

Comparative Report on the State of the Parliament in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco



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of Rule of Law and Integrity

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Introduction

I. Overview of the Project

This comparative report on the state of the parliament is based on the country reports covering the parliaments of four countries—Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco—and is the first report of its kind in the Arab region. ACRLI, with technical support from IFES and the Canadian Parliamentary Centre, prepared these reports over a two-year period. It employed a multidisciplinary methodology based on international best practices and norms for parliaments, and drew up academic resources; applied research; surveys of parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and the public; and discussions at country and regional roundtables. It is part of a series of reports focused on the overall state of three key mutually supportive institutions in the Arab region: the judiciary, the media and the parliament.

Like the country reports, this report analyzes a number of key issues related to the institution of parliament. **Chapter 1** explores the historical, political, socioeconomic and cultural context of the development of parliaments in the four countries being compared. **Chapter 2** evaluates regional parliaments based on essential parliamentary principles and indicators of good governance, including public participation/representation, independence, performance and integrity. Finally, **Chapter 3** offers key findings and recommendations for future reforms.

This comparative report attempts to analyze the similarities and differences—and highlight the negative and the positive attributes—of these four parliaments through a systematic examination of their performance within a framework of the international standards and indicators mentioned above. It also aims to offer key recommendations for reform that can be transformed into programming.

II. Key Conclusions of the Four Country Reports

Each of the parliaments in the four countries examined developed under different circumstances. The formative stages of Egypt's and Lebanon's parliaments began in the mid-nineteenth century, but neither country's parliament was officially established until the 1920s, when Jordan's parliament was also formed. Morocco's parliament was established in the early 1960s, following its independence. Initially, all four parliaments were bicameral, but one year after the formation of the Lebanese Parliament, its Senate chamber was dissolved.

1. Public Participation and Representation

An analysis of the country reports reveals that all four parliaments do not appear to be representative of their respective country's population and that the public does not participate in the affairs of parliament in a meaningful way. This phenomenon is explained, in large part, by various factors related to the manner in which parliamentarians were elected to this fledgling institution, including (1) limited citizen participation in elections; (2) the limited ability of parliamentarians to represent the public; (3) the absence of female and minority parliamentarians; (4) limited opportunities for parliamentary candidates to participate equally



in the electoral process; (5) the lack of accountability for election outcomes; and (6) the lack of citizen participation in the deliberation and decision-making process of elected parliamentarians.

2. Institutional Independence

In most of the countries examined, the parliament does not function as an independent institution because the executive branch dominates the legislative process, including the budget. Usually, it is control over budgetary matters that enables a parliament to act autonomously.

3. Effective Performance

In all four countries, the quality of parliamentary performance is low due to a number of factors, including (1) weak legislation and rules of order leave parliamentarians with little authority to enact legislation; (2) parliamentarians limited control over the government's revenues and expenditures; (3) inadequate powers (such as oversight authority) to fight corruption; (4) weak public participation in parliamentary affairs; (5) inadequate administrative and technological resources; and (6) limited access to specialists in topics like financial, economical and legal affairs.

4. Institutional Integrity

While each of the four countries has some legislation intended to regulate the internal and external activities of parliamentarians (such as those related to conflicts of interest), this legislation is both rarely applied and ineffective when put into practice. None of the four countries has legislation governing parliamentary ethics or political party financing.

The authors of the four country reports made a series of recommendations related to parliamentary reform. These include:

- adopt electoral regulations that will promote a more representative parliament, equal opportunities for political candidates, and enhanced citizen participation in free and fair elections;
- promote parliamentary independence according to the international standard of separate and balanced powers;
- enact legislation and organizational bylaws to promote, fairly manage and protect the role of political factions in parliament;
- reform parliamentary rules of order and bylaws to promote more efficient performance;
- update the administrative and technical systems in parliaments;
- develop research centers staffed by specialists that can assist parliamentarians in fulfilling their responsibilities;
- promote improved legislation, policy and regulations through high-quality public policy research;
- promote parliamentary participation in the development of public policy;



- develop mechanisms that promote more efficient communication among parliamentarians, civil society and the private sector;
- promote parliamentary integrity through innovative mechanisms;
- develop the capacity of parliamentarians to enhance their performance; and
- monitor and report on parliamentary performance, particularly with respect to parliamentarians' legislative and oversight roles.

III. Key Conclusions of the Four National Surveys

The main objective of the surveys of the public and parliamentarians was to collect information on key issues related to the overall status of the parliament as an independent, representative lawmaking institution in the four countries examined. Once collected, this information was analyzed by both national and international experts and discussed at roundtables. It was then used to help the authors of the four country reports with their analysis and to help develop and prioritize their key findings and recommendations.

The survey questionnaires were carefully prepared and closely linked to the standards ACRLI developed to evaluate the degree to which the parliaments studied were capable of fulfilling their constitutional roles and meeting the standards set by parliaments in other democratic countries. The survey questionnaire posed 61 questions, 44 of which aimed to evaluate a given parliament against the four key standards ACRLI developed for analyzing the overall state of the parliament (representation/participation, independence, performance and integrity). The other 17 questions aimed to elicit and prioritize key ideas for parliamentary reform. The survey questionnaires for the public and for parliamentarians (deputies, officials and consultants in the parliament) were created separately.

The survey results revealed the following:

- **Negative ratings from parliamentarians and their staff:** Parliamentary staff and officials surveyed in Morocco, Lebanon and Egypt gave their respective parliaments very negative evaluations in a number of categories, compared to the responses of those parliamentarians who were surveyed. Parliamentary staff, officials and parliamentarians all gave their parliament a very negative evaluation in a number of categories. The highest percentage of negative responses was registered among Jordanian parliamentary deputies (44 percent), followed by Moroccan deputies (25 percent), Egyptian deputies (22 percent) and Lebanese deputies (20 percent). It is interesting to note that the countries receiving the most negative responses was just the reverse when parliamentary staff and officials were asked the same set of questions: Lebanon (44 percent), Egypt (42 percent), Morocco and Jordan (25 percent).
- **Little equal representation:** Parliamentary staff, officials and parliamentarians in all four countries strongly believed there was little opportunity for equal public representation or participation.
- **Egypt, Morocco concerned about independence:** Parliamentary staff and officials in Egypt and Morocco expressed the most concern about the independence of parliament. In Morocco and Lebanon, staff and officials also expressed concern about their security.



- **Negative performance review:** Parliamentary staff, officials and parliamentarians all rated the operational performance of the parliament and parliamentary commissions negatively.
- **Staff focused on improving performance:** The responses given by parliamentary staff and officials differed markedly with respect to the reforms they thought necessary. Staff focused primarily on reforms related to parliamentary performance.
- **Public not happy with parliament:** In all four countries, the public's evaluation of their parliament was overwhelmingly negative, although reform priorities differed from country to country.



