

THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK

On The World Bank & International Monetary Fund

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Chairman's Foreword

I am honoured and slightly daunted to have been elected Chair of the new Board of the Parliamentary Network, just as the world's attention has been drawn to the immediate and grave dangers of climate change. And I'm delighted that in our first discussions, the board were keen for the Parliamentary Network to spend much of our efforts over the next two years focusing on the connected challenges of decarbonising our planet, while creating jobs, and inclusive growth.

At a time when automation, AI and the 'rise of the robots' threaten to transform the world of work, and when, in many parts of the world, inequality is rising while debt levels remain high, this is truly an agenda that requires both the best of our thinking, and the best of our collaborative spirit.

In developing these answers, we will need to listen much harder to our young people. While so many of the hardest challenges of our time have the greatest impact on the young, their voices are gravely underrepresented.

I was extremely grateful to have the opportunity to hear Greta Thunberg when she spoke in the UK Parliament last month. Young activists like her demonstrate that young people around the world are informed, impassioned and hungry for action.

But while under 30s make up more than half the world's population, they are represented by just over two per cent of parliamentary representatives in legislatures around the globe, including my own. Indeed, the average age of a British MP is 50.

That is why I am delighted to report the successful inaugural meeting of the Parliamentary Network's Global Young MP initiative at this year's Global Parliamentary Conference, where we were joined by more than 30 MPs from 26 countries across all regions. This groundbreaking new programme for MPs under 45 is committed to tackling the development challenges directly affecting young people, including education, youth employment, and the future of work.

The biggest concern for nearly all young Parliamentarians was preparing the next generation for the jobs of the future in an age of emerging technology. While this new era poses a range of challenges for young people that policy makers must meet, it is also clear that in broader policy development we must listen to younger people who, as digital natives, are best positioned to understand technology and use it to create opportunities for new skilled jobs and innovation in sectors like healthcare, transport and education.

Over the next two years we also hope to develop the work kickstarted last year with the Parliamentary Network's pamphlet, "The Future of Work for the People We Serve". Editing the publication, which includes contributions on subjects from increasing the number of female entrepreneurs to securing structures of corporate governance fit for the future, I saw the scale of the challenge was clear. Just to maintain current levels of unemployment in the face of automation and a growing gig economy, the world economy may need to create 600 million new jobs over the next decade.

What was also clear, though, was the wealth of ideas and motivation within the Parliamentary Network to meet these challenges. During the next two

years, I hope to collect more perspectives on the future of work from members across all regions, so we can continue to learn from each other and develop innovative solutions to the economic and social challenges a changing world of work poses to those that elect us. If we succeed in this mission, growing inclusive economies that create sustainable work, we will be able to raise living standards in ways that are faster, fairer and more sustainable.

Liam Byrne MP and Shadow Minister of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is the current chair of the Parliamentary Network. He is a Member of Parliament for Birmingham Hodge Hill since 2004. He currently serves as Shadow Minister of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and Digital Economy at the House of Commons, and Chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Inclusive Growth. Previously, he was Shadow Minister for Business, Innovation and Skills, and Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. He served as Chief Secretary to the Treasury from 2009-2010.

The New Board

Chair Liam Byrne MP, United Kingdom

Please present yourself and your main political priorities in Parliament.

In 2004, I gave up life as a technology entrepreneur to serve the community of Hodge Hill in East Birmingham where four generations of my family lived and worked. Today it is one of the most diverse communities in Europe, and the most income deprived constituency in Britain, with the highest youth unemployment in our country.

So the fight for jobs and economic justice has been center-stage for my politics for 15 years, seeking to find a path forward as tidal waves of change crash around us. During the Great Financial Crisis, I served as a Cabinet Office Minister for Gordon Brown in 10 Downing Street, helping coordinate our response to the crisis, before becoming Chief Secretary to the Treasury tasked with preparing our plan for fiscal consolidation. Today, I'm at the cutting edge of the next revolution as Opposition spokesperson for Digital, and chair of Parliament's cross-party think-tank on Inclusive Growth, helping think through how we ensure the future is fairer than the past, as automation, artificial intelligence and the 'rise of the robots' changes our economy and the nature of work forever.



What are the activities you would like to conduct and/or initiatives you would like to realize during your mandate as a Parliamentary Network Board Member (2019-2021)?

As Chair of the Parliamentary Network Board, I hope we can take forward three big tasks. First, helping boost transparency and accountability in member parliaments around the world. Second, we have to harness digital communications to transform awareness of the incredible work and impact of the World Bank, and IMF amongst parliamentarians and policymakers everywhere. Third, I hope we can create a space where parliamentarians can debate a new agenda around the connected challenges of climate change, inclusive growth and the future of work – and translate that big picture thinking into practical ideas that solve domestic political priorities, from youth unemployment and gender inequality to the need to boost start-up rates, build up tax systems and transform infrastructure.

The New Board

What are your ideas on how to encourage more interest in international development and the global economy in national Parliaments?

The great disruptors of our age: climate change, automation, the changing nature of work, will be felt across the world and can only be tackled effectively if we work together. The changes pay no heed to lines on maps. Parliamentarians are an enormous reservoir of talent for the World Bank and IMF, as people on the sharp end of political problems, but very often, policy experts in their field and blessed with brilliant communications skills. We're going to need that entire toolset as we work together to find new answers to common problems. Nothing beats face to face discussion and debate. But it's time to harness digital communications now to really turbo-charge our work.

Vice-Chair Ricardo Leite MP, Portugal

Please present yourself and your main political priorities in Parliament.

I am an elected Member of the Portuguese National Parliament since 2011 and I represent the Lisbon District for the Social Democratic Party. I am a Medical Doctor with specific training in Infectious Diseases and worked as a practicing physician for nearly a decade before I was elected into office. Currently, I am the Head of Public Health at the Institute of Health Sciences of the Católica University of Portugal and Guest Lecturer at NOVA University Medical School (Infectious Diseases and Medical Microbiology).



Sitting on the Foreign Affairs Committee and on the Health Committee, while being Social Democrats' National Spokesperson for health, my main priorities have been, among other, to raise awareness and political support towards the elimination of infectious diseases in Portugal and in the world; the access to healthcare services for all population; to ensure the policy reforms needed to promote universal healthcare coverage; to improve the quality of health and well-being for all and to assure that Portugal's interests in Europe and in the world are safeguarded for its inhabitants and also to its diaspora. Having been born and raised in Toronto, Canada, I take the issues of the Portuguese communities abroad very seriously.

To complement my efforts in the Parliament, in 2017, I founded 'UNITE Global Network of Parliamentarians to End HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and other infectious diseases'. A global network of elected legislators, currently from 46 countries, across 5 continents, committed to promoting life-changing public policies that allow us to eliminate these diseases as a public threat, in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Most recently, I have had the honor of being elected as Vice-President of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, since April 2019.

I got into professional politics because I have seen firsthand as a physician how society needs to do more for those that are most vulnerable and somehow left behind, and how those in power can have a direct impact on people's lives. With political will, everything is possible.

What are the activities you would like to conduct and/or initiatives you would like to realize during your mandate as a Parliamentary Network Board Member (2019-2021)?

I will humbly contribute towards strengthening the work that the World Bank and IMF have been doing since the end of the last financial crisis which poised itself as a serious threat to democracy and development. Despite the general rise of the quality of life across the globe, there is still tremendous work to be done in terms of international development and economic growth towards combating the inequalities that are deeply entrenched. Coming from Global Health, I would argue, based on the highly established scientific evidence, that investing in health is cost-effective and has the highest impact in comparison to all other policy areas, particularly in low and middle income settings. Economically speaking, it's proven that investing in health can actively contribute towards the sustainable growth and development of nations and that the late these investments are made, the less impactful they will be.

Therefore, I would like to propose that during the current mandate of the board we promote:

- A joint session/address on the importance of addressing the question of Universal Health Coverage that people need to access to take the financial hardship they encounter when in the need of healthcare services.

- A field trip to Portugal for MPs to witness firsthand the Portuguese integrated healthcare model and also to evaluate the impact of the Portuguese crisis and IMF intervention (2011-2014).
- A working group to present an investment case for the World Bank to invest in global health (communicable and non-communicable diseases) from 2020 until 2030 as an important step towards reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals (a multi-stakeholder working group to present a report at the Global Parliamentary Conference in April 2020).

What are your ideas on how to encourage more interest in international development and the global economy in national Parliaments?

I would encourage more interest by presenting more effectively the data that the World Bank continuously collects. In a globalized and interdependent economy, it is critical that we share a common view of the globe. It is crystal clear today that economic, social, cultural and political openness is the way to achieve better living standards for those living today and for future generations. Evidence-based and data-driven policies are the safest and most effective path for National Governments, Parliaments and multilateral organizations to take towards contributing to a more sustainable and socially just world.

If we look at the number of people who have gained from globalization and have emerged as an asset to tackling global challenges we understand that the world has gained tremendously from technology, education and health. Let me share one single example that exemplifies this view in practice. The number of people living in extreme poverty has decreased from around 88% in China in 1981 to 0.7% in 2015 (from 878 million to 10 million). This phenomenon had one single causality: China's openness to economic globalization in 1980. (World Bank/Forbes)

Now we must address the challenges and pitfalls of globalization to ensure that the distribution of wealth reaches all, particularly those who have not yet seen development nor economic growth in the same measure as the most prosperous regions of the world. It's in our hands to make sure no one is left behind.

The New Board

Vice-Chair Olfa Soukri Cherif MP, Tunisia

Could you briefly present yourself (which parliament you represent, since when you are in office, your professional background, and your main political priorities in Parliament?)



I am Olfa, an independent Member of Tunisian Parliament since December 2014, and former rapporteur of the Committee of Finance. Previously, I worked as a Professor in Economics at the Insitute Supérieur de Science Humaines in Tunis, and in Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Paris, Panthéon, la Sorbonne, where I also studied. I graduated with an MBA in Trade Policy from Harvard University, the continued serving as a consultant for the OECD in and AISEC Alumni President. I am an adamant advocate of democratic consolidation, believing that sustainable development is a means to which such could be achieved.

What are the activities you would like to conduct and/or initiatives you would like to realize during your mandate as a Parliamentary Network Board Member (2019-2021)?

For the upcoming two years, the activities and initiatives that I would like to realize regard training sessions – as the one organized in Lebanon on accountability -; organize a conference in Iraq on Peace for Development; and publish a booklet “Start-up and innovation: The Future of Work”. Other important initiatives that I will promote are increased connection with the African continent and establishment of a local chapter.

What are your ideas on how to encourage more interest in international development and the global economy in national Parliaments?

With the upcoming G7 conference held by the Network at the French Senate on June 21, I have taken the initiative to adopt a charter on international development and solidarity. I also want to promote the shaping of better policies for development.

The New Board

Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir MP, Bangladesh

Could you briefly present yourself (which parliament you represent, since when you are in office, your professional background, and your main political priorities in Parliament?)

I am Muhiuddin, Member of Bangladesh Parliament, and is for the second time Chair of the Public Accounts Committee (2009-2012; 2014-). I have also served as State Minister for Planning at the Civil Aviation Ministry and Science and Technology Ministry. Moreover, I was the initiator of the Fifth Five-Year Plan, which shaped Bangladesh's development policy from 1997 to 2002.



What are the activities you would like to conduct and/or initiatives you would like to realize during your mandate as a Parliamentary Network Board Member (2019-2021)?

I am delighted and encouraged to be associated with the Board Members of the Global Parliamentary Network. My aim is to collectively strive for sustaining and spreading ideas of democratic governance based in people's representation in every country; Increasing investment of international organizations like World Bank and IMF in the less developed countries in order to account for increasing prosperity of the world as a whole; and fostering freer flow of technology and trade amongst all countries for increasing productivity everywhere.

Hodan Mohamoud Osman MP, Somalia

Could you briefly present yourself (which parliament you represent, since when you are in office, your professional background, and your main political priorities in Parliament?)

I am Osman, I was elected in 2016 to the Somalia Federal Parliament Upper House (Senate). Prior to that I worked as a nonprofit finance manager and



advocate for refugees. The plight of those fleeing persecution and seeking to establish new homes cannot be underscored enough.

As a member of the Senate, my priorities are to advocate for women and girls to have the same rights and access as males do to education, health and economic empowerment. This can be achieved through increasing the number of female representatives in the Somali Parliament by setting aside predetermined seats to be contested for and held exclusively by women.

What are the activities you would like to conduct and/or initiatives you would like to realize during your mandate as a Parliamentary Network Board Member (2019-2021)?

During this two-year period, I aim to emphasize on activities related to empowerment and facilitation of parliamentary oversight committees to fight and eliminate corruption. I would also like to increase and actively pursue the invest in human capital especially the education of the girl child.

What are your ideas on how to encourage more interest in international development and the global economy in national Parliaments?

As nationalism spreads like a wildfire across continents, the need for international development is more urgent than ever before in this growing global economy. I think this trend can mainly be countered by proactively enlightening and informing the masses about global developments, big and small. We live in an era of social media; Parliaments around the world ought to capitalize on this far reaching medium to encourage more interest in international development and the global economy.

Vice-chair Percy Downe MP, Canada

Prior to joining the Senate of Canada in 2003, Percy Downe served as Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. In the Canadian Senate, he is currently member of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, Vice-President of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association and Chair of the Canada-United Arab Emirates Parliamentary Friendship Group. Senator Downe is a former Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.



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Lahcen Haddad MP, Morocco

Dr. Lahcen Haddad has been Member of Moroccan Parliament since November 25, 2011. He has been reelected for a second term on October 7th 2016. He has also served as Minister of Tourism with the Government of Morocco between 2012 and 2016. Before joining the Government in January 2012, Lahcen Haddad worked as international expert in strategic studies, democracy, governance and development, and as a certified expert in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, diversity and entrepreneurship. Dr. Lahcen Haddad taught as a university professor for over twenty years with institutions such as Indiana University, Saint Thomas Aquinas College in New York, the School of International Training in Vermont, Mohamed V University in Rabat and Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. Dr. Haddad is also known for being an active media expert with knowledge of new trends in digital means of communication and social media. Lahcen Haddad has been elected recently as Member of the Governing Council for SID (Society for International Development).



Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu MP, Kosovo

Hon. Dr.sc. Osmani, MP, a Professor of law, educated in Kosovo and the United States, is an elected member of the national Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo. Now serving her third mandate, Dr. Osmani is the most voted woman in the history of parliamentary elections in the Republic of Kosovo. Ms. Osmani is currently serving as Chairwoman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Diaspora and Strategic Investment, and has previously chaired several committees. Before running for parliamentary elections, Dr. Osmani served as Chief of Staff and Foreign Policy Advisor and Legal Advisor to the President of the Republic of Kosovo. Dr. Osmani has studied at University of Prishtina and at University of Pittsburgh, and is teaching both universities.



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Shamsul Bin Mohd Akin MP, Malaysia

Hon. Akin is the current Member of Parliament for Hang Tuah Jaya, in Malacca state. He is the Information Chief of the Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR). Before he joined politics, Datuk Seri Shamsul practiced law at his own private law firm specializing in criminal cases. He was elected as a Member of Parliament from 2013. In 2018, he was appointed as a Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Primary Industries.



Nathan Nandala-Mafabi MP, Uganda

Nathan Nandala-Mafabi is a Ugandan Member of Parliament with the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC). He is part of the Appointments Committee. Since 2011 he is the leader of the opposition and the Chairman of Bugisu Corporation Union. He is also a financial management consultant and tax consultant by profession, and holds university diplomas from Uganda, Kenya and the UK. He used to work as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and as Shadow Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.



Jeremy Lefroy MP, United Kingdom

Hon. Lefroy is a British Conservative Party Member of Parliament and a member of the Committee on Exiting the European Union. Until recently, he served on the International Development Selected Committee and the Health and Social Care Bill Committee. He is also the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Ethiopia. After ten years in Tanzania working in the coffee industry, he returned to the UK and worked assisting smallholder farmers in East Africa until his election in 2010. He co-founded Equity for Africa, a social investment business which supports small businesses, and Stafford Works, a charity which promotes job creation and entrepreneurship in his parliamentary constituency.



Parliamentary Role in Clean Air SDGs 2030: From Writing the Words to Getting the Results

By Shazia Z. Rafi, President and Convenor of AirQualityAsia, consultant specializing in parliamentary diplomacy related to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

As we approach the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] 2030 five-year review in 2020, the SDGs are in danger of the same fate as the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]– not enough implementation, many high flourish commitments including on financing that remain unmet. Since the SDGs are a voluntary commitment by governments there is no enforcement mechanism.

Emergency action, however, is needed on the SDGs related to air pollution and air-quality. “Air Pollution has become the new tobacco” says **Dr. Tedros Adhanom-Ghebreyesus**, Director-General, World Health Organization [WHO]. According to [the Lancet](#) air pollution kills more people than AIDs, Malaria and Tuberculosis combined. It is also the key link between the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change as the same carbon emissions accelerate air pollution and global warming. To deal with this looming crisis, the United Nations Secretary-General is urging governments to come to the Climate Summit in September 2019 with tangible commitments, not more promises.

Parliaments are also being asked to step up the political will to implement the SDGs.

Parliamentarians have been long involved with the SDGs. Legislators played a crucial role in both negotiating the precursor MDGs and using the lessons-learnt from that process in negotiating stronger targets in the SDGs.

Parliamentary work on the MDGs derived from the United Nations Development Programme's concept of Human Development - that development must include factors beyond GDP growth. **Hon. Evelyn Herfkens**, former MP and Dutch Development Cooperation minister, stated at her appointment as Executive Coordinator for the MDGs, “the Millennium Development Goals provide us for the first time in history with a shared vision among all of us including at the highest political level of what development is about – and who should be doing what to put an end to poverty.”

Senior legislators were involved in developing the concept of Sustainable Development. **Hon. Sen. Al Gore** and his international colleagues led their delegations to the Rio Summit on Environment and Development 1992 and negotiated a strong Agenda 21. At my former organization, Parliamentarians

for Global Action [PGA] we published a compendium of national laws and regulations enacted by these legislators to implement Agenda 21.

At 2002 Rio+10, Johannesburg, while Secretary-General of PGA, I organized a [Clean Air/Clean Water Legislation Conference](#) attended by over 100 parliamentarians from around the world. Experts discussed Air Quality Regulations, Economic Cost of Air Pollution, Clean Water Legislation. Model legislation including the US Clean Air/Clean Water Act of 1970 were also reviewed. Parliamentary Seminars followed on Water Management 2002-2005, Energy Management and Environment 2009, Sustainable Cities at Rio+20 in 2012. Outcome resolutions from several parliamentary bodies fed into the 17 SDGs.

By 2013 as SDGs negotiations were underway, an informal Parliamentary Working Group on Clean Air [PWGCA] was formed including politicians from India, Indonesia, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Senegal, Sweden and the United States. The opportunity to put forward the overarching goal came at the Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU] UNHQ meeting in New York, November 2013.

Hon. Nayyar Bukhari, then Chair of Pakistan's Senate was heading his delegation and in his address to the assembly put forward the "[Right to Clean Air](#)" as a basic human right. "My suggestion was supported by the delegations of Mexico, Brazil, Senegal and many others," recalls Bukhari. By March 2014 on behalf of the PWGCA I had begun inter-facing with the negotiating teams on SDGs at the UN.

Parallel to this parliamentary effort the WHO had already started a major program to have air pollution recognized as a global health hazard. "Myself and Dr. Carlos Dora initiated this idea that air pollution was a leading cause of mortality" recalls **Dr. Maria Neira**, Director, Public Health and Environment, WHO. Neira is herself a former parliamentarian having served as Health Minister of Spain.

Dr. Carlos Dora, coordinator, PHE, WHO explained, "By 2013 NASA had started optical density technology that allows scientists to estimate air pollution globally...We used epidemiology to project mortality as a result of these air pollution estimates. Modelling was done in India, Peru etc. When the results came in 2014 of 7 million deaths, we realized that the deaths from air pollution were more than tobacco deaths!"

Dr. Neira and her team realized "we needed a strong mandate with a World Health Assembly [WHA] resolution. The idea of the resolution was discussed with China, India, Norway, United States. We thought we could go for it in 2014, but we needed a lot of negotiations... Norway played an incredible

role in negotiations with oil-producing countries.” The [resolution](#) was finally passed in the WHA 2015.

The PWGCA immediately started to use the WHA resolution to push for air-quality, clean air in SDG targets focusing on [3.9](#), [11.6](#) and [12.4](#). **Sen. Jim Walsh**, Ireland and **Hon. Charity Ngilu**, MP, Kenya introduced the group to **Amb. David Donaghue** and **Amb. Macharia Kamau** co-Chairs of the General Assembly Working Group on the SDGs. We began working on draft language at UNHQ, with parliamentarians meeting their respective Foreign and Environment ministries and their colleagues in other parliaments. Amb. Kamau recalls that the co-chairs, “were supportive of including air-quality...and keeping the enthusiasm and momentum for ambitious targets.”

Key civil society organizations had also done the heavy lifting of strengthening the text. **Richard Fuller**, then heading Blacksmith Institute, now called [Pure Earth](#), worked to “expand the text to include soil and chemicals. We mounted a full court press, contacting over 50 governments through GSHP, defining new text, getting it approved at country level.”

At the key working group session on 12.4, co-chaired by UN Environment Programme and Pure Earth on 12.4, PWGCA insisted that “Air” be added to the target alongside water and soil. Achieving the language on the goals and targets was a crucial first step.

Implementation, however, is a much harder as many indicators are still a work in progress.

On SDGS 3.9 where air pollution indicators are universally agreed, Dr. Neira still faces an uphill challenge on changing the track of pollution sources. “We are pushing **so** much with our new platform on energy and health, infiltrating any agency/group with capacity to change energy sources at country level. “

Parliaments have formed SDGs Task Forces across committees to work on the 17 SDGs. **Hon. Riaz Fatyana**, MP, Pakistan heads the SDG Task Force. “We hold regular [seminars](#) in the National Assembly and with UNDP/parliamentary institute; recently also on the [Clean Air Challenge](#).” However, budget allocation for a national clean air programme has not yet happened.

A clear example of the Implementation challenge is target SDG 12.4 on cleaning up chemical contamination. The UN Statistical Division has [down-graded key indicators](#) to Tier III where “there is no established methodology for the indicator”. In contrast established methods of measuring/monitoring chemicals released into the air are in use in major carbon-emitting economies including India according to [air quality data](#) forwarded by **Dr. Sarath Guffikunda**, Director, Urban Emissions. When asked about the possibility of

meeting the 2020 target date for 12.4, Fuller responded with “Not a chance!!!!!! Nothing much has happened.”

The hurdle to implementation is clearly political will at national and state levels. According to **Hon. Dr. Shashi Tharoor**, MP, India, “a major challenge remains the lack of [national] institutional relationships among three key stakeholders: civil society, the technical solution providers in the air quality space and the political class, particularly Parliamentarians...air quality is also ...not linked to [legislators] winning or losing an election.” Dr. Tharoor further clarifies that with “little access to the funds required to implement any national level strategy at a local level -- state bodies are expected to develop and draw in finances for local implementation on their own.”

Funding the transition to a clean air economy needs a transition to a green economy. **Hon. Satya Widya Yudha**, chair of the Green Economy Caucus, House of Representatives, Indonesia posits “[a] green economy needs financial institutions to fund energy transition to renewable energy; a transportation transition to electric/hybrid vehicles and better transport.”

Funding the implementation of key air pollution/climate change SDGs is the urgent task ahead for the World Bank, as well as regional development banks and parliamentary bodies that work with them.

PAM Panel on Trade and Investments in the Mediterranean – A parliamentary tool to support growth

PAM Secretariat

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean established in 2010 its *Panel on Trade and Investments in the Mediterranean*, as a key policy and operational instrument within the framework of the PAM 2nd Standing Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation, currently chaired by Hon. Karim Darwish (Egypt).

The work-plan of the Panel, structured in Sectoral groups¹, is set on the basis of pre-defined avenues of action, tailored on the needs of the Euro-Mediterranean region, and stimulated by the PAM Secretariat General, which acts as a clearing house for Parliamentarians, the stakeholders and the Sectoral groups.

On the occasion of the 13th PAM Plenary Session, held in February 2019 in Belgrade, Hon. Giulio Centemero (Italy) and Sen. Lhou Lmarbouh (Morocco), have been appointed as co-Chairs of the PAM Panel, and will lead its works for the next two years.

The harmonization of certain specific economic policies as a means for a coordinated process underpinning sustainable development has been a top priority for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, since its establishment. Economic prosperity and security, sustainable policies and job-oriented investment represent key factors for the Euro-Mediterranean region and for its stability. To this end, PAM's member parliaments decided to strengthen their cooperation on a number of issues that need to be addressed through a comprehensive approach, involving in this effort policymakers and experts in order to formulate effective and concrete measures. These are then forwarded to the PAM national parliaments for national legislative proposals.

An inclusive and coordinated approach has been adopted by the PAM Panel over the past years, which resulted in a number of strategic partnerships with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the WTO, EIB, EBRD, UNECE and UNCTAD. This cooperation aims at contributing to facilitate the access to credit, support private and entrepreneurial initiatives and fostering sustainable development in the region.

On the same lines, PAM has initiated a partnership with the OECD, which will lead to the signing, shortly, of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations to formalize cooperation, share best practices and carry out joint activities.

PAM spearheaded a number of conferences and targeted meetings in cooperation with top established international institutions which demonstrate the fruitful work of the PAM Panel, such as the High-Level Parliamentary Conference dedicated to Trade Facilitation and Investments in the Mediterranean region, held in partnership with the WTO, in Belgrade, Serbia in 2018. On that occasion it was decided to create the “PAM/WTO Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum for Trade and Investment Facilitation” which will further enhance PAM’s capacity and expertise in these sectors.

Furthermore, the PAM Panel, closely cooperates with the EBRD to support the decision to extend operations in some MENA countries in order to, *inter alia*, establish an efficient financial environment and increase the productive capacity of the countries involved.

Since its establishment, the Panel also organized events on renewable energy, waste management, vocational training, youth employment, support to SMEs, first recipients for job offers in the Mediterranean basin, and risks reduction related to environmental hazards, such as on the occasion of the meeting, in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Environment, on risks for the Mediterranean concerning a potential disaster comparable to the *Deep Water Horizon* oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico.

More recently, in April, on the international level, the President of 2nd Standing Committee, Hon. Karim Darwish, and PAM Secretary General, Amb. Sergio Piazzini, represented PAM during the Global Parliamentary Conference in Washington D.C. On this occasion, Hon. Darwish and Amb. Piazzini held a series of strategic bi-lateral meetings with World Bank and IMF high ranking officials, and concurrently initiated negotiations for the signing of a Cooperation Agreement.

With regards to future activities, a PAM Panel meeting on “*Alternative Capital Markets for the Mediterranean*” will be held on 4 – 5 July in Milan, Italy. The idea, proposed by the co-Chair of the Panel, Hon. Centemero, stems from the lack of the current mismatch on the market between job demand and job offer. On this occasion, pressing challenges recommended by the World Bank

and IMF during the GPC 2019 Spring Session, such as disruptive technologies for economic development, good governance and political accountability and the role of fintech and cybersecurity in the global financial stabilization will be discussed and PAM panel priorities will be reassessed.

