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Report



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Report

World e-Parliament Conference 2012

**Chamber of Deputies of Italy
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Introduction

The World e-Parliament Conference 2012 took place at the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, Rome, on 13, 14 and 15 September. The Conference was co-organized by the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.

The event brought together over 120 delegations from legislatures around the world, including presiding officers and members of parliaments, secretaries-general and parliamentary staff and officials. Experts from international organizations and academics who work and deal with information and communication technologies in legislatures also attended and contributed to the discussions. At the Conference, participants had the opportunity to analyze good practices, exchange views on latest trends and institutional developments, learn from each other's experiences, network with peers and build partnerships in an international setting.

The Conference built on the results of four previous conferences held respectively in Geneva (2007), Brussels (2008), Washington D.C. (2009) and Johannesburg (2010) as well as on the findings of the *World e-Parliament Report 2012*.

This report summarizes the presentations and practices showcased during the different sessions of the conference, and highlights the main points of discussion. In the document the proceedings are grouped under six chapters with the purpose of reflecting the overall structure of the conference while keeping the focus on the specific nature of the sessions.

The first chapter of the report features a summary of the official remarks by the representatives of the co-organizing institutions. They are followed by a chapter dedicated to the keynote presentation, which focused on the state of ICT in Parliaments in 2012 as presented in the *World e-Parliament Report 2012*.

The third chapter covers two high-level plenary sessions focusing on transparency laws and access to information. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the policy and management oriented plenary sessions which addressed issues such as the impact of technology on parliamentary openness and accountability, participatory media, innovations in parliamentary communications, open data, ICT strategic planning, cloud services, tablets and mobile devices, and protection of the ICT environment.

The fifth chapter presents sessions of a more technical nature which covered a broad spectrum of topics including parliamentary information systems, technology options for recording and reporting parliamentary proceedings, parliamentary libraries and research services, electronic voting systems, XML applications and services, and open source projects.

The last chapter is dedicated to the high-level plenary session on the theme "Promoting Tolerance and Peace", which brought the Conference to its conclusion during the International Day of Democracy 2012.

Video clips of the sessions, along with presentations, are available on the website of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament: www.ictparliament.org

Opening Session

The Conference was opened by Mr. Gianfranco Fini, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Abel Martinez Durán, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic and Co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, Mr. Benedetto Adragna, Senator and Quaestor of the Senate of Italy, and Mr. Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy and Member of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.

Mr. Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations, and Mr. Rainer Wieland, Vice President of the European Parliament and Co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, delivered their opening remarks through video messages.

Mr. Fini welcomed all participants on behalf of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy and expressed satisfaction for the participation in the conference of a large number of delegations.

He praised the collaboration between the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union that led to the establishment of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The Chamber of Deputies of Italy, he observed, has strongly believed in this initiative since the beginning as ICT enable parliaments to be more efficient and transparent, and the sharing of good practices allow significant cost savings. In addition, parliaments can play a key role in the Information Society acting as guarantors. In this regard, he recalled that the Chamber of Deputies of Italy hosted the Conference “The policy-making role of parliaments in the promotion of the Information Society” in 2007, which adopted a document outlining what parliaments should do to ensure the development of an inclusive and equitable Information Society.

Mr. Fini underlined the importance of the theme of the Conference “Openness and transparency” and noted that parliaments are everywhere making efforts to give full access to their data and are continuously confronted with new challenges such as making data available in open formats to allow their reuse.

He highlighted that the co-organizers decided to conclude the Conference on the International Day of Democracy, through a session dedicated to the theme “Promoting Tolerance and Peace”, in order to emphasize the link between the activity of the Global



Centre for ICT in Parliament and the work of the international community to promote democracy. Strengthening ICT in Parliaments, he observed, does not aim only to improve parliaments' efficiency but also to promote and renew democracy at the political and institutional level.

Mr. Johnsson highlighted that the theme of the Conference "Openness and transparency" is one of the five core criteria for democratic parliaments identified by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Mr. Johnsson stated that we are witnessing a quite spectacular increase in the use of social media by parliaments and raised the question whether the institution of parliament is ready to engage in a one-to-many dialogue, taking into account that social media is by nature an interactive form of communication. He reported that the IPU would discuss these issues at its 127th Assembly in Quebec City, Canada, in October 2012 and publish soon a set of guidelines for parliaments on social media.



Mr. Johnsson noted that ICT have changed how and the extent to which citizens are able to contribute to the legislative process by making it easier for citizens to provide their input via e-mail or web sites and to organize campaigns to influence decision-making. The question is what happens to this input and how it is handled in parliament. If parliament is perceived as ignoring public views, frustration will grow, maybe even reinforcing alienation from politics.

The speaker observed that direct involvement of citizens in the legislative process is not the only, nor the best, way for parliaments to listen to citizens. In his view, members of parliament play, and must continue to play, a mediating role, explaining political decisions to their constituents, and listening to their grievances, concerns and suggestions.

In his conclusion Mr. Johnsson expressed the hope that parliament will be the driver of change and find ways to be more responsive, to open channels for greater participation

by citizens and to create space for citizens' views to have a real political impact and influence in parliamentary policy-setting and decision-making.

Mr. Durán stressed the importance of the theme of the Conference and highlighted the role played by ICT to strengthen parliamentary functions, enhance transparency and facilitate citizens' participation by providing easier access to public information.

He observed that ICT have transformed both the way parliaments operate and how they are perceived by citizens. ICT can be used strategically by parliaments to encourage institutional

development and exercise a truly participatory democracy by promoting open, transparent and responsible institutions. The diffusion of ICT within society has generated higher expectations by citizens for increased and better information services in line with higher standards of completeness and reliability.

The speaker stated that the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic believes that ICT do not contribute only to better informing citizens about the work of parliaments and their members but also to promoting a more participatory democracy.

In his capacity as Co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament Mr. Durán emphasized the role of the Centre to support the use of ICT by parliaments and mentioned some of its key functions. The Centre facilitates access by parliaments in developing countries to the expertise of more technologically-advanced parliaments. The analysis of the results of the Global Survey of ICT in Parliament conducted by the Centre every two years presents the state of technology in parliaments on a global basis and helps parliaments to make informed decisions on how to improve their own use of ICT. Through its work in Latin America and the Caribbean in the past few years, the Centre provided parliaments of this region with a platform to exchange views, experiences and future objectives thus promoting a more close relationship among them.

Mr. Durán concluded by highlighting that the broad participation of parliaments in the fifth World e-Parliament Conference clearly shows that parliaments need a space to dialogue and exchange experiences on these issues.

Mr. Adragna highlighted that innovating to keep up with the changing times is no longer simply an option but has become a requirement for democratic institutions that wish to be close to and engage with civil society, while speeding up their decision-making process and reducing their overall operating costs.

He made an overview of how the Senate of Italy has been facing the challenge of innovation over the past few years through a number of “dematerialization” projects and the ever-growing use of ICT to process parliamentary proceedings and documentation. He mentioned in particular the *Scriba* project¹ and the adoption of XML standards.

Mr. Adragna stated that the Senate is now able to publish parliamentary information on its website promptly mostly by means of low-cost automated systems. The openness of parliamentary business is ensured by the instant online availability of most of sitting documents. Working documents may be accessed via wifi, even in e-book format, on the senators’ tablets/PCs during plenary or committee sittings. An additional step towards more openness is the creation of an *ad hoc* website (dati.senato.it) by the end of 2012 containing most of the data from the Senate internal information system downloadable in *Linked Open Data* format.



1 See the technical session “[Joint open source projects to deliver quality information](#)”.

2 Opening Session



Mr. Adragna stressed that the Senate is working closely with the Chamber of Deputies to ensure the consistency of their respective ICT investment strategies and to reduce unnecessary duplication of information.

In conclusion, Mr. Adragna highlighted that the World e-Parliament Conference provides parliaments with an excellent opportunity to compare solutions implemented in response to similar needs. He emphasized the importance of inter-parliamentary collaboration and the sharing of best practices, and expressed the Senate's willingness to work with other parliaments on

the development of common standards in a spirit of exchange and cooperation.

Mr. Lupi stressed that the success of the World e-Parliament Conference shows that the use of ICT is considered by parliaments worldwide as a key tool to strengthen democracy. He also noted that the *World e-Parliament Report*, prepared by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, is becoming a benchmark used by parliaments to measure their progress and define their strategic choices in the use of ICT.

He underlined that the exchange of good practices and experiences among parliaments translates into better innovation processes and overall saving of resources, and emphasized the strong link between technical solutions and institutional policies.

Mr. Lupi highlighted the theme of “standards” which will be addressed by the Conference. Standards are today a very important vehicle to allow access to information about the political process and promote transparency. He acknowledged that at the European level significant progress is being made to develop common standards and encouraged all relevant stakeholders to continue this work.

He concluded that this year the World e-Parliament Conference will emphasize the link between parliamentary strengthening, development and renewal of democracy. He



observed that any effort to make parliaments more effective, more informed, more open and more transparent would make no sense without the awareness of the great challenges that democracy faces today.



Mr. Thomas Stelzer, welcomed all to the fifth World e-Parliament Conference and noted with appreciation the progress accomplished by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament over the past years.

Mr. Stelzer observed that parliaments are being confronted with growing demands from society at a time of worsening world economic conditions, which are forcing many legislatures to work with fewer resources. While recognizing that technology alone cannot address all of these challenges Mr. Stelzer underlined that if technology is planned and implemented on a strategic basis it can generate gains in efficiency and effectiveness throughout the legislature's operations, while fostering parliamentary democratic values. In addition, collective technology responses and solutions generated by the parliamentary community could be extremely valuable to overcome the resources constraints.

He stated that the United Nations will continue to support the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament as a vehicle to provide a framework for inter-parliamentary cooperation, exchange of experience and capacity-building to effectively use ICT to strengthen democracies.

Mr. Stelzer highlighted that the closing of the Conference falls on the International Day of Democracy widely celebrated in the world, which provides an additional opportunity to underscore the indispensable role that parliaments play in making democracy work everywhere.

Mr. Wieland stressed the importance of the World e-Parliament Conference for strengthening parliaments in Europe and worldwide. He noted that the Conference provides an excellent opportunity to analyze best practices and exchange views on the latest ICT trends and institutional developments, and to learn from each other.

He drew the attention of the audience on two studies prepared by the European Parliament dealing with the future environment of a parliament and its members in terms of communication and ICT.



Keynote Address

The State of ICT in Parliaments today: the World e-Parliament Report 2012

Mr. Jeffrey Griffith, Senior Advisor, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, in his keynote address, presented a summary of the findings of the *World e-Parliament Report 2012*.

The *World e-Parliament Report 2012*, prepared by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, at the direction of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA) and the IPU, is intended to document the efforts of legislatures to employ ICT as instruments to strengthen their institutional functions of lawmaking, oversight and representation. The Report is based on the Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments 2012 conducted by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament between February and May 2012 and sent to 269 chambers. 156 responses were received, representing 177 chambers.

After stressing that the results of the Survey showed evidence of small but nevertheless important progress in the use of technology by parliaments Mr. Griffith presented a few of the findings from a number of high priority areas.

In the area of *technology support for members* he reported that three quarters of parliaments allow tablets in plenary, 65% permit smart phones and 57% have electronic voting. Many of the new mobile devices and applications have been adopted more quickly than the implementation of new technology normally occurs in parliaments. 51% of parliaments already provide members with a smart phone or tablet and 35% have developed mobile applications to deliver information to members, whether they provide the device or not.

Regarding *Communication with the public* Mr. Griffith stated that webcasting is still growing and will be available in most parliaments in a few years. Other video techniques are also popular and represent four of the top five means of communication currently in use. The use, or intended use, of social media, in a variety of forms is also growing. Citizens do use technology to communicate when they can. Almost 80% of parliaments reported increasing communication from citizens using ICT when it is available to them.

In the areas of *Openness, transparency, and accountability* a majority of parliaments reported that the three most important improvements in their work made possible by ICT were: more information and documents on the website; increased capacity to disseminate information and documents; and, more timely delivery of information and documents to members. The 2012 Survey also indicates that 46% of parliaments are following the IPU recommendations for designing and maintaining the website.

Mr. Griffith reported that there have also been some improvements in the area of *Strategic planning and implementation*. Political leadership is more engaged than in previous surveys with 56% of respondents identifying the President or Speaker being involved in setting ICT goals and objectives, up from 41% in 2009. More members and other users are participating in planning and managing ICT. Of the parliaments that do have a strategic plan, an increasing number manage it well through regular updates (90%) and the establishment of criteria to measure success (68%).



Mr. Griffith then presented some of the persistent gaps in the use of ICT in parliaments. While the number of parliaments with document management systems for committee and plenary documents has increased since 2007, the use of XML for these documents has not increased. A technology gap also exists in communication between citizens and parliaments. Many parliamentary libraries still lack an adequate technical infrastructure to function at full capacity. Although websites are perhaps the most powerful tool for achieving openness and transparency, there has been little progress in providing explanatory material to assist users better understand proposed legislation or legislative procedures. Lack of standards for access to websites by persons with disabilities persists in many parliaments. Despite the fact that webcasting is growing and will be used in most parliaments in the near future, few have done anything about developing an effective and affordable method of archiving these records and ensuring permanent and timely access to them. Despite some progress in strategic planning, nearly two thirds of all parliaments do not have a written vision statement for ICT and 40% do not have a strategic plan that is regularly updated

The speaker then provided an overview of the global state of e-parliament in 2012 based on a statistical methodology for assessing the maturity level of ICT in legislatures proposed by the *World e-Parliament Report 2010*. Total average scores in 2012 for the 156 individual parliaments that participated in the survey range from 9% to 88% out of a possible 100%. The average total score for all chambers is 46%. As expected, scores were directly related to income level. However, parliaments in low income countries are closing the e-parliament gap.

Mr. Griffith reported that there were some very encouraging findings with regard to regional and global cooperation. It was especially encouraging that although the percentages of parliaments that are currently able to provide support to other parliaments to improve the state of ICT declined in 2012 the percentages of parliaments willing to provide support to other parliaments doubled between 2009 and 2012. Since the publication of the 2010 Report there has been an expansion of the mechanisms for cooperation among legislatures at the regional and international level.

Mr. Griffith concluded by outlining a number of recommendations based on the Survey findings that suggest several ways for continuing the gains made in the last two years and for addressing some of the most persistent gaps.

The first recommendation is to invest in people. ICT staff needs continuous training support in order to have the knowledge required to evaluate, implement, and maintain the systems that have become essential for parliaments. Members need to understand how technology can serve both the institution and themselves as representatives of the people.

Another recommendation is to plan strategically and work efficiently. A well-executed ICT strategic plan can contribute to a more efficient parliament that can accomplish its work

3 Keynote Address

more effectively at lower costs. An effective implementation leads to a more rational allocation of time and resources.

It is important to go mobile. The benefits of mobile technologies for parliaments are becoming increasingly evident. They are flexible, can be fast to implement, and are often less costly to implement than wired services. However, mobile technologies carry intrinsic risks involving security that need to be addressed.

Cloud services offer many advantages to parliaments. They enable parliaments to acquire fairly quickly a broad range of capabilities, such as e-mail systems, storage servers, and a growing list of other functions at relatively low cost without having to build and support the hardware, operating systems, and application software themselves. Cloud services, however, do require Internet access that is reliable and has sufficient speed.

Parliaments share many of the same needs and same goals in their use of technology. It is therefore important to cooperate and share solutions.

Another recommendation is to establish a culture of openness. Technology-based tools cannot be effective in meeting the goals of openness and transparency unless a parliament begins with a strong commitment to these values and makes them high priority strategic goals.

The last recommendation is to promote genuine dialogue with citizens. Technologies for communicating with citizens are becoming easier to use; they are becoming less expensive; and they offer a growing array of methods for informing citizens more effectively.



High-Level Plenary Sessions

e-Parliament, transparency laws and access to information

This session, chaired by **Mr. Timothy Hamel-Smith**, President of the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago, highlighted country cases and reviewed the benefits for legislatures of making technology a means to respond to the increasing demands of laws and norms for access to information and greater parliamentary transparency.

Mr. Javier Barrero, 2nd Vice President of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, presented the work being done by the Congress to increase efficiency, transparency, participation and access. He explained that a key role in this process is played by the “Infrastructure Committee” composed of members from all the different parliamentary groups.

The Congress of Deputies of Spain is currently strengthening the principles of disclosure of parliamentary activity and political and economic transparency by making openly available a variety of data through its website. This include: 1. plenary and committee debates, which are published, classified and stored in more than one format, and retrievable by session, topic, speaker, parliamentary body or date; 2. all information regarding contracts signed by the Congress and all procedures in place, as well as financial disclosures of members of parliament regarding their assets, rents, possessions and income sources; 3. information about votes expressed by the plenary, which are published, classified and stored in reusable format, and retrievable by initiative, parliamentary group and member.

Mr. Barrero informed the audience that the Congress has recently amended its Rules of Procedures in order to allow the implementation of a telematic vote function that



allows members to vote from outside the plenary hall, when specifically authorized. The technical infrastructure put in place by the Congress allows citizens to verify if a member of parliament has been voting in the plenary or remotely by telematic vote.

Before concluding his presentation Mr. Barrero highlighted how he strongly believes in e-parliament as a crucial tool for transparency and for rebuilding a positive image of politics and members of parliament as representatives of democracy and holders of popular sovereignty.

Ms. Päivi Lipponen, Chair of the Committee for the Future of the Parliament of Finland, stressed that the Parliament of Finland, the Eduskunta, is one of the most open parliaments in the world.

Ms. Lipponen presented the structure of the Committee for the Future and explained that its core function is to stimulate an active and initiative-generating dialogue with the government on issues related to the future and on how to solve them. The Committee prepares materials to be submitted to the Finnish Parliament, such as government reports on the future, makes submissions on future-related long-term issues to other standing committees, debates issues relating to future development factors and development models, undertakes analyses pertaining to future-related research and IT methodology, and functions as a parliamentary body for assessing technological development and its consequences for society.

Ms. Lipponen pointed out that in difficult times like the ones we are experimenting, when future is uncertain and legitimacy of politics is weak, ICT and especially social media may help to facilitate dialogue and increase citizens' participation. She stressed that it is crucial to use ICT in the most effective way to allow citizens to contribute knowledge, exercise influence and obtain information. It is also fundamental to encourage citizens' engagement in collective and public affairs. Ms. Lipponen

explained that the technology to make this possible now exists; what is needed is that effective and user friendly services, together with citizens' education, are put in place to exploit it and obtain the best result possible.

Ms. Lipponen then mentioned a number of projects and initiatives that Finland is undertaking to increase transparency and accountability of the administration, facilitate civic participation and harness technology to strengthen good governance. She recalled the *Citizens' Initiative Act* which allows citizens to submit a legislative initiative to the Eduskunta, provided that it is supported by 50,000 citizens of voting age, and the *Open Ministry website*, where citizens can submit suggestions on how to improve legislation.

In addition Ms. Lipponen mentioned that in spring 2012 Finland announced its willingness to join the Open Government Partnership. The *Open Government Partnership Finland*, a Ministry of Finance-led project, is being developed in co-operation with national stakeholders, organizations and citizens. Ms. Lipponen then mentioned the Finnish *National e-participation environment* project, led by the Ministry of Justice and consisting in a set of web tools to enhance dialogue and interaction among citizens, politicians and civil servants.

Before closing her presentation Ms. Lipponen described how the Committee for the Future of the Eduskunta is experimenting a crowdsourcing methodology in the framework of its activities, based on its strong belief that it is important to communicate in many different ways and that the web must be used to make the decision making process open and engage the citizens.

Mr. Julio César Valentín Jiminián, Chair of the Committee on Justice and Human Rights of the Senate of the Dominican Republic, elaborated on the advance towards



transparency and disclosure of information of the Parliament of the Dominican Republic.

At the outset Mr. Valentín shared with the audience official data showing the evolving trend in the perception that citizens have of legislatures and institutions in Latin America

and, more specifically, in the Dominican Republic. According to these indicators trust in parliament, as the core element of democracy, has been growing in the entire region in the last decade after a decrease at the beginning of the years 2000.

The speaker underlined that there can be no democracy without transparency, and that transparency can only result from a real availability of public information, which represents a fundamental right that has to be granted to all. In this context Mr. Valentín pointed out the pillars of a modern legislature that can be strengthened through the key support of ICT: transparency in resource management; transparency of the legislative process and quality of the legislation; openness and public participation; availability of public information; efficiency of processes and procedures.

Mr. Valentín continued his presentation by describing the progress of the legal framework for access to public information in the Dominican Republic in the last decade. A general law for free access to public information was adopted in 2004 and approved



by the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies respectively in 2006 and 2007. In 2010 the principles of equal and open access to public information for each individual were introduced in the Constitution of the country.

The speaker described how both chambers of the Dominican Republic have been working to achieve these principles of equal and open access to public information in their own environment, by implementing the relevant ICT infrastructure, exploiting the Internet, and developing informative and accessible web portals and adequate mobile applications. The two chambers now offer on their websites a broad typology and quantity of parliamentary information, adequately classified, and will soon adopt the *Akoma Ntoso*¹ XML open standard for their parliamentary documentation. Official data and statistics show the rapid intensification of the number of visits to the website, including through mobile devices, and the growth of request of information through different channels. Both chambers

¹ See the technical session “[Bungeni Parliamentary Information and Legislative System: features, architecture and localization](#)”.

introduced systems for managing both the legislative process and administrative functions and the Chamber of Deputies also implemented an electronic voting system.

