



THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK

On The World Bank & International Monetary Fund

The Parliamentary Network Review

February 2017, vol. 10 n°1

– Table of Contents –

Progress on Malaria.....	3
Jeremy Lefroy, PN Chairman, Member of the UK Parliament	
Putting a Stop to the Laundering of Corrupt Money.....	5
Roy Cullen, Member of the Canadian Parliament	
Illicit Financial Flows in Africa.....	9
Yunus Carrim, Member of the South African Parliament	
Faire de la Nutrition une Réelle Priorité de Développement.....	13
Dissan Gnoumou, Member of the Burkina Faso Parliament	
Citizen Engagement in World Bank-Funded Projects.....	15
Yunus Carrim, Member of the South African Parliament	
The Digital Revolution: a Global Challenge.....	19
Brando Benifei, Member of the European Parliament	
The Role of Parliaments in Implementing the 2030 Agenda.....	21
László Borbély, Member of the Romanian Parliament	
Micro-finance in Tunisia: An Opportunity for Development.....	23
Sana Guermazi-Bouassida, Economist, Manouba University, Tunisia	

The Bahraini Reform: Economic Diversification and Controlling Fiscal Deficits.....	25
Redha Faraj, Member of the Bahraini Parliament	
The Chilean Chamber of Legal Evaluation.....	30
Pablo Lorenzini Basso, Member of Chilean Parliament	
The Parliamentary Network Launches its MENA Chapter.....	33
PN Secretariat	
Reconnect Politics Survey.....	35
Reconnect Politics	
Network Featured Discussion.....	36
Göran Pettersson, Member of the Swedish Parliament	

DISCLAIMER

The articles that appear in this publication reflect only the opinions of the authors and shall not be seen as the official position of PN, the World Bank, or the IMF.

Progress on Malaria

Jeremy Lefroy, PN Chairman, Member of the UK Parliament

2015 saw further progress in reducing deaths and illness caused by malaria. But that still meant that some 429,000 people (of whom more than 300,000 were children) died and there were an estimated 212 million episodes of malaria.*

Deaths from malaria have come down by 62 per cent over the term of the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015), and 29pc between 2010 and 2015. Incidence of malaria has declined by 41pc and 21pc in the same periods. Since 2000, 17 countries have seen malaria eliminated and it is estimated that 6.4 million deaths from malaria have been prevented.

This has been achieved because the global community and the WHO again started taking malaria seriously in the late 1990s and have cooperated intensely since then. Funding increased from less than \$100 million pa in 2000 to \$2,900 million in 2015. Of this, the USA contributed 35pc and the UK 16pc.

Investment in tackling malaria is a clear example of the importance of international development work which has tangible results. It saves lives and improves the life chances of millions every year.

But there is a great deal more to do to achieve the aim of the WHO's global strategy for malaria by 2030: that is, (i) to reduce the rates of malaria incidence and mortality by 90pc from current (2015) levels; (ii) to eliminate malaria from a further 35 countries; and (iii) to prevent malaria from becoming re-established in any country which has been declared malaria free. If the aim is achieved, it will also mean that part of target 3.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals - to end the epidemics of malaria, HIV/AIDS, TB and the Neglected Tropical Diseases will have been met.

Analysis shows that the main tools for the reduction in malaria incidence and mortality since 2000 have been a) greatly increased availability and use of insecticide-treated bed nets; b) better and more effective anti-malarial drugs, especially the combination therapies based on artemisinin (ACTs); and c) more indoor spraying against mosquitoes. The development of rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) has also been critical in ensuring that cases are diagnosed earlier and hence drugs are used more effectively.

The seriousness with which most countries with endemic malaria have taken tackling the disease has also been important. They see that they now have the tools to beat malaria, and not just to try and manage it. They also see how the reduction in the malaria burden has given

their health systems the chance to improve and extend the range of health services which they can offer to their people.

We are now seeing challenges to the effectiveness of the insecticides and anti-malarial drugs. Mosquitoes in certain areas are developing resistance to insecticides and ACTs - the most effective class of drugs - is becoming less effective against the malaria parasite in the Mekong Delta region. It is from this area that resistance to previous drugs, such as chloroquine, has spread, particularly to sub-Saharan Africa, which is why the situation is taken so seriously.

So there is a considerable amount of research going on into new malaria drugs and insecticides. In addition, the first malaria vaccine, GSK's RTS,S has been approved by the WHO for piloting in three parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Other vaccines are also in development. We are also seeing more work being done to tackle malaria in areas which are harder to reach, such as the Sahel where seasonal malaria is prevented through mass drug administration.

Stronger health systems have a vital role to play. They ensure prompt diagnosis and treatment and reliable supplies of drugs and bed nets. They are also the cornerstone of malaria surveillance work. But it is estimated that only 19pc of malaria cases were detected globally by surveillance systems in 2015. This is an area in which improvement could be made quickly and cost-effectively. They would enable countries to detect outbreaks rapidly, and ensure that clinics and health workers have the means to tackle them.

The progress made in tackling malaria since 2000 has been one of unprecedented advances. It was a deadly, or at least debilitating, disease which was feared by hundreds of millions around the world. It still remains so in certain parts of some countries. But for many it has either become a thing of the past, or a disease which can be rapidly diagnosed and effectively treated.

We therefore run the risk of thinking that the problem is largely solved. It is not - and the malaria parasite takes advantage of any slackening in the efforts made to beat it. Even now, we need at least to double the amount spent on malaria to reach the WHO's 2030 targets. Much of that should come from countries where malaria is endemic, but there is still a need to increase investment by wealthy countries.

**All figures in this article are from the World Malaria Report 2016.*

Declaration of interests: The author is a member of the boards of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and the Innovative Vector Control Consortium.

Putting a Stop to the Laundering of Corrupt Money

Roy Cullen, Member of the Canadian Parliament

This is an abridged version of the Expert Monograph written by Roy Cullen, and included in the book, Corruption & Legislatures (Frederick Stapenhurst/Riccardo Pelizzo), published by Routledge, 2014.

Corrupt leaders will make every effort to disguise their ill-gotten gains by portraying the amounts illegally gained as though they are derived from a legitimate source, by inserting them into economic circulation – typically by transferring the funds across international borders, using various disguised layering techniques, into legitimate financial institutions. Whatever the method or process used to attempt to launder corrupt money, inserting roadblocks to prevent this from happening is a key element in any anti-corruption strategy. Deterrents are essential to discourage corrupt activities and cause corrupt leaders to pause and think before acting. If they are unable to launder their proceeds, how will they ever be able to use their new-found assets? Is it worth the risk if they cannot derive benefit from these illegal activities?

An effective national and international anti-money laundering regime should be part of a two-pronged approach to address the scourge of corruption. Firstly, tackle corruption and in a parallel way fight the laundering of corrupt money. Parliamentarians have a critical role to play in both of these processes.

An effective anti-money laundering regime is the preventative measure to stop or curtail the laundering of corrupt money. Despite these best efforts, however, corrupt money will 'slip between the cracks' and find its way into offshore or domestic bank accounts. As Raymond Baker, Director of Global Financial Integrity, asserts – “Indeed, global corruption has not diminished despite ten years of effort. Assets now stashed in tax havens around the globe are estimated at \$11.5 trillion, and non-bank cash deposits outside the country of origin are rising.” The recovery and repatriation of stolen assets is the 'treatment' side of this equation whereby governments and parliamentarians launch efforts to locate the stolen corrupt assets and return them to their rightful owners - their citizens. The Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR) - a joint project of the World Bank and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) - is an excellent source of information and support to parliamentarians as they embark upon this quest.