Chapter 1: Background and Context

Parliamentary institutions in the Arab region developed under different historical, legal, political and socioeconomic circumstances.

I. Egypt

The formative stages for Egypt's parliament began with the establishment of the Deputies State Council in 1866. However, multiple political and social barriers prevented it from becoming an official state institution until the passage of Egypt's Constitution in 1923.

Under the 1923 Constitution, the parliament is composed of two councils: the Senate, whose members are both appointed and elected, and the Chamber of Deputies, whose members are elected. However, from 1923 to 1952, the parliament was an unstable institution with limited authority. In general, it was dominated by the king, who often abused his constitutional authority and dissolved it. However, even after the 1952 revolution and the overthrow of the king, the parliament played only a marginal role in Egyptian politics.

The Constitution of 1971 (as amended) designates the Egyptian legislative branch as the People's Assembly, whose members are directly elected for five-year terms. The Constitution also provides for a State Council, whose members are both elected and appointed (the president appoints one third of its members). The Council's primary function is to offer its opinion on important government matters.

II. Lebanon

In Lebanon, the current parliament began to take shape in 1861, with the election of members of the Mount Lebanon Governorate. This administrative body was originally composed of 12 members elected through two rounds of secretive polls. However, its functions were restricted to distributing taxes, controlling imports and (when asked) providing the governor with their opinions. Its seats were allotted on a confessional basis. In 1920, political developments led to the formation of the State of Greater Lebanon and to the emergence of the parliament in 1926. The constitution stipulated the formation of an Assembly and a Senate, though the latter was dissolved in 1927. Thus, Lebanon's parliament became unicameral, composed of the Assembly, which held the country's legislative power and whose members are elected. An exception was made in 1991, and since then 55 deputies have been appointed under the Taif agreement, which was developed due to the country's inability to stage or manage parliamentary elections. Seats in parliament are now distributed on a confessional and regional basis.

The parliament plays an essential law-making and oversight role in Lebanon and is the main institutional tool for interaction between diverse political parties and the public.



III. Jordan

In Jordan, formative development of the parliament began with the creation of the Emirate of Transjordan and the establishment of the State Consultative Council (*Majlis Shura*) in 1923. This Council was entrusted with developing laws and regulations. When the first British-Jordanian treaty was adopted in 1928, the Organic Law (Constitution of 1928) was promulgated. It gave the Prince the “administrative and legislative powers as The Head of the country who ratifies, promulgates all the laws and supervises their enforcement.” This Constitution also provided for a Legislative Council, which shared legislative powers with the State Consultative Council. The first Legislative Council was established in 1929 and consisted of 16 members (14 were indirectly elected and two were appointed).

Following independence in 1946, the Emirate of Jordan became a kingdom. In 1947, a new constitution established the first Jordanian parliament. The Constitution created a hereditary parliamentary monarchy and gave the king the authority to appoint the Cabinet. This Constitution called for a bicameral parliament, which it named the National Assembly, consisting of two houses: a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies. As in the 1929 Constitution, legislative powers were again entrusted to both the king and the newly established parliament. The latter was given political and monetary control.

Under the 1952 amendments to the Constitution (which followed Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank), the king appoints members of the Senate while the public directly elects members of the Chamber of Deputies. The Constitution upholds the principle of equality between the two houses but gives the Chamber of Deputies the right to cast a vote of confidence or no confidence in the Cabinet or any of its ministers.

IV. Morocco

The Moroccan parliament was established in 1962, when the first post-independence constitution was adopted. Before that time, Moroccan legislative activities existed under what are called Amazighi or Berber customs and traditions.

As the result of numerous constitutional amendments, the Moroccan parliament has been both bicameral and unicameral. The 1970, 1972 and 1992 Constitutions mandated a unicameral parliament, and the 1962 and 1996 Constitutions mandated a bicameral parliament. In 1996, it returned to bicameralism in 1996 in order to enable local groups, socioeconomic sectors and professional organizations to be represented in what is called the House of Counselors, whose members are elected indirectly. The members of the House of Representatives are directly elected. The Constitution of 1996 also granted the House of Counselors oversight powers over the activities of the Cabinet.

The Moroccan constitutional regime was heavily influenced by the French Constitution. It restricts parliament’s powers and splits legislative powers between the parliament and the executive power. In Morocco, the executive branch also holds law-making responsibilities in cases related to authorizing laws or provisional governments. The king is also granted a major



role in the law-making process. Within this political context, the Moroccan parliament's constitutional and legal powers appear to be modest.



Chapter 2: Analysis of Principles

This chapter discusses the basic principles that should be upheld by democratic parliaments in the Arab world: (1) public participation/representation, (2) institutional independence, (3) effective performance and (4) institutional integrity. It also attempts to compare whether they are guaranteed in the four countries constitutions and laws and the degree to which they are applied in practice.

I. Public Participation and Representation

One of the basic principles democratic parliaments in the Arab world should uphold is for their members to be representative of the general population. In addition, they should promote public participation in the legislative process.

1. Fair and Equitable Representation

Diverse elements of society should be represented fairly and proportionately in a democratic parliament. Free and fair elections play a major role in achieving this goal. All four countries examined allocate parliamentary seats to geographic districts, which serves to promote fair and equitable representation in districts where the number of seats is proportional to the district's demography and size. This principle is also promoted by a country's election law when it mandates that a certain number of seats be allotted to religious, ethnic and minority groups.

Lebanon and Jordan both mandate such quotas for Christians, Circassians and Chechens. Jordan and Morocco also have a quota for women. While Morocco does not have a law requiring proportional representation based upon religion, it is not a serious issue there since almost the entire population is Muslim. However, proportional religious representation is more problematic in Egypt, where a sizeable number of Copts reside.

In all four countries, women are underrepresented in parliament, although Morocco has parliamentary seat quotas, Egypt has quotas for the appointment of women to government positions, and Lebanon has quotas for the number of women running in elections.

While there are no systematic studies that clearly illustrate the degree to which various elements of society are proportionately represented in the four countries examined, there are a number of political, historical, legal and socioeconomic explanations for various problems in all four countries. In some countries, such as Lebanon, parliamentarians on party lists are elected from districts by majority vote. In others, such as Egypt, local authorities often interfere in the election process. In Morocco, minority parties complain that they are not proportionally represented in some districts, while in Jordan, they protest that the single candidate selection election process works against their interests in many cases.

