October, the minister of finance was called before the National Assembly for a televised question and answer session to explain recent financial policy decisions taken by the government. While ministers have been called before the Assembly in the past, this episode was remarkable for its public nature and vigorous questioning. It is significant that the minister was taken to task on many issues and that the most forceful questioning came from PDCI deputies. The extensive discussions during the seminar of legislative oversight of executive branch members, and the timing of the minister's testimony, suggest that this initiative may well have been sparked by NDI's conference.

In late November, the National Assembly announced that an FPI-sponsored proposal on electoral reform was to be considered in full committee. This was the first time in memory that an opposition proposal had been considered in full committee. The committee dealing with general and institutional affairs proceeded with consideration of the draft proposal on November 20. Although the portions of the draft bill dealing with the institution of an independent election commission were voted down, proposed revisions to the electoral code were passed on to the president of the committee for further study.

These two modest steps represent an effort by the National Assembly to assert itself *vis-a-vis* the executive and to become a more responsive and transparent institution. This new spirit within the legislature has not gone unnoticed by the Ivorian press. An article that appeared in a December issue of the government-affiliated daily *Fraternite-Matin*, even drew a relationship between the NDI seminar and the new assertiveness exhibited by the Ivorian National Assembly. The article explained that following the seminar, the Assembly was infused with a new parliamentary spirit, and that deputies were more motivated to play their roles as questioners of the executive's policies and representatives of the electorate's interests (see Appendix D).

## **VI GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

Based on feedback from the seminar participants, international experts and NDI staff, the legislative seminar in Côte d'Ivoire met or exceeded the expectations of those who participated in the program. After the last day of the seminar, the NDI team was received by President Henri Konan Bedie in the presence of the leadership of the Assembly, including the presidents of the three parliamentary groups. President Bedie echoed the very favorable reports on the seminar by saying that he was impressed by the caliber of the international experts and the substance of the seminar discussions. The success of NDI's program is attributable to several factors including good timing, effective groundwork, seminar format, trainer mix, press relations and staff support.

### **A Timing**

Organizing the seminar at the opening of the second session of the National Assembly proved to be very timely. This was a critical time for the Assembly, which remained in session following the seminar for deliberations on constitutional and electoral reforms proposed by President Bedie. The NDI seminar provided an ideal opportunity for Ivorian MPs to begin discussing the impact of these potential reforms in an open forum.

### **B Groundwork**

The Institute worked with the leadership of the National Assembly in designing the seminar agenda. NDI sent copies of all correspondences to the president and/or secretary-general of the National Assembly and to the presidents of the three parliamentary groups, and periodically telephoned these leaders to verify that they had received the information and to elicit their feedback. The Assembly leadership and individual deputies told NDI that they were pleased to have been consulted so extensively and to have their suggestions incorporated into the final agenda. Because all three political groupings had contributed in designing the program, they had a greater sense of ownership over the seminar. As a result, attendance rates by the deputies remained high throughout the seminar. All three parliamentary group presidents attended every session of the seminar and participated actively in the discussions.

### **C Trainers**

The international trainers invited by NDI, through their variety and richness of experiences, proved to be the most crucial element in the program's success. The six trainers represented different legislative experiences and different perspectives on executive/legislative relations. The regional breakdown among the trainers was two North Americans, two Europeans and two Africans. There were three women and three men, three trainers were from "ruling" parties in parliament and three from "opposition" parties, three of the trainers had served in both the legislative and executive branches of government, while three had served only in the legislative branch, and three of the trainers had participated in NDI programs in the past, whereas three were newcomers to NDI. The six trainers took turns moderating or participating in the plenary sessions, thereby

maximizing the amount of time each spent interacting with participants in the different sessions. The Ivorian participants expressed their appreciation for the number of trainers and the variety of democratic experiences they represented. Some participants even suggested that future programs add trainers from Asia and the Middle East.

## **D Documents**

NDI distributed various documents related to legislative affairs at staggered intervals during the seminar. This approach helped ensure that the participants would not be overwhelmed with information on the first day and that they would have time to focus on each document as it was distributed. NDI also distributed to each participant a welcome packet that contained, in French, the seminar agenda, a registration sheet, the trainer biographies and information on NDI. Immediately before the plenary session devoted to discussing relations between the governing and opposition parties in the legislature, NDI distributed the NDI publication on Presiding Officers in Legislatures. On the second day, NDI staff distributed a document on the Role of Committees in Legislatures, before the plenary session on the central role of committees. Participants noted that the timing of the document distribution, and the fact that the documents were in French, helped them absorb information easily and apply it directly to the discussions that were taking place on the given topics.

## **E Press**

Recognizing the opportunity to draw attention to the Ivorian legislature, NDI contacted the Ivorian press -- print, television and radio -- two weeks in advance of the seminar opening to inform them of the dates and the topics of the seminar and to invite them to the opening and closing ceremonies. Once in Abidjan, NDI again contacted the press to provide NDI's in-country contact information and more background materials on the Institute's activities. When making the press calls, NDI staff highlighted that the program was being organized in coordination with the National Assembly. The Institute also kept the National Assembly leadership informed of its press outreach, thereby preventing duplication and miscommunication. One week before the seminar, the National Assembly issued a press release on the program. The Assembly's press release was cosigned by the president of the ruling party parliamentary group and the two presidents of the opposition parliamentary groups.

The result of NDI's press strategy was twofold. First, the Ivorian media was well informed on the objectives and methodology of the seminar prior to the opening and this manifested itself in the extensive media coverage of the seminar. Second, the press coverage of the NDI seminar was extensive (both in substance and quantity). All three of the major Ivorian daily newspapers -- *Fraternite Matin*, *La Voie* and *Le Jour* -- carried stories on a daily basis for up to one week after the end of the seminar. The national television and radio broadcast stories on the seminar at least twice each during the event, and two months after the seminar a major article in the government daily attributed the reinvigorated nature of parliamentary debates during the last session to lessons learned during NDI's seminar (see Appendix D).