Parliamentarians are key to success in these efforts. Too often legislators underestimate the important role they can play in demanding the transparency and accountability of the executive branch of government. While it is understood that partisan politics and party discipline are realities of life, this does not preclude an active and assertive legislature. The Executive Branch of government, and all Parliamentarians, should not be free to pilfer

government coffers and rob citizens of their inalienable right to move out of the ranks of the poor. Corruption leads to a gross misallocation of national resources and an increase in income and asset disparities that defy justification.

Parliamentarians' important role in combating corruption and money laundering can be achieved in a number of different ways:

- Through debates and questions in the legislature itself;
- Through the work of an auditor general, or equivalent, that reports directly to parliament; and,
- By enquiry and investigative work by a public accounts committee of parliament.

An effective anti-money laundering regime acts as a significant deterrent to big ticket corruption. While money laundering and anti-money laundering (AML) are somewhat technical, the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) has demystified the topic by publishing the Anti-Money Laundering Action Guide for Parliamentarians in GOPAC's three official languages - English, French and Spanish. The Action Guide can be downloaded from GOPAC's web site (www.gopacnetwork.org). An important element in the Parliamentarians' tool kit is an assessment of the quality and extent of the anti-money laundering regime in his/her country. This information can be gleaned from a variety of sources -

- If the jurisdiction in question is a signatory to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), there are various provisions of this Convention relating to money laundering that the country should be complying with. The applicable sections of the UNCAC are - Article 14: Measures to prevent money laundering; Article 23: Laundering of proceeds of crime; Article 53: Measures for direct recovery of property; Article 54: Mechanisms for recovery of property through international cooperation in confiscation; Article 57: Return and disposal of assets; and Article 58: Financial Intelligence Unit.

In the context of these UNCAC articles, here are some good questions for Parliamentarians to ask -

- Is there legislation in place in your country for the prevention and detection of money laundering, including requirements of effective customer identification (Know Your Customer), record-keeping and reporting of suspicious transactions by financial institutions? Is the legislation comprehensive?
- Has a financial intelligence unit (FIU) been established to serve as a national centre for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information regarding potential money-laundering?

- Does the FIU report to Parliament and respond to recommendations?
 - Is Parliament engaged in the budgetary allocation for the FIU?
 - Have any money laundering cases been prosecuted?
 - Have any corrupt assets been recovered?
- GOPAC has developed an effective survey instrument, the State of Nations Survey, which can be used by Parliamentarians to assess how well their jurisdiction is doing in the fight against corruption and money laundering, using the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) as the benchmark. This survey document is available in English, French and Spanish on GOPAC's web site - the specific English version at - http://www.gopacnetwork.org/Docs/StateOfNationsSurvey2012_EN.docx
 - Parliamentarians can also access reports emanating from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global standard-setting body for anti-money laundering, including peer reviews of member countries, mutual evaluation reports, and lists of high risk and non-cooperative jurisdictions. These documents may highlight deficiencies in the country's anti-money regime.
 - The FATF is also represented by Eight FATF Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs) around the world. These local organizations can be a very useful resource for Parliamentarians seeking specific information about the strengths and weaknesses of their own country's anti-money laundering efforts.
 - The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides regular updates about the state of anti-money laundering efforts and may point to shortfalls in individual countries.
 - For those countries where there is no anti-money laundering regime in place, template legislation developed by the UNODC/IMF and the Commonwealth Secretariat is available for both common law and civil law countries. The model laws incorporate the requirements contained in international instruments and the FATF 40+9 Recommendations in particular, and strengthen or supplement them in light of the actual practice of a number of countries. Naturally, these laws serve as models only, and legislators need to customize these laws to fit within their own customs and conventions; nonetheless they are an excellent place to start.
 - If the country has anti-money laundering legislation, but upon examination Parliamentarians ascertain that there are weaknesses in the existing laws, amendments can be tabled in their legislature. Government members, and opposition members for that matter, can, in the first instance, try to convince the government of the day that changes are needed. Should this not produce results, Parliamentarians are able, in addition to tabling amendments, to put questions to the government in the legislature,

and/or engage the media and civil society in the fight for improvements. It is also sometimes the case that anti-money laundering legislation is in place, but cannot be effectively implemented because a Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) has not been established or adequately mandated and resourced.

The establishment of an effective FIU is critical for success in a country's anti-money laundering efforts. Good legislation alone will not suffice. The World Bank and the IMF describe an FIU as a central national agency responsible for receiving, analyzing, and transmitting disclosures on suspicious transactions to the competent authorities. Parliamentarians have an important role to play in the development, launching and monitoring of an FIU. In addition to evaluating the quality and performance of their country's anti-money regime, and its associated FIU, Parliamentarians can intervene on a variety of policy and legislative issues.

To comply with FATF standards, financial institutions globally are adopting stringent due diligence and “know your customer” (KYC) procedures and techniques. Know Your Customer includes client identification requirements and the verification of the source of funds for accounts. Establishing the identity of the beneficial owner(s) of the funds, is often a very challenging task. In that context, the following resolution was adopted unanimously at GOPAC's 5th Global Conference held in Manila, Philippines in February 2013 at its plenary session -

“.... the requirement that all financial institutions and intermediaries demand a binding legal declaration of beneficial ownership for all deposits and other financial transactions, with sanctions for non-compliance.”

The intent of this proposal is, wherever possible, to transfer the burden of responsibility of beneficial ownership declaration to depositors with risks associated with false disclosures, including the freezing and confiscation of accounts if this information on beneficial owners proves to be false. While certainly not a panacea - many depositors will still take the risk of false disclosure - it would deter the laundering of some corrupt money, and at the same time spread compliance costs.

To conclude, the challenges associated with preventing the laundering of corrupt money, and then recovering those stolen assets that do escape, are daunting and considerable. Parliamentarians are not known to back away from problems or avoid thorny issues. Indeed, Parliamentarians have a major role to play in this fight. You are not alone. Organizations like GOPAC, the World Bank Group, StAR, the IMF, FATF, UNODC, the EGMONT Group, Interpol, Transparency International and others are ready to assist Parliamentarians as they tackle the laundering of corrupt money.

As Parliamentarians the challenge is before us. Let us display the leadership that is expected of us.

Illicit Financial Flows in Africa

Yunus Carrim, Member of the South African Parliament

Limits of these remarks

I am new to the area of illicit financial flows. As an MP since South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 but Chair of our National Assembly Finance Committee since 2014, I noticed we have only since last year begun to give more serious attention to the need for global tax transparency and combatting Illicit Financial Flows. Our Finance Committee is however very committed to addressing these issues. So is our Parliament and government, and we are very prepared to work with other parliaments in our region, continent and globally on these issues, as our government has been so assiduously doing with other governments.

There is increasing global consensus on the need for global tax transparency and combatting IFFs. But there is no consensus on:

- What exactly is included in IFFs and where base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) fits into this;
- Crucially, what exactly is legal, illicit and illegal;
- How much is being lost through IFFs.

Scale of Problems

Of course there are considerable complexities, and key aspects of BEPS and transfer pricing are seen as legal. Tax avoidance is legal and tax evasion is not. Yet the divisions are often blurred. Lawyers and other experts and organizations must continue to seek consensus on these issues, which would certainly help to define more effective strategies and plans to combat for IFFs. In my opinion, for now, ultimately it is plainly this: Multinational corporations (MNCs) and individuals must pay their fair share of taxes in the countries in which they make their profits. It is the poor, after all, mainly in the developing world who have the most to lose if the right taxes are not paid. It is not as if these companies and individuals still won't have more than plenty even if they paid the taxes due.

Corporate income tax, as a percentage of GDP, is about twice as large in developing countries as in developed countries. Recent studies using micro-data reveal that tax rate differences across countries are likely to induce twice the profit shifting response out of developing countries than developed countries. This has important implications for African countries with high tax rates.

In 2014 Global Financial Integrity (GFI) said that Abusive Transfer Pricing in the world trade system cannot and should not be legal because it robs developing countries in excess of US\$6.6 trillion, and in just 2012 the developing world lost \$991.2 billion in illicit financial flows.

The 2015 UN Economic Commission for Africa/African Union High Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa suggested that Africa loses more than \$50 billion a year, more than the continent receives in aid.

GFI notes that “these illicit outflows sapped 5.7 percent of GDP from Sub-Saharan Africa over the last decade, more than any other region in the developing world. Perhaps most alarmingly, outflows from Sub-Saharan Africa were found to be growing at an average inflation-adjusted rate of more than 20 percent per year, underscoring the urgency with which policymakers should address illicit financial flows.”

Although the cited figures might be exaggerated, the problem remains huge and must be tackled more decisively.

Some actions for Parliaments

Greater tax transparency could significantly contribute to curbing illicit financial flows. It is the key to the development of new tax systems. Public registers of entities, country-by-country reports, and automatic exchange of information are modern understandings of tax transparency, and developing, not just developed, countries can benefit through this.

While governments, multi-lateral institutions, and some NGOs have been increasingly focusing on IFFs, parliaments, certainly on our continent, have been lagging behind. We can and must do more. Through legislation, effective oversight, parliamentary debates, public hearings, publications, constituency work and other means, we need to increase awareness of IFFs and how they reduce the revenue to deliver services to people.

In much of Africa, we have relatively weak legislation and inadequate capacity to tackle IFFs. Poorly designed tax incentives in our countries also lead to substantial revenue losses. African countries, especially mineral rich economies, are particularly vulnerable to BEPS and IFFs.

In many developing countries, tax officials, police and prosecutors do not have the adequate skills to detect IFF transgressions and secure convictions. Continuous training is required for such officials to ensure they are up-to-date with the constant changes in this terrain. The effective cooperation between the different agencies is also a major challenge.

Parliaments in Africa will not be able to be as effective as those in the developed world to make use of the Country-by-Country Reporting or participate in the automatic exchange of

information or engage with the process of large MNCs disclosing to tax authorities much more information than they do currently.

Developed countries are generally better skilled at negotiating tax treaties than developing countries. As MPs in Africa, we need to improve our skills to scrutinise these treaties more effectively and need to put pressure on our governments and tax authorities to ensure more skilled negotiations. Much more support from agencies in the developed world is required to improve legislation in many African countries and to build technical capacity.

As MPs in African countries we need to have a better technical understanding of the issues and also, where possible, secure the services of competent staff to assist us and/or find academic and other experts who can do so. Agencies in the developed world need to assist far more Parliaments in developing countries with capacity.

But Parliaments in the developed world also need to consider whether aspects of their regulatory and tax frameworks facilitate IFFs or the loss of tax revenue in developing countries. It might also be necessary to consider further support for no or low tax countries who are significantly dependent on these IFFs so that they become less dependent on IFFs and participate more actively in the campaign for global tax transparency and country-by-country reporting process.

We need to work closer with other relevant parliamentary committees and hold our governments and revenue services to far more effective account, including on the following issues:

- Progress on implementing Country-by-Country Reports and the Automatic Exchange of Information;
- Implementation of the Financial Action Task Force's anti-money laundering recommendations;
- Ensuring the highest level of scrutiny by customs agencies of trade transactions involving tax havens;
- Progress towards disclosing the beneficial owners of mining operations and other information towards meeting the standards of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative by 2020.

In South Africa, the Parliament amended the Financial Intelligence Centre Act this year to enhance the fight against financial crime by introducing the concept of Politically Exposed Persons (or Prominent Influential Persons) and beneficial ownership, and by enabling the FIC to freeze assets in terms of Security Council Resolutions. The Finance Committee only yesterday began to reconsider aspects of a provision in the Bill that allows for searches without warrants that could be unconstitutional. On Tuesday, the National Assembly voted on the Financial Sector Regulation Bill that provides for a Twin Peaks system to regulate

financial sector more intrusively, intensively and effectively. Last week, we voted on a Tax Bill that provides for a Special Voluntary Disclosure Programme (SVDP) to regularise taxpayers' illicit financial assets. We also last year effected tax amendments on transfer pricing and BEPS. But we have to effectively monitor South African multi-nationals for any transgressions of the tax laws in countries in which they have subsidiaries.

In tackling IFFs and BEPS, especially given some of the grey areas of what is strictly illegal, African countries, like countries elsewhere, are concerned not to drive investment away. But finding the balance between acting decisively on these tax matters and not driving away investment is very challenging.

We need to work far closer with NGOs and other civil society actors to combat IFFs, and not just the multilateral institutions. There are cogent alternate narratives and proposed solutions from other role players such as the Tax Justice Network, OXFAM, Global Financial Integrity, African Monitor, and the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows of the African Union.

We must lobby for the issues of IFFs and BEPS to be taken far more seriously by the International Parliamentary Union, Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and IMF, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Pan African Parliament and other international and regional organizations of parliaments. We do not need yet another international organization of MPs, but at some stage, if the need arises, consideration can be given to setting up an International Working Group of MPs on Global Tax Transparency including representatives from all the continents which can, among other things, lobby these other organisations of MPs.

So here we are then. We will debate the issues tomorrow. We can as MPs all agree to the Open Letter calling for tax transparency. The value of the Summit will ultimately be determined by what we do thereafter, by what progress we, as MPs, make in ensuring greater global tax transparency, and MNCs and individuals paying the taxes they owe to the countries they owe it to. We must campaign not just in our own countries but together with other countries. This is a global campaign – and it can succeed only through effective global cooperation. Let's act together.

Faire de la Nutrition une Réelle Priorité de Développement: le Rôle des Parlementaires, Exemple du Burkina Faso

Dissan Gnomou, Member of the Burkina Faso Parliament

Au Burkina Faso, si la situation nutritionnelle s'est légèrement améliorée entre 2007 et aujourd'hui, en partie grâce aux efforts du gouvernement, elle demeure fortement préoccupante. Or, aucune nation, aucun pays ne peut se développer en mettant en marge les questions de nutrition. Il reste beaucoup à faire, nous ne pouvons pas nous arrêter là et devons poursuivre la course pour qu'enfin, nous puissions vaincre la malnutrition sous toutes ses formes. Pour atteindre cet objectif, plusieurs défis doivent être relevés : augmenter les financements consacrés à la nutrition par le gouvernement, faire de la nutrition une réelle priorité de santé publique mais aussi de développement, avec la mise en œuvre de programmes et une réelle action de terrain, pour un impact réel auprès de la population, s'attaquer à l'ensemble des causes multisectorielles de la malnutrition.

Voilà trois défis auquel le Réseau des Parlementaires en Sécurité Nutritionnelle (RE.PA.SE.N) du Burkina Faso s'est fixé de s'attaquer.

Créé en 2016 à l'initiative du député Dissan B. Gnomou, nutritionniste de formation, maire, député, et coordinateur du réseau, le REPASEN comprend aujourd'hui 35 députés (soit presque un tiers des députés du parlement burkinabè) et s'est fixé pour mission de plaider pour la cause de la nutrition, en jouant du rôle régalien de la fonction de député, mais aussi du lien fort des députés avec les citoyens. Depuis ce lancement, de nombreuses activités ont déjà eu lieu, lesquelles démontrent le rôle que les parlementaires peuvent jouer et l'impact sur les décisions du gouvernement. Outre les questions orales régulières pour interroger le gouvernement sur les engagements en faveur de la nutrition, un plaidoyer fort est mené pour la création d'une ligne budgétaire sur la nutrition, d'abord au sein du budget de la santé. Ce plaidoyer est mené d'abord au sein de la commission des finances et du budget (COMFIB), à laquelle participent plusieurs membres de REPASEN, puis au niveau de l'assemblée nationale lorsque la loi des finances sera votée. Grâce au plaidoyer fort mené par le REPASEN, le nouveau document politique de référence du gouvernement, le PNDES (Programme national de développement économique et social), intègre davantage les questions de nutrition.

