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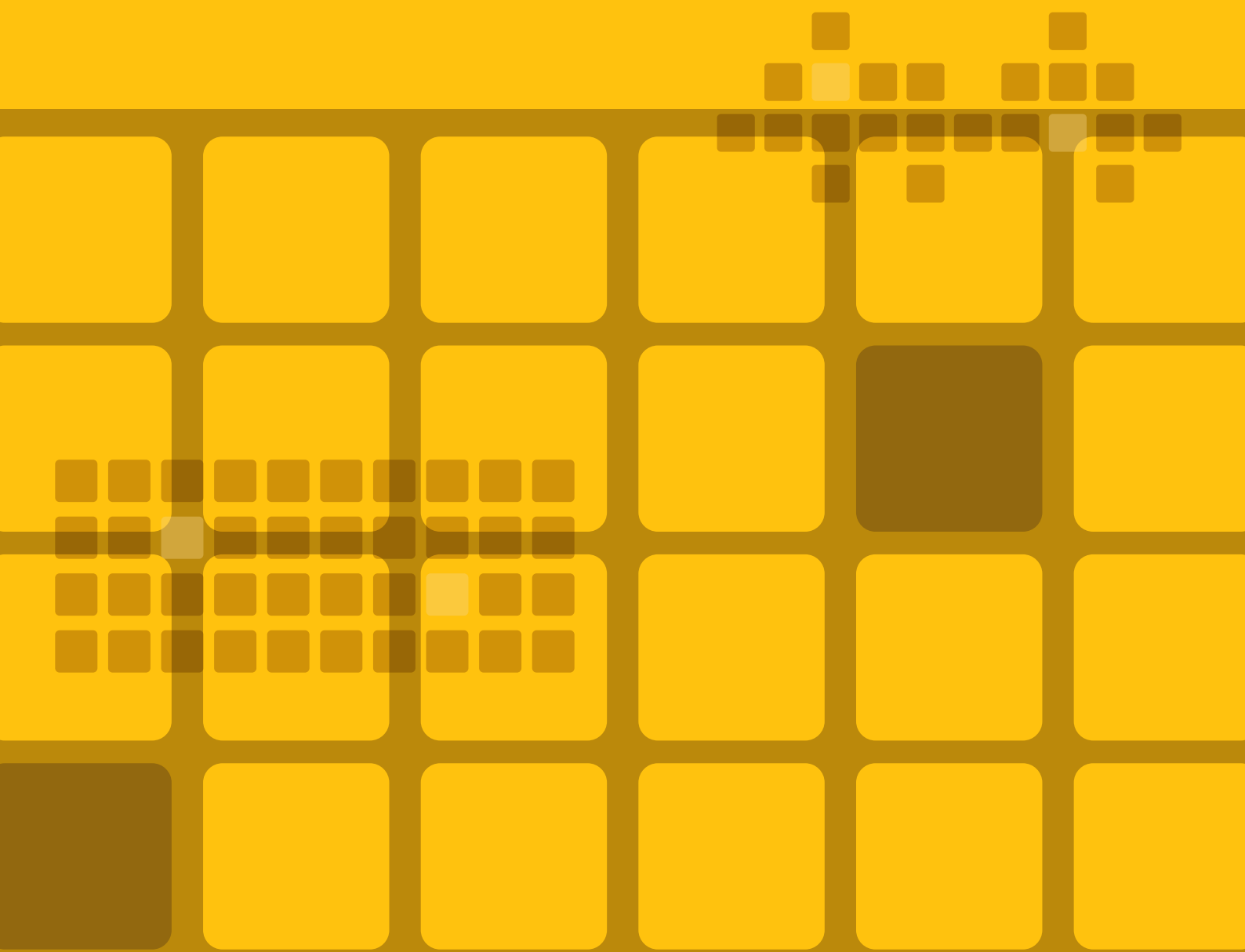
Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

REPORT



World e-Parliament Conference 2008

25 - 26 November 2008 // European Parliament // Brussels



Report

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Disclaimer

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Introduction

The World e-Parliament Conference 2008 (WePC 2008) took place in Brussels at the European Parliament on 25 and 26 November 2008. The conference was co-organized by the United Nations, the European Parliament and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The event brought together over 80 delegations from legislatures around the world, including members of parliament, senior parliamentary officials and staff. Representatives of the academia, civil society and international organizations also attended and contributed to the proceedings.

By providing a unique opportunity to assemble legislators, parliamentary officials and other interested parties from around the world to discuss issues and exchange experiences relating to ICT in parliaments, the WePC 2008 leveraged the growing base of knowledge in this field and strengthened the capacity of all parliaments to address the challenges of the 21st century information society. It reinforced existing and emerging regional networks of parliaments, provided the occasion to learn about good practices employed by other legislative bodies and offered opportunities to network with colleagues and build partnerships between institutions.

The conference built upon the foundation laid by the World e-Parliament Conference 2007 and the findings of the World e-Parliament Report 2008 to make additional progress toward improving parliamentary democracy and fostering citizen engagement through the successful application of new and modern technologies. It was organized in a combination of plenary and par-

allel sessions that addressed the key issues identified in the World e-Parliament Report 2008. Few Special Events were held during the meeting to highlight specific technologies and systems implemented in legislatures. This structure promoted extensive discussions on how to address key issues raised in the World e-Parliament Report 2008, facilitated the sharing of knowledge about the challenges of using ICT in the parliamentary environment and resulted in concrete suggestions for making future progress.

This report is a summary of the presentations and innovative practices and programs described in the different sessions. It highlights the discussions held throughout the two-day event and is organized around major issue areas considered at the conference. The first section features the opening remarks by representatives of the co-organizing organizations and the conference keynote address, which set the framework for the following sessions. The conference proceedings are then grouped in five broad sections reflecting the thematic structure of the conference: Global Perspective on the State of ICT in Parliament, Policies and Politics Fostering e-Parliament, Standards for Parliamentary ICT, Infrastructure and Human Resources, and Communicating with the Public. The final section of the report offers a listing of conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the event.

Opening Addresses

Ms. Mechtild Rothe, Vice President of the European Parliament

Dear Mr Sorour, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt,
Dear Mr Johnsson, Secretary-General of the Interparliamentary Union,
It is with great pleasure that I welcome you as co-organisers, in cooperation with the Global Center for ICT in Parliament, the United Nations and the European Parliament, to the 2008 World e-Parliament Conference.

Dear Mrs. Mongella, President of the Pan African Parliament,
You, and all the other Speakers and Members of Parliament who are honoring us with your presence, are most welcome in the European Parliament.

Today and tomorrow, in this second edition of the World e-Parliament Conference, nearly 400 people from 80 countries from all continents will come together. All of you, Secretaries-General, IT specialists, researchers, diplomats and officials will, I hope, look back afterwards on an interesting and lively Conference.

Unfortunately, Katalin Szili, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary, and the Under Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Sha can not attend. Both had to cancel their attendance at the last moment due to budget votes in Budapest and urgent business in New York.

Nevertheless, both have sent us a short video message which we will transmit later.

The Speaker of the National Assembly of Congo, Mr. Justin Koumba, will only be able to join us tomorrow as he had to delay his departure due to the sudden death of one of the Vice Presidents of that Assembly.

The President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering, has asked me to convey to you from Dublin, which he is presently visiting, his best wishes and his hope that this Conference will lead to a general strengthening of inter-parliamentary cooperation.



tion. We both believe that the European Parliament should be an active player in providing support to the parliaments in developing countries.

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have before us an agenda with an impressive number of speakers. Our debate is strengthened by the outcome of the first World e-Parliament Conference and the findings in the recently published World e-Parliament Report. Both provide, together with the Conference Background Paper, a solid basis for our exchange. The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament has been the driving force behind these initiatives. It is doing a good job. I would like to express my thanks to the staff of the Centre for all their important work.

Obviously, you will, in addition to our discussions, have many opportunities to meet your colleagues. Please visit the cyber café and the exhibition area on the third floor of the Spinelli building. For your information, our plenary debates will be videostreamed whereas many parallel sessions will be recorded. We plan to produce a short movie on our Conference and make this available to all of you via the Conference website.

Allow me now to make a few remarks on the importance of ICT and parliaments.

Viviane Reding, Member of the European Commission responsible for Information Society and Media, recently outlined some of the Internet megatrends that will shape our world. Notably, she highlighted the shift from a “Web 2.0 for fun” to a “Web 2.0 for productivity and services”.

Indeed, today, we cannot deny the growing influence of new technologies in our daily lives. Take the example of the incredible and fast development of social networks online like Facebook or LinkedIn which connect people around the world. New information and communication technologies have gained some ground in the political arena. They empower citizens and help to achieve transparency and access to information for all. These are cornerstones of democracy! Web 2.0 gives us today the possibility to think citizens’ participation in political life in a new way. It gives new alternatives to communicate with the people.

President-elect Barack Obama has made use of Web 2.0 to give voice to millions of Americans. He has leveraged the potential of social media to communicate with citizens and engage them in the democratic process. His campaign focuses on inclusiveness and openness. His use of YouTube and his recent decision to open even a special transition site, “change.gov” will fundamentally affect the way politics will be done by all of us.

“Gov. 2.0” as a form of e-democracy therefore will become an essential tool for us all. It will allow engaging citizens and especially young people, through social networking, into political life. It will not be, however, a replacement of representative democracy. It offers the possibility to get messages out to people and for people to bring their messages to the direct attention of political decision makers. The challenge today is to know how we, as parliamentarians, can develop such communication networks with our citizens to

exchange with them on policy and legislative issues. Parliamentarians and their institutions must play a fundamental role in the shaping of this new society. We should play the leadership role on that matter.

The World e-Parliament Report 2008 has for the first time provided data indicating a significant gap between what is possible with ICT and what has actually been accomplished. Parliaments still need to reinforce the use of new technologies, modernize their processes and make information accessible and understandable to citizens. To do so, I strongly believe that we should be more innovative and we should require increased cooperation and coordination amongst our parliaments and strong leadership inside our institutions, both on the political and the administrative sides.

New technologies are an opportunity to provide effective tools to lead democratic processes. Our aim is obviously to also assist new democracies in adopting the best tools to support efficient democratic systems in their countries.

This conference is a good opportunity for all of us to share experience and knowledge. However, we must keep in mind the needs and expectations of citizens. E-Parliament presupposes a high level of IT security to make citizens confident with these new tools. It also requires respecting citizens' rights by guaranteeing the protection of their private data.

We have to share our experiences especially if we are to address issues such as the digital divide that still exists in many parts of the world and even here in the European Union. We need to work towards e-inclusion. We have to act and prevent that geographic location, disability and age, culture and language, lack of skills or poor economic conditions are reasons for ICT exclusion. These are issues that need to be raised while implementing an efficient e-parliament, which relies necessarily on the use of efficient IT tools.

Here at the European Parliament, we are revising our way to work and we are doing our best to implement innovative e-tools. Our goal is to enhance transparency and improve communication and delivery of information to European citizens to make the European Parliament closer to citizens. In that way, we are proud to say that the plenary sittings are web streamed in 23 languages and that we will soon extend this application to committee meetings. We give access to information through RSS feeds and podcasts to citizens and professionals.

We also have recently launched WebTV, an online service that not only broadcasts live sessions but also gives background information on the Parliament, its Members and its legislative work. As regards other issues such as access to documents or forums for citizens to contribute to the legislative-making process, we know that we have to be more successful. Some national parliaments are doing a great job on this. We should learn from them. We are working hard to improve the use of technologies in the European Parliament but once again, sharing knowledge becomes an important plus.

We must give people access to legislative documents in an easy-to-use form. It is one thing to give access to information but what is important is to provide the contextual environment where the document belongs.

Access goes hand in hand with accessibility.

New technologies have become a tremendous tool for members of parliaments in their day-to-day work. Laptops, PDAs, constant access to documents and emails have allowed parliamentarians to work more efficiently. It allows better support for mobility. It also facilitates exchange of information within the Parliament and between members of Parliament and civil servants.

A major aspect of an efficient e-parliament is the human resource. The organization of the back-office should be rethought while implementing e-parliament. Because everyone in a parliament is affected by e-Parliament.

Technology is often seen as a technical and non-human domain but we need to focus on the human aspect of it. Human resources are the key for the modernization of democratic processes. We count on the commitment of our staff. Without this commitment, there is no possibility for e-Parliament and we are here today to discuss technologies on a human basis.

Discussing these issues is necessary and we should not stop the debate after this conference but instead, we must build a community to discuss best practices and improve strategies for e-parliament that will bring greater openness and transparency in our democratic societies. None of this would be possible without a strong political will.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The European Parliament is looking forward to close partnership and exchange of knowledge between national parliaments and the European Parliament during this two-day conference and in the future.

I hope that discussions around the programme of this conference will be fruitful and that the combination of plenary sessions on important issues such as the strengthening of democratic institutions and parallel sessions that focus on organizational, infrastructural and management issues will enlighten us on the best way to implement efficient e-parliament and to tighten stronger bonds with citizens.

I wish again all participants valuable and interesting discussions.

Dr. Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt

Distinguished Speakers and Members of Parliaments,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a true pleasure for me to be here today to inaugurate with you the works of the World e-Parliament Conference, which is increasingly becoming a vital gathering on the international parliamentary arena. Looking around me, I feel indeed pleased to see this diverse group of participants from all over the globe focusing on one major objective, which is how to further support to our parliamentary and legislative mission and work together hand in hand to strengthen our democracy.

The impact of technology in our contemporary life is so profound and known to everyone. Yet, the question is to what extent is such technology employed in our parliamentary life and what is its tangible outcome?

It was only few years ago when I was honored to be one of two founders of the Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliaments, hosted in Rome, which I currently co-chair with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary. The Centre dedicates itself to work with parliaments, international and regional organizations and a spectrum of stakeholders to utilize, rationalize and promote ICT in parliaments and their constituencies. It was established with the hope that technology that surrounds us and knocks on our doors lends itself to the service of parliamentarians and their peoples. This can and should take place on four interrelated fronts:

- First, how to enhance the communication between parliamentarians themselves, within the same chamber and across the aisle from one another. We all experience that sometimes the virtual distance between colleagues within the same parliament, whether representatives or supporting staff, becomes unnecessarily large. How often in the past did we look for information relevant to our work that was not readily available unless after an exhausting search? Moreover, we all know how much political stand, coordination and voting of individuals and their corresponding parties are of crucial importance. And here, once again, is technology facilitating this matter.
- Secondly, ICT is there to extend bridges between the parliamentarians and their constituencies. In an era where the volume of information is exponentially climbing and time is getting scarcer, parliamentarians have an urgent need to remain in contact with their people, to feel their pulses, to cast their views, to sense their worries and to help aspire for a better tomorrow.
- Thirdly, ICT, as evidenced by this beautiful gathering today offers a new dimension to help supporting indispensable communication between parliaments in our world, which is often referred to as a small village. You know as well as I do that legislation is never deliberated in isolation across the world, even when taking cultural, ethnic and socio-economic dimensions into consideration. How can parliaments benefit from the



accumulated experiences of other parliaments in a timely and effective manner? How can we prepare, coordinate and monitor international and regional laws and agreements without a sound base of information and an effective means of communication? Look at the current international financial crisis and how strong networking among parliaments could, when functional and effective, have been greatly helpful in finding common solutions and forming a unified stand.

- Fourth, come documentation and the associated infrastructure that manages and updates its operation. As all of you know, we never address an issue in our parliaments unless we have conducted thorough research and looked at a number of relevant documents. When I think of the documents that I personally go through each parliamentary year, I do not exaggerate if I say they are in the order of thousands. Archiving and proper data storage, sorting and handling is a key success element in a parliament performing in the 21st century. With that I must add that the analysis of data and the monitoring of trends are of top importance towards a sound decision making and sincere voting systems.

Dear Friends,

As I go through the advantages and merits of technology, rest assured that we remain aware of the concerns and challenges.

First, there is a digital gap and divide between the developed and the developing countries, and while ICT assists in narrowing that gap, the difference is clear between the level and extent of employment of technology in a developed country as opposed to a developing one.

That is another reason why we are here today, simply to exchange views and stretch arms to support one another. Our world that is still facing monsters of ignorance, poverty and wars is a world that needs to take closer steps through the work of parliamentarians.

Moreover, there exists the challenge of misuse of technology, pirating and other unethical forms of use and attributions. And that should never be practiced or allowed in our parliaments as our people look high upon us. Last but not least, there are technical and know-

how obstacles that developing countries face in introducing technology in their parliaments. Such obstacles need to be abolished or at least minimized through a rational use of resources, support of the international community and healthy exchange of experiences.

Having said so, I am pleased to share with you an emerging story of success that is yet to be accomplished. The representatives of 34 African parliaments and assemblies with the support of the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Global Center gathered in Cairo, Egypt last June to establish the African Parliamentary Knowledge Network. The charter of this network is naturally one that aims at fostering cooperation amongst the parliaments in our continent and enhances their visibility and cooperation with similar international networks and assemblies. I am pleased also to announce that the Egyptian parliament has been chosen to host the first secretariat for that promising and rising network.

Dear Participants,

I want to draw to your attention that this conference comes after the launching of the World e-Parliament Report last February in New York, the first report of its kind. It is a report that demonstrates the cooperation of the UN, the IPU, the Global Centre, civil society, as well as more than 105 assemblies and parliaments. I do invite you to read the report and analyze its outcome and to commit ourselves to improve, update and most importantly disseminate it and share it with our communities.

Fellow Parliamentarians, dear guests,

In the two days duration of this conference, there are many vital issues to be discussed. A prime one is how to strengthen the democratic institutions in the information society. A society that is dynamic, ever-evolving and resource-demanding. What kind of a structure, schemes, mechanisms and human resources will be able to accept the challenge and undertake the tasks?

Another key issue is how to meet the needs of parliaments, in particular in developing countries, in using ICT as a means, not as an end, and in capitalizing on technology as the tool not the objective in itself. With all of that at hand, our conference will discuss opportunities rendered by ICT. And when I say opportunities, I mean creating them and fully utilizing them for the common welfare, and not waiting for them to occur.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

An appreciated effort has been exerted in preparing for this remarkable event that is hosted by the European Parliament. Let us make the best use of these opportunities, let us open our minds and our hearts towards a fruitful cooperation and exchange of knowledge. And remember that fostering democracy is a journey; never a destination.

I wish you and this conference all the success.

Ms. Katalin Szili, Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

Indeed I am sorry that I cannot be present in person at the world e-Parliament Conference 2008 in Brussels because the Hungarian National Assembly is in session to vote on the budget for 2009. At the same time I am honoured that thanks to the achievements of modern technology I have the opportunity to greet you on the occasion of this event on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliament.

It is a great pleasure to see that in compliance with the importance of this conference what a widespread interest it has sparked in all parts of the world. It also reflects an international cooperation that the conference has been organized and convened. The World e-Parliament Conference, a joint initiative of the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and a core group of partners, was launched in 2006 in response to the realization that without modern IT infrastructure applications and the exchange of best practices the efficient operation of parliaments is inconceivable.

Inter-parliamentary cooperation in this respect is particularly important, because the parliaments of the countries are basically working towards the same goals in accordance with their own set of specific rules, national constitutions and democratic traditions. This also means that it is impossible to create a uniform system for all parliaments. For this reason, it is vital that all parliamentarians become familiar with the technologies, standards, applied methods of development and operation tools that have already contributed to the successful functioning of parliaments and will continue to do so in the future.

The e-Parliament IT system must provide modern working conditions for the MPs, for the efficient contribution of the staff in the parliamentary office for the legislative process, transparency in the operation of parliaments and access to the information of interest for the general public, the private sector and civil organizations in the shortest lead time.

In the 15-20 years gone by there have been great changes in the IT used by parliaments. Initially it was considered as a great achievement when the databases that contain some fundamental information and support the management of documents in parliaments were established. At that time, the posting of events and documents days, or in some cases even weeks, after the information had been processed on websites displaying static information was still in compliance with the requirement. By now it has become the norm to follow the events of parliament through real-time Internet broadcasting and retrieve documents instantly from the Internet. In addition, there is also a need to create a secure mobile working environment for MPs in order to give them the opportunity to have an instant access to documents and electronic mails, and submission of and access to amendments and opinions.

