



United Nations



U.S. House of Representatives



Inter-Parliamentary Union



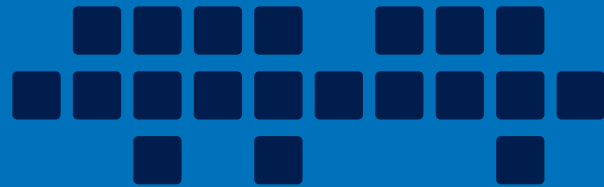
Global Centre for ICT in Parliament



REPORT

World e-Parliament Conference 2009

3-4-5 November 2009 // U.S. House of Representatives // Washington D.C.



Report

World e-Parliament Conference 2009

3-4-5 November 2009 // U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Acknowledgements

The Report of the World e-Parliament Conference 2009 was prepared by the team of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament and benefited from the presentations and conference papers contributed by experts, as well as from the discussions held at the Conference among participants.

Disclaimer

This Report is a joint product of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the U.S. House of Representatives. It provides a brief summary of the proceedings of the World e-Parliament Conference 2009 held in Washington D.C. in November 2009.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union or the U.S. House of Representatives. The designations and terminology employed may not conform to the practice of the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union or the U.S. House of Representatives and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of these organizations. Also, the presentation of the material in this Report does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, or the U.S. House of Representatives concerning the legal status of any country, territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The term “developed” and “developing” countries or the designations of country groups are intended solely for statistical or analytical convenience and do not necessarily express a judgment about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process. The term “country” as used in the text of this publication also refers, as appropriate, to territories or areas. Mention of the names of firms and commercial products does not imply the endorsement of the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union or the U.S. House of Representatives.

Copyright © United Nations, 2010
All rights reserved

ISBN: 978-92-9142-441-2
Reports and documents n°63

ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/160

Content

1. Introduction	2
2. Inaugural session	3
3. Policy-oriented plenary sessions	
- Connecting Parliaments and citizens: new technologies to foster openness, transparency and accountability	18
- How ICT can strengthen Parliaments in young and emerging democracies	23
- How important are international and regional networks to support the responsibilities of Parliaments?	27
- Promoting democracy and inter-parliamentary cooperation: a collaborative approach to institution building through a shared framework for e-parliament	32
4. General sessions	
- ICT Strategic Planning, Management and Oversight: the complexity of the legislature environment	40
- How parliamentary websites can serve different purposes and users	43
- The use of new social media and other Internet communication tools in the parliamentary environment: lessons learned	48
- Systems for managing the lifecycle of legislative documentation	52
- Chamber technologies: experiences and trends	55
5. Specialized sessions	
- Open standards for parliamentary documentation: cooperative approaches	60
- Implementing XML in Parliament	65
- Security and reliability of technical infrastructures: challenges for parliaments	71
- Technology options for recording and reporting floor and committee proceedings	75
- Enhancing research services for members and committees through ICT	79
6. Closing remarks	83
7. Summary	85
8. Annexes	
- Joint Press Release	88
- Picture references	89
- Agenda	90

Introduction

The World e-Parliament Conference 2009 took place at the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., on 3, 4 and 5 November 2009. The conference was co-organized by the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the U.S. House of Representatives and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The event brought together over 90 delegations from legislatures around the world, including Speakers and Presiding Officers, Members of Parliament, Clerks and Secretaries General, and senior parliamentary staff. Representatives of governments, research centres, universities, civil society and international organizations also attended and contributed to the discussions.

The conference built on the outcome of the second World e-Parliament Conference held at the European Parliament in Brussels in 2008, as well as on the findings of the World e-Parliament Report 2008. It provided a platform to exchange views on the latest trends and different modalities of implementation of new technologies in legislatures with a view to identify good practices in the areas of representation, transparency, accountability, openness, and effectiveness. During three days of intensive discussions more than 400 participants had the opportunity to contribute to presentations and debates, learn from each other's experiences, network with peers, and build partnerships in an international setting.

The Italian Development Cooperation, the Inter-American Development Bank, the United States Agency for International Development, the House Democracy Partnership and the European Parliament contributed to the conference by facilitating the participation from developing nations.

The agenda of the event was shaped in a combination of policy-oriented plenary sessions - three high-level panels and one special event - and

parallel sessions of a more technical nature. This structure fostered extensive discussions, at both the policy and technical level, and resulted in concrete suggestions for making future progress.

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

The first chapter of the report features the official remarks by the representatives of the co-organizing institutions which helped set the conference framework. The opening remarks are followed by a chapter dedicated to the three high-level panels, which occurred on the first and last day of the event and addressed policy issues related to (1) connecting parliaments and citizens, (2) how ICT can strengthen parliaments in emerging democracies and (3) promoting democracy and inter-parliamentary cooperation. This chapter also summarizes the special event, held on the second day, which focused on international and regional networks. The third and fourth chapters present the technical sessions divided in two streams as outlined in the conference agenda: the general sessions and the specialized sessions, which cover a broad spectrum of topics ranging from the use of new media in the parliamentary environment to the use of open standards for parliamentary documents. The last two chapters of the report offer the closing remarks and highlight the main conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the event.

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

Inaugural session

Before the official opening of the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Ms. Lorraine Miller, Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, welcomed participants to the conference hall and introduced a video presentation describing the history and role of the House of Representatives. Officiating as master of ceremony, Ms. Miller successively introduced the high-level panel of the opening session and invited each speaker to take the floor to deliver a statement.

Ms. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives

Thank you, Madam Clerk. As Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, Lorraine Miller has led the way in Congress for increased transparency and civic interaction. Lorraine's tenure has been marked by innovative thinking and progress on citizen engagement. The information available on the Clerk's website - including all roll call votes, financial disclosures, and details of the legislative process - strengthens our democracy.

I would like to thank this week's co-organizers, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Sha Zukang, and the Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Anders Johnsson, as well as the two co-Chairs of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, the Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt, Mr. Sorour and the Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, Ms. Pelcz. I thank all the leaders from the 88 countries represented here today for engaging in e-Parliament's dialogue about how we can better communicate with our citizens.

In the history of American democracy, there was a time when a message could travel only as fast as a horse could gallop or a ship could sail. Today, a message from the American people to their representatives in Congress travels as fast as a citizen can twitter, blog, or post to Facebook.

Leading the way in this regard are the young people of the world. In my travels as Speaker, I have met with presidents, prime ministers, and kings. But what impressed and inspired me the most were my encounters with young people. Young people are engaged in their own international dialogue through the most current forms of technology.

In Iran following the election, hundreds of thousands participated in protests organized over Twitter. In America, students joined in solidarity on Facebook and Twitter by turning their profile pictures green - the color of the opposition party. Young people are disruptive thinkers - unsatisfied by the status quo. And so too must we be. E-Parliament gives us an opportunity to break with old ways of thinking and engage in dialogue just as the young people of the world are.

When it comes to governance, technology provides opportunities for discussion and engagement; it strengthens accountability; ultimately it makes democracies more democratic. Or as President John F. Kennedy said, "A nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth

and falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people.”

When I became Speaker, I pledged we would have the most open Congress in history. Led by the innovation and enthusiasm of young people, Americans and Members of Congress are holding a running conversation - in real time. There is no greater tool to increase transparency than the Internet. Now, Americans can watch committee hearings, check votes, read bills, and review financial disclosures--all online. Next month, they will be able to see exactly how Members of Congress are spending their office funds, and at the start of next year, they will be able to watch and search our House floor proceedings in real time.

The internet provides citizens with new ways of obtaining and digesting the work of government. For example, in February, when we passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to jumpstart our economy, we required the creation of recovery.gov to disclose how funds are spent, all announcements of contracts, grant competitions and awards, and the posting of certifications by governors, mayors, or others making funding decisions that the investment has been fully vetted and is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars.

Members of Congress who want to communicate with their constituents are using web video conferencing to talk to students about the environment, Tweeting what’s happening in Congress, blogging their positions, Facebooking and text messaging; they are posting YouTube videos, holding tele-town halls, and using Google maps to show how Recovery Act projects are progressing in their districts.

The countries represented at the World e-Parliament Conference face different challenges in bringing technology to your citizens. The United States faces its own challenges. To allow all Americans to benefit from the economic opportunities that innovation creates, we need an infrastructure that is wired for the future. In the last year alone, home broadband adoption has increased by 15 percent; but we must do more. The United States lags in broadband penetration behind many of the countries represented here.

Broadband access was a priority of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We provided more than \$7 billion to expand broadband access in this country, and \$350 million dollars to develop a national broadband map to ensure that every American has access to broadband capability and the jobs this creates. We are looking at access, affordability and also larger questions of how to use broadband to advance civic participation, consumer welfare and other national purposes.

In this regard, we are also informed by the disruptive thinking of young people. When I suggested to Google co-founder Larry Page that one of our goals was universal broadband in ten years, he said, “Ten? Why not two?”.

Today, as you discuss the future of information and communication technologies in parliaments around the world, the health care debate rages in this very building. As Members

of Congress engage in one of the most significant issues of our time, so too do the American people, through technology. Last week, a document we produced on the Top 14 provisions in our health bill was downloaded three times a minute. Searches for health reform on Google have increased more than threefold. Our Facebook group for health reform has been visited by Americans from all across the country - with 54 percent under 34 years of age. And in the last week alone, I have received more than 30,000 e-mails on the importance of health care reform.

President Obama was launched into office, in part, by his innovative approach to new media and the enthusiasm of young people. As President, he is also using technology to communicate in new ways. We now have a President who harnesses the power of social networks, YouTubes his weekly radio address, and encourages his Cabinet Secretaries to answer questions on Facebook. President Obama has correctly called the information maintained by the federal government a “national asset.” And he created two new positions to ensure this information is widely available to our citizens: a Chief Information Officer and Chief Technology Officer.

As the new Chief Information Officer, Vivek Kundra, has stated: “making the information and operation of government more open and accessible will drive accountability, performance, and engagement... Democratizing government data will engage citizens and fundamentally change how government operates.”

This morning, Congress heard an inspirational speech from the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel. In her address, the Chancellor reminded us that it was 20 years ago that the Berlin Wall came down and freedom was brought to all the people of Germany. Today the citizens of East Germany enjoy democracy. But there are still people around the world living behind walls of despotism. There are people who exist without what the United Nations Charter calls, “fundamental human rights... the dignity and worth of the human person... the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small...”

No tyrant can forever hold back the force of technology. Because technology makes holes through walls erected to keep information out; technology builds bridges; technology promotes freedom. This week, let us come together to foster transparency and openness for our citizens and for all people of the world.



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

Honourable Speaker Pelosi,
Honourable Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,
Honourable Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt,
Honourable Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to join the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States in welcoming you to the third World e-Parliament Conference. I wish to thank our gracious host, Madame Speaker Nancy Pelosi, for opening this historic chamber to the United Nations and to your fellow parliamentarians from around the world.

The United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union came together in 2005 to launch the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. An alliance of many partners, the Global Centre serves as a powerful catalyst for legislatures wishing to exchange experiences and measure their progress among peer institutions.



Today, within the framework of the Global Centre, representatives of more than 90 assemblies are gathered here for this conference. Our focus is on using ICT to enhance legislative processes and strengthen the role of parliaments as key drivers of effective governance, democracy and development, including building the "Information Society" worldwide.

Technology has, time and again, been the engine of human progress. In recent years, information and communication technologies have been credited for numerous advances in human development, from education and health to agriculture and sustainable development.

For parliaments, the benefits of ICT can be enormous. ICTs can make the democratic process more transparent, accessible and accountable, by facilitating access of members of parliaments, parliamentary administrations, media and citizens to information and services.

ICTs can be instrumental in strengthening citizen engagement, providing innovative ways to interact with citizens, as well as enable their access to parliamentary proceedings and documents.

The application of ICTs to internal practices and services can help to make parliaments more efficient in carrying out their legislative, oversight and representational functions.

And ICTs can help connect parliamentarians and parliamentary institutions with their counterparts, in North and South, strengthening their knowledge and information on the issues they confront.

Indeed, from the financial and economic crisis, to food security, energy crisis, public health and climate change, many of the challenges that weigh on the legislative agendas in countries around the world are global challenges that we all confront.

Despite the evident potential of ICTs, and despite some progress made in improving access, a vast digital divide remains between developed and developing countries.

Consider the findings of last year's World e-Parliament Report, produced by our UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on survey information from 105 parliaments. More than 90 percent of the parliaments surveyed had basic ICT and internet access. Yet, only 59 percent had a system for managing bills and amendments.

Statistics from the developing countries paint an even worse picture: only four percent of respondents from developing countries had a system for managing bills, compared to 74 percent in the developed nations. And while 73 percent of the developed countries had a system for communication between members of parliament and their constituents through a website, no respondents from the developing countries - not a single one - had such a capacity.

Preliminary data gathered for the 2010 World e-Parliament Report indicates that there is still a big gap between what has been achieved and the transformative potential ICTs hold.

I am heartened to note that some parliaments are at an advanced stage of ICT adoption. They have valuable experience and expertise to share. I extend my appreciation to those parliaments and parliamentary staff who have contributed to reinforcing the activities of the Global Centre.

At the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society, in 2003 and 2005, world leaders set out a vision of an equitable, open and accessible information society, in support of achieving development for all, especially for the poor and most vulnerable.

I want to remind everyone here of our collective responsibility, as an international community, to ensure that all countries, rich and poor, have access to the full benefits of technology, so that they can achieve their development goals.

I look forward to our fruitful discussions and wish us all a successful outcome.

Thank you.

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

Madam Speaker,
Under-Secretary-General Sha,
Distinguished delegates,

Every week of the year, people in at least one country are going to the polls to elect a parliament. At any given time, in three or four countries - if not more - an election campaign is drawing to a close. Today, Namibia is one of those countries. That explains why the President of the IPU, Dr. Theo Ben Gurirab, who is also the Speaker of the Namibian Parliament and a senior political leader in his country, cannot be with us here today. He asks for your understanding, Madam Speaker, since he has to do his part to be re-elected. He has therefore asked me to deliver these opening remarks on behalf of the IPU.

Let me start by saying how pleased I am to be here at the United States Congress. I want to thank you Madam Speaker and through you the US Congress for hosting this important meeting.

My thanks also go to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Together we initiated the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament which is the powerhouse behind today's event.

Since its foundation in 2006, the Global Centre has made huge progress in bringing together a global parliamentary ICT community around the simple idea that sharing knowledge, good practices and information about developing trends in the field of modern information and communication technology helps make parliaments stronger.

The strategic goals we are pursuing through this Centre offer a comprehensive and coherent framework for helping parliaments become more transparent, accessible, accountable and effective through the use of ICT.

Madam Speaker, this is a matter of urgency. A worldwide opinion poll commissioned by the IPU in September 2009 confirmed that there is widespread support for democracy. Of the more than 20,000 respondents, 90% said that it was important or very important to live in a country that is governed democratically. However, the poll showed that citizens around the world have deep misgivings about the way political life functions in their own countries.

While almost everybody considers that it is important that people should be able to express their political views, even when those views are unpopular, only one person out of four thinks that they are completely free to express their views without fear of harassment or punishment.

On average more than two out of three people said that only sometimes or rarely do legislators feel free to deviate from the official views of their party. Moreover, a majority of people believe that opposition parties only sometimes or rarely get a fair chance to express their views and influence government policies.

Parliaments as an institution and parliamentarians as individuals must be concerned about the gulf that separates public aspirations for democratic governance and vigorous public debate, and the widely-held perception of political life as a closed space where there is little room for dissent and real consideration of alternative policy options.

ICTs may hold some of the solutions, especially where young people are concerned. Information technology is pervasive in many young people's lives in a way that formal politics is not.

Political apathy and a lack of interest in joining traditional youth organizations too often seem to characterize the younger generation in many countries. For many young people, the world of politics seems far removed from their daily realities.

However, the lack of interest by young people pertains primarily to traditional forms of social organization. The powerful new forms of engagement that emerged during the recent U.S. presidential elections are instructive. In fact, today's experiences show that the young population does engage and it does so by using ICT tools.

Access to information is of course an important cornerstone that underpins citizens' involvement in political processes. Without access to information on all social problems, on policies being formulated and considered, and on the political actors involved in decision-making, citizens are not able to genuinely and substantially participate in decision-making processes.

The ability for citizens to hold parliaments to account also relies on the availability of accurate and up-to-date information about what parliament is doing. Constituents are increasingly interested in learning how their representatives have voted on key issues before parliament, and interrogating them about their actions. For members to have their voting



record published, and to be able to give a reasoned defense of their record, is of the essence of political accountability. The extension of the Internet makes this requirement much easier to meet, and it is now a standard feature in many parliaments.

A recent report by the Demos think tank concluded that ICTs must ultimately, and I quote, “become the tool for changing the identity of political institutions themselves. ICT initiatives that are better designed and used strategically rather than simply being ‘bolted on’ as prosthetics should enable the kind of organizational renewal necessary to endow political systems with relevance and meaning. This applies not just to young people, but for the whole of a rapidly changing society.”

May I encourage you to take up these challenges during this conference and to pursue them when you return to your parliament. Let me also assure you that the IPU will continue to support your efforts and do everything we can to facilitate your task in making your parliaments stronger and better able to legislate and hold government to account in the name of the people whom you serve.

Thank you.

Mr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt

Distinguished Madam Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives,
Distinguished Speakers of the Parliaments,
Distinguished Mr. Sha, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Distinguished Mr. Johnsson, the Secretary General of the IPU,
Fellow Parliamentarians,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to be here today to inaugurate with you the World e-Parliament Conference of 2009 in Washington, DC, the capital of the USA - one of today's pillars of democracy. At the outset, I sincerely wish to thank Madam Pelosi for hosting this conference and I truly applaud the tireless effort of the United Nations, the Global Centre, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the Congress' staff in organizing this event, an event that I always wait for not only to meet dear colleagues in the struggle for democracy and in serving the welfare of our people, but also to monitor progress and share experiences in this vital and rapidly growing domain of ICT in parliament.

Dear Friends, it was four years ago when we inaugurated the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, a centre that is dedicated to fostering healthy implementation of ICT towards a better performance and a wider outreach for our parliaments. This step represented a turning point in the realization of the need and the demand for employing ICT in our chambers - a centre that lends itself to the awareness on the powerful tools of technology that extends to all aspects of our contemporary lives.

Glancing through our agenda, we are to explore means and best practices for connecting parliaments and citizens through the use of technology. We will aim to genuinely foster openness among the peoples of our nations. We will work towards enhancing transparency and visibility as means to strengthen our credibility, to allow channels of communication, and to establish accountability as a deeply rooted concept in our parliamentary work. Indeed, we have to capitalize on the privilege that we all have as parliamentarians who can connect with one another without the need for setting agreements and seeking approvals when we simply want to cooperate. By this means we can promote intercultural dialogue and tackle some of the challenges that impact our peoples. It is the sincere welfare of our peoples that drives our engines.

Dear Colleagues, we will continue to renew the oath that we proudly took as representatives of our people.

Coming to this beautiful gathering, I particularly want to discuss not only the concepts but also address the implementation and the impact. I often ask myself: Could a better com-



munication have reduced the negative impact of the financial crisis? Could it have advanced our common understanding of the environment in which we live and thus promoted the exchange of views to ensure the welfare of our peoples and achieve the balance between human rights and security? Would it have helped in setting quick yet effective legislation or regulatory actions to minimize the suffering of the people worldwide?

Dear Friends, when problems become complex and massive, solutions can only be comprehensive and global. Then we should ask: How fast can we react and how efficient can that be? Certainly, one of the key answers lies in a better communication amongst our parliaments, our representatives and senators, thus our people by and large.

As a lawyer, professor and parliamentarian, I spent a great deal of my life working for justice to prevail. We live in a world that confronts organized crime and corruption, a world that awaits stronger actions from our parliaments and our governments. Hence a closer working relation needs to be established at various levels. And by that I mean a cooperation that is tangible and does not only hinge itself to conferences or a set of events. Thus our conference should aim at establishing a sustainable means for cooperation in implementing ICT in parliaments and in a meaningful exchange of information that supports our work. We need our deputies as well as our staff to be continuously informed and updated to serve and perform.

We strongly believe that parliamentarians worldwide, when they unify themselves through better communication networks to face the global issues, indeed rise up to their peoples hopes, the poor and the rich, aiming for peace, security and development. My colleagues, the communication provided by e-parliament is a testimony that we have selected the path of dialogue as means for understanding and that we believe in the democracy of the international relations in order for all of us to live in peace. My friends, mountains and oceans created a barrier that limit our unity, yet the space of technology provided by e-parliament is capable of binding us, despite cultural or ethnic diversity, in order for us to agree on a single language which is serving our people.

I guess I also speak for many of you when I say that the need for such knowledge may be greater in growing democracies in order to narrow the gap and to establish a common platform for cooperation with the rest of the world. And as such, our conference should renew a commitment to assist one another and to share the wealth of information that we can all have - a support of the North to the South, the developed to the developing.

When we address ICT in Parliaments, we traditionally focus on three areas:

- First we seek to improve the performance of our parliaments in an economic manner and minimize the abuse of the resources of this planet, a planet that we did not inherit from our grandparents but that we indeed are borrowing from our grandchildren.
- Secondly, we aim at enhancing the indispensable communications between our Chambers and our people. Unfortunately, no matter how much time we spend in our electoral districts, we are often physically elsewhere. And ICT emerge to make us always

present to listen, to view and to share. What is more of an honor for parliamentarians than speaking up from the heart to express the fears, the joy and the hopes of those who entrusted us with their votes, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the needy?

- Thirdly, with ICT we should create better linkages among our parliaments towards combating our common threats, be it poverty, crime, illiteracy or illness; and towards achieving development for the poor to benefit before the rich and for the developing countries to overcome problems, many of which are induced by globalization and the economic challenges that they face.

And in general we should aim for mankind to enjoy security in its global sense, including social and economic security as well as confronting violence and crime. And in here, I have to state that over the past decade, the world had debates on interactions between our civilizations, interactions that I always choose to call “The Dialogue of Civilizations”, not “The Clash of Civilizations”. After all, it is one planet that we all live in.

Dear participants, as a co-Chair of the Global Centre, I want to draw your attention to the first World e-Parliament Report which was launched in February 2008 at the UN headquarters in New York City. The report demonstrates the cooperation between over one hundred parliaments, the United Nations, the Global Centre, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the civil society. I sincerely invite you to read it and share it with your community. As we all know, the profound knowledge is not one to be possessed, rather, it is the one to be disseminated. In the early part of 2010, a new updated report will be issued with the input of parliaments from all over the world. I will invite you then once more to observe the progress, document the lessons learned and pinpoint any deficiencies in applying ICT in our parliaments. Like any other group, the overall strength of a coherent chain is determined by the strength of its weakest ring.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we have a good assessment of the state of ICT in our parliaments, I wish that this conference will bring the following:

1. More specific recommendations in fostering ICT in parliament particularly in developing countries.
2. A realistic plan for capacity building in this field for our representatives as well as staff.
3. A vision for effective communication between our parliaments on a routine basis that can be translated into sound legislations, particularly those that address global issues and concerns.

Dear Participants, there is much work to be done, and a longer journey is yet to be traveled. Make this conference an opportunity, not an occasion. Reach out and know more from others and let others benefit from your experiences. Tame technology to serve you and let us continue to keep the welfare of our people deep in our hearts.

Dear Friends, I wish you all a fruitful conference.

Ms. Ildikó Gáll Pelcz, Deputy Speaker
of the Hungarian National Assembly

Madam Speaker,
Mr. Under-Secretary-General,
Distinguished Speakers, Deputy-Speakers and Members of Parliaments,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all here and let me thank you all for giving me the opportunity to represent my home country as co-Chairperson of the conference.

I would like to extend my gratitude to our hosts who, after Geneva and Brussels, are organizing the third World e-Parliament Conference in Washington, D.C.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We live in a rapidly changing Information Society, among the modern, technological achievements of the 21st century. We live in a society where modern technologies have not only become integral parts of our everyday lives but they are also of great help to us in doing our work in the parliament, in the legislative process, in database management and in the communication between parliaments and citizens.

I think that the increasingly advanced application of information and communication technologies within and among parliaments serves as a pillar to support the operation of democratically elected parliaments.

The bases of Hungarian parliamentary democracy were established following the change of the political regime 20 years ago and the use of a parliamentary IT system in the Hungarian National Assembly was a significant contribution to that process.

We cannot stress enough the number of possibilities and opportunities that open up for us due to the development of information technologies in the 21st century. We would not have thought perhaps 20 years ago that citizens could be informed about politics and public affairs through channels other than the media and personal meetings. By now it has also become reality that voters can be part of operating democracy from their homes. I am convinced that national parliaments have a responsibility in using these new opportunities given by information technology to strengthen democracy.

For this reason the development of IT is significant not only to members of parliament and the staff. It is of course important to create a mobile working environment for members, to provide for the efficient contribution of the office staff in legislatures and to facilitate cooperation among various government bodies. Yet, it is equally important that the operation of parliaments should be democratic, transparent and controllable. It is easily conceivable that if

citizens receive information about decisions that concern them immediately as well as measures and parliamentary debates that affect their lives, the confidence they have in the democratic institutional system shall be strengthened. The outcome of votes can be seen with a click. This helps in keeping voters informed and enhances the responsibility held by members. This is good because scrutiny is one of the criteria of a viable democracy.

Why is it of primary importance to promote co-operation between and among parliaments? We all know that the political systems of countries participating in this conference have developed on the bases different traditions, rules and laws. For this reason, a uniform system cannot be created even for democratic countries.

Let me briefly describe the situation in Hungary and what such a small country in Central Europe has achieved in the field of parliamentary information technology in less than two decades. After the change of the political and economic systems in 1989, all functions were paper-based in the 386-member Hungarian Parliament, just like it was in the international practice at that time. This was not only an expensive and unsound solution from an environmental point of view but it did not give any opportunity to the people to examine the work of the Parliament. Nevertheless – in a favourable case – the Parliament works in order to serve the citizen's interests.

In 1992 with the help and assistance provided by the United States and Europe, the computerization of the Parliament was launched and it was supported by a contemporary electronic database management system. The Hungarian Parliament had its own website in 1995, quite early compared to some other countries as web presence was far from being widespread in the region at the time. 1998 saw fundamental changes in the field of parliamentary information technology: dynamic data query functions were made available. This brought an end to the previous practice of uploading the minutes of discussions and the data about the outcome of votes every night. This change took place more than ten years ago.

In addition to transparency, another key objective has been to make the IT of the Parliament capable of creating and supporting a mobile and safe working environment for members.

In 2004, paper-based information services for legislators were terminated. This resulted not only in faster access but also in significant savings in the parliamentary budget. In addition, the legislative assembly is also supposed to set an example for companies and businesses in our country: if members believe that environmental awareness needs to be enhanced, then it is within the Parliament that the change to using environmental friendly equipment should first be initiated. One of our goals is to implement a paperless public administration



system. As a first step, an electronic information system has been created in the Parliament. In the meantime, the Parliament's website has also been gradually improving. Visitors can watch live videos of members' speeches, parliamentary debates and ballots. Bills, speeches and other documents can now be retrieved thematically. As an important measure to fight corruption, we have made the members' declarations of property accessible. Thus, the system is not only up-to-date but it fully complies with the requirement of transparency, too.

All data are public on the website. The Parliament's website includes all bills passed or rejected, draft resolutions, questions and interpellations and the constituent members.

A special website has been created for the representatives of the press, minorities, lobbyists and non-governmental organizations. Our "Press Box" column includes some important information for the press.

It also allows anyone to access some information about the functioning of the Parliament through the press. I believe that making the work of the Parliament accessible for young people is a priority in order to promote citizens' awareness and education. We can achieve this by making it interesting for them – for example by creating a website specifically designed for them.

Secondary school students are given the opportunity to take part in "School visits to the Parliament" during which they study and become familiar with the operation of the Parliament and its library both in theory and in practice.

It is our task for the years to come to improve the operation of parliamentary information technology further. To accomplish this, the national governments and the executive authorities have to be committed to this objective and provide sufficient budgetary funding for development. Over the 5–10 years gone by, it has mostly become possible for representatives and members in the European Union and, of course, in the United States to do their work in a mobile working environment; and these arrangements are successful.

We must, however, increase civilian participation in Parliamentary work, most of all by monitoring political events and members' work and offering control. The most fearsome enemies of a democratic political culture are impassiveness, the absence of interest and disillusionment of voters. There are many who interpret daily political fights as a failure of democracy. Yet, campaign and differences of opinion are all natural constituents of political systems built on free elections.

However, in a difficult situation like the economic crisis, there is a real danger that voters will be disappointed in the democratic system of institutions and lose their faith in free elections. However, if we can make effective parliamentary work visible and transparent, in other words, bring it closer to voters, then this can reinforce representative democracy, which will be our common achievement.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that the agenda of this three-day conference will provide an excellent opportunity for us to discuss and review the current situation, share our experiences and develop a joint strategy to cope with the challenges ahead.

I wish you all good work on this complex agenda.

I hope you will spend your time in respect of the professional issues and fruitful discussions during the conference.

Thank you for your attention.

Policy-oriented plenary sessions

Connecting parliaments and citizens: new technologies to foster openness, transparency and accountability

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have significantly changed the way citizens interact with each other and with legislatures. The pace of technological change makes it difficult to predict what new capabilities may be possible and what new societal developments may emerge in the future. While the impact of the newest technologies on the political sphere is at an

early stage, their potential can already be glimpsed through recent elections and changes in the modalities of communication of citizens and civil societies with their legislatures. This presents both opportunities and challenges for parliaments as they seek to affirm their role as vital democratic institutions of the 21st century and the primary representative of the people.

This session considered how ICT can be used to furthering the state of democracy by encouraging effective engagement of citizens and increasing their participation in the political debate, as well as by supporting the commitment of parliaments to greater openness, transparency and accountability.

The Chair of the session, **Mr. Harry Jenkins**, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Australia, noted that all parliaments are looking at ways to harness technology not only to make their work easier and more effective but also to make parliament more relevant to those it serves. He stated

that while investing in technology can be a costly exercise for parliaments, it helps them achieve cost efficiencies.

Ms. Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo, Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, highlighted transparency, openness, participation and accountability as the cardinal principles underpinning parliamentary democracy. Parliaments have the responsibility for ensuring accountability and transparency in the democratic process and for promoting the right of citizens to participate effectively in the governance process. At its best, the parliament embodies the distinctive attributes of democracy - discussion and compromise - and is the means through which public interest is realized. Ms. Bamford-Addo underlined that priority must be given to ensuring that the diversity of views of citizens can be expressed and considered, and that laws embody the wishes of all stakeholders. The crisis of legitimacy of parliaments can be traced to the perception that they do not protect the diverse views of the people they represent. Problems arise when there is a lack of transparency and participation, and an accountability deficit.

Over the years the Parliament of Ghana has adopted a number of programmes to bring the institution closer to the people. These include outreach and TV programmes, visitor programmes, media briefings, capacity-building initiatives for the press, interaction with constituents, members' back-to-school programmes, and youth parliaments. Despite these efforts, citizens still do not have easy access to information on the work of the Parliament in real time. This is partly due to the adoption of inadequate or inappropriate methods of communication.



Recognizing that ICT are now essential for engaging citizens and gathering their input, the Parliament of Ghana made further efforts to connect to the people through the use of technology. Among them are an e-library project with PCs connected to the Internet so users can search the web; a public-private partnership with a TV station to cover plenary sessions in full; live broadcast of plenary meetings and committee hearings; and e-mail addresses of members of parliament posted on the website. The Parliament is also establishing resource centres in regions and districts to allow citizens to follow live sessions via computer or TV. Citizens can also contact through their phones “call in” programmes where parliament and policy issues are being discussed. Other efforts include the development of the Parliament’s own FM radio station to broadcast plenary sessions and the use of Facebook to hold open discussions of policy issues once a week.

Ms. Bamford-Addo stated that there is still room for improvement and stressed the need for assistance from international partners for those countries that lack resources.

She pointed out that ICT contain both threats and opportunities and has ambiguous but profound consequences for democracy, both now and in the future. While they offer access for citizens to information and discussion through interactive media on many issues that affect them, they also compound existing biases in the distribution of knowledge, especially where resources are lacking.

Ms. Bamford-Addo concluded by highlighting that parliaments are information intensive and information demanding institutions. They create information and require information from all sectors, public and private, the executive and judiciary, the media, academia, civil societies, international orga-

nizations, other legislative bodies, and the citizens. The use of ICT can help develop a comprehensive approach to identify, manage, and provide access to critical resources to ensure that members of parliament and citizens are adequately informed, and to enhance connectivity among citizens and between citizens and parliaments.

Mr. Julio César Valentín, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic, described the developments of ICT in the Chamber of Deputies to promote openness and transparency, and to increase citizen participation. He noted first that to make these developments effective there was a need for a legal framework of laws and regulations, which was implemented in the Dominican Republic by the executive and the legislative branches working together. The success of this new framework can be measured on the basis of a number of indicators: 1) a 50% increase in the share of the contribution of the telecom sector to the overall GDP of the country; 2) growth in teledensity, resulting in almost 100% of the population having some type of modern telecommunications device; 3) a tripling of Internet subscribers; 4) a substantial increase in broadband users (well over 60%); and, 5) an increasing number of mobile Internet users. Mr. Valentín noted that collectively these efforts have helped reduce the digital divide in the country.

Mr. Valentín reported that the Chamber of Deputies has a strategic plan for modern governance based on a number of pillars, all of which require ICT. These pillars include transparency in the administrative and legislative processes, greater efficiency, improved



quality of legislation, better parliament-to-citizen communication and e-participation, and greater service to constituents.

Transparency is a critical and crosscutting value in building all the pillars. The Chamber considers access to information a fundamental right and has made several efforts to achieve transparency through the use of ICT. Many documents, such as the Chambers' budget, fees paid, and public statements of members of parliament are now available online. All procurement is done through the Internet and a non-partisan office of the budget provides information online, allowing citizens and the media to see all reports. Votes are now digitally recorded and a biometric system validates the voter and tracks attendance.

The Chamber of Deputies also used ICT to increase its efficiency. Mr. Valentín noted that the Chamber became almost paperless and highlighted that this demanded a cultural change within and outside the Parliament.

ICT have also improved representation. Citizens can participate in debates via ICT and make comments on proposed laws. Other ways to involve citizens include a virtual course, online forums involving citizens and members, and an e-newspaper.



Mr. Valentín described some of the Chamber's plans for the future, such as introducing a digital signature capacity to allow members of parliament to sign documents remotely and equipping them with Blackberries so they can exploit advanced mobile communications.

In his concluding remarks,

Mr. Valentín stated that through the use of ICT the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic has become more dynamic, efficient, and effective and ready to respond to the challenges of a globalized world.

Mr. Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, recounted briefly one of the key concepts in founding the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, namely that of a broad alliance of partners that could help foster parliamentary development and democracy through ICT, especially in young democracies. This concept, however, should not be restricted to the implementation of technology or to its availability to a parliament, but more broadly to how technology is affecting the relationship between citizens and legislatures.

He underlined that statistics and data show that that we are living today through a fast transformation of the societal environment. While the 20th century was dominated by traditional media, the 21st century scenario is defined by a mass media in continuous evolution, network architectures allowing multi-dimensional communication, and a dramatic drop in the cost of communication.

The Information Society has brought about a shift to a new economic paradigm - a new system of production, distribution and consumption with its own laws and rules that, to some extent, are autonomous and independent of the market. Mr. Lupi stated that, although the physiognomy of this new networked information economy has not been defined yet, representative institutions have the responsibility to define the contours and determine the content of its politics.

He highlighted that the last 10-15 years have led to a paradox. On the one hand, there has been an unprecedented expansion of

opportunities for citizens to participate, criticize governments and organize themselves into groups as an alternative to political parties. On the other, there has also been disaffection from politics and a decline of “civicness” and faith in the effectiveness of the democratic process. All this seems to converge towards a framework of uncertainty and difficulties that some have described as post-democracy, where the outward forms of democracy remain but are devoid of confidence and passion, ideals and values, and where privileged elites, working behind the scenes, wheel the real power.

Mr. Lupi stressed that an important problem is how to translate the values of democratic deliberation, including openness, transparency, accountability and legitimacy, into the practice of participatory politics on the Internet and through the Internet. Parliaments are, more than any other, the institutions that safeguard democratic values and constantly disseminate them in a national polity. There is a need for parliaments to inspire, guide and take decisive action to face the crisis of political participation. Even more so if one considers the risks posed by ICT when used for political operations that carry little of democratic values, such as those encouraging violent political content.

Mr. Lupi asserted that today parliamentary websites are the primary means for the dissemination of the values of parliamentary governance and for educating the community around them. They also serve to expand and maintain a public space for thought and discussion.

He acknowledged that the network is ideally suited to strengthening the citizens’ oversight of the work of their representatives. It brings greater transparency to the decisions and the conduct of their political represen-

tatives. Communication from many to many, appropriately incorporated in constitutional laws, is the ideal structure for a richer, more comprehensive and inclusive representational relationship. Finally, the network must be structured with a view to expanding parliaments’ knowledge of society that is so essential to their functioning.

Mr. Lupi underlined that if technologies are to be harnessed to serve the defining values of democracy and parliamentary governance, they must be used to strengthen the work done by parliaments, increase its transparency and accountability and enhance its visibility. This implies that technologies also must safeguard rules, reinforce participation in the shaping of the popular will, and encourage a sense of belonging to a political community.

Mr. Lupi highlighted that only if democratic parliaments succeed in dealing with this challenge in the coming years, a new kind of public sphere - based on the Internet and the concept of network – might emerge, leading to an expansion of the democratic arena and a renewal of the relationship between politics and citizens.

The intervention by **Ms. Cathy McMorris Rodgers**, Vice Chair of the House Republican Conference of the U.S. House of Representatives, reinforced the consensus on the positive impact of ICT on transparency and accountability.



She noted how quickly technology has grown. Ten years ago, as a member of her State legislature, she did not have a website, a Facebook account, a YouTube channel, or a Twitter account. Today, by contrast, it is possible to conduct teletown hall meetings with thousands of participants. She pointed out that new media usage numbers speak for themselves: over 300 million people actively use Facebook, 100 million videos are viewed daily on YouTube, 85 million people view blogs daily, and during the past U.S. presidential election, 1 in 5 voters used the Internet as a major source of information.

She noted that the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign was a defining moment and took social networking to a new level of social mobilization. As a leader of her party she has been actively educating her fellow members about the new media, pointing out that it is not a fad or a passing phase, but a new and revolutionary way to communicate and interact with citizens. She reported that members of her party are adopting the new media: 85% have a YouTube channel, 72% are on Facebook, 59% use Twitter.

She noted the importance of accountability and described a new website created by her party to bring more transparency in the use of tax payers' dollars. The new website, *sunshine.gop.gov*, contains information on TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program), earmarks (i.e. requests of members to fund specific projects in their districts), and government

spending and stimulus projects. Information on TARP includes a description of each programme, dollar amounts, and a map to see which banks have received money and which have paid it back. Information on earmarks includes all requests from members with a section for comments by the public. Spending and stimulus projects can be searched by state, city, contractor, and subcontractor.

She stressed the importance of transparency which results in more accountability and more communication. She noted that while in the past people went to town halls to receive information, they now go with the information they got from the web. She highlighted that the imperative for members is to keep adopting and using new technology to empower citizens and further democracy.

Mr. Edward J. Markey, Chair of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming of the U.S. House of Representatives, noted the importance of appropriate policies and cited his work as former Chair of the House committee dealing with telecommunications in the United States. A primary goal of the committee's work was to break the logjam of monopoly and allow entrepreneurs to innovate. New communication technologies allow individuals to feel empowered to affect government and have their voices heard. The concept of the town hall government is central to the new technology; it offers a return to old models prevalent at the beginning of the nation's



history when ordinary people could speak and their voices could be heard. In 1996 he introduced a bill to allow innovative firms such as Google and eBay to prosper and to create an environment that is leading to a revolution in democracy.

Mr. Markey pointed out that communication is now very much a two-way street and members and their constituents can interact effectively through new technologies such as informative websites. ICT are a powerful force that can make the whole country one big town hall meeting.

Mr. Markey stressed, however, that while these new technologies can enable and enable, they can also degrade and debase. Parliaments have a responsibility to ensure that ICT are used for the best and highest purposes such as enhancing democracy, responding to human suffering and giving ordinary people power.

During the open discussion participants raised the issue of public trust. In some technologically-advanced countries there are indications that citizens still do not feel they can influence policy through the Internet. Panelists agreed that this can be a problem and cited the need for a change in the culture and level of understanding of governments, parliaments, and their relations with the citizenry. Other participants echoed the concern cited by panelists that the new communication technologies can be misused or even abused. Panelists concurred but felt that the advantages of transparency outweigh the potential ICT abuses and disadvantages. Some participants and panelists noted that members of parliament themselves sometimes do not understand the technology.

How ICT can strengthen parliaments in young and emerging democracies

This session focused on the potential of ICT to strengthen and support parliament's primary functions of representation, law-making, and oversight in politically challenging environments, and how these tools can be used to make the legislature a vital forum for the expression of the diversity of society.

The Chair of the session, **Mr. Justin Koumba**, President of the National Assembly of Congo, underscored the fact that young democracies face major challenges to ensure political stability and peace. They especially need resources to improve their functions. Mr. Koumba stressed that ICT might help young democracies to improve their level of transparency and accessibility, enable citizens to participate in debate, and improve their administrative processes which are necessary to legislate.

Mr. Mninwa J. Mahlangu, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa, asserted that developing countries cannot ignore ICT even if investing in technology can be expensive. ICT are the main source of information and knowledge for all citizens, and facilitate communication and dialogue, which form the basis for improving democracy. He noted that information sources and knowledge platforms have moved beyond ownership of individuals and even governments.

Mr. Mahlangu underscored the impact of new technologies, such as social networking tools, on small rural communities and described a programme, called "Taking Parliament to the People", that helps connect members of parliament and people in the nine provinces of South Africa to debate matters of local concern. Video and tele-

conferencing through satellite links allow all provinces to participate in the debate and share experiences with their counterparts. The programme is supported by radio interviews and phone-in programmes with members before and after the event.

Mr. Mahlangu stated that the South African Parliament has approved a five-year strategy for ICT focusing on the theme *From e-Parliament to e-Democracy*. The strategy will deepen and strengthen the culture of popular participation and activism in parliamentary democracy. During the period 2009 – 2014 the Parliament will undertake a number of projects in support of this strategy, including building an interactive website, creating Facebook pages, and developing mobile applications, multi-media services and a web-based TV.

Despite the costs involved, the Parliament considered that it was important to entrench democracy and e-participation through ICT. It will also invest more in the next four years in systems for acquiring, managing, and sharing information; for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the government and its programmes; and for increasing opportunities for public engagement. This vision also includes more exchanges and cooperation with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the African Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN), and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP).

Ms. Diana Wallis, Vice President of the European Parliament, reminded participants that the previous World e-Parliament Conference took place at the European Parliament and underscored that the continuation of this dialogue in Washington is critical as parliaments can learn from each other regardless of their different development level.

Ms. Wallis pointed out that the contribution of the European Parliament to the panel discussion should be framed in the context of the unique nature of this institution and the historical developments that took place in the past twenty years in Europe. The European Parliament, composed of emerging democracies as well as more mature ones, is in fact developing a transnational parliamentary democracy as it gathers, and needs to respond to the electorate of twenty-seven countries.

Ms. Wallis noted that the European Parliament makes extensive use of technology, including Facebook, but it still needs to further develop these efforts on a continuing basis to serve the purpose and meet the challenges of the legislature. The newly approved Lisbon Treaty will require the Parliament to raise the bar for communication both with citizens and with national parliaments, which will entail new ICT solutions. For example, the new Treaty will allow citizens to initiate legislation if one million signatures are collected in support of the proposal. The Treaty will also allow national parliaments to suspend the European legislative process if the European Parliament does not coordinate with them appropriately. To meet both challenges the Parliament will clearly require the support of ICT.

Ms. Wallis stated that as the European Parliament will learn from these new experiences, it would be willing to exchange them with parliaments of neighboring countries and other regions of the world. She stressed that because of the very unusual nature of the Parliament and of its history, the institution is looking at ways to strengthen emerging democracies, as it was resolved by the Conference of Speakers of the European Union in 2006. These efforts are made through the Office for the Promotion of Democracy with specific activities for parliamentary development, including a democracy fellowship programme.

Ms Wallis highlighted that the international sphere offers the greatest challenge. The need for effective international decision-making is growing – the financial crisis and the environment are two important examples – and ICT can help parliaments to include citizens in the decision-making process. She noted that many members of parliament are engaged with other countries through delegations but they need to move from these in-person contacts to the point of being able to engage all citizens everywhere through ICT, moving toward more democratic global governance.

She then raised the question of how to strengthen links among all parliaments of the world, at an institutional level, in order to share knowledge, cooperate, and create partnerships in critical areas such as Internet governance, knowledge management for the legislative process, partnerships to overcome the digital divide and improve innovation, and sharing of information resources.

Ms. Wallis stated that members of parliament must be at the cutting edge of ICT but there must also be a firm belief in debate, dialogue and diversity. Technology should be only considered a tool to facilitate these goals and achieve wider citizens' participation in public life, and not only an instrument in the hands of lobbies.

Mr. Wallis concluded by underlining that democracy needs conflicting tensions based on the expression of different opinions. The democratic organization of a society must allow those in power to explain and justify, but it must also guarantee that opposition forces can confront, denounce, oppose, and propose alternatives. Technologies can play a crucial role to empower parliament and hopefully all citizens but ICT alone will not make a legislature strong or efficient.

Mr. Jani Makraduli, Vice President of the Assembly of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, made an overview of the ICT plan implemented by the Assembly to improve its processes. He suggested that there are advantages to being a small and young democracy such as the opportunity to start from scratch and benefit from the latest technology developments.

In formulating its strategic plan the Assembly started from the recommendations of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. All parties, including the opposition, were involved in developing the plan which crucially put the President at the top of the decision-making process. The vision embodied in the plan calls for achieving more transparent, cost effective, and faster processes in parliament with the use of ICT. It also calls for allowing faster decision-making and less bureaucracy through information systems that enable access to information to anyone, anywhere, and on any device.



Mr. Makraduli reported that the plan was implemented through a participatory process. The Assembly established public-private partnerships, invited all stakeholders to participate and ensured collaboration between ICT staff and members.

In 14 months a state-of-the-art ICT environment was created. Today the Assembly manages PCs centrally, is implementing best practices in security, including secure mobile access, and benefits from interactive media on the web portal. It uses XML, web services, and has a fully integrated system that covers all processes such as legislation and scrutiny questions. The system supports different bodies and the plenary, as well as the work of the President, the Secretary General, members of parliament and other parliamentary groups. Other features of the system include a single sign-on to all common functions, remote access, digital signatures for every action, system-generated documents and letters, notifications for deadlines and new acts in process, key performance indicators and information targeting. The system is process rather than document oriented, which means that a bill contains all versions of the document plus related metadata such as actions and associated reports. The Assembly also has a Parliament TV on the net, a searchable video and audio archive, and notification services.

Mr. Makraduli indicated some of the benefits achieved through the system. These include providing remote access anywhere at any time to members and staff, reducing the time to adopt laws, and enabling more efficient sessions, which has led to reduced operating costs for the Assembly. The system also created greater citizen satisfaction because of the increased two-way interaction and the wider availability of information about the Assembly.

Mr. David Price, Chair of the House Democracy Partnership and Chair of the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives, stated that communication and Internet technologies have completely transformed the way work is done in the House. They have enabled the House to be more responsive, better informed, and pro-active. He pointed out, however, one downside, namely that technology can lead to communication overload.

In his role as Chair of the House Democracy Partnership, he has identified five key building blocks of effective democratic institutions: transparency, accountability, responsiveness to citizens, effectiveness and independence. He asserted his belief that all parliaments - old and new - need to work on these building blocks and stressed that ICT play a critical role in each of these areas.

He stated that the U.S. Congress uses a variety of websites to make information available to citizens and be more transparent. He pointed out that anybody with an Internet connection can look at how he voted. His website provides information on his positions on policies. Mr. Price noted that ICT help members of parliament who need to connect to geographically remote citizens. He now receives all constituent correspondence through ICT and has recently begun conducting telephone town hall meetings with constituents. He also has Internet meetings in which all communications are exchanged via typing. Technology also helps to manage casework – the term used when constituents write in to ask for help with a problem they are having with the government, such as a delayed or missing social security check.

Mr. Price highlighted that ICT support better libraries, research services, media resources,

and access to information, which are vital to improved effectiveness. They give the legislative branch greater independence through better information and research, and direct access to citizens. ICT are linked to building more effective and responsive members and institutions.

Mr. Price concluded his intervention by suggesting that while free and fair elections are very important, real democracy is often what happens between elections. Noting that in between elections members of parliament attempt to turn the ideas of their constituents into effective legislation and policies, he stressed that ICT can help in this very much.

During the interactive discussion, the issue of how to achieve real citizen participation in decision-making was raised by several participants. Speakers highlighted that policy issues are often complex and technical, and it is hard to engage citizens directly in the everyday work of the parliament. This is a challenging matter that would benefit from parliaments' sharing their ideas and experiences. Participants also commented that it is not possible to assume that citizens and representa-

tives are computer literate and raised the importance of ICT training and orientation. They also noted that parliaments need to pool resources and help each other. One participant commented on the need to increase the culture and value of democracy in countries with young democracies by using information and communication technologies.

How important are international and regional networks to support the responsibilities of parliaments?

Cooperation and the sharing of knowledge is one of the least expensive and potentially most effective ways for parliaments to enhance their use of technology in order to meet their legal and constitutional responsibilities. Cooperative networks at the regional and global level, as well as through bilateral or twinning arrangements, can enable more parliaments – in both developed and developing countries – to realize the full potential of ICT to support greater efficiencies and effectiveness in their legislative, oversight, and representational work and attain new levels of transparency, accountability, and accessibility.



This session focused on the role of parliamentary networks in fostering the sharing of knowledge and best practices. Particular attention was paid to lessons learned from existing global and regional networks such as the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN), the Secretaries General Forum of Asia-Pacific Parliaments (SGFAPP), the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD), the Parliamentary Library and Research Services Section of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), and the U.S. National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

Mr. Hafnaoui Amrani, President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) and Secretary General of the Council of the Nation of Algeria, introduced the session by noting that all parliamentary institutions are different from each other but face the same challenges and pursue the same objectives. He highlighted the importance of inter-parliamentary cooperation and recalled that historically parliaments have a strong tradition of cooperation at different levels.

Mr. Amrani stated that the sharing of knowledge and experiences among parliaments is an efficient and affordable way of strengthening parliaments' capacities and enhancing their use of technologies in support of their institutional functions. Knowledge exchange also ensures better coordination of international cooperation initiatives and helps avoid duplication of efforts and waste of resources.

Mr. Mohamed Abou Zeid, Member of the Parliament of Egypt, provided an overview of the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN). The establishment of the network was discussed for the first time at a meeting hosted by the National Assembly

of Nigeria in Abuja in 2007. It was formally established during a conference hosted by the People's Assembly of Egypt in Cairo in 2008, when representatives of 36 parliamentary assemblies from across Africa finalized the APKN Charter. In October 2009, the members of the network met in Johannesburg in conjunction with the Pan-African Parliament Speakers Conference, to discuss the next steps.

Mr. Abou Zeid reported that to date the Charter has been officially endorsed by 14 parliamentary assemblies: National Assembly of Cameroon, National Assembly of Congo, People's Assembly of Egypt, Parliament of Ghana, National Assembly of Kenya, National Assembly of Nigeria, National Assembly of the Seychelles, National Assembly of South Africa, House of Assembly of Swaziland, National Assembly of Togo, Parliament of Uganda, National Assembly of Zambia, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADCPF).

The mission of the APKN is to support the work of assemblies by establishing mechanisms and procedures for exchanging information and experience in areas of common interest. It also intends to strengthen cooperation for capacity building and staff training, and collaborate on technology development to serve parliamentary functions. Major areas of cooperation include legislative processes, information and research services, ICT tools, and communication with the public.

The interim secretariat of the APKN is hosted by the People's Assembly of Egypt. APKN is in the process of establishing an Executive Committee, tasked with the formulation of policies, and a **Council of Coordinators**, responsible for initiating, organizing, and supporting knowledge-related activities.

Mr. Abou Zeid stated that much progress was achieved but there is still a lot of work to do. Among the main challenges ahead he mentioned the lack of know-how and sustainable resources, language and communication barriers, and the need to define clearer mechanisms of cooperation. He concluded by stating that the next steps will be to continue to raise awareness about the APKN, expand and intensify its activities, establish capabilities for assessment of effectiveness, and define the means for communication with other networks.

Mr. Lim In Gyu, Deputy Secretary General of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, provided an overview of the main initiatives undertaken by the Assembly in the area of e-parliament. He observed that e-parliament not only increases citizens' participation but can also dramatically enhance inter-parliamentary communication and facilitate the establishment of a network to solve global issues through global coordination. He noted that the spread of e-parliament has unlimited possibilities considering that the cost of information exchange is nowadays very low.

In July 2009, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea organized the first Secretaries General Forum of Asia-Pacific Parliaments (SGFAPP). The Forum intended to respond to the need for more systematic and consistent mutual exchange of information among parliaments in the region. The five-day event brought together 83 delegates from 42 parliaments in 32 countries. Participants confirmed the need to establish a strong regional inter-parliamentary network

based on e-parliament and adopted the Seoul Communiqué. They committed to sharing e-parliament experiences and expanding technical and people-to-people exchanges among parliamentary administrations. They also agreed that the Forum will be held on a regular basis. The National Assembly of Korea will continue to support the Forum including by building a dedicated website.

Mr. Lim then described the e-Parliament Assistance Initiative (e-PAI) through which the National Assembly of Korea provides PCs and software to parliaments in need of IT infrastructure. The overall objective of this initiative is to expand and strengthen the exchange among parliamentary administrations. The first country that received assistance was Cambodia in November 2008. The National Assembly is now planning to expand the assistance to other countries in Africa and Central Asia and to upgrade the project both in terms of quantity and quality. For 2010 the National Assembly intends to allocate additional funds to meet the growing demand and expects to donate 1000 PCs to 26 countries.

The last initiative described by Mr. Lim was the inter-parliamentary exchange programme. The initiative was launched



in October 2009 when a delegation from the House of the Federation of Ethiopia visited Korea for one week to get a better understanding of the National Assembly's e-parliament (including its digital plenary chamber, e-bills system and e-library) and benchmark its operations know-how. Mr. Lim highlighted that the National Assembly intends to expand its exchange programme in the future.

Mr. Piotr Nowina-Konopka, co-Director of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) and Director for Relations with National Parliaments of the European Parliament, described the activities of the ECPRD and provided examples of good practices. ECPRD was jointly established by the Council of Europe and the European Parliament in 1977 and is the oldest network of national parliamentary staff. Mr. Nowina-Konopka noted that the common cultural, political and democratic traditions of the members of the European Union and the Council of Europe provide a solid basis for collaboration.

The main objective of ECPRD is knowledge sharing among civil servants of parliaments on subjects of common interest ranging from parliamentary procedures and practices to organizational and legislative matters. The membership of the ECPRD is composed of 64 parliamentary assemblies from 49 states and 3 European parliamentary assemblies (European Parliament, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and Western European Union Parliamentary Assembly). The Network has a very small permanent structure composed of two co-Directors assisted by two co-secretaries. The pillars of the Network are the correspondents, one per each parliamentary assembly, who meet every year during the annual conference of correspondents.

The network focuses its activities on four main areas of interest: ICT; parliamentary practice and procedures; parliamentary libraries, research and archives; and economic research. The main services of the ECPRD include responding to requests for comparative information from members, convening seminars, and conducting studies. Each year member parliaments send about 220 comparative requests to all or selected chambers. The replies from the correspondents, provided through standard forms, are not treated as official positions of their chambers and are archived on the ECPRD website for future reference. Mr. Nowina-Konopka stressed the added value of sharing research with other parliaments with different systems, experiences, and tradition.

Mr. Nowina-Konopka noted that the rate of responsiveness is very high and that over time the network has become a true community of specialists. He stressed that the success and effectiveness of the network depend largely on the commitment of the correspondents to assist colleagues from other parliaments. He also noted that the network has reduced bureaucracy over the years.

Since 2001 the website/Intranet represents one of the main tools of the network. It provides space for news, hosts a directory of correspondents, secretaries-general and experts, and gives access to dedicated pages for the network's areas of interest.

Among the challenges the ECPRD faces, Mr. Nowina-Konopka noted the need to maintain a high rate of responsiveness, to create a greater sense of ownership among correspondents for the website, and to improve the workflow and search facility. Based upon the ECPRD's thirty-two years of experience, Mr. Nowina-Konopka identified key lessons learned including keeping

the process human and informal, focusing on feasible goals, respecting national cultures and learning from them, staying open to new ideas and best practices, and keeping the process free of politics.

Another successful cooperative approach for supporting the work of parliaments is the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). **Mr. William T. Pound**, Executive Director of NCSL, stated that the organization was created in 1975 by the 50 U.S. legislatures.

Its main objectives are to foster communication and cooperation among the States, to work for the improvement of their operations, and to ensure that State legislatures have a cohesive voice in the federal system. Mr. Pound provided an overview of NCSL's main activities. Through its website, NCSL makes available its own research as well as research done by the State legislatures. Other activities include the analysis of federal legislation that could have direct implications at the State level, and a bill status and tracking system through which it is possible to obtain a copy of proposed legislation and track its process. Since 1975, NCSL organizes training on a variety of topics and on internal procedures and operations. It also holds annual meetings to discuss a wide range of themes and makes available the outcome of these discussions on its website. It also provides technical assistance by drawing on the expertise of staff of the various legislatures. In order to encourage transparency and open government it sponsors annually the Online Democracy Award which seeks to recognize a State legislative website that stands out for making democracy user-friendly.

NCSL's structure is formed by staff sections such as librarians, researchers, staff of legal

services and IT staff. NCSL members communicate electronically with each other through listservs which have proven to be a valuable mechanism for exchanging information and learning from each other.

Mr. Pound concluded by stressing that NCSL is constantly evolving as new technologies become available.

Ms. Moira Fraser, Chair of the IFLA Parliamentary Library and Research Services Section and Librarian of the Parliament of New Zealand, stated that parliamentary libraries contribute to the effectiveness of parliaments by providing authoritative, independent, non-partisan and relevant information. Parliamentary libraries have evolved greatly in recent decades especially due to the emergence of new technologies that have changed the way parliaments manage knowledge and information.

Parliamentarians need information as they monitor issues, develop policy solutions, influence government decision-making and monitor the success of government programmes. Parliamentary libraries need to understand their needs in order to provide them with specialized information and a more efficient service. Ms. Fraser stressed that the need for independent information is even greater in developing countries where governments remain the main keepers of information.

Ms. Fraser provided an overview of the IFLA Parliamentary Library and Research Services Section which facilitates the exchange of knowledge and expertise among parliamentary libraries around the world to support the information needs of parliaments. She highlighted that the Section has no permanent secretariat and is entirely run by volunteers. The last annual meeting of

the Section was hosted by the Italian Parliament in Rome in August 2009. Previous meetings were held in Ottawa in 2008 and Cape Town in 2007. She underscored that the rotation of the venues facilitates the participation of different regional groups.

Ms. Fraser also cited the joint meeting with the Inter-Parliamentary Union “Informing democracy: building capacity to meet parliamentarians’ information and knowledge needs”, held in Geneva in 2008, and the training workshop “Leveraging Technology for Parliamentary Libraries and Research Services”, held in conjunction with the annual meeting in Rome. The training represented a successful example of a collaborative effort of the Section, the Italian Parliament and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. She also stated that the Section is about to publish the “Guidelines for legislative libraries”, and provides access to a variety of information material through its website.

Ms. Fraser indicated that the next annual IFLA meetings and pre-conference of the IFLA Parliamentary Library and Research Services Section will be held in Sweden in 2010 on the theme “Open access to parliamentary information”. The General Congresses of IFLA are scheduled to take place in Puerto Rico in 2011, in Finland in 2012 and in the Asia-Pacific region in 2013. A regional event will also be held in Canberra, Australia in early 2011.

Ms. Fraser concluded by highlighting the important role of several regional associations of parliamentary libraries around the world.

Promoting democracy and inter-parliamentary cooperation: a collaborative approach to institution building through a shared framework for e-parliament

The Chair, **Mr. Sha Zukang**, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, began the session by acknowledging that since its inception the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament has achieved significant milestones and wide recognition. He stressed, however, that there is still a long way to go in achieving the Centre’s goals.

Mr. Sha highlighted that the results of the survey on ICT in parliaments conducted by the Centre in 2007 indicated that only a few legislatures are able to make effective use of ICT to support their legislative, representative and oversight responsibilities. For this reason, at its third meeting in March 2009, the high-level Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament acknowledged the long-term challenge for strengthening parliamentary institutions through ICT and identified five key strategic areas for action addressing both policy needs and technology requirements: 1) establish national and international policies to create an Information Society that is equitable and inclusive; 2) enhance the connection between legislatures and constituencies; 3) improve the equality of access to the law and the law-making process of the country; 4) ensure that legislatures around the world can harness ICT tools in the service of the legislative, oversight, and representative functions; 5) develop a more robust and well coordinated programme of technical assistance.

These five goals are a call to the world of parliaments and the whole international community to strengthen legislatures, good

governance and democracy, as well as the pillars for the Centre's renewed mandate.

Mr. Sha observed that achieving these goals requires extensive inter-parliamentary collaboration and encouraged parliaments to share knowledge and experience in the use of ICT in a more systematic way. He stressed that ICT-related contributions from other parliaments and from the international community of donors must be closely integrated with programmes to strengthen parliaments. It is also essential for parliaments to have a strategic plan for ICT and to achieve a higher degree of coordination in the international community.

Mr. Sha identified four areas that the Centre should focus on in order to meet these challenges and bring added value at the international level and to the community of parliaments. First of all, it should scale up its efforts to facilitate collaboration among parliaments, particularly at the regional level. Secondly, it should ensure that inter-parliamentary cooperation on ICT is coherent and harmonized with other development assistance efforts. Thirdly, the Centre must enhance its ability to coordinate technical assistance to parliaments in developing countries. Finally, it should pay special attention to the human capacity of parliamentary administrations.

Mr. Sha then invited all stakeholders to brainstorm on the main elements that an international e-parliament framework should have and on how to mobilize support to realize common objectives in support of democracy and development through the use of ICT.

Mr. Jeff Griffith, Senior Advisor of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, provided an overview of the state of ICT in the parlia-

ments of the world and suggested some of the important challenges and opportunities that will confront legislators in the next several years.

He presented a few preliminary findings from the Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments conducted by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament in 2009 to which 134 assemblies from over 100 countries responded. The objectives of the survey were: identify trends over time; share lessons learned and good practices; be a reference source that can help guide the work of those engaged in inter-parliamentary cooperation and support. Mr. Griffith explained that the Centre has just begun the analysis of the data and that the full report will be published in March 2010.

Mr. Griffith reported that regarding infrastructure, 95% of parliaments replied that they have an intranet and the remainder indicated that they were working on one. As for the document management systems (DMS), Mr. Griffith noted that since 2007 the percentage of parliaments reporting that they had a document management system increased only from 45% to 48%. Because a DMS is an important tool for parliaments, the fact that the percentage of parliaments reporting that they have one remains below 50% is a concern. Of equal concern, stated Mr. Griffith, is the fact that implementation of XML in parliaments appears to be declining. He acknowledged that open standards such as XML are a challenge to implement but they hold important keys for future development and for this reason, the Global Centre has formed a Working Group on XML to try to help parliaments address some of these implementation challenges.

On a positive side, Mr. Griffith reported that the percentages of parliaments that provide

members with e-mail, printers, and access to an intranet are higher. He noted that the number of parliaments providing access to the Internet increased from 79% to 85%. In the area of networking and cooperation, Mr. Griffith mentioned the encouraging finding that 48% of parliaments currently provide support or would be willing to consider providing support to other parliaments to help develop or enhance their use of ICT.

Regarding methods of communication, Mr. Griffith highlighted that besides e-mail and websites, webcasting of plenary session is being used or planned by 70% of parliaments; webcasting of committee proceedings is being used or planned by 50% of parliaments.

As for the challenges that parliaments have experienced in implementing new technologies, 39% of parliaments indicated that “members are not familiar with technology” and 34% indicated that “Citizens are not familiar with the legislative process”. These

figures demonstrate a need for education of members and for making the legislative process clearer. However, overall, communication with citizens using ICT tools is growing. The main barriers identified were: knowledge of members about technology; knowledge of citizens regarding the legislative process and the technology; and access to the Internet.

According to Mr. Griffith, moving forward requires a well trained staff and the tools and systems to build and access information. Moreover, it is very important to have laws and regulations that support the growth of an equitable and inclusive Information Society.

To achieve these objectives, Mr. Griffith noted the need for specific goals which can be used to measure the progress on a global basis. In this regard, he commended the initiative of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament in identifying strategic areas for action.

He concluded his presentation by stating that we are at a moment that holds great promise for the strengthening of parliaments: the technology is available, the knowledge of how to use that technology is increasing steadily, and there is a growing desire to learn from each other as demonstrated by the number of delegations participating in the World e-Parliament Conference.

Mr. James Michel, U.S. Ambassador and Counselor to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), stated that over the past three decades the international community has come to recognize that strengthening democratic governance is an integral part of the development process. Experience has demonstrated that in-



ternational cooperation to support local efforts can accelerate positive outcomes.

Mr. Michel identified some basic conclusions. Good governance requires public institutions that are competent, independent, transparent and accountable; separation of executive, legislative and judicial powers is important to sustain those qualities. In public institutions those qualities are sustained by interaction with committed political leaders and with an informed and engaged civil society. Societies where institutions of good governance are in place tend to respect human rights and democratic values and their citizens tend to benefit through increased freedom, security, and economic opportunity.

Ambassador Michel explained that USAID has been at the forefront in supporting strong institutions of democratic governance with programmes of technical cooperation, professional exchanges, and assistance to legislatures in over 60 countries. The Agency has supported efforts to improve internal management, increase staff expertise, foster interaction with the public, develop research capacities and exercise oversight of the executive branch. Total USAID investments in legislative strengthening exceed \$400 million.

In recent years USAID and the U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Partnership have been working together to partner with 14 legislatures around the world. Among their activities have been the development and strengthening of legislative research and library departments through the use of ICT.

Ambassador Michel stated that the joining together at the World e-Parliament Conference of the House Democracy Partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the United Nations, and the Global Centre for

ICT in Parliament represents an important trend. There is a need to recognize the potential value of ICT for increasing the effectiveness of international cooperation to support legislative strengthening.

He stated that USAID is in full agreement with the Centre's strategic goal of enhancing legislative representation, transparency, accessibility, accountability, and effectiveness through the utilization of modern ICT. He provided examples of assistance in this area delivered by USAID to the Jordanian Parliament, Iraqi Council of Representatives, National Parliament and Provincial Assemblies in Pakistan, and Namibian Parliament.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Michel highlighted that in keeping with the principle of aid harmonization USAID is committed to work through partnerships with the sponsors of the World e-Parliament Conference to promote more effective and democratic legislatures.

Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, observed that in his view the session is trying to address three elements: a shared international framework for e-parliament, collaboration, and institution building.

Mr. Johnsson joined the previous speakers in commending the proposal for a shared framework for e-parliament as identified by the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. He recalled that the framework is built on five elements relating to Information Society: people's participation, access to laws, access to law-making, effective parliaments, and cooperation. He invited the audience to provide views and suggestions in relation to the proposed framework.

Mr. Johnsson emphasized that institution



building is central to the five elements of the proposed framework. This means developing the capacity of a parliament, through the best possible uses of ICT, to legislate, oversee government and represent people in an effective manner; to be accessible, transparent and accountable to people; and, to

be able to integrate ICT in its laws and policies with the aim of promoting an increasingly equitable Information Society.

Mr. Johnsson stressed that the international community should draw on the lessons learned over the years with regard to institution building and identified the most commonly agreed ones. The parliament must be the owner of the process and decide the strategy. Institution building requires a strategic plan with a long-term perspective and investment in the institution itself, its staff and its members. Institution building also requires collaboration of many actors.

As for collaboration, Mr. Johnsson emphasized that parliaments are faced with similar challenges but tackle them in different ways, especially considering that they have very different levels of development and access to resources. He noted that while technology advances are moving incredibly fast, parliaments tend to move slowly and innovation inside the institution takes a great

deal of time. He also pointed out that the financial and economic crisis is having an impact on ICT development in parliaments due to budget cuts.

Mr. Johnsson highlighted that most parliaments need external support. The provisional findings of the Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments are encouraging and show that there are a growing number of parliaments, governments and institutions, that are providing technical and capacity building support to other parliaments. He noted, however, that a fair amount of this assistance is under-utilized and ill spent due to overlap and duplication, lack of coordination and planning, and lack of ownership, strategy, and sustainability.

The real challenge is how to make the collaborative approach work in an effective manner. In Mr. Johnsson's view, the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament is a unique tool to foster a collaborative approach and to channel resources to common goals due to its distinctive nature. The Centre has two pillars, the international community represented by the United Nations, and the parliaments, represented through the Inter-Parliamentary Union. These two pillars working together should be able to make sure that the international community works in support of the parliaments on the terms that the parliaments have identified.

In addition, the Centre can help create knowledge and awareness within the international community and parliaments themselves about the strategic goals for building e-parliament. The Centre can also help parliaments inquire of their governments about the kind of support that they are providing to institution building in the area of ICT through their national budget, how this support is implemented, and what strategic goals are being applied.

Mr. Johnsson concluded by highlighting that there is great sense of urgency to ensure the adoption of new technologies by legislatures, in particular from younger generations, and encouraged all stakeholders to support the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament in its strategy to promote more collaboration around these issues.

Mr. Hafnaoui Amrani, President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) and Secretary General of the Council of the Nation of Algeria, noted that parliament is the key institution for democracy because of its nature and functions. The parliament embodies the aspirations of the people and contributes to the emergence and reinforcement of a democratic culture that can guarantee the development of society. In order to contribute effectively to the attainment of this objective parliaments have to be transparent, accessible and organized to efficiently perform their law-making, representative and oversight functions. Collaboration among parliaments is vital since it can promote exchange of information, experiences and good practices.

Mr. Amrani noted that parliaments use more and more new technologies to accomplish their mission. They have different strategic plans and objectives for the use of ICT that depend on the human and financial resources available, the degree of literacy and the involvement of the parliamentary administration and parliamentarians themselves.

Mr. Amrani acknowledged that a lot of work has been carried out by the Centre since its inception, especially with developing nations. He then made some suggestions for its future work. He stressed that parliaments would benefit from having constant contact with the Centre and proposed that each parliament designate a person, parliamentar-

ian or parliamentary staff, who works with ICT within the parliament, to liaise with the Centre in order to maintain a sustainable dialogue. The Centre should take part in regional capacity building meetings for parliamentarians and play the role of catalyst for inter-parliamentary collaboration at the regional level. He further suggested that the Centre give recommendations to parliaments regarding compliance with the guidelines for parliamentary websites. He encouraged the Centre to continue to place great importance on training programmes for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. The Centre should also help parliaments to develop strategic plans and to integrate them in their programmes. Finally, he recommended that the Centre develop a permanent programme of technical assistance and work with donors to bring resources to developing countries.

He concluded by congratulating the Centre on the progress made and ensured that the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments will continue to collaborate with it.

On behalf of **Ms. Julie T. Katzman**, General Manager of the Multilateral Investment Fund, **Ms. Silvana Rubino-Hallman**, Specialist, Institutional Capacity of the State Division of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), provided an overview of the activities of the IDB in the area of modernization and capacity building of the public sector, including the legislative and judicial branches. She stated that over the past 10 years the IDB has been managing 40 different programmes for the public sector, funded with over 170 million dollars.

She noted that the introduction and use of technology have a strong impact on the growth and vibrancy of democratic institutions and mentioned that the IDB's work

ranges from the development of strategic information systems to the provision of physical infrastructure.

The IDB has earmarked a number of funds for institutional capacity building. In particular, she announced the launch of a fund of 75 million dollars, made possible through the assistance of the People's Republic of China, to search for innovative solutions in this area.

She also announced that thanks to the assistance of the Government of Italy the IDB had just launched, in tandem with the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, a new programme to utilize ICT as a tool for disseminating knowledge within parliaments in the Latin American and Caribbean region. This programme intends to improve internal management capabilities, establish closer links between parliaments and the public through innovative communication tools, and contribute to the ongoing debate on knowledge management. As part of the programme the IDB will hold a regional workshop at its headquarters in collaboration

with the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The workshop is intended to put in motion a process for establishing a formal mechanism of inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation in the region.

Mr. Paul Mitchell, Manager of the Development Communication Division of the World Bank, highlighted the importance of good

governance and its effects on development, stability, and security, and provided an overview of the World Bank's main activities in this area.

Main initiatives include parliamentary oversight programmes to create strong public account committees, analytical work with parliaments to strengthen their administrative procedures, capacity building for the use of strategic communication for reforms, and the use of communication for greater accountability, transparency and participation. Mr. Mitchell also mentioned the World Bank's global ICT Centre that focuses on technology. The Centre provides technical assistance on sectorial reform, strengthening regulatory structures, Internet convergence and strategies, access, e-government and on developing IT industries in general. In addition to technical assistance, the World Bank provides lending assistance in various forms.

Mr. Mitchell identified a number of challenges that the World Bank faces in its work in the e-parliament area. The World Bank only lends to governments and e-parliament programmes therefore have to be part of larger governance programmes. Mr. Mitchell noted, however, that the e-parliament component is not often present in most of the World Bank's governance programmes. Another challenge is to make sure that the infrastructure is in place and the regulatory reforms are there. Mr. Mitchell also mentioned that the introduction of e-parliament calls for a huge change of behavior by the society. Finally, he stated that parliaments often are not ready since they do not have the basic procedures and systems in place that can then be enhanced through ICT.

Mr. Mitchell then pointed out that parliaments themselves can help address these challenges. Noting that they are the institu-



tions that approve loans from the Bank, he acknowledged that they could have great influence on the types of investments that are made in their country, and could ensure that e-parliament is part of overall assistance for e-governance. Parliaments can also develop strategies to overcome resistance by society to e-parliament/governance. And they can analyze and reform their own policies and procedures to ensure more transparency and accountability.

A lively and interactive discussion followed the presentations of the session. Many participants commended the work of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament and its commitment to promoting the use of ICT in parliaments to foster transparency, participation and efficiency. Participants raised issues concerning the environmental risks of ICT, the challenge of limited resources for developing countries and the need to take stock of the use of ICT by parliaments in a systematic way.

Participants supported the concept of a coordinated strategic framework that would help parliaments to move forward to strengthen transparency, accessibility and parliaments' legislative, representative and oversight functions using ICT. This common strategy would help to pull together resources and coordinate efforts.

The Secretary General of the IPU highlighted that at the national level parliaments should develop their own ICT strategic plan and encouraged those that do not have one to develop it. Participants highlighted the importance of involving members of parliament in this process.

The issue regarding the way forward after the Conference was raised. The Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

expressed a desire that participants report to their parliaments about the strategic goals that they would like to pursue and inquire of their governments about the activities implemented to support parliamentary development and under which guidelines are they being implemented.

Participants acknowledged that the dialogue that the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament calls for is extremely important. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, Chair of the session, stated that the discussions that took place during the conference provide a good basis for the work of the Centre in the coming years and invited all stakeholders to share with the Centre additional ideas and thoughts.

General sessions

ICT Strategic Planning, Management and Oversight: the complexity of the legislature environment

The active engagement of the leadership of parliaments, from the political level to the administrative and technical levels, is a necessary ingredient for implementing complex ICT programmes and projects. This session focused on sound frameworks for ICT strategic planning, management, and oversight, and the roles that the political leadership, Secretaries General, and ICT directors and managers play in this domain.

The Chair of the session, **Ms. Marilyn B. Barua-Yap**, Secretary General of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, noted that the strategic planning and management of the use of ICT in parliament should be integral to, and must proceed from, an overall effort towards the strategic management of the legislative framework, its systems and processes. The main goal is to transform parliaments into authentic arenas of people's representation, democratic dialogue and consensus, and policy formulation.

ICT need therefore to serve the ends of more and better information to support the legislative work, including swifter access to such information. They should also enable greater transparency, openness, and accessibility to legislative proceedings, and broader legislative public accountability.

Ms. Barua-Yap pointed out that main challenges for developing countries are lack of access and the cost of ICT. Many developing countries can barely afford to commit significant resources to ICT especially in

the long term, beyond the point of initial acquisition. She stressed that it is important to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, and work towards establishing a people's directed democracy instead of an elitist democracy where ICT access is a privilege of the few.

The roles of the political leadership, Secretaries General, and ICT directors and managers are crucial in the strategic deployment and the use of resources to address priorities and manage the changes that accompany the adoption of ICT.

Mr. Anders Forsberg, Secretary General of the Parliament of Sweden, stated that the ambitions of his Parliament are to be a public service parliament and to use ICT in a well-considered and strategic way.

He stated that the Parliament of Sweden realized its vision of making its work and decisions transparent to the public in order to create opportunities for greater understanding and dialogue on political developments. The principles of freedom of information and expression have been fundamental to this process.

The Parliament of Sweden has made efforts in recent years to develop a comprehensive system for IT support for the legislative process both in the committees and in the plenary. Decision making and voting systems have been computerized, parliamentary research work is more efficient, and databases and new systems make it easier to track parliament's decisions. As a result paper consumption in the Parliament has fallen by 16%.

Mr. Forsberg explained that the first step towards the informatization of the Parliament was the development of a clear vision. Earlier investments focused on isolated initiatives that were mainly driven by technological possibilities rather than by institutional needs. He stressed that it is important to ensure coordination, communication and mutual understanding between the technical staff and those participating in the political decision making process.

In order to put its vision into concrete form, the Parliament developed a strategy that sets out priorities for the implementation of ICT activities. All relevant stakeholders, including members of parliament, ICT directors and parliamentary officials, were involved in this process. The Parliament established a special advisory group on ICT consisting of representatives from various departments that helps set the priorities for the IT projects.

Mr. Forsberg also highlighted the importance of ICT to enhance citizens' opportunities to follow the decision-making and legislative process. Without disregarding the traditional ways of achieving openness and transparency the Parliament is considering new means of communication to facilitate contacts between members and the public. Today there is an increasing number of members of parliament who are tech savvy. Mr. Forsberg stressed that it is important to provide them with modern and functional ICT tools and tailor-made solutions that match their needs.

With regard to international exchange and collaboration on ICT matters, Mr. Forsberg sees a leading role for the tech savvy legislators and fully supports their involvement in this arena. Citing examples, he noted that their participation in international and regional forums can lead to spontaneous co-

operation and positive results.

Mr. Ian Harris, Clerk of the House of Representatives of Australia, stated that in many respects strategic planning, management and oversight for ICT in parliaments is similar to elsewhere. There are, however, some considerations that are specific to the legislative environment. Parliaments are often housed in iconic buildings that are part of the national heritage. These heritage buildings may come with their own set of rules and constraints, such as those concerning design integrity, that need to be taken into account at a strategic and operational level when introducing and integrating ICT. The nature of politics itself is another element in the legislative environment that has an impact on strategic planning, management and oversight.

Mr. Harris stated that by its actions, the House of Representatives of Australia has endorsed the idea put forward in the World e-Parliament Report 2008 that ICT can be considered an essential tool to strengthen legislative bodies around the world.

He described four main ICT initiatives adopted in the House of Representatives and illustrated the complexity of their planning and development process: *Votes Officer's Minutes*, *Chamber Chat*, *ParlReplay* and *CommDocs*.

Votes Officer's Minutes is a system that provides for recording parliamentary proceedings and making them available on the chamber's intranet in near real-time and on the Internet in about one minute. The system was developed over the years through a process of trial and error, requiring multi-stakeholder consultations. *Chamber Chat* was developed in 2006 to facilitate communication among legislators. The chamber

was equipped with small laptops that enable bi-directional communication among representatives and with the desk of the Speaker and the Secretary General. Planning and oversight of this initiative required several stages. The project grew from a previous project intended to explore innovative technologies used by members of parliament. *ParlReplay* is a system to access archived audio and video records which was developed through extensive consultations with key stakeholders and the involvement of industry experts.

Commdocs is an electronic online system to disseminate information to members of committees, as an alternative to e-mail. A small pilot was started with a few select committees. *Commdocs* now serves 25 committees. A key ingredient for its success is the increasing confidence of members of parliament that they can easily search and retrieve documents. Security concerns are addressed by each committee through a resolution and it is the responsibility of

the members to determine how to extend access to staff. Workshops were organized for the development of this initiative to facilitate consultations with committee members, secretariats and staff.

Mr. Harris concluded by underlining that one of the key enablers that supported the strategic planning process in the House of Representatives of Australia is the presence of a pool of trained IT staff that understand the parliamentary culture and processes and are able to respond to the needs of the parliament.

Mr. Mzi Mbangula, Divisional Head, Corporate Services (ICT) of the Parliament of South Africa, outlined the challenges that the Parliament of South Africa faced nine years ago when it realized that the Internet was rapidly becoming the new media, and that the Parliament was not sufficiently engaged nor equipped to be part of this revolution.

In 2005, the Parliament developed a strategic plan for ICT whose intent was to be a business plan more than a technology plan. Within a five year span the primary objective was to transform the young South African Parliament into an e-Parliament. The focus was on implementing ICT systems to improve the internal operations and to optimize the administrative procedures, while at the same time strengthening IT and secretariat staff capacity to use the new technologies. In 2008, eleven of thirteen high-priority projects were implemented.

In 2008, a new strategic plan was developed for 2009-2014



taking into account lessons learned from the past. One of key lessons learned was that the effective implementation of an ICT transformation programme needs a coherent change management strategy and delivery capacity. Another important lesson learned was that the maturity level of the organization to transform people, processes, policies and technology must be assessed before the planning of any ICT initiative. To develop a focused initiative it is also very important to involve all relevant stakeholders such as ICT staff, managers and the political leadership through multi-stakeholder workshops.

The main objective of the new strategic plan for 2009-2014 is to support a parliamentary strategy that enables a shift from e-parliament to a parliament that enables democratic participation and inclusion. In the new strategy ICT are also seen as a key enabler.

Noting that the growth of South Africa is interdependent with the world community and the region, Mr. Mbangula underlined that inter-parliamentary cooperation is a vehicle on the road to regional stability. In this context he stressed the importance of networks such as the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) and the recently established African Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN), and expressed the hope that the APKN knowledge exchange structures and online platform can be useful for increasing the level of collaboration. He also encouraged regional efforts aimed at improving the use of ICT for engaging constituents in a more interactive manner.

Mr. Mbangula stated that governance is an important element in the implementation of any ICT strategy. In the Parliament of South Africa a members' group called the *ICT fo-*

cus group was established to reflect on the ICT strategy and champion it. In addition, an ICT steering committee, chaired by the Secretary General, was created to look at its implementation.

On the issue of protection and integrity of information at a strategic level, Mr. Mbangula stated that the Parliament executes an annual risk assessment with proposed solutions to address the issues raised.

In the discussions that followed the presentations, participants underlined the importance of equal access to information and stated that all technologies should be explored by parliaments to engage with citizens. The importance of safeguards against misusing parliamentary information was also raised. One participant encouraged parliaments to make strategic choices for adopting technologies that enable data to be made available in an open manner so that it can be re-used in third party applications.

How parliamentary websites can serve different purposes and users

Ms. Matilda Katopola, Secretary General of the Parliament of Malawi, highlighted that website development and planning is a part of the strategy on how the parliament wishes to communicate and disseminate information. Websites that provide access to the daily life of parliament have become a major resource for legislative bodies to support the work of their officers and members, to provide information access to citizens and to communicate with their constituents and with the civil society. Among the major challenges confronting parliaments in the development of websites Ms. Katopola mentioned the need to serve different purposes and users.

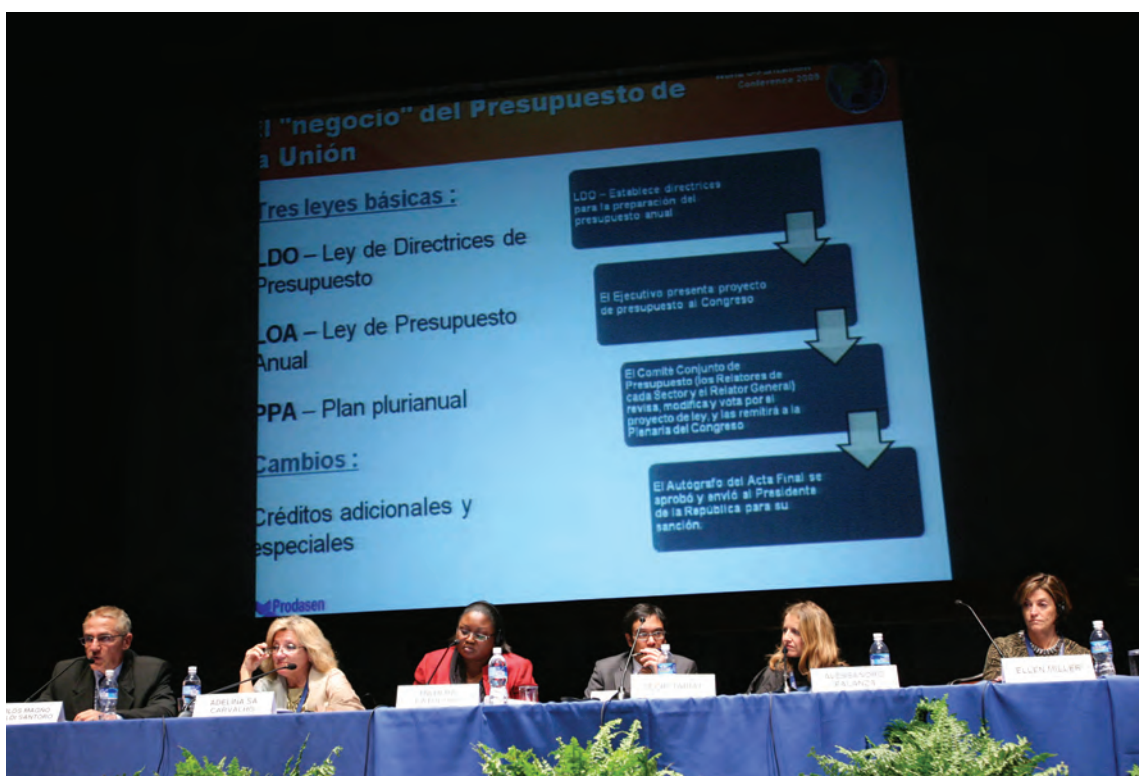
Ms. Katopola provided a brief overview of the new website of the Parliament of Malawi created four years ago with support from USAID and the State University of New York. The website features on demand audio and video archives and offers personal space to members of parliament. Members reacted positively to the new website and demanded further enhancements so that the public can also enjoy more access. She highlighted, however, the challenge of limited resources.

Ms. Adelina Sá Carvalho, Secretary General of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, stated that while 14 years ago the Assembly had no website, TV channel or online access, it now has a fully developed Internet portal that achieves multiple aims and reaches different audiences.

The Secretary General provided an overview of the different stages through which

the portal was developed. The first stage was dedicated to an analysis of the goals, users, and content of the new website. Afterwards the focus was on trying to align the website with the mission and the functions of the parliament and the work of committees. Specific goals were formulated such as being closer to citizens and more accessible, making the information available via different channels, and managing information in a paperless manner. In the area of transparency the main goals were to publish information in a more clear and direct language and to support democratic participation through online petitions, forums and blogs.

During the implementation stage a number of initiatives were undertaken to attain the main objectives of making the parliament interesting again and meeting citizens' expectations.



A media section was developed where information such as members' attendance, allowances and remuneration, as well as questions from the Assembly to the government, are posted. In the Citizen's space, a special section of the website dedicated to citizens, services such as e-mail, e-petition and systems to contact parliamentary departments and political groups are made available. Citizens can also subscribe to content feeds that are of interest to them. Attention was paid to neutrality when disseminating and publishing information on the website. She noted that highlights are selected by a specialized team and put forward to the Secretary General on a daily basis for publishing. Technologies that are popular with citizens like blogs, forums and social networks are used.

Dissemination of information on the EU Lisbon Treaty is another important feature. Ms. Sá Carvalho mentioned that the more this information is in the hands of national parliaments, the more they can disclose it to their citizens, and the stronger the treaty becomes.

The website also offers parliamentary information for youth audiences and virtual tours that provide 360 degrees views of the parliament that have contributed to increasing the actual visits of people to the Assembly.

Among the upcoming projects are providing mobile access to the website, information about democracy for children, and more RSS feeds. In addition, the Assembly of the Republic plans to venture into social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and others.

Ms. Raissa Teodori, Head of the Special Collections Office of the Library of the Senate of Italy, spoke on behalf of **Mr. Alessandro Palanza**, Deputy Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy. She intro-

duced the newly developed website of the Chamber and provided the rationale behind its various modules, sections and functions. Ms. Teodori explained that members of parliament today are required to become experts in a very short time on a wide range of issues, making it indispensable for them to be able to gain rapid access to an increasingly large number of background documents. It is therefore crucial for them to be able to consult specialized sources of knowledge rapidly, selectively, and comprehensively. Furthermore, members realize that it is of great benefit to them to use instruments for sharing information, data, and viewpoints, from ordinary e-mail to the most sophisticated tools for transparent cooperation and consultation.

These changes are taking place not only in the Italian Parliament, but in every other parliament, regardless of the political system, income levels, or the political and cultural traditions of the country. Ms. Teodori stated that for many parliaments the Internet is becoming the place for making public statements and disseminating information, and this trend will only increase. Providing the public with access to the web in an organized manner is becoming a requirement for parliaments. There is also increasing pressure to provide a complete information and communication ecosystem in which members of parliament will perform much of their work.

The new website of the Chamber of Deputies (www.camera.it) was launched in October 2009, after one year of development. It has been the result of an evolutionary process that is expected to gradually incorporate the Semantic Web and the Social Web.

The website features some of the most innovative applications that the Chamber of

Deputies of Italy has developed. It provides a much more user-friendly architecture and design, multimedia contents and a section with events of special interest. The website also offers a customizable WebTV for every user and a complete and indexed archive of the sittings of the Chamber and the committees. It also provides multi-video functions so that users can follow the Chamber and several committees proceedings live at the same time.

Ms. Teodori provided a more in-depth look at the *topics of parliamentary business* section of the website, which analyzes and describes the implementation of laws and the outcomes of government policies. Parliamentary work is organized on the website in 32 thematic areas that group 110 topics. There is also a section on the *themes of the parliamentary activity*, which provides information on topics at the top of the parliamentary agenda. These are generally changed every week.

In conclusion, Ms. Teodori stated that parliaments, in their role as guarantor of a public forum for reflection and debate, must use technologies and their own websites to provide a complete and unbiased representation of the public policies currently being implemented.

Mr. Carlos Magno Cataldi Santoro, Chief Information Officer of the Senate of Brazil, presented the SIGA project, an information system developed by the Senate, gathering several databases on the federal government's planning and budget. It is an innovative initiative to monitor the public accounts.

The system was initially developed for internal use of the Senate to oversee the executive and the funds allocated. It was then

made available to the public to provide more transparency and access to the government spending.

SIGA can be accessed through the budget section of the Senate portal. The main page contains the data of the budget bill broken down into themes, as well as the rules of budget development, relevant studies and news. Through the portal users can have access to detailed information that allows for the accurate identification of bank transfers of federal funds to municipalities.

Since 2000 the portal also provides more educational content with detailed explanations of all activities for citizens. For example, there are reports that show specific expenditures in Brazilian cities and indicate what agencies expend, how much was originally allocated, the names of the projects and the bank that issued the funds. There are also reports that show the different allocations prepared by members of parliament for the cities and the types of activity to be executed.

Mr. Cataldi Santoro explained that the system is made user friendly. Expenditure reports can be generated quite easily, through adding pre-programmed fields and queries into report designs. Users also have access to interactive features that allow for data comparison and other data analyses. All the information is produced in real time thanks to the data warehouse engineering and architecture.

Mr. Cataldi Santoro mentioned four key ingredients for the system: human resources, the portal itself, the *Business Objects* reporting platform, and the availability of transaction data from banks. Some statistics on the system reveal its magnitude: in 2001 there were 192 million registered data items; in

2009 this increased to 252 million. The *Business Objects* reporting platform contains 140 universes (which are large data sets or *data marts* that are imported from the transactional data systems). In addition, there are 2,800 expert users, 22,000 regular users, and 30,000 alumni. In 2008 there were 18 millions accesses to the system.

On the technical side, the system has a web-based users' interface that is built on an Oracle platform developed with JAVA and PL/SQL technology. The system is capable of hosting up to one hundred concurrent users.

The project is now being launched in all 27 States in the Federation, including more than 5500 cities. It is worth noting that in Brazil the States still have a large degree of autonomy and have their own databases and tax revenue systems.

Mr. Cataldi Santoro highlighted several benefits of SIGA: end-users now have a single tool to obtain information from multiple sources; the system allows for simulations with access provided to databases for planning, budgeting, executing, and follow-up; finally, but perhaps most important, the tool is used to democratize information and create a culture of awareness among the citizenry.

Ms. Ellen Miller, Executive Director and co-founder of the Sunlight Foundation, explained that Sunlight is a new non-profit entity that focuses on using the power of the Internet to catalyze greater government transparency and accountability. The Foundation offers new ways to bring government closer to citizens, so that they can hold it accountable and re-build public trust. It does so through creating websites, databases, and tools that provide transparency in the legislative process and lobbying activities.

Sunlight organizes groups of stakeholders and users of websites to demand more accountability from government and to work towards a cultural shift in the availability of government information.

She recalled that one of the first non governmental U.S. Congress tracking sites (*gov-track.us*) was established in 2004. Today, there are dozens of such sites to help the public understand what their democratically elected representatives are doing. She cited the examples of *theyworkforyou.com* in the United Kingdom, *nosdeputes.fr* in France and *openparlamento.it* in Italy. These sites are free public alternatives to government-run platforms and present innovative information retrieval features.

Ms. Miller provided an overview of the *opencongress.org* website that is managed by the Sunlight Foundation. The site takes congressional information, bills, and amendments, and combines them with a social networking layer so that they can be tagged and commented upon by users of the site. On the *opencongress.org* website information and bills are accessible in a linked format that is easy to use and facilitates additional analyses. Users can read entire bill texts, vote for or against bills, subscribe to e-mail alerts, see bills in progress, and "drill-down" to read more on campaign contributions for that particular bill. This interactive information is not provided on the official U.S. Congress website.

Ms. Miller noted that the reactions from politicians to the website have been mixed. While the Speaker of the House and the Minority Leader endorse the online publication of public information, there are still many that resist making certain information available.

Opencongress.org also serves as social platform for public participation and the sharing of information among users. It identifies trends in the user community and allows for sorting and recommending bills in the way that *amazon.com* offers ranking and grouping of products. *Opencongress.org* offers insights on legislation through an editorial presence in the form of bloggers and commentators. The website also features a wiki in which users are free to contribute to any issue, and a comprehensive tracking system for all House, Senate, and gubernatorial races in its so-called race-tracker module.

One additional website launched by the Sunlight Foundation is *CapitolWords.org*. This site searches congressional records and tries to extract the single most used words of the day and present these like word clouds. This can help representatives or individuals to get a snapshot of what is happening.

In her closing remarks Ms. Miller expressed the hope that in the future governments and parliaments will adopt the techniques developed by NGOs and that NGOs will continue to develop new techniques and approaches. She concluded by stating that it is important not to underestimate the public's interest in legislatures and in tracking what representatives are doing. She supported this statement with data: *opencongress.org* has a robust community of registered users of approximately 75,000 people and it is growing at a rate of about 5,000 a month. In addition, the site sees 35,000 unique visitors every single day and in the month of August 2009, during the health care debate, there were 1,000,000 unique visitors to the website.

She also noted the important work of programmers whose passion gives citizens today new possibilities to interact with govern-

ments and parliaments and offers possibilities to display new modeling of information that can be used by parliaments themselves.

The use of new social media and other Internet communication tools in the parliamentary environment: lessons learned

This session drew upon the lessons learned in the use of new social media and other Internet-based communication technologies. It analyzed successful uses of tools such as blogs, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Facebook, and online forums with constituents, which have the potential to support the goals of transparency and greater citizen participation.

The Chair of the session, **Mr. James G. Kwanya Rege**, Member of the Parliament of Kenya, stated that the term new media encompasses the digital, computerized or networked information and communication technologies that emerged at the end of the 20th century. He stressed that new media can alter the meaning of geographic distance among parliaments, allow for a huge increase in volume and speed of communication between parliaments and citizens and provide opportunities for interactive communications. He noted, however, that the growth of new social media is still extremely slow in developing countries like Kenya due to the high cost of bandwidth.

Mr. Sérgio Sampaio de Almeida, Director General of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, stated that one of the main challenges of the Chamber is to minimize the gap between citizens and legislative powers. In 2001, the search for new mechanisms to enable public participation in the Chamber's activities became a priority and the commitment of all towards this objective made

possible a true communication revolution in the institution. Since 2001, through its legislative management system the Chamber provides full access to documents and laws produced during the law making process. Citizens also have online access to what is going on in the floor and committee rooms through 22 web channels. Members' interventions in the plenary are available online within thirty minutes after they are delivered. The Chamber also makes use of traditional media, such as TV and radio channels and a newspaper, which continue to play a significant role in the effort to achieve more transparency and accountability.

Mr. Sampaio de Almeida expressed satisfaction with the results achieved over the past eight years and stressed that the number of accesses to the Chamber's website per month rose by 30%. He underscored that the Chamber's challenge today is to continue to look for new services and products that can help enhance public participation.

Ms. Andréa Perna, Manager of the Legislative Governance Bureau, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, gave an overview of the e-Democracy Programme. The Programme's objectives are to encourage citizens' participation in the legislative process, enhance the value and recognition of the legislative work, bring transparency to the legislative process, strengthen the role of the legislative power in the formulation of public policies and improve the quality of laws. The Programme expects citizens to provide strategic information for the decision making as well as ideas and comments.

Ms. Perna identified some of the challenges in the implementation of the Programme including stimulating national participation, reducing the digital

divide, and fostering political engagement. She highlighted that the management of the programme itself represents a big challenge.

The Programme works through multiple participatory mechanisms. The topics to be discussed on the e-democracy website are identified according to the agenda of the parliament or by demand. Once the topics are defined, virtual communities are created and relevant actors are invited to participate. Each community has a number of tools available such as forums, digital libraries, social networks, videos, polls and chats. Through the forums citizens can discuss bills and provide their comments and suggestions, which are compiled and sent to the members of parliament involved. Citizens can also develop their own version of a bill or suggest amendments to existing bills through Wikilegis, an innovative functionality that allows collaborative work on the law's elaboration.

Ms. Perna concluded by identifying a number of lessons learned since the launch of the programme. The engagement of members of parliament in the virtual discussions makes a big difference as citizens feel more



motivated to communicate with them. There is not enough information about who is participating. Mistrust in politics and politicians can interfere with the level of participation. The political, economical and social context is extremely important to the success of virtual discussions. In the case of very complex matters, it is more effective to break the discussion down in stages to let citizens submit several kinds of inputs in a variety of ways. It takes time until people get used to digital tools and mechanisms of participation.

Mr. Patricio Alvarez Cabezas, Director of IT of the Senate of Chile, presented the Virtual Senator, a system that since 2003 enables public input to the legislative process. A pilot, launched in 2001 to gather public opinions and views on specific bills, showed that citizens felt that bills were often hard to understand because of the language used and that it was essential to ensure more participation and generate more interest from the public.

The Virtual Senator aims to reach a number of key objectives. Firstly, it intends to provide citizens with more information about major bills being considered by the Senate including their actual text and any relevant background information. Secondly, it intends to provide a better understanding of the process through simulation. Finally, it aims to generate greater participation by allowing citizens to provide inputs to the process and take position about the content of the bill.

Mr. Cabezas described how the Virtual Senator works by showing the bill discussion process. When citizens sign on to a discussion of a particular bill they are given additional information, including the text of the bill and information on its overall process. Through the system, individuals can regis-

ter their vote and can provide comments or proposed text. Inputs have to be provided in appropriate language. Registered users are notified by e-mail (1) if the bill in question has been voted on in Senate sessions or by a Committee and (2) after a new bill is published on the Virtual Senator website for discussion/voting. The results are made public once the designated period for the discussion is over. They are then forwarded to the relevant Senate entity responsible for consideration of the bill.

Mr. Cabezas provided statistics that show that citizens are taking seriously their participation in the legislative process through the Virtual Senator. To date the system has registered over 16,000 users, most of whom are active participants.

The Senate is now preparing a new version of the software to be launched in 2010 which will take into account the results of a poll taken last year. The results showed that registered users would like to have the chance to debate among themselves, as well as to have a better idea of statistics that relate to them. The results also indicated that both the registration and notification systems could be improved.

Mr. Cabezas concluded by expressing satisfaction for the results achieved through the Virtual Senator and highlighted that the key component of its success is the commitment of citizenship.

Mr. Stephen Clark, Head of Web Communications of the European Parliament, presented the institutional communication campaign conducted by the European Parliament on the occasion of the elections in June 2009. The campaign, which aimed to encourage European citizens to vote, made extensive use of web 2.0 technologies and tools.

The European Parliament developed a dedicated website which made available, for the first time, several interactive features such as weekly polls and debates. Statistics on the daily visits of the website showed that these new features were very well received by users. In addition, the communication campaign used several interactive tools such as MySpace, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube and Twitter. The MySpace profile of the European Parliament featured daily blogs, online widgets, videos and slide-shows, and provided information on the campaign activities going on all over Europe. Facebook was considered the most successful of the tools and was used to post parliamentary news and host debates. Through a Flickr account the European Parliament posted photos and other editorial products. A YouTube channel was used to post viral videos, official campaign spots and material from the web TV channel of the European Parliament. Through Twitter, the European Parliament provided real-time updates in the 22 languages of the European Union and live tweeting of special events such as the election day.

Mr. Clark stressed that social media can be very effective tools for parliaments to reach new audiences and be closer to the electorate. He highlighted a number of recommendations in the use of new media by parliaments. Parliaments should stick to their core values and communicate as a non partisan institution. It is important that they build a reputation and trust the public since it is not possible to control what the other people say. Parliaments also need to be fast and update their social tools all the time. He finally recommended that they make their content easy to share, use an informal tone, and be ready to experiment and take risks. He underscored the importance to “be human” and show “faces”.

Presenting a particular communication initiative which costs only 500 Euros, Mr. Clark highlighted that using social media is a very cheap investment.

He concluded by encouraging parliaments to adapt to the new social media ecosystem, mainstream social media in their communications policy, act as hubs for dialogue between members and public, and broaden the involvement of staff.

In the ensuing discussions, participants asked whether and how members of parliament take into account the inputs provided by citizens online. Panelists confirmed that members receive and analyze citizens' comments. The importance of structuring the discussion in order to get useful inputs and feedback was noted. Another issue raised by the audience was the risk of using inappropriate and offensive language during online forums and the possible ways to control it. Panelists stated that forums can be moderated and filtered although it is advis-



able to follow a liberal moderation policy. Both panelists and participants recognized the importance of involving young people in the legislative process.

Systems for managing the lifecycle of legislative documentation

The growing reliance of parliaments on digital technologies as the primary means for managing their documents pose a number of technical and procedural challenges. This session focused on how modern systems designed around the lifecycle of legislative documents can better support legislative research and analysis, enable more effective parliamentary information services, and ensure preservation and permanent access.

The Chair of the session, **Mr. José Pedro Montero**, Secretary General of the House of Representatives of Uruguay, briefed participants on the work of the *High Conference on Information and Communication Technologies*, which is tasked with ensuring that ICT can meet the objectives set by the Parliament for both its chambers. The Conference focuses on e-parliament, including management of legislative documentation formats, lifecycle and best practices. As the work of parliaments becomes more complex and lawmakers need clear and precise information on the issues before them, legislative documentation must be as accurate and reliable as possible. There are various solutions being implemented around the world. Taking into account the need to operate with open standards, norms and methodologies, parliaments should tailor solutions according to their specific needs.

Mr. Innis Montgomery, Director of Technology, Parliamentary ICT, Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and North-

ern Ireland, recalled the history and role of the ICT office servicing the two branches of the U.K. Parliament. In 2007, the office undertook a risk assessment of the ICT systems in use in the Parliament. The assessment proved critical in underlining existing deficiencies. There were many small and focused applications in various departments and a lack of understanding of the end-to-end workflow across the different offices.

Following that assessment, the office initiated an exercise to modernize legacy applications and stabilize ICT systems. A strategy was then put in place, in close collaboration between the ICT office and other departments, encompassing not only the technical but also the business and knowledge sides of operations.

The new strategy called for agile systems, data and information reuse to avoid replication, multiple information delivery channels, public access to data sources, prototyping, and provisioning of a research and development budget. The strategy relied on four key components: open data publishing (object oriented architecture), standard integrated packages, flexible service (mobile and static), and flexible and agile infrastructure. It favors a horizontal approach to systems and business processes, exploits new technologies such as micro-blogging and embraces open standards, including XML, to facilitate reuse of parliamentary data by entities outside of the Parliament.

Mr. Montgomery stated that there are a few challenges on the horizon. Upcoming general elections are expected to bring a new generation of parliamentarians more demanding of ICT services. They are already fairly sophisticated users of ICT in their private lives. IT systems in the parliament must keep pace with the higher expectations of

this “online generation”, which include social networking, online collaboration and interaction. The multitude of personal devices, now seen as disposable fashion accessories, increases the complexity of services access, delivery and security.

Mr. Fernando Milan Zuber, IT Director in the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico, presented the workflow for managing documents in the chamber. Bill proposals from citizens are received by e-mail, then presented in a plenary session and sent to a specific commission or group of commissions for analysis. All bills coming to the Chamber of Deputies are published in the parliamentary gazette. Committees produce drafts and then reports that are presented in a plenary session for debate and voting. Debates, including verbatim records, interventions of Deputies, and votes are registered in the Journal of Debates. The final outcome (a law or amendment) is then published.

A messenger system, based on Sun Java System Communications Express, is used to manage interaction with citizens for the

purpose of submitting bill proposals. The publication in the parliamentary gazette relies on the XML standard. An enterprise content management system is in place to manage document workflow within the committees, from the evaluation of proposals to the creation of the reports. Committee reports are stored as XML documents and managed with a PHP system using an open source database. The verbatim records and the Journal of debates are also stored in the XML format and the Information System of Deputies Interventions is based on an open source database.

An information system for legislative work of members of parliament has been developed, using PHP and open source databases. It features information about the members’ curriculum vitae, voting records, attendance records, sponsored bills, etc. Laws and amendments are published as PDF documents and listed in the Official Journal of the Federation.

The institutional portal, equipped with a powerful search engine, provides easy ac-



cess to information on deputies, committees, federal laws, bills, committee reports, parliamentary gazette, journal of debates, financial disclosures, etc.

Ms. Cecilia Matanga, Programme Officer at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, provided an overview of the Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan. It is an initiative that aims to provide an efficient support structure and services to the administration of parliaments, increase parliamentary knowledge management skills, facilitate access to parliamentary proceedings and the participation of citizens in the political process, and strengthen regional networking among parliaments. The project stems from the realization that despite similar needs and functionality, there is a growing digital divide separating “affluent” parliaments from those in developing countries. The unique characteristics of ICT offer opportunities to tackle the challenge. Technology is reusable, adaptable, accessible and reproducible at very low marginal costs.

There is, however, a strategic gap that exists between the global needs for economic integration and harmonization of legislation and the implementation of locally focused solutions. There is also a gap between the technological opportunities offered by advances such as the Semantic Web and open source solutions, and the practical approaches which often overlook the benefits that collaboration and sharing of tools and content could bring in terms of quality and sustainability. The project endeavors to fill the latter gap.

The Semantic Web allows processing of information according to its content by enabling computers to “understand” documents. The Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan designed *Akoma Ntoso* (www.akomantoso.org) as a Parliamentary Document Open Access Infrastructure based on the open standards (XML, RDF, OWL).

Following the Open Source Development Model that allows the collaborative development of better and sustainable tools for all parliaments, the Africa i-Parliament Action Plan is also developing *Bungeni* (www.bungeni.org), a Parliamentary Information System. *Bungeni* models the lifecycle of legislative and parliamentary documents and their workflow. **Mr. Flavio Zeni**, Chief Technical Adviser for the Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, provided a demonstration of the features of the *Bungeni* system. Since it is open source, parliaments are invited to enhance the system and provide feedback to make the system better. A pilot deployment of *Bungeni* in half a dozen African countries is planned for the first quarter of 2010.

The strategic choice of open and common standards was made because they address the African political agenda of economic integration and harmonization of legislation. Open source applications deliver high quality information systems and have the critical mass of support to make it sustainable.

In a rich and lively discussion, participants commended the initiatives and activities presented by the panelists and raised a wide range of issues including collaboration between technologists and end-users, capacity development, technological constraints on business processes, participation of non-legislative entities in the legislative documents workflow, security of data and open standards.

As there is often a contradiction between the needs of the users and organizations and the constraints of technology, there was a recommendation to develop partnerships

between the technology side and the business side of legislative work. It was noted that work methodologies in the legislative environment often lag behind technological advances and must be modernized while acknowledging that technologies bring opportunities for positive impact on business processes. It was noted, for instance, that *Bungeni*, thanks to its open source nature, is easily customizable to account for the specific needs of each parliament. Participants called for technical systems to be simplified for end users and for the legislators, who also must be exposed to technology, and trained and empowered to use the technology. The case of the Dominican Republic was reported, where members of parliaments follow a mandatory training at the beginning of each legislative cycle. Such empowerment facilitates adoption of new technology by the legislators. In the United Kingdom, floor workers provide technical assistance to members of parliaments who have the opportunities to ask technical questions informally. It was noted that the framework of the African Parliamentary Knowledge Network includes capacity building activities for parliaments, with the support of the African i-Parliaments Action Plan. The Action Plan will continue to develop skills to use *Bungeni* and will provide training at the local and regional level, which will be an essential part of planned deployments of the system.

Observing that entities outside of parliaments, such as the executive branch of government and civil society, are often involved in various parts of the legislative document workflow, participants sought clarifications from panelists on how to take into account such participation and manage related security concerns. It was noted that it is the political will of parliaments, not technology, which makes them more transparent and more accessible. Participants stressed that

the availability of legislative information as appropriate should not be compromised due to security concerns. An overview of the security features of the *Bungeni* system was provided, including private workspaces for committees as well as for each member of parliament, with the ability to specify which document can be accessed publicly. *Bungeni* also provides space for relevant external stakeholders to be part of the legislative documents lifecycle.

Participants called on the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to support further cooperation on the implementation of XML standards within parliaments. The experience of *Bungeni* was a strong indication that open source has proven to be a reliable and effective method of collaboration and resources pooling.

Chamber technologies: experiences and trends

Chamber technologies serve a twofold purpose: first, to facilitate the work of legislators during proceedings; second to provide the public with access to accurate information about what is occurring in the session. This session highlighted experiences and trends towards digital chambers.

Mr. Luc Blondeel, Secretary General of the Senate of Belgium, and Chair of the session, suggested that to some extent the theme of the session is the “paperless parliament”. He noted, however, that chamber technologies are also the basic technologies that parliaments have in the chamber like electronic voting, simultaneous translation, audio within the chamber and in other parts of the parliament, and live, remote, and streaming video.

Mr. João Viegas d’Abreu, Director of IT, Assembly of the Republic of Portugal and

ECPRD Coordinator of the ICT Working Group, stated that the aim in the Assembly was to develop a paperless parliament and to use ICT to bring the parliament closer to the citizens.

The chamber has been recently modernized by integrating IT hardware and devices in its more than 100-years-old building. Workstations, equipped with retractable touch screen monitors, keyboards and wireless mice, have been installed for all 230 members of parliament and for the bureau. Workstations also have USB and sound device connection ports. A smartcard reader authenticates the user and enables digital signing of documents, reading personal e-mail messages, electronic voting on the touch screens and registering attendance of members during sessions.

Each member has a unique user profile that is loaded on the plenary workstation once he/she logs in. The same profile is loaded on the desktop in the member's office, or on his/her laptop from outside the parliamentary building. From wherever legislators log in, they always have access to their documents. From their workstations, members of parliament can also project presentations onto the two big screens in the chamber hall.

The entire system is driven by a virtual server. The workstations are thin-clients, i.e., the clients do not have hard drives or processing devices. The thin clients do not need any memory or hardware except a screen and keyboard. They can boot either Windows or the Linux operating system.

Mr. d'Abreu concluded his presentation by showing a video that demonstrated the virtual workbench. He explained that the system has been operational since March 2009, with little or no glitches. Members

also seem to spend more time in the chamber since they can continue their work and read e-mails from their virtual workbench.

Mr. Shin Hang Jin, Director of the Legislative Information System Office, National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, provided an overview of the main functions of the "Digital Chamber" of the National Assembly.

All seats in the chamber (299 seats for members of parliament and 26 seats for cabinet members) are equipped with a touch screen monitor (thin client terminal), an electronic nameplate, ports for sound devices and USB, a keyboard and a voting device. Each seat has its own ID. User convenience is also supported through an e-book viewer, Internet access, and instant messaging services. The chamber is also provided with electronic boards, large high-definition electronic screens that are placed in the front of the chamber and outside it.

The system is designed to provide a stable operating environment. This is achieved through separate networks of servers for parliamentary proceedings and for Internet access, which limit security threats and provide uninterrupted services. In addition reliability and flexibility are achieved by managing proceedings not only at the Speaker's seat but also with the video/image control centre and the central server room. Service interruption is prevented through continuous system check ups.

To increase the work efficiency the Proceedings Management system and e-Bills System were integrated into a single system. The e-Bills System receives bills from the Government Document Distribution Centre and from members of parliament. The bills are electronically forwarded to the standing committees for consideration and then

automatically put on the agenda of plenary meetings. At the end of that process all information relating to the bill under discussion, including reports, is automatically transferred to the Digital Chamber System. This information is provided to the members in the form of an e-book.

Voting is done primarily through touch screens. Voting records are displayed on the electronic boards and automatically transferred to the Minutes System. The electronic boards are also used to display presentations made by members from the podium. The podium features an integrated prompter if needed so members can control reading speed, etc. An instant messaging service between members of parliament is also available inside the chamber.

Mr. Hang Jin stated that in the future the National Assembly intends to keep upgrading the systems and optimize them in ways that will bring the Assembly closer to the people.

He noted that there is a need to have more sharing of experiences in this area.

Another successful example of the use of chamber technologies was provided by **Mr. Oleksiy Sydorenko**, Head of the Computer Systems (IT), Department of the Parliament of Ukraine.

The current ICT functions in the Parliament of Ukraine can be grouped into four main categories: a) general technical support with secure network capabilities and a database infrastructure; b) electronic decision-making support during the plenary sessions; c) legislative procedure support; and d) an e-democracy portal. The technological solutions are based on modern client server platforms, including highly efficient Cisco Systems network equipment, Oracle-based databases, and computer-based automation systems. There are currently about 10 legislative databases and more than 20 automation systems that are



maintained by about 70 IT specialists.

The core solution is the specialized system “Rada-3” which was introduced in 2002 to provide electronic support to all plenary sessions and parliamentary hearings. “Rada-3” can support a large number of functions, such as members’ registration, e-voting, speaker’s registration, management of electronic screens with information about plenary sessions, and background information. It also offers simultaneous translation if needed and synchronization with the computer shorthand system, which allows uploading shorthand records of plenary sessions within two hours after the plenary meeting. Furthermore, it facilitates Internet access, online video-conferencing, and live webcasting of plenary sessions.

Registration and voting results are displayed on large screens in the session hall, on members’ monitors, and on the monitors of the Chairman, the First Deputy Chairman and the Deputy Chairman. The electronic screens can also be used to display announcements, background information, and video materials.

A member’s seat is his/her working place in the session hall and has on the desk a control panel consisting of a liquid crystal monitor with the information on the plenary meeting activities, a microphone, a reading device for the personal electronic authentication card with the unique ID number, a voting button, a speaker registration button, and a simultaneous translation device. The system enables members of parliament to connect their laptop to the network via wireless connection and make use of all databases and automation systems right from the session hall. They can also access e-mail and Internet resources.

Currently all stages of the legislative procedure in the Parliament are fully automated. Since 1998 cross database linkages have been established between the “Bills Passing” database, the “Legislation of Ukraine” database, and the “Rada-3” system. These three applications form the parliamentary knowledge base that enables monitoring and analysis of the dynamics of legislative activities from 1990 till now.

Mr. Hernán Figueroa, Director of IT of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile, stated that the introduction of computers in the chamber goes back to 2006 when parliamentary authorities conducted feasibility studies. The objectives identified for the systems in the chamber were to increase efficiency and reduce the use of paper that had been growing exponentially. Also, the systems were designed to assist voting and members registration, and to accurately record the proceedings so that citizens could have timely access to accurate information.

Mr. Figueroa explained that before the session starts all the legislative documentation about the bill to be discussed is gathered and distributed electronically to members’ digital desks. When the session starts members have access to their digital desks through the PCs (small custom made Linux driven machines). The system shows the attendance records of deputies. During the session members’ votes are recorded in Oracle databases. All this information is published online so that citizens can have total access to all the documents.

Television systems broadcast to national TV stations. The TV feeds are streamed online via the website of the parliament and the audio feeds are captured and exported outside the institution. Also, members and citizens can program their mobile devices to

get automatic alerts when there is a change in a bill.

The main benefits of the systems are that legislative information is produced and disseminated fast to deputies and to the citizens, and what is being done in the chamber is captured reliably and accurately.

During the discussions that followed, participants asked whether technology affects members' behavior by providing more usable information during the debate or encouraging effective participation. Panelists responded that the quality of members' intervention during the debates is surely increasing since there is more information available. Also, because of the higher involvement of citizens, expectations grew for members of parliament to work more. The importance of training members in the use of new technologies and conducting usability tests was raised. Participants also expressed interest for "paperless technology" and available solutions.

Specialized sessions

Open standards for parliamentary documentation: cooperative approaches

As Chair of the session, **Mr. Flavio Zeni**, Chief Technical Adviser of the Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, welcomed participants and provided an overview of the topic to be discussed, namely the approaches leading to a better deployment of XML in parliaments. As parliaments develop various systems to digitally produce, manage and preserve parliamentary documents, the choice of the standards used in preparing these documents becomes a crucial factor in ensuring their long-term access and availability. Parliaments face a high cost of adoption of XML, compounded by the lack of tools and expertise that can support their deployment of the standard. Mr. Zeni expressed the view that a collaborative approach would lead to a wider adoption of XML and the ultimate goal of providing high quality service to parliaments and citizens.

Mr. João Alberto de Oliveira Lima, Systems Analyst of the Federal Senate of Brazil, presented the Senate's experience in implementing XML. In Brazil it is acknowledged that information access is paramount to the development of democracy and citizenship. Thus the right of citizens to access information is enshrined in the Constitution. Such access is, however, hindered by several factors. Often, information is disorganized and its amount excessive. On the Internet, web addresses (URLs) change constantly and make it difficult to create a network of interconnected documents. To access these documents, citizens face a multitude of portals and search interfaces. Moreover, the more specialized a bill or document is, the more difficult it is to find it on the Internet.

In order to adapt to a constantly changing le-

gal system, the legislative documents lifecycle relies on semantic interoperability, which enables the integration of heterogeneous information sources. At the conceptual level, the Senate of Brazil implements the IFLA FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records) Object Oriented reference model. At the verbal level, the controlled vocabularies are modeled according to the W3C Simple Knowledge Organization System (SKOS), and at the notational level XML with UTF-8 encoding are used along with URN syntax for persistent identifiers.

The URN identifiers play an important role in the organization of legislative data. Adapted from the Italian *Norme in Rete* project, the URN identifiers consist of four basic components: locality, authority, document type and descriptor. Additional components, such as version and document fragment, allow a more precise identification of data.

A network, LexML Brazil, was established to organize the legal and legislative information available in digital form from the three branches of government at the federal, state and municipal levels. The network is led by an Information Management Committee composed of librarians, information analysts and archivists. In its work, LexML Brazil is influenced by the *Norme in Rete* project for persistent identifiers and by *Akoma Ntoso* for XML schema specification. The LexML portal (<http://www.lexml.gov.br>) was launched in July 2009. At the time of the conference, 1,400,000 documents had been collected from about 20 institutions in Brazil. Its homepage features a simple search interface similar to Google Search. Users can further refine search results by locality, authority, document type and date.

The LexML portal is developed entirely with open source software. Originating institu-

tions use a data provider toolkit in order to generate and validate the metadata of documents according to a defined schema. Such metadata is then harvested automatically by LexML using the Open Archiving Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH). Scalability and availability of LexML search and resolution are achieved through a distributed system of servers located at various institutions. Capacity can be easily increased with the addition of new servers.

LexML Brazil currently focuses on the consolidation of the portal and persistent identifiers, the development of a unified view of the bills from the Federal Chamber of Deputies and Senate, and of a linker application that will automatically insert links to reference laws and documents in legislative texts. Future work will focus on the development of open source tools (such as editor, compiler and publisher) for managing XML documents.

Mr. Lima concluded by stating the support of the IT Department of the Senate of Brazil for the converging strategy on XML standards for legal resources proposed by the UN/DESA Africa i-Parliament Action Plan. Mr. Lima also expressed support for the "urn:lex" namespace for persistent identifiers for legislative documents, proposed by CNIPA/ITTIG.

Ms. Monica Palmirani, Associate Professor of Legal Informatics, CIRSIFID, University of Bologna, provided an overview of *Akoma Ntoso*, an open XML standard for legal documents in the parliamentary and judiciary systems. She presented a brief history of the Legal XML standards, starting from the first generation in 1998 which consisted of a typographical approach based on SGML with no separation between content and metadata. The second generation in 2000 brought

a clear distinction between content markup and metadata. The third generation in 2005 was characterized by abstract classification of the main parts of legal document and the application of a pattern and object oriented approach to the XML schema. *MetaLex/CEN* and *Akoma Ntoso* are examples of standards that emerged in the third generation. The upcoming fourth generation will consist of pattern based schemas that can accommodate localized customizations.

Akoma Ntoso (Linked Hearts in local dialect used as a symbol of understanding and agreement for the Akan people of West Africa) was started in 2004 by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in a project to strengthen parliaments' information systems in Africa. *Akoma Ntoso* aims at describing and managing legislative and judiciary documents as well as the parliamentary documentation workflow. It was designed following three main principles: it is document-oriented, not data oriented; content, metadata and presentation are separated; and it relies on workflows to describe the steps of the legislative process.

In a data-oriented approach, a legal document is split in sections that are used to populate a database. In such cases, XML is merely used as a format for data interchange. An application layer is then necessary in order to link the different sections together as a single document. In a document-oriented approach on the other hand, the different sections are marked within the document itself, removing the need for an application layer to present the document. This approach allows more flexibility and transparency and preserves the legal validity and the legal message that the form and format of the document convey.

Akoma Ntoso's approach is to maintain a

separation between the different levels of a document. At the base level is the text of the document. The next level is the structure of the text, which usually depicts a hierarchy that has a legal meaning and must be preserved. The third level is the metadata such as library classification or information on the document itself. Then it is possible to add advanced levels such as legal ontology for expressing concepts in a particular legal system. Another possible level is the modeling of legal knowledge in logic rules and links between legal text and logical representation of these rules, making possible advanced applications such as legal reasoning. Thus, *Akoma Ntoso* describes the entire structure of legal documents in XML. It relies on URIs according to the FRBR model to reference documents within and across countries.

In terms of workflow, *Akoma Ntoso* is able to manage the entire legislative document lifecycle and related activities, including drafting of the bills, debates, minutes, amendments, consolidation of documents and amendments, translation, storage, security, and multi-channel publication.

This three-pronged approach to its design allows *Akoma Ntoso* to foster the diffusion of best practices in re-engineering legislative processes and to support interoperability between parliaments and other public administration institutions. Another key benefit of *Akoma Ntoso* is that it contributes to improving the quality of law by encouraging compliance to legal drafting guidelines. As an open standard, it allows the development of tools, open source or otherwise, by the community. One such tool is the *Bungeni Editor*, an open source XML editor, currently being developed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and based on OpenOffice. The *Bungeni Edi-*

tor is modular and can be customized to meet national requirements.

Mr. Tom van Engers, Professor of Legal Knowledge Management of the Leibniz Center for Law, University of Amsterdam, presented perspectives for the future of XML and open standards for parliaments. XML documents and standards are based on concepts such as the IFLA FRBR hierarchy, which abstracts ideas from physical files; SGML, which separates meaning from typography; and the Semantic Web approach, which distinguishes between data (actual text of the document as provided by the author), metadata (additional information on the content and on the document, generated manually or automatically by an editor) and ontology (conceptual model expressing the meaning of the content).

The tagging structure of XML is important because it adds meaning to content by providing a context (for instance it identifies the title of a law article). The structure connects presentation to content (the correct typography can be applied to the title). It can be used to test the correctness of a document (a law document is incorrect if it doesn't have a title). With XML, tagging is achieved via markups, which are additions to a written text that allows applications to process it automatically. XML defines a specific syntax to distinguish markup from text. The markups can be related to the structure, description (heading, paragraph, quotation, etc.) or presentation (bold, underline, font name, font size, etc.) of the text. Such a layered approach allows the same data to be optimally rendered through different formats such as paper, computer screen, mobile device, etc. and is flexible enough to accommodate future formats.

Because of the specificities of different ju-

risdictions which require more prescriptive and detailed tagging, there are multiple standards and schemas that have emerged in various countries. In order to facilitate interoperability, the *MetaLex/CEN* was developed as the lowest common denominator. It provides an abstraction layer that allows the combination of multiple schemas and mapping between schemas while preserving the particularities of each specific schema.

MetaLex/CEN provides a homogeneous and neutral document format for representing the structure of heterogeneous legal resources. It allows interoperability between standards, with legacy systems, between application layers and also between different data formats. It also provides an open document format for publishing heterogeneous legal resources independently from legal systems and jurisdictions. *MetaLex/CEN* preserves the meaning of the documents structure and metadata and it provides a minimal set of metadata for querying heterogeneous repositories containing legal documents built with different standards. Several standards and applications, such as *Akoma Ntoso* and *Bungeni*, for instance, are designed to be compliant with *MetaLex/CEN*.

Mr. van Engers called for more collaboration among practitioners to identify best practices, share knowledge and join efforts. He advocated an open collaborative model aimed at developing an open standard and open source tools in an open partnership between governments, academia and the industry. Taking reference from the works of scientists such as John Locke, John Wilkins, Gottfried Leibniz, Mr. van Engers argued that the tools were now available for fulfilling the long running quest for an artificial universal language that would formally model the concepts in the laws and improve services to the citizens and lawmakers.

Mr. Flemming Sorensen, Head of Service in the Directorate for Information Technologies, Directorate General for Innovation and Technological Support of the European Parliament, in his capacity as Manager of the e-Parliament Programme, provided an overview of the implementation of XML within the European Parliament. He started by highlighting the magnitude of the challenges faced in the European Parliament, as the European Union consists of 27 member states totaling 500 millions citizens. All documents must be translated into each of the 23 official languages. 8,000 staff members service 736 members of parliament from 3 physical locations.

Currently, the European Parliament uses outdated technology (such as Word 97 and file sharing) that is inefficient and insecure, with low integration across applications. A significant amount of resources is required to cope with last-minute changes and ensure proper quality. The e-Parliament Programme was launched to address these shortcomings. The initiative aims to provide benefits to the three main constituents of parliament. It will allow members of parliament to focus on creating legislation, not on operating difficult applications. They will be able to retrieve information from various sources easily. And they will be able to carry on with their work even when outside the premises of the European Parliament. For improved transparency and interoperability, institutional partners, such as the European Commission, the European Council, national parliaments as well as citizens will be able to easily access structured documents from the European Parliament that can be processed automatically. The e-Parliament Programme will improve the efficiency of the administrative staff, allowing content re-use, better delivery times, less manual processing and better control of work processes.

The e-Parliament Programme relies on a complex business process, workflow and various technological tools. The process starts with a conversion of incoming official documents from the Commission and the Council to XML, as there is not yet a common agreed XML standard between these institutions. Specialized XML authoring tools will be made available for further document processing in committees or in plenary. Members of parliament will be able to digitally sign documents and amendments. All documents will be stored in a content repository and indexed according to the Eurovoc thesaurus. The entire process will be controlled using a workflow management and communication tool.

The main challenges that the e-Parliament Programme faces in rolling out XML are multilingualism and interoperability with partner institutions. Because of the high number of official languages, translation in the European Parliament happens on a massive scale. In 2006, 1.15 million pages were translated. To improve the efficiency of the process, it is imperative to ensure that XML markups support the re-use of already translated information. Regarding interoperability with the European Council, the European Commission and national parliaments, in addition to providing them with structured documents, the European Parliament would like to eventually receive documents in XML format.

The European Parliament opted not to develop its own XML standard, but to comply with an existing standard, the *MetaLex/CEN standard*. Mr. Sorensen stated that the e-Parliament Programme will derive its own XML schema from *Akoma Ntoso*, as it already meets many requirements of the programme. In this regard, and if needed, the European Parliament will contribute to the further development of *Akoma Ntoso* in a

transparent manner, inviting the stakeholders to review, discuss and adopt proposed changes to the standard. Mr. Sorensen called for an initiative to create a worldwide standard to avoid re-inventing the wheel and to create a market for the development of appropriate tools.

Mr. Sorensen then provided a demonstration of an XML tool, developed by the e-Parliament Programme, for authoring amendments. The application allows authors to focus on drafting, not on layout. Since it is a web application, they can work from remote locations and they can digitally sign their amendments. Metadata is inserted automatically. The application replaces a legacy application based on macros in Microsoft Word, and it greatly improves the time required to create an amendment.

Before taking questions from the audience, the Chair of the session, Mr. Zeni, highlighted key points from the previous presentations. He lauded the achievements of the Parliament of Brazil and called for more sharing of the Brazilian experience with other parliaments. He recalled the dynamics and complexity of XML and its importance for preserving documents and their legal meaning and value. He noted the current convergence of various efforts around common standards. Mr. Zeni expressed his appreciation for the attitude of the European Parliament which stresses compliance to standards. He invited participants to review and comment on a distributed document calling for the establishment of a working group for parliamentary XML convergence.

Participants in the audience raised the issue of cooperation among partner institutions on common standards, as a significant number of documents in parliament originate from other government administrations. It

was noted that although the European Commission has sponsored projects promoting XML, including *MetaLex* and *Akoma Ntoso*, there appears to be no plan to introduce the use of XML in the Secretariat of the Commission. However, collaboration has been initiated between the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Participants identified several obstacles impeding adoption of XML by parliaments. Major areas of concern were the lack of dedicated leadership within parliaments for promoting XML and the lack of resources, as adapting legacy applications to new technology such as XML requires a significant re-engineering of existing processes and significant investments in time and resources. Also deplored was the unavailability of tools on the market that would facilitate adoption of XML. However, participants noted the progress accomplished in this regard, with applications such as the *Bungeni XML Editor*, being developed in the framework of the Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, and the eXist-db database management system which allows XML documents to be stored natively and queried more efficiently. An open source platform such as TemaTres can be leveraged to develop parliamentary thesauri according to the W3C SKOS specifications.

Participants also stressed the need to expand the pool of available human capacity to deploy, implement and advise on XML in parliaments, not only at the international level but also at the national level. In this regard, they noted that in addition to the poles of expertise available at the Universities of Amsterdam and Bologna, a Legislative XML summer school now in its fourth edition, takes place at the European University Institute in Florence.

Participants re-emphasized the importance and desirability of convergence and collaboration. They called for more cooperation to support parliaments adopting XML and more efforts to showcase success stories.

Implementing XML in Parliament

Implementing open document standards, such as XML, is a complex process, yet there are a number of examples where success has been achieved through the right mix of planning, stakeholder engagement and understanding, and the application of good practices and methodologies. This session focused on the implementation of XML in parliaments and highlighted its benefits and challenges.

Mr. Andreas Sidler, CIO of the Parliament of Switzerland and Chair of the session, presented the status of XML usage within his Parliament. The migration of the Parliament of Switzerland to XML was facilitated by the use of HTML since 1988. He underlined however the complexity of the XML technology, which requires special skills and resources.

Ms. Kirsten Gullickson, Senior Systems Analyst in the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, reported on ongoing efforts to author and publish official documents and data of the U.S. House of Representatives in XML. These include legislative documents such as bills and resolutions, and administrative documents such as members' biographies and official lists of members. These efforts aim to improve effectiveness, cost, accuracy and timeliness of document creation and revision process, as well as establish common data standards for the exchange of documents and data across the legislative branch organizations.

XML provides the means for meeting the requirements of transparency, accountability, accessibility in preparation, management, dissemination and archiving of official documents, whether in paper or electronic form. It allows publication of raw data on which other organizations are empowered to add value.

Ms. Cindy Leach, Projects Director, Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, provided an overview of specific applications in use in the U.S. House of Representatives. Many of the legacy applications were developed from a data management point of view, without necessarily taking into account the need to disseminate the information to the public. In contrast, the requirements of transparency, accountability and accessibility were native to the new projects, not an afterthought. The ubiquity of desktop computers led to various proprietary applications developed in various platforms for individual divisions' own needs. Paper-driven processes and workflow began to involve electronic data. Currently, in the second generation of this development, more and more workflow is becoming electronic and the amount of data is growing ever more rapidly. Legacy systems could not keep pace with such high volume of data. In the migration from legacy applications, specific goals were set for new systems: single point of entry for data, data-sharing with other applications and processes, data distribution via web service, and platform independent data formats.

The challenging migration of proprietary and legacy applications from paper to electronic processes was done in phases, going forward with new technologies while maintaining support for old technologies. For instance, some applications used to print monthly publications were also used to

print the telephone directory twice a year. XML was used to facilitate the phased approach by creating a stylesheet to back-fill the legacy database from a single point of entry. The new telephone book application being developed uses XML and stylesheets for formatting specific areas of the book. Such method allows easier maintenance by keeping data separate from its presentation. New legislative mandates require that lobbying disclosure data must be downloadable and searchable (disclosures.house.gov) using the XML format, as it allows search indexes, platform independence, and easy import of data into many other formats.

In 1998, the biographical directory of members of Congress was made available online (bioguide.congress.gov) using SGML and XML later on. Voting records are also made available (clerk.house.gov) in XML format. Voting records are linked to the biographical directory using a unique identification code assigned to each member of Congress. These identification codes are being used across various databases and organizations to correlate information pertaining to a specific legislator. The Office of the Clerk now publishes membership lists, official names of committees and sub-committees and committee lists using XML. Stylesheets are used to produce several different publications from the same XML file. It is planned to automatically produce web pages using the same technique. XML allows reusing the data from a single entry point.

Further to Ms. Leach's intervention, Ms. Gullickson reported on the process to develop an XML editor for the legislature. Both the House and the Senate have customized separate XML editors for drafting bills, resolutions and amendments. The production and exchange of legislative documents, using agreed-upon document type definitions

(DTD), is a joint effort between the House, the Senate, the Library of Congress and the Government Printing Office. An XML Technical Committee coordinates all DTDs, shared tools and common tag library. The common tag library ensures that appropriate data linkages are maintained across the entire legislature, as illustrated with the unique identification code for members of Congress. The Library of Congress uses Handle technology for persistent identifiers of all XML documents posted on its website. The Government Printing Office applies digital signatures to all government documents.

The imperatives of minimizing the drafter's attention to typesetting, allowing him/her to focus on the content of the bill, were addressed using "smart authoring" (context-sensitive editor, auto-renumbering, auto-generation of table of contents, no typesetting when drafting, ability to move legislative structures within document, simple keystrokes) and a tags-off approach (little or no knowledge of XML required). The House uses an off-the-shelf XML editor called Xmetal, which allows the various user groups (House Office of Legislative Counsel, House Enrolling Clerks and Government Printing Office) to author in an XML editor without necessarily having knowledge of XML. The paper version, which is the official document of record, is produced from an XML version of the document. After being drafted by the Office of Legislative Counsel (XML), a bill is introduced by a legislator on the House floor (paper printed from PDF produced from XML). The Enrolling Clerks then prepare an official version of the bill and transmit it to the Government Printing Office (XML), which then publishes it (electronic and paper) and transmits it to the Library of Congress (XML).

Ms. Gullickson drew some lessons from the

experience of the House with an XML editor. It is possible to meet the needs of the authors while at the same time ensuring consistent formatting, searchability, and ability to reuse the data. Drafters do not always like to use structured editors and must be provided "smart authoring" tools that do not require knowledge of XML. The XML format must be kept simple and well-formed, and use easy to understand tag names. Well-trained and well-quipped staff can meet the constraints of no interruptions, no failure, no risks, and costs limits.

Mr. Brian Keenan, ParInfo Administrator and Senior Information Technology Officer, Department of Parliamentary Services of the Parliament of Australia, provided an overview of the use of XML and open standards for parliamentary documents and information in the Parliament of Australia.

The Department of Parliamentary Services provides support (building services, recording, broadcasting ICT, library and research) to both chambers of the Parliament of Australia and its committees. The Department is also tasked with providing public access to the work of the Parliament and parliamentary information. In order to do so, it has developed, in close cooperation with the two chamber departments, the ParInfo Search System (<http://parinfo.aph.gov.au/>), which is the main repository of documents of the Australian Parliament published to the Internet and contains documents of different types and formats. ParInfo uses a number of open standards (XML, SGML, XHTML, RSS, SOAP and Z39.50) and open source technologies (Apache FOP).

Central to ParInfo Search is a core repository containing parliamentary documents such as Hansards, bills, and procedural documents, as well as other research information

such as newspaper clippings, radio and TV program information, information from the public website and online news feeds. Feeders, or authoring systems, are used to submit content into the repository. In its first incarnation, ParInfo Search provided basic web search and a PC-based application with advanced search capabilities. Data was stored in SGML format and later migrated to XML.

The second generation ParInfo Search, currently in use, is fully web-based and is designed for people with different skill levels and knowledge. It offers Basic Search and Guided Searches for novice users and the general public as well as advanced search features for in depth searching and skilled users such as library research staff, who use it heavily to provide services to members of parliament.

Documents are available in various formats and organized into "Collections" of related document types such as Hansards, Votes and Proceedings, Senate Journals, Daily Program and Order of Business in the Chamber Collection.

Documents are created through a number of specialized authoring systems such as the Bills System, the Hansard Production System, the Document Production System, the Information Storage and Retrieval (ISR)/Integrated Library System (ILS) and the Document Upload System. Documents are mostly created using Microsoft Word, and then converted to XML/XHTML/SGML for storage into ParInfo Search, accompanied by a print quality PDF version. The bulk of ParInfo Search content is not yet in XML. All new Chamber and Committee Hansards are in XML but legacy SGML prior to 2004 still exists and is not converted because ParInfo Search processes both formats seamlessly. Bills are submitted as XML as well

as Microsoft Word and PDF. The XHTML format is used for displaying web content. As XHTML is essentially XML with HTML tags, it can be parsed and transformed in the same way as XML, without the need of potentially complex stylesheets and transformations required for presenting XML. The Parliamentary Handbook and the House of Representatives Votes and Proceedings are in XHTML format. Native Microsoft Word documents submitted and processed by the TeraText Database System are converted to XHTML format for display in the web browser. XHTML however presents some challenges in the automation of the document updating process, which are currently being investigated.

ParInfo is built on the TeraText database system developed by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia. TeraText is based on open standards such as XML, SGML and the Z39.50 protocol which allows other Z39.50-compliant sources, such as the Australian Associated Press (AAP) and the Australian and New Zealand (ANZ) Reference Centre, to be tapped into and made available through ParInfo. A Simple Object Access Protocol Applications Programming Interface, or SOAP API, is exposed to the authoring systems for uploading content to the repository. A file share interface is also available but all authoring systems not yet using the SOAP API will be redeveloped.

Thanks to open standards, the Parliament of Australia made significant progress in improving its processes, facilitating the reuse of information and offering greater functional access to parliamentary documents to the public. However much remains to be done. Of the major authoring systems, the Bills System has recently been redeveloped. The Hansard Production System and the library authoring systems are all in the early stage

of redevelopment. However, the Document Production System is not yet scheduled for redevelopment.

Plans for the future also involve migrating as much data as possible to XML and making raw XML data available for reuse by the public, developing a Parliament-wide XML schema and digitizing historic parliamentary papers.

Another experience in the implementation of XML and related applications was presented by **Mr. Bruno Penne**, Team leader of the Development Section of the ICT Department in the House of Representatives of Belgium.

The Intranet portal of the Belgian House of Representatives offers a collection of all supporting services to internal departments, more than 82 applications including a documents management system. Not all applications use XML. The use of XML is closely related to existing legacy applications in three key categories. Of the documents centric applications - word processors producing documents such as agendas, motions, minutes and bulletins - only those used for the agenda and bulletin have been migrat-

ed to XML. Database oriented applications (documents management system, bills and amendments) have been partially migrated to XML. Documents are stored either as PDF or XML and metadata as XML. Web applications (search engine and content management system) are fully XML.

For data entry, five applications (agenda, web content management system, display system, archiving of legislative files, written Questions and Answers) currently use an XML editor called XMLSpy. Mr. Penne provided a demonstration of the editor and the features of the Agenda application.

The rationale for choosing the XML standard is to be found in the three key advantages it offers. XML allows multiple output formats, data exchange across applications, and it simplifies the preparation process for documents. The Parliament has developed an XML database automation process which generates XML files in three steps. XML files are first produced from the databases, then metadata is added to the file, and finally the file is indexed (full text and XML structure) by a search engine which facilitates access to the information from



the Internet or the intranet.

Mr. Penne noted several challenges that he faces in rolling out XML. For XML data entry, users are still layout and document oriented and they do not realize they have to input and use information in a structured way in XML. Changes in a standard layout or format of existing documents, mandated for technical reasons, are resisted. WYSIWYG is not always possible, an issue addressed by the preview mode offered in the XML editor. For XML automation, the design of the XML structure in order to match the legacy database structures presented some challenges.

Mr. Penne concluded that the use of XML facilitated accessibility and searchability of legislative information, and it improved the consistency of formatting. After the first time, subsequent implementations are quick and easy. Existing legacy applications can remain operative at no cost alongside XML applications, which themselves can be sometimes complex and hard to manage.

Mr. Arik Fischel, Head of the IT Department of the Parliament of Israel, presented the website of the Knesset, which is entirely based on XML. He started by underlining a paradigm shift that changed the computing world, triggering an evolution from closed systems, once considered the ultimate goal of successful computer systems, to open and transparent systems that make as much information accessible and available to as many as possible. For parliaments, such a shift caused the dilemma of opening their gates while maintaining efficiency. By enabling openness and transparency without compromising security, the structured and open standard XML facilitates a dialogue between parliaments and citizens in an unprecedented connection between technology and democracy. This new paradigm is

not without its own set of challenges. For instance, making legacy data formats accessible, especially if they are not based on open standards, can be complex and difficult.

The first major XML application developed in the Parliament of Israel consisted of an intelligent search engine that allows synchronous access to transcript and audio/video of parliamentary debates and committee sessions. A click on the text automatically displays the corresponding part of the audiovisual record. In addition to full text, it is also possible to search according to a speaker, a subject, or any of the metadata in the XML structure. Mr. Fischel and his staff provided a live demonstration of the application.

Several other applications based on XML are being developed in the Knesset, such as an "active" thesaurus to guide users in their research, comparing legislative documents on a given topic between several countries, and expanding the searchable database to include non-parliamentary sources such as academic research, newspapers clippings and television programmes.

The Knesset has implemented a technical architecture allowing it to process data in parallel for internal applications and for the public website of the Parliament, allowing almost real-time availability of parliamentary information, while being mindful of security concerns. At the beginning of the process, all proceedings are digitally recorded. From transcriptions of recordings, XML documents are created by adding XML metadata in Microsoft Word, which users in the Parliament are already familiar with. Within a 15-minute timeframe, the documents are made available on the website. In order to support decision-making, a work methodology has been developed regarding publicly available data, with the aim of bet-

ter understanding the information needs of the users. The methodology addresses issues such as how to link parliamentary official documents to non-parliamentary resources on the same topic, what impact disclosed information may have on the public, etc. Each new feature may bring new functionality, but also new complexity for the users, which must be evaluated carefully and addressed during the implementation stage.

Mr. Fischel concluded that the Parliament of Israel has been able to change its trademark image thanks to the various applications made available to its citizens. With good will and good technology, it has been able to improve its effectiveness in generating communications with and among the people of Israel. Mr. Fischel called for increased cooperation among legislatures to exchange information and create a better communications environment between parliaments and their constituents as well as among parliaments.

Participants discussed the challenges of putting together an appropriate IT team for migrating legacy systems to XML technology. In the particular case of the Parliament of Australia, a contract was awarded to a private company which supplied all necessary expertise for business analysis, building the hardware and software infrastructure and migrating data from legacy applications.

Further clarifications were sought on ways to encourage members of parliaments themselves to use the XML editors to draft legislation. In the U.S. House of Representatives, the attorneys of the Office of Legislative Counsels are the main users of the editor, as they are responsible for researching issues and producing initial drafts on behalf of legislators. There are instances of legislators that are familiar with the tools and participate in the drafting using the XML editor.

Noting the use of proprietary software as XML editors in several parliaments, participants and speakers indicated that viable open source solutions, which in some instances were not yet available when such choices were made, would seriously be considered if there was opportunity to make the choice again. In other instances, the choice of proprietary solution was made to take advantage of users' familiarity and level of comfort with specific proprietary applications.

Security and reliability of technical infrastructures: challenges for parliaments

Legislative services require a safe and reliable technical infrastructure free from disruptions. Improving security is essential, yet in many legislatures the issue is still not being addressed adequately. This session focused on internal and external vulnerabilities and on practices that could be adopted to minimize risk and ensure greater confidence and trust.

The Chair of the session, **Mr. Javier de Andrés Blasco**, Coordinator of the ICT Centre of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, noted that infrastructure is the basis for all information systems in parliament and that with an adequate foundation it is possible to build robust systems. He stressed that it is complex to find the right balance between assigning sufficient resources to security and to other areas of IT management. Providing adequate resources for security is a costly exercise as it requires experts who are not always easy to find.

Noting that attacks can come from anywhere, are unpredictable, and can propagate quickly, Mr. de Andrés Blasco stated that a completely secure system is very difficult to achieve. Considering that the fail-

ure of security of systems creates risks and a lack of trust, the responsibility for security requires active participation and engagement and cannot be outsourced. Mr. de Andrés Blasco referred to the “Orange Book”, developed in 1985 by the U.S. Department of Defense, as a good guideline for implementing a security framework.

Mr. Lou Magnotti, Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer of the U.S. House of Representatives, observed that securing systems in large organizations is a collaborative effort and requires teamwork. He provided some details about the scale of the U.S. House of Representatives’ information infrastructure. There are 435 members, more than 23 committees and sub-committee offices and over 10,000 employees. Almost all have electronic systems to work with, including laptops and portable computing devices. The House enterprise network infrastructure has over 22,000 devices connected. It is a centralized enterprise network which also has decentralized capabilities. The scope of the enterprise network includes 900 district offices.

For the management of the overall technical infrastructure Mr. Magnotti outlined a number of objectives: (1) reduce the IT footprint, reduce costs and re-allocate resources to other areas from these savings; (2) better management of existing operations within the current budget; (3) continue to modernize the IT infrastructure and services; and, (4) ensure systems and data security.

Mr. Magnotti noted some recent IT developments with regard to security. These include the adoption of more environmentally friendly technology to reduce energy consumption and increased use of portable devices.

At the U.S. House of Representatives secu-

rity management is a balancing exercise between the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO). Approximately 8% of the yearly budget is being spent on security. With regard to best practices, he agreed that the Orange Book is a sound departure point for designing a security management framework.

Mr. Brent Conran, Chief Information Security Officer of the U.S. House of Representatives, provided the results of a global survey conducted by the CIO Executive Council that showed that cyber and information security is becoming more structured, supported, and embedded within organizations. The survey found that in India, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, China, Brazil and Australia a significant percentage of organizations are employing Chief Information Security Officers and are dealing with issues such as developing an overall information security strategy, managing security spending, implementing security standards for portable devices, using tools to discover unauthorized devices, and managing accurate inventories of where sensitive data is stored.

Mr. Conran pointed out that personal data protection should be at the forefront of security investments. He noted that while in the past hackers exposed vulnerability in systems to prove that they could be further improved; now they just intend to cause damage and steal data.

With regard to technologies, the U.S. House of Representatives is investing in technology that allows the storage of session data for a long time and the analysis of historical session data to uncover causes of intrusions. It also allows the diagramming of networks and the anatomy of attacks on the infrastructure. Moreover, investments are being made

in IDS (Intrusion Detection Systems), as there is a shift from using the traditional IDS Alert systems to adopting behavioural intrusion detection systems. This supports receiving early warnings before incidents actually occur. The U.S. House of Representatives is also making extensive use of encrypting storage devices.

Mr. Cornan highlighted that another important area of investment is application monitoring. He noted that hackers now target applications, looking for holes in the software. Spyware filtering is being looked at not only to control content and access, but also to categorize streams of information that are being accessed and block malicious untrusted sites and bad content before they are accessed.

Regarding “Sandbox” technology, he explained that it allows isolating and watching a threat. He acknowledged that it is a useful technology especially to learn more about how applications behave in closed environments.

Mr. Conran reported that the House is subjected to many attacks a day. The House has deployed SIM (Security Information Management) systems which are a force multiplier in managing security over the extensive enterprise network. The systems are able to monitor 100,000 ongoing attacks and display all of them on a central system. They pull together all the metadata from listening systems from all over the country, and process, analyze and identify the most urgent occurring attacks that need immediate human intervention.

Identity management in the House makes use of Active Directory and is structured around well defined processes and procedures on how changes can be made to iden-

tity data. Access to the directory is closely controlled. On average a total of 7,000 tokens are issued to staff and managed through the directory. As there is constant turnover of staff (notably through election cycles) the tokens are forced to expire every two years.

Mr. Addow-Quarshie, ICT Director of the Parliament of Ghana, provided an overview of the security standards implemented in the legislature.

The Internet resources being exploited by the Parliament of Ghana rely on an infrastructure of computers, Internet connections, Local Area Networks (LAN) and wireless network connections to store, share and disseminate information. The infrastructure, however, is exposed to threats both internally and externally from other networks to which it is connected. Acknowledging that these threats can undermine the availability, quality and integrity of information flows, the Parliament of Ghana has initiated policies to mitigate these adverse effects.

In the Parliament it is mandatory for users of computer services to update the anti-virus software in use every morning. Any external devices, like pen drives, are automatically scanned for virus threats. This anti-virus policy is designed to protect parliamentary resources against intrusion by viruses and other malware and to control the access of users to sources outside the system. With regard to the internet/virtual private network security policy the parliament has implemented computer ID and password authentication systems.

The Parliament has also developed an external service provider’s policy that addresses the requirements for the selection and administration of vendors, consultants, contractors and other service providers external to

the legislature. An *acceptable use policy* has been developed to address the appropriate use of communications and computing resources and each user's responsibilities. It applies to all users, contractors, consultants and other workers including personnel affiliated with third parties who use the legislature's computing infrastructure and resources. Inappropriate use exposes the legislature to risk including virus attacks and compromises network systems and services security. The Parliament is also actively combating online phishing by informing parliamentary users about this practice and how to handle it.

In concluding his presentation, Mr. Addow-Quarshie stated that these policies are intended to ensure the delivery of up-to-date, accurate, and reliable information to legislators to enable them to make informed decisions at plenary and committee meetings. They may not be exhaustive, but they are expected to mitigate the level of information corruption.

Another perspective on security of technical infrastructure was offered by **Mr. Antonio Saad**, ICT Director of the National Assembly of Panama. Mr. Saad pointed out that there are some technical deficiencies that

keep the National Assembly's information systems from being more efficient. He also highlighted the lack of formal policies and regulations for managing cyber security issues in the legislature. As a result, security is more a matter of responding to attacks than a matter of prevention and early warning. The process of institutionalizing a formal policy is also hampered by the lack of active participation by the parliamentary leadership.

In order to address the lack of institutional policy on cyber security his office works towards a security strategy based on several pillars: security policies that are implemented through strategies that reflect the enterprise philosophy; implementation of standards; training; security awareness; analysis of gaps, and development of contingency plans. He emphasized the importance of involving the different administrative groups within the parliament in the implementation of the security strategy. Noting that technology changes quickly, he underscored the need to carry out policy assessments and reviews.

Mr. Saad presented a project led by the Ministry of Innovation, and involving his department, that aims at establishing security procedures for all branches of government. Training on cyber security issues for staff is a critical component of this initiative.

In relation to hardware and the infrastructure of the Assembly, Mr. Saad presented a project that aims to upgrade and optimize the data centre and to implement virtualization techniques to use resources more efficiently. Another project aims to ensure business continuity, through a mirror site that will replicate all information and applications. The primary site will be a local site outsourced to a local provider; the second-



ary site will be within the parliament. The system will feature a back up electrical system and several contingency plans/scenarios.

Among the challenges Mr. Saad mentioned the rotation of Speakers every twelve months, which makes it difficult to implement IT strategies for the longer term. To cope with this, Mr. Saad said that an information security roadmap was developed in such a way that the incremental building blocks can be implemented within the term of each Speaker.

During the discussion that followed the presentations participants suggested that parliaments work collaboratively on the development of guidelines for a common security framework that includes information security management policies and standards. One participant commented that besides the Orange Book it is useful to look at the ISO27001 information security management certification.

Questions were also raised about the strengths and weaknesses of open source software and their manageability with regard to security. Panelists noted that the open source code is often less vulnerable because of the fast reaction of a large community of enthusiastic developers.

On the issue of requirements and standards for security software and systems it was noted that it is important to implement certification and accreditation programmes for software which include regular software testing.

Technology options for recording and reporting floor and committee proceedings

With the advent of web 2.0 technologies, such as blogging and social networking, the demand for recordings of parliamentary pro-

ceedings in digital scripted, audio, and video formats has evolved. This session focused on how parliaments make use of technologies to provide recordings of proceedings, in which types of format, at what speeds, and through what methods of access.

The Chair of the session, **Mr. Jeff Griffith**, Senior Advisor of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, stated that the session was intended to shed light on the range of technologies used to record the most fundamental proceedings that take place in the legislature, and to highlight both the problems experienced and the successes achieved.

Mr. Robert Reeves, Deputy Clerk of the U.S House of Representatives, observed that there is considerable demand today for parliaments to be more transparent and to adopt web technologies that will enable citizens to stay informed and be engaged in the democratic process. The challenge is to try to provide the complete range of timely and accessible information on the web.

Mr. Reeves introduced a new system developed by the U.S. House of Representatives to stream the House proceedings over the Internet. Following a successful pilot test the system is now ready for deployment.

He gave a demonstration of the system beginning with the webpage that will be used to access the webcast of floor proceedings. It will be live, on-demand, searchable and integrated with House floor proceedings and records. Features of the system include: video and audio of live and on-demand access to House proceedings; a journal which provides users with easy navigation through an overview of speakers and items being discussed; identification of current legislative items under discussion; compliance with requirements of the U.S. legislation on

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including closed captioning; and deep links to additional legislative information and background documents.

Mr. Reeves noted that the House is trying to offer a one-stop-shop to users with everything available. The objective is to bundle together existing information feeds and channels into one package without duplicating what is being provided through other systems like the internal Legislative Information System (LIS) and the Library of Congress Thomas system.

Mr. Reeves stated that the new system will improve public access with advanced media archiving and searching capabilities, allowing the House to reach a wider audience, build trust and give citizens more options to engage in the democratic process.

He reported that the application works across platforms and browsers, offers integrated data and documents, and has a mobile friendly format, i.e., is compatible with smart phones and other popular mobile technologies. For example, mobile devices can be set up so that they receive notification when a particular member will be speaking. Other subscription mechanisms are possible via RSS and automatic updates. In addition the system will expand access to social networks. The House will provide some internal capabilities so that members of parliament can obtain clippings of their interventions in the House and re-use them for publication in their own media channels, websites and Facebook pages.

Mr. Paulo Henrique Alves Araújo, Project Manager of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, gave a presentation of the recording and publication systems adopted by the Chamber of Deputies. He noted that systems that

make available the recording of what is discussed and decided during the proceedings promote the transparency and accountability of the legislature.

The recording and publication systems of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil have been developed over several years and include solutions to produce verbatim of speeches, audio records of sessions, TV and radio stations, and a webcasting service.

Mr. Alves Araújo stated that the Chamber is working on defining new information architectures that allow retrieving of information in different data structures. This will make it possible to provide information in different formats and channels e.g. on the agenda, on plenary and committee web pages, and even on the personal web pages of members.

The Chamber has redefined the information indexing structure along four information axes: the body (committee or plenary), the session (the meeting itself), the speakers (members of parliament), and finally by timestamp, in order to allow people to browse and retrieve information from a specific committee, meeting or speech delivered. In addition, citizens are able to see the video and obtain text information about the speeches of the members during the sessions.

Mr. Alves Araújo concluded by showing some screen displays of the systems, highlighting the features described earlier. He noted, however, that the one function the Chamber does not have yet is linkage to the closed captioning.

Mr. Carlo Marchetti, Head of the Information Systems Development Office of the Senate of Italy, noted that the Senate has a long tradition of recording proceedings and reporting.

Mr. Marchetti showed an example of an on-line report of plenary proceedings published on the Senate website. The report consists of a navigable table of contents that provides an overview of the structure of the document, a summary, the verbatim transcription and annexes. The annexes contain documents that have been discussed during the sitting as well as those that have been presented by senators during the same sitting.

With regard to the service levels for the publication of plenary sitting reports, Mr. Marchetti stated that the updated unrevised draft version is published every 40-50 minutes on the website during a sitting. The final versions are produced in HTML, PDF and paper. If proceedings take place in the morning the final reports are produced on the same day, and if they take place in the afternoon, the printed reports are delivered the next morning before 8 a.m.

Mr. Marchetti described the workflow underlying the drafting of assembly reports. In the 1st phase there are 12 stenographers, each of whom sits in the assembly to record the activities for five minutes. Then they go back to the office and draft a first version of the recorded five minutes. This first draft is passed to a second pool of staff that reviews the text and inserts the mark-up in the document. The document is then submitted to the last pool of staff for final collation, annex insertion, review and publishing.

The main technologies used during the workflow are (1) the stenotyping and related software, (2) the dictation software, and (3) the mark up editors, which enable the generation of the table of contents and the linking of report's contents (e.g. statements) to other relevant pages of the websites (e.g., those of senators). Audio broadcasting, recording and reproduction systems are other

useful tools in use to review, summarize and transcribe. Currently, the IT Department is also evaluating speech to text technologies, for example for indexing video recordings.

Mr. Marchetti stressed that stenotyping is a highly specialized discipline that requires specially trained people. Laptops are connected to the "Michela" stenotyping keyboard. The *Total Eclipse* software recognizes the keystrokes and transforms them into text in a very short time interval (milliseconds). The initial costs of a stenotyping system are high. Both the acquisition of the hardware and software, and the training for the Michela typists are very expensive. In addition, the installation and maintenance of the entire system is challenging and requires uncommon technical skills. With regard to the benefits, Mr. Marchetti pointed out that this system is able to produce a first draft of the record almost in real-time, which in turn enables the publication of the unrevised versions on the web-site in about 30 minutes.

The dictation software is used while composing the summary report starting from verbatim, audio and minutes. The user dictates into a microphone and the words are automatically transcribed in an active window. This is a much cheaper solution compared to the stenotyping method. It can be used directly by officials, saving the costs of specialized typists and other related expenses. As for time efficiency, the content must already be structured and available before dictation.

With regard to mark-up editors and services, the IT Department has extended MS Word with custom controls to augment and enrich the report with XHTML tags. This technology is used for web publishing and for linking contents in real time on the website. Editors are also being extended to lead to the creation and publication of PDF docu-

ments and thus to enable autonomous printing capabilities, with related savings. As for the costs, the initial investment is mainly in software development and testing. The benefits are all those derived from using an XML-based structured information management approach.

Audio is a very fundamental resource for stenotypists and officials while writing and checking reports. Audio systems deployed in the Senate include a plenary and committees amplification system (that outputs to recorders and other systems), a central recording room and the use of local digital recorders. Publicity of the Senate activities entails other products, ranging from webcasting of plenary and committees sittings up to RSS feeds from the assembly, from committees, and from the press office.

Mr. Marchetti concluded with a number of observations. The implementation of the system required adequate support facilities from the IT Department and is the result of several years of refinements. The use of evolutionary and incremental cycles for developing improvements is highly recommended when developing the system, as well as involving users as much as possible. Finally, he pointed out that it is possible to extract/combine steps and technologies of the process that he described to put in place solutions tailored to other needs.

Mr. Juha-Pekka Leskinen, IT Manager, and **Mr. Petteri Nyman**, Web Producer, Parliament of Finland, presented the webcasting solutions implemented in the Finnish Parliament.

Mr. Nyman reported that annually there are about 430 hours of sessions and the Parliament covers the entire 430 hours by webcasting. Fifty hours of these sessions, covering the most interesting debates, are broadcast

on national television by a private company.

The technical infrastructure of the session hall was built by the staff of the parliament while the rest (the cameras, direction, integration and distribution) was outsourced.

The webcast is streamed over an HTTP/XML interface and shows the video feed of the current speaker, the item under discussion, as well as the title and number of the plenary session. All information is provided in the two official languages of the country, Finnish and Swedish. There are five steady cameras that can be operated manually or automatically. The direction of the cameras is automatic as they have microphones that pick up the sound and change direction to focus on the speaker. The streaming solution used is Flash Media Server.

Mr. Nyman then demonstrated a live webcast of the Parliament of Finland. Besides the live video feed he showed that a side menu is available on the screen that provides links to information about the speaker and to the legislative documentation under discussion. This information changes automatically when the video feed changes. All information is updated live every 30-60 seconds. There are also static links to general information about the Finnish Parliament. Webcasts are archived and updated automatically.

Mr. Leskinen then illustrated the technical architecture behind the system. He showed the separate session hall architecture and the architecture for multi-channel output (webcasting, web, and TV) and pointed out that both sides are connected via an integration server. Adding channels and servers is easy since the system is XML based.

During a rich and lively discussion participants shared their experiences in recording

plenary proceeding and discussed the benefits and challenges of the systems adopted, and the difficulties in implementing them. They raised the importance of having a platform to continue to exchange views on these issues, and discuss concrete solutions. Representatives of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament noted that a specific workshop is to be organized by the Centre on this topic in order to exchange knowledge and experiences. The establishment of a Working Group to share lessons learned is also under discussion.

Participants asked whether open source solutions for recording sessions are available. Panelists noted there are some existing solutions such as Sphinx software for speech to text, and others are under development.

Enhancing research services for members and committees through ICT

This session focused on the capacity of parliaments to respond to the research and information needs of members and committees. Special attention was given to solutions for providing library and research services using modern technologies.

Ms. Marianne Gei-Khoibes, Chair of the session and Director of Library and Computer Services at the National Assembly of Namibia, emphasized the important role that parliamentary research services play in collecting, organizing and disseminating information. Despite the improvements in timely access to the information brought on by ICT, the creation of knowledge that is useful to legislators from the vast amount of data available remains a daunting challenge that requires skilled librarians, information specialists and policy analysts.

Ms. Rae Ellen Best, Librarian of the U.S. House of Representatives, gave an overview of the tools and databases in use in the U.S. House of Representatives. These include the commercial database LexisNexis Congressional, Thomas, FDsys and Westlaw. She described the process by which a bill becomes a law in the U.S. In a simplified scenario, a draft bill is introduced in the House and sent to a Committee and then to the floor for a vote. It is then considered and voted on by the Senate. In case of differences between the House and the Senate versions of the bill, it goes to Conference for reconciliation, after which it is voted on for a final time in the House and Senate. If it passes both chambers, it is sent to the President to be signed into law. Many documents are generated during the process, the most significant of which are bills, committee reports, committee prints, House documents, hearings, debates/floor proceedings, Conference reports, and roll call votes. The House Library tracks the process and retrieves various documents, old and recent, for the members of Congress. The House Library is a legislative and legal reference library founded in 1792. Maintained by the Clerk of the House, it is a depository by law of all House documents. The Library's website provides access to parliamentary documents, committee hearings, roll call votes, as well as "Hot Topic" dossiers on important bills of the moment.

The LexisNexis database is a commercial application which digitized the majority of congressional publications going as far back as the first Congress in 1789. Various search criteria are possible in the database, including keywords. Each document is assigned a durable URL that allows immediate retrieval of a specific record. Documents are tagged and stored in PDF, including not only text, but also images, maps and charts.

The Thomas application, on the Library of Congress website, also allows tracking and searching of bills introduced on the House floor as well as congressional actions. FDsys, managed by the Government Printing Office, ensures the authentication and validity of documents published by the Congress.

Westlaw is a commercial database that provides a graphical overview of the history and references of all versions of a bill. It also offers a hierarchical view of statutes published in the U.S. Code.

Mr. John Pullinger, Director General and Librarian of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, emphasized the important role of parliamentary libraries and research services in informing legislators as a cornerstone of a successful democracy. He reported on recent activities of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments, which discussed developments in “digital information for democracy: management, access and preservation” at the annual pre-conference of the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments in Rome in August 2009. At a conference in Geneva in 2008 focusing on “Informing democracy: building capacity to meet parliamentarians’ information and knowledge needs”, librarians stressed the importance of dialogue and coordination of initiatives across regions, a challenge taken up in the European region by the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation.

Acknowledging that the level of service provided by librarians using traditional means is good but no longer sufficient, Mr. Pullinger called for a dramatic change in the relationship between parliamentary libraries and technology. In the United Kingdom, young-

er parliamentarians, more familiar with the mobile and online world and coming from the “Google generation”, are accustomed to finding information online and are therefore technically more demanding. Parliamentary libraries and research services must innovate and offer faster, cheaper, and personalized services that are uniquely valuable to members of parliaments. Furthermore, libraries face environmental sustainability imperatives to cut the use of paper, heat, power, space. Harnessing information technology is key to meeting such challenges. In this regard, Mr. Pullinger identified five needs that can be fulfilled by technology: handling of inquiries from and interaction with members of parliament; creation of new personalized services to be delivered on mobile devices or designed for the online environment; a suite of parliamentary information management services with close integration with upstream procedural applications and downstream internet and intranet offerings; content digitization and management of digital assets; and, knowledge management and sharing within the parliament and also with other parliaments.

Mr. Pullinger called for close partnership between the library and technology departments in addressing these needs. He described the example of the Parliament-wide ICT Advisory Board in the U.K., which includes the Librarian, the Director of Parliamentary ICT, as well as other senior officials from both Houses of the Parliament. Its mandate is to ensure integration between the ICT Department and the rest of the parliamentary business groups. Such an approach, based on good relationships and joint problem-solving, is critical to the success of the library and research service in harnessing technology to meet the needs of parliamentarians.

Mr. Alim Garga, Deputy Director of the Li-

brary and Information Services in the National Assembly of Cameroon, reiterated the importance of parliamentary library services in a successful democracy and provided an overview of the National Assembly of Cameroon and its library. ICT are being introduced in the management of information at the library. The library offers information and research services as well as multimedia services to parliamentarians. With technical assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the website of the National Assembly has been revamped and a digital library is being developed in cooperation with the World Bank. In planning the introduction of ICT, Mr. Garga advocated for proper awareness-raising and training of relevant stakeholders.

Mr. Santo Voeuk, Director of Library and Research Services of the Senate of Cambodia, also highlighted the importance of library services and identified some key challenges he faces in fulfilling his mandate, notably, the lack of qualified personnel, limited resources, outdated technology, lack of basic infrastructure, and inadequate use of the Internet as a tool to promote library services and to share parliamentary information. In order to address these shortcomings, the Senate of Cambodia, in cooperation with development partners, including the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, has initiated a strategy to modernize the library and introduce ICT tools in the Senate. Mr. Voeuk reported on the outcome of two assessment missions conducted by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, which recommended the establishment in the Senate of an ICT Department and an ICT Advisory Council composed of both senators and staff, as well as training for relevant staff.

Mr. Voeuk called on the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to mobilize resources to

strengthen the ICT system in the Parliament of Cambodia.

Ms. Raissa Teodori, Secretary of the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments and Head of the Special Collections Office at the Library of the Senate of Italy, provided an overview of the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services. Composed of 111 members from more than 50 countries, it is the largest professional network dealing with library and information services in the parliamentary environment. Its main goals are to build capacity and share best practices through annual conferences and workshops. The IFLA Section is aware of the role that ICT can play in strengthening parliamentary information services. The World e-Parliament Report 2008 identified parliamentary libraries as early adopters of ICT tools. The Section is updating the Guidelines for Legislative Libraries, to be published in December 2009, to take into account the changes in the provision of information services due to the development of the Internet and ICT management tools. There is a variety of practices already in place, as numerous innovative developments have occurred in the last few years across the world. The IFLA Section currently focuses on building on these experiences and learning from best practices and successes. In doing so, the Section acknowledges the added value of ICT tools and endeavors to explore not if, but when and how they must be used, taking into account that ICT should not lead the process but rather contribute to meeting the users' information needs.

Ms. Teodori reported on the 25th Annual Pre-conference of the Section, which took place in Rome in August 2009 and focused on "Digital Information for Democracy: Management, Access and Preservation". More than 200 librarians, researchers and IT man-

agers representing 64 countries and 86 legislative assemblies and many other national and international organizations, including many newcomers from developing countries, took part in four days of intensive discussions on the state of the art in the use of ICT in parliamentary information services. Referring to a number of examples and best practices, she identified the key topics explored during the pre-conference. They included: websites (Internet and Intranet) and digital reference/information services, digitization processes, social networking tools, improved efficiency of traditional library services through automation and ICT, and open source software. As a result of this pre-conference meeting, participants made the following key recommendations: they emphasized the importance of having a vision, clear policies, and needs assessments; they called for supporting the role of librarians in innovation through ICT by building cooperative relations with IT experts, leveraging the expertise of others, using standards, and cooperating and networking at different levels with parliamentary and non-parliamentary libraries.

In conjunction with this pre-conference meeting, the IFLA Section and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament organized a training workshop on “Leveraging Technology for Parliamentary Libraries and Research Services”, which targeted 45 librarians and IT experts from over 20 developing countries.

In concluding her presentation, Ms. Teodori

re-emphasized that technology must support the goals of the users and not drive the agenda, provide added value, and respond to real needs and not simply be a toy.

In the ensuing discussions, participants raised a range of issues concerning the marketing of library services to members of parliaments, outreach and advocacy for international networks, and increased cooperation at the regional level.

Participants and panelists explored ways to encourage those parliaments that do not yet participate in IFLA to join the network, touting its value as a unique platform for the exchange of innovative ideas, experience, and lessons-learned. They requested the IFLA Section to be more active at the regional level, as a way to address the specific needs of individual countries and reduce the cost of participation in international events for staff with limited resources in developing countries. The relatively low level of participation from the Latin American Region in the IFLA network as compared to other regions was noted and participants expressed the wish that the 2011 IFLA conference, scheduled to take place in Porto Rico, will be a catalyst for a network in the region. Parliaments in the Latin America region were invited to take the lead in committing to the establishment of a network.

Participants noted, however, the low level of awareness within parliaments of the value of library services. In this regards, they called on libraries to be more proactive in marketing themselves to members of parliaments, using technology to communicate with them and anticipate their needs. They urged the IFLA Section to include the issue in its agenda and provide training to its members on how to market their services.



Closing remarks

The closing session was moderated by **Ms. Lorraine Miller**, Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, who introduced the speakers.

Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, recalled the broad spectrum of issues covered by the Conference and expressed satisfaction with the progress made and the convergence of views on some of the key themes. He highlighted that participants agreed that international and regional inter-parliamentary cooperation must be strengthened to facilitate sharing of resources. They also stressed the importance of new media, which bring the public closer to parliamentary institutions and offer new opportunities to enhance the dialogue between citizens and their elected officials. There was also general agreement that open standards offer a great potential for sharing legislative information and making it more accessible.

Mr. Sha stressed the importance of greater involvement, cooperation and coordination among parliaments, governments, international organizations, academic institutions and donors to make progress in the use of ICT to support parliaments' legislative, oversight and representational functions. He underscored that the United Nations will remain committed to supporting the ongoing transformation of parliaments through ICT.

He concluded by thanking the U.S. House of Representatives and the Inter-Parliamentary Union for their steadfast cooperation, and congratulating Honorable Max Vuyisile Sisulu, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, and Honorable Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy for their elections as new co-Chairs of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. He then recognized the contributions made by the Italian Development Cooperation, the House Democracy Partnership, USAID, the European Parliament and the Inter-American Development Bank for ensuring participation from developing nations in the World e-Parliament Conference 2009.

Mr. Mohamed Abou Zeid, Member of the Parliament of Egypt, delivered closing remarks on behalf of **Dr. Ahmed Fathy Sorour**, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt and co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. He underscored the successful outcome of the World e-Parliament Conference that provided participants with the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences.

He stated that many of the ideas on the use of ICT in parliament discussed during the past years have materialized and many of the initiatives have become projects. The dialogue on ICT and its role in strengthening democracy is no longer limited to a relatively small group of parliaments but it has extended to include parliaments from all the continents of the globe. He encouraged participants to keep their enthusiasm and continue to discuss these issues as new technologies emerge. He concluded by highlighting the importance of inter-parliamentary cooperation to address global problems.

Ms. Ildiko Gall Pelcz, Deputy-Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly and co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, thanked the U.S. House of Representatives for hosting the Conference, and the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament for the organization of the event.

She stated that the Conference proved the importance of a dialogue between young and old democracies and highlighted that ICT can help strengthen democracy all over the world. Ms. Pelcz stressed the role of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament in facilitating inter-parliamentary cooperation and promoting the use of ICT in parliaments from developing countries.

She underscored the importance of mobilizing parliaments and parliamentary communities to create a fair, just and inclusive information society, a closer relationship between legislative assemblies and constituencies, and improved access to national legislative processes. She highlighted the importance of working together through a well-coordinated, more powerful technical cooperation programme.

Mr. Anders Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, stressed that the World e-Parliament Conference 2009 proved to be a useful platform for the exchange of information and experiences among parliaments on how ICT can help them become more effective institutions. The Conference also gave the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament a good sense of the future agenda and showed where to improve in the organization of these meetings.

He thanked the United Nations and the team of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament for their efforts and strong commitment that made the event possible. Mr. Johnsson also thanked the leadership and staff of the U.S. House of Representatives for hosting the Conference so well and for the warm welcome received by all participants.

He concluded by recalling some of the main themes discussed at the Conference, such as the importance of ICT to engage new generations in politics, the use of open standards, and the importance of citizens' involvement in political processes through ICT.

Ms. Lorraine Miller, Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, stated that the success of the World e-Parliament Conference 2009 can be judged by the great interaction between representatives of parliaments from many different countries as they explored opportunities to make legislative processes more productive.

She thanked the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament for co-organizing the event. She expressed thanks to the staff of the U.S. House of Representatives for their work and to all participants for sharing their concerns and best practices.

Ms. Miller then adjourned the World e-Parliament Conference 2009.



Summary

During many rich and lively exchanges panelists and participants discussed the benefits and challenges of ICT in the legislative setting and shared their own experiences and views. They frequently underscored the value of the World e-Parliament Conference as an ongoing platform to consider common problems and learn from the solutions of others. The meeting demonstrated the importance of continuing the dialogue between legislatures, and highlighted the contribution ICT can make to strengthening democracy all over the world. The following is a summary of some of the main points of those discussions.

- ICT have brought an increase in civic engagement and an unprecedented expansion of opportunities to enable people to participate in the political life of the country. A new kind of public sphere - based on the Internet and new forms of social connectivity – is emerging that is leading to an expansion of the democratic arena and a renewal of the relationship between politics and citizens. This evolution, however, has coincided with growing citizen disaffection from politics and a decline of trust in political institutions. The challenge for parliaments is to better understand how technology is affecting society and the relationship between citizens and representative institutions in order to find ways to exploit it to make the legislature more relevant to those it serves.
- While fostering the adoption of technology, parliaments and legislators have the responsibility to ensure that it supports the cardinal principles underpinning parliamentary democracy - transparency, openness, accountability, accessibility – and in increasing the effectiveness of lawmaking, scrutiny and representation. They must make sure that ICT are used for citizens' effective participation in the governance process, for a diversity of views to be expressed and considered, and for engaging the younger generations for whom ICT is a central part of their way of life.
- ICT alone, however, do not make a legislature stronger or more efficient. ICT need to be integrated with parliamentary processes and not adopted in isolation from efforts to improve the capacities of the parliaments to legislate, to hold governments to account, to achieve greater independence, and to enable members to be more effective and more responsive. This process of innovation requires vision, sound governance, and strategic planning. The realization of an e-parliament also needs a coherent change management strategy, mutual understanding between the political and technical worlds, and a pool of ICT staff that understands the parliamentary culture and its processes.
- Websites have become a major resource for legislative bodies to reach different audiences through multiple channels. There is also increasing pressure for parliamentary websites to provide a complete information and communication ecosystem within which members of parliament can perform much of their work. Appropriate time and resources should be devoted to website development and planning as they are critical to the way in which legislatures communicate and disseminate well organized and unbiased information to the public and interact with it.
- Alternatives to parliament-run online platforms have been developed by non-governmental organizations to provide citizens with additional instruments to scrutinize the

parliamentary environment. These websites have attracted the public's interest by combining new methods of representing and retrieving of information with social networking layers that support civic engagement. Parliaments would benefit from the adoption of some of the most useful of these innovations on their institutional portals to better respond to citizens' information needs.

- Some parliaments have added new media - such as MySpace, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Twitter, and Wikis – to their traditional channels of communication with a view to being closer to the electorate and facilitating dialogue between members and the public. In adopting these instruments, parliaments should consider the experience of other legislatures, be ready to experiment, and continuously evaluate their results.
- Parliamentary information systems are critical to achieving effective workflows, efficient legislative processes, and timeliness in the publication of documentation. In countries lacking financial and technical resources, collaborative software development among partnering legislatures offers a unique opportunity to leverage limited funds for deploying such systems and to ensure a high quality and sustainable documentation process.
- Over time legislatures have adopted an array of technologies in their plenary halls to facilitate the work of members during proceedings and to provide the public with access to accurate information about what is occurring in the session. A few parliaments have become technology leaders in this area as demonstrated by their capacity to integrate hardware, software, and sophisticated systems on the floor. As these technologies become standard components of an e-parliament, the knowledge that these legislatures have gained needs to be shared systematically, with others parliaments.
- Methods for recording and making available plenary and committee sessions have changed dramatically in recent years. However, among developing countries there is still a strong need for low cost solutions to the challenge of providing a timely and accurate record of proceedings. There is an opportunity and a clearly expressed interest in sharing solutions for meeting these requirements through workshops and the exchange of knowledge through online working groups.
- XML is at a crucial stage in its development in parliaments. Significant and highly beneficial discussions on XML are emerging across continents, in Europe, Africa, and Latin America. Despite apparent widespread commitment to the goal of using this open standard, implementation has been lagging for a variety of reasons, including technical complexity, the requirement to have well trained staff, and the necessity for better tools. There is an evident and pressing requirement for the sharing of knowledge in this critical area and for cooperative initiatives to support parliaments adopting XML, including by showcasing success stories and by looking at the international convergence of existing schemas.
- ICT security has become a serious issue for parliaments which cannot be ignored. It requires the appropriate technology, skilled staff, and adequate resources to sustain both. Security is also a global issue, one that a single parliament cannot solve on its own. This calls for engagement with other public and private institutions at the national and international levels and for further sharing of experiences among partnering legislatures.

- Access to information underpins citizens' involvement in political processes and the work of members of parliament themselves. Members' enormous information needs can best be met by effective and well-resourced parliamentary library and research services making full use of new technologies for collecting, managing and sharing information. Efforts should be made by parliamentary bodies to sustain the testing and adoption of the newest collaborative technologies and to seek synergies at both regional and global levels to improve these services.
- The current environment holds great promise for the strengthening of parliaments through ICT: the technology is available, the knowledge of how to use it is increasing steadily, and there is a growing desire to learn from each other. However, a great deal still needs to be done by the international community, including by technologically advanced legislatures, to support parliaments in developing nations to achieve this goal.
- Inter-parliamentary cooperation and the sharing of knowledge is one of the least expensive and potentially most effective ways for parliaments to enhance their use of technology. At the regional level, despite language and communication barriers, collaboration offers unique opportunities to share resources, overcome lack of know-how, and establish common approaches. Extending support to the growth of formal parliamentary networks in developing regions can provide important contributions to future achievements.
- Despite the obstacles posed by the digital divide, parliaments in emerging democracies and developing nations cannot ignore ICT even if investments appear expensive. Appropriate and cost effective communication technologies, based on the latest developments, can in fact be leveraged to support a more informed, competent, transparent, and accountable legislature. There is a need for these legislatures to commit their own resources to ICT improvements as an important means to enhance their law-making, oversight, and representative responsibilities.
- The international community and the world of parliaments should unite around the principles of the ten-year strategic plan advocated by the high-level Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to provide predictable, coherent and coordinated support to parliaments in developing nations. These principles aim to: a) foster national and international policies to create an information society that is equitable and inclusive; b) enhance the connection between legislatures and constituencies; c) improve the equality of access to the law and the lawmaking process of the country; d) ensure that legislatures around the world can harness ICT tools in the service of their legislative, oversight, and representative functions; e) develop a more robust and well coordinated programme of technical assistance on ICT in parliaments.

World e-Parliament Conference 2009
3, 4 and 5 November 2009
U. S. House of Representatives - Washington, D.C.

Joint Press Release

Modern information and communication technology is essential to democracy and development. It can play a hugely important role in ensuring that parliament and political processes are accessible to the public and that people can influence political decisions. ICT is central to ensuring that work carried out in Parliament is effective, transparent and accessible and parliament and parliamentarians are accountable to the public. Yet, there is a substantive gap in most parliaments between what is possible to achieve with ICT and what is being accomplished. Lack of resources is one cause of this problem. An absence of clear understanding among parliaments of what can actually be achieved is another. This has implications not only for the efficiency of parliamentary operations, but also for the quality of relations between parliament and citizens and therefore also of democracy itself.

The third World e-Parliament Conference in Washington D.C. from 3 to 5 November 2009, which was hosted by Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, addressed these challenges. It brought together four hundred elected members and staff of ninety-five parliaments. Delegates discussed how to connect parliaments and citizens and how to strengthen parliaments through better use of ICT. They debated the new social media and other internet based communication tools, including issues of security and reliability. They exchanged experiences of ICT strategic planning, ICT in legislative processes and parliamentary websites, to mention a few examples.

Some of the main conclusions that emerged during the debates:

- There is an opportunity for parliaments to engage a new generation of citizens for whom ICT is central to their way of life in political and parliamentary processes. In this way, their views could be heard and taken into account as parliaments debate and decide on major policies and legislations.
- The adoption of open standards will allow parliaments to be more transparent and accountable to citizens. Parliaments will also be better equipped to facilitate regional and global cooperation and integration. Many issues requiring legislative action in today's globalized world are in fact common problems that require concerted solutions.
- Access to information underpins citizens' involvement in political processes and indeed the work of members of parliament themselves. Members' enormous information needs can best be met by effective and well-resourced parliamentary library and research services making full use of new technologies for collecting, managing and sharing information.

The World e-Parliament Conference 2009 is an initiative of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, which was created by the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2006. The Board of the Global Centre met on the margins of the Conference to discuss its future work programme and to adopt the principles of a 10-year strategic plan for stimulating parliamentary action to develop modern information societies and expanding the use of ICT in parliaments.

The long-term goals advocated by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament cannot be achieved without greater involvement, cooperation and coordination among parliaments, governments, international organizations, academic institutions and donors. Inter-parliamentary cooperation in particular is a critical factor for success. Investing in ICT helps to strengthen parliaments, thereby advancing good governance and democracy and contributing to the attainment of internationally agreed development goals.

Picture references

- p. 5 **Ms. Nancy Pelosi**, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
- p. 6 **Mr. Sha Zukang**, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations
- p. 9 **Mr. Anders B. Johnsson**, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- p. 11 **Mr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour**, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt
- p. 15 **Ms. Ildikó Gáll Pelcz**, Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly
- p. 18 **Ms. Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo**, Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana
- p. 19 **Mr. Julio César Valentín**, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic
- p. 20 **Mr. Maurizio Lupi**, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy
- p. 21 **Ms. Cathy McMorris Rodgers**, Vice Chair of the House Republican Conference of the U.S. House of Representatives
- p. 22 *From left to right:* **Mr. Harry Jenkins**, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Australia; **Mr. Andy Richardson**, Information Specialist of the Inter-Parliamentary Union; **Mr. Julio César Valentín**, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic; **Mr. Edward J. Markey**, Chair of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming of the U.S. House of Representatives
- p. 25 **Mr. Jani Makraduli**, Vice President of the Assembly of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; **Mr. Mninwa J. Mahlangu**, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa; **Mr. Justin Koumba**, President of the National Assembly of Congo; **Ms. Diana Wallis**, Vice President of the European Parliament
- p. 27 **Mr. Mninwa J. Mahlangu**, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa ; **Mr. Justin Koumba**, President of the National Assembly of Congo; **Ms. Daniela Giacomelli**, Programme Officer of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament; **Ms. Diana Wallis**, Vice President of the European Parliament; **Mr. David Price**, Chair of the House Democracy Partnership and Chair of the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives
- p. 29 **Mr. William T. Pound**, Executive Director of National Conference of State Legislature (NCSL); **Mr. Piotr Nowina-Konopka**, co-Director of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) and Director for Relations with National Parliaments of the European Parliament; **Mr. Mohamed Abou Zeid**, Member of the Parliament of Egypt; **Mr. Hafnaoui Amrani**, President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) and Secretary General of the Council of the Nation of Algeria; **Mr. Serge Kapto**, Programme Officer of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament; **Mr. Lim In Gyu**, Deputy Secretary General of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea; **Ms. Moira Fraser**, Chair of the IFLA Parliamentary Library and Research Services Section and Librarian of the Parliament of New Zealand
- p. 34 **Mr. James Michel**, U.S. Ambassador and Counselor to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- p. 36 **Mr. Hafnaoui Amrani**, President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) and Secretary General of the Council of the Nation of Algeria
- p. 38 **Mr. Paul Mitchell**, Manager of the Development Communication Division of the World Bank
- p. 42 **Mr. Mzi Mbangula**, Divisional Head, Corporate Services (ICT) of the Parliament of South Africa; **Mr. Ian Harris**, Clerk of the House of Representatives of Australia; **Ms. Marilyn B. Barua-Yap**, Secretary General of the House of Representatives of the Philippines
- p. 44 **Mr. Carlos Magno Cataldi Santoro**, Chief Information Officer of the Senate of Brazil; **Ms. Adelina Sá Carvalho**, Secretary General of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal; **Ms. Matilda Katopola**, Secretary General of the Parliament of Malawi; **Mr. Avinash Bikha**, Programme Officer of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament; **Ms. Raissa Teodori**, Head of the Special Collections Office of the Library of the Senate of Italy; **Ms. Ellen Miller**, Executive Director and co-founder of the Sunlight Foundation
- p. 49 **Mr. Sérgio Sampaio de Almeida**, Director General of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil; **Mr. James G. Kwanya Rege**, Member of the Parliament of Kenya
- p. 51 **Mr. Stephen Clark**, Head of Web Communications of the European Parliament; **Mr. Patricio Alvarez Cabezas**, Director of IT of the Senate of Chile
- p. 53 **Mr. Patricio Alvarez Cabezas**, Director of IT of the Senate of Chile; **Ms. Andréa Perna**, Manager of the Legislative Governance Bureau, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil; **Mr. Sérgio Sampaio de Almeida**, Director General of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil; **Mr. James G. Kwanya Rege**, Member of the Parliament of Kenya; **Ms. Daniela Giacomelli**, Programme Officer of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament; **Karina Newton**, Director of New Media, Office of the Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives; **Mr. Stephen Clark**, Head of Web Communications of the European Parliament;
- p. 57 **Mr. Oleksiy Sydorenko**, Head of the Computer Systems (IT) Department of the Parliament of Ukraine; **Mr. Shin Hang Jin**, Director of the Legislative Information System Office, National Assembly of the Republic of Korea; **Mr. Luc Blondeel**, Secretary General of the Senate of Belgium; **Mr. Andy Richardson**, Information Specialist of the Inter-Parliamentary Union; **Mr. Hernán Figueroa**, Director of IT of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile ; **Mr. João Viegas d'Abreu**, Director of IT, Assembly of the Republic of Portugal and ECPRD Coordinator of the ICT Working Group
- p. 82 **Ms. Raissa Teodori**, Head of the Special Collections Office of the Library of the Senate of Italy; **Mr. Alim Garga**, Deputy Director of the Library and Information Services in the National Assembly of Cameroon; **Ms. Rae Ellen Best**, Librarian of the U.S. House of Representatives; **Ms. Marianne Gei-Khoibes**, Director of Library and Computer Services at the National Assembly of Namibia **Mr. John Pullinger**, Director General and Librarian of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Parliament; **Mr. Santo Voeuk**, Director of Library and Research Services of the Senate of Cambodia
- p. 84 **Ms. Lorraine Miller**, Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives

Agenda

3 November 2009

12:00 pm - 02:00 pm	Arrival and registration of delegates
02:00 pm - 03:00 pm	<p>Official Opening of the World e-Parliament Conference 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives • Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations • Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union • Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt and co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament • Ildiko Gall Pelcz, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary and co-Chair of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament
03:00 pm - 04:30 pm	<p>High-level panel Connecting Parliaments and citizens: new technologies to foster openness, transparency and accountability</p> <p><i>Chair: Harry Jenkins, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Australia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo, Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana • Julio César Valentín, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic • Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy • Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Member of Congress, Vice Chair of the House Republican Conference, U.S. House of Representatives • Edward J. Markey, Chairman of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, U.S. House of Representatives <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
04:30 pm - 06:00 pm	<p>High-level panel How ICT can strengthen Parliaments in young and emerging democracies</p> <p><i>Chair: Justin Koumba, President of the National Assembly of Congo</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mninwa J. Mahlangu, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa • Diana Wallis, Vice President of the European Parliament • Jani Makraduli, Vice President of the Assembly of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia • David Price, Chairman of the House Democracy Partnership and Chairman of the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, U.S. House of Representatives <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
06:30 pm - 08:30 pm	Welcoming reception hosted by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives

Agenda

4 November 2009

09:00 am - 10:45 am	Parallel sessions
General session	<p>ICT Strategic Planning, Management and Oversight: the complexity of the legislature environment</p> <p><i>Chair: Marilyn B. Barua-Yap, Secretary General of the House of Representatives of the Philippines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anders Forsberg, Secretary General of the Parliament of Sweden• Ian Harris, Clerk of the House of Representatives of Australia• Mzi Mbangula, Divisional Head, Corporate Services (ICT), Parliament of South Africa <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
Specialized session	<p>Open standards for parliamentary documentation: cooperative approaches</p> <p><i>Chair: Flavio Zeni, Chief Technical Adviser, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• João Alberto de Oliveira Lima, Systems Analyst, Federal Senate of Brazil• Monica Palmirani, Associate Professor of Legal Informatics, CIRSIFID, University of Bologna• Tom Van Engers, Professor of Legal Knowledge Management, Leibniz Center for Law, University of Amsterdam• Flemming Sorensen, Head of Service, Directorate for Information Technologies, Directorate General for Innovation and Technological Support, European Parliament <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
10:45 am - 11:15 am	Coffee break
11:15 am - 01:00 pm	Parallel sessions
General session	<p>How parliamentary websites can serve different purposes and users</p> <p><i>Chair: Matilda Katopola, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Malawi</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adelina Sá Carvalho, Secretary General of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal• Alessandro Palanza, Deputy Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy• Carlos Magno Cataldi Santoro, CIO, Senate of Brazil• Ellen Miller, Executive Director, Sunlight Foundation <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
Specialized session	<p>Implementing XML in Parliament</p> <p><i>Chair: Andreas Sidler, CIO, Parliament of Switzerland</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kirsten Gullickson, Senior Systems Analyst, and Cindy Leach, