

# PAKISTAN PROGRAM PROFILE



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## History of Partnership

The House Democracy Assistance Commission approved a partnership with Pakistan in March 2010. Since then, it has worked with the National Assembly and Senate of Pakistan in the areas of budgeting, information and technology, committee operations, and civil-military relations. The Commission has encouraged development on these fronts to strengthen the independence and efficacy of the National Assembly and Senate through Congressional visits to Islamabad and training and seminar programs in Washington for visiting Pakistani members of parliament and key parliamentary staff.

## Background

On February 18, 2008, Pakistan held elections after nine years of military rule. General elections were last held in Pakistan on May 11, 2013, to elect the members of the 14th National Assembly and to the four provincial assemblies of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Elections were held in all four provinces, Islamabad's federal capital territory and in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The remaining two territories of Pakistan, the Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, were ineligible to vote due to their disputed status. The election took place in 272 constituencies, whilst a further 70 seats were awarded to parties having been reserved for women and minority groups; none of the parties achieved the 172 seats needed for an overall majority. The fifth largest democracy and second largest Muslim democracy in the world, the elections are noted for the first civilian transfer of power following the successful completion of a five-year term by a democratically elected government.

Pakistan has a bicameral Parliament whose lower house, the National Assembly, has 342 members; 272 are directly elected, and the remainder are reserved for women and minorities. The Senate has 100 members elected by provincial assemblies. Senate elections will next be held in March 2016 to elect members replacing 52 retiring Senators.

## Congressional Delegations

Representative David Dreier led a delegation of five Members of Congress to Pakistan in February 2012. The delegation met with the Chairman of the Senate Farooq H. Naek, Prime Minister Yousaf Gilani, and Interior Minister A. Rehman Malik. In addition, the delegation formally opened the USAID-funded Pakistani Institute for Parliamentary Studies (PIPS) which promises to be a training center for legislative staff and legislators alike in the years to come. Following the opening ceremony, the delegation held workshops on committee operations and oversight and concurrent staff training was held on the role of a professional staff and management of a congressional office.

The Commission organized a delegation of Members of Congress to Pakistan in March 2010. Representative David Price led the delegation of four Members who met with the Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Senate Chairman Farooq H. Naek, Prime Minister Yousaf Gilani, and President Ali Zardari. The delegation also met with Members of the Pakistani Women's Caucus and Foreign Affairs Committee. Several workshops were held to demonstrate the roles defense budget

oversight, committee operations, and parliamentary oversight of the executive branch have in an effective legislature. The delegation also visited Peshawar, capital of North-West Frontier Province, to examine local governance and federal-local relations, especially as pertains to service delivery.

## **Staff Delegations**

In September 2015, a delegation of congressional staff visited Pakistan and Nepal as part of an assessment exercise to capture impact of HDP's work to date and make recommendations as to future programming. The assessment team included Karen Robb, Chief Counsel to Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and the Budget Committee, and Cate Sadler, Legislative Assistant to Rep. Ander Crenshaw (R-FL); as well as senior NDI staff. During their visit, the delegation met with senior parliamentary and party leadership, as well as HDP program alumni, representatives of the diplomatic and donor communities, civil society activists, and other stakeholders with perspective on the legislature's development and the role of HDP in strengthening the parliamentary institution.

## **MP Seminars**

Five members of parliament participated in a member exchange focused on budget processes and financial oversight in the legislature in September 2014. Delegates examined: congressional committee structure; the role of legislative support services and the budget products they provide; processes for preparing and analyzing governmental budgets; organization and implementation of public, budget, and oversight hearings; functions of audit institutions and mechanisms for budget oversight; policy considerations for taxation, trade, and financial services; and legislative ethics. In addition to observing a public committee hearing and activities on the House floor, delegates met with current and former members and staff of the U.S. Congress.

In March 2011, Members of the Pakistani Senate and National Assembly visited Washington to attend an HDP-organized seminar on committee operations. The Pakistani Members met with a dozen of their counterparts in the U.S. House of Representatives to discuss the organization and operation of public committee hearings, the importance of committee oversight, legislative ethics, the support Members receive from agencies, such as the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and the role of a committee chairperson. The program began with an overview of the U.S. committee structure by CRS, and presentations by senior staff members of key House committees on how committees set their agendas in consultation with House leadership, how committee press operations are managed, how legislative drafting takes place, and how budget analysis is provided by CBO for the Congress. In addition, participants also met with the Comptroller General of the United States, viewed an Appropriations Committee hearing, and compared and contrasted their own committee systems with those of other seminar participants.