Pour mener à bien ses objectifs de plaidoyer, le REPASEN a commencé par renforcer les capacités de l'ensemble de ses membres en matière de nutrition, avec le soutien des partenaires techniques et financiers présents dans le pays (nations unies, ONG, bailleurs) et d'autres réseaux existants tels le RESONUT, Réseau de la Société Civile pour la Nutrition. Si le développement du plaidoyer se fera aux côtés de ces partenaires, la stratégie du réseau est avant tout de renforcer la collaboration avec les autres réseaux parlementaires existants,

pour renforcer la mobilisation des parlementaires sur la nutrition, notamment avec le réseau sur l'eau et l'assainissement, le réseau des parlementaires pour la promotion des droits des enfants, le REPRODEN, ou encore le réseau des parlementaires sur la santé, population et développement.

Dans la région Afrique de l'Ouest et Centrale, la situation nutritionnelle est la même dans de nombreux pays membres du mouvement SUN (Scaling Up Nutrition) au sein desquels se sont également créés des réseaux de parlementaires pour la nutrition (Cameroun, Tchad, Mali, Niger), quand d'autres sont actuellement en cours de création (Sénégal, Côte d'Ivoire). Ces différents réseaux sont en voie de mieux s'unir, pour être des porte-voix plus crédibles et plus audibles, en faveur d'une bonne nutrition pour les populations de leurs pays respectifs, à travers la création d'un groupe de parlementaires sous-régional pour la nutrition (à l'instar du groupe sous-régional SUN pour la société civile en Afrique de l'Ouest et Centrale, rassemblant actuellement 13 pays). Des Députés du Sénégal, de la Côte d'Ivoire, du Cameroun, du Tchad et du Burkina Faso ont commencé à tracer la voie en se réunissant à l'occasion du lancement du Rapport mondial nutrition 2016, à Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) le 9 novembre dernier : les premières bases d'une collaboration sous-régionale des parlementaires engagés pour la nutrition ont été jetées, avec des discussions en cours pour l'adoption d'une charte ou une résolution des parlementaires ouest africains pour la nutrition.

Début 2017, le REPASEN s'attèlera en priorité à faire voter une loi sur le contrôle de la qualité nutritionnelle des aliments, plaidoyer qui s'accompagnera d'une grande sensibilisation sur le terrain par les parlementaires. Un parlementaire est un homme de public. Chaque parlementaire a un rôle à jouer à travers sa proximité avec les citoyens, doit être porteur d'un message sur la lutte contre la malnutrition et la promotion de bonnes pratiques nutritionnelles.

Pour relever le défi de la malnutrition, un appel est lancé aux parlementaires, et plus largement aux autorités publiques. Parlementaires et gouvernement doivent prendre à bras le corps les questions de nutrition, lesquelles ont un impact connu et prouvé sur le développement humain mais aussi sur le développement économique. Parce que nous sommes en charge de prendre les décisions pour le compte de l'ensemble de la population, aux côtés du gouvernement, nous avons aussi en charge l'avenir de nos enfants, l'avenir de la nation. Nous devons prendre les bonnes décisions pour préparer l'avenir de nos enfants et de la nation.

Citizen Engagement in World Bank-Funded Projects

Yunus Carrim, Member of the South African Parliament

Neither the World Bank (WB) nor elected Parliaments can ensure effective and sustainable development without the active participation of citizens. That much is obvious and has been for too long a time. Neither the WB nor MPs have paid sufficient heed to this. The same can be said, sometimes more so, for governments.

So the 2014 “Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement (CE) in World Bank Group Operations,” long overdue and inadequate in parts though it may be, is most welcome. The challenge for MPs now is to engage with the Framework, suggest improvements, and most importantly of all, facilitate its implementation, especially its more progressive aspects.

The WB and IMF are becoming increasingly sensitive to the importance of CE. We need to encourage CE in various ways, not just through this Framework. But for now let’s focus on the Framework. What then can we do to make it more effective?

As a start, those of us committed to CE should try to win elections in our countries so we have more say. But even if we come from opposition parties, and sometimes precisely because we do, we can hold governments to account on WB-funded and other development projects. Governments, after all, are often not keen on engaging with MPs, and much less citizens, on these projects. And yet it is the citizens who put the governments in power, and therefore who are meant to be the beneficiaries of these projects and will ultimately bear any financial burden for them.

Of course, parliaments differ in how they are elected and in the extent and scope of the public’s participation in them. Historical, political, economic, cultural, social, religious and other aspects provide a context for these differences. But whatever the context, most parliaments can do more to encourage public participation. And as MPs we need to ensure this.

It’s easier to facilitate participation in WB projects if the parliament is generally people-centred, with constitutional, legislative, normative and other prescripts that provide for effective CE. But whether they are or not, MPs could assist, even mobilise, civil society organisations to demand that they play a role in development projects.

This Session’s topic refers to the need for MPs to “act as a liaison between citizens and the World Bank.” That we must do. But we must also work with citizens to hold governments to account for WB-funded projects and the WB to account for its decisions to support projects. We must have parliamentary hearings and other forms of public participation to ensure that citizens have an effective say on projects, not just in parliaments, but by going to the

communities directly.

To the extent possible, MPs should require governments to be as open as possible on the goals of the project, how it fits into the government's developmental agenda, what the financial implications are and what role citizens will have in its implementation. Governments should be encouraged to consult citizens, especially the intended beneficiaries, and parliaments before approaching the WB.

There is a two-way street here. Citizens can be empowered through the space MPs create, and MPs can be empowered by being more rooted in the citizens. And both citizens and MPs working together can be stronger in holding governments and the WB to account. CE can certainly contribute to ensuring accountability and reducing corruption.

In the first instance, citizens need to be informed about their right to engage in projects. The WB, governments, parliaments and civil society organisations need to play a role in this regard. The WB Framework is too long, not accessible, and not easy to read. There needs to be a shorter, simpler version of it produced and if possible in different indigenous languages. Consideration also needs to be given to citizens who cannot read.

Perhaps too often we MPs seem to be wary, even suspicious of, and sometimes threatened by, citizens and especially civil society organisations (CSOs). But these are the people who vote for us and to whom we are accountable. And there are CSOs who are funded by international agencies who serve to undermine democracies, but most CSOs have an important role to play in advancing democracy and development. And even those that do not, we need to engage with them, not marginalize or clamp down on them.

But we shouldn't romanticize citizens. They are made up of complex beings with multiple and contradictory needs, interests, views and feelings, both across and within different classes and strata. And some of them too and some of the CSOs they get involved in can be far from democratic in their activities and can also abuse resources. But for all that, MPs and citizens can cooperate and benefit mutually from the interactions.

The reference is to WB-supported projects, but much of what is said here applies also to projects funded by other multilateral institutions, and other projects too.

Public participation on WB-funded projects, it must be stressed, can't just be done nominally. It has to be real, meaningful, and effective. The Topic for this Session notes, "Citizen engagement is indispensable to the honest give-and-take that shapes effective project planning." There's reference here to "give-and-take." That's important. For CE to work citizens have to see the outcomes of their participation or otherwise they are likely to lose interest. One of the five higher level principles of the WB CE Framework is a "results-focused" approach and another is "engagement throughout the operational cycle," including "during program and project preparation, implementation and evaluation, to contribute to improved outcomes." Good, but obviously the test is: implementation.

Citizens have to be empowered. They have to build the confidence, leadership qualities and technical skills to be effective. Ideally, the WB should not fund any project that does not have a significant CE programme and appropriate funding and other support for it. The WB Framework notes that “WBG experience demonstrates that a government’s willingness to engage is highest when CE is incorporated into project components that are discussed and agreed upon during project design.” It is noted too that recent decentralization legislation in African countries, particularly Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda, has, despite some challenges, encouraged CE. This suggests that Municipal councilors and officials also have a role to play in CE.