Speech delivered by video conference

The acceleration of the pace of life, triggered partly by the rapid development of information technology, also presents a considerable challenge to IT specialists, parliament experts and parliamentarians.

The Hungarian Parliament has had its own e-Parliament task force since 2001, which is responsible for identifying the key requirements for short and medium terms and the guidelines of development. Similarly to some other national parliaments, we also have some impressive achievements in this regard, considering the directives of e-democracy as well.

I also attribute great significance to e-Parliament and to the use of information and communication tools in parliament. Let me inform you that the next session of the Board of Directors of the Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliament to be held in March 2009 will be hosted by the Hungarian Parliament.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Looking through the work schedule of the recent few years including the agenda of the World e-Parliament Conference 2007 and the related workshops, it is obvious that this technical area requires an analysis of diversified IT solutions and their application.

The agenda for 2008 confirms that the most important areas we have managed to cover by the plenary and parallel sections.

The plenary sections are responsible for developing a comprehensive approach, including a summary and analysis of the current situation and defining key development criteria and the opportunities for regional and global cooperation.

In contrast, the parallel sections provide a deep analysis of current technological challenges from the application of open-source software, document management, website use best practices or IT-infrastructure related issues to creating the technical conditions of a dialogue between MPs and citizens and the organization and development issues involving the officials of parliament.

I would like to thank the European Parliament, the Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliament and all contributing organizations which have made it possible for the World e-Parliament Conference 2008 to provide the necessary conditions and background for this two-day event in Brussels.

I would like to wish every success and good work to all the participants of this conference and hope that next to technical discussions we should see the beginning of many good personal relationships that will promote future cooperation, efficient discussion of problems as well as sharing experience, results – also allowing widespread implementation- between and among parliaments.

Thank you for your attention.

Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations

Distinguished members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to send this message to you from United Nations Headquarters, and to welcome you to the World e-Parliament Conference 2008.

Since the launch of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, together with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and a core group of committed leaders of Parliament, we have made important progress in building a global framework for exchange of experience and knowledge, among parliaments and stakeholders, on the use of modern technologies in support of parliamentary democracy.

To inspire us, we have a vision laid out at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis in 2005, of an open, people-centered and inclusive society, that allows citizens to access and share authoritative and timely information.

Almost 400 participants from national and regional assemblies, parliamentary associations, universities and civil society organizations are gathered in Brussels today. Your presence manifests the “partnership” that has developed in response to a fast evolving need felt by many legislatures.

In this connected world, parliaments must find their own way of exploiting ICTs, for strengthening their institutional role within their societies, for reaching out to citizens, and for effectively discharging their legislative and oversight duties.

Yet, they must do so knowing that other experiences can be tapped, that more technological choices are possible, and that inter-parliamentary cooperation is a key ingredient to make advances in this field.

This is an important process that we, together, must nourish and reinforce for the benefit of all parliaments and societies.

On behalf of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, I would like to express my gratitude to the European Parliament for hosting this important Conference. Our thanks also go to the co-Chairs of the Board of the Global Centre, for providing their guidance in realizing it. I wish all participants fruitful discussions and a successful Conference outcome.

Thank you.

Keynote address

**Mr. Anders B. Johnsson,
Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,

I would like to start by thanking the organizers of the second World e-Parliament Conference for having conferred on me the honor of addressing you as the conference starts its proceedings. Let me say at the outset that I am pleased to see that both senior officials and members of parliament are attending this event. It makes all the sense in the world since they have to work together to ensure that parliaments and citizens can benefit from ICT.

The subject that I want to explore with you is e-parliament and its role in today's democracies. E-parliament is really synonymous with parliament in the modern world. The World e-Parliament Report released earlier this year defines e-parliament as a parliament that is empowered to be more transparent, accessible and accountable through the use of ICT. An e-parliament empowers people to be more engaged in public life. It provides higher quality information and greater access to its parliamentary documents and activities.

E-Parliament uses information and communication technologies to support its primary functions of representation, law-making and oversight more effectively. Through the application of modern technology and standards and the adoption of supportive policies, a parliament fosters the development of an equitable and inclusive information society.

Asked to comment on the institution of parliament a couple of years ago, the then IPU President said that the paradox of our times is that we hail the victory of democracy while lamenting the fact that in many countries parliament - the central institution of democracy - is facing a crisis of legitimacy. What is wrong with parliament and with democracy?

For one thing, public life is dominated by men. For most of history, and in most countries, government has been a male preserve. This is still true, and it is rare for women to be participating in public office in proportion to their numbers in the population. This not only undermines the democratic principle of equality, it deprives public life of women's full contribution.

Experience shows that the situation will only really change when political parties feel obliged, either through public pressure or legal requirement, to change their procedures for candidate selection. Getting to that point requires public awareness, focus and debate. Almost always, improvement of this nature comes through organized pressure from the public itself. That is one of the beauties of democracy; its capacity for self-correction. In fact, I would argue that the solutions will always involve greater transparency and accountability and better access to information. Let me give you a few more examples.



One important reason why democracy may be seriously in trouble has to do with corruption. Corruption is usually defined as the abuse of public office for private gain. It contradicts the principle that public office in a democracy is exercised on behalf of the people. Chronic, corruption undermines public trust in government and support for the democratic process itself.

Paying public servants a decent wage may help with one side of the problem. Improving the likelihood of exposure and enforcement of sanctions on defaulters may serve as a deterrent on the other side. Here the media and anti-corruption organizations of civil society can play a significant role.

Another phenomenon undermining democracy and parliament is the so-called “Tyranny of the majority.” Decisions taken in accordance with a majority view are necessarily more democratic than decisions taken by a minority. However, they can become oppressive when they infringe upon the basic democratic rights of an unpopular individual or group to participate in political processes, or when an ethnic, linguistic or religious minority is excluded from any share in power.

Addressing this problem requires constitutional protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, backed by effective law enforcement. The exclusion of minorities from any share in political power can be addressed through the electoral system, through quota provisions, through power-sharing arrangements and through decentralization of government.

Executive control over parliament also stifles democracy. Where parliaments lack effective independence from the government, whether through inadequate resources and expertise, or through tight ruling party control, they are unable to carry out their oversight function effectively, with consequences for the quality of policy and legislation as well as reduced public accountability of the government.

For parliaments to be fully independent of the executive arm of government, they need control over their own staffing, procedures and organization of business, effective powers

of investigation, and sufficient resources and expertise to be able to carry out their functions independently. Ensuring that the incentives and sanctions available to party leaderships do not render parliamentarians subservient to government is, however, much more difficult to legislate.

Lack of pluralism in the media constitutes another negative element. The key requirement for the communication media in a democracy is pluralism: multiple sources of information and diversity of views and opinions. This diversity can be threatened from two directions: from government, through control over public media or more subtle forms of pressure and censorship, and from the private sector, when there is undue concentration of ownership of different forms of media.

Government control of, or interference in, publicly funded broadcasting can best be prevented by establishing an independent broadcasting authority with a politically inclusive or non-partisan membership. Concentrations of media ownership can be addressed through legally enforceable limits on ownership, including cross-media interests.

And then, of course, there is public apathy. Loss of public interest in politics, of confidence in government and of belief in the value of the democratic process poses dangers to the survival of democracy itself. It is usually symptomatic of something seriously wrong with the system of government and of a widespread sense that people are powerless to change or influence it.

There is little evidence that people anywhere have lost interest in the major issues that affect their lives; rather, many have lost confidence in the institutions of representative democracy to do much about those issues, and in their own ability to influence those institutions. Improved electoral choice, more effective and responsive government, and better political leadership are all needed. There is no one single solution.

The common denominator in all these points is ensuring that citizens have the information which is indispensable to ensuring the genuine exercise of their participatory rights. ICT is a powerful tool to achieve this objective; to improve citizens' access to information about, firstly, the role of parliament, secondly, the legislative agenda and thirdly, the activities of their elected representatives.

Today only a small number of parliaments are harnessing these tools effectively. Doing that job better will require political choices which can seem minor, but which ultimately have a major impact on the quality of democracy and its evolution in coming years.

Just as we make choices in our daily life, so parliaments make choices about the kind of institutions that they want to be. Does parliament see itself as a closed institution that needs to protect itself from the intrusive glare of the outside world, or as a dynamic, vibrant institution that is keen to establish links with the citizens that elect it?

When IPU puts this question to parliaments - albeit formulated in a less tendentious manner - they nevertheless clearly told us that their objective was to be more transparent, more accessible and more accountable to their citizens. They gave us many examples of good practice that can inspire others.

Decisions about moving towards an e-parliament are first and foremost political. After all, deciding to make draft legislation available to the public amounts to opening up the institution to scrutiny, questions and perhaps criticism. Yet democratic dialogue, where people are able to express their opinion on the matters that concern them, is fundamental to democracy. We should not fear dialogue but embrace the possibilities that ICT offers to enhance it.

Nor should we be concerned when people ask 'how can we do this...?' or say that they do not have the necessary technical skills. The experience and expertise that is assembled in this room has already found solutions to most of the technology problems. I am confident that collectively you will be able to find solutions to the new and emerging challenges. The way forward is through collaboration and we are all in this together.

From the very beginning, UNDESA and the IPU embarked on a systemic approach to e-parliament. It resulted in the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament that was established at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis in 2005. That was only three years ago. Few would have imagined the incredible progress we and you have made since then.

In little more than two years we have produced the 2008 World e-Parliament Report, held the first World e-Parliament Conference in Geneva, undertaken a whole host of activities and established a network of individuals and institutions which today are represented at this second World e-Parliament Conference in more than a hundred delegations.

During this short period we have found that the fast pace of innovation and the characteristics of ICT allow us not only to identify and exchange solutions and experiences, but also to develop some of them jointly. The experience of the regional UNDESA programme in Africa demonstrates that collaboration is also possible on advanced solutions by using document standards and open source information systems.

The establishment of learning and knowledge networks, as well as working groups on specific topics, is necessary to reinforce this process of inter-parliamentary collaboration and cooperation.

I would like to congratulate Dr. Sorour for having hosted the Cairo Conference that established the Charter of the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network, and all African parliaments that have endorsed it. I would like to take this opportunity to invite his colleagues in Latin America, in the Caribbean and in other regions of the world, to emulate his example and to create similar vehicles of cooperation among officials and members dealing with the parliamentary machinery.

Working in a global partnership is not easy, but it is essential to achieve greater results. Under such a framework, asymmetric coalitions of parliaments, universities, international organizations can respond to the call for assistance from assemblies in poorer nations by pooling resources, be they human and financial resources or substantive specific expertise and knowledge.

After this conference is over, the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament and the members of its high-level Board will have the task to translate its outcome into concrete activities.

I therefore invite you to see the plenaries and parallel sessions at this Conference as part of a broader process and to express your ideas and recommendations openly. I am particularly glad that one of the sessions will seek to improve on the guidelines on parliamentary websites which the IPU published in 2000. While many of the guidelines retain their validity, it is an opportune moment to incorporate the evolution in the technology environment and the many lessons that have been learnt by parliaments on the web.

I would like to end by inviting the donors and international agencies to join this process with IPU and UNDESA and to support it for the benefit of all. I call on the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to pursue its efforts to build a forum for collaboration among the parliamentary community, and I call on you, parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, to be leaders in the move towards more transparent, accessible, accountable and effective parliaments.

Thank you.

The state of ICT in Parliament: a global perspective

Mr. Jeffrey C. Griffith, Senior Advisor, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, provided an overview of the World e-Parliament Report 2008, which was based on the world-wide survey of ICT in 105 assemblies from 73 countries conducted by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The Report had three key objectives: 1) establish an authoritative baseline of ICT in parliaments; 2) share lessons learned and what respondents reported to be “good” practices; and, 3) be a reference source that could help guide the work of those engaged inter-parliamentary cooperation and support.

Several primary conclusions emerged from the survey. First, some parliaments are clearly innovators in their use of ICT as they:

- Have developed systems for managing most of their important documents – bills, amendments, committee reports, plenary debate and votes
- Are using open document standards
- Have websites that present the most current activities of the parliament
- Are using several channels for communication including real time video, to provide access for themselves and their citizens, and developing archives of these formats
- Use a wide range of information sources and are building a policy and legislative knowledge base to ensure a more informed legislature
- Provide numerous links to relevant documents and information about proposed bills
- Have provided their members with PCs

in offices, laptops when traveling and with the means for staying permanently connected to the parliament and to each other.

- Are testing new ICT-based methods for communicating with citizens and for engaging them in constructive discussions of policy options

However, this group is small – estimated to be 10% or less of those who responded to the survey. For most parliaments the survey documented the fact that there is a substantial gap between what is possible with ICT and what has been accomplished. Their use of ICT is best described as uneven. For example, they may have systems for managing only one type of legislative document, such as bills or plenary debate, but they do not have systems for ALL of their documents. They use proprietary document standards; have websites that may have the text of bills, but no links to related information; and lack a search engine for finding specific bills and documents. It was clear from the survey that this gap is especially pronounced, although not exclusively, among legislatures from countries with lower income levels.

An additional finding was that resources constrain some to the point where they cannot provide even the most basic ICT services, such as PCs for members, networks, or even websites. From the survey, this group represents at least 10% of respondents and could be as high as 20%-25%.

Despite the concerns raised by these results,

however, a very positive finding was that many parliaments, regardless of the income level of their country clearly have significant plans to improve their use of technology. This was evident in several areas, such as strategic planning, building legislative document systems, implementing open document standards and improving information services. Therefore, with sufficient political will, the availability of resources and increased collaboration among legislatures the state of ICT in parliaments will hopefully improve substantially in the future.

There are also new technologies and new practices using existing technologies that will pose significant challenges to legislatures. These include: 1) the growth of social networks; 2) the increase in user generated content; 3) the evolving and ubiquitous nature of connectivity; 4) the emergence of “smart data”; and, 5) continuous growth in computing power.

The impact of these developments on legislatures could be dramatic. The fact that computers will continue to grow in power means that the task of building the technical infrastructure of a legislature will be a continuous effort requiring permanent funding and a long term commitment to staff training. The enhancements in connectivity mean that

citizens and members will be able to connect to anyone and anything at anytime – and they will expect to be able connect to the legislature. The rise of user-generated content has enabled civil societies and non-government organizations to make effective use of information by and about legislatures. Parliaments will need to learn from these developments. Finally, the extraordinary growth and innovative use of social media as seen in the latest US presidential election is a predictor of major changes in the way in which political bodies, including legislatures, must learn to communicate with citizens.

To improve their use of ICT and to meet



these challenges, legislatures must be able to meet a number of critical managerial and technical requirements. Sound management of ICT in parliament requires involving all stakeholders, both internal and external in the development of the a vision for the effective use of technology in the legislature; developing a strong capacity for strategic planning, oversight and implementation; investing in people; and collaborating at all levels both within and outside the legislature. Essential technical efforts must focus on systems for creating and managing all legislative documents; a website that is authoritative, complete, understandable and accessible; open standards for documents; a coherent and comprehensive knowledge base; and continued exploration of ICT-based tools for engaging citizens and civil society.

At its annual meeting this year, the board of the Global Centre called on “...all parliaments to make all possible efforts to ensure that, by 2020, authoritative, timely and complete information on all stages of the legislative process in every country is publicly accessible on the Internet”. To move toward this goal will require improvements in several key areas, including the following:

- More assemblies with legislative document systems. It is important to note that only 43% of all respondents to last year’s survey had such a system and only 4% of the assemblies in low income countries
- Greater use of open standards – as more document systems are implemented, the percentage using an open standard such as XML should rise above the current level of 25%
- Improvement in websites based on guidelines first published by the IPU and currently being updated
- More parliaments providing information services targeted to the legislative and policy issues
- More reports from researchers and from parliaments about how to use ICT tools effectively for engaging citizens
- Measurable growth in the number of parliaments that provide members with PCs and remote access
- More parliaments that have training programs for their staff

Finally, it is vital to have greater cooperation among parliaments, governments, international organizations and the donor community. The experiences of other legislative coordinating groups, such as the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation and the African Parliamentary Knowledge Network, demonstrate the importance and the success of such efforts. To achieve most of the goals just discussed will require even greater collaborative efforts in the future.

Through the effective use of ICT, parliaments have a unique opportunity to lead the way in making public institutions transparent, accessible, accountable and effective and to engage citizens in all their diversity to participate in public life. Parliaments can thus become proactive agents in creating an equitable, inclusive and open society. The starting point is leadership and the commitment of members to enhancing the use of ICT.

Policies and politics fostering e-Parliament

ICT is a critical tool for achieving fundamental parliamentary goals to increase transparency, enhance accountability and foster greater public participation in the democratic process. However, in order to ensure that ICT is effectively implemented within a legislative body, it is necessary to have strong political leadership and sound policies that promote the parliament's vision. Members and leaders in parliament are becoming increasingly aware of the potential of e-parliament to strengthen their institutions, promote democracy and enable them to help shape the emerging information society.

Strengthening democratic institutions in the information society: the politics of e-parliament

The co-chair of the first session of the conference, **Ms. Mechtild Rothe**, Vice President of the European Parliament, emphasized the importance of political leadership becoming aware of the potential of ICT in parliaments. She stated that Members need quality information that is made available at the right time and in the right format. The 2007 survey indicated that those parliaments that bring together effective organizational management with political vision are at the high end of ICT adoption. Such implementation of ICT will help to strengthen the policy-making process, increase efficiency in parliaments and enhance contact with voters. She stressed the importance of becoming more open, stimulating full transparency and ensuring that no one is left out of the

process, as essential goals if parliaments are to influence the shaping of the information society. Ms. Rothe concluded by raising several key questions to be considered during the session. These included how members can play a more active role in determining the direction of parliamentary ICT and what common approaches can be shared among parliaments, especially as they relate to actively engaging citizens in policy debates.

Ms. Gertrude Mongella, President, Pan-African Parliament, stressed that the question is not whether the use of ICT in parliaments is important, but rather how to implement it. She stated that implementation of ICT will be an important mechanism for the Pan-African Parliament to carry out its mandate. ICT can overcome the difficulty of traveling across Africa by providing networks that transcend geographic boundaries. Use of ICT can promote the exchange of experiences among parliaments, address the difficulty of harmonizing laws across the continent and assist in building capacity and creating training programs. She noted that the biggest challenge for Africa is providing access to technology at affordable rates. For Africa, the problem is not the lack of good will, but the lack of capacity.

Ms. Mongella commented that the lag in ICT usage in African parliaments is parallel to the overall lag in millennium development goals. This gap reflects some specific problems of African countries, such as the diversity of peoples within countries and across the continent making dialogue difficult. However, she stated that connectiv-

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ity among people is essential to help solve these problems. Parliaments need to use ICT to consult with their constituencies and to hear the voices of the people. The absence of such connectivity is a key barrier to true democracy. Therefore bridging the gap between those having technology and those without is critical in a global world where all need to participate in spreading democracy.

Ms. Mongella stressed that e-parliament can have an important impact on the ability of African parliaments to become more democratic institutions since it enables them to have a dialogue with citizens. However, leadership is crucial and political will is needed to allocate resources needed to make progress. She concluded by asserting that, "Democracy can only happen if we are all connected" and these connections must

occur between people, between parliaments and globally to promote peace and development worldwide.

The implications for parliaments of operating in a networked world were the focus of the remarks by **Ms. Silvia-Adriana Ticau**, Member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, European Parliament. E-parliament is important both for the internal efficiency of the parliament and for connection with the outside. She stated that 60% of the EU population has Internet access, with Germany having the highest level, enabling them to access e-parliament systems and services. However, worldwide the number is much lower so there is a need to expand this number and to allocate adequate resources to ensure that all are connected to e-parliament.



Specifically, information needs to be easily found and must be current, accurate, reliable, complete and attractive if users are going to want to access parliamentary information online. They must be able to find information about members, bills and related information on a 24/7 basis on the parliamentary websites because citizens have a right to know this basic information. Parliaments must have an adequate infrastructure to support these capabilities, including strong security, available back-up and a trained IT team that is regularly updated on the newest technical developments. She stated that it is important to engage young people in the democratic process and parliaments should develop a section on their websites for specifically designed for children. In order to build an e-parliament, there needs to be a vision of the goals, adequate planning and resources, and effective implementation. In conclusion, she emphasized that the President of the parliament must be a key sponsor of e-parliament in order to ensure its success.

Another perspective on e-parliament was offered by **Mr. Pablo Álvarez**, Chair of the Special Committee on Innovation, Research, Science and Technology, Chamber of Representatives of Uruguay. He noted that it is hard to explain the value of e-parliament to the average Member. For example, he highlighted the difficulty in introducing electronic voting where member's votes would be recorded individually because such application can have political consequences. He asserted that politics needs to lead technology, and those advocating new technologies must remember that the key word is parliament.

He stated that parliaments have lost strength as institutions and that it is important to stress the open nature of parliament and how ICT

can be used to improve democracy, as well as helping in the work of parliamentarians. In Uruguay the rate of Internet penetration remains low with only 17% of homes having this capability. Various mechanisms are planned to improve ICT access including connecting children in primary schools, where they have a goal of one laptop per student. This will have a positive impact on democracy in the future because information technologies will influence the students' involvement in politics and these students will be looking to engage with e-parliament.

The Special Committee on Innovation, Research, Science and Technology has had difficulty making a significant impact because it is not considered a high priority by members and is composed mostly of younger members. This underscores the importance of convincing parliamentarians and their leadership that they must become more active participants in the networked society of the 21st century.

Mr. Álvarez identified several characteristics required for the successful application of ICT to parliaments. For example, technical experts need to work together with parliamentarians to achieve the desired outcomes. Standard formats and harmonization among regions are required. Standards also must be open so that people have the right to choose their own technology. Accessibility for those with disabilities must be assured. Finally, access should be free of charge for information from public institutions, including parliament.

Mr. Wellars Gasamagera, Member of the ICT Steering Committee of the Senate of Rwanda, spoke about the need to facilitate open and free dialogue within a democracy. He identified the potential of creating



ICT supported virtual communities that can contribute to e-democracy and e-parliament through increased civic engagement. Among the benefits of such virtual communities are spreading knowledge and information, reducing the digital divide and enhancing transparency and openness. A key program for accomplishing this in Rwanda is through village telecenters that provide low cost access to the public.

Rwanda has articulated its National Information and Communications Infrastructure (NICI) Plan II (2006-2010) to improve rural and community access to ICT. Among the achievements are distributing thousands of computers to students, installing a fiber optic backbone, distribution of machine-readable national ID cards and expanded penetration of mobile phones. One important component is a program for distributing mobile phones at a cost of \$2.50 per month. The parliament al-

so has been developing its own ICT infrastructure plan, including providing all parliamentarians with laptops and developing human resources. He stated that parliamentarians should exercise their responsibilities as representatives, rather than simply serving as delegates of their constituencies. The Parliament has an ICT steering committee chaired by the President of the Senate, which has developed its 2009 Digitalization plan. There are several ways they are working to achieve the goals of these plans, including undertaking a law-making exercise with citizen participation, enforcement and oversight of related law implementation, and development of a better parlia-

mentary website that reaches more citizens. Parliamentarians also make formal commitments to their constituencies about achieving specific objectives, which can help to advance the implementation of laws.

Seeing ICT as an enabler rather than as a solution, Mr. Gasamagera noted that the area of interaction with citizens needs much work, including creating vibrant virtual communities, networking to increase citizen participation and enhancing training and public access. He also stressed the importance of providing local language content, revising laws and policies to support ICT in society, and increasing the affordability of ICT throughout the society.

Mr. Alexandros Dermentzopoulos, Member of the Permanent Committee on Technology Assessment of the Hellenic Parliament, stat-

ed that ICT provides essential tools for open and effective government and for improving services for the public. He provided a description of the Hellenic Parliament and its use of ICT. For example, all Members have PCs and laptops, email and high speed Internet access and they are offered training and technical support. In addition, they have an integrated information system that includes a document management system and applications for parliamentary scrutiny, legislative work, committee activities, proceedings management and administrative services. The parliamentary website enables them to communicate information about the parliament and its activities to the outside world and allows the public to send email to parliament. Members also have their own webpage on the Parliament's website. They offer webcasting of parliamentary meetings and are redesigning their website to develop a portal with additional links to information related to legislation and new capabilities for citizen participation. Mr. Dermentzopoulos identified improving communication with citizens as a major focus of their use of ICT in parliament. They are looking to develop a variety of capabilities including interactive websites, electronic newsletters and Member participation in social networks that will enable citizens to become informed about the positions of parliamentarians and to enter into discussion and offer feedback. Moving in this direction will require training of members. Other future efforts include supporting discussions of parliamentary committees working on particular pieces of proposed legislation and opening up debate on legislation to a larger number of individuals.

Dr. Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt chaired the ensuing discussion and identified several topics

that warranted attention. He asked whether there is a need for standards to avoid misuse of technology and also whether there should be a code of conduct among participants of a network. E-parliament can help to enable greater dialogue and cooperation, while respecting diversity of views. To accomplish this will require more research and understanding the political environment where information originates. He suggested that e-parliament networking makes it possible to have conferences, roundtables and greater exchanges of experiences that facilitate the acquisition of information from other parliaments.

Conference participants then engaged in a lively exchange with sessions speakers and raised several important issues, including concerns about pushing technology so far as to threaten the independence of MPs to make decisions, m-parliament or the implications of increasing reliance on mobile technologies particularly in Africa, the apathy of young people towards democratic processes and institutions and improving communication between committees of parliaments about latest developments in order to solve problems in a global way. In response to these questions, panelists offered several comments. **Ms. Ticau** emphasized that ICT should be seen not as an end itself, but only as a tool to communicate transparently with citizens, in complement to direct interactions.

Concurring with Ms. Ticau, **Mr. Gasamagera** stressed that ICT should facilitate, not substitute, the representative function and responsibility for making decisions by easing the flow of information between Members and citizens. He agreed with concerns about the impact of information overload on Members. In Rwanda it has been hard work

to convince members to use ICT, to buy into ownership of e-parliament, and to exercise the needed political will to champion ICT in parliament. They have created a paperless plenary that now requires all MPs to use computers. However, implementation was accomplished over a period of time and had to be based on in-house culture and values.

Mr. Álvarez agreed with previous speakers and further suggested that MPs have better strategies for communicating with young people to establish the kind of two-way communication that is important to involve the next generation.

Ms. Mongella concluded the session by commenting that while there are many good things happening in Africa, generally only bad things are reported in the world press. She expresses hope that the use of ICT within Africa will result in increased exposure of positive information to the rest of the world because Africans will have greater influence over what is transmitted. This will incorporate African countries in the information highway in a positive way.

Meeting the Needs of Parliaments in Developing Countries: the role of development partners and the instruments of assistance

The World e-Parliament Conference 2008 documented the significant disparity in the application of ICT in parliaments between countries that are at the highest and lowest income levels. This digital divide is a serious impediment to ensuring that parliaments in developing countries are able to operate efficiently and to perform their legislative, oversight and representative functions effec-

tively. There are a number of bilateral and multilateral assistance programs in place that aim to level the playing field for parliaments in developing countries. However, given the multiplicity of initiatives it is essential to improve coordination among them and ensure a more coherent approach to supporting ICT in these parliaments.

The chair of this session, **Mr. Justin Koumba**, Speaker, National Assembly of Congo, set the stage for the discussion by suggesting that all should work together to create more effective partnerships with funders and other partners in order to meet the needs of developing countries and update the role of their parliaments.

Ms. Linda Mauperon, Member of Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Information Society and Media outlined how the EU has developed policies and projects to promote the use of ICT for enhancing the relationship between citizens and their governments and to further this capacity in developing countries. Using the building blocks of the Internet and mobile phones new communications capabilities can expand democracy, make services more accessible and improve the lives of all citizens. However, today there is a low participation rate in elections and in politics that is regrettable for democracy. ICT can help reverse this deficit by enabling more communication between parliaments and citizens. The EU has led by example in launching the political dialogue to help engage citizens on public policy issues and to enable them to offer input on pending legislative proposals. For example, they have developed E-Participation, as well as the Debate Europe site where visitors can exchange views on the future of Europe, and an interactive EUtubes site that

publicizes activities of the European Union. E-government involves changing administrative processes and organizational behavior so that public services are delivered more efficiently to citizens wherever they are. These systems must be designed to work across all of Europe. A top priority for the EU involves expanding IT infrastructure across Europe and especially bridging the broadband gap.

The European Commission sees a strong linkage between ICT development and broader development goals like human rights and promoting democracy. Two main areas of development support efforts are: 1) improving access and connectivity, and 2) e-government linked to e-democracy. Communications infrastructure is evolving rapidly in many developing countries and a recent study indicates that investment in ICT yields significant economic return. Recently a new Strategic Partnership between Africa and the European Union was adopted and two new major projects (African Internet Exchange System and AFRICACONNECT1) initiated to enhance the digital infrastructure in Africa. Now is the time to move forward in a coordinated fashion to advance these initiatives in concert with other African and bilateral efforts. Ms. Mauperon also provided several examples of existing EU supported collaborative ICT development projects that might serve as models for others. These projects will enable e-governance and e-participation to increase democracy around the world. In conclusion, she advocated the concept of dynamic digital partnerships where governments work with private sector, academia and civil society to advance ICT development. Coupled with this should be the promotion of Internet access for all to help overcome inequality in the digital divide. A third component should be work-

ing toward a strong convergence between digital and development agendas at the international level that takes into account the multiple stakeholders. These efforts will help to realize the benefits of ICT for promoting participative democracy that brings governments closer to citizens.

Ms. Dominique Dellicour, Head of the Unit "Governance, Human Rights, Democracy and Gender", EuropAid, European Commission reinforced the essential role of parliaments in strengthening democratic governance and for supporting assistance efforts in developing countries. She stressed that parliaments should play a key role in national development plans and in establishing priorities. She noted that the European Commission has seen positive results from its support to national parliaments in developing countries especially in the areas of capacity building within parliaments, strengthening law making capability, oversight and civil society participation in public debates, including increasing participation by women and minorities. Other areas of parliamentary support include internal management efficiencies and increasing research capabilities. Additional support has been provided as part of wider programs of governance, rule of law, human rights and budget creation. The European Commission has also provided funding for regional parliamentary organizations, such as the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Pan African Parliament.

Ms. Dellicour identified several important lessons learned from these assistance efforts, including the importance of promoting ownership of projects design, advocating true collaboration within a comprehensive approach rather than just focusing on IT from a technical perspective, and coordinating

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with other parliamentary support efforts. The following year, the European Commission planned to undertake a comprehensive review of the portfolio of support for parliaments to guide future initiatives and ensure cooperation with other donors. She recommended that future action involve a long-term sustained engagement and integration of parliament support activities in the wider effort to enhance democratic governance.

The intervention by **Mr. Mauro Massoni**, Head, Multilateral Office, Italian Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs further advocated for donor harmonization to achieve more effective support to parliaments for promoting democracy, enhancing citizen participation and modernizing parliamentary operations. He emphasized the important role that ICT can play in parliaments for fostering accountability, promoting transparency and increasing international collaboration and the exchange of information. The Italian government has placed special emphasis on support of ICT in parliaments for improving internal efficiencies and enabling parliaments to fulfill their constitutional mandates.

In addition to initiatives that support specific countries, several Italian development ef-

forts have sought to create a broader framework for ICT assistance to developing countries. For example, the Italian Development Cooperation supported the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) efforts in Africa to originally develop ICT capacity for nine African parliaments. The success of the initial project has now evolved into support for the Africa iParliament Action Plan, a major initiative that promotes cooperation across Africa for ICT development in parliaments. Since 2005 they also have supported the activities of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. Italy strongly endorses the dual objectives of the Global Centre to enhance use of ICT within parliaments and to improve the capacity of parliaments for shaping the information society. In addition, Italy's cooperation intends to fund several other projects, including support for the library and research services of the Iraqi Parliament. He encouraged other countries to join in these efforts to foster regional and global approaches to enhancing ICT in parliaments, such as providing additional funding for the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.

Mr. Olivier Pierre-Louveaux, Parliamentary Development Expert, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) described the work of UNDP in supporting democratic governance. This is its largest portfolio of projects and includes parliamentary development efforts in 65 national parliaments, with activities focused on ICT use in 14 parliaments. UNDP tries to develop the main parliamentary functions and to focus on both processes and on substantive issues. They are working at national, global and regional levels and integrating these different projects. In 2006 they issued their report, "Empowering Parliaments through

the Use of ICTs”, that involved a review of 15 parliaments at different economic levels. They concluded that the use of ICTs in a parliament must be put in the context of the work of the MPs and the functions of the parliament itself. Also, they found that it is crucial for parliaments and MPs to take ownership of these efforts. ICT can support the legislative and oversight functions by improving access to useful information, while such things as e-petitions and interactive websites can assist in the representative function. Since different ICT tools can assist in multiple parliamentary functions it is important to develop an overall strategy for implementing ICT.

UNDP is supporting ICT application in parliaments by developing benchmarks for openness and transparency, creating a Web portal and producing reports related to parliamentary development. The Web portal will be a centralized resource about parliamentary development and have interactive capabilities. In conclusion, he emphasized that successful projects depend upon performing ICT needs assessments and developing a nationally based strategy based on priorities. Networking on the regional and global levels will facilitate the sharing of experiences and useful models among all countries.

In the following discussions, participants raised several important issues. A major concern centered on coordination among donor agencies, as well as coordination with the recipient county to prevent duplication of efforts. Others stressed problems that developing countries have with the timeframe for receiving funding compared to the fast pace of technological change. Lack of adequate ICT infrastructure and affordable In-

ternet access in developing countries presents additional challenges when attempting to implement ICT in the parliament and donors need to consider how these problems can be addressed. Other issues include the lack of follow-up by donors and the need for more analysis of the challenges faced by donors in attempting to support ICT in parliament.

The panelists agreed that more work needs to be done to address the issue of cooperation among donors. **Ms. Dellicour** noted that a recent study found that aid is often fragmented and duplicative and is not based on proper requirements analysis. She emphasized that projects are most effective when the parliament is actively involved in determining needs and performing an internal analysis. She also suggested that cooperation between parliaments on a peer-to-peer basis may be more successful than assistance provided by private companies that may lack knowledge of the parliament. **Mr. Massoni** concurred that coordination is the big issue - even among desks of the same directorate. He commented that the reason for financing the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament was to provide an organization that could take the lead in fostering coordination. **Mr. Pierre-Louveaux** welcomed the idea of more parliament-to-parliament cooperation. He offered the example of the Uganda strategic management plan that called for a unit to coordinate interested donors. Ms. Mauperon identified other examples of partnerships, including those with the private sector and civil society.

In conclusion, **Mr. Gherardo Casini**, Secretary to the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament described how the creation of Global Centre by the United Nations and

the Interparliamentary Union resulted from the belief that there was a need for greater coordination among the many organizations working in field. The idea was to establish a global framework to give visibility to existing efforts and encourage dialogue among all parliaments. The Global Centre is guided by a high level Board of parliamentary leaders to ensure that its work connects directly with the needs of parliaments. He concurred that there is a need to find expertise within parliaments to help other parliaments by matching knowledgeable people to provide assistance. The World e-Parliament Report 2008 establishes a baseline of information that can help to guide these efforts by identifying which parliaments have made progress in particular areas. He also agreed that recipients need to coordinate their requests for support, which should help donors become more effective partners in supporting ICT in parliaments in developing countries.

Opportunities for regional and global cooperation: benefits and barriers to parliamentary cooperation

A major theme throughout the conference was the importance of cooperation among parliaments. This cooperation can occur on a bilateral basis, but there are also important opportunities for collaboration at the regional and global levels. Cooperation is especially valuable in the area of ICT, where such things as common standards and shared experiences can significantly leverage the limited resources available to many parliaments.

Mr. Anders Johnson, Secretary General, Inter-Parliamentary Union noted that there has been a substantial increase in the number of international parliamentary groups in recent years. He reinforced the primacy of the role of parliaments because it is the institution more than any other that expresses the sovereignty of the nation. Parliaments are the



main actors, beneficiaries and implementers of strengthening programs and therefore the role of outside organizations is to support, but not attempt to override the primacy of parliaments. He asked the participants to consider a number of questions, including how best to sustain regional cooperative organizations over the long term and identifying the most effective mechanisms for sharing expertise among parliaments on both the regional and global levels.

Ms. Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, President of the Basque Parliament, offered her insights as President of the Working Group on e-Democracy of the Conference of Presidents of the Regional Legislative Assemblies of Europe (CALRE). This group involves 74 parliaments in 11 countries. She described their website that focuses on e-democracy and the use of technology in parliaments. Because all software and tools are available to users, they can conduct their own analysis of the information.

The Working Group on e-Democracy has looked at the gap between citizens and parliaments and is now implementing models for improving openness through ICT. The theoretical model they developed is based on the concept that citizens need to dialog with parliament in real time, parliaments need to be willing to share information, and that citizens must be responsible participants. In addition, there must be a political commitment to transparency, all citizens must be able to participate, and all parts of government must be willing to become engaged. Effective tools and adequate resources are needed to make this a reality. The management model employed involved the creation of mission statements that included the additional goals of eliminating

the digital divide and promoting civic value. Pilot projects based on the models and best practices provide the basis for implementation of the effort in 2009.

One important new regional cooperative effort, the African Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN), was described by **Mr. Mohamed Nagib Abou-Zeid**, Member of the Shoura Council of Egypt. The APKN is an idea that has been evolving and developing for several years. Milestones include the 2007 Abuja, Nigeria conference, which brought together representatives of several African countries to lay the groundwork for the APKN and the meeting in Cairo in 2008 where members developed an APKN Charter. As indicated by the data reported in the World e-Parliament Report 2008, parliaments in low-income countries lag substantially in using ICT. Working collaboratively across Africa offers a major opportunity for progress on their common objectives given the limited resources available to each parliament. As a result, the APKN was established for African parliaments to exchange information and experiences on common interests, strengthen cooperation for capacity building and training staff, and collaborate on technology development to serve legislatures.

Major areas of cooperation include building an African knowledge base, legislative processes, information and research services, ICT tools, and communication with the public. The APKN has been endorsed by 11 Speakers of Parliament to date and gone into effect. APKN is in the process of establishing its secretariat at the Egyptian Parliament, promoting the network throughout Africa, and developing cooperation with similar regional networks. The members of

the APKN recognize, however, that they face significant challenges in accomplishing these goals in Africa. For example, the lack of financial resources and technical know-how are serious barriers that must be overcome. Similarly, they must address issues of multiple languages and limited communications infrastructure. They are working to establish sustainable mechanisms for cooperation, the capabilities for performing monitoring and evaluation, and making all African parliaments aware of the benefits of collaboration so that they are able to maintain the political will to support cooperation across Africa.

Another successful cooperative approach to supporting the work of parliaments is the Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). **Ms. Gro Sandgrind**, Chair of the Section, noted that the World e-Parliament Report 2008 underscored the key role that libraries and research services can play when it identified them as among the most knowledgeable and important contributors to ICT development in parliaments. Librarians and researchers are often early adopters of ICT and have skills that enable them to work effectively with IT staff to develop online resources, such as websites. IFLA is a network for professionals dealing with information and has the core values of democracy that include universal and equitable access to information. Through the international and regional activities of the Parliamentary Library and Research Services Section, 100 members from over 50 countries share expertise and approaches to common challenges in supporting the information needs of parliaments. Conferences and workshops help with building capacity in parliamentary libraries and research services.

A number of these activities have focused on the use of ICT in parliaments. The annual meeting of the IFLA Libraries and Research Services for Parliaments Section constitutes the permanent link among its members. Other activities, including professional meetings, staff exchanges, guidelines for legislative libraries, the IFLA website and listservs provide ongoing support to information professionals in parliaments. Ms. Sandgrind emphasized the importance of having closer relations with main parliamentary clients and establishing partnerships to further their goals and meet the challenges of the digital era and the changing needs of legislative clients. She cited the recent joint meeting with the IPU in Geneva, the planned 2009 training session in Rome to strengthen the capacity of libraries in developing countries, and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament as positive examples of such collaboration. The Section hopes to build additional partnerships and cooperative programs and gain additional resources to establish a forum for the exchange of information on capacity building projects, find funding for supporting staff training opportunities, and to revitalize their regional groups.