## **VII APPENDICES**

- Appendix A Agenda for Seminar on the Role of the Legislature in Consolidating Democracy
- Appendix B International Participant Biographies and NDI Staff
- Appendix C Participant Questionnaire Evaluation
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# **APPENDIX A**

Agenda for Seminar on the Role of the Legislature in Consolidating Democracy

**Seminar on the Role of the Legislature in Consolidating Democracy  
National Assembly, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire  
October 7 - 9, 1997**

**SEMINAR AGENDA**

**Tuesday, October 7**

- 8 30 - 9 00 a m Registration of Participants
- 9 00 a m **Opening Ceremony**
- Remarks by the NDI Regional Director for West Africa
  - Remarks by US Ambassador
  - Opening speech by the President of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire
- 9 30 a m COFFEE BREAK (departure of VIPs, Press)
- 10 00 a m **Opening Plenary Session**  
**The Role and Responsibilities of Members of Parliament**  
Presenters *Fernando Marques da Costa / Lise Bourgault / Peter Barca*  
Moderator *Maria Leissner*
- An overview of the role of legislatures in transitional democracies
  - The role of the legislature in overseeing the executive and in serving as a forum to debate policy
  - Constituency relations
- 11 15 a m BREAK
- 11 30 - 12 45 p m **Interactive Question and Answer Session on Opening Plenary**  
Presenters *Fernando Marques da Costa / Lise Bourgault / Peter Barca*  
Moderator *Maria Leissner*
- 1 00 p m LUNCH
- 3 00 p m **Second Plenary Session**  
**Parliament's Relationship with the Executive Branch**  
Presenters *Colin Eglin / Fernando Marques da Costa*

Moderator *Mata Sy Diallo*

- The separation of powers at the national level
- What are the legal mechanisms that facilitate a productive and efficient communications link between the legislature and the executive branch?
- How can deputies use these mechanisms to initiate or influence the design and implementation of government policy?

4 15 p m

COFFEE BREAK

4 45 - 6 00 p m

**Interactive Question and Answer Session on Second Plenary**

Presenters *Colin Eglin / Fernando Marques da Costa*

Moderator *Mata Sy Diallo*

6 00 p m

End for the day

**Wednesday, October 8**

9 00 a.m

**Third Plenary Session**

**Relations between Governing and Opposition Parties in Parliament**

Presenters *Maria Leissner / Colin Eglin / Mata Sy Diallo*

Moderators *Lise Bourgault*

- What are the roles of governing and opposition parties in a democracy?
- What are the rights and duties of parties in other established democracies (opposition parties and individual members of the ruling power)?
- How could the roles of parties represented in parliament be better defined and institutionalized?
- How can deputies reach out to build consensus on policy issues across party lines?

10 30 a m

COFFEE BREAK

11 00 - 12 15 p m

**Interactive Question and Answer Session on the Third Plenary**

Presenters *Maria Leissner / Colin Eglin / Mata Sy Diallo*

Moderators *Lise Bourgault*

12 30 p m

LUNCH

2 30 p m

**Fourth Plenary Session**

**Outreach, Transparency and Ethics of the Legislature**

Presenters *Lise Bourgault / Colin Eglin*

Moderator *Dennis Delaney*

- Why is it important to include the views of civil society in relevant legislation? What kinds of public outreach techniques might be used in order to incorporate the views of a large group of people before examining or developing legislation?
- What does transparency mean and how may it be judged in practical terms? What are the procedures in place for making public voting records, draft legislation, etc ?
- Holding legislators accountable for private holdings and activities, a discussion of ethical standards in other established democracies

4 00 p m COFFEE BREAK

4 30 p m **Interactive Question and Answer Session on the Fourth Plenary**  
 Speakers *Lise Bourgault / Colin Eglin*  
 Moderator *Dennis Delaney*

5 45 p m End for day

**Thursday, October 9**

9 00 a m **Fifth Plenary Session**  
**The Central Role of Committees**  
 Presenters *Mata Sy Diallo / Peter Barca / Maria Leissner*  
 Moderators *Fernando Marques da Costa*

- The importance of specializing and dividing responsibilities to review and initiate legislation, the importance of developing issue expertise as a legislator
- The role committees play in the system of checks and balances *vis-a-vis* the executive branch
- How committees can provide channels for public input and how they may encourage increased legislative initiative

10 30 a m COFFEE BREAK

11 00 - 12 15p m **Interactive Question and Answer Session on the Fifth Plenary**  
 Presenters *Mata Sy Diallo / Peter Barca / Maria Leissner*  
 Moderators *Fernando Marques da Costa*

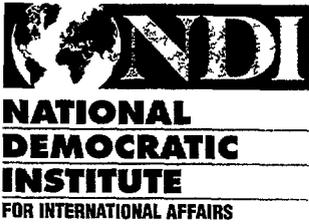
12 30 p m LUNCH

2 30 p m **Recommendations and seminar evaluation**  
 Presenter *Timothy McCoy*

3 00 p m Closing ceremony

# **APPENDIX B**

International Participant Biographies and NDI Staff



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**Seminar on the Role of the Legislature in Consolidating Democracy  
National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire  
Abidjan, October 7-9, 1997**

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**International Trainers**

**Peter Barca** served in the U S House of Representatives and before then in the state legislature of Wisconsin. He initiated policy, developed coalitions, publicized and obtained passage of a broad range of legislation centering on education, employment and training, and economic development. Mr Barca received the award for Legislator of the Year in 1987, 1988 and 1989 in his home state of Wisconsin. He is currently a regional administrator for the U S Small Business Administration where he coordinates financial assistance, business development, and management counseling for the six states of the upper Midwest region. He holds a Master of Arts degree in educational and public policy administration.

**Lise Bourgault** was a Member of the Canadian Parliament from 1984 until 1993, representing the Progressive-Conservative Party. During her term, Ms Bourgault was nominated to the Special Committee of the House of Commons in charge of reforming the parliamentary system in Canada. She was also the parliamentary secretary for the ministries of Consumption and Corporations in Canada, Health and Human Services, and Provisions and Services of Canada, from 1988 to 1992. In 1993, Ms Bourgault returned to work in the private sector. She is the president of her own company, Concrete Cantley Inc and Warehouses of Argenteuil Inc. In April 1997, she became the first woman elected president of the Quebec Concrete Association. Ms Bourgault also acts as treasurer for the Center for Social Assistance of Argenteuil, an organization dedicated to low income residents in her region. In recent years, as a member of the Canadian Association for Ex-Parliamentarians and the Canadian Group for Parliamentary Studies, Ms Bourgault has been working on the reform of the electoral system in Canada. Ms Bourgault has participated in NDI legislative programs in Madagascar and Togo.