PAM is committed to come up with a concrete vision and a sustainable road map for the Euro-Mediterranean region and is confident that this objective is within reach especially on the knowledge that it has gained support, respect and recognition not only within its member parliaments but also from the stakeholders and the international community.

¹ Sectoral groups of the PAM Panel:

- Sustainable Development (SD): Energy, Water, Environment;
- Trade Facilitation (TF): Rules, Logistics, Transport, Infrastructures;
- Production Initiatives and Job Creation (PJ): Industry, M/SMEs, Services, Food Production, Vocational Training;
- Investment and Finance (IF): Facilitating legislative and regulatory frameworks, Promotion Agencies, Financial Institutions and operators;

Overseas Tax Evasion and the Ongoing Failure of the Canadian Revenue Agency

Percy E. Downe, Senator, Canada
Vice-Chair, Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & IMF

Canada has a growing problem with citizens hiding their money overseas to avoid paying Canadian taxes, and our tax collection agency, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), is failing in fulfilling its mandate.

The CRA is not upholding their responsibilities to collect money owed by Canadians hiding their money overseas. When these tax cheats are not caught, charged and convicted, and money owed isn't collected, Canada has fewer funds to invest in healthcare, infrastructure, culture, the military, and the rest of Canadians must pay higher taxes to make up the shortfall.

Why the national government allows this state of affairs to continue year after year remains a mystery. The national government of course talks tough, "overseas tax evasion is a high priority", "we will catch you if you cheat" and other reassuring words. Their [results](#) however speak for themselves: they have none.

Recently, on the 3rd anniversary of the release of the Panama Papers, we [learned](#) that other countries have recovered more than \$1.2 billion dollars in fines and back taxes. Australia has recouped \$92,880,415, Spain is counting \$164,104,468 in their coffers, the United Kingdom has recovered \$252,762,000, even tiny Iceland was able to recover \$25,525,959. Some 894 Canadians (individuals, corporations and trusts) were [revealed](#) to have accounts in the Panama Papers, but Canada's Revenue Agency hasn't recovered a dollar.

Canadians are told that it is complex. The CRA has "identified" money, they tell Canadians. Well, it is complex for every country and other countries have not only identified money owing, they have collected the money, which is now available for them to invest or to lower taxes.

Because Canada has not recovered any money, three things have happened. One, we don't have that money to fund our priorities without incurring a deficit; two, the rest of Canadians have to make up the shortfall by paying more taxes; and three, Canadians are wondering why there is a two-

tier justice system for tax evasion. Try to cheat on your domestic taxes, and the CRA will likely find you, charge you, convict you and force your repayment. Hide your money overseas, and you likely will never be charged or convicted. The odds are good you will get away with it, and the national government allows this double standard to continue.

The government doesn't even know the size of the problem. At my request, the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO, an independent officer of Parliament) has been [trying](#) to estimate the tax gap (the difference between what the CRA collects and what they should be collecting) since 2012. Other countries, like the United States, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Sweden [publish](#) their tax gap. In Canada, the CRA [refuses](#) to provide the PBO with the raw data he requires to inform the Government and Canadians about the amount of unpaid taxes due to overseas tax evasion.

The PBO recently [stated](#) "(i)t's very difficult to fix a problem that you cannot quantify", and the Canadian government allows this state of ignorance to continue.

To compound the dishonesty of the CRA, investigative reporter Christopher Nardi of the *Journal de Montreal*, recently examined repeated public comments made by the Revenue Minister, who said "(i)n our current mandate, we hired 1,300 new auditors to work on combatting tax evasion." The reporter [discovered](#) this was totally false; in reality the CRA had only hired 192 new auditors since January 1, 2016.

Regrettably, this is not the first instance of deception from the CRA. In fact, the list of misleading statements is a lengthy one:

CALL CENTRES

The Claim: The Auditor General's November 21st 2017 [report](#) on the CRA's call centres cited the Agency's claim that 90 per cent of calls were successfully connected (to an agent or the automated help line).

The Reality: According to that same Auditor General Report, however, it was revealed that the CRA achieved this high success rate by blocking 28.9 million of the 53.5 million calls received and excluding these blocked calls from their calculations. When blocked calls and other factors were [considered](#), "the Agency's overall success rate was 36 percent."

“SPONSORED CONTENT”

The Claim: In February and March of 2017, articles appeared in newspapers and online across Canada extolling the work of the CRA. Bearing titles like

“Federal programs in place to address offshore tax avoidance and evasion” and “How Canada is cracking down on offshore tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance”, it was likely the best press the Agency had ever received.

The Reality: It was subsequently revealed, in response to a [Written Question](#) I tabled in the Senate, that CRA—operating under the premise that if you can't earn good press, buy it—paid almost \$300,000 for this positive “sponsored content” in six print and digital newspapers across Canada.

BILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT

The Claim: A number of individuals, from CRA spokespersons to the Revenue Minister herself, have [spoken](#) of the “billion dollars” that has been invested in the fight against tax evasion, implying that this money was already at work.

The Reality: The billion dollars is the amount the government has *promised* to invest. As of the end of 2017, less than \$107 million of that \$1 billion had [actually](#) been spent. Moreover, the Agency has [admitted](#) that some of the money went to fund previously agreed to wage increases.

To this litany of exaggeration, misinformation and outright falsehood, can be added the tough talk that comes from the Agency every time there is a public leak of information from some bank or law firm operating in a tax haven. Nevertheless, the fact remains that for the leak we know the most about—the 2006 leak of information from a bank in Liechtenstein, [where](#) 106 Canadian-held accounts contained more than \$100 million—not one person was charged with overseas tax evasion, much less convicted, fined or sentenced. In fact, as [reported](#) by the Auditor General (another independent officer of Parliament), the CRA “waived referrals for potential criminal investigation to gather information”. In other words, the Agency promised not to charge the people involved in that tax scheme in exchange for them explaining to the CRA how it actually worked. However, any lessons learned from the Liechtenstein affair were obviously not very effective, as three years after the release of the Panama Papers, nobody has been charged as a result of that leak either.

And, of course, the endless claims of money they have “identified” versus what they have actually collected. Meanwhile, the Canadian government does nothing to stop this constant misleading of Canadians. The CRA has failed Canadians. How many millions of dollars hidden overseas are owed to Canada and are not being collected? No one knows and the national government, notwithstanding their soothing statements, seems not to care. Why? It remains a mystery, but Canadians may want to ask why people are being treated differently depending upon whether they’re evading their taxes at home or overseas.

Charlottetown Senator Percy Downe's Bill S-243, requiring CRA to cooperate with the PBO in its independent study of the tax gap, and to report on all convictions for overseas tax evasion, has passed the Senate of Canada and is currently at Second Reading in the Canadian House of Commons.

Percy Downe is a Senator from Prince Edward Island, Canada, and serves as one of the three Vice-Chairs on the Board of Directors of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and IMF. He has also tabled a bill in the Senate of Canada requiring Canada's Revenue Agency to cooperate with the Parliamentary Budget Officer in its independent study of the tax gap, and to report on all convictions for tax evasion, including a separate report listing all convictions for overseas tax evasion. Prior to joining the Senate of Canada in 2003, Percy Downe served as Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. Senator Downe is a former Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Accountability at Work: A Global Perspective

Lahcen Haddad MP, Morocco, Board Member of the Parliamentary Network
on the World Bank & IMF

Accountability is part and parcel of good governance and is a pillar of real and effective democratic rule. Strong and democratically elected institutions with the right powers and means to hold those in power to account are necessary for democracy to have its real meaning of “rule by the people”. Independent and strong oversight entities producing quality data on how public resources are used by local and national governments should provide parliaments and the public (and the courts as the case may be) with the necessary information to use in the accountability exercise. Professional and independent media as well as strong and well-managed civil society organizations play a major role in informing and mobilizing public opinion and communities to demand for accountability. The more citizens are engaged at the local level, the more those endowed with delivering services feel accountable to them.

The World Bank has set up a list of Governance Indicators that it aggregated into six clusters:¹ 1. Voice and accountability; 2. Political stability and absence of violence; 3. Government effectiveness; 4. Regulatory quality; 5. Rule of law; 6. Control of corruption (World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators). Most of the indicators involved in each of these clusters revolve around making citizens at the heart of governance, focusing on transparency and improved effectiveness in performance and quality service delivery - all of which are essential features of the question of accountability. Accountability is about good governance. Holding those in power, elected through democratic ways or chosen via transparent processes, to account means measuring their performance against set targets and objectives and against set rules and standards, and gauging the efficiency and effectiveness of their use of the resources put at their disposal to carry out their mission.

¹ Azi Iqbal and Anwar Shah, “A Critical Review of Governance Indicators,” 2008.
Siteresources.worldbank.org/PSGLP/.../Acriticalreviewofgovernanceindicators.doc

Citizens hold representatives to account when voting for them; Council Members and Parliamentarians summon governments to answer for their actions; and independent fiscal oversight entities verify that financial

management follows set rules and standards. But accountability is about “voice” as well; it is about giving citizens, civil society and media the right, the space and the freedom to express their concerns, monitor implementation and offer dissenting views. “Institutional accountability” and “voice” go together. In fact, if both are strong, the chances are that the other indicators in the Governance gamut will improve as well.