But it’s not just citizens who need capacity. MPs need capacity too. We need effective technical, including financial, skills. We also need skilled support staff in parliament and assistance from external academics and others. But we cannot just depend on them; we need to improve our own technical skills, including the ability to evaluate the support we get.

WB staff also need to be trained in CE. The WB notes, “Scaling up CE in WBG-funded operations needs to be supported by comprehensive staff training... Assessing staff capacity and developing staff training is planned as part of the implementation of this framework.”

Government officials also need to recognize the value of CE and receive appropriate training.

No time here to dwell on this, but the Private Sector also has an important role in CE.

Among the lessons from CE drawn so far, the WB notes that projects on different services seem to draw differing degrees of participation. Why is this and what can be done to improve the situation?

Monitoring and evaluation is important. The WB notes that “CE is not monitored systematically, and results reporting during project implementation is irregular.”

Yet the WB’s goal, it says, is to “mainstream citizen engagement in WBG operations by incorporating beneficiary feedback in 100% of Investment Project Financing (IPF) operations with clearly identifiable beneficiaries by FY18.” Exactly what this means may need to be engaged on. It does seem to be somewhat ambitious; but it is a goal that as MPs we should work with citizens to strive towards.

The WB says its Framework aims to improve the way the Bank listens to beneficiaries. Listening is important, but necessary action is even more so. The WB talks about CE, but isn’t it better to speak of “citizen participation”? Or maybe even “public participation”? Engagement implies a top-down approach – governments and other institutions reaching out to the public on their terms, rather than active engagement by the public, not all of whom are citizens of a particular country but who have no less, and sometimes more, need for public services.

The WB and governments talk about the need for an “inclusive economy” and “shared

prosperity.” Well then, this means more active engagement of citizens and the MPs they elect. Yet the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and IMF had no say on the shaping of the WB’s CE Framework. Why?

Of course, there are many challenges, but we need to strengthen the Parliamentary Network. The WB deals primarily with governments, but we can engage them to create more space for the voices of the PN and MPs more generally to be heard. When I served on the PN Board from 2007 to 2009, it was one of our key concerns. There certainly has been progress then, even that MPs are now able to attend sessions of the Annual Meetings of WB and IMF, and we need to acknowledge the good work of the PN’s President, Mr Jeremy Lefroy and the Board. But isn’t there room for more progress? This is not a matter for the Board alone. All of us have to help in whatever way possible.

One hopes that the Advisory Council to the WB on CE, which includes civil society representatives, is effective. Would it not be possible to have a representative of the PN on the Advisory Council?

As much as we have resource and other constraints, shouldn’t we as MPs do more? So we come to these PN Conferences. But what follows? Do we report back to our Parliamentary Committees and Parliaments on the Conferences? Do we take issues from these Conferences forward? Should the Conferences avoid being too ambitious and be incremental in its progress, taking into account that MPs are not participating here as representatives with specific mandates and that we have closing sessions in which modest Action Plans or Guidelines can be decided on and engaged on and reported on at subsequent Conferences?

Shouldn’t we complain less and act more? And not always blame our governments and the WB? We have influence. Not as much as we need. But however limited, let’s just use it, working with citizens, in their interests.

There are five major stakeholders: the WB, governments, parliaments, civil society organisations and citizens. Of course, they need to retain their specific identities. It may not seem like it but each of these stakeholders can become stronger the more they cooperate appropriately with the others. That is the state all of us need over time to strive for. In the interests of all, but primarily the poor and the disadvantaged.

This input is a brief, initial response to the following document:

World Bank 2015a. Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement in World Bank Group Operations. Engaging with Citizens for Improved Results. World Bank <http://consultations.worldbank.org/Data/hub/files/consultation-template/engaging-citizen-improvedresultsopenconsultationtemplate/materials/finalstrategicframeworkforce.pdf>

The Digital Revolution: a Global Challenge

Brando Benifei, Member of the European Parliament

The entire world is at the dawn of a great transformation: the digital revolution. Sudden changes in technology are shaping a new world of production and consumption with continuous improvements in efficiency and productivity.

At the heart of this process lies a new role of the internet and the digital devices. We are witnessing huge innovations in sectors like transportation, energy, communication, education and health with regards to digital advancements, and we are beginning to discern the contours of the digital society of the future.

These technologies modify our lifestyles, our social practices and the institutions, while paving the way to both new opportunities and new risks.

As far as the opportunities are concerned, while most of the so-called “developed countries” dedicate themselves to issues such as broadband connections, infrastructures, digital ecosystem and markets, much of the developing world is using technology to address long lasting crises and to guarantee a better response to basic needs. By contrast, the challenges are coming into view only gradually, but they should be at the top of the governments’ political agenda. These risks are revealing themselves in broad outlines although we can still see how they are going to affect a variety of dimensions, from personal data protection and job replacement to wealth distribution and dynamics of democratic participation in the political sphere.

These old threats and new perils will take different shapes due to geographic, regional, social and economic differences of the areas affected by innovation.

In various parts of the developed world, the biggest fear is strictly connected with the present lack of jobs and poor growth caused by the economic and financial crisis and the economic policies based on austerity programmes consequently adopted. In a time of uncertainty, the rapid technological change increases people’s worries that automation, computerisation and Artificial Intelligence could lead to a mass destruction of jobs. One of the best known study in this field was written in 2013 by two Oxford researchers, Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael Osborne; they found out that 47% of US workers had jobs at high risk of potential automation. Subsequent studies focused on other labour markets unveiled similar percentages: 47% for Great Britain and Sweden, 49% for Japan, and 62% for Romania.

The job loss seems to be a future reality, but it is a matter of fact that robotization and AI will also lead, in the long term, to the creation of new jobs especially in the leading sectors of the digital revolution and in the newly created industries.

Alongside unquestionable advantages, the digital revolution raises issues of job destruction and relocation which are industry-specific even within the same country and could generate imbalances in the global economy.

As a matter of fact, technological change could have a stronger impact on developing countries because their economies are more focused on the production of cheap goods and services using low-wage workers. Automation could make rich countries more self-sufficient in many areas, therefore it erodes the comparative advantage of the developing economies and it risks reducing their exports and growth.

Many economists have also denounced the risk of a “premature deindustrialization” due to the huge introduction of automated machines in the industrial sector. The presence of robots and computers will reduce the human labour in factories, making it harder to boost growth moving people from agriculture to industry. This event could generate a lack of manufacturing jobs, leading to disappearance of the middle class and reinforcing the global tendency of job polarization. The near future could confirm the possibility of further reduction of middle classes both in developed and developing countries, after many years of its enlargement in the emerging nations.

The fourth industrial revolution is an incredible opportunity but it conceals dangers and problems which need to be properly addressed by governments. Both developed and developing countries should focus on the solutions, defining a set of innovative policies in fields like welfare, education and development; this is the only way we can transform a global challenge in a real chance to build fairer societies, an objective which might prove increasingly difficult to pursue in this new world.

The Role of Parliaments in Implementing the 2030 Agenda

László Borbély, Member of the Romanian Parliament

2015 was a crucial year for sustainable development. Agenda 2030 is a valuable document for all. The challenge for humanity now is effectively implementing the SDGs in our respective societies.

The role of Parliaments will be crucial, but implementation could be a failure if we are not able to establish our priorities:

1. Education:

To educate our societies, to translate into a common language Agenda 2030. To prepare Sustainable Development handbooks for parliamentarians, for the civil society, for universities, and schools.