**J Dennis Delaney** is a former Vermont State Senator who served on major legislative committees and was voted Legislator of the Year by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. He has also been a member and chair of several community and statewide boards and commissions including the Red Cross, Rotary Club and Regional Planning Commission. Mr Delaney has lived and taught in Nigeria and he has studied in Tanzania and Kenya. He earned a Ph D from the University of Arizona. He is also fluent in French, Hausa and Swahili. Mr Delaney is the legislative advisor to NDI's Ghana country office.

**Mata Sy Diallo** has been a deputy in the National Assembly of Senegal since 1988 and, since 1993, has served as the Assembly's Second Vice President. She is the former minister of state for Senegalese abroad (1990-93), and has served as a ranking member of the Socialist Party of Senegal since 1982. Madam Sy has been a member of the Socialist Party's Central Committee since 1982 and of its Politburo since 1990. Prior to entering politics, Madam Sy earned her undergraduate and master of arts degrees in economics and mathematics from the University of Dakar. She taught these disciplines in Senegal for eight years.

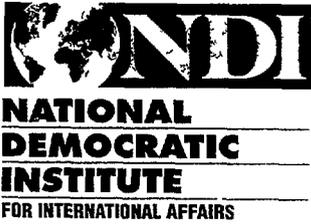
**Colin Wells Elgin** has been a Member of the new non-racial and democratic South African parliament since 1994, representing the Democratic Party. He currently serves as the Democratic Party Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, the Chairperson of the Democratic Party Caucus, and the Leader of the Democratic Party Constitutional Negotiating Team. In 1954, Mr. Elgin helped found the Progressive Party and, during the next four decades, served as the Leader of the Progressive Party, a Member of Parliament, and the Leader of the Opposition in the South African Parliament. He was a member of the Planning Committee and Sub-Committee of CODESA which drew up South Africa's Interim Constitution, he also co-chaired the Transitional Executive Council. Mr. Elgin has traveled extensively throughout Africa, America, China, and Europe. He holds an Honorary Doctorate of Law from the University of Cape Town.

**Maria Leissner** served as a Member of the Swedish Parliament from 1984 to 1991. She served as part of the coalition government from 1991 to 1994, and was elected President of the Swedish Liberal Party in 1995. Ms. Leissner has also served as the President of Women Can, a foundation that works to promote women issues in Sweden. She has been involved in the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. Ms. Leissner has also worked with the Scandinavian Institute for African Affairs. Prior to entering the Parliament of Sweden, she was the President of the Young Liberals of Sweden. Ms. Leissner has participated in legislative training programs and election observation delegations for NDI in Angola, Central Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia, Pakistan, Yemen and Zambia.

**Fernando Marques da Costa** is the Chief Political Advisor to the President of Portugal. He has had an enriching career as a Member of the Parliament of Portugal. At various times, he has held positions within the Socialist Party of Portugal as International Secretary, Deputy for Political and Electoral Strategy, member of the Board of Research Cabinet, member of the National Council and the Political Committee, National Secretary and Spokesman of the Party, and member of the Board of Managers for Electoral Campaigns. Mr. da Costa has also served as a university professor, specializing in contemporary history. He is the author of several books and articles on Portuguese contemporary history. Mr. Marques da Costa has participated in numerous NDI programs throughout the world, including in Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Pakistan, Senegal, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

# **APPENDIX C**

Participant Questionnaire Evaluation



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Analysis and Evaluation of Responses to NDI Questionnaire

From October 7 to 9, 1997, NDI organized a seminar for Ivorian members of parliament (MPs) at the National Assembly in Abidjan. The seminar was designed to assist MPs -- about 65 percent of whom are first time members -- become more familiar with their roles as elected representatives and legislators in the National Assembly. Topics of discussion included the role and responsibilities of members of parliament, relations between governing and opposition parties in parliament, outreach, transparency and ethics of the legislature, and the central role of committees.

One hundred and ten of the 175 members of the Ivorian parliament attended the three day seminar. All three parliamentary groups (PDCI, RDR and FPI) were well represented. The international experts included former and current legislators from Canada, Portugal, Senegal, South Africa, Sweden and the United States. The three-day seminar employed the format of plenary sessions followed by question and answer sessions during which a more profound discussion of the plenary topics took place between Ivorian MPs and the international experts.

At the end of the seminar, NDI distributed a questionnaire to the participants for the purpose of evaluating the various components of the training. Sixty-one participants completed and returned the form. The following is a rephrasing of the survey questions (in bold and italics), the rationale for posing the question (in italics) and a summary of responses. Given the number of responses, similar or indicative answers have been consolidated.

General Comments

In general, participants were highly complimentary of the content and the format of the seminar. Many singled out specific trainers for praise (with Colin Eglin from South Africa and Fernando Marques da Costa from Portugal eliciting the strongest favorable responses). The general thrust of the comments was that this was a talented and varied group of experts. Participants were highly satisfied with the number and the varied experience of democratic transitions represented by the trainers.

## I. PROGRAM PREPARATION

1. *Were you informed in advance of the objectives of the seminar? (This question attempts to understand the information flow within the parliamentary groups and within the Assembly as a whole )*

Yes 38  
No 23

Among those who answered in the affirmative were several participants who noted that information about the NDI seminar and its prospective themes was announced in full plenary session of the National Assembly several days prior to the event, as well as during several radio and television broadcasts. Some members said that they had been informed of the themes of the seminar in advance but not of the "objectives" of the training. Many of those who had not been informed indicated that they had been absent from the Assembly and/or Abidjan in the time leading up to the seminar.

2. *What did you expect from the seminar and did the training meet your expectations? (This question attempts to determine the expectations of the participants and their assessment of the outcome of the seminar )*

Almost everyone who responded to this question said that the seminar met or exceeded their expectations. Among the more popular answers was that the seminar would be an opportunity for Ivorian legislators to exchange experiences with their counterparts from other countries and to compare the Ivorian experience with those of established democracies. Other participants said that they expected to cull practical information on the role and responsibilities of an elected official, particularly *vis-a-vis* his/her party, colleagues and constituents, how to make the Ivorian Assembly a more vibrant and responsive institution, and how to use limited resources creatively. On the negative side, one participant thought that some of the presentations were too personal and limited to the experience and context of the international experts to be instructive to Ivorians. Another participant thought that the seminar was not long enough to do justice to all of the topics.

Overall, the Ivorian legislators viewed this seminar as an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences with the international experts and with the NDI staff. Everyone who articulated this hope indicated that their expectations were met.