The book I edited recently, *Holding Governments Accountable to the People* is about principles, tools and practices of accountability in different countries and different contexts; the pieces included are written mostly by Parliamentarians, but views of experts (from the IMF, the World Bank, SID etc.), private sector, civil society and distinguished individuals are also included. It is neither an exhaustive study of accountability, nor an expert view of the matter. It is a mere assemblage of various points of views by “policy practitioners”, academicians, and other interesting individuals on the “whys” and “how’s” of accountability and good governance. It includes theoretical statements as well analyses of cases, some of which are critical, while others are descriptive, showcasing successes and good practices. Five major areas of concern are included: theoretical considerations, fiscal oversight, role of Parliament, the need to access information, social accountability and citizen engagement, media and civil society, and, finally the role of coalitions and global indexes.

The “Philosophical” Prologue: More accountability is needed on the part of those in power; otherwise, populist and other extremist forces will exploit the mounting frustration of youth and the middle classes to manufacture detours that are dangerous to democracy and world security alike. The specter of the 1930s should never be forgotten. Politics should be relevant to people’s lives and especially to the new generations who are at a loss when they see older people engaged in fearmongering, a discourse at odds with what they normally learn in school. Access to information in a context of free expression is key to establishing a culture of transparency and accountability (Talib Rifai). One of the cornerstones of the democratic mandate and process is the need for elected representatives to subject themselves to an accountability check (Arthur Murilo). Democracy without accountability could be a simple exercise in populist demagoguery. On the other hand, accountability is inextricably linked to culture. Traditional values in East Asia, for example, are integrated

within the group's duties to preserve a working identity with all actors involved to make accountability a daily concern (El Mostafa Rezrazi).

Fiscal oversight: Fiscal transparency is critical to public financial management and good governance. Government accountability requires strong parliaments, independent audit bodies, and easy and timely access and publication of quality information (Sailendra Pattanayak & Alpa Shah). But oversight should go beyond reporting on the use of resources to include forecasting and macro-economic and labor analyses as well as oversight of financial market regulations (Liam Byrne). Streamlining the time lag between audit bodies' reporting cycle and parliament's need to hold regular fiscal accountability hearings is necessary to ensure regularity in oversight (Driss Skalli). In addition to that, anti-corruption efforts require a fair system with real separation of powers and a clear definition of roles and responsibilities (Shamsul Iskandar).

Information Act and others are some of the tools available for Parliamentarians to access information that helps them hold Government to account (Percy Downe). A robust record management system is at the very heart of a transparency regime and reinforcing the role of citizens is key to its effectiveness. However, the risk of too much institutionalization may burden the process (SV Anil Das). The system should be tight, effective and as lean as possible. On the other hand, strengthening the role of opposition in parliamentary systems helps with giving voice to critical views within Parliaments and accessing otherwise inaccessible information (Elvira Kovacs.)

The Role of Parliaments: In a highly digitalized world and a global disaffection with politicians, new forms of accountability are needed. Accountability helps with providing different forms of checks and balances between different branches of Government (Valentina Martinez). The function of Parliament consists, among others, of monitoring and ensuring that public policies are effectively implemented by the executive branch (Pauline Ndoumoi). The stronger Parliaments are, the more capable they are of acting as the voice of people, and making government responsive to people's needs and interests.

When Citizens Hold Governments Accountable Through the Ballots: Elections enable voters to select leaders and to hold them accountable for their performance in office by voting them out. The cyclical nature of elections makes accountability a form of popular periodic review of achievement. In addition, the role given to opposition is a delegation by the people of power to a political group to check on the performance of the others between elections (Nawal El Houari). The decline in Parliament dynamism is both a

cause and consequence of Parliament not being more effective. Political divisions within the Majority could weaken parliaments and make them less capable of monitoring government work (Yunus Carrim).

Social Accountability and Citizen Engagement: Citizens need tools, in addition and beyond elections, to hold those in power accountable for their service to the population (Kanishka Balatsurya). Citizen Engagement involves making citizens partners in development from the planning to design and

implementation, to tracking and monitoring. The real "citizen engagement" stems from the concept of "direct democracy" as a complement to "representative democracy" (Lahcen Haddad).

Media, Civil Society, Social Movements—the Demand for Accountability:

The media have always played a role in governance. High quality, informative, truthful and responsible media are essential for democracy, especially in the age of fake news (Jeremy Lefroy). Everything is possible with democracy, as long as there is freedom of speech (Olfa Skouri Cherif). On the other hand, civil society could help with developing concrete tools for cooperation between local communities and other stakeholders to ensure citizen voice is heard (Olga Bielkova & Souad Zaidi).

Alliance and collective initiatives: The Mexican Agreement on tourism was a consensus building process and document that was instrumental in monitoring action against indicators making everybody accountable (Gloria Guevara). On the other hand, the **Reykjavik Index for Leadership** measures how people's attitudes are towards men and women with leadership roles. Data informs on what to target to engineer change. It is a source that helps build accountability in the field of equality in leadership (Silvana Kich-Mehrin).

Holding Governments Accountable to the People is designed to help policy makers, Parliamentarians, media and civil society actors understand the intricacies of accountability and good governance and learn about the different tools available to them to improve their work in their respective political and cultural contexts. It spans a wide array of experiences and practices and represents opinions from different experts and practitioners in different countries, organizations and cultures. It is in no way representative of the wealth of accountability practices in different regions; South American, Central Asian, Oceanic and East African experiences are either not represented or not as well represented as they should be. But the idea was not to produce a geographically or politically representative body of literature on accountability. The goal was to find individuals who are willing to

share their thoughts and ideas on good practices and the need to improve the systems, in a way that will help others in other contexts reflect on their own experiences and needs.

Accountability is the only means to win back hearts and souls in an age of doubt, mistrust and rise of easy and populist solutions that are undermining the very basics of democracy and the rule by the people. Improving governance ensures the sustainability of democracy and guarantees improved service to citizens who are the ultimate stakeholders and beneficiaries of our work as politicians, practitioners, experts and activists.

Vietnam National Assembly and Sustainable Development Goals Number 13 (SDG 13) on responding to climate change

*Dr. Nguyen Manh Tien, Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee
of the Vietnam National Assembly
Nguyễn Thuý Linh, Department of the foreign affairs*

2015 was an important milestone for the Earth, the common home for all of us, when the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development with 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including sustainable development targets for responding to climate change (SDG13). At the same time, according to the World Meteorological Organization, the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere had exceeded the threshold of 400 million volumes. Meanwhile, the safety limit of this index was 350 million volumes. The British economist Nicholas Stern once warned that climate change will cause global GDP losses of 5-10% when temperatures rise 5-6 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. Poor countries, developing countries will suffer much more than 10% of GDP. Climate change will become a disaster that threatens the existence and development of humanity on Earth without effective response solutions.

In that context, in addition to the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, at the end of 2015, for the first time in Paris, nearly 200 countries agreed to achieve obtained a historic, legally binding agreement for all countries on climate change after more than 20 years of negotiations since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted in 1992. The Paris Agreement is the basis for countries to implement actions to respond to climate change from 2021 onwards in the context of sustainable development, contributing significantly to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals on responding to climate change.

Sustainable development goal for responding to climate change (SDG13) was adopted with indicators on climate change adaptation, mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and implementation resources. Over 3 years of implementation, along with other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG13 has been actively implemented and achieved by countries with some initial results.

So far, according to UN statistics, 12 developing countries have completed and submitted the National Adaptation Plan (NAP); 184 countries have ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and 181 Parties (including

180 countries plus the European Commission) have submitted a National Self-Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Secretariat of Climate Change Convention. Developed countries continue to aim at mobilizing \$ 100 billion annually by 2020 to address developing countries' needs in responding to climate change. Many countries have been actively implementing actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through promoting clean energy, renewable energy, economical and efficient use of energy.

Vietnam is considered one of the most heavily affected countries of climate change. According to the climate change scenario in Vietnam, at the end of the 21st century, if the sea level rises by 1 meter, there will be about 10-12% of the Vietnamese population directly affected and GDP can lose about 10% due to the variable climate change. Therefore, Vietnam will face many obstacles and challenges in the process of implementing the SDG13, including challenges from the international context, specifically could be:

Firstly, on a global scale, climate change is forecast to be complicated and unpredictable due to commitments to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions to implement the Agreement, which is not enough to ensure a medium temperature rise at the end of the century is below 2 degrees C.

Secondly, there is no legal binding mechanism for the commitment to financial contribution, so there is no guarantee that successful implementation of the commitment to mobilize 100 billion USD annually from 2020 onwards for the reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change, committing to support free or low-cost green technology access for developing countries like Vietnam. The reality of international negotiations on climate change shows that the implementation of the responsibility to support resources for developing countries is increasingly fuzzy compared to the responsibilities and obligations stipulated in the Paris Agreement.

Thirdly, there will be barriers to investment and trade in the international market due to the strict regulations and requirements on carbon standards on a global scale, especially for products, resource-intensive services, large carbon emissions.

For domestic, the main challenges are identified, including:

Firstly, Vietnam will have to implement its emission reduction targets as committed, shifting from a voluntary practice to ever implemented in 2021 in economic growth of Vietnam needs to remain high, leading to a large demand for energy. This will be a big challenge for Vietnam in the condition of continuing to maintain high economic growth while production technology level is still low, energy and resource consumption is still large, resources remain limit.

At the same time, Vietnam must address the issue of increasing greenhouse gas emissions due to undeveloped renewable energy (currently only about 5% of total primary energy), while fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas etc. still account for a large proportion, estimated coal power by 2030 still accounts for about 50% of the electricity structure.

Secondly, climate change in Vietnam is becoming more and more complicated and unpredictable, taking place faster than forecast, severely impacting on people and climate-sensitive sectors and fields. The situation of water exploitation and use, the development of hydropower in the upper reaches of the Red River and the Mekong River has been a major influence on Vietnam, especially in the Mekong Delta region. This impact exacerbates the effects of climate change such as increased flooding, drought and saline intrusion.

Thirdly, the system of legal documents on climate change is incomplete; climate change response lacks coordination mechanisms and mechanisms to address interdisciplinary and inter-regional issues in responding to climate change; mechanisms and policies have not created a driving force to promote the participation of businesses and communities in responding to climate change; integrating climate change issues into strategies, planning and plans is still difficult due to lack of specific regulations and guidelines.

Fourthly, resources for responding to climate change are still limited, failing to meet the requirements, while financial resources from international support are still unclear. Climate change response activities are mainly carried out at a single project level with the support of the Government and the international community in each sector and field.

Recognizing the challenges caused by climate change, in the past time, the National Assembly and the Government of Vietnam have always paid

attention to, issued many guidelines, policies and taken important actions on climate change to implement SDG13:

- (1) Vietnam has constantly improved institutions, policies and laws, ensuring proactive response to climate change, promoting green growth and low carbon emissions. Specifically, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam has issued Resolution 24-NQ / TW on proactive response to climate change, strengthening resource management and environmental protection. Vietnam's National Assembly enacted a revised Law on Environmental Protection in 2014, including a separate chapter on responding to climate change; and recently the Law on Hydrometeorology, which also has detailed regulations on climate change issues; The Standing Committee of the National Assembly issued Resolution 853 / NQ-UBTVQH13 on the results of monitoring and promoting the implementation of policies and laws on climate change response in the Mekong Delta.

The Government has issued a National Action Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development; Resolution No. 120 / NQ-CP of the Government on Sustainable Development of the Mekong Delta to adapt to climate change; National Strategies on climate change, green growth; Target program on climate change and green growth, Plan for implementing Paris Agreement in Vietnam.

Most recently, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has submitted to the Government for consideration and issuance of the Decree on roadmap and method of reducing greenhouse gas emissions of Vietnam and will soon submit to the National Plan on adaptation to variables climate.

Internationally, Vietnam soon joined the Climate Convention and Kyoto Protocol; Early participation and approval of the Paris Agreement.

Vietnam is one of the first countries in the region to soon set out a roadmap and solutions to implement the Paris Agreement in accordance with the context and situation in the country, and efforts with the world community to solve one of the challenges. great consciousness, threatening the survival of humanity.

The contribution by Vietnam's self-determination (NDC) commitment to 2030, by domestic resources, Vietnam will reduce 8% of GHG emissions compared to the conventional development

scenario (BAU) and can reach 25% if receiving international support.

- (2) Promote communication and disseminate widely on challenges caused by climate change and opportunities brought about by climate change in all levels and sectors from the central to local levels and the people, thereby raising awareness to create consensus in the action of the whole society on climate change response.
- (3) Strengthen the strong implementation of international cooperation on climate change response. Thereby, Vietnam has mobilized important resources to respond to climate change from the support of the international community in terms of finance, technology and capacity building.
- (4) The Government, ministries, branches and localities have stepped up investment in responding to climate change, such as building, upgrading and modernizing natural disaster risk monitoring and warning systems; upgrading sea dykes and river dykes, developing water resources management plans and adapting to climate change in the Mekong and Red River deltas; develop an action plan, solutions to respond to climate change in accordance with the situation of ministries, branches and localities.
- (5) The National Assembly of Vietnam has actively coordinated with IPU and UN agencies to organize international conferences to raise awareness of National Assembly deputies on climate change, introduction and dissemination of the IPU Toolkit for assessing the implementation of SDGs, including SDG 13 on climate change to National Assembly deputies, organizing the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference under the IPU framework for change climate and actions of MPs.

Climate change has been and will continue to strongly impact Vietnam as well as countries around the world. Responding to climate change continues to be defined as a mandatory task for the survival of all humanity, each nation, and each nation.

Vietnam wishes to continue to receive the support of countries and organizations around the world in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals to respond to climate change in the world as well as in Vietnam, including:

- (i) Building and completing policies and policies on climate change and climate change, strengthening the legislative role of the National Assembly in reviewing, issuing and issuing additional policies. The law on climate change coping ensures a complete, synchronous, consistent and consistent system of policies and laws, consistent with international regulations and in accordance with national conditions.
- (ii) In the process of reviewing and approving national socio-economic development programs and plans, specialized action plans must calculate the context of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, in which has a sustainable development objective of responding to climate change, ensuring interdisciplinary, inter-regional, inter-sectoral, even inter-regional adaptation to climate change adaptation and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions.
- (iii) Strengthen cooperation with the National Assembly, parliaments and international organizations in monitoring the implementation of obligations and responsibilities in implementing policies and laws on climate change response, especially the responsibilities and obligations stated in the Climate Convention, Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, which give priority to particular vulnerable groups before the impact of change climate like Vietnam.

Encouraging countries, depending on historical responsibility, economic and technological potentials contribute positively to global efforts to effectively respond to climate change.

- (iv) Strengthening the role in national resource allocation in order to take initiative in resources in making contributions committed by Vietnam under the Paris Agreement. At the same time, support to develop and issue a mechanism to mobilize resources including financial resources from the state and enterprises at both national and international levels, with a focus on encouraging community participation.

IMF and Heavily Indebted Countries: Policy Measures out of the Mainstream Approaches

Dimitris Mardas MP, Greece

During the World Parliamentary Conference, which took place in Washington from 16 to 17 April 2018, it was pointed out by the Managing Director of IMF Mrs. Christine Lagarde, that the increase of overall debt from 2007 to 2018 was approximately 40%. Taking into account this note and the experience of heavily indebted countries, some interesting points are raised:

Since the policy mix that IMF imposes on countries facing increased deficits of External Transactions Balances and/or Budget Deficits does not produce in many cases the appropriate results. Why IMF does not change this policy, by introducing, alternative solutions?

In general, IMF policy measures introduced in the case of heavily indebted countries, give emphasis to the next issues: To structural measures, to the digitalization of the economy and to tax evasion measures.

All these operate in conjunction with a restricted austerity policy. The later policy is the result of financial constraints faced by indebted countries. The main goal of the above mentioned policies is the reduction of the double deficit, i.e. the Current Account Balance deficit and/or budget deficit.

A restricted austerity policy pursues a dramatic reduction of wages and public expenses, which in turn lead to the decrease of public and private consumption and of imports. However, a restricted austerity policy provokes social tensions and policy instability. These effects may threaten even the creditor's loans.

Instead of this pattern of policy mix, IMF could introduce another series of policy measures, which could reduce social tensions, policy instability and consequently could reduce country risk.

More precisely, IMF could apply a soft austerity policy in conjunction with a selective and a short run (max five years) protection policy. These two changes can have an equivalent impact to the deficits under consideration. Analytically, a short run protection policy in favor of domestic production will reduce the Current Account Balance deficit. Besides, increase in domestic production, due to protection, will create direct and indirect taxes. All these will have the same impacts. Consequently, instead of launching drastic reduction of public expenses and hence recession, IMF could simply

introduce a soft public expenses reduction in conjunction with the above mentioned protection policy.

So far as the suggested protection policy is concerned, "Buy National" in the frame of public procurement policy, could be a main instrument of the suggested measures. This policy consists of a preferential policy following the old-fashion policy practices. A "Buy National" policy of this pattern would reduce imports of goods and services produced domestically. Even so, the domestic producer will know in advance that this is a short-term policy, having positive impacts on its production. Through this proposition IMF could provide a credit of time to entrepreneurs, which in turn can prepare themselves in order to follow rules dealing with the international competition.

Against this proposal IMF points out, *inter alia*, the following:

- a) Such protection measures are a pit of fallacy. Regarding the EU Member States more precisely, that protection measures are against the basic principles of the EC Treaty. However, there are provisions for such policy, met in an explicit way to EC Treaty (Article 115) and implicitly in Article 3 of the Treaty of the European Union and in Articles 107-108 and 347 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Besides such provisions exist in other Agreements (e.g. under GATT rules Article XII). Finally, it is mentioned that an expression of a short run violation of EU basic rules (i.e. of free movement of capital) is the capital controls, a process which has an end.
- b) It is also noticed the difficulty of limiting a deadline to provisory protection measures. Nevertheless, an end to this process can easily take place. A representative example is given by the "Voluntary Exports Restrictions" (VER's). VER's are based on the same way of thinking, through time-limited exports restrictions, which results from a conciliation process. Consequently the main determinant of this proposal is the conciliation process and not the unilateral decisions about import restrictions and their time-table.
- c) Besides, it is supported, that such type of selective protection would insert multiple problems. Indeed, it is well known, that protection measures provoke sectoral distortions on national level. This can happen however under a long-term protection process. In contrast a series of a short run protection measures constitutes an interesting incentive in favor of modernization process. Furthermore, if firms fail to exploit this provisory advantage will interrupt their activity by the end of protection measures. This proposal simply provides an opportunity to protected firms to increase their competitive position via investment to

human and physical capital before the ending period of protection measures.