In March 2010, the Commission, in cooperation with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan, and Near East/South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, organized a study visit for three Pakistani Senators focused on civilian-military relations. The objective of the tour was to demonstrate how civilian legislators can oversee the armed services. The delegation met with Members of Congress from key defense appropriations and oversight committees, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, and Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. In March 2009, the Commission had assisted with the organization of a similar visit by members of the Pakistani National Assembly, prior to Pakistan's entry into the House Democracy Partnership program.

## Staff Seminars

In January 2015, two parliamentary staff members joined colleagues from 14 other countries for the largest HDP staff institute to date. Facilitated by the National Democratic Institute, the weeklong program focused on strengthening committee operations. The program sought to provide participants an overview of committee operations in the U.S. Congress, and covered topics such as internal and external policy analysis resources, the oversight role and oversight tools available to committees, as well as legislative and executive branch relations. Emphasis was placed on organizing, preparing and conducting public hearings. The program also will provide the delegates the opportunity to discuss the role and functions of committees in their home legislatures.

Staff of the Pakistani parliament participated in a Legislative Staff Institute organized by the Commission in October 2014. The staff institute hosted 24 participants from 12 partnership countries for a week-long seminar that focused on legislative research, analysis, and drafting. The program began with an overview of how the U.S. Congress works, led by the office of the Clerk of the House and the Congressional Research Service. The seminar focused largely on the policy analysis process, which was designed to enhance analytical skills, strengthen the connection between information providers and the legislative process, and to ensure that legislatures were presented with a variety of choices to solve societal problems. The seminar provided best practices to (1) define the problem to be addressed, (2) identify alternative solutions for the resolution of the problem, and (3) trace the key impacts and effects of the alternatives, to utilize when providing products and services to the legislature.

In January 2012, two staff members participated in a training seminar on legislative research and analysis. They were joined by colleagues from 12 other HDP partner countries. The parliamentary staff institute included presentations and discussions with Members of Congress and top officials from the Congressional Research Service (CRS). Current and former CRS staff provided the participants an overview of basic legislative research and analysis techniques including identifying sources of information, basic policy analysis, developing alternatives for the legislature, and conducting impact analysis.

In December 2010, Pakistani staff took part in a Commission-sponsored Legislative Staff Institute in Washington, focused on committee operations, where they held meetings with CRS, staff from several House committees, and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Commission. In addition, committee staff from the Republic of Macedonia shared their experience in developing procedures to begin using oversight hearings as an element of the work of their parliamentary committees.

In October 2010, staff from the Pakistani parliament participated in a staff institute focused on strengthening legislative budget analysis capacity. Twenty-one staff from 11 partner countries participated in the program, which included meetings with or presentations by officials from CBO, CRS, and staff from the House Committees on Budget, Appropriations, and the Joint Committee on Taxation. Additionally, budget analysts from the Kenya National Assembly shared their experience in establishing and developing a parliamentary budget office.

In June 2010, two staff members of the Pakistani parliament traveled to Warsaw, Poland, to attend the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Frost-Solomon Commission, which was the predecessor to the House Democracy Assistance Commission. They were joined by 22 staff members from 11 partnership countries, along with MPs and research staff from former partners of the Frost-Solomon Commission. While they were in Warsaw, current and former staff of the Congressional Research Service worked with the Pakistani

staff to help them further develop their parliamentary research service through workshops, peer-to-peer discussions, and open forums. Speakers underlined the importance of reliable, impartial, timely, and accurate research to the work of democratic legislatures. They also shared tips on how to engage legislators and help them see the value of research, which was a concern shared by a number of participants.

A December 2009 legislative staff institute was organized in conjunction CRS. The Institute hosted 27 participants from 12 partner countries, including Pakistan, who were mostly officials and analysts of their respective parliament's research services. The program focused on the role of a research service in providing independent information and analysis to members of parliament and their staff.