At the regional level, the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD), which was founded in 1977 and has 72 chambers as members, offers a long-standing practical model of effective cooperation among parliamentary staff in Europe. **Mr. Piotr Nowina-Konopka**, ECPRD Co-Director, offered a description of the activities of the ECPRD, provided examples of good practices, and identified lessons learned. He noted that the strong parliamentary culture in Europe and tradition of working together in organizations like the EU and the Council of Europe provide a long standing basis for collaboration. The ECPRD promotes knowl-

edge sharing among the administrations of parliaments in Europe on subjects of common interest and enables close cooperation among parliamentary services in all fields of parliamentary administration, legislation, information, research and documentation.

The main services of the ECPRD include responding to requests for comparative information from members, convening seminars, conducting studies, operating the ECPRD website, and maintaining a system of parliamentary correspondents who facilitate information sharing. The network of parliamentary correspondents is especially effective because of the strong ties among its members and their commitment to assist colleagues. It is a professional, yet informal mechanism for comparing and sharing legislation, parliamentary management information and best practices among member Parliaments that provides responses to comparative requests and summaries on parliamentary procedures, rules and practice, and legislative matters. More than 200 comparative requests per year are handled by the ECPRD. They also hold a variety of seminars on parliamentary information and ICT topics, as well as publish related studies. Based upon the ECPRD's years of experience, Mr. Nowina-Konopka identified key lessons learned that would be of benefit to other cooperative undertakings. These include keeping the process human and informal, focusing on feasible goals, yet staying open to new ideas, respecting national cultures and keeping the process free of politics.

Another more recent case study of regional cooperation was offered by **Mr. Vladimir Danchev**, Head of the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in South East Europe. The organization grew out of the ef-

forts of the Stability Pact that made strengthening of parliamentary activities in the region a main focus. As the Stability Pact was phased out, its parliamentary activities were transitioned to the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in South East Europe in 2007. Bulgaria was selected to be the host for the Regional Secretariat as the parliamentary arm of the process. The Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation now involves 11 states including three from the EU, six from the western Balkans, and Turkey and Moldova. It is a collaborative effort with rotating staff provided by the parliaments and national coordinators representing each parliament. The national coordinators drafted a Memorandum of Understanding on parliamentary cooperation that was signed in April. The Secretariat is using ICT to manage their operations and has developed its own website. They have established several partnerships, including with the EU, that will result in a series of 10 seminars.

At the 2008 meeting of Speakers of Parliaments, they noted the importance of ICT for their institutions and expressed a willingness to cooperate among themselves, as well as with other organizations to advance the goals of e-parliament as outlined in the World e-Parliament Report 2008. In June 2008 a capacity building workshop with officials from parliaments was organized by the Secretariat and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The e-parliament workshop was designed to strengthen interparliamentary cooperation in Southeast Europe in the use of ICT for supporting the legislative, oversight and representative functions of parliament. The group recommended the creation of a regional ICT working group comprised of IT staff, librarians and researchers, which will be launched at the next Speakers Con-

ference. The working group will share best practices and exchange information on a range of ICT issues including ICT support for Members, communication with citizens, document management systems, guidelines for websites and establishing standards.

IPEX (Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange)

To reinforce the advantages of effective collaboration, a special event on IPEX was held during the Conference. IPEX illustrates a concrete example of successful cooperation among parliaments based upon the use of ICT. **Mr. Dick Toornstra**, Director, Office for the Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy, European Parliament, opened this special event by describing IPEX as simple, accessible and usable. He noted that one of the advantages of IPEX is that it overcomes linguistic barriers. **Mr. Piotr Nowina-Konopka**, Co-Director of the ECPRD, offered an overview of the goals and capabilities of IPEX. Launched in 2006 by the European Union, IPEX is a comprehensive website for electronic exchange of EU-related information for parliaments in the European Union. It facilitates the exchange of information on EU legislation and policies among parliaments, enabling them to publish and share their results of general parliamentary scrutiny, as well as on issues related to subsidiarity. It therefore greatly increases the transparency of the policymaking process in the European Union. Mr. Nowina-Konopka stated that IPEX is a joint undertaking of the European Parliament and the national parliaments in the EU. The IPEX Database, the largest of its kind, contains Commission documents, a list of bills undergoing scrutiny, associated dossiers with access to national scrutiny pages, adopted legislation and related Com-

mission comments. It also provides a calendar of inter-parliamentary meetings and links to useful resources and national parliament websites. Usage statistics showing approximately 5000 users per month reflect the success of IPEX within the EU. Future plans include use of IPEX for management of subsidiarity control and for exchange of information among parliamentary committees. Challenges include issues of performance and usability as the database grows rapidly.

Mr. Alessandro Palanza, Deputy Secretary General of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, offered another perspective of IPEX from the viewpoint of a national parliament and as someone who has been involved in the development of IPEX from its inception. The original working group that established IPEX emphasized the importance of exchange of information and recognized the value of inter-parliamentary cooperation for addressing the complexity of EU legislation in a useful framework. It also identified the critical role of ICT in making this a reality. Because IPEX is a unique database that “belongs” to the national parliaments as well as to the European Parliament, it provides a very effective connection between the national and European levels of government, creating a continuous exchange between them. Nothing similar exists between the executive branches at these two levels. Also, he highlighted the fact that IPEX is a “bottom-up database” where the national parliaments contribute their own information and therefore it engages all the participants in the development of a shared resource for parliament-to-parliament cooperation.

IPEX demonstrates how ICT enhances the exercise of parliamentary procedures and

opens new ways to inter-parliamentary and inter-institutional cooperation that facilitates the operation of a multi-level system of governance. He commented that among the advantages of IPEX are the facts that it avoids duplication, enables resources and information from different institutions to be pooled, and allows for direct and timely interaction. IPEX is a tool that connects political, institutional, administrative and technical aspects of parliaments. It demonstrates how technology can have an influence not only on debate, but also on procedure and political results. With the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, IPEX takes on additional value by providing complete and timely exchange of information that is essential for the functioning of the new subsidiarity control procedure by national parliaments. The World e-Parliament Conference, like IPEX, demonstrates the value of positive cooperation among parliaments and the impact of ICT. In conclusion, Mr. Palanza stressed that IPEX helps to reaffirm the primacy of parliaments in public communication and as the best representative of political interests.

During the discussion, a question was raised about the ability of other regions of the world to use this system. In response, panelists stated that IPEX serves as a useful example for how to develop this capability elsewhere and is a general tool that can be applied in other regions. Panelists also commented that they are working

on mechanisms for standardizing tagging and the uploading of the information. Regarding the issue of different languages, the determination of what languages would be available had to be negotiated on the political side and required considerable give and take. In concluding the special event, **Mr. Toornstra** identified some prime considerations that have dominated the IPEX project. He stressed that IPEX was based on a political initiative that emerged from the Speakers of the parliaments of the EU. Throughout the process the technical and administrative staff fully engaged the politicians so that the development of IPEX involved cooperation on all three of these levels. He commented that the system is so rich that in addition to the exchange of EU legislation, it can go well beyond to serve as a platform for coordinating among all countries and the European Parliament any parliamentary peer-to-peer capacity building projects undertaken by any of the member parliaments.



Standards for Parliamentary ICT

Standards, and especially open standards, are important to a parliament because of the central role they play in supporting its most critical work. This can be seen clearly in the creation and use of parliamentary documents. Open standards allow for the timely and efficient exchange of documents between parliaments and other institutions, support improved search capability, enable multiple forms of dissemination, produce internal efficiencies in the preparation of documents, and ensure the long term preservation of documents in digital formats. Open standards are also important because they can support nearly the entire technical infrastructure of a parliament – its PCs on members' desks, its website, its communication with citizens – at potentially lower costs and greater efficiency. But implementing open standards has challenges: it takes effective planning and management, careful analysis of requirements, user education and patience. It also requires political will and commitment from the leaders of the parliament. And finally, it can benefit greatly from the exchange of information with other legislative bodies, sharing of knowledge and, at times, collaboration on projects of common interest. The alternative – continued reliance on proprietary standards – will lead inevitably to higher costs and reduced flexibility to meet the challenges and needs of parliaments in the future. The sessions summarized in this section describe the efforts, the successes and the lessons learned from a number of legislatures who are adopting open standards for their desktops and their documents.

Open standards for managing parliamentary documents

This session offered a review of the state of implementation of XML in five different legislative bodies. The speakers discussed the advantages of XML as well as its challenges. Topics included authoring and editing tools, workflow, document structure, goals for systems, the state of current projects and methods for making systems acceptable to users.

Mr. Flavio Zeni, Chief Technical Advisor, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, UNDESA, and moderator of the session, indicated that one of the objectives of the session would be to have follow up recommendations for continued work in the area of open standards for parliamentary documentation.

Ms. Kirsten Gullickson, Office of the Clerk, House of Representatives of the United States of America, described the use of XML for drafting legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives. Both the House and the Senate use XML editors based on a shared document type definition (DTD) which was developed by a technical working group of the two chambers. The House uses XMetal, an off the shelf editor which they customized to meet the needs of three groups of drafters. First are the attorneys of the House Office of Legislative Counsel, which is a non-partisan group responsible for preparing the 3,000+ bills and resolutions introduced each year. Second are the House Enrolling Clerks, who prepare the official version of each bill that has passed the House and the official version of each bill that passes both the House and the Senate if it originated in the House. Almost 1000 bills and resolutions passed the House in 2008 and nearly 100 bills that

originated in the House also passed the Senate and were enacted into law. The third user of the XML editor is the Government Printing Office, which prepares and publishes print and online copies of all draft legislation for use by Congress and the public. In the U.S. the paper version is still the official version. A process has been developed to produce a PDF version from the XML version.

Ms. Gullickson described the workflow as follows: 1) the House Office of Legislative Counsel drafts a bill for a legislator; 2) the legislator introduces the bill on the House floor; 3) the floor staff prepare the bill and transmit it to the Government Printing Office (GPO); 4) GPO publishes the bill and makes it available to the public and the Legislative Branch in paper and electronic format; 5) GPO transmits the bill to the Library of Congress; 6) The Library posts the bill online and provides additional information about the status of the bill through the THOMAS system. Links within the XML document to related documents and information are added by script; metadata is also added. The structure of the document follows the legislative structure as seen in the use of sections and subsections. The business rules for the DTD also follow the legislative structure.

Ms. Gullickson stated that the goals for the use of XML in drafting are to: 1) minimize drafters' attention to typesetting; 2) maximize drafters' consideration of the legislative language itself; 3) provide "just-in-time" knowledge support during the drafting process; 4) provide a tags-off environment; 5) reduce training effort; and 6) improve quality of output.

She noted that to achieve these goals a "smart authoring" system has been developed that

has number of key characteristics: 1) context sensitive; 2) supports auto-renumbering; 3) provides auto-regeneration of table of contents; 4) has an absence of typesetting rules while author drafts; 5) supports the ability to move legislative structures around; and 6) requires simple keystrokes.

She reported the followed lessons learned to date: a) an XML editor can be created that meets the needs of the author, so the goals of consistent formatting, better search and the ability to publish in multiple formats are achieved; b) authors do not always like working in a structured editor, so it is important to ensure that the XML editor improves their document and provides "smart authoring"; c) a "tags-off" environment requires little XML knowledge by the authors; d) when naming elements, use easy to understand tag names. Finally it is important to focus first on the legislative process and then adding the metadata.

Mr. Sergio Falcão, Advisor to the Chief Information Officer, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, gave a presentation that included a demonstration of LeXML. The sources for LeXML are Akoma Ntoso from the Africa i-Parliament project in Africa, Norme in rete in the Italian Chamber of Deputies and MetaLex/CEN based in Europe. The planned scope of LeXML is to prepare in XML all legislative proposals, all laws and all court decisions at three levels – Federal, State (27 entities) and Municipal (5,564 entities) – for all three branches – legislative, judicial and executive. There are estimated to be 2,500,000 laws at the municipal level, nearly one million laws at the state level and approximately 150,000 laws at the federal level.

The LeXML project is a joint effort by Brazil-

ian federal agencies to establish and adopt open standards, integrate work flows and processes, and share information in order to provide permanent identification through URNs and structure through XML for all legislative and judicial information. The current situation is that the project has begun in the Federal Senate, the Chamber of Deputies, the Accounting Office and the Supreme Court. To date 90,000 references to bills have been harvested. It is expected that by February 2009 it will reach one million.

Mr. Falcão reported that the architecture is in place to convert all historical material into the XML format with linking of documents by permanent URNs. They are studying how to convert from XML to PDF with a digital signature. They are currently using Word and Open Office but in the future they will use an XML editor. They also plan to move documents directly from editing with an XML editor into an enterprise-wide content management system, thereby eliminating the use of multiple databases.

He noted that a key issue is publishing the documents from the database. The vision for Brazil is that all documents will be in digital format throughout their lifecycle and will be published from this format.

Mr. Richard Ware, Director of Programmes and Project Development, Parliament of the United Kingdom, gave an overview of the "Report from the UK Parliament: A case for British pragmatism?" The benefits of open standards are well known: 1) facilitate the exchange of documents between Parliaments and other institutions; 2) improve search capability; 3) enable multiple forms of dissemination; 4) produce internal efficiencies in the preparation of documents;

and, 5) support digital preservation. Given these advantages, Mr. Ware pointed out that one may ask why it has taken so long to do more with open standards. There are several reasons that most parliaments face: 1) Existing processes for producing and publishing parliamentary material were conceived many years ago; 2) Few of the existing systems are based on truly open standards; 3) Understanding of open standards and the practicalities of achieving them is still in infancy; and, 4) Parliamentary administrations are inherently averse to risk.

He noted that XML has so far been used primarily for its typesetting functions – the full semantic capabilities are not yet being used. But there are now opportunities for improving this situation based in part on the fact that the UK Parliament has created a single organization with a single vision and shared benefits to support ICT. This has allowed the development of a multi-year framework programme and the ability to have seamless service with information partners and users. The programme will offer the opportunity to re-use functionality in a modular way and perhaps most important, to recruit and retain expert staff with predictability of budgets.

One of the goals is the fullest possible integration between requirements of document production and web publication. The Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology Office (PICT) faces multiple requirements with emphasis on reliability precision, accuracy and clarity of information while also allowing for continuing flexibility to meet procedural changes and changing Member requirements. There is an emphasis on business continuity -- they must operate 24/7 and risky technology must be avoided. There is also a requirement to attain value for money.

Mr. Ware stated that XML is at the heart of the UK Parliament's strategy which includes: 1) Service oriented model (SOA) World Wide Web Consortium (W3C); 2) Storing of data with its XML in an openly published repository; 3) Creating reusable XML; 4) Application of XML equally to audio-visual content; 5) Use of XML as much as possible following international open standards; and, 6) Encouraging and influencing partners to work with PICT.

PICT has adopted a very pragmatic approach to implementing XML with mandatory co-operation with the procedural and reporting offices of the two Houses of Parliament. An Enterprise Architecture Board is responsible for standards choices. Sometimes shortcuts are allowed but they must be controlled. Also the issue of establishing an XML repository has become crucial. The goal is one repository yet different databases.

Current projects described by Mr. Ware include the "Votes and Proceedings" document, which is the name of the document that records the formal decisions of the House of Commons. This project will create new software to manage the process using XML and a searchable database. A similar project is planned for the House of Lords in the near future. XMetal is used to edit the documents. The next stage is to publish internally.

There is a project to present bill information in a more accessible way, in response to demand from both inside and outside of parliament, although further progress in this area will need partnership with the Government.

Another project is the Hansard for the Web. Debates are the big challenge. The rolling version of debates is available within three

hours. A revised process with a direct feed is being tested. The goal for the following year is to be able to write and produce a semantically rich XML that will be good for both internal and external publishing. PICT is also working to make the content more readily searchable through a menu structure. The revision of the Hansard production systems will take longer and require a more ambitious reworking of the Hansard process. This project is still at an early stage and it is important that any changes not be disruptive to continuity.

The "Historic Hansard" is an experimental project based on open source software and open source standards. Volumes of the Hansard are being scanned for both Houses back to 1803. Information on this project is publicly available on the website.

Another system is the Parliamentary Information Management System (PIMS), which went live in 2005. PIMS is the principal internal database for parliamentary information. It is not open standard, it was developed with a commercial partner and unfortunately it is not up to expectations. A decision about its future is forthcoming.

Mr. Ware reported the following conclusions from the experience in the UK: 1) It is right to be ambitious but also patient; 2) Parliaments have duty to share data with the world; 3) It is necessary to use test sites to evaluate results before fully committing resources; and, 4) We can learn from each others experiences.

Mr. Jinho Choi, Vice Director General of the Inter-Parliamentary Affairs Bureau, National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, gave a presentation on the "Establishment

of e-Parliament using Semantic Web: Digital Chamber and Information System". The background for e-Parliament has been the rise of e-democracy in Korea. This has been the increase in people's participation in democracy and also a strengthening of the role of the National Assembly. There are computer terminals for all 299 Assembly Members at their desks in the plenary hall. These are highly advanced and user friendly, for example permitting members to use a touch screen to simulate turning the page of an e-book that may contain such things as budget proposals. There is also a secret e-voting system that displays the results of each vote.

Mr. Choi stated that the goal of the system is to have electronic access to legislative documents in all phases of their life cycle based upon a metadata repository. The National Assembly Information System is a highly integrated legislative knowledge and bill information system that is combined with an Internet webcasting system that has seen considerable growth. A search for legislative content will display bills, minutes of related meetings and meeting videos. Searching can also be done by a list of popular bill names. All components of the system are based on XML and the semantic web.

Mr. Ian McDonald, Deputy Principal Clerk, House of Commons of Canada reported on the PRISM system. PRISM is an integrated application designed to manage information and publish core business documents. For the House of Commons, this includes Journals, Order and Notice Paper, Status of House Business and Hansard. For committees, it includes notices, minutes, evidence and reports. For international and inter-parliamentary affairs, PRISM is used to man-

age conference activities, the business and memberships of parliamentary associations, track activities of official parliamentary delegations (both incoming and outgoing) and visit reports. For bills, it is used for authoring, publishing and exchange with partners.

PRISM was developed to replace and integrate nine major environments supporting procedural business and publishing. It is also intended to be able to respond to future service requirements. PRISM is used by more than 900 users, includes 65 modules ranging from classical record keeping to sophisticated workflow management. It uses a mix of technologies including SQL server, XML, etc. The XML uses a common DTD between the Houses, but each has a different authoring systems.

XMetal is the editing tool and can be used in a "tags on" or "tags off" mode. Mr. McDonald gave an example using Journals, which are the record of decisions of the House of Commons. Every entry is recorded as an event and then each event is categorized with an event type with parameters that can be adjusted by the users. Events and event types are used to calculate the appropriate entries and create the tagged XML fragments.

The Hansard was also used to illustrate the linkage of speech with its associated audio. Each time a member speaks, it is recorded as an intervention event. Digital audio is also recorded and aligned with that event. A transcriber requests a unit of work and receives the outline of events and the related audio.

He noted that it took time and patience to develop the system fully. The Canadian Parliament began its work with XML in 1999.

The reasons for adopting XML are: 1) it is an open standard; 2) it separates content from the container so that one XML document can be rendered for various outputs, such as full web layout, text layout and print versions (which are still the de facto official version.). Also, XML can accommodate future requirements.

There have been a number of challenges, including the fact that early adoption meant that third party tools were in their infancy in 2000. The benefits have been significant, such as improved web sites for the chamber and committee business, with new interfaces, search and linkages to documents. The system has been developed in collaboration between the technical people and the business users. Over time it has become a highly customized system.

Mr. Zeni summarized a number of the presenters' key points by noting that XML can be well hidden and does not have to be unfriendly to users. But drafters are sometimes resistant to using XML writing tool. It is not necessary to reinvent everything if one is willing to learn from others. A modular approach can work well with low risks and parliamentary demand.