An IMF type restricted austerity policy is probably a preferential choice on behalf of creditors. We know meanwhile, that restricted austerity policies insert political instability and social tensions. All these operate against foreign investors, following the existing empirical investigations. Indebted countries could avoid the above mentioned trends by introducing an alternative policy, which combines budget cuts and provisory protection reducing consequently risks and instability.

The promotion of the dialogue, which can lead to best practices in the frame of policies aiming at reducing either the Current Account Balance deficit or the double deficit of heavily indebted countries, remains a main goal of IMF policy. The suggested policy could guaranty the social cohesion, policy stability and steady growth, though more effective policy measures.

Mobile Connectivity and Fake News in Emerging Markets

Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin MP, Malaysia, Board Member of the
Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & IMF

1. We are living in exciting times, with many technological advances, knowledge sharing opportunities, and novel ways of interacting with one another.

2. But this is also an age that is fraught with disinformation. The very channels that are used to convey and share information with one another are also the channels that are being abused to spread falsehoods or in today's parlance, "fake news". The motives are varied – it can be for financial gain, to sow discord, and even to radicalize people – but the impact is profound, because it can erode social cohesion and in extreme circumstances, disrupt harmony.

3. It is a challenge that people worldwide are thinking about 2017 word of the year is 'fake news'. We have seen measures taken in the US Congress, which held hearings to investigate Cambridge Analytica's use of Facebook data to plant fake news to influence the 2016 US Presidential Elections. In July, a UK Parliamentary Committee convened an Inquiry into Disinformation and Fake News.

4. In developing countries, where access to information is a luxury and where press freedom often remains elusive, "information dystopia" can undercut development agenda. It can undercut efforts to improve health, make disasters worse than they already are, alienate vulnerable populations, and even incite violence.

5. According to Freedom House, only 13 percent of the world's population lives in a country deemed to have a free press. 87 percent of the world's population is dealing with lack or total absence of press freedom. So the benefits of a healthy media environment are not reaching 90 percent of the world. In many developing countries, citizens have lower media literacy, relying on information from social network on Facebook or WhatsApp. People of these countries blindly trust what others have to say with no means to verify the veracity of the information received. This has been a common phenomenon in many parts of the developing world.

6. In the Philippines for example, hate speech, fueled by Facebook, has become one of the biggest challenges to national harmony. It has become a

major challenge because people are less reliant on traditional media, relying more on Facebook where speech can get very ugly, spread very quickly, and it is very hard for even the government to control. In Pakistan, there has been increasing issue of online harassment against women. It drives women away from the internet depriving them of the benefits associated with higher connectivity. Things are worse in countries like South Sudan where there is minimal internet penetration, low levels of media access, and fake news is being used to incite mass atrocities, with devastating consequences.

7. In the context of development programs, there are well-known examples — some of them relate to health intervention. In fact, we experienced this in Malaysia recently. As the government pushed for vaccination among children, there were all sorts of rumor about what a vaccine programmed is about. Rumors and fake news like this can be very devastating to development impact.

8. To counter this significant problem, governments in many parts of the developing world have undertaken various concrete measures. Some consider fake news, misinformation and falsehood as a matter of national security. To give you a perspective on how the issue of fake news is perceived in emerging markets, I will cite some examples of what some governments in Asia are doing to address the challenge.

9. In China, creating or spreading online rumors that "undermine economic and social order" has been a criminal offence since 2016. Anyone suspected of promoting false terror-related information can be detained, and a law passed in 2017 makes it mandatory for online news providers to publish information from government-acknowledged news outlets. Chinese social platforms also have features in place to identify "fake news". Twitter-like microblogging website Weibo launched an option to tag misinformation in 2012. Messaging app WeChat has had an "anti-rumor assistant" to check the veracity of an article since 2017.

10. Thailand's new computer crime laws allow the military-run government to monitor and remove content seen as provocative, including misinformation. The lese majestic laws that prohibit insulting the royal family are also strictly enforced, raising concerns that critics can be accused of "fake news". In November, two executives of a Thai newspaper were indicted for spreading "false information" about the army after they published a report about alleged brutality against a detainee in the restive southern region. In December 2017, the Ministry of Public Health launched an application called

Media Watch to allow the public to report any misleading information on health.

11. Indonesia is not a stranger to fake news with a flurry of online hoaxes that emerged after the earthquake, tsunami and the crash of the Lion Air flight. In November, 16 people were charged with spreading false information about reported child kidnapping and the plane crash. The suspects have been charged under the Criminal Code Law dating back to 1946, which carries a maximum prison sentence of three years. But activists say it might be difficult to assess the impact of misinformation, the intent behind it, and the potential level of chaos. The Ministry of Communications has also set up a "war room" where a surveillance team of 70 engineers monitor social media platforms and online traffic round the clock for "fake news". A new cyber security agency set up to address religious extremism will also look into online misinformation, local reports suggest. Reputed media outlets in Indonesia have also set up "CekFakta" to work together to check facts and verify information.

12. A lengthy report prepared by a Committee on "deliberate online falsehoods" has become the basis for the Singapore government's proposed legal fight against disinformation. Authorities are concerned that misinformation campaigns could target the sophisticated digital economy and multi-ethnic society - but others are worried that these laws will also worsen the controversial media freedom record. In November, local authorities asked a website to remove an article linking Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong with Malaysia's scandal-ridden investment fund Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), calling it "fake news". The founder of the States Times Review website initially criticized the "false charges of 'fake news' and 'criminal defamation' laid by the Singapore dictatorship" but has since said he will shut down the website of his own volition. But the Prime Minister is still going ahead with a lawsuit against a columnist and blogger critical of the government who shared an article about the 1MDB allegations.

13. The new Malaysian government is trying to do away with the Anti-Fake News Act brought in by the previous administration days ahead of general elections this year. But it is likely to take time, as the upper house of Parliament dominated by the now opposition Barisan Nasional coalition has rejected a proposal to repeal it. This law can impose a fine of 125,000 dollars and up to six years in prison. It is widely seen by critics as a tool to crack down on the media and political opponents. Tun Dr Mahathir himself came under scrutiny over the law during the elections. In April 2018, a Danish national of Yemeni descent became the first person to be convicted and sentenced under the

act for remarks about the time taken for the police to investigate the killing of a university lecturer. Mahathir has said that the anti-fake news law needs "proper" definitions to clarify what is fake. "Even though we support freedom of the press and freedom of speech, there are limits," he has also said.

14. Vietnam has deployed a 10,000-strong military cyber warfare unit named Force 47 to fight "wrongful views" online. This has led to concern about misuse because of the one-party communist regime's track record of jailing critics. In April, police detained a man accusing him of being paid by foreign websites to produce videos with "falseful messages" to incite violence. Charges of anti-state propaganda are punishable by three to 12 years in prison. The parliament has passed a cybersecurity law effective from 1 January 2019, requiring foreign firms like Google and Facebook to open local offices and store data of Vietnam-based users in the country. The law also bans the use of social networks to organize anti-state activities or spread false information. This has huge repercussions for Vietnam, where almost half of the population uses Facebook. Critics say it is likely to further suppress dissent and even affect the country's digital economy prospects.

15. While the responses of the governments from various parts of the emerging markets have been varied – ranging from legalistic approach to education, I think we need to pursue a more coordinated response that mobilize everyone – whether they come from governments, news industry, technology companies, educational institutions or other.

16. In an environment where freedom is upheld and respected, government has to undertake a very difficult task of balancing between freedom and control. It needs to identify and censure organizations promoting fake news but at the same time careful not to censor nor constrain journalists. It should also include programs to support and protect quality journalism.

17. The news industry needs to do everything possible to define and promote honest, fair, professional journalism. Providing more background information and transparency enhances legitimacy of the industry. Simultaneously, the industry needs to quickly and effectively identify and debunk fake news. The way fake news is corrected often matters. For example, researchers have shown that video often works better than text, repeating the fake news can unintentionally reinforce it, and partisan voices correcting the news (Republicans debunking conservative news, Democrats debunking liberal news) is most effective.

18. Technology companies, especially social media companies, need to be strict and consistent in enforcing rules about malicious or fake accounts, such as Twitter's recent purge of thousands of accounts. In addition, companies require improved systems and algorithms for accurate and fair identification and removal of fake news. Technology firms have made great progress in

combatting spam and demarcating pornography online. Similar progress is required for fake news. Simultaneously, technology companies need to review their business models, particularly with respect to online advertising, to make sure that those purveying fake news are not financially rewarded for information going viral.

19. And last but not least, educational institutions — from kindergarten through university — need to expose students to the challenges of fake news, and train students to be sophisticated and informed consumers of news. This can happen in classes specifically designed for news literacy, but also any class demanding research, analysis, and presentation of ideas.

Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin, MP serve as Deputy Federal Cabinet Minister of Primary Industries, Malaysia and also the Chair of Asia Chapter, Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and IMF. He is currently representing Malaysian Parliament in Global Parliamentary Conference 2019, Washington DC.

Curbing Corruption: Why we must condemn and fight corruption in public entities

Nathan Nandala MP, Uganda, Board Member of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & IMF

Corruption context

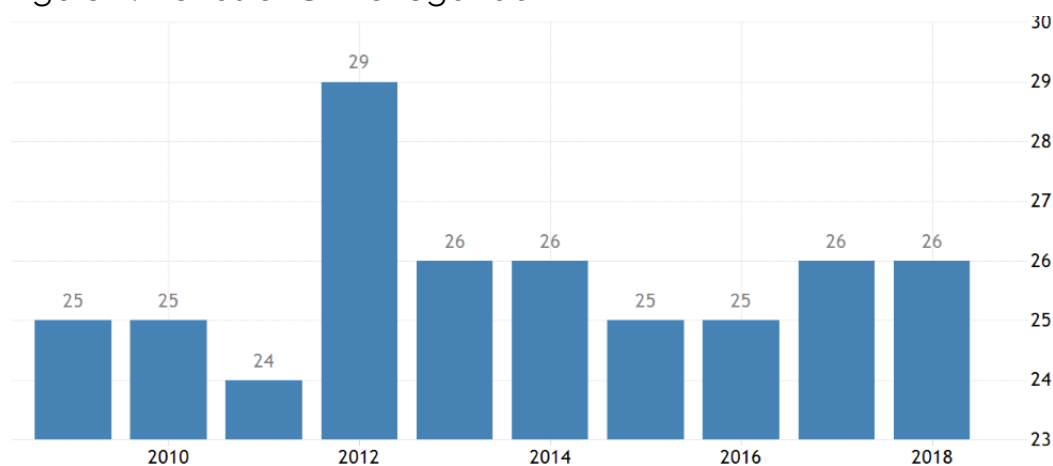
Fighting corrupting is increasingly becoming a big issue of debate in most of our countries. Yet, detecting corruption has also become an extremely difficult job because of its common occurrence, sophistication and how it has been normalized in some societies.

Public officials are accused, both with merit and without, of diverting public funds for personal gain in form of misappropriation, embezzlement, unwarranted fees for public services, commissions paid for illicit services, string pulling by those with positions of power, and a host of other forms of corruption. Some of these are well captured and explained in the edited volume, *'Everyday corruption and the state: citizens and public officials in Africa'*² The context of corruption no doubt varies even within developing countries, but there are also important areas of commonality.

For a long time now, Transparency International has done tremendous work around measuring perception of corruption in countries. Important as this work is, it rarely translates into countries responding with commitment to ensure they do better in subsequent years. As such, a number of countries remain stagnant. The 2018 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) shows that Uganda is still under 30 per cent. The trend for Uganda is worrying, as demonstrated in figure below:

² Blundo, G., Olivier de Sardan, J-P, Arifari, N.B. & Alou, M.T. (Eds). (2006). *Everyday corruption and the state: Citizens and public officials in Africa*. London: Zed Books.

Figure 1: Trends of CPI for Uganda



SOURCE: TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries and territories based on perception of how corrupt their public sector is seen to be, on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). Thirty percent is this a very low perception, implying levels of corruption are a record high.

The cost of corruption

It is not clear the actual cost of corruption in socio-economic development. Much work remains to be done to establish what is exactly lost to development in aggregate terms due to corruption. Direct linkages need to be found between the nature of corruption and the loss in development outcome rather than the indirect costs to say poverty reduction or improved health service delivery.

The case of education delivery within the context of Universal Primary Education (UPE) has been among many of examples where citizens perceive corruption to be endemic. Yet, the cost to quality of learning remains speculative. In some sectors, for example, where the construction of a road is either delayed or frustrated as a result of corruption, the cost is enormous, from the interest rate to be paid up on the loans acquired to build such roads to delayed return on investment.

It is for such costs, that corruption must be condemned and fought. What is clear is that citizens and even some public officials are tired of corruption and are beginning to make demands on their governments to do something concrete about the vice. Many stories appear on media highlighting various cases of corruption to which the public respond with despair sometimes.

The common story in Uganda today is that when a few hundred million shillings are lost, it is nothing to really debate, in the face of billions lost to individuals and sometimes companies. Various Auditor General reports, a government entity whose role also includes fighting corruption, highlight gross cases of financial hemorrhage in government, some of which have been debated in relevant committees of parliament, such as the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and Committee on Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (COSASE).

Challenges of fighting corruption in Uganda

Despite increasing evidence that many Ugandans and citizens in developing countries are tired of corruption and condemn it, the challenge remains huge. Whereas governments, including the Ugandan government has put a lot of effort in fighting graft, the profits to write home about remains minimal. Consequently, there is increasing frustration both within the leadership and the public that little is being done to fight graft, little to celebrate in doing so.

In Uganda, a lot of effort has gone into institutionalizing the fight against corruption. Besides the Auditor General, several institutions have been created to fight graft. The Inspectorate of Government headed by Inspector General of Government, a high court judge; Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP), headed by another judge; an anti-corruption court, Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA); The Police and its Directorate of Criminal Investigations; Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA); and more recently, the Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) at State House. Billions of shillings are spent in budgetary terms to ensure these institutions run and do their work of curbing corruption. Some institutions, like the Inspectorate of Government, claim that their funding is limited to enable them do more according to expectation.

Given the extensive and various mechanisms in institutional terms, why is success so limited to write home about? Why is the state so frustrated that President Museveni has voiced his frustration with existing establishments like the IGG in public? Why is it widely believed that corruption was even transferred on grand scale from the center to local governments, leaving no safe space? Why is fighting graft becoming an even bigger challenge than the vice itself?

The answers are many, but two general ones need to be talked about. One has to do with the nature of democratic institutions in these countries. This is well captured by Delia Ferreira Rubio, the Chair of Transparency International,

that 'corruption is much more likely to flourish where democratic foundations are weak' and 'where undemocratic and populist politicians can use it to their advantage'. Experiences from Uganda demonstrate this perhaps more than in many developing countries. As already indicated, there is no shortage of institutions and even political will to handle, but a strong democratic foundation is lacking.

In a country where institutions are themselves too weak to act independently, partly because they are also beholden to the powers that be, it is extremely difficult to act on those found guilty as some may be cadres and important elements in the regime. People with responsibility in either the ruling party or regime who find themselves in trouble then find refuge in particular loopholes. In the last few years, many high-profile cases have been investigated, and few were satisfactorily concluded.

The other is that the system of patronage created to sustain ruling parties, itself survives on sophisticated forms of corruption with complicity from people within the system, including accounting officers. This is evident in the face of several institutions doing the same job, where coordination and competition become diversionary rather than complementing their work. In the Ugandan context, creation of parallel institutions has sometimes been the undoing of existing effort to address public problems by institutions with constitutional mandates that cannot just be disbanded.

Consequently, both the weakness in democratic base and weak or dysfunctional institutions of government are important places to look for reform. If this is not urgently addressed, citizens will find it exhausting to put their lives at risk as corrupt people are also likely to be connected to real power and give up reporting cases. And, it is pointless to try spending billions of dollars in anti-corruption measures such as running a court and commissions of inquiries if they do not amount to making savings on public expenditure.

Curbing corruption in developing countries: Some concluding thoughts

Cultivating cooperation and consistency

Many citizens wonder if we are losing the fight against corruption and if donors care when corrupt entities or countries continue to get funding from funding agencies. But we must remain optimistic. There are countries that have made progress. South Africa and Tanzania have shown that committed and decisive leadership can make a huge difference in perception and

practice of corruption. Much work needs to be done in order to cultivate cooperation between the public and the state. In fighting corruption, neither the state nor the public can win alone. There is need for deliberate effort to try and address the ever-growing problem of corruption. This might require revisiting the roles of actors and specific institutional mandates.

There is need to invest in detecting and investigating corruption in both public and private spaces. Civil society organizations, the academia and media have critical roles to play in providing relevant information. This is crucial in political climates where the State can use political pawns to tarnish the reputation of critical and credible opposition politicians and non-complicit public officials.

The benefits would be enormous in terms of meaningful reform, rethinking the role of actors such as parliament, restoring faith in institutions that play both implementing and oversight roles, and repairing broken trust in government by citizens. These are critical for deepening democracy.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I thank the authors of this issue for their valuable contributions. If you have suggestions for improving the publication, please contact Olivia Hjertén Knutson at jpo2@parlnet.org, the Parliamentary Network Review

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

If you would like to contribute an article to The Parliamentary Network Review, please send your submission to Olivia Hjertén Knutson, at jpo2@parlnet.org.

The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & International Monetary Fund

66, Avenue d'Iéna 75116 Paris, France

+33 (0)1 40 69 30 55 / givanova@parlnet.org

Check our website at <http://www.parlnet.org>