3. *Were the distributed documents useful? What other information would you have liked to receive during the seminar? (NDI distributed the program agenda, trainer and staff biographies, activities calendar, program and resource information on NDI, NDI-prepared information on presiding officers and committees in parliament, and a publication on the Canadian parliament. Most of these documents were in French.)*

Everyone who answered this question indicated that the documents distributed were useful and of high quality. In elaborating their answers however, many participants said that they would have appreciated more documents in French, as some of the information distributed looked very pertinent but was only available in English. Other participants found the quantity of documentation low, others wanted to have copies of the international participants' presentations, and still others said they would have appreciated seeing documents from previous NDI legislative seminars.

## II PROGRAM CONTENT

4 *On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the various plenary sessions? Please circle the number that best corresponds to your assessment and include your comments below. (This question was intended to give NDI a clearer idea of whether the plenaries were interesting and useful to the Ivorians and why/how)\**

1=Not Useful    2=Below Average    3=Average    4=Good    5=Excellent

### Opening Plenary -- The Role and Responsibilities of Members of Parliament

All of the respondents to this question rated the first plenary session as "excellent", "good", or "average". The majority however, rated it as "good" (76.6%) or "excellent" (16.6%), while only four respondents (6.6%) rated the session as "average". The comments were complimentary and constructive. One participant said he enjoyed that "no subject was taboo" among the international experts, another said that this plenary served as a perfect introduction to the seminar and the trainers, and a third said he was pleasantly surprised to find the experts well-versed in Ivorian law and politics. Another participant, who rated the plenary as "good", questioned the relevance of some of the experts' experiences since the Ivorian legislature is not constitutionally as strong an institution *vis-a-vis* the executive as is the case in other countries.

### Second Plenary -- Parliament's Relationship with the Executive Branch

As with the first plenary session, the majority of respondents rated the second plenary session as "good" (65%) or "excellent" (18.3%). However, nine participants rated it as "average", and one as "below average". The one participant who rated the session as "below average" commented that the Ivorian executive branch does not grant the legislature enough power or resources. The participant thought that it was therefore of limited value to discuss the parliament's relationship with the executive branch. One participant, who rated the session as "excellent", said that even though his parliamentary group's relationship with the executive "could not but be excellent" because his was the majority party, he nevertheless found the discussion very interesting. One of the participants from an opposition party noted that the session helped his party reinforce its position *vis-a-vis* the executive as it seeks to correct certain "insufficiencies" in their relationship. Still another participant

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\* A copy of the agenda is attached

suggested that the recommendations discussed during the plenary -- establishing regular written communications between the branches, convening committees to call members of the executive branch to account on given issues or policies -- ought to be institutionalized by the parliament

One criticism of this session was that the question and answer period did not adequately allow for in-depth discussion and debate of the issues, or to discuss how to ameliorate the specific problem of an executive driven law-making process in Côte d'Ivoire

### **Third Plenary -- Relations between Governing and Opposition Parties in Parliament**

The third plenary session provoked mixed reactions from participants, although most of the legislators still found the session useful. Fifteen participants (25%) found the session "excellent", 27 found the session "good" (45%), 17 found it "average" (28.3%), and one found it "below average" (1.6%). The respondent who found this session "below average" said that he did so because he was bothered by the opposition party representatives "grandstanding" during the question and answer period. Other comments echoed this one, as both majority and opposition party participants criticized their colleagues for not being sensitive to their positions. Many participants said that this plenary session made them realize that opposition parties are necessary within the legislature as a check and as alternative voices.

### **Fourth Plenary -- Outreach, Transparency and Ethics of the Legislature**

Again, this plenary session elicited mixed reviews from the participants but mostly for global reasons (e.g. "the subject is taboo in African parliaments", "the subject was hijacked by the majority/opposition parties", etc.), rather than for content or methodology reasons. Eight participants rated the plenary as "excellent" and 29 as "good" (for a total of 67.3% of respondents). Sixteen rated it as "average" however, and two as "below average" (for a total of 32.7% of respondents). Six participants did not answer the question.

The comments included in the responses ranged from overwhelmingly positive feedback to sharp criticism. The positive comments mostly focused on South African MP Colin Eglin's presentation and the strength of using the South African model as a case study. Many participants also noted that this topic was on the cutting edge of governance in Côte d'Ivoire and many elected officials are not yet versed in outreach, transparency and ethics, or, more importantly, why such qualities are essential to instill in the legislature. For this reason, the participants found the session an informative vehicle to discuss these issues in a bipartisan setting. Another participant said that the session prompted him to move beyond simply deploring the general state of affairs, so as to formulate concrete recommendations to create mechanisms that allow the legislature to receive public opinion on legislative matters and grant the press and public greater access to information emanating from the legislature. The criticisms of this plenary session included that it was not precise enough a topic, that contacts with civil society, the press or constituents are so rare as to make a comparison with other countries unhelpful, and that the session did not go far enough in advocating transparency of the institution.

## **Fifth Plenary – The Central Role of Committees**

No one rated the fifth plenary session as “below average” and only 11 participants said it was “average” The remainder of respondents labeled the session as “good” or “excellent” (a total of 43 participants, or 79.6%) Many of the participants thought that the focus on committees was among the most practical of all the seminar topics because the deputies face issues of committee specialization and effectiveness every day The comparative experiences of the international experts allowed the Ivorian deputies to see, specifically, what committees in other democracies do and how they do it One participant said that the plenary showed him that Ivorian committees lack the resources and expertise to be truly efficient Another participant said he came away from the session with the conviction that the National Assembly would do well by revisiting the number and composition of its committees Finally, many participants praised the Senegal example as being particularly instructive given fundamental similarities between the parliamentary systems in Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire There were few negative comments on this plenary session, one of them being the complaint that there was not enough debate during the question and answer time

- 5** *Do you have suggestions regarding other subjects that should have been included on the agenda? If yes, what are they? (This question allows the participants to point out omissions in the training syllabus and is helpful to NDI in planning future activities of this nature )*

Many of the participants said they did not have any suggestions for topics that should have been included on the agenda. In general, participants seemed satisfied with the topics but not always with the amount of time devoted to discussing them Some suggested that thematic working groups should have been organized For the people who answered this question in the affirmative, the answers ranged from the very specific to the very vague For example, one participant said he would have preferred a session on the relationship between international lending institutions and the Ivorian parliament, while another simply said a plenary on the role of the parliament in preventing social conflict should have been included A common theme among the responses was the desire to hear about the financing of political parties and elections, augmenting the material means of a legislature, and creatively compensating for a lack of resources Other suggestions included electoral codes and alternance of power, how to establish relationships between national parliaments, how to organize a dialogue between elected officials and voters

- 6** *Did you find the experience of the international trainers to be useful and relevant to you during the plenary session presentations? Did you have sufficient time to talk with the experts after the presentations? (This question is designed to evaluate the effectiveness, the number and the representative nature of democratic experiences among the international experts )*

With one exception, every participant who answered this question said that they found the experience of the international trainers to be useful and relevant to them during the plenary sessions While many respondents noted however, that there was not enough time for them to discuss the

issues with the experts, other participants did say that they enjoyed the “corridor conversations” that they had with the experts between the regular sessions of the seminar. One participant even said that he found the formal and informal exchanges so enriching that “we could have benefitted if the NDI seminar had lasted a few more days.” The one respondent who did not find the experience of the international experts useful said that it was interesting but not pertinent to Ivorians, without elaborating why. Another participant, who gave high marks to the experts, said that NDI could have made the mix even more diverse by inviting a parliamentarian from Asia. Finally, many participants singled out the experience of the South African deputy as particularly relevant.

### III POST-PROGRAM

7. *Were there concrete suggestions made during the evaluation/recommendation session that might be acted upon by the National Assembly? Were the proposals and recommendations made useful or feasible? (This question asks participants to evaluate the practicality of the recommendations and whether consensus is likely to develop on their implementation.)*

Only 38 participants answered this question but everyone who did answer said they found the proposals and recommendations made during the evaluation/recommendation session useful and feasible. Among the most popular recommendations were increasing the number of the committees, making the legislature more transparent, and instituting a mechanism to provide constituent feedback. There were mixed responses however, regarding whether the suggestions will be acted upon by the National Assembly. Some legislators thought that the ruling party was the determining factor in whether the recommendations were moved forward. Others felt that elected representatives in Côte d’Ivoire lack the financial resources to do their jobs and to implement many of the useful ideas suggested during the seminar.

8. *In what manner would you like to see the National Assembly address questions relative to transparency and visibility of the institution, particularly with respect to the views exchanged on this issue during the seminar? (As opposed to the preceding question, this query asks the participants to state their own views on how they would like the Assembly to address the issue of transparency, rather than on what they think the institution is likely to do.)*

Forty-seven of the participants answered this question, and the answers were quite varied. Among other things, participants thought that the National Assembly should focus more on the relationship between the legislative and executive branch, encourage the executive branch to be more open in its budgetary consultation process, address the issue of legislative pay and work conditions, make concerted efforts to encourage real transparency in the institution, institute an open door policy to constituents and civil society, televise Assembly debates, create sub-committees to deal more specifically and efficiently with issues, and make committee debates open to the public and the press.

- 9 *Do you have recommendations for follow-on NDI programming in Côte d'Ivoire? If yes, what are they? (This question is designed to provide NDI with feedback from the Ivorians on how they would like to see NDI involved in Côte d'Ivoire, and how they could be helpful to the Institute in planning future activities )*

Thirty-six participants had recommendations for follow-on NDI programming in Côte d'Ivoire, three said that they did not, and 22 did not respond to the question. The recommendations offered were varied and a sampling of the more popular responses is below

NDI should

- send Institute publications to the National Assembly on a regular basis
- conduct a bi-yearly mission to assess democratic progress in Côte d'Ivoire
- foster the creation of an ad hoc committee made up of members of parliament to study or review the recommendations of the seminar
- do additional similar seminars and organize regional parliamentary seminars
- keep in contact with each of the three parliamentary groups
- repeat the seminar, but organize it for the civil society and invite the press to attend and participate
- establish permanent contacts with the parliament
- publish a report on the seminar

- 10 *Please use the space below to add other comments or suggestions that you may have (General question to elicit ideas and suggestions that might not have been addressed earlier )*

Thirty-one participants offered comments and suggestions regarding the seminar. As with the previous question, responses were varied. Many participants simply stated their satisfaction with the seminar and their thanks to NDI for organizing it. Some participants directly contradicted each other in their comments. For example, one participant said he would have preferred a week-long seminar, whereas another participant said seminars of this type should only last two days. Another participant praised NDI's approach of presenting different models of governance without imposing one "solution." This same participant said that the issue of an independent election commission could benefit from NDI's comparative approach to analyzing such issues. Many respondents expressed the wish that this seminar would be only the beginning of NDI's relationship with the Ivorian National Assembly.

# **APPENDIX D**

Selected Press Articles

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

**Source**        *Fraternité-Matin*  
**Date**         **October 8, 1997 (Wednesday)**  
**Title**         **National Assembly The Executive Branch and the Parliament**

**AN UNAVOIDABLE COLLABORATION**

During their first day of a seminar on "The Role of the Legislature in Consolidating Democracy," organized by NDI -- American NGO -- the Ivorian members of parliament attended several lectures, first on the role and responsibilities of members of parliament and subsequently on relations between the National Assembly and the executive branch. This was accomplished through presentations on the Portuguese, Swedish, Canadian, U S and South African experiences with democracy, given by Fernando da Costa, Maria Leissner, Lise Bourgault, Peter Barca and Colin Eglin.

Ivorian members of parliament showed interest in this initiative, and more specifically in the study of relations between the Assembly and the executive branch. Members of the PDCI and the opposition parties mentioned how difficult it is for the Assembly to play its institutional role acting as a check on executive branch power. Ms Jacqueline Lohoues-Oble, an RDR deputy, critiqued the role the constitution plays in African countries and transitional democracies by often concentrating power in the executive branch to such an extent that the only role left to the parliament is that of rubber-stamping executive initiatives and giving the executive legitimacy. The situation is aggravated by the attitude of international financial and monetary institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, which lend money while putting a knife to their debtors' throats. Furthermore, when a minister comes to the Assembly and sees his bills criticized or even rejected by its members, he bandies about terms such as "loan conditionality" and "IMF or World Bank requirements" to prevent the country from being stifled, the Assembly ends up obliging him.