Mr. Valentín explained how the process towards the development of an “open parliament” in the Dominican Republic confirmed the need for legislatures to increase their level of transparency and the availability of information in open data formats, respond to citizens’ demand of openness and interaction, facilitate their engagement and increase the legitimacy of representative institutions. A major lesson learned drawn during the process was that ICT alone are not sufficient, and that there is a need for a strong political determination to achieve these objectives. He also stressed the need for the Caribbean region to keep pace with the development of social networks to make even faster progress than in the last few years.

The last speaker was **Mr. Sérgio Sampaio Contreiras de Almeida**, Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil who presented the new *Access to Information Law* and its impact on the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil.

Mr. Sampaio provided the audience with an overview of the legal framework on access to information in the country, starting from the Constitution of 1988 which guarantees access to information and the State’s obligation of accountability. The values stated in the Constitution were endorsed by a number of subsequent laws such as the *Budgetary Guidelines Law* and the *Fiscal Responsibility Law*. The concept of transparency of State activities was then expanded by the 2012 *Access to Information Law*.

Mr. Sampaio mentioned the progressive

growth of social participation and the idea of monitoring public policies in the country and recalled the primary role of Brazil in the Open Government Partnership initiative of 2011, which endorsed the principle of public transparency regarding access to information, management of public resources, promotion of citizen participation and efficient provision of public services.

The 2012 *Access to Information Law*, aiming at promoting transparency in public administration, accountability and publicity, gives the right to anyone to request information through any means and without the need for justification. According to the law information is also to be disclosed independently from specific requests to facilitate control of public administration by society. The Law is now fully operating in Brazil with the fundamental support of technology, whose role for transparency is acknowledged by the law itself.

Mr. Sampaio explained that the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil used to provide parliamentary information and documents to the citizens, through its portal, even before the





enactment of the *Access to Information Law*. The Law had however a significant impact on the Chamber under several aspects. On the organizational side, adapting to the Law's provisions implied, for example, changing the work processes, identifying new information policies and responsibilities, and providing information to staff on the implications of the Law and guidance to citizens on the new search tools available. On the technological side, implementing the Law internally meant for example increasing the quantity and type of information available on the portal, centralizing information requests, improving open data services, providing a wider range of information in an open, machine readable and reusable format, and assessing and evaluating the adequacy of content provided through the portal. Mr. Sampaio mentioned the success of the *e-Democracia programme*, launched in June 2009 with the objective of engaging

citizens in the lawmaking process to achieve tangible legislative results.

Mr. Sampaio illustrated how today a large amount of information is requested to and provided by the Chamber in a tailored and timely manner. He also explained how further progress is expected in the near future through an overall strategic planning and development of specific projects, the integration of multiple channels to communicate with customers, the expansion of research sources and the extraction of statistical data related to legislation. Finally, Mr. Sampaio stated how the *Access to Information Law* represents a mechanism to improve the quality of legislation itself, thanks to the larger amount of information and data that the legislator can gather from the government before approving a law, to follow its implementation and to evaluate its future impact.



The session ended with the presentation of a successful cooperation initiative between the Senate of Chile and the Parliament of Finland presented by **Mr. Carlos Cantero**, Member of the Committee for the Future of the Senate of Chile, and **Ms. Päivi Lipponen**, Chair of the Committee for the Future of the Parliament of Finland. The cooperation between the two bodies led, *inter alia*, to the translation in Spanish of the publication *Developing and Implementing Knowledge Management in the Parliament of Finland*

whose purpose was to describe the various processes used in the Eduskunta to outline and analyze the role and importance of knowledge management, its essential components and application in practice during the years 2000–2001. The Spanish translation *Desarrollo e Implementación de la Gestión del Conocimiento en el Parlamento de Finlandia* is available on the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament website.

Being open to citizens' voices, participation and dialogue: the formal launch of the Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations' Declaration on Parliamentary Openness

The purpose of this session was to present to the audience and launch the *Declaration on Parliamentary Openness* as well as to introduce the mission, objectives and activities of the Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations (PMOs).

Mr. Andrew Mandelbaum, Senior Governance Officer of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), was the Chair and the first panelist of the Session. He underlined how the range of activities and field of action of PMOs are much broader than simply "monitoring" parliaments. He was pleased to know from the discussions of the Conference that a number of parliaments recognize PMOs' successes as being a function of their efforts as providers of parliamentary information.

Mr. Mandelbaum gave a brief presentation of the NDI, a non profit, non-governmental organization working to strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizens' participation, openness and

accountability in government. NDI collaborated with the United Nations and IPU on the development of standards for democratic legislatures and conducted a number of studies, research and assessments, including a survey, in partnership with the World Bank Institute, on PMOs worldwide and on their work and strategies of action. In addition, Mr. Mandelbaum stressed the relevance of the collaboration between the PMO community and parliaments to bring together their respective knowledge on openness, transparency and citizens' engagement.

Mr. Mandelbaum introduced the *Declaration on Parliamentary Openness*, a collaborative effort of PMOs, which represents a call on legislative bodies by the international PMO community for an increased collaboration and renewed commitment to enhance parliamentary openness and citizens' engagement in parliamentary work. The *Declaration*, inspired *inter alia* by the Open





Government Partnership initiative, promotes a normative framework to serve as basis for dialogue between PMOs and parliaments to advance parliaments' and governments' openness, and ensure that this openness feeds to greater citizens' engagement, more responsive and representative institutions and ultimately more democratic societies.

Inspirational in nature, the Declaration identifies a set of principles, criteria and benchmarks to be met in terms of openness, transparency, access to information while taking into account the specific institutional, cultural and economic context of each country and each parliament's traditions, resources and capacities. The Declaration is available on line in several languages at OpeningParliament.org with a living commentary and background notes that provide support and share good practices by parliaments.

Mr. Mandelbaum briefly presented the first section of the Declaration titled "Promoting a Culture of Openness" developed around the principle that parliamentary information belongs to the public and that citizens should be able to reuse it or republish it with very limited legal restrictions. Parliaments should enact measures to ensure inclusive citizen participation and effective parliamentary

monitoring, promote citizen understanding of parliamentary functioning as well as work collaboratively with PMOs and citizens to ensure that parliamentary information is complete, accurate, and timely.

The second and third sections of the *Declaration* were presented by the next panelist, **Ms. María Baron**, co-Coordinator of the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency and Executive Director of the Foundation *Directorio Legislativo*.

She described the two main principles expressed by the second chapter of the Declaration titled "Making Parliamentary Information Transparent". The first one is that parliaments shall adopt policies to promote transparency. The second is that parliaments shall ensure the publication of three types of information, namely: 1) the backgrounds, public and private activities and affairs of members; 2) the management and administration of parliament and parliamentary staff, including budget information; 3) the legislative process, including all documents generated, text of laws and amendments, votes, calendar, records of plenary and committee sittings etc.

The third chapter of the Declaration titled "Easing Access to Parliamentary Information", Ms. Baron explained, is about how parliaments should facilitate access to parliamentary information. This should be done through several channels including by giving access to media, through live streaming, by facilitating physical access to the parliament's premises, by making parliamentary information available in multiple national and working languages, including dialects, and free of charge.

Ms. Baron concluded her presentation by briefing the audience on the work done by the *Directorio Legislativo*. Based in Argentina, the *Directorio Legislativo* collects

information about members of parliament of the country since 1999 through the distribution of a questionnaire to members. This information is systematized in a publication released every two years when elections are held, and on the Web through a dedicated platform named *Salesforce*.

She then provided examples of similar work done by other organizations that are part of the Latin America Network for Legislative Transparency in other countries of Latin America such as Colombia, Mexico, and Peru.

Mr. John Wonderlich, Policy Director of the Sunlight Foundation, United States, presented the fourth and last section of the *Declaration*, on “Enabling Electronic Communication of Parliamentary Information”.

He stressed first of all how not only is technology reinventing the way parliaments work, but it is also reinventing the way parliaments can interact with citizens and the way NGOs and citizens can work along with parliaments. Technology changed the expectations of citizens as well as the way monitoring organizations can play their role. He highlighted that the *Declaration* recommends that parliamentary information shall be released online, using the full range of technology tools, and in open formats that allow citizens to analyze and reuse it.

He then briefed the audience on the work of the Sunlight Foundation to advocate and promote a more transparent Congress, including encouraging the use of social media by members of parliament. The Sunlight Foundation has a strong team of technologists that works on creating tools that strengthen the ability of citizens to access and retrieve information. Mr. Wonderlich mentioned for example the creation of databases of all bills and

legislation, enriched with strong search capabilities. The Foundation also carries out investigative journalism, focusing on the use of money in politics.

The next speaker of the session was **Ms. Marwa Abou Daya**, Executive Board Member, Nahwa Al-Muwatiniya (Towards Citizenship).

Nahwa Al-Muwatiniya is a Lebanese non-profit organization created in 2007. In the absence of an access to information law in Lebanon - a multilingual and multireligious country highly politicized, where media are owned by the different political parties - there was a need to create a platform that could strengthen transparency and encourage participation by providing citizens with direct access to objective parliamentary information.

The organization provides information on individual profiles of members of parliament and monitors in particular their activity on policy development, policy proposals and policy reform. It also monitors the policy development timeline by informing about how much time it takes for a proposed legislation to be discussed, and provides data regarding proposals and actions of political parties. Citizens are given the possibility to



generate reports and compare the work of the different political parties and members of parliament.

The organization plays a particular role ahead of political election, when the information it provides regarding the ending parliamentary term can help citizens to make more informed decisions. Nahwa Al-Muwatiniya also supports civil society organizations in their campaigns for political reforms.

Ms. Abou Dayya underlined the importance of collaboration and networking between PMOs around the world to achieve common goals.



The following panelist of the session was **Ms. Aline Pennisi**, Vice President of the OpenPolis Association. She presented the work of the Italian public platform active since 2008 on providing searchable data on the parliament, which counts today a large community of registered members.

Open Polis develops tools to make public data and information already provided by the Italian chambers more accessible, searchable and easier to understand so to promote awareness and citizens participation. By creating links and elaborating

available data the Open Polis' web platform "Open Parlamento" generates added value compared to the original source of information. In addition to providing information to citizens, Open Polis encourages them to participate actively in the activity of the Parliament. Ms. Pennisi underlined how the analysis provided by Open Polis is often used by the press when examining the work of the Parliament.

The tools developed by Open Parlamento allow following step by step the activity of a given member of parliament or a legislative act. Citizens and members of parliament are instantly updated on topics of their interest and are given the possibility to express their opinions on proposals or decisions taken by the Parliament.

Ms. Pennisi acknowledged that the work of Open Polis is made possible by the growing amount of information – in terms of quantity and quality – that is being made available on the websites of the Italian chambers. A crucial role is also played by the work of a dedicated group of people who decided to experiment a new paradigm in the relation between members and citizens by applying the technologies made available by the Internet in an innovative way.

She underlined the beneficial collaboration that can take place in this context between the civil society and the open data/ open source community to experiment new ways of promoting transparency and communication.

Ms. Pennisi said that the websites of the Italian Chambers, although rich and informative, could still be improved in terms of openness, completeness and timeliness of data, and she expressed the opinion that a reform of the Rules of the two Chambers should take place in order to meet the principle of full transparency set in the

Declaration. Ms. Pennisi noted that the *Declaration* and its principles are applicable not only at the level of national legislative bodies but also at other different governing levels, for example municipalities, and she mentioned in this context the ongoing Italian project “Open Municipio”.

The following panelist was **Ms. Anna Scisłowska**, Project Coordinator of Association 61, a Polish independent and non-governmental organization promoting transparency in public life and civic participation through the web service “I have the right to know”.

The Association provides information about candidates for public offices and their professional experience, electoral statements, positions regarding policy issues, and informs about the effective voting decisions and activities carried out during their subsequent term in office.

The Association meets this objective by publishing and providing access to raw parliamentary data as well as data coming from surveys and analysis of collected data, resulting in reliable, synthesized information and research products.

Ms. Scisłowska underlined that the level of accomplishment of the principles set by the *Declaration* is overall positive in Poland, and that the parliamentary websites meet a number of criteria set in it; she also mentioned the good cooperation between the Association and the Polish Parliament, whose IT department provide the Association with the XML format of the publicly available data. However the level of availability of information still has to be improved, with specific regard to financial information, and recordings to Committee meetings of the parliament. She concluded her presentation stressing that the primary role of providing data and information must



be played by parliaments, and that surveys make it clear how, for example in Poland, citizens mostly expect the official institutional websites to provide information that can be considered reliable. The institutions must therefore satisfy these expectations by improving their level of transparency and the quality of published data, while the role of monitoring organization should mainly be of providing further analysis and add value to the data and information provided by the legislative bodies.

The last panelist of the session was **Mr. Gregor Hackmack**, co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of ParliamentWatch.org, Germany, existing since 2004.

The organization runs a website where German citizens can find information about their representatives in the Federal Parliament as well as in the European Parliament and a good number of state parliaments and municipalities.

The platform also allows citizens to ask questions to their representatives and receive public online answers. ParliamentWatch acts as an impartial moderator of the platform (the only filter is against privacy violation and explicit insults) and the result of this process is a tremendous engaging dialogue between citizens and politicians, counting over 130.000 questions and 110.000 answers published so far.

The project counts on the participation of

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about 90 per cent of politicians who feel that they are gaining citizens' trust through this dialogue. A good number of first time voters or pre-voting age citizens have also been active in the platform.

ParliamentWatch.org partners with projects in Austria, Luxembourg, Ireland and recently Tunisia, and hopes to broaden its field of action in other regions or countries.

The session ended with a lively discussion where members of parliament coming from different regions of the world expressed their appreciation for the work done by the PMOs and for the role they play to strengthen openness, transparency and democracy. It was stated that transparency and disclosure

of information are crucial but there is a strong need to go beyond this, towards a real participation of citizens, whose engagement and collaboration in the legislative process can help to improve the quality of the legislation itself. It was stressed that PMOs have to be seen as partners both by legislatures and by civil society. Finally, it was underlined how PMOs can help politics and politicians regain trust by making available information on the good work that many members of parliament carry out on a wide range of issues. Their work is often not highlighted by traditional media, which focus instead on the activity of more famous political leaders.



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The impact of technology on parliamentary openness and accountability

This session, chaired by **Ms. Jennifer Simons**, Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname, discussed the impact of technology on parliaments and on society, and its use as a means to increase citizens' participation in the political debate, as well as to support the commitment of parliaments to greater openness, transparency and accountability.

Mr. Antonio Palmieri, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, shared with the audience his experience in using technology. Mr. Palmieri is active online since 1994 when he became responsible for Internet communication within his party. When he was elected member of parliament in 2001 he created his personal website to be accountable to citizens for his daily activity. He was the first parliamentarian in Italy to use Twitter in 2007. He also communicates with his constituency through Facebook, You Tube and Google Plus.

Mr. Palmieri highlighted that new communication technologies today play a key role in promoting transparency. He expressed his conviction that Internet can revive the relationship between politicians and citizens by providing them with a space for a continued dialogue and exchange. Although Internet is considered to be a cheap means of communication, Mr. Palmieri observed, it is actually very expensive as its use requires time, which is a non-replaceable resource.

Mr. Palmieri stressed that the interaction

between politicians and citizens through e-mail, Facebook or Twitter is very demanding but also very effective in enhancing transparency. He highlighted the importance of publishing online the agenda of members of parliament, thus informing citizens and soliciting their views and suggestions on specific issues. He underlined that members of parliament need to find the right balance between privacy and the need for transparency when it comes to publishing personal information online.

The speaker concluded by stating that the online relationship between politicians and citizens cannot replace their personal relationship but it offers the politician an extraordinary opportunity to be closer to the electorate.



Mr. Juan José Lucas Giménez, 1st Vice President of the Senate of Spain, stressed at the outset that the growing lack of confidence of citizens towards the politicians and the political parties clearly shows a significant crisis of political representation.

He pointed out that many factors have influenced the exercise of political representation over the years including the role of political parties and the introduction of ICT and Internet. Mr. Giménez acknowledged that political parties have made efforts to keep contact with citizens. These efforts, however, did not produce the expected results and politicians are seen by citizens as belonging to a privileged class. ICT and the Internet, he noted, facilitate direct contact between politicians and citizens and are used by both respectively to conduct the electoral campaign and to influence the decision making process.

He emphasized the increasing role of social networks over the past five years and stated that public institutions have been adapting themselves to this new reality.



He mentioned the “Recommendation on electronic democracy (e-democracy)” of the Council of Europe adopted by the Committee of Ministers in February 2009, which highlights the role of citizens’ participation as a means to improve and legitimate the exercise of power. The Recommendation states that “e-democracy is an opportunity for enabling and facilitating the provision of information and deliberation, enhancing civic participation in order to broaden political debate, and fostering better and more legitimate political decisions”.

Mr. Giménez then identified two ways in which ICT is used in parliaments. The first one is to enhance internal processes and make parliamentary administrations more efficient and effective. Examples of this use are databases and electronic voting systems. The second one is the use of ICT to be closer to citizens by enhancing the availability of relevant information and facilitating interaction and participation. In this regard he highlighted four different phases of the use of ICT by parliaments to interact with citizens: 1. *Information* (unidirectional distribution of static and not always updated information); 2. *Communication* (provision of information that is updated and understandable by everyone); 3. *Interaction* (possibility of interaction through different tools and services); 4. *Participation* (engagement of citizens in the decision making process). Mr. Giménez pointed out that the *World e-Parliament Report 2010* offers a comprehensive analysis of these phases.

Mr. Giménez made an overview of the new website of the Senate of Spain which was built in line with the 2009 IPU *Guidelines of Parliamentary Websites*. The homepage offers functionalities such as access in different languages, a “frequently asked questions” session, a general search engine,

accessibility standards and the map of the website. The website also provides access to the calendar of activities and to the approved legislation, a page for young people, a virtual tour of the Senate and access to the audiovisual archive.

Mr. Giménez explained that the Senate of Spain also introduced a webpage with tools that allow citizens to interact with the institution. He pointed out, however, that these tools do not go beyond the possibility of formulating suggestions and do not allow citizens to contribute directly to the lawmaking process. The cautious implementation of participatory tools by the Senate, Mr. Giménez explained, is due some questions that remain unanswered. The first one is whether Internet users should be given more representativeness than what they actually have taking into account the discrimination posed by the digital divide; the second one is whether those who are most active online hold less moderate positions as some studies have highlighted.

Mr. Giménez concluded that parliaments cannot ignore new technologies and their use to connect with citizens but they have to evaluate whether the use of these platforms can have any political repercussion.

Mr. Chifumu Banda, Deputy Chairperson of Committees of the National Assembly of Zambia, observed that the recent past has seen a number of parliaments in developing countries exploiting the advances of ICT to support their constitutional functions and reach out to the electorate.

After noting that the application of ICT allows quantitative and qualitative improvements in the way parliaments work, Mr. Banda described how ICT can support parliaments' legislative, representative and



oversight functions. By providing easier and efficient access to a wide range of information and knowledge resources ICT allow members of parliament to make informed decisions and be aware of issues important to their constituencies. ICT can also provide the public with effective means to express its views and concerns. In addition they facilitate more effective communication among parliament, government agencies, civil society organizations and the public. With regard to the oversight function ICT can provide effective means for citizens to post their complaints and concerns online.

Mr. Banda gave an overview of the use of ICT by the National Assembly of Zambia. Under its reform programme, aimed at bringing parliament closer to people, the National Assembly has embraced various technologies to perform its core functions. E-mail has improved communication and Internet has increased the knowledge base of the research section of the Assembly. The website, built in 2000, provides information

to the public and access to vital parliamentary information including daily transcripts of debates, order papers, bills and acts of Parliament, profiles of members, events of the Assembly and committee meetings schedule.

Mr. Banda reported that the National Assembly is using radio to broadcast live parliamentary debates, thus allowing people who live in remote and rural areas to follow the business of the parliament. Live parliamentary debates are also rebroadcast in a cheaper way through radio streaming using the Internet. Other innovations introduced by the Assembly are an electronic voting system and an electronic register of bills that allows easy access to information.

In his conclusion, Mr. Banda underlined that like any other parliament in developing countries the National Assembly rests with the challenge of acquiring appropriate

technology due to the lack of adequate resources. As a result, the Assembly has not yet reached the stage where members of parliament and staff are making full use of ICT.

During the discussion participants took the floor to share the experience of their own parliaments in using ICT to reach out to the public. They highlighted that ICT facilitate strong communication between members and citizens. They noted that ICT and new media have changed the way information is gathered, stored and processed. Participants urged the use of ICT to meet the expectations of citizens who have become more demanding with regard to openness and accountability. Representatives from developing countries highlighted that parliaments often lack the means and resources to make use of technology and stressed the importance of inter-parliamentary cooperation.



The challenges of today's participatory media for parliaments and legislators

This session, chaired by **Mr. Abdelouahed El Ansari**, Vice President of the House of Representatives of Morocco, addressed both the opportunities and the challenges that the phenomenal development of social media in recent years is offering to legislatures and members of parliaments to gain public trust and support their representative functions.

Mr. Cedrick Frolick, House Chairperson of the National Assembly of South Africa, underlined the crucial role of participatory media in the promotion of dialogue and interaction between citizens and elected representatives. He observed, however, that participatory media cannot replace the critical need for elected representatives to directly interact with citizens through public hearings. He also stressed the importance of bridging the digital divide to make sure that people living in rural areas as well as people with little computer literacy participate in the lawmaking process.

Mr. Frolick reported that a dedicated team of parliamentary staff constantly monitors the use of social media by the Parliament of South Africa. Members of parliament make use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and stimulate the debate by posting topics on the website or responding to the opinions expressed by the public.