The degree to which diverse elements of society are represented in a parliament is sometimes influenced by the characteristics of a particular election, including voter turnout, the number of candidates competing for each seat and the number of annulled ballots. For example, in



Morocco, in one election the number of annulled ballots was 16 percent (an unusually high figure), and some of the winning candidates received as little as 10 to 15 percent of the total vote. In Jordan, women running under the quota system also receive a relatively small number of votes at times, which tends to weaken their ability to represent or speak out on behalf of their entire constituency.

In Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, the law does not require that professional entities and local organizations be represented in parliament, although these kinds of groups are allotted a certain number of seats in one chamber of the Moroccan parliament (the House of Counselors). In all four countries, many parliamentarians come from business backgrounds.

2. Equal Opportunity for Political Candidates

Ensuring that candidates have equal opportunities to run for parliament is a key element of upholding equitable representation and a free and fair election process. This principle is promoted, in part, through regulations of media coverage, political advertising and campaign finance.

A. Regulation of the Media During Elections

The Moroccan government regulates television and radio coverage of elections. Parties are entitled to equal access to public television and radio resources. However, it should be noted that many parliamentary candidates often complain about the limited amount of media time they receive. In addition, there are no private television or radio stations in Morocco.

In Lebanon, there is no law regulating media coverage during elections. Many candidates and parties own private television and radio stations and use them to cover their political campaigns. These factors make equitable election coverage very problematic.

Jordan also does not have a law regulating media coverage during elections. However, its situation is less problematic than that in Lebanon because there are no private television or radio stations. Moreover, there is no law guaranteeing candidates/parties equitable media coverage during an election.

B. Advertising Regulations

While Lebanese electoral law regulates the media's coverage of elections and publicity, the regulation does not apply to campaign advertising. Updating the law would help clarify the scope of the regulation. However, in Jordan, the electoral law is fairly strict and regulates campaign ads. Under specific conditions, candidates are entitled to free media ads and have the right to organize publicity campaigns. Morocco's electoral law also regulates campaign publicity, and it is aimed at providing equal advertising time to competing candidates.



C. Ceilings on Campaign Spending During Elections

In Lebanon and Jordan, no laws limit campaign expenditures during the election cycle. In both countries, money plays an increasingly important role in political life. In contrast, in Morocco, the law limits the funding an election campaign can receive as well as the state contributions to any campaign. Money is distributed among the political parties in a manner proportional to the number of parliamentary seats they hold. However, the law regulates how parties can spend their campaign money and mandates disclosure through a mechanism. It also prohibits local parties from managing their finances outside of the mechanism it created to monitor them.

In Egypt, in 2005 the High Commission for Elections established rules and limits for campaign expenditures. However, many believe that numerous candidates, particularly wealthy businessmen, exceed the limits and that the law is not enforced in practice.

D. Financial Contributions to Election Campaigns

In both Lebanon and Jordan, laws now regulate financial contributions to election campaigns. In Morocco, a law was passed in 2005 that regulates both state and legally authorized private sector, political party contributions.

3. Free and Fair Elections Conducted with Integrity

Free and fair elections conducted with integrity are essential if a country is to have a representative parliament.

A. Conducting Elections According to International Standards

There are various opinions as to the degree to which free and fair elections with integrity are conducted in each of the four countries. International standards are incorporated (to some degree) into the electoral laws of the four countries examined, but they are rarely applied in practice. In Lebanon, the 2005 report of the European Union Delegation for Monitoring Parliamentary Elections underlined many gaps in how these laws are applied during elections. Similarly, a report on Jordan's parliament noted many instances in which compliance with the law was falsified. A report on Morocco's parliamentary elections stated that votes and election results were also manipulated and falsified. In Egypt, the electoral process manifested many flaws.

B. Election Monitoring by Independent, Impartial Institutions

In Lebanon and Jordan, there are no impartial, independent election monitoring institutions. Under the law, the monitoring of elections is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior. In Morocco, the country report was not clear as to whether an independent impartial institution existed, but it did acknowledge that both parties and various organizations believed the 2002 parliamentary elections were administered impartially.



In Egypt, the constitution provides that elections are to be held under the supervision of the judiciary.

C. Impartial and Effective Mechanisms for Election Challenges, Complaints and Appeals

Lebanon and Morocco both have specific procedures for hearing and resolving disputes, complaints and challenges raised during the election process. For example, in Morocco, the administrative courts hear and resolve such complaints. However, appeals and challenges to the final election results are resolved by the Constitutional Council in both countries.

In Jordan, parliament has the authority to resolve appeals and challenges, but it is generally not considered an impartial, independent institution in its conduct of this task. During the 2003 elections, a total of 53 appeals were presented to parliament but they were all denied.

In Egypt, the People's Assembly is responsible for resolving such complaints and is the ultimate decision-maker in such cases. However, in practice the Court of Cassation (appeals) serves as the primary investigating authority and has specific procedures for handling complaints of this nature. An election result is not considered null unless two thirds of the People's Assembly make such a decision. This legal requirement raises many questions with regard to the validity of final appellate decisions by the Court of Cassation.

4. Parliamentary Accountability

Independent democratic parliaments must be accountable. Elections are a means not only to elect the best candidates but also to hold members of parliament accountable for their performance.

A. Political Accountability and Party Platforms, Local Customs, Ethnicity, Religious Affiliation and Sectarianism

Party platforms, local customs, ethnicity, religious affiliation and sectarianism have all played roles in promoting accountability in the elections process in all four countries. In Lebanon, party platforms played an important role during the 2005 elections. In Jordan, ethnic affiliation plays an important role, except in cities where parties and civil society organizations engage in the electoral process. In Morocco, reports note that elections are more sectarian than in the early years following independence. Parties have played a major role in promoting sectarianism, although all four countries still have a long way to go with respect to this issue.

B. Personal and Business Relationships

Personal and business relationships with people of financial means and influence play a role in the parliamentary decision-making process in all four countries.



C. Election Outcomes and Accountability

In most countries, the outcomes of parliamentary elections are determined by changing electoral alliances and the circumstances of the moment more than they are shaped by the electorate's efforts to hold their representatives accountable. Such public accountability hardly exists, although this generalization appears to be less accurate in the case in Morocco, where parliamentarians sometimes lose their seats because of voter dissatisfaction with their performance.

5. Public Participation

In democratic societies, parliament is one of the main mechanisms to enable citizens to work with their elected representatives to participate in the governance of their country. The public and parliamentarians should work together during both the elections and parliamentary deliberations process. Thus, continuous dialogue between citizens and parliamentarians is crucial to democratic debate and engagement.

A. Communication Between Citizens and Parliamentarians

In all four countries, there is a serious lack of communication between citizens and parliamentarians on matters of public interest, including good governance. Generally, any dialogue between them occurs only during social occasions, even though parliamentarians meet at their party offices periodically.

B. Communication Between Civil Society Organizations and Parliamentarians

In all four countries, there is only intermittent dialogue between civil society organizations and parliamentarians. Occasionally, parliamentary hearings are organized to hear the views of civil society, and civil society organizations organize workshops to which parliamentarians are sometimes invited.

II. Independence of Parliament

A key principle for democratic governance is the concept of separation of powers. Therefore, in the Arab world, this means that the institution of the parliament, as well as individual parliamentarians, should not be controlled by the executive power, any external forces or any personal interests.

1. Independence of Parliament as an Institution

The constitutions in Egypt, Morocco and Jordan do not clearly guarantee the independence of the parliament; the Lebanese constitution does.



A. Constitutional Guarantees for Parliamentary Independence

In Morocco, the independent status of parliament under the constitution is very weak, as it designates the king as the supreme representative or ruler of the nation. It also gives the king legislative tasks alongside parliament and limits the parliament's legislative prerogatives. In addition, the king has the right to "address both the Chamber of Representatives and the Nation and his speech cannot be the object of any debate."

In Jordan, the broad powers granted to the executive branch under the constitution, legislation and executive decrees serve to diminish the independence of the parliament. Moreover, the Jordanian Constitution entrusts both the National Assembly and the king with the legislative authority.

In Egypt, the executive is led by an all-powerful president who has the parliament under his effective control. Indeed, under the constitution the parliament's Peoples' Council can only meet by invitation of the president.

In Lebanon, the constitution clearly guarantees the independence of parliament and gives it exclusive legislative powers.

B. Management of Parliamentary Affairs

i. Parliaments Should Have Own Bylaws

The parliaments in all four countries have developed their own bylaws.

ii. Parliaments Should Manage Own Affairs

In all four countries, parliamentary affairs are managed in different ways. In Egypt, Morocco and Jordan, parliamentary affairs are managed by the director or secretary of each of the two chambers, with the assistance of his/her staff. In Lebanon, the speaker of the parliament (National Assembly) manages parliamentary affairs with assistance from his/her staff.

iii. Parliaments Should Establish and Manage Own Budget

In Lebanon, parliament develops and manages its own budget and expenditures without interference from the executive power.

In Jordan, the heads of the two parliamentary chambers—the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies—manages their respective financial affairs through independent financial mechanisms and procedures.

In Egypt, the People's Assembly and the State Council each have an independent budget.



However, in Morocco, the constitutional court decided that the two parliamentary chambers—the House of Representatives and the House of Counselors—did not have the legal authority under the constitution to establish their own independent budgets.

iv. Parliaments Should Administer Own Internal Affairs and Security

In Lebanon and Jordan, the speaker, with the assistance of staff from each chamber, manages all administrative affairs. These matters include the appointment, promotion and dismissal of employees as well as the management of security forces for parliamentarians and their staff. However, in Jordan, even though there is a law giving parliament the power to manage its own staff, in practice that power is seriously weakened by various financial mechanisms imposed by the executive power. The Moroccan parliament's security is provided by special forces appointed by the executive and the royal armed forces.

C. Constitution Establishes Firm Dates for Parliamentary Sessions

The constitutions in all four countries establish the dates on which regular parliamentary sessions are to be held. They also authorize extraordinary sessions. The Lebanese Constitution gives the president the right to defer a parliamentary session no more than one month. The Jordanian Constitution gives the king the right to postpone the meeting of the National Assembly no more than two months. While the Moroccan Constitution does not authorize the king to decide such matters, many believe he has the constitutional authority to do so under his constitutional responsibilities as the “Supreme Representative of the Nation and the Commander of the Faithful.”

In Egypt, the president traditionally invites the Council of People to hold its ordinary annual parliamentary session before the second Thursday of November. If the president does not extend such an invitation, the Council meets on this date by the authority granted to it under the constitution. The president also ends the ordinary session of parliament but only after the general state budget is adopted. The president can also invite the Council to hold extraordinary meetings when necessary.

D. Constitution Establishes Parliamentarians' Terms of Office

In Morocco, Egypt and Jordan, the constitution establishes the terms of office for parliamentarians. In Lebanon, the term of office is established by the electoral law. While in general it is more difficult to circumvent a mandate of the constitution than that of a law (which can be more easily amended), in Morocco parliamentary terms of office mandated by the constitution have been extended through royal interpretation of Chapter 19 of the constitution.

E. Clear Conditions for the Dissolution of Parliament

The independence and stability of parliament depends on its ability to perform its constitutional responsibilities without fear of being arbitrarily dissolved. In Lebanon, it is



practically impossible for the president to dissolve parliament under the conditions outlined in the constitution. However, in Morocco and Jordan, the king has the authority to dissolve parliament under any circumstances apparently. In Egypt, the president is not entitled to dissolve the People's Assembly unless it is necessary, and then only after a public referendum has authorized it.

2. Parliamentarians' Security

The independence of parliamentarians is dependent on their being afforded adequate security.

A. The Doctrine of Parliamentary Immunity

In all four countries, constitutions guarantee parliamentarians' immunity from prosecution except in cases where the person is caught in the commission of a crime (*in flagrante delicto*). Generally, parliamentarians can only be prosecuted with the consent of parliament. The main objective of parliamentary immunity is to protect parliamentarians from arbitrary prosecution and to allow them to perform their responsibilities under the constitution. However, in Morocco, the constitution lifts immunity when parliamentary opinions are injurious to the monarchical regime, Islam or the reputation of the king.

i. Restrictions on Lifting Parliamentary Immunity

In all four countries, an individual parliamentarian's immunity cannot be lifted without the consent of parliament itself. Even then, immunity can only be lifted in criminal cases after the accusations have been verified by parliament.

ii. Clear Procedures for Lifting Parliamentarians' Immunity

In all four countries, parliamentary bylaws outline clear procedures for lifting immunity in certain limited circumstances. However, in practice parliamentary immunity is rarely lifted.

B. Constitutional Guarantees of Freedom of Expression

In all four countries, constitutions guarantee parliamentarians' right to express their opinions. However, in Morocco, the constitution also forbids negative opinions about Islam or opinions that are deemed injurious to the monarchical regime or respect owed to the king.

C. Physical Security and Illegal Pressure

In principle, parliamentarians in all four countries are supposed to be protected from physical harm and illegal threats and pressure. However, in Lebanon, during Syrian occupation, some parliamentarians stated they were often subjected to various pressures. As noted in Section II.3.C below, the executive power and certain forces within society sometimes make political threats to parliamentarians in all four countries.



D. Parliamentarians' Compensation

Adequate compensation for parliamentarians is an important way to promote parliamentary independence and high quality performance. Monthly salaries for parliamentarians vary from country to country: US\$7,500 in Lebanon, US\$4,300 in Morocco, US\$2,300 in Jordan, and a surprisingly low US\$52 in Egypt (parliamentarians receive an extra US\$13 for every day they attend parliamentary sessions).