*(Photo of Colin Eglin seated)*

*Caption reads: Colin Eglin, South African member of parliament, from 1958 to 1980 emphasized the necessity of cooperation between legislative and executive branch.*

Mr Boga Doudou, deputy from the FPI, agreed with his colleague and stated that Article 51 of the constitution takes power away from the Assembly. When the parliament rejects a proposed budget, Article 51 authorizes the executive branch to override the veto and pass the budget. For Mr Koffi N'Guessan, a representative of the Tabou region, traditions play an important role in shaping relations between the Assembly and the executive branch. He stated that in Africa, people generally listen to the chief and, in Côte d'Ivoire, the chief is represented by the president. He continued by saying that in Africa, political parties have always been founded around personalities. Members of parliament must always cooperate with the head of state (who is also usually head of the ruling party) to deliver on his electoral promises by implementing his societal projects.

***Fraternité-Matin / National Assembly The Executive Branch and the Parliament, An Unavoidable Collaboration***

It is not easy to reconcile the responsibilities of a member of parliament, whose task it is to check the power of the executive branch, with those of a party member. Simone Gbagbo, FPI deputy, stated that this is why the image exists that parliament is a mechanical voting apparatus and a member of parliament is "an active supporter of the government." Mr. Colin Eglin, a South African member of parliament from 1958 to 1980, explained how his country's experience exemplifies the advisability and necessity of communication and cooperation between the government and parliament.

After starting as a non-democratic state, South Africa was able to build a modern democracy and is in the process of becoming a model for other countries. The strength of that country lies in its sovereign constitution. The section on human rights describes in detail the limitations of the powers of the executive and legislative branches. Decentralization of power has been established at all three levels of government -- national, provincial and local. In fact, each level has its own constitution. South Africa substituted the South African Senate, which played the role of the lower chamber, with the Provincial National Council, whose members are represented in the upper house of parliament. This upper chamber, which has the power to bypass committees, is where provincial representatives defend their vested interests.

The executive branch initiates and introduces bills. The representatives of the people adopt or amend them. In South Africa, the parliament also takes the initiative of introducing bills, Colin told the group. To stress the necessity of cooperation between the parliament and the executive branch, he noted that in South Africa, committees are made up of legislators and members of civic associations who work in cooperation with the ministries on draft legislation. Committee chairpersons can at any time summon ministers if they suspect management problems. As members of parliament, they discharge their responsibilities to monitor government activities. Committees play a positive role because they provide an opportunity to the members of parliament who disagree with bills, to reflect further and find solutions to the problems. At the same time, MPs who represent the ANC -- the majority and ruling party -- also make use of committees to openly criticize the government.

Ms. Mata Sy Diallo, a Senegalese member of parliament and a member of Abdou Diouf's Socialist Party, also noted that with the president's agreement, socialist party members at the Assembly often amend bills before they go back and discuss them with their colleagues from the opposition parties.

Ivorian members of parliament also explained the problems they face in fulfilling their role and responsibilities. They must be agents of both change and development, although they have insufficient or scarce financial resources. They must pay for their constituents' health care, death and wedding expenses. Mr. Peter Barca noted that this situation was far from unique to Côte d'Ivoire. Legislators experienced similar situations in the United States and solicited the assistance of civic associations, NGOs, business people and religious organizations to meet the needs of their constituents. As for environmental problems and river clean ups, legislators solicited the help of the business community and the government. To address the problem of children who, on their way back from school, had to walk through dangerous and dark streets, retired people and active men

volunteered to protect them

Ms Lise Bourgault, from Canada, focused on personal efforts and faith in one's work, although she acknowledged that the situation of Canadian MPs is better than in Côte d'Ivoire. The MPs' operational budget allows for a cabinet of four people who serve as liaisons with the public. According to their level of expertise, these liaisons analyze cases and legislative bills presented to MPs before they are debated in parliament.

At opening ceremony of the seminar, NDI's West Africa representative said that Côte d'Ivoire had made significant progress towards democracy and NDI was really pleased to help the country advance even further along that road. This is why every year since 1991 NDI has visited Côte d'Ivoire or invited Ivorians to participate in NDI seminars in the sub-region, such as the seminar on "Civil Society and Political Parties". He also congratulated Mr Emile Brou, the president of the National Assembly, who had invited the members of the Assembly to participate in the seminar and deepen their knowledge of parliamentary democracy.

The US Ambassador praised the courage of President Bedie, who had announced important reforms, by saying, "Let me thank President Bedie for his proposals and for keeping an open mind on the opposition counter proposals, which will pave the way for something he always advocated, a peaceful and participatory democracy." The National Assembly Vice-President, Gilbert Bleu Laine, who was representing Assembly President Emile Brou, recommended a critical and faithful cooperation between the Assembly and the executive branch. He then declared the seminar in session.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

**Source**        *Le Jour*  
**Date**         **October 10, 1997 (Friday)**

**Title**         **Democracy at the National Assembly The Deputies Agree on a Frank Dialogue**

*The seminar organized by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), an American NGO, intended for Ivorian deputies and African and European experts, took place as planned. During the course of yesterday's discussions, the speakers recognized that there cannot be a democratic consensus in parliament without a frank dialogue between the political parties*

“Relations between majority parties and opposition parties represented in the National Assembly” This was the theme tackled by the Ivorian deputies, the African experts and the European experts yesterday morning, during the second day of the seminar organized by NDI According to Colin Eglin, the South African deputy, majority parties and minority parties must understand that they are not enemies Even further, he said, these two groups must work together to insure the proper functioning of the parliament “The administration of parliamentary affairs is achieved above all by consensus However, this consensus cannot evolve without frank consultations and dialogue between the majority and the minority,” explained Colin Eglin

This opinion was shared by the other speakers For many years, the PDCI party extolled an apathetic democracy Because of this past, the PDCI deputies say, President Bedie reached out to the opposition parties by inviting them to join an open government “Today consensus is possible if everyone plays his part,” stressed PDCI deputy Auguste Miremont The sentiment was shared by his colleague Mr Waotta According to Mr Waotta, consensus demands the respect of others and the right to disagree “Our problem here is that each party believes it is the purveyor of the truth”

The opposition parties, however, believe that the idea of alternating power is not accepted by the majority party, for which reason the majority party maintains an all out dictatorship over the minority parties According to Aly Coulibaly, RDR deputy, the majority thinks that the minority should play an insignificant role Specifically, he stated that “the majority refuses to allow the minority to express itself as it has the right to Opposition parties are denied access to state media”

On another note, according to Ms Mata Sy Diallo, a Senegalese deputy, the opposition should be pleased when it is invited to participate in a government of national unity “This is an opportunity for the opposition to show what it is capable of,” she said However, she invited the majority and the minority to cultivate dialogue and consultation This is the price, she asserted, for achieving a consensus that can advance democracy