During the interactive discussions, participants asked specific questions about how the authors of documents were transitioned from MsWord to XML. The panelists responded that the tools were user friendly and were focused primarily on the content. In addition, they used a phased approach whereby both the old and new systems were used next to each other. It helped convince users that the tools offered real value. Another issue raised by the audience was how to establish a metadata model among three different

branches of government. The response was that they had to develop a three-part system to include parliament, government and the courts, acknowledging that the government is the strongest entity among them. A final comment emphasized that while there are many benefits of open standards, there is a need to have extensive planning and preparation to make them successful.

Parliamentary documents in a regional context: how standards can promote harmonization

This session discussed the why, what, how of open standards, reviewed the history of legislative documents and standards, and presented a specific example of regional cooperation on a standards based system being implemented by a number of countries in Africa.

Mr. Giovanni Sartor, Professor of legal Informatics and Legal Theory, European University Institute, and moderator of the session began by noting the need for common interoperable standards and also the need to focus on regional developments.

Mr. Peter Brown, Chairman of the Board, Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS), discussed the "why", "what" and "how" of standards.

As to "why", Mr. Brown noted that the answer lies in the complexity of documents and their largely unstructured nature. A parliament is not an island that can avoid making its documents more understandable to others. Its documents have legal force and must have structure in a multilingual world.

But first, there has to be a good business case for standards. The business case depends on the answers to a number of questions such as what is a document and what is being documented. A model must be developed for the entire document processes and procedures of legislative drafting that they embody. Other questions include whether the process should start with higher level concepts and whether there are common building blocks. What is missing is the higher level of information analysis and management that gives users a clear view of how different concepts in the document relate to each other. It is important to remember that the word "document" is first a verb, so one must decide what is to be documented, e.g. text, speeches, or concepts. There also needs to be agreement on the scope and the granularity of information, which requires an understanding of the relationship between concepts embodied in documents. So standards must be built based on modeling of information within the documents, rather than looking at format of the documents themselves.

Once the scope and the degree of granularity are agreed upon, Mr. Brown pointed out that the next question is "how" to develop standards. Here there are additional questions, such as who decides--- the "supplier" of standards or the "client". There is a marketplace for standards and it is important to understand the dynamics of this market place. On the supplier side, there are many bodies and consortia and often multiple standards for the same requirement. On the client side, there are questions of whether standards are an IT service issue, a management issue, or a political issue. Here is where the governance model comes into play because it involves how to manage choices and the role

and participation of stakeholders. In the development of standards the issue of the process for establishing those standards must also be addressed, including what process should be used, what intellectual property model is being used, who the stakeholders are, and how should they be involved.

He stated that it is also important to avoid the "Not Invented Here" syndrome, meaning "I believe in standards...so let's use mine" and "I'm happy for anyone to collaborate with me". There must be a "reflex for collaboration", not only among public administrations but among standards bodies and consortia. In conclusion, he stated that the development of shared standards requires agreement on: 1) the business case; 2) the scope, granularity and nature of information/document management; 3) governance; 4) process; and 5) collaboration.

Mr. Tom M. Van Engers, Professor of Legal Knowledge Management, Leibniz Center for Law, University of Amsterdam, discussed IT standards in the law, with a focus on the MetaLex/CEN standard. He provided a history of the recording of legislation and the ability of the public to access it. He questioned whether text is the best way to transfer legal knowledge given that it is abstract, contains legal terms, and interpretations are difficult. The challenge is not just to automate parliamentary procedures, but to have effective laws. This requires the ability to convey the understanding of them so they can be followed. Parliaments have been focused on publication, but there have been so many proprietary standards that it has created many problems. Now there is an effort to push the process higher in the chain to the legislative drafters and Members of Parliament and give them tools to produce XML documents.

Use of open standards like MetaLex for legal documents has been growing with a community of people developing capabilities to enable greater access and exchange of information. Open standards for formulating the content of law also are gaining in use. MetaLex was developed to be jurisdiction independent, language independent and independent of context of use. In that way, it is possible to bridge between national, European and other XML formats. For example, it provides transfer mechanisms from national or regional standards, like Norme in Rete (Italy) or Akoma Ntoso (Africa), into MetaLex documents and enables the export of legal materials to different web interfaces and between different data formats. The result is the creation of a standard publishing format that enables publishers to adapt their tools to a common format. It also provides a homogenous data format for querying heterogeneous documents. Mr. Van Engers described one example of a tool developed for the Netherlands that is an XML editor for legal drafters that is helpful in preparing amendments and seeing how different amendments interact. Furthermore, having an open source interface format enables interoperability among legal sources.

Having many standards can result in confusion. Therefore, the challenge is to develop collaboratively stable and law compliant services with maximum adaptability to accommodate ever increasing changes in rules and legislation driven by the demands of politics and society. What was seen in XML development in MetaLex/CEN is now being done in the development of formal languages expressing the content of legislation, such as the Legal Knowledge Interchange Format (LKIF). Mr. Van Engers concluded by recommending that parliaments explore MetaLex/

CEN, look at the potential of LKIF, and continue to stimulate international cooperation. He advocated using open standards and working together, instead of parliaments building their own independent systems.

Ms. Monica Palmirani, Associate Professor of Legal Information, CIRSIFID, University of Bologna gave an overview of Akoma Ntoso, an open standard for harmonizing legal resources. The parliamentary legislative process involves multiple phases and XML is ideal for representing parliamentary documents and for promoting the harmonization between different data formats that may be involved in each of these phases. Akoma Ntoso (AK) is an open XML standard for all the legal documents that are produced within parliamentary processes and beyond (judgments). It has been promoted by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) since 2004. It can be used for describing structures for legal documents in XML, referencing documents across countries using URIs, and adding systematic metadata to documents using ontologically sound approaches based on OWL, FRBR, etc. Akoma Ntoso is not only a standard but it includes legal drafting rules.

Professor Palmirani stated that AK provides a range of support functions, including: 1) generating documents, such as drafting activities, record keeping, translation into national languages, etc.; 2) workflow, including the management of documents throughout their lifecycle, storage, security and the timely involvement of relevant individuals and offices; 3) citizens' access to through multi-channel publication (on paper and on the web); 4) search, classification, identification of documents; and, 5) other ac-

tivities such as consolidation, comparison, language synchronization, etc.

AK also supports harmonization. This includes: a) best practices within processes - as a unique standard it fosters the diffusion of best practices within African Parliaments and the reengineering of the drafting processes to improve effectiveness; b) quality of law - the XML standard fosters compliance with many legal drafting guidelines, harmonizing the quality of the law and increasing cultural harmonization about legal drafting guidelines; c) interoperability - the harmonization of legal document formats allows interoperability between African Parliaments, shared templates, distributed web sites; and, d) open source tools development - as an open standard it encourages the open source software community.

She reported that the design characteristics of AK include the facts that it is: 1) neutral with respect to legal system, legal tradition, and jurisdiction; 2) independent of language; 3) preserves the ontological and axiological structure of the legal document; and, 4) represents the legal document using a descriptive approach. It encompasses characteristics of both the Francophone tradition and the Anglophone tradition.

It also has a number of important technical characteristics. It a) is object oriented and uses a pattern approach; b) uses a unique XML-schema which is clean and compact for modeling different types of documents; c) makes a division between content, metadata, semantics; d) uses a URI mechanism to identify all the legal resources in a distributed model; e) is extensible and customizable; and f) is compliant with MetaLex/CEN. The architecture of AK is focused on

content – showing exactly what was written in the document, *structure* – showing how the content is organized, *metadata* and *ontology* – a representation of the conceptual model that shapes all metadata associated with a document.

AK relies on open software tools for editing, converting and resolving names. Its post editing open software tools include a reference parser, validators, a database, repository, a native XML content management system (eXistrella) and a search engine. In conclusion, she noted that Akoma Ntoso fosters the cohesion and harmonization of the legal systems of different countries through legal drafting best practices and culture, simplification of legislative processes, a unique document format and open software tools specifications.

Professor Sartor noted the similarity in ideas and approaches presented by the speakers. He also pointed out that implementing XML is not easy, but it is possible to build common standards, both for insuring interoperability and communication between parliaments. He cited the MetaLex example as evidence of this. He also stated that it is possible to create common standards at a regional level.

Discussions with the audience brought forth several key issues, including how to convince parliaments to use open standards. This is an ongoing challenge and there is a question of what the value is for users. This was reinforced by another comment about the need to think about the best approach to sell open standards to parliaments and other institutions. While the technical staff understand the benefits of open standards, they often do not have the skills to convince parliamentary stakeholders. Therefore, it is important to create more awareness of the benefits for

users and for parliaments as institutions. Another participant noted that what is needed is political leadership. For example, in the case of Italy there is a decree that mandates that public administrations need to adhere to open standards for publishing. This applies to local and regions as well. A further issue is the lack of transparency that sometimes exists in the standards making process, which hampers the ability to clearly make the case for their adoption. The session concluded with a recommendation to form a technical working group on open standards.

Open Desktop in Parliament

This special event provided conference participants an opportunity to hear from three parliaments regarding their use of free and open source software (FOSS). The presenters discussed the pros of cons of FOSS, the challenges of implementation and the expected benefits.

Mr. Rudy Salles, Vice President of the National Assembly of France, gave a presentation on the implementation of FOSS for the Deputies of France. Beginning with the legislature for 2002-2007, each deputy bought his or her own equipment. The National Assembly provided an e-mail account and broadband access. In 2006 the Assembly launched a study to evaluate the possibility of changing the software environment on the desktop to open source. This plan was to coincide with the new legislature of 2007-2012. The study identified the following strengths of open source software: 1) it would cover the needs of each office; 2) there is no cost for acquisition; and, 3) the overall costs would be lower because fewer resources would be required for maintenance. The weaknesses identified were: 1) interoperability problems with MS

Office; 2) a different ergonomics that could affect changing work habits; 3) the lack of synchronization with local PDAs; and, 5) the inability to use proprietary software, except through emulations or virtualizations.

Mr. Salles reported that it was a difficult decision. There were major debates in the National Assembly about copyright and related issues. There was a strong recommendation by the French government to develop the use of open source software in government. There was also a desire of many members of all parties to try open source for a variety of reasons, including financial, strategic and even ideological. On 22 November 2006, the President of the National Assembly and Quaestors decided in favor of free and open source software.

The changeover was made easier, he said, because members did not have business applications on their PCs that had to be migrated. The solution is a single workstation based on Linux and fully configured with software. The workstation is locked and only the support teams can make software installations. Accompanying this change was the establishment of secure extranet enabling members and their employees to work from their constituencies. Despite the constraints of a public tender, it took just 6 months to design and develop the target environment.

Beginning in 2007, workshops were held with MPs and their staff to collect their needs and methods of work, to present models of the working environment, and to provide answers to their questions and expectations. The aim was to limit changes in the use of the tools. From the beginning of the new parliament (20 June 2007), various media for communication about the change were

established. These included: 1) briefings on the new software; 2) simplified manuals; 3) online help; 4) a one hour session to help get started; and, 5) training in groups or individually, depending on the needs of members. However, the latter was little used.

He noted that the plan was to have everything ready between 20 June and 10 July 2007. There were many challenges. Computer cabling was not fully operational; there were delays in delivery of the computers; members needed to be operational immediately to carry out their work; there was resistance to change by some members and staff; and there were new political authorities. With regard to maintenance of the environment, hardware and software are supported by the same vendor. Support is provided by a service that specializes in open source. They provide major updates to the software three times per year and corrections for deficiencies as needed.

Mr. Salles said that so far there has been a positive review of the new software. Savings are projected to be hundreds of thousands of euros over five years. Members are generally satisfied. The majority is satisfied with the office tools, and only 14% has regretted the loss of Windows and MS Office. There has been rapid adoption, requiring about six months. Still there have been some difficulties. For example, it is not possible to install the proprietary tools that some members used to develop their own applications.

But expectations are high regarding the community of free software. The hope is that computers will be easier for users who are not experts, and there will be better integration of software. Conclusions from this experience are: 1) it is crucial that a change to FOSS be accompanied by a service com-

pany specializing in this type of software to ensure consistency and maintenance of software installed; 2) acceptance of change will be facilitated by adapting the environment to make it "Windows-like"; 3) it is best to make this kind of change when there also a major change in the legislature; and, 4) the software requires continuous updating.

Mr. Ganyani Khosa, ICT Director, Parliament of Zimbabwe gave an overview of the open desktop in the Parliament of Zimbabwe (POZ). The rationale for adopting Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) included: 1) the expense of purchasing and licensing software; 2) the problem of being seen to promote software pirating; 3) strong support within the technical community of the country; 4) the cost of international bandwidth compared with using a local repository; 5) the cost of 3rd party security compared with the exceptional built in security of FOSS; 6) there is (or will be) a FOSS for all essential proprietary software; 7) problems with Microsoft Office 2007 documents in terms of backward compatibility; 8) free built in PDF conversion with full features; and, 9) stability, which is now good for FOSS.

Mr. Khosa noted that the open source operating system Ubuntu has a number of attractions, including its central management and associated applications such as GIMP for image management, Ebox for IT infrastructure administration and e-mail which uses PGP for security. There are, of course, some challenges: the effort to migrate to FOSS, the fact that drivers are not available for some devices, and not all proprietary software has a FOSS equivalent.

He reported that planning for FOSS was relatively easy for the POZ. There were no sys-

tems that required migration. Open source was being used or planned for all major applications - ERP, NuView for HR, KOHA for the library, DSPACE for the data repository. Recommendations for those considering migration to FOSS were to: 1) plan to transfer documents, bookmarks, preferences and system settings; 2) find equivalent open-source applications for the Windows applications in use; 3) use the Ubuntu Linux built in migration, use 3rd party tools, do it manually. In the case of the POZ, it was done in conjunction with the purchase of new machines.

Mr. Carlo Marchetti, Counselor, IT Department, Senate of the Republic of Italy, provided an evaluation of a migration to OpenOffice. In the Italian Senate there are 2,600 users, 2,150 PCs using MSOffice XP and 3,300 mailboxes. There are two data centers with 110 (virtual) servers, 28Tb of storage and 3,600 network sockets. They have 500 custom applications, 40 based on MS Office, a website with 350,000 pages and 200,000 PDF documents. The IT department has 2 general managers, 6 engineers, 28 senior analysts and technicians and 22 assistants. They do selective outsourcing for infrastructure management, on-site technical support and maintenance, help desk and maintenance of applications. They employ Free/Libre/Open Source Software (FLOSS) on their servers – 50% of servers run FLOSS operating systems, all new applications run on FLOSS, and the website is based on open source.

Mr. Marchetti reported, however, that FLOSS is not very much in use on desktops at this time. The IT department will adopt open standards for document interchange. Currently PDF-A is used for archiving and XHTML for accessibility. In the 2nd quarter

2008, the Senate undertook a tender process to renew all PCs; distribution began in the 4th quarter 2008 and completion is expected in January 2009. The new PCs are equipped with Windows Vista and Office XP. However, OfficeXP is not officially supported in Vista, so they began an evaluation of MSOffice 2007. (Infrastructure and the applications portfolio hindered migration to a different OS.) MSOffice 2007 is expensive to license and has a different GUI and metaphors, requiring education and support.

This situation - the desire to adopt open standards for document interchange, the cost of upgrading to MS Office 2007 and the possibility of lower licensing costs for FLOSS - provided a rationale and opportunity to do an analysis of migrating to OpenOffice (OO). This included risks – OO migrations can take up to 5 years and there are variations in the estimates of total cost of ownership (TCO) during and after migration.

Mr. Marchetti said that in June 2008 the IT department began to look for a technologically neutral partner to assist in the study. (The market is not typically neutral). They involved the National Inter-University Consortium on Informatics in selecting a partner. The analysis included: 1) an evaluation of the organizational impact; 2) an evaluation of the technical impact; 3) a migration scenario with a development and costs/benefits analysis; 4) a migration plan with activities, time and costs. There would then be a political decision regarding whether to go ahead with migration to OO in January 2009.

The organizational impact and analysis, which was underway at the time of the conference, consisted of an evaluation of the current use of MSOffice, the effectiveness

of OO, the user education needs attitude toward the OS and the voluntary adoption rate. The analysis was based on a pilot study of 40 non-IT employees, one from each administrative office who will use OO. The technical analysis, which was also still underway, included an assessment of several versions - IBM Lotus Symphony, Novell Edition and the OO.org community version. [Note: this part is completed and OO.org has been selected.] The analysis aimed to identify interoperability problems and define a strategy for coping with them. It also included testing and evaluating a development platform for porting applications in order to better understand migration costs.

Mr. Marchetti provided some preliminary results. Regarding the current use of MSOffice, all 40 users employ MSWord, 10 use Excel and 4 use Access. They found 4 (10%) have custom VBA/Macros applications autonomously developed by users. One of these is very complex using Word, Access and Excel together in a single application. The problems are how to port these user-built applications and how much it will cost? The estimate is that there could be as many as about 100 custom applications.

Regarding the effectiveness of OpenOffice.org, it appears that OpenOffice.org is suitable for opening standard MS documents (correspondence, reports) and for editing from scratch (calc gives some GUI problems). There are problems and consequent user resistance when opening and editing "complex" documents, e.g., .doc with several revisions, nested tables w/pictures, etc. Also MS Excel spreadsheets with complex formulas can be difficult to edit.

He noted that provided good user training is

performed, the main issues to care about for migration effectiveness are:

1) *Interoperability*: A few people already use ODF to exchange documents (and this number is growing). Also senators and their staff will continue buying and working on their own devices, as well as receiving documents in several formats, which raises the issue of continuity enforcement. Finally, legacy "complex" MSOffice documents must remain accessible in future.

2) *Legacy MSOffice-based custom and enterprise applications*. Users want to continue using advanced features and their applications. Customization in OO is not as easy as in MS. Porting is expensive: the development platform (i.e., Eclipse and/or Netbeans) is still not very productive and the market is not highly responsive.

The preliminary conclusions to date are the following: A) With thousands of MS installations, OO installation is easy, but migrating is not. Support and education quality might determine success. Users in parliaments are smart: they develop their own solutions. 40 enterprise applications deserve a careful porting approach. B) Market and platform maturity play a central role. The market should provide more adequate support for both users and the IT Department. Also, platform maturity highly influences porting and maintenance efficiency. C) Costs are not going to be reduced in terms of magnitude, especially during migration, which means that non-monetary benefits prevail over budget. Porting is likely to be expensive. Also, it will be difficult to evaluate the maintenance costs of migrated applications. D) The migration process will have to be politically approved and supported. Interoperability and porting problems (and related costs) are likely to remain after migration.

Infrastructure: technology, information services and human resources

To operate efficiently and effectively, parliaments must have an adequate infrastructure of modern technology, quality information services and skilled staff. Some parliaments are only beginning to acquire the needed hardware, software and networks to support the exercise of their legislative, oversight and representative functions. Others face the challenge of replacing outdated legacy systems with newer technology and expanding their basic ICT capabilities to include new media and mobile technologies. Without a sufficient technology base, parliaments are limited in their ability to acquire, analyze, manage, disseminate and preserve needed information and to foster communication both within the legislature and externally with constituents. Building systems to manage legislative documents is one key component of such an infrastructure. In addition, parliaments must have professional librarians and researchers who are capable of responding to the information requests of individual members and the analytical needs of legislative committees. Building strong information services to support parliaments can have a major impact on their ability to meet the challenges of legislating in today's information society. Investing in staff development across the institution likewise can pay significant dividends for parliaments.

IT infrastructures in Parliaments: old and reliable, new and flexible

This session offered a picture of the current and planned infrastructure in four legislatures. The presenters emphasized the importance of the relationship between the goals of the parliament and the technical infrastructure, the impact of changes and trends in technology, the importance of ensuring security and the need to make the infrastructure "user friendly".

Mr. Ravi Poliah, ICT Manager of the General Assembly of South Africa, noted that for IT to be successfully deployed there must be a clear linkage between process, people and strategy. Broadly speaking, infrastructure encompasses hardware, software, support and management. This covers a wide range of essential components.

In the hardware area it includes desktop computers, laptops and mobile devices, servers, network devices, cabling, storage and backup devices, audio and video hardware and telecom hardware. In the software area it includes operating systems (Windows, Linux and Mac), network software, office suites, browsers, security, backup, messaging systems, web services, legislative drafting software and software for plenary sessions. Technical support requires help for end users (including a service desk), network support, security, software development, database and system administration,

as well as audio and video technical support. Management services include IT governance and policies, planning, legal compliance, service management, standards, life cycle management and contracts and service level agreements.

Mr. Poliah pointed out that as hardware and software assets are acquired and disposed of, it is important to maximize the business processes that these components support and use the technologies to their fullest capacity. Each of these essential elements requires effort, none more so than security, which has become a major challenge. Service desks and help desks are also vital, as are support for database administration and system administration.

He noted that among the most important trends affecting infrastructure are the emphasis on making IT green and the need to manage the environmental footprint. He further stated that this is only possible if a country has an established industry that offers “green IT services” for recycling old PCs and equipment. Fortunately, South Africa has this supporting business environment/industry. But it can be a constraint for countries that do not. So the direction of ICT in parliament is reliant on the surrounding environment.

There is also growing scrutiny of the return on investment (ROI) as budgets come under greater pressure. Consolidation can be one way of doing more with the same or less. The need to be able to do more can be seen in the Obama campaign and its exploitation of Web 2.0 capabilities. Cloud computing is also growing in importance and offers a way to have more processing and storage capacity.

Among emerging technologies he cited, the most important for parliaments are mobile TV, web TV, the semantic web and machine translation. In South Africa there are also growing opportunities for collaboration. These include such areas as shared services and outsourcing, exemplified by the financial services industry, as well as cloud computing, the use of open source software and inter-parliamentary exchange programs.

Outsourcing can have a number of benefits, but there are important issues to consider such as security and confidentiality, whether to do a full or partial outsourcing (for example by retaining data control inside but having hardware control outside), and the availability of the appropriate technical and management skills inside and outside. This often requires a detailed cost/benefit analysis.

Open source software is another area that is growing and has a number of benefits, such as security, cost, availability of source code, free enhancements bug fixes and no license fees. However, there may be limited technical support and development skills available, integration with other systems can be a challenge, and there are a limited number of applications. Another challenging area is disaster recover and redundancy. This needs policy guidance based on risk management assessment.

Finally, he pointed out, the state of development of technical infrastructure within the entire country has a significant impact on parliament’s infrastructure. This is a constraint but it can also be an incentive for parliament to establish policies that improve the situation. What is needed is an infrastructure that has the capacity for growth to meet the increasing technical needs of organizations and that is reliable but also agile.

Mr. Joao Viegas D'Abreu, Director, IT Department, Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, emphasized the importance of ensuring that the IT infrastructure meets the goals of the parliament. There needs to be a clear business context for the infrastructure. This becomes evident in the many interfaces of ICT infrastructure management, such as the interface of service management with both users and operations, the interface of customers with design and planning and also application management. As noted by the previous speaker in reference to green IT, parliaments also need outside technical partners to accomplish their ICT goals. The primary goal of ICT in Portugal is to bring the parliament to the people and bring the people to the parliament.

At the intersection of technology and the goals of the organization, ICT infrastructure management must provide service support, application management and service delivery that meet the most important needs of the business. In this context, security management also becomes a critical issue. Security must always "be there" but it must not "be there" in the sense of constraining usage, i.e. become a hindrance in terms of user friendliness/usability of ICT.

He pointed out that the main processes in the development of ICT infrastructure for parliaments involved first, *planning and design*, which provides overall guidelines for the development and installation of ICT infrastructure in parliaments. Then there is *deployment*, which is concerned with the implementation and rolling out of the infrastructure as designed and planned. Next is *operations*, which encompasses all activities and measures to enable and/or maintain the intended use of the ICT infrastructure.

Finally, there is the need for *ongoing technical support*, which requires the development of knowledge for the evaluation, support and validation of all current and future ICT infrastructure solutions.

Historically, he noted, infrastructures have moved from individual and often independent systems to interconnected systems that operate through a network which provides distributed services and enterprise-wide management. Portugal now uses the Microsoft Office SharePoint System (MOSS) for managing legislative documents, minutes, proceedings, etc.

The current goal of the parliament is to enable paperless processes. This requires a great deal of authentication and security, mobility based on smart phone and virtual private networks (VPN) for secure remote access and transparency using such things as blogs and online discussion forums. The old and reliable infrastructure has many constraints in attempting to achieve these goals, including high cost, multiplicity of servers, complex technical management, complicated authentication, difficulties for disaster recovery and difficulties in implementing consistent security policies. Consequently, the parliament is building a new and flexible ICT infrastructure whose features include only one VLAN, a unique active directory, a unique organization unity, one domain server, one mail server, one webmail and one address book. The advantages of this infrastructure are that it will enable a single sign-on authentication system, fewer servers, low licensing costs, better support for global solutions, easier disaster recovery solutions and a more consistent security policy.

He concluded by identifying four key points: 1) ICT infrastructure should always be adjusted to an organization's goal; 2) most ICT problems in parliaments are related to infrastructure; 3) old and reliable infrastructures are often a barrier for ICT development; 4) ICT infrastructure should have enough flexibility in order to adapt to an organization's goals.

Mr. Hernán Figueroa, Director of ICT, Chamber of Deputies of Chile, presented an overview of the project of the Chilean Chamber of Deputies to create a digital chamber for plenary meetings. The goals of the digital chamber are to have: 1) a mechanism for the deployment of electronic voting with automatic publication on the website; 2) a control mechanism for providing secure and reliable access to documents for deputies and also automatic publication on the website; 3) an information system that allows access at each desk to legislative information as well as information from other systems; 4) a system that enables the distribution of different audio channels; 5) a system that allows online access to multimedia content recorded in the plenary hall for later transcription; 6) a system of automatic reception of information concerning legislative developments on mobile devices for Members; 7) a system of control and management of content before, during and after a plenary session; and, 8) screens for deputies and the general public that show events in the plenary session as they occur. A team of 30 professionals is employed to disseminate content.

Mr. Figueroa included numerous depictions that illustrated components of the system. Deputies have their own mini PCs that run on open source software. These workstations are very mobile and have the full function-

ality required by the members. The system also provides for biometric identification of MPs as well as online chat while they are in session.

The results of the project have led to: 1) improving the management of legislation with increased availability of access to databases and the Internet; 2) a substantial decrease in consumption of paper; 3) increased attendance in the House; and, 4) increased confidence in the processes that occur in the Chamber (attendance, voting, discussion, etc.).

Mr. Juha-Pekka Leskinen, IT Manager, Parliament of Finland, discussed the information and document needs of members of parliament and the way they are being met in the Finnish parliament. There is emphasis on an infrastructure that supports mobility. The goal is to help members do their work wherever they may be.

In describing the system, Mr. Leskinen noted that search services provide access to a wide range of information. Standardized interfaces between databases allow easier interoperability and sharing. The website provides access to all parliamentary documents and laptops can be used anywhere to gain access to the system. The ambition is to create a single information system for MPs that is a secure portal with a web interface that can be accessed from everywhere in the parliament, from all workstations connected to the network and from laptops via available wireless access points.

He noted that not all users are happy about this move to a digital environment and human factors play an important role in helping them to adapt to the new system. A

great deal of time and effort is dedicated to producing secure and user friendly applications and systems. Security is a primary pre-condition, but the key factor in deciding when to roll-out systems to users is the “user friendliness”. So the challenge is to offer ICT where security is there, but not seen. This is how the Finnish Parliament tried to find the balance between security and usability. A future project will provide secure access via VPN on a mobile phone.

Interventions from the audience addressed a number of key issues including the importance of standards/requirements for environmentally friendly hardware and striking the right balance between security and usability. Participants shared their own experiences on how to encourage MPs to use the technology.

The Chair closed by emphasizing the importance of preserving what has been captured digitally. He also noted the importance of planning, being forward looking and having a vision.

Building systems for managing parliamentary documents

This session provided a summary of the systems that five parliaments have developed for managing their documents. The presenters discussed the types of documents, ranging from proposed bills, to committee reports, to plenary sessions, the goals of the modules developed to support them, and the software tools used.

Ms. Eszter Kertészné Gérecz, Head of the Department for Informatics, National Assembly of Hungary, identified the primary users of parliamentary documents in Hun-

gary as MPs, staff, the government, experts, the press, citizens and civil organizations. The functions that have to be fulfilled were preparing, managing, distributing and archiving. Tools used include Windows Office, Open Office, XML and PDF. Data and information have to meet the rules of the legislative process.

She described three systems that exemplify best practices in the Hungarian Assembly. First is a registration system for legislative documents. All documents entered in this system use an Oracle format and receive an ID number and a bar code. They are then scanned and put into a file system according the bar code name. All documents are shown in the format in which they were prepared. They are scanned so that the signature can be displayed. All documents in this system are available on the web. Tools used include MS Word for printing, Oracle forms for metadata, Global-Store for scanning and OmniPage Pro for PDF and text. Oracle PL/SQL is used to provide the full PDF text from the Oracle database.

Second is a system for managing European Union documents. This system is maintained on an intranet and is not available to the public. EU documents are transferred from the Foreign Ministry to Parliament via email, assigned metadata and stored temporarily in a database using Java. These documents are made available to MPs and staff via the intranet using PL/SQL and XML.

Third is a system for managing MPs’ declaration of assets. The application is used for MPs’ annual declaration of assets. It is based on Oracle, a web platform and XML. PDF is used for printing. A strong emphasis has been placed on making it user friendly.

Mr. Enrico Seta, Head of the International Affairs Office, Research Department, Chamber of Deputies of Italy, described the challenging environment of a parliament in which an ICT system cannot afford any interruption even in case of migration. Parliamentary documents must meet high standards in five key areas: accuracy, timeliness (and rapidity), completeness, clarity and context. Also, parliamentary procedures change. ICT is not the core business in parliament, so it is difficult to engage political leadership. However, this appears to be changing lately.

Mr. Seta noted several milestones in the legislative process that are important in the management of documents:

1) Knowledge and facts obtained about an issue which results in the presentation of a bill. The Italian Chamber of Deputies provides MPs with access to news agencies and press clipping organized into hundreds of searchable compilations. They also provide databanks with legislative, financial and statistical information – both domestic and international. Many of these have subscription costs. In addition they provide electronic parliamentary data sources and over 3000 internet sites of parliamentary interest which are classified thematically. This service is managed by the library. Updating of resources is the result of cooperation between the library and the documentation services department.

2) The examination of the bill. During this phase, HTML files of the previous day's plenary sitting reports are published on the web by 9 am each morning. Mr. Seta reported that the Library Department examines each piece of text using markup tags inserted by the Printing Shop, modifies it if necessary,

and then adds further markup. The debates are then recorded in a database by noon. This is a compromise solution that must deal with the demands of large volumes of data, timeliness and cost. The Debates Database is used to build the document fact sheet that sets out the preparatory procedures for bill examination. Amendments for the bill are prepared in XML format and made searchable by an open source search engine. The research department also produces dossiers on bills. Video and audio from the plenary session provide live and recorded files. Every sitting is stored permanently. Increasingly meetings of standing committees and special events are also being made available. Web TV will be launched in January 2009.

3) The bill is voted. There are 660 voting terminals and there can be as many as 700 votes per day.

Mr. Miguel Ángel Gonzalo, Head, Coordination and Projects Planning Unit, Cabinet of the Secretary General, Congress of Deputies of Spain, presented an overview of the modernization plan of the Congress of Deputies, which was established in 2004. The plan consists of a number of strategic lines, with three primary objectives: innovation through ICT, improvement in operations and opening parliament to the people. His presentation focused on the system for document management and electronic registration. The system involves the management of all parliamentary initiatives by MPs, including registration and access to the full text. Mobility is also critical to the Deputies, who often work away from the parliament. Therefore the remote registration of parliamentary initiatives must support remote electronic registration as well as archiving.

Mr. Gonzalo reported that the specific objectives of the system are: 1) full management of all parliamentary initiatives in both paper and digital form in a single system that provides for filing, processing and publication; 2) confidentiality, integrity and validation that is guaranteed by the use of electronic signatures; 3) making parliamentary initiatives available in full text at all stages of the process; and, 4) and promoting access and mobility. The system allows initiatives to be submitted and registered electronically through the web or in paper, which is scanned and entered into the same system. The system also provides for electronic exchange with the government.

In addition to describing the management of parliamentary documents, he pointed out the sittings of the House and the Committees are recorded and broadcast both through the web and through a television channel, both live and deferred. The metadata associated with the recordings and their related initiatives are integrated and updated in both directions. Access through the web allows for both public consultations of the documents and secure access for authorized users.

The technical platform is based on Oracle Application Server Version 10, Oracle Internet Directory, BRS 9.0, Oracle Forms and Reports, Proc, J2EE, Net Framework 2.0, Visual Basic.Net, VRS 4.1 Professional Service Pack 2 and Subversion (for version control). The regulatory framework requires, by Spanish law, an electronic signature to register documents. MPs all have smart cards to support this requirement. Registration is available 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. Remote filing is guaranteed by a message confirming the date and time of registration as well as the registration number. If this message

is not received, the document must be registered at another time or by other means. Such a system guaranteeing registration is critical to the integrity of the system.

Mr. Strashimir Strashimirov, Expert, and **Ms. Daniela Tatarova**, Expert, Directorate of Information and Communication Systems, National Assembly of Bulgaria, gave a presentation of an integrated information system of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria. The system has five major goals: 1) to support the work of the MPs and the parliamentary administration; 2) integration of the parliamentary information resources; 3) optimization of document management; 4) efficient access to information; 5) minimization of duplicate data. The intended users are a) members of parliament; b) parliamentary groups; c) parliamentary committees; and, d) parliamentary staff.

They reported that in 2005 the decision was made to build a system in which all data was integrated. This was followed by a needs analysis and a public procurement in November 2006. Specifications were completed by March 2007 and implementation and testing was completed in June 2008. Deployment occurred in August 2008 with development continuing. The architecture is centralized, web-based, three-tier, clustered, and built upon Oracle, Java and XML. Security is based on ISO 17799/2000. System reliability is ensured through online replication and automatic backup.

Basic modules provide for legislation, parliamentary control, parliamentary and administrative structures, European documents, international relations and protocol, the state gazette and press review. A system administration module handles access pol-

icity, user access, module functionality and database management.

The speakers noted several challenges that had to be addressed: 1) migration of data from the existing system to the new system; 2) provision of information for a wide range of users; 3) training; and, 4) the need to support and extend the system while it was being deployed. They drew the following conclusions from this development project: a) the integration of IT resources achieves higher efficiency of usage; b) appropriate implementation of new technologies facilitates the successful development of the information systems necessary for the parliament; c) the utilization of modular information systems facilitates expansion and access of different classes of users; d) the key to guaranteeing the success of the system is the engagement and the strong support by the presiding body of the parliament.

Mr. Jamal Darwish, Expert, Federal National Council, United Arab Emirates, described the systems that have been developed for the Federal National Council.

The Council aims to fully transform into an e-parliament. The sessions are paperless, as are the operations of the Secretariat. Members can use the Intranet within the parliament, or can access parliamentary information remotely via the Internet. Members can use eForums, ePress, eLibrary and voting systems. Public users can communicate with members and with the General Secretariat, as well as submit complaints to the parliament.

The functions that are currently supported include member activities, draft laws (bills) and amendments; oversight actions includ-

ing questions, general inquiries and complaints; the work of the Bureau Board, the general secretariat and committees; and plenary sessions, minutes and agenda.

Mr. Darwish reported that a number of specific modules are in place. These include: 1) a correspondence module to handle incoming mail, outgoing mail, internal memos and integrated task management; 2) an executive module that handles meetings, calendars and support for the steering committee and executive committees; 3) a parliamentary activities module that covers questions, general discussions, draft laws, activities and complaints; 4) a sessions module that covers the agenda, sessions and minutes; 5) a committees module for agenda and meetings; 6) a members module that provides a directory and other member services; 7) research and information modules for support of the Speaker, ePress and an eLibrary, with support for committees and members being developed; 8) website modules for members that provide access to eForums, eLibrary and ePress, with a members/citizen eForum being developed; 9) website modules for citizens that support the registering of complaints, online polls and communication both to committees and directly to members. Some of these are work flow applications and others involve database management.

The technologies used include IBM DB2 Content Manager Enterprise Edition, DB2 Enterprise Edition, Tivoli Storage Manager, WebSphere Application server, IBM DB2 Common Store for Lotus Domino and MS SQL server/ASP.NET and Oracle.

Meeting the information needs of Members

Legislators require timely, accurate and useful information to conduct their legislative, oversight and representative roles. The growth of electronic information resources and online tools offer both opportunities and challenges for supporting parliamentarians as they grapple with increasingly complex policy issues and a rapidly evolving information society. Parliamentary information that documents the legislative process must be effectively managed within the parliament to ensure its availability to members and their constituents. At the same time, there is a growing need to skillfully navigate the overwhelming volume of resources available via the Internet to locate relevant material. Organizing, validating and presenting that information in ways that specifically respond to member's needs require trained library and research staff who can make effective use of ICT.

Ms. Eliza Roszkowska Oberg, Member of the Parliament of Sweden and moderator of the panel, spoke to the challenges of Members who are inundated with emails and other information. She set the stage for the session by raising questions about how to identify systems and services that can be most effective in the parliamentary setting for supporting Members. Given the growth of new online tools, such as wikis, podcasts, blogs and others, it can become increasingly difficult to identify the right information from all that is available. Ms. Oberg stressed that dealing with information overload, whether from constituent emails or the mass of information available via the web, is a major challenge for parliamentarians.

Ms. Raissa Teodori, Senior Parliamentary

Officer of the Library of the Senate of the Republic of Italy, provided insights from both the point of view of an individual staff member of a parliamentary library and as a member of the Standing Committee of the Committee of the IFLA Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section. She noted that while there is a great diversity of parliamentary library and research services around the world, they all share a common mission to provide parliaments with timely, accurate, reliable, non-partisan, independent, confidential and objective information. They also face similar challenges in terms of the rapidly evolving needs of members and the fast pace of technological change.

Ms. Teodori provided an overview of the outcome of a recent conference, entitled "Informing Democracy: Building Capacity to Meet Parliamentarians' Information and Knowledge Needs," sponsored by IFLA, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments. The meeting was unique in bringing together legislative information providers with the users, including both members and parliamentary administrators, to enhance the dialogue among them. Users voiced concern about the problem of information overload and the need for relevant information that is both timely and high quality. Members emphasized the importance of establishing close relationships with information and research specialists and of having highly skilled staff who can create knowledge from information. Based upon the discussions at the meeting, several strategies were identified for improving information support within the parliament. For example, there should be more effective collaboration among libraries, research services and other documentation offices within the parliament, as

well as more tailored responses to member requests. In addition, Ms. Teodori stated that information providers need to do a better job at marketing the services they offer, communicating with users and establishing better feedback mechanisms.

Another key to improving member support is to make the best use of new technology to access, organize and disseminate information both internally and to the public. There is widespread reliance on intranets, portals and websites by librarians and researchers for locating needed information, especially as members pose increasingly complex search requests. Because the combination of ICT tools and knowledgeable staff is critical to providing effective member information support, close cooperation between IT experts and information specialists must be established.

The experience of the European Parliaments Research Initiative (EPRI) offers useful lessons on how Members are adapting to technology and provides a snapshot of what some pioneers are doing to exploit the potential of online communication for achieving parliamentary goals. **Ms. Birdie Nathanson**, EPRI, described the range of activities they have undertaken through this program beginning in 1999 when they began hosting conferences for parliamentarians on ICT issues. Later EPRI also started producing studies, such as "Learning to Live with the Internet." This report focused on how MPs were adapting to the use of technology in their professional lives and provided a snapshot of what the pioneers among them were doing. Specifically, it looked at how parliamentarians are making different use of ICT in their roles as representative, party member and legislator. Other activities have included online

web discussions with academics and other technology leaders and Members of Parliament, as well as podcasts. The goals of these projects include enhancing e-democracy, improving the efficiency of parliaments and disseminating information about ICT policy developments in parliaments.

Ms. Nathanson identified information resources outside the parliament that can be acquired via the web and integrated and used within the legislative setting. There is a variety of online tools for accomplishing this ranging from formal consultations to blogs and policy wikis. She suggested that it is increasingly important for parliamentarians to be able to find and receive this kind of information using new Web 2.0 mechanisms. Similarly, it is vital that parliaments make use of Web tools to push their information out to people and organizations outside the parliament. Examples include such possibilities as "hearfromyourmp.com" and "youtube.com/eutube" that can serve as "infomediaries" between members and their constituents. She emphasized that by dovetailing parliamentary dissemination efforts with those undertaken by other information producers and publishers, members are more likely to reach a greater audience. Furthermore, by developing a strategy that makes parliamentary sites easier to locate and accessible from popular search tools, parliaments are more likely to increase traffic and have a greater impact.

Mr. Martin Atkinson of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission highlighted the development of their news monitoring systems as an example of how to use the Internet to vastly improve access to information for parliamentarians. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) is the second biggest

General Directorate of the European Commission and provides technical & scientific support for law and policy making. The JRC undertook media monitoring to cover major events and identify public opinion and trends for policy impact. They aggregate information on specific topics from multiple sources, creating a type of “mini-report” that captures the major news developments. They developed the capability for electronic media monitoring in order to assist the human analysis they performed and support real time information delivery. In addition, electronic media monitoring enables automatic categorization of information collected, information extraction, information linking, detection of breaking news and trend analysis. Mr. Atkinson stressed the importance of covering all relevant languages and providing search screens in multiple languages to foster broad access. The initial effort involved creation of the JRC’s Europe Media Monitor (EMM) that provides automatic news aggregation and analysis. Today they gather approximately 50,000 news articles per day in 42 languages and are able to classify them into hundred of subjects and countries. They currently receive around 40,000 visitors daily on their public sites.

Their most recent project is the African News Monitor (ANM) service that focuses on African news sources and is Africa-centric in both its operation and its content. The ANM is now a full working prototype, and in the future they intend to migrate the information to servers in Africa to be run by and for Africans. To sustain its operation, adequate IT infrastructure, training programs, support from Africans on defining categories and maintaining sources and ongoing funding are essential. Information in the ANM is being made available in the most widely used

languages in Africa with a focus on African entities.

During the discussion period, questions were raised about the overlap and duplication that exists among the different parliamentary units that support Members in specific areas. Ms. Teodori commented that parliamentary support offices must find better ways to cooperate and should communicate with the parliament’s senior administration about the need for adjusting the organization so that it is more efficient and responsive to member needs. Ms. Nathanson noted that, for example, press relations units that deal with the media may need to restructure to cope with the new realities of web 2.0 capabilities. Mr. Atkinson added that MPs should ensure that they lead the development of new IT services, rather than abdicating to IT departments to do so. Ms. Oberg emphasized that there is a growing need for information wherever members are located and therefore new mobile requirements must be addressed by all the support units within parliaments. Highlighting the particular challenges they face with very limited resources, a librarian from a developing country indicated that they have 300 Members and only 2 computers in the library, making it very difficult to provide adequate support to members.

Organizational challenges: Staffing and staff development

Building e-parliament requires highly skilled staff throughout the legislature. Many parliaments face challenges both in acquiring needed staff and in ensuring that they are adequately trained to keep pace with the rapid advances in technology. Even in parliaments that have greater resources, expertise often exists in silos that are not effectively linked

to provide the most efficient and effective support for the institution. In addition, replacing traditional ways of conducting business in legislatures through modern technology may meet resistance among some officials and members. Therefore, it is important to introduce innovations in ways that elicit support from the political leadership, and to provide the necessary training to ensure that staff acquire the needed expertise to support 21st century parliaments.

Mr. Jean-Marc LaForest, Director-General for Innovations and Technological Support at the European Parliament, introduced the session by emphasizing that IT specialists must also have a good awareness of the business of the parliaments. He commented that despite having good salaries, it is hard to hire and attract specialists, especially in certain areas like IT security. It is vital to have ongoing training due to rapid technological change and the need to keep up to date, but such training also is very expensive. In addition, other staff in parliaments often don't understand the importance of IT and there is a tendency to create little fortresses of independent operations where the systems don't work together. Setting the stage for the panel, he concluded that there is a need to address broader organizational structures required for the future, systems that are most responsive to the requirements of parliament and sustained support for training.

The presentation by **Ms. Joan Miller**, Director, Parliamentary ICT at the Parliament of the United Kingdom, reflected on the lessons she has learned from her experiences centralizing IT organizations in several institutions. She stressed that IT services are about people, not technology, and that finding solutions to people problems is much harder

than technology. A key point that managers need to understand is that it is counterproductive to change an organization without changing the underlying culture. She reinforced the point that staff both inside and outside the IT department present challenges and therefore it is important to focus attention on the cultural and behavioral issues in both areas to make change viable.

She contrasted the characteristics of dispersed versus centralized IT operations. For example, decentralized IT staff tend to be better at fixing problems than planning prevention and while they are less concerned with deadlines and budgets, they are also more dedicated to the "cause." In contrast, centralized IT operations tend to have a professional approach and be good at targets and budgeting, but they can become too process driven, inflexible and detached from the customer. In addition, although enterprise planning enables systems to work more cohesively, this approach also can lead to oversimplification of customer requirements. While there are positives and negatives to the organizational systems, there are many advantages to creating a centralized IT operation, such as greater efficiency and the opportunity to recruit new people who can fill gaps and serve as models for other staff. While it is important to set up a sound structure and effective processes in any new organization, it is equally critical to communicate the reasons for the changes and the role of each member of staff in that change. Developing ways for people to work together and ensuring that they know what success looks like are important factors for accomplishing one's goals.

Ms. Miller emphasized that in the UK Parliament, office traditions are very important

and create a feeling about the value of the work being done. Therefore, managers need to take a broader perspective and be able to educate potential supporters about consideration of larger institutional needs, as well as their own particular needs. She concluded by emphasizing that organizational development is about leadership, management and alignment. It is essential to communicate, be flexible and open to solutions, work with the organizational culture and never lose sight of the long-term aim. In response to a question about how best to meet the needs of members, Ms. Miller noted that every member wants something different and it is important to serve them individually. Responding to a question about behavior training, she indicated that Service Desk staff get technical and process training, but 60% of their training is focused on customer service and exchange of knowledge. While training staff on the human side rather than the technical side of IT support takes longer, they have used such techniques as workshops, team meetings and across team interaction to break down barriers.

Mr. Rogerio Ventura Teixeira, Head of the Center for Qualification and Training of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, described the extensive staff development initiative undertaken by the Brazilian legislature. There are approximately 20,000 people working in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, including the 513 Deputies. A significant strategic planning effort was undertaken to ensure that human resources for the Chamber are aligned with the vision and goals of the institution. Underlying this process is the belief that people and technology must be developed in concert to accomplish the Chamber's goals. While direct aides to Members are hired through free appointment,

tenured civil servants are selected through a competitive public examination process. In order to allocate staff most effectively, the Chamber performs a profile analysis of the candidates.

The Chamber of Deputies makes available a broad array of training and development opportunities. These include technical courses, post-graduate education, educational leaves of absence, training licenses and distance education. The technical training may be of a general nature to enhance skills, or it may be aimed at specific groups with common responsibilities, such as auditors, managers or information professionals. Mr. Teixeira also explained the opportunities provided by the Chamber of Deputies for its civil servants to take courses at the master's and doctorate degree level to acquire a specialization in legislative process, legislative institutions and political process, public budget or internal audit and government control. They plan to offer specialization courses online in 2010 to expand this training to Municipal and State legislative civil servants. Through a partnership with a higher education institution it also is possible for Chamber civil servants to pursue master's and doctorate degrees in political science. The Chamber also grants leaves of absence for staff to attend seminars and other outside training activities upon request. In addition, any staff that have served for more than 5 years is entitled by law to take up to a 90-day leave of absence to attend training courses for which the staff pays the costs. A special program for poor adolescents with good scholastic achievement has been established to create opportunities for these young people to receive training.

Beginning in 2001, the Brazilian Chamber also has made a substantial in-house investment in distance education. They are currently exploring moving their distance education modules to an open source platform. In addition to courses geared towards their own staff, they are developing more distance education for the public so that university students can learn more about the legislative process. Other initiatives include skills management programs to improve the internal promotion process and to ensure that all staff can effectively perform their tasks. In conclusion, Mr. Teixeira reiterated the concept that people and technology must be complementary to achieve the goals of transparency and engagement of people in parliamentary institutions. In response to a question about the number of ICT staff, Mr. Teixeira stated that they employ 126 systems analysts, but have an additional 237 outsourced employees supporting ICT in the Chamber. Training is provided only to in-house staff and not to employees of private companies.

Mr. Mahesh Perera, Director, Information Systems and Management of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, provided another example of an extensive staffing initiative. He described the development of performance indicators and competencies skill set for ICT staff in the Parliament of Sri Lanka. After conducting a macro analysis of opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses, they were able to identify the major issues, including motivation and competences that needed to be addressed to improve management of staff performance. They created an employee development review tool that has been fully automated. The review tool is based upon a framework that includes evaluation of employee competency in several key areas,

such as knowledge, communication skills and leadership qualities. After a pilot project, they have begun implementation including the appointment and training of an appraisal team and testing of the competency framework. The goal is to show employees what is expected of them and to establish a strategic link with training and development. This should change the staff-management culture within the institution, build an improved "institution-employee fit" and better motivate employees.

Communicating with the public

Parliaments have identified improving communication with the public as a high priority and a promising area for the application of a variety of information and communications technologies. ICT offers an opportunity to open up the parliament to public view, to disseminate information about the parliament and to engage citizens more directly in policy discussions. It holds the promise of countering the disaffection of the public with political institutions and bringing in a new generation of voters to the political process. Almost all legislative bodies now have websites that they use to communicate information about their activities to the public. Increasingly, legislatures are exploring new media for reaching constituents, especially younger people who are increasingly using Web 2.0 technologies on a regular basis. Use of WebTV is an example of how parliaments are migrating to new technologies to make their activities more transparent and promote engagement of people in the democratic process.

Websites for Parliaments and Committees: Practices and Standards

This session described a project to develop updated guidelines for websites and provided a summary of a study that evaluated websites in Latin American legislatures. In addition there were presentations on the recent enhancements to the website of the Egyptian People's Assembly and a discussion of the European Parliament website, with a focus on committee and plenary information. Websites have become one of the most important windows for citizens to view the

work of their legislatures. Moderator and speaker **Mr. Jeffrey Griffith**, Senior Advisor to the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, noted that in many countries where the Internet is widely available, they have become an important method for legislative bodies to explain their work to citizens and the primary means for people to learn what their members have said and done, as well as what laws the legislature has passed or rejected.

Mr. Griffith noted that parliamentary websites are also important tools for the members, committees, leaders and officials of the legislature itself. They are often the fastest and most reliable method for obtaining copies of draft bills, receiving agendas, getting summaries of committee actions and the text of committee documents and learning what other members have said and how they have voted. They have become essential for enabling members to carrying out their own legislative and oversight work.

Websites representing the entire parliament, however, are not the only source for citizens and members to obtain information about the legislature. In many parliaments, there has been a significant growth in the number of websites maintained by committees, by members and by political parties.

Equally importantly, he pointed out, are websites dealing with public policy and with legislative and oversight issues are now being maintained by civil society, by lobbying groups, by political parties and by commercial companies. Especially among higher income countries, there is a wide range of web-based sources that provide information

similar to that maintained on parliamentary sites. They often have particular viewpoints and include commentary about the work of the parliament. These sites are likely to continue to grow on a world-wide basis as access to technology increases and as economic and political issues become more intertwined globally.

Mr. Griffith stated that this increase in the number of sources that provide information and opinions about public policy issues makes it even more important that the official site of the legislature be authoritative and non-partisan, and that it provide timely, accurate and comprehensive information. The website must be easy to understand and use, be accessible to all and be free of charge. Finally, it must be well managed and supported so that it can grow with the needs of both citizens and members, keep pace with advances in technology, and support the goals of the parliament.

In the year 2000, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (the IPU) published a very important document entitled "Guidelines for the Content and Structure of Parliamentary Websites". This was one of the first attempts to make recommendations to guide the development of websites and to foster good practices in the creation of a communication tool that was becoming increasingly important to legislatures. At the time of its publication, the IPU estimated that 57% of parliaments had websites. Today that figure is estimated to be even higher.

The IPU Guidelines, he observed, have served well for a number of years, but the authors of those guidelines themselves recognized that they would eventually need to be updated. As they wrote in the introduc-

tion to the guidelines *"Internet technology is constantly evolving. It [will be] necessary to review and update the Guidelines in the light of future developments."*

With the advances in technology during the past 10 years, it is important to update the IPU guidelines to reflect the best current and emerging practices in today's websites. The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, therefore, in consultation with the IPU has undertaken a project to update the guidelines. Mr. Griffith indicated that an advisory group of parliamentary experts from around the world had been formed to consult in this effort, with the aim of making final recommendations by the end of January 2009. Initial draft guidelines were circulated at the conference and participants were invited to send their comments and suggestions to the Global Centre.

In the context of the emergence of new technologies and practices and the project to develop updated standards, other speakers gave presentations on current practices in the legislatures of their countries or regions.

Mr. Assem Genedy, Director of the Information Centre, People's Assembly of Egypt, described the services available on the website of his parliament. The Home Page reaches out to citizens by presenting a dynamic news service about the daily activities of the Assembly. It also provides an open forum that allows visitors to the site to discuss topics of interest. The results of these discussions are categorized and presented to the committees that deal with these issues.

Going a step further in engaging visitors to the site, the service allows for a public vote on issues with the goal of assessing public opinion on the matter. The reports of these

votes include the number of voters, age and educational level, country of residence, etc. Mr. Genedy reported that the web site also provides extensive information about the parliament and its activities. It includes such things as Questions and Answers about parliamentary practices and democracy; how the Assembly accomplishes its work, including the duties of members and the rules of procedure; a glossary of terms; and other related information. Other services for citizens include the ability to submit a request to visit the Assembly; the ability for citizens to send a request to their deputy; and the ability to register a complaint, which is referred to the appropriate committee. During elections, voters can use the site to learn about candidates and their parties. Citizens can also subscribe to a number of information services, including a Bulletin with news, meetings and agendas; a daily journal of Assembly activities; and publications regarding the activities of the President of the Assembly.

He noted that among the search services offered on the site are the ability to search the Library's collections and access to the archives of the minutes of the Assembly. Assembly sessions are also broadcast on TV.

Services for Deputies include enabling members to send questions and requests directly to ministries electronically. Deputies also have access to communication channels that allow them to discuss issues among themselves. To enhance communication, there are plans to provide an email address and a laptop computer for every Deputy so that the member can be contacted directly. Deputies will also receive mobile phones that enable them to receive messages regarding dates of sessions and committee meetings. Committees have access to internal pages that contain research

reports and other material related to issues currently under consideration.

Mr. Bernard Muller of the Parliamentary Information Systems in the Directorate General for Innovation and Technical Support of the European Parliament, provided an overview of web services available to committees of the European Parliament. The underlying structure of legislative documents provides the foundation for web-based support for committees. Based upon XML, there is a document model for each document type. This model gives a structure to all legislative documents and supports a wide range of functionality, including validation of the document and language substitution. Once a document is created according to its model, it is enhanced with links to other documents and information, and then disseminated automatically by the system.

In terms of support, Mr. Muller noted that committees offer a number of challenges. They can be a "bottleneck" in the legislative process and they need tools that allow them to be as efficient as possible. They have specialized competencies and yet carry out a diverse range of activities. Each committee has its own means of working and communicating and each needs tools that support this individual character. At the same time, those tools need to have common features and capabilities – they need to be rationalized so that they can be supported.

The approach taken by the European Parliament, he reported, is to have a common set of tools and common rules for production and publication products. This allows for the automation of publication to the web, making it more efficient and timelier while still allowing some customization of products.

Publications can be produced by the committees themselves or by the Communication Directorate General. Most products have an automatic production process, such as texts to be put to votes at meetings, works in progress, agendas, minutes, draft reports, amendments, formal communication, etc. However others, such as highlights of committee activities and hearings and studies which can vary considerably in their structure, require a more tailored manual publication process.

In addition to supporting the publication of committee products, the website also provides committees with search facilities such as the Legislative Observatory, which offers a comprehensive view of the status legislative actions on proposed bills and other instruments. This view includes detailed status steps; links to all associated documents, including all committee documents; and a summary of current and likely future activities written in a straight forward and easily understood style.

Mr. Muller observed that actions at the plenary level present special challenges. It can be difficult to match specific debate to a specific version of the document being debated. It can be equally difficult to find a member's interventions during debate on a specific resolution. The European Parliament addresses this challenge by making each document a gateway to a "ring of information" that provides links to other documents and to actions such as debate and votes. These linkages through the "ring" provide access to as much related information as possible about a specific measure. It also allows selection of languages for presentation as may be needed by users. All of this information is pulled together through the plenary system called Séance en Direct.

Ms. Ninoska Lopez, an IT Analyst in the National Assembly of Nicaragua and **Mr. Erick**

Landaverde, IT Officer in the National Assembly of El Salvador, presented the results of an assessment of parliamentary websites of Latin American countries based upon the IPU Guidelines. The evaluation was carried out by five members of the Network of Experts in Technology of Latin America. It was undertaken because there has been no research effort in the region to date that assessed legislative websites and yet websites were becoming significant communication tools for legislatures. The members of the team established a formal methodology with assessments of each website being done by at least two people. In addition to using the IPU Guidelines the team also assessed the state of e-Government using other standards.

The speakers reported that comparisons were also made between the Latin American sites and those in Spain, the US and Italy. Specific scores for each of the IPU Guidelines were assigned ranging from: 4=Available on the Home Page; 3=Available within two clicks; 2=Not easy to find; 1=Information found but it was outdated; 0=Information was not on the website. The results showed that much work remains to be done to achieve effective websites. Of the categories of the IPU Guidelines, none achieved collective scores above 60%. Among the lowest scoring guidelines were those related to electoral systems, bodies of the Chamber, languages and interactive tools.

The conclusions of the group were the following: 1) Monitoring has shown that websites have indeed become a tool for improving the essential activities of the parliamentarians, but the mechanisms used are not the most appropriate because they lack guidelines for the implementation, development and updating; 2) It is important that the methodology employed and the results obtained serve as

a basis for designing better websites; 3) The leaders and the bureaus of the parliaments must provide the necessary support to move forward to strengthen their websites; 4) It is necessary to continue tracking and monitoring the progress made by the legislative powers because improvements have been found and documented on the websites following the first exercise conducted in 2007; 5) The evaluation team will continue this work and make this assessment an annual event.

Participants commented on a range of issues about parliamentary websites that included both technical and political topics. One issue concerned how parliaments could gain the attention of the ICT industry given what a small market they represented. Another concern was how to make parliamentary websites truly non-partisan. Related to this was the question of the relationship between parliamentary websites and the websites of political parties. Other questions concerned specific features of parliamentary websites, such as highlighting the importance of parliamentary scrutiny and providing the capability for citizens with specific problems to get help. A final point was made about how to make parliamentary websites more interesting.

Engaging Citizens to Enhance the Dialogue

Parliaments are exploring new tools and technologies for engaging citizens in the debates on legislative issues and for enabling them to get a closer view of the activities of individual members and the work of the legislature. **Mr. Edward Baliddawa**, Chairman of the ICT Committee, Parliament of Uganda and moderator of this session highlighted the growth of the use of Web 2.0 in parliaments and raised a number of issues for consid-

eration by the panels and audience. These included questions about how to identify successful applications, how to work more collaboratively to foster better communication with citizens, and how to develop better means to assess needed resources and the effectiveness of these new approaches.