3. Parliamentary Independence in the Performance of its Duties

A. Parliament's Right to Make Laws

In Lebanon, the constitution gives the right to promulgate laws exclusively to parliament. The Lebanese Cabinet then issues the necessary decrees to enforce these laws. In Jordan, the constitution also gives parliament this power, but it allows the executive branch to make provisional laws in particular situations, such as when the parliament is not in session or has been dissolved. The Jordanian premier is also entitled to promulgate provisional laws when time is of the essence or with the permission of the king. However, this right has been expanded in practice to apply to a wide variety of circumstances.

In Morocco, the constitution actually restricts parliament's right to legislate in certain areas and gives all other lawmaking powers to the executive branch. In practice, the executive has shared some of its lawmaking powers with parliament. However, the king, as the "Supreme Representative" of the nation, is the country's ultimate legislator.

In Egypt, the constitution gives parliament some legislative powers but also gives the president extensive powers, which he frequently uses. Under the constitution, the president can issue resolutions that have the force of law if he receives consent from two-thirds of the parliamentary Council or in urgent circumstances. Even in urgent situations, the president is supposed to have his resolutions approved by the parliament.

B. The Scope of Parliament's Lawmaking Powers

In Lebanon, Egypt and (to a lesser degree) Jordan, parliaments have broad lawmaking powers. In Jordan, parliament refers regulations related to public facilities to the Council of Ministers (which functions like a Cabinet). In Morocco, the parliament's lawmaking powers are more limited and are restricted to specific areas outlined in the constitution.

C. Illegal Pressures on Parliamentarians

Parliamentarians in all four countries are subjected to various pressures and enticements by the executive power and forces within society. During Lebanon's civil war, parliamentarians often had to face serious threats and pressures.



III. Effective Performance

1. Efficient Legislation

A. Parliament Acts on Legislative Matters in a Timely Manner

Parliamentary efficiency varies from country to country, although in general there is considerable room for improvement in all four countries. In Lebanon, legislation is promulgated at a very fast pace, although many believe this negatively affects its quality. In Jordan, because the parliament meets only four months per year, its efficiency and accomplishments are quite low. In Morocco, various conflict of interests and governmental pressures often lead to inefficiencies and delays in the lawmaking process.

B. Parliamentary Debate over Legislation

In general, parliamentarians' analysis and debate of draft laws is of relatively low quality in all four countries (although there are differences between countries). In Lebanon, serious analysis and debate on draft laws varies from issue to issue. In Jordan, the process is taken less seriously and suffers from hasty analysis and action. In Morocco, the deliberations of parliament are (to some degree) less important, because its legislative role is more limited than in the other three countries. In more recent years, the legislative role of Morocco's parliament has been even further reduced because it is seen as co-opted by the executive power on most legislative matters.

C. Parliamentary Debate on Matters of Public Policy

In general, parliamentary participation in matters related to public policy is quite limited. Parliaments often do not seriously engage in public policy debates or fulfill their responsibility to implement and enforce the law.

D. The Participation of Civil Society

In all four countries, civil society participation in parliamentary debate over legislation and public policy is still quite limited. Civil society organizations are intermittently and irregularly invited to participate in the affairs of parliament, including in the analysis and drafting of laws and policies. However, in Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon, there is an increased effort underway to enhance civil society participation.

E. Access to Specialized Experts

In all four countries, parliaments have few experts and have particular gaps in experts who specialize in finance, economics and legislation. However, parliamentarians are beginning to realize the importance of experts, particularly those with knowledge of specialized areas.



2. Efficient Use of Public Money

A. Budgetary Analysis and Debate

In the four countries, the Cabinet develops a draft budget, which is then analyzed and approved by the parliamentary committee for financial affairs (occasionally after consultation with experts, when permitted). Government ministers are invited to attend this committee's meetings. However, because parliamentarians have limited knowledge and training in financial issues (as well as a limited amount of time to approve the budget), their capacity to seriously analyze and amend it is limited.

i. Transparency in Budgetary Matters

Parliament cannot carry out its budgetary responsibilities without governmental transparency in the budget process. While the parliamentary financial committee is entitled to budgetary information from the government, understanding this information requires special expertise, training, experience and considerable time. Because all four parliaments face serious impediments in each of these areas, they are not able to fulfill their responsibilities.

ii. Analysis of the Economic, Financial and Social Impact of the Budget

Parliament's financial committee undertakes primary analysis of the economic, financial and social impact of programs funded by the government budget. However, the capacity of this committee to undertake this complex task is very limited and dependent on the personal abilities of parliamentarians. Experts in financial and economic affairs are needed in all four parliaments, although the Jordanian parliament has already taken some steps to fill these gaps.

iii. Budget Audits

The annual audited budget details the government's actual revenues and expenditures. Each year, it is sent to parliament for final review and verification. Theoretically, this process should help parliament to analyze programs and develop the budget for the coming fiscal year. However, parliamentarians do not have the expertise, capacity or time to properly review these budgets in any of the countries examined.

B. Transparency in the Budget Approval Process

The constitutions in all four countries require that parliaments approve the government's budget by majority vote. However, in Jordan, it was reported that the vote approving the 2006 budget was not transparent and that, in fact, many parliamentarians objected to it. The situation is reported to be similar in Lebanon.



C. Budgetary Oversight and Monitoring

All four parliaments have budgetary oversight responsibilities under their respective constitutions but, for the reasons noted above, their capacity to perform this task is minimal at best. Because of this fact, most parliamentary oversight tasks are delegated to financial administrative entities, such as a government audit or accounting agency, like Morocco's Highest Council for Accounting. These bodies draft financial reports and submit them to parliament for review and approval.

3. Effective Oversight of the Government

In all four countries, the government is accountable to parliament. This means that parliament should be able to effectively oversee the budget and work of government ministries, agencies and programs. This oversight includes monitoring and evaluating performance as well as, when necessary, dissolving the government and forming a new one.

A. Opposition Parties

In all four countries, opposition parties lack organization and strategic direction. In addition, they have limited capacity to effectively monitor the work of the government, which is one of their most important roles in a democratic society. The strength of opposition parties varies from country to country and depends on several circumstances, including the structure and nature of the country's political regime and electoral system.

B. Effective Questioning of the Government

Inquiries to government ministries can be an effective tool for parliamentary oversight. In all four countries, ministers and Cabinet officials are required to respond to official parliamentary inquiries. However, there can be lengthy delays, vague answers or no responses to many inquiries. Thus, parliamentary oversight of government work using this tool is minimally effective. The failure of ministers and/or Cabinet officials to answer inquiries rarely leads to a parliamentary vote of no confidence in the government or one of its ministers.