The FPI and RDR deputies underlined that they are not against consensus But said that consensus must be established on the basis of mutual confidence, and on the acceptance of the proposals of

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others “Consensus can help us avoid drastic situations in our country” Colin Eglin spoke again to say that one cannot build a democratic society without taking into account the position of the minority Because, he said, the minority has the right to criticize the government -- constructive criticism, that is

On October 7, the participants also reflected on the theme of the relations between the National Assembly and the executive branch During these debates, the speakers reiterated that the deputies must realize they are in parliament to defend the interests of their constituents and not their party In this respect, they have the right to demand accountability of the government “The African partners must avoid being the rubber stamp of the executive”

### **The Deputies Give Their Feed Back**

The seminar organized by the American NGO, NDI, on the Role of the Legislature in Consolidating Democracy, which opened on October 7, closed yesterday on October 9 The presidents of the different parliamentary groups were unanimous in agreeing that the exchange was fruitful and enriching

Adama Coulibaly, president of the RDR parliamentary group, pointed out that this seminar allowed the deputies to correct certain errors “This meeting has permitted us to learn, through the experts, about the experiences of other parliaments from Africa and Europe” Echoing this sense, Amoakon Thiemele, president of the PDCI parliamentary group, indicated that the themes addressed during the seminar were very important because they permitted the deputies to “put together ideas for a strong and improved Côte d’Ivoire” Mr Boga Doudou, president of the FPI parliamentary group, agreed with the other sentiments This forum, he stated, showed the Ivorian deputies the direction in which they should head in order to reinforce the democratic process in Côte d’Ivoire The deputies all expressed the hope that this kind of seminar can be repeated, so that the lessons of this seminar are not lost “In one or two years, this seminar will likely be credited with playing a positive role in advancing the democratic process in our country,” stressed Mr Doudou

Christopher Fomunyoh, NDI regional director for West Africa, expressed his hope that this forum would serve as a catalyst for democracy and for the development of democratic institutions in Côte d’Ivoire

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

**Source** *Fraternité-Matin*  
**Date** **October 11 - 12, 1997 (Saturday and Sunday)**  
**Title** **National Assembly Seminar on Democracy, from October 7 to 9, 1997**

**MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY LEARN FROM THE SOUTH-  
AFRICAN EXPERIENCE**

The seminar on the role of the legislature in consolidating democracy, organized by NDI and endorsed by member of parliament Leopoldine Coffie, ended last Thursday at the National Assembly. Upon leaving the seminar, the Assembly members felt satisfied by this positive learning experience and were happy to have been enlightened by the South African experience, which the Honorable Colin Eglin -- himself a Member of Parliament from 1958 to 1980 -- described so brilliantly in detail.

Mr. Amoakon Tiemele, Mr. Boga Doudou and Mr. Adama Coulibaly, the presidents of the PDCI, FPI and RDR parliamentary groups, respectively, were extremely pleased that the seminar had opened a channel of frank communication between members of the Côte d'Ivoire National Assembly. They pledged to host further NDI programs in their country in order to study more extensively other aspects of democracy.

While discussing the theme of the seminar -- namely, the role of the legislature in consolidating democracy -- the Ivorian parliamentarians had an opportunity to become acquainted with and appreciate their colleagues while learning more about their relations with various groups that make up Ivorian society.

From Wednesday through Thursday, debates on the themes of transparency and ethics, the central role of committees and the relations between majority and opposition parties in the Assembly sparked the enthusiasm of the legislators. The theme of relations between the ruling and opposition parties engaged the interest of the participants, resulting in passionate yet cordial debates.

Regarding this theme, the NDI international experts emphasized that consensus reaching and political humility in governance are prerequisites to the preservation of a country's national interests. Voters elect a government, and it is by effectively ruling that this government can implement its societal project. Losing the elections does not entitle the opposition to behave as if it were the legitimate power in place and block government action. It should not fight the ruling party with a firing barrage of systematic criticism, nor should it foster repeated crises. The ruling party, however, should provide the mechanisms through which the opposition party can express its views. From time to time, the ruling party should accept amendments and counter proposals introduced by the opposition parties. This would provide the ruling party with an opportunity to improve its performance. Such an interaction is necessary since each party must be prepared to eventually lose.

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an election. This is the best way for the deputies to move beyond partisan politics in order to obtain a consensus on government policies

To legislate is to make laws that govern the entire nation, private and public sectors alike. "The legislature has fulfilled its mission when laws are flawless," said Gilbert Bleu Laine, vice president of the National Assembly, who was representing Assembly President Emile Brou. This means that members of parliaments have to change their traditional image of simply being lawmakers. They must go one step further and espouse the concerns of their constituents. They must be models of virtue who are beyond reproach. Members of parliament must reach out to NGOs in order to more effectively address and improve the social conditions of their constituents. They must involve themselves in projects that benefit all citizens. This must be done so that the myth that legislators line their pockets at the expense of the people remains just that, a myth. Members of parliament, lawyers and ministers must not have other sources of income. Such is the law in Canada and South Africa.

As recently as a year ago, an initiative taken by the South African parliament compelled its elected members to disclose their financial assets every six months. Until then, all assets in excess of FCFA 125,000 had to be disclosed once a year on October 15th. Included in this new disclosure initiative are tips, wages and even fees received by consultants traveling abroad, said Colin Eglin, a member of parliament.

In comparison to the other examples, the Canadian and South African Parliaments have had some original experiences. Draft bills are publically published and distributed three weeks before being debated in the Assembly. Channels of communication are open, and citizens are made aware of the laws under consideration by their parliament.

Thursday night, the President of Cote d'Ivoire received the NDI representatives. "Bedie won us over" said Lise Bourgault, a former member of the Canadian Parliament from Quebec.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

**Source** *La Voie*

**Date** October 13, 1997 (Monday)

**Title** NDI SEMINAR ON THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

**IVORIAN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PROMISE TO FULFILL  
THEIR MANDATE**

*From October 7 to 9, Ivorian members of parliament attended a seminar at the National Assembly on "The Role of the Legislature in Consolidating Democracy," sponsored by the National Democratic Institute (NDI)*

NDI, an American nongovernmental organization, is concerned with the establishment of true democracy in Côte d'Ivoire. This is why from October 7 to 9, 1997, the Institute organized a seminar for the Ivorian parliament entitled "The Role of the Legislature in the Consolidation of Democracy." There, our deputies had the opportunity to become more familiar with their responsibilities as members of parliament and as agents of the democratization process. Discussions focused on the constraints that hinder the mandate of legislators, such as partisan attitudes that often prevent reaching consensus. However, the legislators promised to overcome these problems to the best of their abilities. To discuss these issues, NDI called upon present and former members of parliament from the United States, Sweden, South Africa, Canada and Senegal.