2. Institutional background:

To establish functional institutions that have the capacity to implement the SDG goals and targets. For this, based on statistical indicators, it will be important for national parliaments and governments establish special structures under prime ministerial offices and parliamentary committees for sustainable development.

3. International institutions:

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which represents 170 national parliaments, plays an active role in finalizing a self-assessment toolkit for SDGs and in putting together a Sustainable Development handbook for national parliaments.

The UN has a crucial role, too – it must finalize all the statistical indicators and to establish a high level monitoring system, through a HLPF – (High Level Political Forum), for national states to report the stage of implementation of Agenda 2030.

The World Bank and the IMF could also play an active role in supporting projects in different phases of implementation of SDGs.

4. Romania's position on SDGs.

In Romania, we have in place, since 2008, a National Sustainable Development Strategy.

In 2014, the Romanian Parliament started to organize, annually, regional meetings for parliamentarians from Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and former Soviet Union countries. Romania, at this moment, is considered a regional hub by the IPU. We hope that we will be able to help MPs effectively promote SDGs in their own countries.

The Romanian Parliament was the first national parliament to adopt, in April 2016, a declaration regarding Agenda 2030 and SDGs. The Government of Romania is working to revise the Strategy on Sustainable Development. An intersectoral committee on SDGs will be established, based on Romania's Parliament declaration, under the oversight of the Prime-Minister's office.

Micro-finance in Tunisia: An Opportunity for Development

Sana Guermazi-Bouassida, Economist, Manouba University, Tunisia

The reform of the Tunisian banking system is more than ever an urgency. This reform must go through an in-depth reform of the practices anchored in the system, including corruption and poor governance, but also requires a series of micro and macro-prudential measures that are in line with the international regulations.

The failures of the Tunisian banking system have been widely detected and reported in the past. However, with the new economic situation, which followed the « Jasmine revolution », the socio-economic conditions deteriorated considerably, bringing to the fore again the issue of reforming the banking system, which became even more fragile and vulnerable to external shocks.

Within the framework of financial inclusion objective, aspiration for a remarkable development in micro-finance has been observed in the financial structure of the Tunisian economy.

Micro-finance undeniably has a number of advantages, including economic growth, reducing regional disparities, financial stability, and reducing unemployment. Indeed, it has been widely shown that financial inclusion contributes directly to stabilizing the financial system. Micro-finance can divert economic agents from investing and making financial contracts with usurers and swindlers. It is especially important considering the fact that that a considerable number of Tunisians find recourse in informal financial services [FINDEX (2014)].

With this perspective of developing micro-finance in Tunisia, several initiatives have to be put in place.

Micro-finance has seen a considerable renewal of interest since the revolution. Micro-finance is still limited to the current needs of the economy.

Micro-finance institutions (MFIs) must efficiently meet the needs for the economy. In order to bridge the gap between supply and demand, they have to develop new products with potential, other than micro-credits, such as micro-saving, which remains almost absent.

The first step that must be undertaken is to understand the Tunisian financial ecosystem and the demand for micro-finance products. Today, the demand is not appropriately identified in the Tunisian case. The explosion of micro-finance institutions in Tunisia is worrisome and suggests that they may not respond effectively to real needs. A careful examination of demand must be made in order to clearly identify it and its interactions and consider the social dimension: people's financial situation, their needs, their family situation and the economic and social environment in which they operate and their funding relationship with

the informal sector.

The major concern is to establish a better understanding of the needs and the usages of micro-financial services. It is important to determine the gender dimension in the Tunisian case since women are very active in society. It is thus crucial to support them, particularly in underprivileged areas, to help them overcome the obstacles they face and to provide for their families. Particular attention should be paid to young graduates who represent one of the most serious socio-economic problems of Tunisia. Because of their fragile economic and financial situation, they tend to immigrate illegally to Europe or be indoctrinated by religious radicalism.

However, developing micro-finance entail risks if it is not sufficiently regulated. It can feed the cycle of customers borrowing from MFIs. To honor their current financial commitments, they tend to borrow from other micro-finance institutions. These risks fuel the vicious cycle of customers' insolvency.

Micro-finance in the case of the Tunisian economy may help informal entrepreneurs meet their needs. However, it can also respond effectively to financing problems encountered by several small businesses, like handicrafts and small farmers. The latter represents a high potential for development to limit regional disparities and reduce unemployment in the regions.

Moreover, the options and the diversity of the proposed products still remain less developed in Tunisia, despite a considerable potential for financial products other than micro-credits (notably micro-savings). According to the study prepared by the CAWTAR and the World Bank (2015), a rather large number of Tunisians would be interested in micro-savings, which remains until now an unavailable financial product.

The World Bank indicated that despite its development, micro-finance remains confined to the Greater Tunis and coastal areas. In addition, services provided to individuals or small businesses remain fragmented and inaccessible, with cumbersome administrative procedures and limited as well as complex financing options.

A considerable policy-making efforts must be carried out by authorities in order not only to be able to meet efficiently the most dire needs, but also to be able to stop any slippage that may result from MFIs. Efforts should be made to establish a comprehensive and an appropriate regulatory and legislative framework. Diversification of micro-finance products must be developed beyond micro-credits, to meet the needs of the economy and to limit the inadequacy of financial supply and demand.

These initiatives must be developed with the aim of strengthening financial inclusion. Within the framework of a social policy, encouraging this kind of investment would be strongly advised by means of encouraging interest rates. Transparent information should also be required and conveyed.

The Bahraini Reform: Economic Diversification and Controlling Fiscal Deficits

Redha Faraj, Member of the Bahraini Parliament

1. Introduction

The discovery of oil in 1932 ushered in a new era of modernization in the Kingdom of Bahrain shifting the economy, historically dependent on the pearling industry, to an oil dominated one. The Kingdom and economy underwent a transformation altering the landscape bringing modernity, wealth and the rapid development of its manufacturing industry supported through the extraction of oil.

Over the next three decades, Bahrain's economy was supported by its national oil company until 1968 with the incorporation of Aluminium Bahrain B.S.C. (ALBA). The regions' first aluminium smelter, commenced operations in 1971 with 120,000 tonnes per annum, becoming a leading global smelter with a capacity of approximate 1,000,000 tonnes per annum.

A number of other industries soon followed after the introduction of the aluminium smelter, some as downstream by-products of the smelter and others new industries. The government's main aim was to leverage its newfound wealth to (1) create new employment opportunities for its citizens and (2) diversify the government's revenue sources. Amongst these projects was the creation of the Arab Ship Repair Yard (ASRY), a dry dock with the capacity of receiving and servicing VLCC ships. Another large scale project was the production of ammonia, urea and methanol plant. The government employed considerable capital in modernizing the country and building the necessary infrastructure which would not only serve the populations' needs and requirements but also form the backbone of new industries and services. It was this investment which also provided Bahrain connectivity to the world and the neighbouring countries, offering a more effective and efficient option.

2. Planning and diversifying away from oil

Like most other Gulf States, Bahrain became focused on its dependence on oil, limited reserves and managing revenues needed to meet its very ambitious investment projects and expenditures. In order to diversify income sources, considerable studies leading to initiatives were undertaken over the last 50 years. However as the population increased, along with shifts in commodity prices and regional political environments, a number of changes to the original plan were required.

Bahrain, being limited in available land for large industries, along with limited sources of energy, exercised caution with regards to the environmental impact on its population in selecting the right industry which meets these restrictions. Given a focus on education following the discovery of oil, the government concentrated on developing a service-built economy as well as small to medium enterprises to create additional job opportunities and enhance the sources of revenue to the government.

The 2030 Economic Vision launched in October 2008 focuses on the coordinated reforms leveraging the country's private sector and educated workforce: "We aspire to shift from an economy built on oil wealth to a productive, globally competitive economy, shaped by the government and driven by a pioneering private sector – an economy that raises a broad middle class of Bahrainis who enjoy good living standards through increased productivity and high-wage jobs."

The reform policy outlined was conceived with the intention of addressing the three-pronged strategy, namely:

- Domestically transforming the economy;
- Taking advantage of the regional growth opportunity
- Improving Bahrain's global competitiveness

The policy is intended to provide a guiding role to the kingdom, people and government to improve the living standards of all citizens and set a target of doubling the disposable income, in real terms, by 2030.

To achieve this very ambitious objective, the document, as a guideline, was based on three fundamental principles which are:

- Sustainability/Collaboration. A change in the direction of shifting the government from being the main economic driver and employer, towards a collaborative model with the private sector. The idea remains to focus on installing a system aimed at empowering nationals through education and training as well as creating an infrastructure which would be conducive to attracting the private sector, both local and foreign, to invest in the kingdom. All efforts by the government in this direction is governed by the fact that no economic growth shall be made at the expense of the environment and the well-being of the nationals.
- Competitiveness. A key principle of the utmost importance. In the current global economy and the in years to come, productivity, quality, and response would be the driving forces of growth, profitability and a better quality of life.

In order to remain competitive, the vision recognizes the need for a highly skilled workforce. To achieve this objective, the strategy includes education, vocational training, retraining, and

above all, attracting young Bahrainis to acquire the skills needed to succeed. Reforming the education system to create the environment to develop the type of skills needed has commenced, but as the objective is long term in its nature, it will require continuous investment, vigorous review, along with timely and firm actions.

- Transparency/Rule of Law. Bahrain has placed a considerable focus on setting up a well-structured legislative system with laws in all fields, and in particular, that which relates to investments and business operations. The Regulations introduced over the last few decades provides transparency for both the private and public sector.

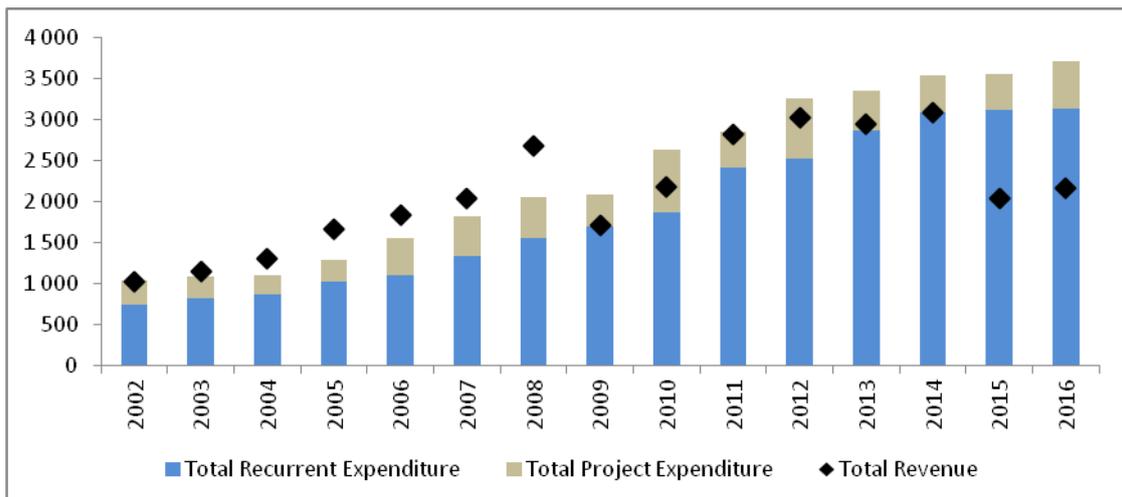
Judging from what has been put in place over the past years, it is evident that Bahrain offers a very attractive environment for both domestic and foreign investors to deploy capital safely in projects in line with the overall plan of the government, namely in service industries such as education, healthcare, hospitality, tourism, banking & finance, etc. These plans also supports small to medium industries underpinned by a highly skilled workforce delivering products for the region and globally.

3. Initiatives

Before discussing initiatives taken by the government, particularly over the last two years, the graph below illustrates the fiscal results over the last 15 years. The 2010 deficit (the highest compared to the years from 2002 to 2009) was mainly due to introduction of several standard of living improvement subsidies from the budget of that year.

Graph

Currency BD in Million



Note: The figures for 2002 to 2015 are the audited final figures. 2016 is the approved budget.

With oil prices falling c. 70% from peak to trough over the last 36 months and the average prices for 2016 averaging \$45/bbl with the budget based on \$60/bbl, Bahrain has run into fiscal and current account deficits. The estimated price of oil to achieve a breakeven for Bahrain stands at over \$120/bbl, and there were immediate actions taken by the government to reduce the deficit, and this is an ongoing process. The measures which were taken are briefly given below:

- Subsidies: Over the years, the Government of Bahrain subsidized number of products (food and others) which amounted to considerable sums. As a result of a very responsible and diligent review of these subsidies, bearing in mind that none of removal/lowering of such subsidies should affect the low income citizens, the following actions were swiftly taken:
 - i. Refined petroleum products: The pump prices for the gasoline, kerosene, and gas oil were all increased by over 50% from its original pump prices. This is expected to have a substantial impact on the amount of subsidy which burdened the previous budgets and should be properly addressed in the fiscal budgets and actuals of the coming years.
 - ii. Electricity/Water: Both were also heavily subsidized without any discrimination between industrial or domestic consumption. Thus to differentiate, the subsidy was removed on the industrial consumption. Domestic consumption, on the other hand, applied the full subsidy to the primary residence but a partial subsidy to multiple home owners.
 - iii. Food subsidy: Food subsidies also did not distinguish between commercial and domestic consumption. Thus, restaurants, hotels and individuals all benefitted from the subsidy. The government at the end of 2015, changed the policy where the subsidy was removed from the price of meat in the market, and instead offered citizens a lump sum cash amount based on individual consumption.
- Cost Rationalization: All government ministries and institutions have undergone a cost rationalization exercise without affecting the operations or headcount of citizens. This process has already resulted in an overall reduction in addition to a pullback in certain components of costs such as overtime, temporary employments, etc. This initiative is not expected to give a substantial reduction in the immediate years.
- Additional Streams of Revenue: The government commissioned a committee of ministers headed by the Deputy Prime Minister to consider all possibilities of lowering the fiscal deficit through other sources of revenue. At this initial stage, the main focus was to ensure that all services provided by the government are charged at a fair rate reflecting at least the actual cost to the government. Among the areas considered are excise on certain commodities and fees on industries previously

untaxed.

- Ability to raise debt: While debt to GDP remains a key metric, closely monitored, the government of Bahrain has been successful at addressing the deficit. The acceptable level of debt to GDP of 60% has not yet been exceeded, taking into account the deficit and the GDP for the year 2016.

The plans, actions and initiatives in this document illustrate that the objectives for the medium term are shifting the public sector's role from the main economic driver to a regulator and a partner to the private sector. The government is focused on sharing the risks and the rewards with all stakeholders to allow for a more transparent and efficient political and business environment. It is through this shift in policy as well as a continued investment in its infrastructure and people that it will meet its objectives and improve the living standards of its citizens and demonstrate its competitiveness on the international stage. To activate the plans and initiatives, the government's role would be to improve government services, develop legislation and directives to facilitate the procedures, and provide high quality infrastructure to attract investment to the kingdom.

The Chilean Chamber of Legal Evaluation

Pablo Lorenzini Basso, Member of Chilean Parliament

The Chilean Chamber of Deputies Legal Evaluation was created in December 2010, with the aim of complementing the regulatory framework with studies revealing the effects of the implementation of enacted laws. It also identifies possible externalities affecting effectiveness and efficiency, exposes unexpected impacts produced caused by their implementation and makes suggestions for remedial administrative or legislative action to improve them if necessary. The Department includes a multidisciplinary team, integrated by a lawyer, a social communication officer, and a political scientist. It also counts on the technical assistance of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in accordance with the agreement signed between the Chamber of Deputies and the international organisation.