C. Parliamentary Vote of No Confidence in the Executive

In all four countries, the leaders of the executive branches usually win by a large margin and thus are very rarely, if ever, confronted with a vote of no confidence from opposition parties or the entire parliament.

D. Parliamentary Oversight of International Agreements

In all four countries, a number of international conventions require parliamentary approval and oversight of implementation, but in practice this does not occur. In most countries, this is



the primary task of a parliamentary committee for external affairs, but in reality the government exercises full control over this process.

E. Parliament's Power to Charge Government Officials with Crimes

In all four countries, parliaments have the power (to varying degrees) to either charge and/or even try high-level government officials, such as ministers and premiers, with crimes. In Lebanon and Egypt, parliaments can even accuse the president of crimes. However, political considerations (including parliamentary party politics) usually prevent ministers from being accused except in the rarest of circumstances. Although Lebanon has never experienced such a situation, in theory parliamentary trials of the president and his/her ministers would be held before a High Council composed of parliamentarians and judges. Jordan has a similar process in place, although it, too, has never found a need to use it. In Morocco, the trial would be held before the Supreme Court but, for such a case, parliamentarians from both houses would also sit on the Court. However, there has never been such a trial in Morocco either.

4. Parliamentary Committees

In theory, parliamentary committees play an extremely important role in the work of parliaments in democratic societies and the Arab world.

A. Permanent and Specialized Committees

In both Lebanon and Jordan, there are a relatively high number of permanent, provisional and investigative committees covering all ministries and they play an important role in promoting parliamentary performance. There is also a committee composed of the leaders of various parliamentary blocks and permanent committees. In Morocco, permanent parliamentary committees are formed to oversee only certain ministries, although more general fact-finding committees may also be constituted.

B. Transparency and Effectiveness in Drafting Legislation

In Lebanon, the transparency and effectiveness with which parliamentary committees operate vary from committee to committee. In Jordan, draft laws often accumulate from one parliamentary session to the next because of the limited time parliament meets each year. Over the past decade, the percentage of draft laws that parliament has examined per session has ranged from 26 percent to 31 percent of the total proposed laws. In Morocco, the country report gave the parliamentary committees good performance marks in this area.

C. Transparency and Effectiveness in Oversight of the Executive Branch

In all four countries, the constitution gives the parliamentary committees the responsibility to monitor government performance. However, in reality, their role in this task is still quite limited in every country.



D. Transparency and Effectiveness in Investigations of Government Bodies

In all four countries, the work of parliamentary investigative committees does not appear to be transparent or effective due to various political pressures.

E. Transparency and Effectiveness in Involving Civil Society

The bylaws in the four countries examined do not include specific provisions that require civil society participation in parliamentary committee studies, hearings or meetings. Nonetheless, in both Lebanon and Jordan, civil society organizations sometimes participate in parliamentary committee meetings and hearings, although these meetings are irregular and intermittent.

F. Committee Experts

Parliamentary committees in the four countries examined are only to consult with experts on occasion, if at all. For the most part, parliamentary committees do not have specialized experts or, if they exist, they are few in number.

5. Parliamentary Bylaws and Performance

A parliament's performance is linked to the procedures and policies outlined in its bylaws.

A. Bylaws Guarantee Diversity and Freedom of Expression, Association and Debate

In all four countries, parliamentary bylaws guarantee diversity and freedom of expression, association and debate. They also contain the rules for managing the day-to-day work of parliamentary sessions.

B. Bylaws Specify Rights and Responsibilities of Parliamentary Committees

Parliamentary bylaws provide the rules and procedures for all parliamentarians—regardless of their party affiliation—related to appointment to and participation in parliamentary committees. However, a parliamentarian's affiliation with a political voting block plays an important role in determining committee assignments as well.

C. Bylaws Facilitate Parliamentary Performance

The goal of parliamentary bylaws is to uniformly promote and efficiently manage rules and procedures for the day-to-day work of parliamentarians and the parliament as an institution. However, in order to achieve this goal, the bylaws in all four countries need to be further developed and refined.



D. Clear Bylaws

In general, parliamentary bylaws in the four countries examined are relatively clear and unambiguous, although a report from the Moroccan Constitutional Council called for more clarification in various areas of Morocco's bylaws.

6. Effectiveness of Parliamentary Blocs

Political party blocs within parliament play an influential role in parliamentary life and committee assignments, although their effectiveness depends on how well they are organized.

A. Blocs and Parliamentary Bylaws

In all four countries, parliamentary activities are generally managed and controlled by party blocs that themselves are governed by internal procedures rather than the parliamentary bylaws. Many see the bylaws as ineffective, inefficient and unenforceable in practice.

B. Blocs and Parliamentary Decision-making

In Lebanon, parliamentary blocs are well organized around key issues, and their members are usually loyal and disciplined. In Jordan and Morocco, parliamentarians are less loyal and less disciplined, which allows parliamentarians to move from one bloc to another. However, a new law passed in Morocco in 2005 prohibits parliamentarians from changing their party affiliation or moving from one political bloc to another during their term of office.

C. Gaps in Parliamentary Bylaws

In all four countries, there are gaps in parliamentary bylaws, although they vary from country to country. For example, in Lebanon and Jordan, the bylaws do not mention parliamentary blocs, which play an important organizational and managerial role in parliament. In Egypt and Morocco, the bylaws are more explicitly linked to the process by which parliamentary blocs operate, such as their relationship to the speaker, parliamentary finances and parliamentary human resource issues.

7. Parliamentary Administration

Parliamentary performance is closely linked to the effectiveness of the parliament's technical and administrative system.

A. Technical Support

In all four countries, parliamentarians receive limited technical and administrative support from staff. These parliaments all lack specialized, well trained professional staff and experts who can undertake the research and analysis necessary to support the effective work of parliamentarians.



i. Standards for Hiring Professional Staff

In all four countries, there is a lack of clear, objective and fair standards for hiring, promoting and dismissing professional parliamentary staff. To the extent such standards exist at all, they are not applied in practice. Personal considerations play an important role in the appointment and promotion process in the four countries examined.

ii. Capacity of Professional Staff

In general, many parliamentary staff in the four countries examined are not professionally qualified. In addition, in Lebanon and Jordan, the administrative support system is too large and cumbersome, while it is too small in Jordan. In all four countries, consultants and research analysts often lack professionalism, training and experience.

iii. Training for Professional Staff

While there are occasional training programs organized by various donors, such as UNDP, they generally do not have any positive long-term impact on parliamentary staff because they are not seen as institution-building programs geared towards the needs of Arab parliamentarians.

iv. Salaries of Professional Staff

In general, the salaries of parliamentary staff in all four countries are similar to the salaries of other governmental civil servants and are not competitive with those in the private sector.