Among the challenges posed by the use of social media by the Parliament of South Africa Mr. Frolick identified the following:

a) responding promptly to citizen's inquires; b) improving the website's usability and avoiding that the information published become outdated; c) controlling the risk that inappropriate information can have on the political scene; d) improving broadband speed and computer literacy; e) differentiating

between strong lobby groups with international appeal and local citizens when interacting on the website; f) improving protection and online security; and g) using different media to ensure responsiveness through the contact with the whole electorate.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood, Chairman of the Information

Committee of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom, gave an overview of how the use of mobile devices has changed the way members of parliament stimulate their debates.

Mr. Kirkwood observed that the major challenge for the House of Lords is changing the mindset in the technological approach, which is more demanding and takes more time than technological change itself. In this regard, Mr. Kirkwood underlined the need to share best practices and experiences with other legislatures to make progress together. The speaker also noted that the Information Committee should keep pace with the changes brought about by modern life while respecting traditions.

Mr. Kirkwood stated that the House of Lords' Information Committee published a report, titled "Are the Lords listening? Creating connections between people and Parliament", on how the House of Lords and Parliament as a whole can engage with the public and enable the public to



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communicate with it. The report, which has to be updated regularly to follow the quick evolution of technology, illustrates both the opportunities and the threats of participatory media.

Mr. Kirkwood provided an overview of the main achievements of the House

of Lords in the use of new technologies. Parliamentary proceedings are made available in several formats, including in video format on YouTube. Open Standards such as XML are used to make parliamentary proceedings easily available and reusable. Applications for mobile technologies are made available to members of parliament who bring their own devices to the plenary.

The speaker concluded by identifying the main challenges faced by the House of Lords in making use of participatory media, which include: 1. reaching the apathetic; 2. making participation meaningful whilst respecting representative democratic traditions; 3. providing accessible information; 4. respecting the resulting scrutiny; 5. reaching the digitally excluded and 6. managing the digital security risks.

Ms. Eriko Yamatani, Member of the House of Councillors of Japan, introduced her presentation by describing how Internet is used in the political sphere in Japan.

All plenary sessions of the Diet and almost all committee meetings in both Houses can be viewed live on the web or on demand streaming, and all the debates and information on the outcome of deliberations are posted on the website built according to the IPU Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites. More than 90% of Diet members are disseminating information on their legislative activity through websites and blogs.

An estimated 20% make use of participatory media. However, Ms. Yamatani observed that policymaking using participatory media is uncommon in Japan because of the digital divide among voters and the lack of experience in building consensus via the Internet. Society in Japan believes that it is difficult to conduct a balanced discussion on the Internet and “experts ought to play a leading role in policymaking”.

Ms. Yamatani reported that nevertheless in 2010 the Japanese government conducted an experiment over a 10 month period aimed to stimulate political dialogue in the area of education using electronic bulletin boards. 2.400 people participated sharing 14.000 opinions and dialogues on 13 themes. The discussion was joined by many young people and researchers bringing wisdom and ideas that would not have been developed by a conventional policymaking body composed of experts. Some results of dialogue were reflected in relevant laws and national budget. A close and interactive relation with the existing policy consulting body of experts and citizens was built, and the support by government policy makers was provided.

Ms. Yamatani concluded her presentation by highlighting three main issues that have to be considered when using participatory media: 1. establishing a mechanism to secure the effectiveness and impartiality of policymaking; 2. setting themes suitable for policymaking; and 3. the digital divide.

Mr. Ramón Farías Ponce, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile,



highlighted that ICT are redefining social relations by reducing distances among people and between countries. By offering new channels of communications and facilitating citizens' participation in political life ICT are able to revitalize representative democracies.

He mentioned a few examples of successful uses of ICT in Chile aimed to increase efficiency of public administration, such as the possibility of getting certificates or paying taxes through Internet.

Regarding the use of Internet by the Congress of Chile, Mr. Farías called the attention of the audience on the programme *Democracia en Vivo* (www.democraciaenvivo.cl), which allows citizens to follow the discussion of bills during the parliamentary sessions and to express live their views to the members. Citizens communicate directly with their representatives and obtain immediate answers to their concerns.

The speaker stated that participatory media are powerful tools of political change which can reinforce the communication between society and political authorities, and enhance political participation. ICT can promote transparency by giving easier access to information and improving its quality. This results in strengthened confidence between the Parliament and the citizens. Mr. Farías stressed, however, that new technologies do not replace traditional channels of parliamentary communication but rather complement them.

The big challenge, Mr. Farías observed, is to create platforms aimed to increase transparency, oversight and citizens' participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies. He noted that a variety of tools exists that can be helpful in this regard such as web blogs, parliamentary TV and radio programmes, e-consultation



and e-petition mechanisms, online surveys, online group discussions and forums. Members' personal websites also contribute to increasing the connection with citizens through web cameras, blogs and social media. As an example Mr. Farías stated that through his own website, once a week, he discusses directly with the public different issues.

The speaker underlined that through new participatory media communication between members and citizens is moving from unidirectional to bidirectional forms, and members of parliament should use these powerful tools to encourage citizens' participation in politics and to overcome the crisis of representation. This will not be possible, however, if there is a lack of political will to give real power to citizens and build a concrete participatory democracy.

During the discussion, participants underlined the crucial role of participatory media in the Arab Spring, stressing that participatory media must be part of wider communication programmes in order to avoid the exclusion of citizens who do not have access to them. The lack of Internet access and the lack of IT skills were identified as main challenges for developing countries. Participants stressed the importance of creating mechanisms using participatory media for policy-making based on collaboration with experts.

Innovations in parliamentary communications

This session focused on current innovations in parliamentary communications, providing an overview of best practices and successful applications, challenges, and policy and management options. The chair, **Ms. Audrey O'Brien**, Clerk, House of Commons of Canada, opened the session by highlighting the closeness of the question of communication with the question of collaboration.

Mr. Hayono Isman, Vice-Chairman of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation of the House of Representatives of Indonesia, offered his views on the use of new communication technologies in the Parliament of Indonesia. He highlighted the astonishing and rapid development of ICT over the past two years and reported that according to a recent survey Indonesia is the sixth biggest Twitter user and the second largest Facebook user in the world.

Mr. Isman stressed that the basis for the development of ICT in Indonesia is the 2008 Freedom of Information Law. Since then, the

ICT use in the Parliament has grown systematically. The Parliament's website currently provides a vast amount of information including bills, laws, plenary and committee sessions' agendas, members of parliament's profiles and live video streaming of parliamentary sessions. The Parliament has also built a public information service centre and an online e-procurement system for the provision of goods and services for the parliament's administration.

Mr. Isman observed that the real challenge with ICT is not the mere development of infrastructure and software but rather how ICT can be used effectively to engage citizens in the public policymaking process and provide them with full access to parliamentary information and data. The use of ICT to this purpose was defined by Mr. Isman as "Democratic Legislative Technology".

The speaker reported that the Parliament of Indonesia is about to establish a "Caucus on Democratic Legislative Technology" in order to promote the use of ICT to strengthen its representative, oversight and legislative functions, and encouraged other parliaments to undertake similar initiatives in order to share experiences.

Mr. Stephen Clark, Head of Web Communications, European Parliament, started his presentation by highlighting that there is no choice today for parliaments but to be innovative in their communication efforts.

As a result of Internet new forms of journalism and politics have emerged and generational changes have occurred that cannot be ignored. Mr. Clark pointed out that the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are recognizing these changes and are using new technologies to communicate with





their constituents. Today, 70% of MEPs are using Facebook and 40% of them are on Twitter.

The speaker illustrated some of the innovative tools that the European Parliament is using to communicate with citizens. The Facebook page of the European Parliament, which is mainly used to get feedback from citizens about what is going on in the parliament, is approaching 400,000 fans, while the European Parliament's Twitter account has about 45,000 followers.

Mr. Clark highlighted that the communication game today has new rules and requires a change of mind set. In their communication initiatives parliaments must be reactive and mobile, and accept loss of control. They also need to take into account the possibility of failing otherwise they will never be able to be really innovative.

Highlighting the importance of building connections Mr. Clark stated that the European Parliament has a tab on its Facebook page where all MEPs having a Facebook presence are together. A tool was also built to facilitate Facebook chats in real

time between MEPs and citizens on specific subjects. In addition, a tool is being developed to give citizens the opportunity to ask a question to the members through their profile pages. Another innovative initiative is the European Parliament's newshub, a page that aggregates everything that is posted by MEPs on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Youtube, and shows the plurality and diversity of opinions within the European Parliament.

Mr. Clark concluded by acknowledging the difficulties for parliaments to reconcile the use of social media with their internal rules.

Mr. Andy Williamson, Consultant, Inter-Parliamentary Union, began by emphasizing that the process of introducing new communication tools needs to be slow and gradual.

Mr. Williamson set the context by highlighting three main aspects of social media that parliaments need to consider: 1. Social media are a new and effective way for parliaments to be closer to the public; 2. they are subject to rules and norms that govern informally the way they work; and 3. they are fast moving and dynamic spaces for networking and sharing.

Mr. Williamson described some of the pros and cons of social media. Among the positive aspects he mentioned their ability to create a huge opportunity to engage in dialogue that did not exist before and to build credibility and trust over a long period of time. Social media are also cost effective as they allow saving from documents reduction and reaching the public without the need to get in single place in a single time. They also offer a rapid communication tool which allows reducing the time to get information out.

With regard to the cons, Mr. Williamson stated that etiquette and protocols are different to



other media. He highlighted that there is a reputation risk if the user is not authentic, honest and transparent. He stressed that coming across as a real person is very hard for parliaments who need to develop a “corporate” voice. He also pointed out that social media require tailored content and observed that long reports, often produced by parliaments, cannot work with social media. Social media also pose challenges in terms of managing and moderating content. In this regard, parliaments need to consider that the formalities that exist in face-to-face communication, particularly in parliament, disappear.

Talking about their possible uses, Mr. Williamson defined social media as an information, education, outreach, and engagement resource. They facilitate the provision of information about parliamentary activities; provide easy and timely access to research and other parliamentary publications; make access to the public easier; and promote direct consultation with the public on legislation, policy and strategies. Social media can help reduce the distance between people and the institution by making it more “human”. They are also a powerful way to

connect with people who would normally not engage with parliaments.

Regarding what can be done with social media Mr. Williamson stated that first of all parliaments can track social networks and monitor where the public debate is. They can also publish content and promote educational resources or background information on legislation through the posting of relevant links. Social media give also parliaments the opportunity to engage and get involved by responding and retweeting.

Mr. Williamson identified several issues that parliaments need to consider when they decide to start using social media. It is necessary first to clarify who is going to be authorized to use them on behalf of the parliament. Legal issues such as privacy and freedom of information need to be taken into account. Other issues are how to facilitate debates and manage the flow of information, the need to envisage a crisis strategy should anything go wrong, and the importance of choosing the right social media platform.

On measuring the impact of the use of social media Mr Williamson stated that what is important to measure is: *engagement* - how diverse is the group that communicates with you; *amplification* - what is the ratio of broadcasting to participation? How likely are you to be re-tweeted or shared? *reach* - how far does your content spread across the social network?; *churn* - how many new or lost followers in the period? *sentiment* - identifying what is being said and the positivity or negativity in a debate.

Mr. Williamson concluded by emphasizing two main points: 1) good social media practice means listening, responding, asking and sharing; 2) and social media are faster and fast changing.

In the following discussion participants noted that popularity in social media does not always translate in actual votes when you are an MP candidate. Having a social media presence, however, can help a strong candidate in a close election. The importance of monitoring what is being talked about online was highlighted. Parliaments

should track the subjects relevant to them and identify opportunities. Other issues raised included the importance of using open source and inter-parliamentary cooperation. The need for guidance and technical assistance on the use of ICT to make parliaments and members of parliament closer to the public was also highlighted.



Benefits and value of open data for fostering greater transparency in legislatures

This session, chaired by **Mr. Jani Makraduli**, Vice President of the Assembly of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, provided examples of open data implementation by three parliaments.

Ms. Elena Flavia Candia, IT Department Officer, Chamber of Deputies of Italy, highlighted that open data represents both a challenge and an opportunity for parliaments to achieve transparency, interoperability and efficiency. She showed a video providing an overview of the work done by the Chamber of Deputies since 2011 when it decided to build a common repository of Linked Open Data by assembling all digital files and documents produced through different applications and systems in a common data structure.

First of all a general ontology was created in the W3C standard ontology web language describing the entire information domain of the Chamber of Deputies and giving a complete overview of how it is organized. The ontology included legislature, members of parliament, parliamentary bodies, committees and parliamentary acts.

Data were then collected in a new website based on a semantic “facet” browsing interface and organized according to multiple thematic timelines. In the meantime a publishing platform (dati.camera.it), through which all linked open data are released under Creative Common Licence, was made available online. Datasets of 48 legislatures are downloadable from this platform and searchable through SPARQL query language.



The adoption of the Linked Open Data system provides an opportunity to uniform data from different sources. By enabling re-use and analysis of the published data the system represents a main step toward making the Institution more transparent. It also makes the Chamber of Deputies a part of the Linked Open Data cloud.

Although the Linked Open Data system originated within the semantic web to reach the external community, its adoption in Intranet has the advantage to increase internal efficiency, reduce costs and improve the internal information sharing process. Following this approach, the Chamber of Deputies developed an Open Documentation Management System designed for internal activities named *Open Platforms for Documents* (PAD). The system, entirely developed by Open Source technologies and components, acquires automatically information from different and heterogeneous sources, converts it in RDF and registers it in the Linked Open Data repository.

PAD allows introducing notes and comments to every topic in the repository, and supports the shared editing of contents and the production of complex documents by the mash-up of single parts supplied by the repository. It also offers advanced services of web editing fully integrated with word processing and a multichannel distribution of PDF, RDF, eBook and web documents.

Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, acknowledged the huge work done by the Chamber to make its data available and to link it to other public institutions' data. He observed that today the Chamber of Deputies ranks among the first three/four national institutions for the quantity of datasets published per year.

Mr. Gentiloni noted that from the citizen's point of view it is critical that data is made available by all public institutions. The current Government in Italy is making an effort in this direction through the adoption of a decree promoting good practices on open data. One example is considering open data as a key benchmark to assess the performance of public institutions' managers. Mr. Gentiloni highlighted the need to increase integration and linkages among public institutions both at the national and European level. He stated that one of the objectives of the European Commission is the establishment by 2015 of a European portal containing a vast amount of data of the institutions of the European Union members.

Observing that over the past 10 years public trust in parliament has decreased, Mr. Gentiloni stressed that transparency can help parliaments regain their authority. It is however necessary that an effort in this direction is made not only by parliaments as institutions but also by the single members of parliament and the political parties.

Mr. Rogério Ventura Teixeira, Director General, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, presented the experience of Chamber of Deputies on open data. Mr. Teixeira referred to the constitution of Brazil which states that publicity is a principle that must be obeyed by all organs and agents of Government and should be widely applied to embrace the entire state activity.

Mr. Teixeira highlighted that the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil has been a pioneer among the Brazilian public institutions in disclosing its data. In 2006 it was one of the first public institutions to provide open format information on deputies, their parties, legislative bills, parliamentary speeches, federal budget, agenda of plenary sittings



and committees meetings, voting etc.

Even before the theme of open data received international attention the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil was making available data and information in open data format to government agencies, trade associations, NGOs, to allow them to follow the processing of bills and proposals. Now the data is open to all citizens.

Mr. Teixeira explained that the principles that guide the vision to open data in the Brazilian public sector are lined up with the global vision adopted by W3C. These principles are: a) *complete* - available to everyone; b) *primary* - data should be raw, collected from the source; c) *current* - available in real time; d) *accessible* - to the largest number of users; e) *non-discriminatory* - accessible by all.

Mr. Teixeira outlined the activities carried out by the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil in the area of open standards in the past years. In 2009 the Chamber of Deputies worked with the Senate in the project LexML Brazil

aimed at making legislation available in a standardized and structured format and facilitating the maintenance, use and quick search of the Brazilian laws. Today all Brazilian legislation is being converted into the XML standard.

In December 2011 the Chamber of Deputies launched the open data project, which represented an important moment to strengthen the Chamber's commitment to transparency and the right of citizens to access information.

The year 2012 represented a milestone with the entry into force of the *Access to Information Law* which guarantees the right by all citizens to obtain any information (both legislative and administrative) produced by public agencies in raw open machine-readable format in order to allow its re-use. With this new law the demand for free access to government and parliament information in open format has become a fundamental condition to public transparency. In June 2012 the Chamber of Deputies also hosted the regional workshop "Connected Parliaments - Introduction to Legislative XML", organized in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament with the support of the Exchange Network of Parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean (ENPLAC).

Mr. Teixeira explained that today several types of open data are available on the website of the Chamber of Deputies. These include the list of deputies on duty, the list of leaders and vice leaders by political party, the list of positions in the governing Board and in the administrative bodies, the list of all bills in course, the list of voting and daily agendas of plenary sittings and committee meetings. More recently data on the parliamentary budget, the list of expenses and

contracted suppliers has also been made available. Mr. Teixeira reported that the data is being analyzed and re-used by several organizations and universities which are generating reports and statistics on parliamentary data.

All these efforts of the Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Teixeira highlighted, are generating benefits for the improvement of the administrative and legislative activities, and the enhancement of social participation. They are producing not only more transparency but also better interaction between the parliament and society. By recognizing that still much needs to be done he concluded that the Chamber of Deputies will continue to keep up with the latest developments in this area.

Mr. Robert Reeves, Deputy Clerk, House of Representatives of the United States of America, gave a definition of open data as “all forms of data that are made accessible to the public”. He then provided an overview of the main projects carried out by the House of Representatives in the area of open data in the past years.

More than two years ago the House of Representatives launched *HouseLive.gov* which offers live and on-demand video access to the Floor proceedings of the House. Users can search the videos by keyword or date and download them for no cost. A few months after its launch, *HouseLive.gov* was enhanced through an improved video player.

In May 2011 the House developed *Live and Archive video clipping*, a tool that allows members of parliament and staff to clip out the videos that they want to display, download them to their desktop and put them up on their websites for viewing by the public.

In October 2011 the House rolled out a mobile version of *HouseLive.gov*, which allows live streaming of the parliamentary sessions on mobile devices. During the same month, a webpage was created, named Floor summary, providing a high level summary of all actions occurring on the Floor such as recent votes or bills passed. The page was provided the XML download.

As part of the *House meetings series* in December 2011 the House of Representatives hosted a public discussion on how to use technology to make the legislative branch more open, transparent, and accessible. The event, bringing together developers, third party organizations, civil society groups and staff, addressed issues such as how to respond to citizens’ e-mail or make data available.

In January 2012 the House launched *Docs. House.Gov*, which provides a central repository of all bills to be considered on the House Floor. Mr. Reeves reported that the House will launch soon phase 2 of *Doc.House.gov*



by which Committee Documents, initially available in PDF format, will be added to the central repository.

In February 2012 the House held its second event as part of the *House meetings series*. The meeting brought together the leadership of the House, representatives of the legislative branch, parliamentary monitoring organizations to discuss the theme of legislative data and transparency. During the same month the House, in collaboration with the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, organized the international meeting *Achieving greater transparency in legislatures through the use of open document standards*. The meeting aimed at advancing the policy dialogue and the technical exchanges among parliaments that are currently using XML. One of the outcomes of the meeting was the establishment of a Working Group on open standards.

In June 2012 the House launched the project *Embedded video player* which provides live streaming of sessions to members and their staff. During the same month, the Speaker's Office established the *Bulk Data Task Force* to address bulk data questions and issues following the publication of a report accompanying the Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill passed by the House.

Mr. Reeves reported that in October 2012 the House would roll out *Video Speaker search* which will allow the public to go on to *HouseLive.gov* and search the House Floor video of a specific speaker on a given

day. It will also provide the link to the text of the speech.

The House is also working on making available the periodic transaction reports of members of parliament containing information on their stock transactions, as required by the *Stock Act*, recently passed by the House.

The last project mentioned by Mr. Reeves was *Congress.gov*, the new version of the website of the Library of Congress *THOMAS.gov* to be launched in September 2012. It will offer new features, a new integrated search and the XML versions of bill texts.

During the discussion one of the concerns raised was that several parliaments are investing in proprietary systems for the development of their new platforms such as tablets and smart phones instead of looking at open alternatives. It was commented that parliaments may decide to opt for proprietary systems because the adoption of open architectures requires the development of internal expertise. It was noted that parliaments in Africa face many challenges when it comes to transparency such as language barriers, lack of Internet access and illiteracy. It was also noted that in several countries in Africa there is no real parliamentary tradition and most of the laws are not posted on the parliament's website. The importance of public opinion pressure was indicated as one possible way to ensure that the government makes the laws available to the parliament and the general public.

ICT strategic Planning in Parliament: doing more with less

This session offered a picture of strategic planning and management of ICT in three legislatures. The chair of the session, **Mr. Dick Toornstra**, Director of the Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy, European Parliament, highlighted that ICT strategic planning is not about ICT per se but about the strategic development of the Parliament. He stressed that ICT should be incorporated as a strategic element in the work of the parliament and observed that one common challenge faced by parliaments around the world is the need to reconcile the few financial resources available with the growing expectations of both members of parliament and citizens.

Ms. Antonieta Teixeira, Director of the IT Department, Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, gave a presentation on the work done by the IT Department to improve the quality of its services while reducing costs.

Ms. Teixeira gave first an overview of the IT services of the Parliament. The Assembly of the Republic has more than 1000 users and 1200 computers. Each member of parliament is provided with one laptop with Internet access, two virtual desktops (one in the office and one in the assembly hall) and one smart phone. Among the facilities available to the members are video conferencing tools and remote access.

Ms. Teixeira stated that the vision of the Assembly is to reach excellence in delivering IT services and supporting parliamentary activities, at highly controlled costs. The mission is to promote the dematerialization of processes in order to improve the quality of service provided to the members and the information available to the citizens in order to stimulate their participation in politics.

The speaker identified six main objectives of the IT Department: 1. increase members' access to information; 2. provide support to users; 3. dematerialize processes; 4. improve quality services; 5. reinforce security; and 6. reduce costs. She then provided an overview of the main activities undertaken to achieve these objectives.

To improve members' access to information the Assembly developed a portal for members providing them with all the information they need for their daily work. Other solutions provided were stronger Intranet and Internet systems, access to Internet through mobility devices and a plenary information system. The Assembly also developed a Newsletter to promote its IT solutions.

Support to users was provided through a help desk improved in quality and quantity, remote assistance and written instructions to help users solve issues on their own to the extent possible.



The dematerialization processes began several years ago and since then it was extended to many administrative processes. A number of applications were developed to dematerialize written questions to the Executive and state budget procedures. A digital signature system was also implemented.

The quality of services was improved by, among others, setting up a welcome reception for new members, increasing the bandwidth for Internet, scheduling meetings by SMS, and sending and receiving faxes and voice messages through the e-mail system.

Security was strengthened by reinforcing Internet connection at the end of 2012, providing all members of parliament with digital signature to exchange information quickly and securely, and implementing an auditing system.

Reduction of costs was achieved by unifying the infrastructure of parliamentary groups thus reducing servers and licence costs. The main contracts were renegotiated and hardware investments and software acquisition costs were reduced. The Assembly also switched from locally installed applications to web based applications. The number of printers was drastically reduced and the use of video conferences helped reduce travel costs.

At the end of her presentation Ms. Teixeira outlined some of the main ongoing projects. These include: exploring a cross side engine to simplify research to increase access to information, create a FAQ page to provide further support to users, developing a fully dematerialized legislative procedure, adopting a monitoring system to track solutions provided to improve quality of services, continuing to develop open source desktop image to pursue cost reduction, and continuing the ISO 27001 implementation

by putting to practice the laptop information encryption and new backup solutions to laptops and virtual desktops to improve security. In the near future the Assembly also intends to consider cloud computing to archive public information, and to develop a disaster recovery and a business continuity plan.

Mr. Thomas Taimu, Director of the IT Department, National Assembly of Malawi, shared the experience of the Assembly in the development of its ICT strategic plan.

In 2010, the National Assembly of Malawi launched a five-year strategic plan building on the lessons learned during the implementation of its previous strategic plan covering the period 2006-2009. The current plan has a clear vision, mission and strategic objectives outlining where Malawi wants its parliament to be in 2015. The plan's five key objectives are: 1. strengthening the institutional capacity of the Parliament; 2. improving the legislative process; 3. developing the capacity of Parliament to provide effective oversight of the Government; 4.



strengthening the leadership and representative roles of members of parliament; and 5. increasing the outreach work of the National Assembly.

Mr Taimu explained that the National Assembly, recognizing the importance of harnessing the benefits of ICT in order to realize its objectives, decided to develop an ICT strategic plan that would complement the overall strategic plan of the Parliament.

The ICT strategic plan was developed, delivered and adopted in February 2012, within the framework of the project “*Support to ICT Strategic Planning in the SADC Parliaments*”, funded by the European Union and implemented by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament and the SADC Parliamentary Forum. The plan looked at how ICT can help achieve the different strategic goals of the National Assembly and considered the existing capacity and strengths as well as the gaps and challenges.

The main objectives of the ICT strategic plan of the National Assembly of Malawi are: 1. to increase the institutional capacity by improving the use of ICT in Parliament; 2. to reinforce the legislative process management by implementing the parliamentary information system *Bungeni*²; 3. to improve library and research services through developing an integrated library automation system; 4. to speed up communication between members of parliament and Parliament Services by implementing a fast electronic messaging system; 5. to increase openness and transparency of the legislative process through publishing parliamentary proceedings; 6. to promote information dissemination and dialogue with citizen by

redesigning the Parliament website in line with the IPU Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites; 7. to improve efficiency of Human Resources services by implementing respective database management systems.

With regard to the progress made in implementing the plan Mr. Taimu reported that the redesign of the parliament website is at advanced stage and nearly completed. Upcoming activities include the implementation of *Bungeni* and a messaging system, and the use the central government Human Resources system.

Mr. Taimu highlighted that the process of developing an ICT strategic plan was made easier by a number of factors such as: 1. the existence of an overall plan of the National Assembly with a very clear vision for ICT in the parliament; 2. a highly supportive Parliament leadership; 3. a national ICT policy with a vision to promote an ICT-led Malawi; 4. and a highly motivated and dedicated ICT team.

Among the main challenges in implementing the plan Mr. Taimu identified the poor and inadequate infrastructure, the very low internet bandwidth and connectivity quality, unreliable electricity; the very small and unspecialized ICT team and inadequate ICT funding.

The Speaker concluded by pointing out the following lessons learned: strategic planning is crucial in aligning efforts and prioritizing resources to achieving an objective; internal funding of ICT in the National Assembly of Malawi is still very low requiring significant assistance from other stakeholders; ICT staff need strengthening in both numbers and skills; and much can be achieved through partnership between ICT developed parliaments and developing parliaments through exchange and study tours as well as technical assistance.

² See the technical session “*Bungeni Parliamentary Information and Legislative System: features, architecture and localization*”

Mr. Shmulik Hizkiya, Head of the Information Division, and **Oz Cohen**, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Parliament of Israel, shared with the audience how the Knesset reorganized its internal structure to make the parliament more open to the citizens.

Mr. Hizkiya stated that the Knesset adopted the concept of an Open Parliament a few years ago. It recognized that the main task to make the parliament's information more accessible to the public was the review of the parliamentary information processes. Noting the need to make a clear distinction between information policy and IT solutions, it was recognized that any IT project needs preliminary professional information policy discussions between end users and technologists. As a result of this vision a new organizational structure was set up through the establishment of the Information Division and the re-organization of the Chief Information Office (CIO).

Mr. Hizkiya described the work of the Information Division. The Division leads the Knesset's information policy and is in charge of establishing accurate methodological work processes across the entire organization. Under the leadership of the Information Division and with the professional partnership support of the CIO's office, end-users and the various information producers are engaged in the decision-making process in order to provide an integrated view of the needs of the institution.

Prior to any IT project the Information Division clarifies the informational benefits for end-users and the public, evaluates the professional needs for every IT request, implements methodological work-processes, and provides professional documents for the CIO's Office.

Mr. Oz Cohen, Deputy Chief Information Officer, described the role of the CIO Office.

The Office is in charge of defining the IT strategic priorities of the Parliament, analysing the requirements defined by the Information Division, developing appropriate IT solutions and ensuring their ongoing maintenance and support.

Mr. Cohen stressed that the main challenge of the Office over the past year was moving from outsourcing to co-sourcing. Before the re-establishment of the CIO Office the outsourcing vendor was fully in charge of setting the strategy and implementing it. With the new organizational structure the CIO Office recruited additional staff and started leading ICT activities in partnership with the Information Division.

The Speaker highlighted that a clear distinction of roles and functions was set between the Information Division and the CIO Office. The Information Division is in charge of setting the requirements and the CIO Office is responsible for delivering.

A common work plan was developed for the two entities and mechanisms of collaboration were created such as multidisciplinary working groups and forums. A joint-responsibility mechanism was established through the creation of a "2 in a box" model, according to which the responsibility for the support, operation and maintenance of each system/application is shared between two people, one from the CIO Office and one from the Information Division.

Mr. Cohen concluded by describing some of the current IT projects. The Parliament recently launched a new website which provides access to all the Knesset activities including live broadcasting of plenary and committee sessions, information on members of parliament, and raw data. Another project is the synchronized protocol which allows video-text synchronization of all parliamentary sessions, which are

available on the website for search and view by the public. Mr. Cohen then mentioned the live broadcasting of committee sessions and the Knesset facebook page, which allows the Parliament to get connected with new audiences.

During the discussion participants raised the issue of lack of electricity in many developing countries which makes it difficult to introduce ICT in parliamentary processes. The importance of identifying ways to reaching out to the public and engaging them more in the parliament's work was highlighted. The establishment of constituencies' offices and telecentres was indicated as one possible way to be closer to the citizens. With regard to the issue of paper reduction it was commented that parliamentarians are

often reluctant to work on digital documents instead of having hard copies of documents in their hands. It was highlighted that digital documents should be introduced gradually to give parliamentarians the time to get used to the new situation.

The chair closed the session by announcing two activities that the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament will carry out in 2013 in the area of ICT strategic planning: a workshop for parliaments of Latin America and a Handbook on ICT strategic planning.



Tools and technologies for meeting mobility requirements

This session, chaired by **Ms. Carol Mills**, Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services, Parliament of Australia, offered a picture of mobile services and cloud computing in three parliaments.

Mr. Koo Heekwon, Vice Secretary General, National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, stated that the National Assembly is strongly committed to becoming a people-centered advanced institution which makes every effort to communicate to the public and stay relevant to the daily needs of the people. He explained that today the National Assembly is in the process of building a *Smart Parliament*, with the objective of strengthening parliamentary openness and accountability. The Smart Parliament, which makes use of cutting-edge innovation technology, is made of two components: Open Parliament and Mobile Parliament.

Mr. Koo presented the four most relevant services among the twenty public services currently run by the National Assembly under the banner of Open Parliament: 1. The Bill Information System; 2. The Electronic Minutes System; 3. The Legislation Notice System; 4. The Customized Information System.

The Bill Information System is the database of all bills, motions and resolutions discussed at the National Assembly. It provides the public with access to information regarding the entire legislation process from the introduction and consideration of bills to their transmission to the Government.

The Electronic Minutes System provides a database of all parliamentary meetings. Electronic minutes are available on the intranet as an unedited version the following day and on the website as an edited version

3 days later. The Video on Demand system provides VOD content for all National Assembly meetings, including plenary and committee sittings. Members can download the video clips they are interested in and use them in their activities.

The Legislation Notice System disseminates information about bills to be discussed by standing committees to seek public input and comment. The system allows citizens to participate in the legislative process by presenting their views and concerns. The comments are collected and organized by the committees' staffers who will report to the Committees during their deliberations. Mr. Koo reported that more than 17,000 comments were posted on 44 legislative bills over a 2-month period.

The Customized Information System helps registered users to track bills of interest through the e-mailing service. Registered users can have relevant information delivered to their e-mail account throughout the entire legislation process.



Mr. Koo then presented the mobile applications delivered by the National Assembly. The project Mobile Parliament was launched in 2011 following the development of mobile technology and the increasing penetration of smart devices. Currently the components of the project are the mobile website and six mobile applications.

The *National Assembly application* is an integrated application allowing easy access to all mobile application services delivered by the National Assembly of Korea. The *Proceedings Broadcasting application* provides the live and on-demand content of plenary and committee meetings, hearings, and press conferences in 22 channels. The *TV application* allows users to watch the live and on-demand content of the National Assembly Television and check out the latest news. The *Members Plaza application* offers detailed information on members and their legislative activities. The *Tour application* allows users to reserve and confirm guided tours and take the virtual tour of the main facilities. Finally, the *Journal application* allows users to read monthly magazines covering parliamentary activities in webzine or eBook format.

By noting that e-parliament will continue to evolve to keep up with the fast development of ICT Mr. Koo stated that parliaments cannot afford to stand still. He highlighted that the rapid adoption of mobile devices is driving the demand for ubiquitous parliamentary information services which need to be smarter to meet the higher expectations of the public. Mr. Koo expressed confidence that opening all procedures to the public and inviting people to provide inputs on the legislative process will lead to deeper trust and confidence in the legislative bodies and to stronger public engagement in parliamentary activities.

The speaker concluded by highlighting that the global community of parliaments can contribute to the promotion of parliamentary democracy by sharing experiences on e-parliament and working together to advance it.

Ms. Joan Miller, Director of Parliamentary ICT, Parliament of the United Kingdom, presented the experience of the Parliament of the United Kingdom in cloud services.

She pointed out that when she joined the Parliament of the United Kingdom in 2005 reading electronic papers was unimaginable in the chambers or committees, IT was controlled and locked down and everything was managed in-house. The main objective in 2005 was to attain best practice in delivery, support and exploitation of ICT in Parliament. In this regard, Ms. Miller stressed that the Parliament of the United Kingdom learned a lot from parliaments around the world, in particular at previous World e-Parliament Conferences.

Ms. Miller stressed that in 2012 the ICT culture looks very different. Following the broad diffusion of mobile devices to communicate and provide information, which has changed the way IT services are delivered, the Parliament of the United Kingdom started rethinking its main objective in the IT area. The Parliament looked first at the different users of its IT products, considered what the cost of the current IT was, what was available in the market and what the organizational readiness and the human resources and staff development were.



Special consideration was given to which IT services had to be managed internally and which ones could be contracted from third parties. It was concluded that internal services had to be the *Vision, Strategy, and Planning*; *Procedural Services* (bills, papers of the House); *Customer Advice and Support*; and the *Management of the Parliament's own projects*. Other Services, such as the e-mail system, the file store, the applications store, human resources and hardware, could be outsourced.

In January 2012 the Parliament embarked in a major cloud readiness project. It was considered that possible areas where cloud services could be needed were: *Infrastructure* (networks, servers), *Application Infrastructure* (back office applications), *Application and Information Services* (Internet, web applications) and *Business Services*. Different types of clouds were considered: private clouds (the ones you build and manage yourself), virtual private clouds (shared services) or public clouds (the services you buy as a commodity).

With regard to organizational issues the following were taken into account: a) security of services; b) data ownership; c) network reliability to get access to the services; d) compliance with the Data Information law; e) contracts' availability; and f) sensitiveness of the data.

Ms. Miller reported that it was concluded that as long as it was possible to segment data (distinguishing between IT services to be managed internally and IT services to be contracted from third parties) the Parliament of the United Kingdom should use cloud services. These services would provide the Parliament with a platform to be mobile and to work with many different types of systems and equipment, while ensuring savings



for about 1,5 million pounds. The issues that remained to be resolved were ownership, retrieval and integration of data, and security.

Mr. Fakhreddine Aouadi, IT Applications Specialist, European Parliament, shared with the audience the work on mobility of the European Parliament.

Mr. Aouadi highlighted that enhancing mobile communication, connectivity and interoperability is the key objective of a number of initiatives developed by the European Parliament to empower members to exercise their mandate. These initiatives include: the Wi-Fi; teleworking; video conferencing; a global intranet and the paperless programme.

Mr. Aouadi stated that the European Parliament is looking beyond the hype and seeing what opportunities and challenges lie in the cloud. In considering cloud services the European Parliament's major concerns are privacy, liability (SLA), security and pricing.

The speaker provided an overview of some of the initiatives. The Wi-Fi was developed in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg in all meeting rooms and offices. The network is accessed either through a basic authentication system using username and password or through more complex systems using tokens.

The paperless programme was launched in 2010. Its objective is to replace the files drawn up for group and committee meetings by electronic files available for consultation

by means of individual mobile devices. Mr. Aouadi stressed that cost savings are only a small part of the overall value that a paperless environment can offer. The intangible benefit from the paperless program is mobility since automating the business records and documents makes them accessible anytime and anywhere from any computer, laptop or mobile device.

Mr. Aouadi explained that within the paperless programme there are two main projects: the e-Committee project and the e-Meeting project. The e-Committee project provides an all-in-one solution making accessible documents and studies to the members of the 23 committees of the European Parliament through any mobile device. The e-Meeting project, still in a pilot phase, is intended to replace papers printed during committee meetings. The application, which was first built on iPad, is now available on any mobile device.

Mr. Aouadi concluded by highlighting three

main points: a) in order to enhance mobility this needs to be considered as a big system; 2) cloud computing should be used as an accelerator; and 3) the focus should not be in the device but on the users who will spread adoption if well served.

During the discussion participants asked questions on the issue of security when using cloud services. Panelists highlighted that companies offering cloud services invest a lot on security. A certain amount of risk, however, always exists. It was also noted that when information is very critical it should not be put in the cloud. It was highlighted that mobility and new products providing mobility contribute to narrowing the gap between experts in using IT and people worried to use it. Several participants commented that a negative opinion was expressed in the media when their parliaments announced the introduction of tablets for the members' use, considering it as a waste of public funds.



Delivering information and documents through tablets and mobile devices

This session focused on current implementation practices that have allowed parliaments to provide solutions for the delivery of information on mobile devices and achieve savings and efficiency gains.

In his introductory remarks, the chair of the session, **Mr. James Rege**, Chairman of the Energy, Information and Communication Committee of the National Assembly, shared information and figures about the increasing use of mobile technologies in his home country. Kenya has 30 million mobile phone subscribers, with only 3% of the total broadband in use. With the increase of smart phones usage, Mr. Rege reported, this capacity is expected to be more fully utilized.

The first panelist **Mr. Geert Jan Hamilton**, Secretary General, Senate of the Netherlands, provided an overview of the *iPad project*. Through a specialized application all Senate proceeding documents are published and distributed to Senators through a tablet device with the main goal of achieving a “paper-poor” parliament.

The *iPad project* was first announced in 2010 when a business case was developed. The main benefits envisaged were less paper, and lower production and distribution cost. The drawbacks envisaged were a complete dependence on technology and the need to change working methods.

The project was officially launched on 13 September 2011 when every senator received an iPad2 with the specialized application. Mr. Hamilton reported that despite some initial user resistance the project was well received by senators. A spin-off of the launch was the immense and unexpected media interest both nationally and internationally.

Mr. Hamilton highlighted that around 140.000 Euros were saved annually since the launch of the project and within one year the investments in terms of application development and purchase of iPads were earned back.

Mr. Hamilton then provided an overview of the screens of the application and their functionality.

The speaker concluded by emphasizing that the endorsement of the political leadership was key to the success of this initiative.

In terms of technical architecture, **Mr. Redegeld**, ICT Advisor of the Senate, provided further details. He explained that all iPads are registered through an application provided by a mobile operator that allows the Administrator to lock the iPads when not properly used or trace their use when lost or stolen. Mr. Redegeld explained that individual user accounts were created in the Apple iStore as part of the iPad registration and activation process. Concerning content sourcing into the application Mr. Redegeld emphasized that all the content was already available and well structured on the Senate website.

Mr. Mukul Pande, Joint Secretary, and **Mr. Pradeep Chaturvedi**, Director, Council of States of India, shared with the audience the experience of their parliament.

Mr. Chaturvedi provided first an overview of the ICT development in the Parliament of India. The Parliament, he explained, does not have a dedicated IT team, and IT services are provided by Government staff. In the 80s there was no IT culture in the Parliament, but nowadays tools for document processing, storage and dissemination of information to members are being put in

place and becoming ever more important.

Mr. Chaturvedi stated that the year 2000 marked a growth of IT with the implementation of the first website. Other major and recent initiatives include the complete digitization of the official debates of the Parliament since 1952, which are offered in PDF and image format, complemented by a search engine. There are also efforts to use machine assisted translation system (MANTRA) to serve bi-lingual translation/interpretation, offering users glossaries with vast dictionaries.

Regarding tablets, Mr. Chaturvedi reported that discussions are ongoing about the possible future use of android based tablets. Currently the Parliament offers mobile e-reading devices which receive content from the web server including all session documents such as the agenda of the day, bills, questions and minutes. One of the main challenges in the introduction of these

new technologies, he explained, was the need to train and support users.

Mr. Chaturvedi concluded by explaining that the culture is changing and members are increasingly using online communications to connect with the secretariat, and to receive and view their payroll and other administrative information.

Mr. Pande explained that user resistance to early laptops and desktops was high but when e-readers were introduced, accompanied by user friendly applications, acceptance was wider. Mr. Pande also stated that the use of technology by members of parliament to raise questions electronically and participate in parliamentary work has increased since the Parliament is disclosing more information on the parliamentary website about members' participation. There has also been an increase in demand by members for debate records. Mr. Pande concluded by underlining that non-technological



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requirements like accuracy, timeliness, reliability of service delivery remain important as they help to build trust and yield wider acceptance among the users.

Mr. Simon Nicholls, Director of Programmes and Development, Parliamentary ICT, Parliament of the United Kingdom, provided an overview of the latest developments in the use of mobile devices at the House of Commons of the United Kingdom.

He first highlighted that the use of ICT is a sensitive topic within the House since a lot of importance is attached to tradition. In terms of developments he explained that the first technology tools used by members in the chamber were pagers, which could only be set on silent mode. In 2007 mobile phones and handhelds were allowed but only for checking messages and e-mails. In 2011 a breakthrough ruling was adopted that stated that handhelds could be used to read speeches. In 2012, the House started to provide members with tablets to be used in Committee rooms.

Mr. Nicholls stated that the approach followed for the introduction of tablets at the House was to conduct limited trials and pilots

with specific Committees. Members were informed of the benefits of the use of tablets such as better search ability and indexing, and much more portability. He reported that the feedback provided by members was very positive and, as a result, by late 2012 more Committees were expected to migrate to paperless environments.

Mr. Nicholls concluded by underlined the delicate balance between culture and technological progress.

During the discussion, participants commented that the current revolution of using tablets can change the way things are done, and help save money and reduce paper waste. For developing countries the challenges are greater since not only tablets and supporting infrastructure need to be purchased, but also investments must be made to actually set up information management systems that serve the content. Participants also raised the issue of sharing among parliaments the applications that have been developed. The importance of providing adequate user support to overcome resistance to the use of new technologies was highlighted.



Protecting the IT environment and minimizing external threats

This session provided the experiences of two parliaments in the implementation of their security systems. The chair, **Mr. Jesus Alfonso Rodriguez Camargo**, Secretary General of the House of Representatives of Colombia, introduced the theme by highlighting the importance of making investments in infrastructure and security. He explained that the introduction of new technologies in the Parliament of Colombia has allowed to extend the information provided to the public but has also increased the risk of mal-use and the vulnerability of the institution. Among the issues to be discussed in the area of security he mentioned road maps for implementing systems that are secure yet usable, and how new trends like cloud storage and cloud computing impact

security. He emphasized that incorporating IT in parliaments, which are institutions vested in traditions, may pose many challenges in terms of security and infrastructure.

The first panelist, **Mr. Hernán Figueroa**, Director of Information Technology, Chamber of Deputies of Chile, explained that security is always a rather silent matter. Although it is essential to make services function with minimal disruption and maximum availability more attention is usually given to other aspects of IT.

IT decision making within the Chamber of Deputies of Chile, Mr. Figueroa explained, happens through the Information Management Committee, which sees the participation of members of parliament and



the political and administration leadership. The Committee defines the levels needed for security, sets the various requirements and defines the strategy.

In terms of needs, Mr. Figueroa reported that there are three aspects of security that the Chamber tries to address: 1. who needs to be protected; 2. what infrastructure is needed to protect; and 3. how to protect.

Mr. Figueroa explained that the Chamber has evolved its IT services. While in the past only internal services were provided and information was pushed towards the public, nowadays there is a two way interaction with citizens, which generates greater risk of penetration into the services. To mitigate the risk the Chamber has introduced an external network, from where information is offered to external parties and, where possible, has segmented the networks between different offices and sectors within the parliament. Furthermore, the Chamber's workstations, from where all internal documentation can be accessed according to different user profiles, are to be strictly used by staff and members of parliament. Elaborating on the growing need for public transparency Mr. Figueroa explained that today a lot more information is held in databases across the institution and disclosed to the public. The increased disclosure of information and interactivity, Mr. Figueroa emphasized, require robust security systems.

Services that need to be secure are e-mail services, website streaming of TV and radio feeds, and the new platform Democracia en Vivo that allows citizens to follow committee meetings live and send in questions using social media tools. Other systems that see high security investments are the internal applications, including desktops used in the hemicycle that provide access to members' personal data and information, the digital

signing tool and voting applications.

Mr. Figueroa explained that security investments are not made only in the technology but also in the area of user conduct. Members of parliament and staff receive awareness training sessions on the use of internal IT services and on the general use of Internet, including searching, social media and security risks. In addition, when there are phishing attacks, e-mail alerts are sent to staff and members.

With regard to the concept of "bring your own device" Mr. Figueroa reported that only authorized hardware is allowed to be connected to the internal network and only security-cleared software can be installed on this hardware. In terms of assessment of security and infrastructure, the Chamber regularly carries out security audits and hack simulations. Also logs are kept to be able to reconstruct security failures for analysis purposes.

Mr. Figueroa in conclusion provided an overview of the exponentially growing security costs and stated that parliaments need to have internal discussions on what they want to achieve security wise and depart from there to make and justify investments.

Mr. Stéphan Aubé, Chief Information Officer, House of Commons of Canada, provided an overview of how security is implemented as part of the entire IT philosophy of the House, and how paradigm shifts have occurred in thinking of security.

In the view of the House of Commons, IT security is seen as an enabler and not as a barrier. IT security must present itself as being there to help the parliamentary business, and should be aligned to deliver parliamentary business goals.

Mr. Aubé invited the audience to view parliamentary information as an asset that needs

to be protected. In line with this thinking he stressed the key principles that need safeguarding: 1. confidentiality (to protect from one another and from outside), 2. trust (to provide services in transparent way), integrity (data disclosed must be guaranteed integrity wise and must come from an authoritative source), 3. reputation (which needs to be protected), and 4. availability (as many attacks are not about getting information but about disruption operations).

He stated that annually the House of Commons sees around 4 million forms of spam and malicious attacks. In response to this, a security group of seven officers has been established.

Mr. Aubé explained that new technology and usage trends also impacted the way to implement security. In the old paradigm the House tried to close its network and keep everything and everyone out. Today, however, with the new levels of citizen interest and transparency, the House needs to let people inside the perimeter. As a result the network has been thrown open and security has moved to the application level.

The application level security model is complemented by policies about what acceptable use is and how the infrastructure should be used. In line with its thinking of security as an enabler the House supports the “bring-your-own-device” trend, social networking, access to Internet and cloud computing.

Mr. Aubé explained that the implementation of the application level security model comes with the concept of “domain zoning”, where risk is assessed within a particular zone and proper controls are applied to that zone. More secure zones give access to services requiring higher level of security. With that come also increased authentication and authorization checks, through the

use of relevant tools that are based on identity, trust and reputation.

Mr. Aubé emphasized that the biggest threat to security remains user awareness which is raised through security policies, training, newsletters, bulletins, e-mail alerts and so on.

Mr. Aubé also identified the IT security pillars of the House of Commons: 1. governance (need for an acceptable use policy and buy in of members and staff); 2. technology (which is not about perimeter security anymore); 3. threat management (the security group monitors threats of the organization); 4. vulnerability management (by developing partnerships with institutions that know about the existence of threats, and involving senior management by explaining them the vulnerabilities and the risks that are taken); 5. incident management; 6. awareness and 7. audits (by external regular audits like hacking exercises and penetration test).



Technical Sessions

Bungeni Parliamentary Information and Legislative System: features, architecture and localization

This session, chaired by **Mr. João Viegas Abreu**, Senior Programme Expert, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, presented the features, architecture and localization opportunity of *Bungeni*, as well as its support of the *Akoma Ntoso* XML standard.

Mr. Flavio Zeni, Chief Technical Adviser, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, started his presentation by emphasizing that semantic technologies can contribute to delivering advanced information services. He then highlighted that the open source development model can help to build high quality and sustainable information systems. Open source and open standards are the best choice to help parliaments to move from information management limited to “presentation” and mere “publishing” on the website to an interactive use of documents.

He then provided an overview of *Bungeni* (www.bungeni.org), an open source parliamentary information system developed within the framework of the UN/DESA Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, an initiative aimed to empower African Parliaments to better fulfill their democratic functions by supporting their efforts to become open, participatory, knowledge-based and learning organizations.

Mr. Zeni explained that *Bungeni* automates the life-cycle of parliamentary documents. The system has two main components: 1. a workflow system, which supports the workflow of all parliamentary documents and the production of agenda, minutes, debate

records, as well versioning, audit log, etc., and 2. a content management system for the creation of dedicated workspaces such as committee workspaces and public spaces for members of parliament to interact with citizens.

Mr. Zeni identified the main benefits of the system. *Bungeni* provides citizens with exhaustive timely and proactive information with the help of notifications such as RSS feeds and e-mail notices. It is multi-channel (PC, phone, tablet, television), open and reusable. It offers members of parliament a workspace with real time monitoring, personal pages, blogs and a private storage space. It also allows easy access to committee workspaces with the documentation under discussion, gives the opportunity to receive notifications of meetings and agendas of sittings, and allows keeping track of documents from anywhere and at any time. Finally, *Bungeni* empowers the management of the Parliament with the support of the schedule of sittings, creation of agenda and minutes, transcription of debates, real-time workload assessment, audit trail to monitor who has done what and when, and long-term preservation of documents.

Mr. Zeni concluded by underlining that *Bungeni* helps parliament to be more accessible, more transparent, and more participatory.

Ms. Miriam Ngoka, Programme Officer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, described the content management system of *Bungeni*.



Developed to respond to the need of parliaments to store electronic content such as documents, files and images, the system is based on *Plone*, an open source content management system released for the first time 12 years ago and used by 2283 sites in 70 countries.

Ms. Ngoka described the different typology of pages provided by the system, such as: simple pages with picture and description; tabbed pages with several pieces of information easily accessible; links (similar to a glossary); hierarchical documents with table of content with subsections; repositories where, for example, debates can be stored by date, or by type, and can be found through the search function; and polls with interactive information.

The virtual spaces were created to provide members of parliament and staff with a private “place” to work on drafts either individually or in group, or to receive feedback from the public through polls or surveys.

Ms. Ngoka explained that having a content management system within *Bungeni* presents benefits to both the management of the parliament and the citizens. The advantage for the management is having a ready-made website, easy to customize and to extend through a supportive community. With regard to citizens, they are provided with rich and diverse content and information accessible seamlessly from one place, as well as the possibility to interact directly with the parliament and the members of parliament.

Mr. Ashok Hariharan, Software Development Coordinator, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social

Affairs, United Nations, gave a presentation on the architecture of *Bungeni*.

Observing that different parliaments have different needs, structures and languages Mr. Hariharan stated that the software must be able to adapt and configure itself around the parliamentary process as well as to evolve in the future. Thanks to a whole supporting community, open source solutions, open standards and open formats are strongly adaptable and can reduce the long term risks.

When building *Bungeni* three categories of users were identified: the public, parliamentary users and other stakeholders. The different categories were provided with different levels of access control. Mr. Hariharan stated that all the activities of the system are easily reachable via web browser. The user interface includes legislation management and processing, parliamentary information management, report and web content. The system infrastructure is based on an application server, a web content server, a database server and a web server, which are all based on Linux.

Mr. Mario Ruggier, Software Development Officer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations made a presentation on the localization of *Bungeni*.

He stated that *Bungeni* allows the management and customization of both documents, such as bills, motions, questions, and groups recognized within the parliament.

Mr. Ruggier explained that the localization can be applied to the following: a) definition of parliamentary documents; b) definition

of groups and memberships; c) form user interfaces; d) workflows for document, group and membership; e) roles and permissions; f) user workspaces; g) notifications; h) supported languages and i) reports.

Mr. Ruggier stated that the localization process requires a set up effort, involving the stakeholders of the parliament, to identify document types, workflows and processes. Then the ICT staff of the parliament will proceed with the configuration. Once *Bungeni* is in use, additional adjustments to the workflow may be done.

The speaker underlined that any customization is not part of *Bungeni* and is maintained in a separate physical folder that belongs to the parliament and falls under the responsibility of the configuration team of the parliament.

Mr. Ruggier stated that additional information about *Bungeni* customization is provided by the *Bungeni* Customization Guide available at: http://code.google.com/p/bungeni-portal/wiki/Bungeni_Customization_Guide

The last presentation of this session was made by **Mr. Fabio Vitali**, Co-Chair of the OASIS LegalDocumentML Committee and Professor of Computer Science, University of Bologna, who made an overview of *Akoma Ntoso*.

Akoma Ntoso is a specific XML vocabulary that can be used to represent electronically different kinds of documents used in a parliamentary context. It describes what is contained in a document by enriching it through labels and annotations (markup). Labels need to be associated to the whole document, to its main parts, to lesser structures (e.g., paragraphs) and to individual words.

Mr. Vitali explained that markup traditionally

is divided in structural markup (identification of the parts of the documents and how they repeat, associate and contain others), semantic markup (association by way of labels of interpretations to pieces of text e.g. title, date, emanating body, etc.), and presentation markup (association of specific visualization - e.g. typographical choices - to individual pieces of markup).

When designing *Akoma Ntoso* a number of issues were taken into consideration: a) short term constrain (for example short notice in order to create the new version of a bill); b) long term constrain (in the legislative context documents are expected to last for a very long time as they also have to be a permanent recording of political feeling and decisions despite of the technological changes); c) correct attribution of authorship; and d) distinction between descriptive and prescriptive documents, in order to allow legislators to use any kind of documents without technological restrictions.

Mr. Vitali observed that *Akoma Ntoso* was born to be adaptable across different uses, contexts and legislative systems and can support different document types such as legislative documents, bills, acts, debates, amendments, judgements, collective documents, official gazettes, amendment lists and generic documents.

Mr. Vitali concluded that *Akoma Ntoso* tries to provide XML support for all kind of legal documents by taking care of the different document structures and the specific requirements of the various legal systems. He observed that the OASIS LegalDocumentML Committee is the right place to discuss and share the different country requirements and contribute to the development of the language.

Bungeni Parliamentary and Legislative Information System: the way forward

The chair of this session, **Ms. Miriam Ngoka**, Programme Officer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, introduced the representatives of five parliaments who shared their experiences and challenges in preparing to implement *Bungeni*.

Ms. Shirley-Ann Fiagome, Deputy Director ICT, Parliament of Ghana, explained that the Parliament of Ghana is planning to implement *Bungeni* as part of the e-Ghana project sponsored by the World Bank.

When discussing how to go forward with the implementation of a parliamentary information system the Parliament initially considered two options: hiring someone who would develop it or buying an off-the-shelf package. However, taking into account that the development of a system from scratch would require a lot of time and an off-the-shelf product would need customization, it was finally decided that the Parliament would use *Bungeni*.

Ms. Fiagome explained that one of the main challenges for the Parliament of Ghana in implementing *Bungeni* is the lack of IT skills. To overcome this, the Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT agreed to support the Parliament in customizing the system by helping to recruit the IT implementation team.

Mr. Owino Harrison, Head of ICT Services, National Assembly of Kenya, informed the audience that the National Assembly of Kenya deployed *Bungeni* in June 2012, and outlined the steps that, in his view, parliaments need to take if they also decide to implement the system.

Parliaments have to understand first how the system works and introduce it to the leaders

of the Parliament for getting their buy in. It is then important to clearly define the work flow within the parliament and to build managerial and technical skills to customize and deploy the system. Mr. Harrison also highlighted the need to identify champions within the Parliament who would promote and support the implementation.

Mr. Harrison clarified that there is no need to deploy the system to the entire parliament. The Parliament of Kenya, for example, only deployed *Bungeni* to the committee clerks to enable them to trace bills, motions and questions within the Parliament.

Among the main challenges Mr. Harrison identified the indirect costs to address such as hardware, training of staff and data migration. He highlighted the need to address the resistance to change that can be overcome through the involvement of the Parliament's leadership and the support of champions. Other challenges are getting the information to populate the system and having a common standard for parliamentary legislative documents.

Mr. Harrison emphasized the importance of joining regional inter-parliamentary networks to share experiences and deal with common implementation issues. He also highlighted the role of partnerships and collaboration to look at the challenges and opportunities that ICT can bring forward.

He concluded by thanking the team of the UN/DESA Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan for its continued support.

Ms. Saseeta Ramsahye-Rakha, Ag. Parliamentary ICT Manager, National Assembly of Mauritius, reported that the National Assembly has been working on a Parliamentary Electronic Document

Management System since the year 2008 when it started exploring possible solutions. The National Assembly found that the various platforms required not only development from scratch but also an efficient integration of the workflow and business logic of the parliament.

Since 2008, the National Assembly has also been following *Bungeni* by comparing it with all the other solutions. In 2011, after a workshop co-hosted by the National Assembly of Mauritius where *Bungeni* was presented to African Parliaments, it was decided that the Assembly would implement *Bungeni* and integrate it in the Assembly's local existent ICT infrastructure. Ms. Ramsahye-Rakha pointed out that it was initially a challenge to convince all stakeholders of the Parliamentary Electronic Document Management System project that *Bungeni* had all required features.

Ms. Ramsahye-Rakha explained that the Assembly is moving from a paper-based procedural system to an automatic process-based workflow system. It is expected that users will take some time to adjust to this feature but no reluctance has been noted from stakeholders. The speaker noted that the parliamentary ICT staff may face some problems in providing support on the platform as it has no experience in open source systems.

Ms. Ramsahye-Rakha reported that a charter was drafted to explain clearly what *Bungeni* would bring to all involved stakeholders. All parliamentary documents would be made readily available to the citizens and to the civil society, the use of paper would drastically decrease, and parliamentary documents would be prepared quickly, efficiently and accurately.

Regarding the Assembly's plan for sustainability, Ms. Ramsahye-Rakha highlighted the

importance of training staff and involving local institutions such as the University of Mauritius and other ICT institutions.

The speaker concluded her presentation by underlining that the National Assembly of Mauritius did not choose to implement *Bungeni* because it was free of charge but because it is a sound and well developed system that takes care of all parliamentary processes. She underlined that the IT staff of the parliament received strong support by the team of the UN/DESA Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan.

Ms. Cheryl Pinas, Head of the ICT Department, National Assembly of Suriname, explained that the Assembly decided to implement *Bungeni* because of the need to increase transparency in parliamentary processes, provide more timely information to citizens and members of parliament, and increase efficiency of parliamentary activities.

She underlined that the adoption of *Bungeni* will first imply organizational changes. The Assembly will need to engage more open standard in its IT policy and to go from one application manager to more applications. There will also be a need to manage change through a marketing campaign for citizens, members of parliament and internal personnel.

Ms. Pinas then emphasized the need for more training among the IT staff on open standards, *Linus* operating software and *Plone* management system. She mentioned that 3 members of the IT team of the Assembly were expected to participate in the XML summer school in Italy.

Among the main challenges in implementing the system Ms. Pinas identified the need to thoroughly define the parliamentary process, the minimization of resistance, and

the lack of financial resources.

Regarding long term sustainability Ms. Pinas stressed the importance of maintaining strong communication with the UN/DESA team of developers based in Kenya, and developing relationships with other parliaments deploying *Bungeni*.

Mr. Michael Mukuka, Principal Clerk ICT, National Assembly of Zambia, explained the rationale behind the decision to implement *Bungeni*.

The system has all the features needed by the National Assembly of Zambia to support its workflow. It allows the processing of parliamentary documents such as questions, motions, votes, proceedings, order papers and agendas of the day; provides workflows for approval of parliamentary documents; and provides easy publication of information.

Among the benefits of the system Mr. Mukuka identified the efficient processing of parliamentary information, the archiving of documents for easy access and future preservation, the automate approval of processes of documents, and the easy publication of information on the website which helps take the parliament closer to the people.

Mr. Mukuka stated that the main challenges were the customization of the system, the lack of programming skills within the

parliament and the lack of high speed connection to support *Plone*.

He stressed that the National Assembly is receiving strong support from the UN/DESA team and expressed the hope that there will be a growing community working together to face common implementation challenges.

During the discussion it was clarified that the core of *Bungeni* parliamentary workflow is developed on *Zope 3* and the programming language is Python. The suite of applications around this core, which provides extended functionalities, are managed through *Plone*. The UN/DESA team explained that *Plone* was chosen because it was considered more solid and secure than other content management systems available. The UN/DESA team underlined that the first step to be taken when deciding to implement *Bungeni* is building internal capacities. Many IT departments, especially in African parliaments, were not set up to develop information systems or support the knowledge management of the parliament, and need therefore to acquire these new skills. The exchange of experiences among parliaments was indicated as critical to help build capacities.

Technology options for recording and reporting parliamentary proceedings

This session presented examples of parliaments' use of technologies to provide recordings of proceedings. The chair of the session, **Mr. Damir Davidovic**, Secretary General, Parliament of Montenegro, set the stage by emphasizing that openness, transparency and accessibility of legislative institutions are essential conditions to be met in modern societies. Today the issue is no longer establishing a connection between parliaments and citizens but rather making this connection as easy and as good as possible. Parliaments cannot just react to the interests and request of the public. They must be proactive in collecting and disseminating information in a timely and accurate way, and in a format that allows its easy re-use. While recognizing obstacles and challenges for several parliaments, such as lack of resources, the chair highlighted that ICT today provides the necessary tools to meet these requirements.

Ms. Saseeta Ramsahye-Rakha, Ag. Parliamentary ICT Manager, National Assembly of Mauritius, described the Digital Recording System of the Assembly. The core function of the system, launched in March 2009 within the framework of the National ICT Strategic Plan, is to record, convert and transcribe the audio signal from the microphones in the chamber.

Ms. Ramsahye-Rakha explained that it was imperative to replace the old system which dated about 26 years back and could have crashed anytime during a sitting of the House. Moreover, as of 2009 the Assembly had a backlog of 18 years for the publication of the official reports. Currently, she noted, there is only a 3-year backlog which is expected to be cleared in 2 months.

The platforms used are Windows Server 2003 and Windows Cluster. With regard to the technologies the following are used: *Murf/VIQ* version 4.1 for the recording/transcribing software, *Dragon Naturally Speaking* version 10 for the Voice to text software, *Bosch - Digital Congress Network* version 2.6 for the Conference Management software and *Quark Express* for the page layout for pre-press unit.

Ms. Ramsahye-Rakha described how the system works. From the microphones in the chamber the audio signal goes to the amplifier and then, through the audio lines, to the voice processors which convert the analog to digital. The authentication through the application is done through the domain controller. The Hansard reporters access the takes from their desk through *Murf*.

When the member of parliament speaks the audio is recorded and stored on a server cluster. The recording is cut into 10-minute chunks, converted in text through the voice-to-text transcription and edited by the Hansard unit. The unrevised version is published on the website within 24 hours. The final revised/proofread Hansard in word format is sent first to the Pre Press unit and then to the Printing unit. The final version is published on the website within 7 days.

Ms. Ramsahye-Rakha explained how the system works from "inside". The administration console allows creating an event recording with specific parameters such as the location of the event, the time and the take length (which is usually 10 minutes). The annotator console, located in the chamber, allows tagging speakers with specific keywords and searching for a particular speech recording. The system

also allows the user to select a particular take through the take listening window, to search for any particular speaker or take by key word, and to keep track of the status of the take.

The staff involved is the following: 15 hansard reporters, 3 IT officers, 2 A/V operators for conference management in the chamber, 4 pre-press officers and 2 officers at the printing unit.

Ms. Ramsahye-Rakha highlighted that the real novelty in the system was the integration of voice-to-text technology with a recording system available off-the-shelf in the market. She pointed out that the software used for voice-to-text conversion, *Dragon Naturally Speaking*, grows with the user. It allows the user to do daily training to attain 98 -99% of correct transcription and also to add new words to the dictionary or new commands. All users are logged in through roaming profiles located on a central server. Only one set of pedals and headset with integrated microphones are used for automatic transcription. All takes are automatically merged into one main document for final editing after it has been transcribed.

Mr. Andreas Sidler, Chief Information Officer, Federal Parliament of Switzerland, described the system for recording and reporting parliamentary proceedings of the Parliament of Switzerland. The system, which was built in 2001, when it was almost impossible to find people with the necessary typing skills, is XML-based and made of several modules. Mr. Sidler pointed out that the system would be further improved in the next months while maintaining its main components.

The module *Cutter client* allows the user, who sits in the chamber during the parliamentary session, to create sequences of about 5 minutes by putting and removing

the time stamp. The sequences can then be distributed to different persons and transcribed almost simultaneously in order to make the transcribing process faster. Through the system the user also inserts information such as the name of the speaker, its role, the language used and the subject matter.

Through the module *Transcription client* the user has access to the audio recording in MP3 format and to all the information introduced by the user of the *Cutter client*. After logging in, the user has access automatically to the first sequence that has not yet been transcribed. The editor used is an XML editor made internally.

The *Composer client* is used to verify the transcription. It allows the user to put all sequences together, jump from one sequence to another and make sure that nothing is missing.

The module *Supervisor* allows the user to check the status of sequences, verify who made the transcription and change the priorities of transcriptions if necessary.

Regarding the publication on the website, once the reader client reads the text for the second time and approves it, the text is automatically published on the website. The first version is published within an hour. The final version, incorporating comments of the members of parliament, is published within three days.

The printing is made with a tool that can treat XML and very large files. The whole page, including the titles, the styles and the index, is generated automatically. The PDF can be created and posted on the website at the same time as the as the HTML text.

Mr. Sidler reported that two years after the introduction of the system one additional module called *Web TV* was created to deliver live webcasts of proceedings from

both chambers of the Parliament. When the member of parliament speaks, a link is automatically created to his/her biography. A searchable video archive containing all videos on MP4 format since 2005 is available on the Internet.

Mr. Sidler also reported that a few years ago all modules used for recording parliamentary proceedings from the plenary were put in one system running on a simple notebook used for recording proceedings from committee meetings.

Mr. Miano Njoka, Software Developer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, provided an overview of the transcription module of *Bungeni*. The application is open source and uses the XML format *Akoma Ntoso*.

Mr. Njoka described the workflow and clarified that it can be customized to suit the needs of the different parliaments around the world.

First the sitting is created. Through a drag-and-drop interface the user can insert the venue, language, etc. Then the staff is assigned to transcribe the sitting.

The person in charge of the transcription process then initiates the process of generating the rota. *Bungeni* generates the segments of the sitting for which each transcriber is responsible. The segments are configurable and can last 5, 7 or 10 minutes.

Every transcriber sits at a work station and has a client application that connects to a server to get the video and audio of the parliamentary proceedings. After logging in the users get the segment assigned to them and can do the actual transcription through a simple editor. The data is saved in *Akoma Ntoso* XML. Mr. Njoka specified that all the

shortcut keys are customizable and there is also support for food pedal.

Once done, the transcriber submits his/her transcripts from *Bungeni Transcribe* to *Bungeni*. *Bungeni* collates all the transcripts automatically. *Bungeni* versions all changes made to the transcripts.

Among the main features of the module Mr. Njoka identified the following: a) integration between the audio and video records of the debate with the profile pages of members of parliament and the agenda items; 2) support of different platforms and dozens of media file formats used by parliaments around the world.

Discussions with the audience brought forth several key issues including the ownership of copyrights of videos available on the parliamentary websites. Some panelists clarified that while parliaments own the copyrights of videos they cannot prevent people from downloading and re-using them. In responding to a question about the implementation of automatic transcription without the use of an operator, it was highlighted that it is almost impossible to implement it since software do not recognize of speakers. It was also noted that the success of any system is based on the people using it and not on the software or hardware. Other issues discussed included the need for multilingual transcription for bilingual or multilingual parliaments and the possibility of archiving content in the cloud. Participants also pointed out the importance of giving thorough consideration to the skills needed in terms of human resources when deciding to implement a system for recording parliamentary proceedings.

The added value of libraries to parliamentary information: making content more powerful

The objective of this session, as outlined by the Chair **Ms. Sonia L'Heureux**, Librarian of the Parliament of Canada, was to discuss how parliamentary libraries can take advantage of ICT to make parliamentary information more accessible, useful, relevant and engaging for both members of parliament and citizens.

Before giving the floor to the first panelist, Ms. L'Heureux drew the attention of the audience to the *Handbook on Information and Communication Technologies in Parliamentary Libraries*, prepared by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, and published in 2012. The *Handbook* provides, in a concise manner, an overview of the ICT software, systems, services and standards that can be adopted by parliamentary libraries and a series of references to which parliamentary staff can refer when planning services and development strategies for the library.

Ms. Raissa Teodori, Secretary of the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments and Head of the Special Collections Office of the Library of the Senate of Italy, provided an overview of parliamentary libraries around the world as seen from IFLA's point of view. She briefly recalled IFLA's history since the foundation in 1927 and described its large network and main activities, stressing how the enhancement of networking and cooperation represents a primary mission for both IFLA and its Parliamentary Section, active at the global level since 1984.

Ms. Teodori reminded the audience that effective parliamentary libraries and research services can become a fundamental component of democratic legislatures, as they increase the effectiveness of parliaments by providing adequate information support to members and allowing open access to parliamentary information by citizens. The IFLA parliamentary Section aims to support the development of library services in parliaments around the world in several ways. It facilitates the sharing of knowledge and best practices during its annual conference, encourages capacity building activities and training and promotes standards and the use of the latest information technologies to develop professional competencies. The Section also prepares professional reports and publications, such as the *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries* whose revised edition was published in 2010, the above mentioned *Handbook on Information and Communication Technologies in Parliamentary Libraries*.

Ms. Teodori explained that in order to achieve these goals the Section has developed partnerships with key institutions and organizations at the international level, in and outside the parliamentary context, such as the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, with which the Section has especially developed training activities and workshops aimed at the creation of regional networks or associations of parliamentary libraries.

The speaker stressed how IFLA is a privileged observatory on the wide "community" of parliamentary libraries around the world, which can differ one another by many

aspects (history, functions, size and type of collections, position in the parliamentary administration, and so on) while sharing the same core mission of providing parliaments with timely, accurate and reliable information to support their institutional functions. To accomplish this mission parliamentary libraries must be able to innovate their services and tools and can nowadays leverage on technological innovation to broaden the range of services they can offer and better respond to the needs of clients.

Ms. Teodori pointed out that, while a number of parliamentary libraries are groundbreakers in the use of ICT, the implementation of technology is still limited in a high percentage of parliamentary libraries and research services as highlighted in the *World e-Parliament Report 2012*. Inadequate resources, lack of trained staff, limited connection and limited availability of library websites are just some of the existing gaps and challenges that should be overcome to enable libraries to deliver their full potential through innovative and tailored information products.

Ms. Moira Fraser, Member of the Standing Committee of the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments, outlined a development strategy which focuses on strengthening parliamentary libraries' online services and digital content.

She made special reference to the role that parliamentary libraries can play in gathering and preserving parliamentary papers, and in making them available online, in organized and indexed digital collections, enriched with relevant links between debates, legislation and other items related to the legislative process.

Ms. Fraser identified three areas of activity that should be enhanced and where the IFLA Section has been active in strengthening the

knowledge of parliamentary libraries and research services around the world in recent years, especially in developing countries. The first area is the establishment of research services and capabilities, and the improvement of the quality of research products, in terms of content, accuracy, reliability and quality of comparative analysis. The second area is the use of ICT in parliaments, by closing both the knowledge and capability gaps. Ms. Fraser stressed the need to make ICT a fundamental partner for parliamentary libraries capable of making content easier to find and use, and to leverage on ICT to create information systems that can be enriched with useful and organized content.

Finally, Ms. Fraser highlighted how parliamentary libraries and research services can help parliaments engage with citizens. According to each library's rules, mission and functions, citizens can be addressed in a variety of ways including: by: 1. providing direct information services to the public, remotely or through physical access to the parliamentary library, 2. making parliamentary information freely accessible and easily available online in digital format, 3. carrying out institutional communications activities, such as Parliamentary Open Days, and through outreach activities directed to citizens to help them understand the parliamentary processes. In this perspective the library also performs a role of education and training on the use of new technologies by both members and citizens.

Ms. Fraser pointed out that online services, digitization projects of historical documents and training initiatives contribute to the visibility of libraries and to engaging citizens in the work of parliaments. However, in order to add "value to content", library services and information products must rely on technological tools in line with the highest

standards available.

Mr. Alim Garga, Director of the Library of the National Assembly of Cameroon, outlined the structure and functioning of the Assembly, Committees and parliamentary administration in Cameroon. He described the Directorate of Documentary Information (*Direction de l'information documentaire*), which includes library services and archives, as the privileged place of culture and memory.

Mr. Garga explained that the library of the National Assembly of Cameroon serves members and their staff, and its collections are mainly related to law, political science and economy. It is the repository of the historical memory of the Parliament and at the same time a future-oriented service, relying on ICT to respond to its clients' needs. It is responsible for managing and recording parliamentary documentation in digital format and for supplying members with information useful to be converted into political decision. In order to fulfill these tasks the library makes use of new technologies. By making reference to data provided by the *World e-Parliament Report 2012*, Mr. Garga reminded to the audience that a very high percentage of parliaments around the world have established internal library services, a good percentage of which are provided with basic ICT capabilities and, on a minor scale, with connection to the intranet.

Mr. Garga observed that parliamentary libraries are meant to help members of parliament to deal with the information overload they are exposed to, by creating and implementing effective systems for managing information, making the information accessible and usable, and promoting information literacy to members. Mr. Garga mentioned in this context the ongoing

digitization project of the Archives of the National Assembly of Cameroon.

A key element of a library development strategy is its capability of marketing the services, tools and knowledge that it can make available for its users. At the National Assembly of Cameroon a great opportunity for the Library to promote and market its services is offered by the Parliamentary information days (*Journées d'information parlementaire*) organized at the beginning of each parliamentary term, specifically addressed to members and their staff. During these Parliamentary information days, where parliamentary departments explain their functions and organization to new members, the Library provides members with essential documents such as the Constitution of Cameroon, the Rules of procedures of the National Assembly, a handbook for members providing information on services and rules of the parliamentary administration, and the *Livre d'Or* of the Assembly, a very precious element of the Library collections.

At the end of his speech Mr. Garga mentioned the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN) and the Working Group on Libraries supported by UN/DESA whose secretariat is currently based in South Africa. Mr. Garga expressed his trust on the capability of the APKN network to become fully operational.

The last speaker of the Session was **Mr. John McDonough**, Head of Collections at the Library and Research Services of the Oireachtas (Parliament of Ireland). He focused his presentation on the availability of information inside and outside the Parliament and on the services related to management and dissemination of information sources and products.

Mr. McDonough underlined how the essential requirements of library and research

information products for the parliament are impartiality, timeliness, added value and accessibility. The Library must be an authoritative source, able to manage the entire life-cycle of information, from current events to digital preservation.

He briefly described the structure and functions of the Library and Research Services of the Oireachtas, and some of the services and information products they put in place including on-demand research services, proactive publications, legislative analysis, debate packs and economic indicators. He also underlined how, although the Library is not open to the public, it looks at ICT to deliver information and maintain a public presence through its website.

Technological innovation, Mr. McDonough noted, has become crucial, but there is a need for the Library to understand how to implement technology in a way that targets the user's actual information needs. Library and ICT units working within the parliament must find synergies in order to avoid the risk of targeting diverging objectives (data vs. information, security vs. openness, risk prevention vs. innovation etc.). If this risk is avoided, ICT can become a challenge but also an enabler for the development of library services, capable to respond to the growing expectations of members and of the parliamentary administration of the Oireachtas.

Mr. McDonough explored the concept of added value referred to libraries, recalling the theme of the session. Members can search for information in a variety of web resources (such as Google, Wikipedia) but what they really want and need is not to search, but to find information. The library can help fasten and enhance the search process by providing members, for example, with a single access point to relevant information

and to the e-resources of the library, with a discovery tool customized upon their needs, or with personalized and indexed subject alerts. The Library is also developing an easy to access blog on the parliamentary network to be used as a current awareness tool, for posting research papers, information, links to external websites and so on, and that can be handled and updated by the librarians without needing specific technical skills.

The most important element, according to Mr. McDonough, is to make sure that the huge supply of information that the library can develop is accessible from anywhere, remotely and especially through mobile technology. Furthermore, the public needs access to the parliamentary library network through mobile devices, so the Irish parliamentary library recently "moved" its servers, virtually, to a sort of dematerialized zone where security rules could be slightly relaxed to facilitate public access.

At the end of his presentation Mr. McDonough described the *eDocs Laid* system managed by the Library and Research Services. It is an electronic facility in place from January 2012 that allows department or agencies laying documents before the Houses to support the parliamentary process. This important development is an example of how synergy between Library and ICT, along the lines of defined policies and development strategies, can become a crucial factor for the enhancement of information in Parliament.

Interventions from the audience addressed important issues such as the difficult balance between accessibility and security and the question about who holds the responsibility for archiving blogs and similar material and information published online in a variety of formats. The publicity of parliamentary documentation as a guiding

principle to the security policy of the parliament was agreed upon during the discussion, as well as the fact that the role of IT departments is not to restrict information and contents but to protect systems. A last issue was raised regarding what the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments is doing to develop not only libraries but also research services, which still need a large amount of support to be developed or even established in a number of parliaments. The Section's representatives acknowledged this concern and mentioned

that this issue is being included in the future agenda of the Section. Cooperation and regional networking between countries sharing similar economic and legislative context were mentioned as well as important means to support the development of research services and skills in the parliamentary context.



XML applications and services in parliament

Through the presentation of concrete examples, this session, chaired by **Mr. Ravi Poliah**, Acting Division Manager, Parliament of South Africa, focused on the current implementation of XML in parliaments, the services that can be delivered making use of XML, and the tools that can be used to create and manage XML documents.

Mr. João Holanda, Director of SSALEP, Prodasen, Senate of Brazil, reported that a new infrastructure was built at the Senate of Brazil because of the need to improve the legislative information system to ensure data quality and consistency across the applications architecture. He explained that there was also a need to respond to the new sources and uses of information across multiple channels brought by the “consumerization of IT” (i.e. members of parliament and staff bringing their own devices). In addition, the open data movement and the 2012 Access to Information Law urged all public institutions to ensure open access to data and information.

The new infrastructure, Mr. Holanda explained, does not allow only the publication of files on the Internet but represents a truly open infrastructure upon which in the future new services and applications could be developed. To address the issue of data consistency the first step was to create an architecture based on data access layers.

The model is based on open tools and open standards. The open data solution is based on *SeekEnd* and enables federated catalogues all over the institution. The core underlying data container is XML, derived from the *Akoma Ntoso* schema. Other aspects of the solution are free and open source licenses and document repositories. Security concerns were addressed by a digital signature solution. Tools were made available to convert XML documents into other formats like PDF and eBook.

Mr. Holanda mentioned a number of applications that will be developed in the future. One of them is an application to compare the different versions of the constitution as it evolved throughout history. Other applications include editor tools that guide users in terms of smart authoring and tools where documents are integrated with audio and video links. Applications related to e-citizenship are also being considered.

Mr. Holanda concluded by saying that data quality and services can always be improved and highlighted the importance of investing in lessons learned exercises as they enable better planning and implementation.

Ms. Kirsten Gullickson, Senior Systems Analyst, House of Representatives of the United States of America, presented the ongoing developments within the House and the Senate to enable authoring and publication of XML data.

While the paper version, Ms. Gullickson explained, remains the official record for documents like bills, legislation, amendments and records of debate, there is a commitment to prepare, manage, archive and distribute electronically.





The basis for XML introduction for the exchange of legislative documents was a congressional directive of 1996 to revert to common data standards and the need to improve the information creation process and information exchange with other institutions. Also the opportunity was seized to allow the House of Representatives to become more independent in preparing and printing documents, by moving away from the Government Printing Office (GPO). Ms. Gullickson explained that during the late nineties the focus was on creating internal efficiencies in the document creation and publication process, instead of responding to demands from the open data/transparency movements, which have become the focus of the U.S. House's efforts today. XML, she underlined, is ideally suited to support accountability, transparency and empowerment of the public.

In developing the XML-based tools the legislative branch established a working group with representatives of the House, Senate and legislative branch stakeholders. XML is used in the shape of DTD instead of full-fledged schemas which were not robust enough during the late 90s.

Ms. Gullickson elaborated on the legislative drafting process and specifically explained how bills can originate from the Government branches and are then electronically delivered to the House. Within this process, she explained, there are many offices and

departments working on the same document but no common platform. In that sense the organizational setup remains compartmentalized and many information silos exist.

Ms. Gullickson provided an overview of XMetal, the editor used for bill documents, and described its main benefits such as the "smart authoring" functionality which allows the user to focus on content by taking care of other details like page numbering. One of the main lessons learned from the experience of introducing XMetal, she observed, was the importance of identifying an XML editor that fits the needs of authors.

Mr. Ashok Hariharan, Software Development Coordinator, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, identified first the main benefits of the use of XML tools and applications for parliaments: a) efficiency; b) improved collaboration among institutions; c) preservation; d) interoperability; e) cost effectiveness; f) value addition; and g) comparative research.

He then provided an overview of the set of common tools developed under the UN/DESA initiative Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, including the *Bungeni* suite of legislative information management tools, and how these tie in with the *Akoma Ntoso* legislative XML format.

Bungeni, he explained, is an open source suite of applications built on Open Office software. It allows the creation of bills and other parliamentary records and has the ability to support any document type. It is licensed with GPL version 3 and can run in Windows and Ubuntu operating environments.

Mr. Hariharan explained that the *Bungeni* Editor is based on a word processor editor. It is fully customizable, uses the Open

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Document Standard (ODS) and supports the RDF Meta data model. The underlying production format is based on *Akoma Ntoso*.

Mr. Hariharan gave the audience an overview of the screens of *Bungeni*. He showed how the document marking up functionality works using specific “control markup tools”. He furthermore demonstrated the viewable structural views, and explained that the underlying *Akoma Ntoso* XML schema “holds together” these structural views. Lastly he explained the incorporation of external data into the legislative documents, through an interface between *Bungeni* and external sources, built using REST open source software.

During the discussion participants expressed interest in tools that can be deployed for converting past and historic paper collections into digital collections, preferably XML. The panelists explained that this is a complex road but the starting point could be the use of OCR technology that allows scanning text, after which they would have to be “casted” in XML containers.



Inter-parliamentary cooperation to achieve an international legislative and parliamentary XML standard

This session discussed the importance of achieving an international parliamentary and legislative XML standard to support the exchange of documents and data across legislative branch organizations and to create synergies and economies of scale that will greatly lower the adoption barriers for parliaments that are planning the deployment of XML. The adoption of the *Akoma Ntoso* schema in several parliaments and the establishment of the OASIS LegalDocumentML Technical Committee that has begun its formal standardization process indicate that there could be promising developments on this front in the near future.

The chair of the session, **Mr. Gherardo Casini**, Head, Office of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, underlined that all panelists, besides their role in their respective national institution, had been invited to speak in the session as representatives of international bodies or associations dealing with inter-parliamentary cooperation, standardization and XML.

Mr. Enrico Seta, Senior Officer at the Research Department of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, delivered a presentation focusing on the role played by IPEX³ in the development of the initiative on common open standards of the Conference of the Speakers of the Parliaments of the European Union (EUSC).

At the outset, Mr. Seta stressed the crucial role played by the EUSC in recent years in the standardization process in parliaments.

He recalled that, upon the initiative of the Italian Parliament, the Presidency Conclusions of the EUSC of May 2010 in Stockholm contained a paragraph clearly encouraging “all initiatives aimed at establishing standards for digital data and documents, so as to make information on the activities of parliaments and EU institutions more easily accessible and transparent”.

The 2010 EUSC initiative addressed the need to assess the state of the art in the standardization of parliamentary documents in the European Union, to provide a reliable evaluation of possible costs and potential benefits of further investments, and to promote policies encouraging standardization initiatives and processes. Mr. Seta explained that the 2010 EUSC Conclusions entrusted the IPEX Board with the task to achieve these goals.

The IPEX conducted a survey on the use of standards and XML in EU parliaments, which showed a still limited use of open standards despite the possible benefits for transparency, efficiency, cost reduction and cooperation. The survey highlighted, however, that there is within the EU parliaments a shared interest to introduce XML for their documentation management processes and an increasing awareness of the importance of standardization of parliamentary and legislative documents and data for promoting transparency, accessibility and accountability at the national European Union, and global level. The survey results also stressed the need for the development of a common standard (such as *Akoma Ntoso*) for information exchange and documents sharing in open format among institutions, and for the promotion of cooperation strategies and know-how sharing to achieve this goal. As a conclusion the survey strongly

³ The InterParliamentary EU information eXchange (IPEX) is a network and a platform launched in 2000 for the exchange of EU related information between parliaments.

recommended the creation of a unique “information point” on digital standardization at the parliamentary level where each EU parliament can obtain updated information about the applications implemented and the projects set up and developed in this field.