Civil servants from public institutions involved in law implementation, experts and civil society representatives are therefore invited to take part in order to provide their feedback from stakeholders previously involved in the law-making process, together with new social actors in the public debate, so that they can express their opinion, concerns and suggestions to improve the law.

To this date, a total of 10 evaluations have thus been led (with one in progress) on topics of high public interest, giving the opportunity to the Chilean Chamber of Deputies to travel to the affected regions in order to see the local reality and to include the modification proposals and concrete views on the implementation at the country level.

The initiative pays special attention to the citizen participation. As a result, we could observe its key role in the law-making processes, allowing us to make an evaluation of law implementation, provide feedback on the functioning of the legally-mandated institutions, involve citizens effectively in the law-making process, promote decentralization, and adjust and renew the legislation according to the real needs of the people.

The information obtained by the Department research team during the six years of existence has provided legislators with feedbacks on implementation, identified new critical points and various underlying perspectives to the topics being assessed, and made the information available to the Deputies and to the citizen in the form of a report, in addition to legislative committee when required.

The above has moreover been translated into various parliamentarian motions presented by the Legal Evaluation Committee of Deputies/OECD, a body which comprises all the political

trends represented in the Chilean Chamber of Deputies and supported the research led by the Department technical team of civil servants, thus becoming an active stakeholder for the promotion of legislative reforms.

The reports have thus been referred to by other parliamentarians in legislative sessions as well as in various law projects on the matters studied in the evaluations. Their impact has also reached regional and national scales, where they have been included into the public and media debate as revealing reports on the handling of topics such as organ donation, domestic violence, teenage crimes, and data protection.

Other activities developed by the Legal Evaluation Department include support to public institutions and international parliaments who request feedback. It is within this framework that professionals have received, last year, requests from the Regulation Committee of the Undersecretary for Transports to gain a deeper understanding of the work scheme, methodology and process followed by the technical team. Similarly, the Agriculture and Breeding Service issued a request to the Legal Evaluation Department of the Chilean Chamber of Deputies to participate, as collaborators to the “Strengthening of normative system y Mexico and Chile: implementation of tools for better regulation as a state policy” project. This participation would consist of ex-post legal evaluation capacity-building for the participating institutions.

Parliaments from various countries of the region have expressed their interest to learn more about the Chilean Chamber of Deputies Legal Evaluation experience. In this context, information have been shared and visits have been planned from representatives of countries such as Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua.

EVALUATED LAWS:

- Law N° 20.413, which determines who can be considered as organ-donor and in which way their will to do so can be expressed.
- Law N° 20.422, which establishes norms on equal opportunity and social inclusion of disabled persons.
- Law N° 18.600, which establishes norms on mentally disabled persons, published on 19 February 1987.
- Law N° 20.348, which ensures the right to equal pay.
- Law N° 20.000, which sanctions the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
- Law N° 20.599, which regulates the implementation of transmitting antennas for

telecommunication services.

- Law N° 20.066, on domestic violence.
- Law N° 20.084, which establishes a liability scheme for teens in cases of criminal offences.
- Law N° 19.628, on privacy protection.
- Law N°20.090 and Law N°20.596, which sanction and regulate cattle rustling (currently under evaluation).

The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and the IMF Launches its MENA Chapter

PN Secretariat

The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and the IMF launched its Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Chapter on 1 and 2 December in Tunis, Tunisia. The event, which was co-organized with the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with the support of the Tunisian Government, was by attended by 50 MPs from Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco and Tunisia and co-chaired by PN Chair Hon. Jeremy Lefroy (MP, United Kingdom) and PN Vice-Chair Hon. Olfa Soukri Cherif (MP, Tunisia). Civil society and private sector were also represented at the event. Discussions centered on common regional development challenges, including youth unemployment.



The conference opening featured addresses from HE Prime Minister Youssef Chahed, HE Finance Minister Lamia Zribi, and HE Development, Investment and Cooperation Minister Fadhel Abdelkefi. In the follow up of the successful Tunisia2020 investment conference, the representatives from the Tunisian government welcomed such initiative for the strengthening of international cooperation at the legislative level and underlined the critical role of the

parliament's oversight and monitoring functions in ensuring the achievement of the necessary economic and social objectives. The initiative was also praised by World Bank Group MENA Vice-President Hafez Ghanem as an opportunity for dialogue and the exchange of good practices for the region development, as well as by IMF Deputy Director for the Middle East and Central Daniela Gressani who insisted on the need for MPs to hold their government accountable.

The launching event provided the delegation with the forum to discuss the following topics: youth entrepreneurship and job creation in the context of a high youth unemployment rate; economic and governance reform priorities to tackle the consequences of conflicts; the role of regional networks in supporting collaboration among accountability institutions; and the role of parliaments in fragile states.

On the second day, the delegation was welcomed by HE Mohamed Ennaceur, Speaker of the Tunisian Parliament, at the Assembly of People's Representatives to further discuss the scope, structure, and activities of the MENA Chapter. The MPs expressed their wish to meet regularly to benefit from the World Bank and IMF capacity building programmes for parliamentarians as well as from their expertise on topics of interest, to increase awareness on the World Bank and IMF activities among parliaments and the public opinion, and to seek greater parliamentary engagement in the World Bank and IMF project negotiation process. The participants agreed to further their collaboration by having national focal points liaising with the network before the upcoming year's meeting in Morocco.

Reconnect Politics Survey

Reconnect Politics

[Reconnect Politics](#) is running an ANONYMOUS survey to evaluate the level of support parliamentarians might be needing to solve internal conflicts in Parliament or in their political families. Please take a minute to fill this survey, the link exists in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic.

- ENGLISH - Is your work as a parliamentarian affected by internal conflicts?
<https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/GCGSVGT>
- FRENCH - Votre travail de parlementaire est-il affecté par des conflits internes?
<https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/GJPZ93Z>
- SPANISH - Su trabajo como parlamentario está limitado por conflictos internos?
<https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/GCGSVGT>
- ARABIC - Is your work as a parliamentarian affected by internal conflicts?
<https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/BTPSHPW>

Network Featured Discussion

Göran Pettersson, Member of the Swedish Parliament

Since the 2008 financial crisis, the central banks and budget committees around the world have been challenged by low growth and low inflation. The crisis has been so deep and long, and this has led to unprecedented low interest rates, in some countries even negative base rates, topped with quantitative easing in the form of the central bank buying of government bonds. When the economies came back to growth, the central banks and the budget committees entered waters where the experiences from the last decades have limited relevance. Out of the present crafters of monetary and fiscal policies, only a few have personal experience of a high inflation economy. We must adapt the historic lessons to the present situation, or otherwise we risk repeating the same errors.

I have two questions for the readers.

1. Which books in economic history do you recommend in the context of the current economic situation?
2. Which parameters are significant and are different this time around, and what impact will they have?

I hope to have your answers so they can be published in the next issue of the review and thereby serve as the starting point for a fruitful debate.

Please send your contributions to goran.pettersson@riksdagen.se.

MP Göran Pettersson
Discussion section editor, *The Parliamentary Network Review*

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I thank the authors of this issue for their valuable contributions. If you would like to write for future issues or have suggestions for improving the publication, please contact me at olivia.e.noh@gmail.com.

Eu Na Noh

Editor, *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 Hana Rakem, Consultant, at jpo1@parlnet.org. If you would like to write for the Network Featured Discussion, please contact discussions column editor Göran Pettersson at goran.pettersson@riksdagen.se.

**The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank
& International Monetary Fund**

66, Avenue d'Iéna 75116 Paris, France

+33 (0)1 40 69 30 55 / <http://www.parlnet.org>