"The Role and Responsibilities of Members of Parliament," "Relations between Majority and Opposition Parties in Parliament," and "Relations between the Assembly and the Executive Branch," were among the main themes of study during this seminar. The themes were presented by international speakers who shared the experiences of their respective parliaments. During the debates that followed these presentations, the Ivorian members of parliament had the opportunity to share their own experiences with the experts.

From the presentations of the representatives of democratic countries, the participants learned that parliaments are meant to be forums for democratic debate as well as tools to check government policy. According to the speakers, members of parliament must not work to please their government. They must protect the interests of their constituents rather than echo what the executive branch says. The Ivorian legislators were impressed by Mr. Colin Eglin's presentation on the South African experience. In South Africa, members of parliament in the ruling and opposition parties have an institutional framework in which to discuss ways of accelerating the democratic process.

Over the course of the various discussions, deputies of the opposition parties noted the lack of real democratic debate in the Ivorian parliament. They blamed this on ruling party deputies who persist in systematically passing all bills presented to them, including the electoral code. A member of the

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RDR even charged majority members with being scornful and antagonistic. Of course, the ruling party deputies denied these charges and stated that debates in the Assembly are democratic. The ruling party deputies continued by explaining that the opposition feels disenfranchised not because there are no parliamentary debates, but because opposition views are not taken into consideration by the government. Some opposition members countered that a lack of democratic culture in the National Assembly prevents the legislators from fully doing their work and reaching a consensus. Finally, everyone agreed on the need to move forward. The legislators decided to create a follow-up committee.

## **WHAT THEY SAID**

### **Mr Boga Doudou, President of the FPI Parliamentary Group**

In many respects, it was a very good seminar. The experts chosen were professionals and were all either current or former members of parliament. They shared with us their present and past experiences and the various ways in which they participate in debates to foster a true democracy.

As for the seminar's themes, we heard presentations on the relations between opposition and ruling party members of parliament as well as on relations between the Assembly and the executive branch. We had the opportunity to learn how in other democratic countries the parliament serves as a check on the executive branch and how members of parliament should work at defending the interests of their constituents rather than the government's interests. We sincerely hope that Ivorian legislators will take good note of that.

### **Mr Adama Coulibaly, President of the RDR Parliamentary Group**

This seminar was very interesting. Members of the Assembly, more specifically those from the opposition parties, should organize such forums in their districts in order to explain their role to their constituents. This is very important because people do not always understand our role very well. It is also important that Ivorian legislators meet with one another to understand better the mechanisms already in place and to effectively serve as a check on the government.

### **Ms Léopoldine Coffie, Chairwoman of the Cultural and Social Affairs Commission, Deputy of PDCI Party**

I am very satisfied because I was the one who contacted NDI during a mission to the United States. I thank the President of the Republic for having allowed this seminar to take place. I thank the members of parliament for their very enriching presentations. We shared a great deal with our colleagues from other countries. We gathered information and learned a lot. The presentations enabled us to make comparisons with our own situation, which will help us make some improvements in conformity with our specific situation. Côte d'Ivoire remains Côte d'Ivoire. It cannot be changed overnight.

***La Voie / NDI Seminar on the Consolidation of Democracy* Ivorian Members of Parliament Promise to Fulfill their Mandate**

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

**Source** *Fraternite-Matin*  
**Date** December 19, 1997 (Friday)

**Title** National Assembly Deputies Go On Vacation

A ceremony scheduled to take place this morning at 10 00 am at the National Assembly will mark the closing of the second ordinary parliamentary session of 1997. Without a doubt, this has been a dense session in terms of work volume -- 17 pieces of draft legislation were examined -- and in terms of the quality of the changes observed. During this second ordinary session, our parliamentarians gained a better sense of their role by enriching themselves through diverse experiences.

In fact, the seminar organized by NDI and the different parliamentary groups on the role of the legislature in the reinforcement of the democratic process proved among the most enriching experiences for our parliamentarians. The deputies explored rich and diverse themes with international experts who possessed extensive parliamentary experience and hailed from countries with long democratic traditions. Discussing the relationship between the executive and legislative branches, and a statute for opposition parties within parliaments where the ruling party is in the majority, helped give the legislative branch the necessary tools to more fully play its role *vis-a-vis* the executive branch. Even better, this theme consecrated the indispensable and inevitable collaboration between the legislative and executive branches, even though it is true that the [Ivorian] constitution grants power too liberally to the executive branch. This seminar also insisted upon the necessity of interaction between the ruling and the opposition parties in a fully democratic system. For in a democracy, no one is above the consequences of power alternation.

The result? A new parliamentary spirit has been born that transcends partisan interests. And this spirit manifested itself during the debate on current national events. This represents a great innovation that has not gone unnoticed by Ivorians. The deputies have exercised their critical spirit, the parliament played its role as a check on power, and Ivorians were reassured that democracy is deepening its roots in our country.

Safiatou Bah N'Daw, Minister-Delegate responsible for Transport and Telecommunications, Ezan Akelee, responsible for Economic Infrastructure, and Niamien N'Goran, responsible for Economics and Finance, were each called before the "tribunal" of the parliament with varying results. In general, the pertinence of the questions posed by deputies of all political tendencies spoke to the fact that, in matters of problems of general interest that affect the nation, parliamentarians can speak with one voice in the name of Côte d'Ivoire.

That the democratic process is functioning in Côte d'Ivoire is evidenced by the consideration given to the draft legislation proposed by Madame Gbagbo Ehivet Simone [deputy from the FPI opposition party], concerning the creation of an independent national election commission. This piece of draft legislation was given serious consideration [by the proper parliamentary committee] before being

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voted down by the National Assembly Other strong initiatives of this session were the examination of certain institutional reforms and several working sessions with missions from the parliaments of Europe and the United States The parliament also received representatives from the European Economic Commission, European Union, U S Senate and certain “grey-haired” dignitaries from the economic world, such as the former prime minister of France, Raymond Barre, and the former finance minister of New Zealand