Mr. Seta reported that the meeting of Secretaries General of EU parliaments held in Warsaw on 6 February 2012 took into account the findings of the survey and gave IPEX a further mandate to initiate a cooperation process with the relevant EU institutions, the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) and the UN/IPU Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, in order to establish a unique “information point” in the field of digital standardization. Few weeks after, at the end of February 2012, IPEX representatives participated in the international meeting *Achieving Greater Transparency in Legislatures through the Use of Open Document Standard*, co-organized in Washington D.C. by the U.S. House of Representatives, the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. During the meeting consensus emerged among delegates on the establishment of an inter-parliamentary Working Group on Open Document Standards under the framework of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, with the aim of providing a forum for advancing the state of open document standards in parliaments.

During its meeting in Warsaw of 20-21 April 2012, the EU Speakers Conference renewed its engagement as political body in this issue by noting the Conclusions of the meeting of the Secretaries General and encouraging, in the Presidency Conclusions, initiatives for digital standardization, transparency and parliamentary openness. The Conclusions

underlined “the importance of ensuring maximum transparency and the most accurate and timely information on parliamentary activities by providing the relevant data online in freely accessible ways and formats, while promoting the adoption of open, common international standards favouring the treatment and re-use of the published data by all parties concerned”. Finally, Mr. Seta mentioned that, as a follow up to this initiative, in June 2012 the IPEX Board mandated the IPEX Central Support to participate in all the relevant networks, conferences and workshops on common standards including the Working Group on Open Document Standards to be established under the framework of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.

Before giving the floor to the second speaker, **Mr. Casini**, Chair of the Session, pointed out how crucial it is that at the political level there is a shared awareness of the value and urgency of using open documents standards and of making documents available to the public in formats that can be re-used. He mentioned, in this perspective, the very important step taken in April 2011 by the Speaker and the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives of the United States of America, who sent a letter to the Clerk of the House fostering and furthering the use of machine-readable formats to ensure that all legislative documentation and data is available to the public.

Mr. Carlo Simonelli, Coordinator of the ECPRD Area of Interest on ICT and Head of the Office of Central Systems at the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, explained that ECPRD is a network born in 1977 to facilitate collaboration, information sharing and comparative research in the legislative and parliamentary domain, which now counts 68 parliamentary assemblies from countries of the

Council of Europe, plus some observers. He then outlined the activities of the *Area of Interest on ICT* explaining that this network of IT specialists working in the parliamentary context organizes two series of seminars annually: the ICT seminar dedicated to general parliamentary ICT services and the *Parliaments on the NET* seminar focusing more specifically on parliamentary websites.

The speaker explained that while access to the main part and content of the ECPRD website is restricted to ECPRD correspondents and parliamentary staff, the presentations delivered at the seminars are accessible and downloadable from the websites of the hosting parliaments. This is the case of presentations and studies on XML, which has received increasing attention at recent ECPRD seminars following its growing importance for legislation drafting and legislative documents exchange in recent years.

Mr. Simonelli provided an overview of three case studies on XML presented during the *Parliaments on the Net* seminars. The first one was delivered by the Dutch parliament at the “Parliaments on the Net” seminar in Brussels in 2011; the second one, presented at the “Parliaments on the Net” seminar in Madrid in 2012, focused on the results of a questionnaire on XML developed to assess transparency of parliamentary works, and the third one, delivered as well in Madrid, addressed the multiyear effort of the European Parliament to start using XML and to move towards the implementation of the *Akoma Ntoso* schema.

The final part of the presentation focused on ICT strategic planning and on mobile devices and delivery of services, paperless parliaments, “bring your own device” strategies and permanent connection, defined by Mr. Simonelli as “the current drivers for change”. Mr. Simonelli stated that XML



and open data must and can be drivers for change and strategic planning, provided that there is adequate budget and support from the parliamentary leadership. He then pointed out the benefits that can result from using XML in terms of costs reduction, re-use of information and rapid development of advanced IT parliamentary processes. He also stressed how there can be extra benefits if a common XML standard is adopted such as no cost for developing and maintaining the standard, mitigated risks for document long term preservation and sharing, and encouraged international parliamentary cooperation.

Mr. Simonelli observed that a common XML standard can also represent a step toward the Web 3.0 and the Semantic Web, and the mobile revolution. A diagram representing the UN ICT strategy was then presented to stress, once again, how the adoption of XML must be championed at the highest level of the institutions or organizations that intend to implement it, and with adequate budget, in order to develop projects that are actually able to reap the benefits described.

The last panelist of the session was **Ms. Monica Palmirani**, Co-Chair of the OASIS LegalDocumentML Committee and Professor of Legal Informatics at the Law School – CIRSFID of the University of Bologna. The presentation of Ms. Palmirani dealt with the work of the LegalDocumentML Technical Committee aimed to develop a

common legal document standard, extendible, customizable and able to support all necessary languages.

Established by the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS), the Technical Committee focuses its work on *Akoma Ntoso*, the XML-based language developed since 2004 by the UN/DESA in the framework of the *Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan*. Ms. Palmirani explained that *Akoma Ntoso* is an open XML standard for all the legal documents used in parliamentary processes, able to mark up every type of document also within a complex legislative process and documentation workflow. Initially developed to support the legislative work of African parliaments *Akoma Ntoso* is now starting to be used by other parliaments and other institutions and organizations around the world.

Ms. Palmirani stressed that unlike other XML schemas *Akoma Ntoso*, an extendable and customizable standard, has specific features that can ensure the management of all kind of documents with specific peculiarities to guarantee transparency, quality and efficiency. These features include

1. a clear division between content, metadata and presentation;
2. the ability to track of the entire lifecycle of the document and workflow steps of the legislative process;
3. mark-up not only of the content but also of the metadata, allowing to systematically connect different parts of the document and generate

4. new information and legal knowledge;
5. long-term preservation of legal validity;
6. provision of raw open data, accompanied with specific rules on how to re-use the content and information in order to avoid incorrect use and manipulation;
7. multilingualism;
8. preservation of privacy all together with accessibility, through anonymity mechanisms provided by the schema. In addition, the separation of players in the *Akoma Ntoso* schema allows each “player” (for example the legislator, the library, the editor) to apply a digital signature to the relevant layer and fragment.

Ms. Palmirani stated that the aim of the LegalDocumentML Technical Committee is to widen the community of experts, strengthen training activities and increase the number of pilot cases, in order to move *Akoma Ntoso* to the status of International Standard.

Ms. Palmirani explained that OASIS is instrumental to this end since OASIS Standards can be submitted to *de jure* bodies (ISO, ITU, etc) for further ratification. OASIS holds a LegalXML Community since 1998 and a LegalXML Member Section since 2002. In early 2012 it opened a call for participation for the LegalDocML Technical Committee focusing on *Akoma Ntoso*, which now counts 43 members, has a governing body and equal participation rights for members, and an approved workflow.

Ms. Palmirani concluded her presentations with an open invitation to participate in the activities of the Committee.

After the presentations the Chair encouraged an open discussion to find a common ground and verify opportunities for wider cooperation among parliaments and for a collaborative approach for further developments. He started the discussion sharing data coming from the *World e-Parliament Report 2012*,



which confirms that the number of parliaments using XML is still very limited despite the benefits it can provide, but outlines that there is a growing number of them that would like to use XML or open document standards, and to exchange documents, and that are looking for a standard to do so.

He recalled the idea emerged in February 2012 among the participants in the International meeting *Achieving Greater Transparency in Legislatures through the Use of Open Document Standard* of creating an inter-parliamentary Working Group on Open Document Standards within the framework of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament for sharing knowledge with other parliaments, investigating case studies and practice, as well as setting benchmarks. A key outcome of the activity of this Working Group could be to create the right means to facilitate the understanding by Speakers, members of parliaments, and secretaries general of XML and to help them to identify the benefits it could bring to their parliament and to the parliamentary community.

A good number of delegates from parliaments around the world expressed their interest in implementing XML, in exploring *Akoma Ntoso* and in participating in the Working Group on Open Document Standards. It was also noted that the Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations have strong expertise and knowledge in this field within their community and are willing to cooperate and bring in the Working Group the perspective of the end users.

Several parliaments expressed support to the idea of *Akoma Ntoso* becoming an international common standard for parliaments. A good number of parliaments stated that they are already using *Akoma Ntoso* (Brazil, European Parliament, Senate of Italy, Uruguay) or considering doing so (Chad, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia). In addition, others declared that they are willing to offer their parliamentary documents, already available in XML, also in the *Akoma Ntoso Standard* (United Kingdom and the United States of America).



Joint open source projects to deliver quality information

This session was chaired by **Mr. Bassel Dohaini**, Chairman of the ICT Department, Parliament of Lebanon.

Mr. Mauro Fioroni, acting Head of the IT Department, and **Mr. Carlo Marchetti**, Head of the Information Systems Development Office, Senate of Italy, presented the experience of the Senate of Italy with open source projects.

Mr. Fioroni explained that the development of open source projects in the Senate started from the need to reduce costs since the ICT budget was cut by about 20% in two years and the users increased by 40% in four years. The Senate intends to move towards a “paperless parliament” with the objective of reducing, through ICT, the cost of drafting, printing and distributing. It is expected that by 2013 the number of printed pages will decrease by 83% and the number of online documents will increase by 180%.

In order to reduce the costs for drafting the IT Department started to draft agendas, written answers and dossiers internally and stopped printing them. Reports are edited through XML/XHTML editors. The expected savings are about 200,000 Euros per year for

the agendas and 500,000 Euros per year for the reports.

Mr. Marchetti elaborated on specific projects developed by the Senate. The development of editors started in 2006. They are MS Word based and use open source software such as iText, FOP, Saxon and Tidy, which are very useful for libraries to move from the XML file to the pdf file. These editors allowed the Senate to move away from the typography printing service while maintaining good quality and cutting costs for software licences.

Recently, the Senate also migrated all search engines from proprietary platforms to open source platforms based on *Apache Solr*, and published all pdfs of legislative acts on the website through the open source document management system *Alfresco*. The Senate is also planning to use *Alfresco Share* as a collaboration tool to be used in committees and in plenary for sharing documents among members of parliament.

Mr. Marchetti then focused his presentation on the first open source product developed internally by the Senate, named *Scriba*. Released in 2011, *Scriba* allows the publishing of all parliamentary documents in ePub format, thus increasing access to parliamentary information from tablets and mobile devices. The rationale behind the development of *Scriba* was that through tablets readers can maximize user experience by having the possibility to turn pages, insert bookmarks or comments, adjust size/contrast, etc.

To convert any PDF or HTML file into an ePub document the Senate built a general engine. The conversion of documents is made online. On any page showing the html version of an act there is an icon that, once





clicked, allows the dynamic conversion of the html version into an ePub version. The user can then place the ePub document in the library and access it at any time, even off line.

The other way eBooks are offered is through the Scriba service, which is a page (www.senato.it/ebook) that collects a set of eBooks made available in agreement with the press office such as press releases, acts, daily agendas of committees and plenary etc. The user can select specific eBooks and also create relevant dossiers.

The Scriba service is proprietary but the Scriba eBook conversion engine makes extensive use of open source software. It is released under the GNU GPL3 license on sourceforge and downloadable free of charge at www.scribaebookmake.sourceforge.net. It can be deployed on Tomcat OS AS. Scriba can be easily extended by developing plugins for pre-processing and transforming whatever content (XML, PDF, feed RSS, feed ATOM, non well-formed HTML) in eBooks understandable formats.

Mr. Marchetti reported that since July 2001 Scriba was downloaded 3703 times. Many parliaments are asking the Senate for

technical advice to integrate Scriba in their infrastructure.

Mr. Fioroni concluded by highlighting that open source and open standards *are now reliable tools for fostering innovation and ensuring savings*. Collaboration among parliaments is the next challenge to promote information exchange on available tools and encourage re-use of internally developed tools.

Mr. Claudio Fabiani, Project Manager, Directorate General for Innovation and Technological Support, European Parliament, presented *AT4AM*, a web tool developed by the European Parliament in 2010 to help draft amendments.

AT4AM was developed as part of the broader programme “e-Parliament” aimed to enhance and simplify the legislative process at the European Parliament through the production of XML-based content from the reception of the proposal by the European Commission to the final publication of the act. The XML standard used is *Akoma Ntoso*.

Mr. Fabiani described the entire process. The draft proposal arrives in word format from the European Commission and the Members of the European Parliament



propose modifications via the *AT4AM*. Amendments are submitted by users in their native language and compiled into one large multilingual document. Amendments can be submitted for tabling directly in a web browser. *AT4AM* is integrated with the European Parliament digital signature system. The document is then sent to the legal and verification service. The editing of the document is done through a draft support tool which is also XML-based. It allows tracking changes, making comments, highlighting the text and exporting to both MS word and *Akoma Ntoso* XML.

Mr. Fabiani identified the main benefits of the introduction of *AT4AM*. The tool covers all 23 languages of the European Union and allows instant access to all language versions of the source text. The time to draft, verify and translate amendments is drastically reduced. More than 100.000 amendments have been drafted during the first year of use. Quality is improved and authors can focus on the drafting activity and forget layout issues. Amendments are stored as individual objects and therefore available for subsequent re-use.

Mr. Fabiani then announced that the European Parliament intends to make available the open source version of *AT4AM* to any parliament and institution interested in taking advantage of this tool. Open *AT4AM* will be provided with all the important features used at the European Parliament including in line editing, multilanguage support and export in MS Word and XML *Akoma Ntoso*. The code of Open *AT4AM* will be released under the European open source licence EUPL.

Mr. Mario Ruggier, Software Developer Officer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, offered his views on the

open source software development model.

Mr. Ruggier started his presentation by highlighting that many parliamentary applications lack a number of features that make software unique: reusability at very low marginal costs, adaptability to meet changing requirements and openness to unprecedented collaboration opportunities. He stressed that open source offers parliaments a huge opportunity and represents the best model to deliver high and sustainable quality information systems.

The speaker identified the main advantages of the open source software development model. It is reliable as several people can discover and fix bugs and stable since multiple eyes have access to the source code and can scan it. It is also free of charge, gives users flexibility and freedom from the interests of commercial companies, and is supported by a whole community that can give advice and respond to technical issues.

Mr. Ruggier noted that despite many parliaments are adopting open source software to support their legislative process there are currently very few examples of tools implemented within the logic and mindset of open source. There are two myths, in particular, that should be busted. Firstly, open source applications are not a way of “doing charity”, as many parliaments may think, but rather a way to build better services for the institution. Secondly, open source does not demand a vast amount of resources to support it as technical support is provided by the wider open source community.

Mr. Ruggier described the main features of the open source eco-system. The code is developed around open standards. Since there are no direct commercial interests involved developers are interested in the results and not in the financial gain. Good documentation is critical to allow others to



re-use the software and build on it. Finally, modularity is a key element which allows the systems to be adapted.

The speaker highlighted that the development of open source software is driven by the “community” and specifications and requirements are changing all the time. It is therefore important to build modular

architectures that are more likely to meet new requirements.

Mr. Ruggier concluded by reiterating that the open source software may be evolved, adapted, extended, redesigned, used in unforeseen ways, developed collaboratively and reproduced at no cost.

During the discussion one participant observed that even though there is no direct cost involved with open source software there is an educational/training cost to learn how to implement it and adapt it. In responding to this comment it was emphasized that collaborative software means also collaborative support and inter-parliamentary cooperation is critical to help parliaments build their capacities. It was also noted that there are today commercial companies specialized in providing training. The importance of having good documentation about the code was highlighted.

Options of electronic voting systems in plenary and committee rooms

This session provided examples by three legislatures of technology solutions that have been adopted for electronic voting systems. Before giving the floor to the panelists, the chair of the session, **Mr. Garreth Ferguson**, Information Systems Manager, Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, highlighted that the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago does not have an electronic voting system since it follows the Westminster system by which members of parliament cast their vote manually.

Mr. Patricio Alvarez, Director of the IT Department, Senate of Chile, gave a presentation on the electronic voting system used by the Senate. He explained that the system was introduced because of the complexity of the voting procedure in Chile, which envisages different types of quorums and forms for expressing the vote, and the need to react quickly in accessing information in case of controversial and sensitive discussions.

When developing the system the IT Department considered different options taking into account all scenarios and actions that could occur during the voting process, and made a thorough analysis of the security risks.



Mr. Alvarez described the physical infrastructure in the plenary room. All 38 senators are provided with touch screen computers, an audio unit and a web camera. The identification of users is done through biometric. The plenary room is equipped with two large displays so that everyone can follow what happens.

The speaker then described the voting process. Through the legislative information system the secretariat enters the information about the session which is synchronized with the local database. Through an alert system senators are called to vote. After the vote, the results appear on the displays in the plenary room. The voting process is then documented and the results are published on the website.

The system in use was developed in 2006. The client application is Windows-based and communicates with a mysql server database through a *Windows* socket (*Winsock*). The main shortcomings of the system are the complexity of the vote processing in the server, the difficulty of communication with the senators, the dependence on the voting device, and the slow response time.

Mr. Alvarez pointed out that the IT Department is working on a new system to be launched in November 2012. The client application in the new system runs over a web browser and makes use of *Websocket*. The new system will facilitate communication, ensure independence from the device since the vote can be cast with a tablet, a smartphone, etc., improve significantly the response time, and allow the control of the voting system by multiple authorized users.

Mr. Alvarez concluded by stating that the IT Department is now exploring the possibility

to extend this solution to the Committee voting, and to improve the security of the system by considering facial recognition as an identification method.

Mr. Marian Botocan, IT Director, Chamber of Deputies of Romania, provided an overview of the electronic voting system of the Chamber. Put into operation in 2005, the system was based on Bosch Digital Congress Network (DCN) Concentus and replaced in June 2006 by DCN next generation and wireless products.

The plenary hall is equipped with about 500 voting terminals. The members of parliament have no fixed seats and their identification is done through chip cards without assigned seats.

Mr. Botocan identified some of the shortcomings of the system. The use of chip cards without fixed seats allows multiple voting. Chip cards are frequently lost and their replacement implies the resetting of the voting server. When results are contested there is no immediate feedback on vote options. The system does not allow either obtaining the historical archive of votes across legislatures or accessing the votes via search keys (member of parliament, session, date, topic, etc.).

Mr. Botocan identified other features of the system. Vote results are immediately available on voting terminals during the sitting. Vote results are also embedded in the live video which is cast in the plenary hall and on the close TV system, and broadcast over the Internet.

Mr. Botocan clarified that initially the voting system network was connected to the database infrastructure network. After the vote, the results were automatically exported to a text file, imported in the database infrastructure network and published on the website.



Recently, in order to reinforce the security of the system, the link between the voting system network and the database infrastructure network was cut. Now the vote results are not loaded into the database not online but immediately after the end of the sitting.

The list of votes is available for every sitting day and updated automatically after the vote. The bill tracking sheet, generating from the bill tracking system built in 1996 and providing links to relevant documents, transcripts of the debates and videos, is also automatically updated with the vote results. Nominal vote results are also provided in the plenary debates transcript pages. Moreover, the vote history of members of parliament is available on their web pages.

Vote results are available in XML open data format for re-use. The data is used, for example, by the Institute for Public Policy which manages a website containing information about the activities of the Parliament of Romania (www.alesiivoteaza.ro).

Mr. Umberto Biagi, Senior Advisor, IT Department, Chamber of Deputies of Italy, described the electronic voting system of the Chamber introduced for the first time in 1987. It is a stand-alone, integrated system, running on servers located in a dedicated control room, next to the plenary hall.

In 2009 the system was improved to prevent multiple voting by the members

of parliament. Each voting terminal was upgraded in order to be activated by fingerprint recognition. During an enrollment phase, templates were created with the fingerprints of the members of parliament and stored in smart cards. Each member of parliament was provided with a personal smart card to be used on the voting terminal of a specific voting seat.

Regarding the technical aspects, the fingerprint device used is *Touch Chip UPEK TCEBB1C*, the fingerprint algorithm is the software Cogent which has very low error rates, and the smartcard is Oberture Card System 64 RSA T ver. 5.4.

The members of parliament can follow the voting procedure through either the displays in the plenary hall, which schematically reproduce the entire seats area, or the vote count boards, which show the

type of vote (roll-call, secret ballot), the vote order number and the status of voting (open, closed, cancelled). All the operations are managed by a system management console under the Speaker control. At the end of the sitting, all voting data are extracted to be published in official documents and on the Internet and Intranet websites.

The discussion brought forward issues such as existing policies for managing the chip/smart cards, publication of vote results in real time and multiple voting. Panelists were also requested to provide information about the time and cost for implementing their electronic voting systems. The issue of who decides about the adoption of the electronic voting system was also raised. Panelists responded that the final decision rests with the leadership of the Parliament.



Celebrations of the International Day of Democracy

Promoting Tolerance and Peace

This high-level plenary session, chaired by Mr. Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, and Mr. Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations, brought the conference to its conclusion during the International Day of Democracy 2012. The overall theme “Promoting Tolerance and Peace” was addressed by high level members of international organizations and representative institutions as well as by Speakers and Presidents of Parliament.

Mr. Stelzer stressed that it was highly symbolic that the closing day of the World e-Parliament Conference 2012 coincided with the International Day of Democracy. The Conference deliberations, he observed, have highlighted the link between democracy, parliaments and new technologies and stressed the importance of freedom of access to information and citizens’ participation in the political life of a nation. Mr. Stelzer made reference to the resolution A/62/7 of the United Nations General Assembly inviting all stakeholders, including parliamentarians, to commemorate the International Day of Democracy.

Mr. Lupi expressed appreciation for the conclusion of the World e-Parliament Conference with the celebration of the International Day of Democracy and highlighted the importance of the theme addressed by the session.

Mr. Lupi noted that today freedom of religion is increasingly threatened and, paradoxically, the fall of authoritarian regimes and dictatorships has serious consequences for religious minorities. He highlighted that fundamentalism is the evil of any religious faith and should be fought against to build democracies that recognize the role of diversity and plurality. Politicians cannot ignore the importance of freedom of religion as any democracy that is not based on respect for human dignity would only be a mere technique of political exercise. Free and pluralist societies should be built on dialogue and respect for traditions.