B. Access to Information

In general, the library and research facilities in all four countries are insufficient to support the professional and efficient work of either parliamentarians or their staff (though parliamentarians do now have access to the Internet). This means parliamentarians also lack access to databases and highly qualified specialists.

C. Facilities and Equipment

In Lebanon and Jordan, the facilities and equipment provided to parliamentarians and staff appear to be satisfactory and are in the process of being modernized. However, in Morocco, parliamentarians currently have insufficient space, although this problem is now being addressed.



D. Public Access to Parliamentary Activities

In general, in all four countries, the parliament's laws, achievements and activities are accessible to the public through private publications.

8. Capacity of Parliamentarians

Effective parliamentary performance is predicated on having a sufficient number of knowledgeable, well trained, experienced parliamentarians.

A. Preparation and Experience

In general, in all four countries, the percentage of parliamentarians with sufficient knowledge, training and experience to be effective is small, although this percentage varies from country to country.

B. Access to Information

In general, parliamentarians and their staff do not have ready access to information due to the lack of efficient, modernized information, administrative and technical systems. Moreover, many parliamentarians appear to have little desire to undertake research or try to access information.

C. Ongoing Training

In general, in all four countries, there is a need for parliamentary training programs and enhanced parliamentary performance, but most parliamentarians have demonstrated little interest in participating in such programs. Participation in past training programs has been low.

IV. Parliamentary Integrity

In order for parliamentarians and their staff to perform their legislative and oversight duties well (and thereby achieve good governance), they must adhere to certain minimal standards of professional integrity.

1. Parliamentary Ethics

Parliamentarians should abide by established ethical standards. They should not use their position for personal gain or closely associate with people of questionable character.

A. Written Rules

In general, in the four countries examined, there are virtually no written rules related to the ethical behavior of parliamentarians, except for some references found in parliamentary



bylaws and election laws. In Lebanon, the electoral law does prohibit parliamentarians from using their position for political purposes or financing private projects with public money. Another law forbids illegal enrichment. However, the latter law is not effectively applied, and there have been no prosecutions under its provisions. In Morocco, the bylaws of the House of Representatives require parliamentarians to submit a declaration of income and assets form to the speaker.

In Egypt, an ethics committee is organized each year within the parliament. This committee examines ethical infractions related to a parliamentarian's religious, ethical or social values as well as those related to the political and economical principles of Egyptian society.

In Jordan, the constitution states that "he who has a financial benefit in one of the governmental offices could not be member of the houses of representative and people." If a parliamentarian is found to be in violation of the provisions of this text, he or she can be removed from parliament by a two thirds vote of his or her house. The Jordanian criminal code also has in illegal enrichment law of sorts, but it is not enforced in practice.

B. Sanctions for Unethical Behavior

While parliamentarians can theoretically be prosecuted in court if parliamentary immunity is lifted, this rarely happens in any country. In Egypt, the ethics committee can adopt sanctions against parliamentarians found guilty of a breach of ethics in an investigation, but these administrative sanctions are seen as weak and ineffective. Even though some sanctions are clearly defined in some countries, they are not applied in practice.

C. Watchdog Functions

In none of the four countries examined are there specific watchdog institutions within parliament charged with monitoring and enforcing ethics rules and regulations. Because of this fact, the government's watchdog institutions try to assume this responsibility. The mass media also plays an important role in collecting and disseminating information about parliamentarians' ethics.

2. Parliamentary Integrity and Conflicts of Interest

Parliamentary integrity presupposes that parliamentarians and their staff are working with the public interest in mind—not their own private interest.

A. Conflict-of-Interest Rules

While some parliaments in the four countries examined have adopted rules related to conflict of interest and abuse of influence, they are insufficient in scope. Regardless, they are rarely applied in practice.



B. Discovery of Conflict-of-Interest Violations

Some parliamentarians in the four countries examined secretly pursue their own personal interests and not the public interest. However, their activities are sometimes revealed by the media.

C. Application of Conflict-of-Interest Rules

In countries where there are no clear conflict-of-interest rules, it is virtually pointless to examine how they are applied in practice. However, even though some countries have such rules, they are usually not applied in practice.

D. Income and Asset Disclosure Laws

In Lebanon, parliamentarians have a legal obligation to submit an income and asset declaration that lists their real (immovable) and personal (movable) properties. In Morocco, the House of Representatives bylaws also require parliamentarians to make such a declaration. In Jordan, such a law is under development.

3. Transparency With Respect to Political Funding

Transparent financing of political parties and electoral campaigns of parliamentary candidates is key to promoting parliamentary integrity and fighting corruption.

A. Rules for Financing Political Campaigns

In Jordan and Lebanon, there are no laws related to the financing of parties or election campaigns. In Morocco, the election and political party laws define rules for financing campaigns and political parties. In 2005, Egypt's High Commission for Elections established rules for financing campaigns, but many see them as ineffective.

B. Declaring Income and Assets

In Lebanon, the law of illegal unjust enrichment requires every official to declare his or her income and assets. In Morocco, the House of Representatives' bylaws require its members to do the same. In Jordan, a law requiring parliamentarians to disclose their finances was recently adopted.

C. Citizens' Access to Political Finance Information

Whether a country has laws related to political financing or not (Morocco does but Lebanon and Jordan do not), obtaining access to this kind of information is very difficult.



4. Transparency With Respect to Parliamentary Activities

Parliamentary transparency in the exercise of its duties is a basic condition for parliamentary integrity.

A. Mechanisms for Transparent Actions and Discussions

While parliamentary bylaws establish mechanisms to promote transparent operations and open public discussion, some important actions and discussions often occur outside these rules and mechanisms.

B. Media Coverage of Parliamentary Sessions

In all four countries, some parliamentary sessions are broadcast by television and radio as well as covered by the print media.

C. Citizen Access to Parliamentary Sessions

While citizens in all four countries are entitled to attend all open parliamentary sessions, in practice such sessions do not occur frequently. Sessions of parliamentary committees can only be attended by invitation from the committee's president, and such invitations are generally issued only to experts and selected representatives of civil society organizations.

D. Publications of Minutes of Legislative Sessions

In all four countries, the minutes of legislative sessions and public debates are published by parliamentary councils and disseminated to the mass media.

E. Public Access to Parliamentary Archives

In all four countries, anyone can access the parliamentary archives with appropriate approval.

5. Impartial Treatment of All Citizens Under the Law

Parliamentary integrity requires that legislation be uniformly non-discriminatory.

A. Parliamentary Impartiality

Parliamentary and legislative integrity also requires that legislation not be biased in favor of one group or political party. This concept is particularly important with respect to election laws.