Ms. Ann Macintosh, Professor of Digital Governance, Institute of Communications Studies, The University of Leeds, stated that the goal of her research was to determine how to make e-participation a success. This involves moving experiments in e-participation towards greater sustainability through analyzing the dialogue and performing rigorous evaluation. She provided a list of challenges and goals in several key areas. For example, there is often institutional and political resistance to e-participation efforts because of the implications for sharing or losing power. Unless politicians take the lead, they will not be a success. She emphasized that it is important to make the benefits explicit to parliamentarians and to understand how to make elected representatives more visible to the public. From a societal perspective, people can be hesitant to participate because of lack of trust in the process and differing expectations. Parliaments should consider how to connect their efforts with what is occurring on social networking sites, rather than focusing on formal consultation. Ms. Macintosh spoke to the need to overcome digital, language and civic divides in order to understand how to incorporate excluded groups within the debate. She commented that there are hardly any efforts that support actual online deliberations, in part because of the technological constraints of what can be developed. There is a need to develop more innovative technologies, provide support for the role of facilitators and moderators, and conduct anal-

ysis of online discussions. Another constraint that must be addressed is the understanding of what participation means in different countries and cultures, so that systems can be designed appropriately. In conclusion, she called for more rigorous evaluation and impact assessment and the need for greater long-term research that jointly engages parliaments and academia.

As Director of the Library of the National Congress of Chile, **Ms. Soledad Ferreiro** has developed her research service in ways that are strengthening the relationship between the parliament and its citizens. By listening to the needs of the Members and developing a marketing strategy the Library has built an array of new services that support social interaction with different communities of users. This has resulted in a new culture of sharing as compared to the traditionally closed environment within parliaments. Her goal is to create environments and stimulate the development of cyber-citizen meeting spaces in which the Library and Members participate, creating public value for all. For example, experiments have focused on children and involved role-playing and civic education, on senior citizens where they are trying to capture their concerns to pass them along to Members, and on blogs for lawyers on laws under debate. Given the growth of YouTube, Facebook and Podcaster in Chile, Ms. Ferreiro believes that their use of these avenues will enable them to attract more young people into the political process. She concluded by stressing the importance of empowering these communities by creating citizen spaces where they can connect and express common concerns, allowing them to co-design and manage their networks, and adding public value to those communities by creating a sense of identity and ability to influence the political system.

Ms. Karina Newton, Director of New Media, Office of the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, described many of the new approaches to informing citizens being used by both parties in the U.S. Congress to foster dialogue between Members and citizens and increase transparency. The goal is to translate what Congress is doing in understandable and interesting ways and to make that information available in many forms. A key assumption is that it is most productive to reach people where they already are getting their information, rather than to create separate online spaces that users need to find. Studies have indicated that there is a shift in where people get their information with almost half using the Internet for acquiring political information, combined with a growth in social networking.

Ms. Newton showed a series of examples of how they have capitalized on the shift in public use of new media to extend Members' outreach to citizens. Using such services as ICHAT, DiggDialogg, Yahoo Answers, Second Life, Social Networking, Web Video, Twitter and Ask the Speaker, she demonstrated how Members are able to maintain the idea of their "personal touch" and connection with constituents. Not only can the public see the members in action and hear them personally describe their positions on issues, but members can also solicit comments from their constituents on pending legislation. The Speaker of the House has used blogging as a mechanism to help develop legislation by posting drafts on both conservative and liberal leaning blogs and gathering input from all perspectives. This array of new media activities has been very positively received by the public and by advocates of open government.

Mr. Fernando Milán Zuber, ICT Director of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico,

described how efforts to enhance access to legislative information have been supported by the passage of a Federal Law of Transparency and Access to Public Government Information. The law ensures access to information held by any federal entity and states that it must be provided either in person or online. To respond to this law, the Chamber developed a Transparency Portal that offers a wide range of legislative information to the public, including official journals, committee reports and minutes, research reports and official votes. The implementation of the law in the Chamber has led the Secretary General and ICT staff to continuously develop improvements. In addition to a website that contains both current and historical information and has advanced search capabilities, live broadcasts of plenary sessions are made available via Internet and cable TV.

Mr. Jon Gómez Goikolea, Director of Cabinet of the President of the Basque Parliament, provided an additional example of how the use of new technologies is expanding citizen participation in the legislative process. He defined openness as the combination of transparency and participation. He noted that they have had a four fold increase in participation in recent years that is informed by the easy access to legislative documents on the website of the Parliament. Information in the participatory system called ZABALIK or "Open" in Basque is provided in both Basque and Castilian to reach all segments of the population. Users can subscribe to weekly email updates about legislative activity and then can enter the participation system at the appropriate time. Links are provided from the topic under debate to all related material. Mr. Goikolea stated that they currently have 2500 subscribers, of which most are associa-

tions, foundations and other organizations, but have had more than 10,000 users of the system. Since ZABALIK has been made available the traffic on the parliamentary website has increased 100 times. Another service they provide is called Parte Harte or "take part". It allows users to ask questions directly to MPs. Over 1000 questions from 600 users have been received. About 70% of all questions are answered, with 40% resulting in specific action and 20% leading to parliamentary initiatives. Finally, the Basque Parliament has set up a bloggers forum called Politika 2.0 to capture citizen contributions and experiment with this form of interaction with the public.

Parliamentary Web TV

A special event on Parliamentary WebTV provided an opportunity to showcase the efforts of several parliaments in broadcasting the workings of their institutions to the public. The moderator **Ms. Cecilia Matanga**, ICT Officer, Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, opened the session by emphasizing the value of WebTV as an effective mechanism to counter public disinterest in parliament.

Mr. Sergio Falcão, Advisor to the Chief Information Officer, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, provided some context for the use of WebTV in Brazil with statistics on the large size of the country and the penetration of cable TV (over 5 million subscriptions) and Internet access in the home (over 20%). The Chamber of Deputies initiated its own TV channel in 1998 and made daily programming available via cable, satellite and UHF. Offerings include coverage of plenary and committee sessions, journalism reports, interviews with members and cultural programs.

The introduction of WebTV in 2002 provided two channels - TV and WebTV using Windows Media. Beginning in 2009 they expect to provide WebTV via an Internet provider who will capture the TV broadcast and also permit direct broadcast via the Internet. They will offer 22 simultaneous channels and have a variety of new capabilities such as searching, links to other available information and video chat. Video chat will enable individuals to ask questions to the members while a committee meeting is being held, expanding the opportunity to connect the public to the activities of the Chamber. The European Parliament has been at the forefront of using WebTV and recently launched their newest version that supports their program "Democracy On Demand". **Mr. Michael Shackleton**, WebTV Project Manager of the European Parliament, described the features of their system and the unique challenges they face in opening up the workings of the European Parliament to the many countries within the European Union. Their system is based solely on broadband, rather than using a TV channel, because it is more cost-effective, an increasing number of people are using the Web to get information, and there are requirements for providing programming in so many languages. The European Parliament must offer material in 21 languages, giving no priority to any one language and ensuring that language does not prevent anyone from finding information. Viewers can watch whatever program they like at any time, rather than being restricted to a specific programming schedule. Viewers can see which segments are the most watched. An editorial board ensures that the information provided is non-partisan, credible, informative and adheres to standards. Four channels are offered, including:

1) "*Parliament live*" provides coverage of plenary sessions and an increasing num-

ber of committees. This channel enables knowledgeable audiences to closely cover the activities in the parliament.

- 2) "*Your Voice*" features citizens speaking about different subjects of interest throughout the EU. The language differences are addressed through the use of subtitles. There are currently 400 programs that can be searched in the archive.
- 3) "*Young Europe*" offers programming geared to schoolchildren, including news updates and special features.
- 4) "*Your Parliament*": Discovering the European Parliament features programs highlighting members and their views on hot topics before the Parliament.

This panel concluded with a presentation by **Mr. Hernán Figueroa**, Director for ICT, Chamber of Deputies of Chile, who emphasized the importance of showing the public what is happening in parliament to promote transparency. Because Chile has a high Internet penetration, WebTV is an effective tool for reaching citizens. A committee of members provides guidelines for the WebTV operation, ensuring effective oversight.

Mr. Figueroa provided a technical description of the WebTV components, including the video signal, signal distribution and the archiving of video programming. Programs are indexed so that they can be retrieved at any point in the future. For example, it is possible to retrieve segments where a particular parliamentarian is speaking. In addition to the live broadcasting of plenary sessions, the WebTV provides material for civic education. In order to facilitate access by all citizens, closed captioning is available. An additional advantage of the system is that by having a video signal within the chamber itself, the quality of the verbatim record transcript can be improved.

World e-Parliament Conference 2008 Summary highlights

Acknowledging the many valuable contributions and views provided by the participants at the World e-Parliament Conference 2008, the following points highlight some of the key recommendations that emerged during the discussions:

- Leaders and members of parliaments have to exercise strong political will to foster e-parliament at both the national and international level with a view to improve the quality of democracy and advance the evolution of democratic institutions in the coming years. While increasing their attention to the use of ICT in parliaments, they must focus particularly on the right of all citizens to access public information, the obligation for transparency and accountability of the legislature and the necessity to reduce the digital divide.
- Investments must be made to accelerate efforts ensuring that authoritative, timely and complete information on all stages of the legislative process in every country is publicly accessible on the Internet by 2020, as stated by the high-level Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.
- The World e-Parliament Report 2008 found that there is a low level of technical infrastructure in many parliaments today. Greater resources are needed to assist developing countries in establishing essential parliamentary information systems that are vital to building e-parliament and effective parliamentary processes.
- Legislative document systems and the use of XML standards are critical components in creating a knowledge base to support parliaments. There is a need for the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to establish a Working Group of experts from parliaments, universities and other organizations to facilitate the sharing of experiences in this field and to promote coordination of open standards for parliamentary documents.
- Advances in technology have led to the need to update the IPU *Guidelines for the Content and Structure of Parliamentary Websites*. Consultations that have begun among experts and interested parties must continue under the auspices of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to complete this work by February 2009.
- Parliamentary information and research services, including libraries, play a vital role in ensuring an informed legislature. To better serve the information needs of members, parliaments need to coordinate their information and research services, make effective use of new technology and raise awareness among members of the services available.
- Parliaments are undertaking many experiments to reach and engage citizens through new media. Given the fast pace with which new interactive technologies are being developed, parliaments are invited to fully evaluate their experiences, share the results with other parliaments and continue to explore opportunities to more fully engage citizens in the democratic process.

8 World e-Parliament Conference 2008 Summary highlights

- The goals advocated by the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament and by the participants in the World e-Parliament Conference 2008 cannot be achieved without well trained professional staff. All parliaments need to invest in training programs for ICT staff, offer appropriate training in the use of ICT to members and other parliamentary staff, and explore possibilities for sharing training programs among legislatures.
- The 2007 Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments established a valuable baseline of data from the 105 assemblies that responded to it. All parliaments around the world are invited to participate in the survey to be conducted in 2009 so that data can be expanded and worldwide progress measured through the World e-Parliament Report to be issued in 2010.
- With the framework of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, greater cooperation and coordination among parliaments, governments, international organizations and the donor community is needed to assist legislatures in developing countries to achieve the goals of e-parliament and to support regional networks.
- To further the valuable information exchanged among the participants at the World e-Parliament Conference 2008, planning should be undertaken for the next World e-Parliament Conference with the goal of engaging more parliaments from all regions of the world, along with universities, non governmental organizations, international organizations and other interested institutions.



Picture references

- p. 3** Ms. Mechtild Rothe, Vice President of the European Parliament
- p. 8** Dr. Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt
- p. 14** Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- p. 19** Mr. Jeffrey C. Griffith, Senior Advisor, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament
- p. 24** From left to right:
 - Ms. Mechtild Rothe, Vice President of the European Parliament
 - Mr. Dick Toornstra, Director, Office for the Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy
 - Mr. Justin Koumba, Speaker, National Assembly of Congo
- p. 28** Ms. Dominique Dellicour, Head of the Unit "Governance, Human Rights, Democracy and Gender", EuropAid, European Commission
- p. 30** From left to right:
 - Ms. Silvia-Adriana Ticau, Member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, European Parliament
 - Ms. Gertrude Mongella, President, Pan-African Parliament
 - Mr. Dick Toornstra, Director, Office for the Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy
 - Ms. Mechtild Rothe, Vice President of the European Parliament
 - Dr. Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt

Credits for all images: Audiovisual Unit-Photo Service, European Parliament

Agenda

25 November 2008

08.00 – 09.30	Registration
09.30 – 11.00	<p>Inaugural Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechtild Rothe, Vice President of the European Parliament • Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Speaker of the People’s Assembly of Egypt • Katalin Szili, Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary (video message) • Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (video message) <p><i>Keynote address</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union <p><i>Presentation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeffrey Griffith, Senior Advisor of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament The state of ICT in Parliaments: a global perspective
11.00 – 13.00	<p>Plenary session I - Strengthening democratic institutions in the information society: the politics of e-parliament</p> <p>Chair: Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Speaker of the People’s Assembly of Egypt</p> <p><i>Discussants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gertrude Mongella, President of the Pan-African Parliament • Silvia-Adriana Ticau, Member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, European Parliament • Pablo Álvarez, Chair of the Special Committee on Innovation, Research, Science and Technology, Chamber of Representatives of Uruguay • Wellars Gasamagera, Member of the ICT Steering Committee of the Senate of Rwanda • Alexandros Dermentzopoulos, Member of the Permanent Committee on Technology Assessment, Hellenic Parliament <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break
14.15 – 15.00	<p>Special event: Parliamentary Web TVs</p> <p>Moderator: Cecilia Matanga, ICT Officer, Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum</p> <p><i>Presenters:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sergio Falcão, Advisor to the Chief Information Officer, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil • Hernán Figueroa, Director ICT, Chamber of Deputies of Chile • Michael Shackleton, WebTV, Project Manager, European Parliament

Special event

15.00 - 16.30	Parallel sessions
A	<p>A - Open standards for managing parliamentary documents: case studies in the use of semantic technologies</p> <p>Moderator: Flavio Zeni, Chief Technical Advisor, Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirsten Gullickson, Software Engineer, House of Representatives of the United States of America • Sergio Falcão, Advisor, IT Department, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil • Richard Ware, Director Programme and Project Development, Parliament of the United Kingdom • Choi Jin-Ho, Deputy Director General of the Inter-Parliamentary Affairs Bureau, National Assembly of the Republic of Korea • Ian McDonald, Deputy Principal Clerk, House of Commons of Canada <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
B	<p>B - Websites for parliaments and committees: practices and standards</p> <p>Moderator: Jeffrey Griffith, Senior Advisor, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assem Genedy, Director, Information Centre, People's Assembly of Egypt • Bernard Muller, Parliamentary Information Systems, Directorate General for Innovation and Technical Support, European Parliament • Ninoska López, IT Analyst, National Assembly of Nicaragua • Erik Landaverde, IT Officer, National Assembly of El Salvador <p><i>Open discussion on Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites</i></p>
C	<p>C - Meeting the information needs of members of parliament</p> <p>Moderator: Eliza Roszkowska Öberg, Member of the Parliament of Sweden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raissa Teodori, Senior Parliamentary Officer, Library, Senate of the Republic of Italy and Member of the Standing Committee of the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments • Bridie Nathanson, European Parliaments Research Initiative (EPRI) • Juha-Pekka Leskinen, IT Manager, Parliament of Finland • Martin Atkinson, Joint Research Centre of the European Commission <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>

16.30 - 18.00	Parallel sessions
D	<p>D - Parliamentary documents in a regional context: how open standard can promote harmonization</p> <p>Moderator: Giovanni Sartor, Professor of Legal Informatics and Legal Theory, European University Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Brown, Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS) • Tom M. Van Engers, Professor of Legal Knowledge Management, Leibniz Center for Law, University of Amsterdam • Monica Palmirani, Associate Professor of Legal Informatics, CIRSFID, University of Bologna <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
Special event	<p style="text-align: center;">5:00 p.m. Special Event Open Desktop in Parliament</p> <p>Moderator: Abdoulaye Sene, Member of the National Assembly of Senegal</p> <p><i>Presenters:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rudy Salles, Vice President of the National Assembly of France • Ganyani Khosa, ICT Director, Parliament of Zimbabwe • Carlo Marchetti, Counsellor, IT Department, Senate of the Republic of Italy <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
E	<p>E - Engaging citizens to enhance the dialogue: concrete experiences</p> <p>Moderator: Edward Baliddawa, Chair of the ICT Committee, Parliament of Uganda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ann Macintosh, Professor of Digital Governance, Institute of Communications Studies The University of Leeds • Soledad Ferrero, Director of the Library of the National Congress of Chile • Karina Newton, Director of New Media, Office of the Speaker, House of Representatives of the United States of America • Fernando Milán Zuber, ICT Director, Chamber of Deputies of Mexico • Jon Gómez Goikolea, Director of Cabinet of the President of the Basque Parliament <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>

Agenda

26 November 2008

09:00 – 11:00	Parallel sessions
F	<p>F - Building systems for managing parliamentary documents</p> <p>Moderator: Chafiq Rachadi, Member of the House of Representatives of Morocco</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eszter Kertész Géczy, Head of the Department for Informatics, National Assembly of Hungary• Enrico Seta, Head of the International Affairs Office, Research Department, Chamber of Deputies of Italy• Miguel Ángel Gonzalo, Head, Coordination and Projects Planning Unit, Cabinet of the Secretary General, Congress of Deputies of Spain• Strashimir Strashimirov, Expert, Directorate of Information and Communication Systems, National Assembly of Bulgaria• Jamal Darwish, Expert, Federal National Council, United Arab Emirates <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
G	<p>G - IT infrastructures in Parliaments: old and reliable, new and flexible</p> <p>Moderator: David Addow-Quarshie, Director, ICT Department, Parliament of Ghana</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ravi Poliah, ICT Manager, National Assembly of South Africa• Joao Viegas d'Abreu, Coordinator, Working Group on ICT of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research & Documentation (ECPRD) and Director, IT Department, Assembly of the Republic of Portugal• Hernán Figueroa, Director ICT, Chamber of Deputies of Chile <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
H	<p>H - Organizational challenges: staffing and staff development</p> <p>Moderator: Jean-Marc Laforest, Director-General for Innovation and Technological Support, European Parliament</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joan Miller, Director, Parliamentary ICT, Parliament of the United Kingdom• Rogério Ventura Teixeira, Head of the Center for Qualification and Training, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil• Mahesh Perera, Director, Information Systems and Management, Parliament of Sri Lanka <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>

Plenary sessions	
11.00 – 13.00	<p>Plenary session II - Meeting the needs of parliaments in developing countries: the role of development partners and the instruments for assistance</p> <p>Chair: Justin Koumba, Speaker, National Assembly of Congo</p> <p><i>Discussants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linda Mauperon, Member of Cabinet, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media • Dominique Dellicour, Head of Unit “Governance, Human Rights, Democracy and Gender”, EuropAid, European Commission • Mauro Massoni, Head, Multilateral Office, Italian Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs • Olivier Pierre-Louveaux, Parliamentary Development Expert, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) • Gherardo Casini, Executive Coordinator, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
13.00 – 15.00	Lunch break
14.15 – 15.00	<p>Special event IPEX - Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange</p> <p>Moderator: Dick Toornstra, Director, Office for the Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy, European Parliament</p> <p><i>Presenters:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alessandro Palanza, Deputy Secretary General, Chamber of Deputies of Italy • Piotr Nowina-Konopka, Director for Relations with National Parliaments, European Parliament and co-Director, European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Development (ECPRD)
15.00 – 16.30	<p>Plenary session III - Opportunities for regional and global cooperation: benefits and barriers to parliamentary cooperation</p> <p>Chair: Anders Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union</p> <p><i>Discussants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, President of the Working Group on e-Democracy of the Conference of Presidents of the Regional Legislative Assemblies of Europe (CALRE) and President of the Basque Parliament • Mohamed Nagib Abou-Zeid, Member of the Shoura Council of Egypt • Gro Sandgrind, Chair, Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section, IFLA • Piotr Nowina-Konopka, Director for Relations with National Parliaments, European Parliament and co-Director, European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Development (ECPRD) • Vladimir Danchev, Head of the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in South East Europe
16.30 – 17.00	<p>Closing session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gherardo Casini, Executive Coordinator, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament • Mechtild Rothe, Vice President of the European Parliament

For more information:

United Nations: www.un.org/esa/desa
European Parliament: www.europarl.europa.eu
Global Centre for ICT in Parliament: www.ictparliament.org