Mr. Lupi observed that the World e-Parliament Conference, just concluded, has demonstrated that parliamentary assemblies all over the world are increasingly using new technology tools to better exercise their functions. ICT, he noted, should be used to develop the link between parliaments and people since parliaments are the place where people



are represented. Western countries, he stated, should make their knowledge available to contribute to the development of democracy all over the world.

The opening remarks by the co-Chairs were followed by four keynote addresses delivered by Mr. Giulio Terzi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Chukwuemeka Nkem Ihedioha, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nigeria and Mr. Vannino Chiti, Vice President of the Senate of Italy.

Mr. Terzi underlined the importance of a joint action of parliaments and governments in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular freedom of religion.

After strongly condemning the attack on the American diplomatic mission at Benghazi, in Libya, Mr. Terzi highlighted the importance of promoting dialogue and fighting extremism. He underlined that democratic rules promote pacific coexistence and ensure the respect of religious and ethnic minorities, and parliament is the main guarantor of these principles.

He expressed appreciation for the growing number of democratic countries which today are 60 per cent of all countries according to the data provided by “Freedom House”. Democracies, he noted, should be defended every day.

He stressed the importance of educating young people to democratic values in both consolidated and in transition democracies. Awareness and education are key to keep young people away from any extremism. In this regard he welcomed the invitation by the Secretary General of the United Nations on the Day of Democracy to work together “to bring democracy education to all, and in particular, to those societies in transition that need it most”.

New technologies, Internet and social networks, he observed, can contribute to democracy



by promoting contacts to overcome barriers. It is necessary, however, to ensure that these tools are not used to encourage violence. It is also important to take into account that many countries still lack Internet connection and cannot access parliament and government Information. Mr. Terzi highlighted that the role of parliaments cannot be replaced by these new tools, as parliamentary dialectic is essential for freedom and pluralism, as well as for promoting peace and economic growth.

The speaker concluded by underlining that the role of religion is to unite in the name of peace, and to pursue values of tolerance, dialogue and peaceful coexistence, of which parliaments are the guardians.

Mr. Radi stated that the International Day of Democracy provides an opportunity to reflect on the concept of democracy and on the ways to reinforce it through individual and collective actions. He provided examples of how parliaments all over the world are commemorating the Day of Democracy in 2012 and highlighted that since its establishment in 2008 more than 70 parliaments have celebrated this Day. He highlighted that the IPU chose as theme for the International Day of Democracy 2012 “Dialogue and inclusiveness: Central to Democracy”.

Mr. Radi recalled that fifteen years ago in Cairo the IPU adopted the Universal Declaration on Democracy in which it was stated that democracy is both a universally recognized ideal and a goal to attain. The Declaration acknowledged that without respect for plurality of views in politics, there could be no democracy. Plurality of views, he observed, can also lead to confrontation but what separates democracy from other political philosophies is the principle and practice of solving differences first and foremost through dialogue.

He stated that the Arab Spring is a tragic reminder of the critical importance of political integration and dialogue to both peace and democracy. What people are demanding and what has to be delivered is a system that brings everyone into the political fold and for all citizens to participate in political dialogue at the national and local levels through free and fair elections and through elected representatives.

Mr. Radi made reference to a 2008 global poll that found that 85 per cent of people believed that the “will of the people should be the basis of the authority of government”. Yet that potential, Mr. Radi observed, will not be realized until voters’ trust in parliaments and in their elected representatives reaches a certain level of reliability.

As a first step, parliaments should improve their own performance and reach out to the people and, parliamentarians should practice a policy of being close to their constituents. Next they must include and engage





in dialogue with the very people who have elected them on the decisions that fundamentally affect all aspects of their life.

Mr. Radi concluded by underlining that parliamentarians remain the most important contact in relations between citizens and parliament, and the dialogue and engagement with the voters not only brings democracy alive but humanizes it.

Mr. Ihedioha, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nigeria, explained that Nigeria is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society with two dominant religions practiced by the majority of the population: Christianity and Islam. The diverse composition

of the country in terms of religion and ethnicity has impressed a big obligation on the government to pursue the path of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Mr. Ihedioha stated that the issue of religion in Nigeria is very sensitive and delicate. Religion can easily be exploited by the enemies of the state to cause confusion. However, given the mass appeal that the two dominant religions enjoy in the country, religion can be also employed to mobilize citizenry for national development.

The speaker underlined that according to the Nigerian constitution there is no state religion in the country and the right to freedom of religion is a fundamental human right. The constitution also states that the government guarantees that different beliefs have the same rights.

In Nigeria, the speaker observed, different people and religions have coexisted and lived peacefully for a long time but nowadays a campaign of terror in some parts of the country has started in the name of religion. Despite of that, people in Nigeria have demonstrated not to be intimidated in their tolerance, and there is clear commitment by the political, religious and traditional leaders to maintain religious peace and harmony.

Mr. Ihedioha emphasized that there is a general consensus in Nigeria that democracy is the best form of government that can lead to economic development, social peace and political stability.

He then underlined the key role of parliaments and quoted Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations who stressed, in his address to the World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments in 2010, the importance of parliaments in the promotion of democracy towards poverty reduction and eradication of unemployment.

Mr. Ihedioha concluded that the National Assembly of Nigeria will continue to promote and defend democracy and the rule of law.

Mr. Chiti pointed out that celebrating the International Day of Democracy during the World e-Parliament Conference 2012 is a way of linking the theme of parliamentary strengthening, also through ICT, to the broader theme of democracy promotion.

He observed that democracy is a value per se and encouraged the international community to play a key role in facing current challenges such as an ungoverned globalization and the raise of fundamentalism and terrorism.

Democracy, Mr. Chiti stressed, needs institutions that can implement it, especially at the global level. At the European level, there is a need to build a supranational democracy and make the necessary reforms to allow the European Union to be more politically effective on themes such as security, international relations, environment and energy.

Mr. Chiti highlighted that democracy, more than other forms of government, guarantees human dignity and freedom. He emphasized the role of dialogue among cultures and religions to eliminate inequalities and ensure social cohesion not only between nations but also within the same nation. Religions should clearly condemn all forms of political violence and terrorism and play a role in overcoming conflicts and ensure a fair international order.

Mr. Chiti concluded by highlighting that in our contemporary world the basis for the coexistence of different religions and cultures is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which embodies a universal system of values to be realized and towards which all countries should direct their efforts in order to attain the goals of freedom, justice, solidarity and inclusion. This is how, Mr. Chiti observed, peace is built and strengthened.

The keynote addresses were followed by statements delivered by Presidents/Speakers of Parliament.

Mr. Timothy Hamel Smith, President of the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago, stressed that everyone individually and collectively can do something to foster peace. He expressed the conviction that parliamentarians will generate a “tsunami of peace” if they are mindful of their words and action as they fulfill their duties.

Recalling the words of Pope Paul VI Mr. Hamel Smith stated that each of us should endeavor to enable every person to fulfill his/her own human potential. In relation to everyone’s duty to the wider world this duty is a three-fold obligation: 1) mutual solidarity, 2) social justice, 3) universal charity.

He concluded by encouraging the Presiding Officers of parliament to be ambassadors of peace and to work together for peace and justice.

Mr. Pandikar Amin Haji Mulia, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia, stated that Malaysia coined its own democracy which he defined as a working democracy in a multiracial, multicultural and multireligious society.

Mr. Mulia highlighted that the current system works well for Malaysia and guides the country in protecting its values and making it united in diversity. He underlined that Malaysia’s economy is well managed. According to a research conducted by the International Institute for Management Development based in Switzerland out of 59 countries Malaysia’s economic competitiveness ranks 14.

Mr. Mulia also stressed that Malaysia takes seriously current global issues such as human trafficking, illicit drugs, climate change, terrorism, human rights and religious tolerance.



Mr. Hama Amadou, President of the National Assembly of Niger, stressed that some countries have difficulties in implementing democracy due to their economic situation. Extreme poverty, Mr. Amadou observed, can create the conditions for the development of extremism and fundamentalism.

Referring to the attack on the American diplomatic mission at Benghazi, in Libya, Mr. Amadou stated that freedom of expression is a pillar of democracy but should not be used to create tensions and conflicts between countries but rather to promote tolerance and peace.

He then highlighted the importance of implementing democracy at the international level where decisions must not be taken by a restricted group of states. This, he explained, generates injustice and inequalities that lead to mounting violence around the world.

Mr. Adam Hamid Musa, Speaker of the Council of States of Sudan, offered an overview of the progress made by Sudan in its democratic process since the general elections held in 2010 and mentioned the referendum that led to Southern Sudan's independence. He highlighted the importance of cooperation among countries to promote development and stability.



Ms. Jennifer Simons, Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname highlighted that the establishment of a special day for Democracy is important not only for countries with lack of democracy, but also as a reminder for every one of the challenges for establishing a real citizens' democracy.

Ms. Simons stated that citizens' participation fosters trust and peace within societies. Suriname, she observed, proves that people with different ethnicity, religion and cultural background can live together and establish a peaceful society. She emphasized that what enables Suriname to keep building its unity is democracy.



Ms. Simons stated that democracy is a never ending “work in progress” both in new and mature democracies, based on the rule of law and citizens’ knowledge of their government system. Timely availability of information is therefore crucial for citizens to participate in the decision-making process.

Ms. Simons then underlined the role of parliaments in further developing and defending democracy, and enabling and encouraging citizens’ engagement, also through ICT tools.

Closing remarks were delivered by Mr. Stelzer, Mr. Radi and Mr. Renzo Lusetti, Member of the Bureau of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy.

On behalf of the United Nations **Mr. Stelzer** thanked the Chamber of Deputies of Italy for hosting the World e-Parliament Conference and recognized the leadership of President Fini and Vice President Lupi for making it happen. He also thanked the staff of the Chamber of Deputies for their professionalism, capacity and courtesy.

He thanked the Inter-Parliamentary Union for the long-term partnership established around the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, and expressed the belief that the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union will continue in the future.

Mr. Radi thanked the Chamber of Deputies of Italy for the hospitality and excellent organization. He expressed appreciation to the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament for its work and to all participants for their active participation in the Conference.

He highlighted the role played by ICT to strengthen parliaments and their functions and noted that improving communication between parliaments and the society helps citizens to better know parliaments and their mission. Better communication among parliaments, in addition, facilitates dialogue and reinforces cooperation among nations. He concluded by expressing the hope that the cooperation among parliaments will be further strengthened in the future.

Mr. Lusetti thanked the co-organizers and all participants. He highlighted the link between democracy and new technologies, which offer immense opportunities to enhance democratic participation.

He recalled that the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and a group of parliaments, including the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, launched the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament in 2005 to promote cooperation among parliaments in the use of ICT to support their work and enhance citizens’ participation. He also stressed the importance of the collaboration between politicians and technical staff to be able to fully reap the benefits of ICT.

Mr. Lusetti concluded by emphasizing that it is the duty of parliamentarians to defend the principles of democracy and political participation.

13 September

08:00 am	Registration of delegates	
Aula dei Gruppi		
09:15 am - 10:00 am	<p>Official opening of the World e-Parliament Conference 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gianfranco Fini, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy • Anders Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union • Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations (video) • Abel Martínez Durán, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic and Co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament • Rainer Wieland, Vice President of the European Parliament and Co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament (video) • Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy and member of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament • Benedetto Adragna, Senator and Questor of the Senate of Italy <p><i>Greetings on behalf of the Presidency of the Senate</i></p>	
10:00 am - 10:30 am	<p>The State of ICT in Parliaments today: the World e-Parliament Report 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key note address: Jeffrey Griffith, Senior Advisor, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament 	
Aula dei Gruppi		
Sala del Mappamondo		
10:30 am - 12:00 pm	<p>Session A1 - The impact of technology on parliamentary openness and accountability</p> <p><i>Chair: Jennifer Simons, Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antonio Palmieri, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy • Juan José Lucas Giménez, 1st Vice President of the Senate of Spain • Chifumu Banda, Deputy Chairperson of Committees of the National Assembly of Zambia <p><i>Open debate</i></p>	<p>Session B1 - Bungeni Parliamentary and Legislative Information System: features, architecture and localization</p> <p><i>Chair: João Viegas Abreu, Senior Programme Expert, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flavio Zeni, Chief Technical Adviser. Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations • Miriam Ngoka, Programme Officer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations • Ashok Hariharan, Software Development Coordinator, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations • Mario Ruggier, Software Development Officer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations • Fabio Vitali, Co-Chair of the OASIS LegalDocumentML, Committee Professor of Computer Science, University of Bologna
12:00 pm - 01:30 pm	<p>Session A2 - The challenges of today's participatory media for parliaments and legislators</p> <p><i>Chair: Abdelouahed El Ansari, Vice President of the House of Representatives of Morocco</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cedrick Frolick, House Chairperson of the National Assembly of South Africa • Archy Kirkwood, Chairman of the Information Committee of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom • Eriko Yamatani, Member of the House of Councillors of Japan • Ramón Farías Ponce, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile <p><i>Open debate</i></p>	<p>Session B2 - Bungeni Parliamentary and Legislative Information System: the way forward</p> <p><i>Chair: Miriam Ngoka, Programme Officer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shirley-Ann Fiagome, Deputy Director ICT, Parliament of Ghana • Owino Harrison, Head of ICT Services, National Assembly of Kenya • Saseeta Ramsahye-Rakha, Ag. Parliamentary ICT Manager, National Assembly of Mauritius • Cheryl Pinas, Head of the ICT department, National Assembly of Suriname • Michael Mukuka, Principal Clerk ICT, National Assembly of Zambia <p><i>Open debate</i></p>

01:30 pm	Lunch break	
	Aula dei Gruppi	Sala del Mappamondo
03:00 pm - 04:30 pm	<p>Session A3 - Innovations in parliamentary communications</p> <p><i>Chair: Audrey O'Brien, Clerk, House of Commons of Canada</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hayono Isman, Vice-Chairman of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation of the House of Representatives of Indonesia • Stephen Clark, Head of Web Communications, European Parliament • Andy Williamson, Consultant, Inter-Parliamentary Union <p><i>Open debate</i></p>	<p>Session B3 - Technology options for recording and reporting parliamentary proceedings</p> <p><i>Chair: Damir Davidovic, Secretary General, Parliament of Montenegro</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saseeta Ramsahye-Rakha, Ag. Parliamentary ICT Manager, National Assembly of Mauritius • Andreas Sidler, Chief Information Officer, Federal Parliament of Switzerland • Miano Njoka, Software Developer Officer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations <p><i>Open debate</i></p>
04:30 pm	Coffee break	
05:00 pm - 06:30 pm	<p>Session A4 - Benefits and values of open data for fostering greater transparency in legislatures</p> <p><i>Chair: Jani Makraduli, Vice President of the Assembly of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paolo Gentiloni, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy and Elena Flavia Candia, IT Department Officer, Chamber of Deputies of Italy • Rogério Ventura Teixeira, Director General, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil • Robert Reeves, Deputy Clerk, House of Representatives of the United States of America <p><i>Open debate</i></p>	<p>Session B4 - The added value of libraries to parliamentary information: making content more powerful</p> <p><i>Chair: Sonia L'Heureux, Librarian, Parliament of Canada</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raissa Teodori, Secretary of the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments and Head of Office, Joint Parliamentary Library of Italy and Moira Fraser, Member of the Standing Committee of the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments • Alim Garga, Director of the Library, National Assembly of Cameroon • John McDonough, Head of Collections, Library and Research Services, Parliament of Ireland <p><i>Open debate</i></p>
	Aula dei Gruppi	
06:30 pm	<p>Report on the outcome of the meeting of the high-level Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainer Wieland, Vice President of the European Parliament and Co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament 	
07:00 pm - 08:30 pm	Welcoming reception for all delegates	

14 September

	Aula dei Gruppi	Sala del Mappamondo
09:30 am - 11:00 am	<p>Session A5 - ICT Strategic Planning in Parliament: doing more with less</p> <p>Chair: Dick Toornstra, Director of the Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy, European Parliament</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antonieta Teixeira, Director of the IT Department, Assembly of the Republic of Portugal • Thomas Taimu, Director of the IT Department, National Assembly of Malawi • Shmulik Hizkiya, Head of the Information Division, and Oz Cohen, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Parliament of Israel <p>Open debate</p>	<p>Session B5 - XML applications and services in Parliament</p> <p>Chair: Ravi Poliah, acting Division Manager, Parliament of South Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • João Holanda, Director of SSALEP, Prodasen, Senate of Brazil • Kirsten Gullickson, Senior Systems Analyst, House of Representatives of the United States of America • Ashok Hariharan, Software Developer Coordinator, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations <p>Open debate</p>
11:00 am - 11:30 am	Coffee break	
11:30 am - 01:00 pm	<p>Session A6 - Tools and technologies for meeting mobility requirements</p> <p>Chair: Carol Mills, Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services, Parliament of Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koo Heekwon, Vice Secretary General, National Assembly of the Republic of Korea • Joan Miller, Director of Parliamentary ICT, Parliament of the United Kingdom • Fakhreddine Aouadi, IT Applications Specialist, European Parliament <p>Open debate</p>	<p>Session B6 - Inter-parliamentary cooperation to achieve an international parliamentary and legislative XML standard</p> <p>Chair: Gherardo Casini, Head, Office of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrico Seta, Senior Officer, Research Department, Chamber of Deputies of Italy • Carlo Simonelli, Coordinator of the ECPRD Area of Interest ICT in Parliaments and Head of Office, Central Systems, Chamber of Deputies of Italy • Monica Palmirani, Co-Chair of the OASIS LegalDocumentML Committee and Professor of Legal Informatics, School of Law - CIRSIFID, University of Bologna <p>Open debate</p>
01:00 pm - 02:30 pm	Lunch break	

	Aula dei Gruppi	Sala del Mappamondo
02:30 pm - 04:00 pm	<p>Session A7 - Delivering information and documents through tablets and mobile devices</p> <p>Chair: James Rege, Chairman of the Energy, Information and Communication Committee of the National Assembly of Kenya</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geert Jan Hamilton, Secretary General, Senate of the Netherlands • Mukul Pande, Joint Secretary, and Pradeep Chaturvedi, Director, Council of States of India • Simon Nicholls, Director of Programmes and Development, Parliamentary ICT, Parliament of the United Kingdom <p>Open debate</p>	<p>Session B7 - Joint open source projects to deliver quality information</p> <p>Chair: Bassel Dohaini, Chairman of the ICT Department, Parliament of Lebanon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mauro Fioroni, acting Head of the IT Department, and Carlo Marchetti, Head of the Information Systems Development Office, Senate of Italy • Claudio Fabiani, Project Manager, Directorate General for Innovation and Technological Support, European Parliament • Mario Ruggier, Software Developer Officer, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations <p>Open debate</p>
04:00 pm - 04:30 pm	Coffee break	
04:30 pm - 06:00 pm	<p>Session A8 - Protecting the IT environment and minimizing external threats</p> <p>Chair: Jesus Alfonso Rodriguez Camargo, Secretary General, House of Representatives of Colombia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hernán Figueroa, Director of Information Technology, Chamber of Deputies of Chile • Stéphan Aubé, Chief Information Officer, House of Commons of Canada <p>Open debate</p>	<p>Session B8 - Options for electronic voting systems in plenary and committee rooms</p> <p>Chair: Garreth Ferguson, Information Systems Manager, Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patricio Alvarez, Director of the IT Department, Senate of Chile • Marian Botocan, IT Director, Chamber of Deputies of Romania • Umberto Biagi, Senior Advisor, IT Department, Chamber of Deputies of Italy <p>Open debate</p>
06:00 pm - 08:00 pm	Tours of the Chamber of Deputies	

15 September

Aula dei Gruppi	
09:00 am - 10:15 am	<p>Session A9 - e-Parliament, transparency laws and freedom of access to information <i>Chair: Timothy Hamel-Smith, President of the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Javier Barrero, 2nd Vice President of the Congress of Deputies of Spain • Päivi Lipponen, Chair of the Committee for the Future of the Parliament of Finland • Julio César Valentín Jiminián, Chair of the Committee on Justice and Human Rights of the Senate of the Dominican Republic • Sérgio Sampaio Contreiras de Almeida, Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil <p><i>Open debate</i></p>
10:15 am - 11:15 am	<p>Session A10 - Being open to citizens' voices, participation and dialogue: the formal launch of the Parliamentary Monitoring Organisations' Declaration on Parliamentary Openness <i>Chair: Andrew Mandelbaum, Senior Governance Officer, National Democratic Institute</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • María Baron, co-Coordinator, Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency, and Executive Director, Directorio Legislativo Foundation • John Wonderlich, Policy Director, Sunlight Foundation • Marwa Abou Dayya, Executive Board Member, Nahwa Al-Muwatiniya (Towards Citizenship) • Aline Pennisi, Vice President, OpenPolis Association • Anna Scislowska, Project Coordinator, Association 61 • Gregor Hackmack, co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, ParliamentWatch.org <p><i>Open debate</i></p>
11:15 am - 01:00 pm	<p>Celebrations of the International Day of Democracy - Promoting Tolerance and Peace <i>co-Chairs:</i></p> <p>Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations</p> <p>Key note addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giulio Terzi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy • Abdelwahad Radi, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union • Chukwuemeka Nkem Ihedioha, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nigeria • Vannino Chiti, Vice President of the Senate of Italy <p>Statements by Presidents and Speakers of Parliament</p> <p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations • Abdelwahad Radi, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union • Renzo Lusetti, Member of the Bureau of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy

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