B. Non-discriminatory Laws

Parliamentary and legislative integrity also requires that laws not discriminate against citizens on the basis of their geographic location or regional affiliations. However, in some countries such discrimination exists in laws related to personal status, public budgeting and the distribution of regional credits.

C. Legislation Prohibiting Discrimination

All four countries have ratified international treaties that prohibit all forms of discrimination and are obligated to pass and enforce laws in this area. All of their constitutions contain provisions guaranteeing equality.

6. Parliamentary Adherence to the Constitution

Parliamentary integrity is contingent on the constitution being honored as the supreme law of the country. Therefore, it should not be contravened by any law.

A. Constitutional Review of Legislation

In Lebanon and Morocco, there are constitutional councils that examine the constitutionality of proposed laws. These councils are independent from all other state authorities. In Egypt, the Supreme Constitutional Court is also independent and examines the constitutionality of laws. In Jordan, while there is no constitutional judiciary or council *per se*, the Assembly and the Senate have some professional experts who try to help parliamentarians draft laws that are consistent with the constitution. The Supreme Court of Justice Code also provides that it will not apply or enforce any law that contravenes the constitution.

B. Legislative Conformity to the Constitution

In general, the laws in all four countries do not conflict with the constitution. However, there are many contradictory laws, and some are misapplied in practice. Moreover, even though there are constitutional councils or courts, they are usually not consulted on the constitutionality of a law or practice.



Chapter 3: Recommendations

An examination of the state of the parliament in the four country reports of this project reveals the need to undertake radical good governance reforms as soon as possible in all four countries. However, the reports also reveal that there are many political, socioeconomic and legal barriers to implementing such reforms, not the least of which is the political will of the current powers that be. Other potential barriers relate to religious fanaticism, executive control of political parties and the capacity of governments and civil society organizations to implement fundamental reform.

The reforms recommended in the country reports—many of which are captured below as reforms needed in all four countries—should take these various obstacles into consideration during their on-the-ground implementation. However, the most important first step is for each country to make comprehensive reform of parliament one of their highest reform priorities. Without these reforms, including those needed to empower civil society, it will be virtually impossible to promote good governance reforms, build stronger institutions, enhance government integrity and create a society governed by the rule of law.

Perhaps the most significant, virtually unanimous finding in this two-year project is that comprehensive parliamentary reform is needed on every front examined in the four country reports. This includes public representation and participation, independence, performance and integrity.

I. Public Representation and Participation

The people in a society are the ultimate source of political authority, and they must be able to express their will and to participate in the governance of their society. This can only be achieved through free and impartial elections and when all people have ethical representatives in parliament who are working in the public's interest. To achieve this kind of representation, the following reforms should be implemented in all four countries, according to the needs of the country in question:

- Reform the system for parliamentary elections to ensure that all citizens are fairly represented and encouraged to vote and participate in the way in which they are governed.
- Reform the system for campaign financing to promote equal opportunities for all parliamentary candidates. This includes adopting spending ceilings for candidates/parties, mechanisms to monitor campaign expenditures and fair policies relating to access to the media and campaign advertising.
- Reform the election laws to ensure free and fair parliamentary elections and the resolution of election disputes according to international standards.
- Pass and implement a law that requires elections to be held under the supervision of an impartial and independent organization.
- Pass and implement a law that gives the authority to rule on the validity of elections and parliamentary challenges to independent judicial authorities.



II. Parliamentary Independence

To promote and safeguard the independence of parliament, the following reforms should be undertaken in all four countries:

- Pass and implement laws to promote the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches. This includes giving parliament the exclusive power to promulgate laws and to control, manage and monitor all internal parliamentary affairs.
- Pass and implement laws that give parliament exclusive control over the development and management of its budget.
- Pass and implement laws that allow parliament to fulfill and perform its constitutional responsibilities in an effective, efficient and legal manner.

III. Parliamentary Performance

Enhancing parliamentary performance requires the following reforms in all four countries:

- Reform the legislative drafting process and develop the capacity of parliamentarians to conduct analytical research and produce written commentary on each law.
- Reform the public policy and legislative drafting process with the goal of generating more practical legislation that can be applied and enforced in practice.
- Pass legislation (or constitutional amendments, if necessary) to lengthen legislative sessions and enhance the quality of parliamentary performance.
- Reform and implement parliamentary bylaws that promote more parliamentary committee activities as well as engagement with and oversight by the opposition.
- Pass and implement laws, bylaws or budgets (as the case may require) to authorize and fund specialized experts and to organize meetings with civil society and the private sector—which are necessary to enhance parliamentary performance.
- Pass and implement laws, bylaws or budgets (as the case may require) to enhance parliamentarians' capacity to manage and control government finances.
- Reform and implement parliamentary bylaws to promote more efficient and effective parliamentary performance.
- Reform and implement parliamentary bylaws and rules of order to better and more fairly manage and oversee the activities of party blocs.
- Reform and professionalize the civil service system that supplies parliament with staff so that hiring is based more on merit and less on politics in order to enhance parliamentary performance. Professional training programs should also be developed.
- Develop, equip and fund research centers within parliament and supply them with specialized experts and consultants in financial, economic and legal affairs.
- Develop and fund regular training sessions for new parliamentarians.
- Modernize and fund the purchase of equipment and technology for parliament.



IV. Integrity

Promoting parliamentary integrity will require the following reforms in all four countries:

- Pass and implement campaign and political party finance laws that promote transparency.
- Pass and implement laws that prohibit abuse of power by parliamentarians and that include clear and effective sanctions that are imposed and monitored by judicial authorities.
- Pass and implement laws related to unjust or illegal enrichment of parliamentarians.
- Reform and implement bylaws that promote transparency and debate within parliamentary hearings and committees.
- Pass and implement laws that give the constitutional courts the power to review and decide on the constitutionality of draft and existing laws.
- Reform the bylaws or pass and implement a law (as the case may require) to create an institution within parliament to manage and monitor the conduct and ethics of parliamentarians.

V. Additional Recommendations for Reform

In addition to the reforms outlined above, other closely related reforms should be undertaken in all four countries:

- Launch a comprehensive campaign to promote the rule of law through educational programs and the mass media. The media plays (or could play) a pivotal educational and watchdog role by disseminating information to the public on a range of issues, such as religious fanaticism and sectarianism, free and fair elections, integrity, and holding parliamentarians and officials accountable.
- Pass and implement new regulations that promote more political party engagement, activism, openness and democratic behavior.
- Pass and implement laws that enhance the role of civil society in engaging with and monitoring parliament's decision-making process and the fight against corruption.
- Establish a center to systematically monitor and report on parliament's representativeness, its encouragement of public participation, its independence, its performance and its implementation of integrity reforms.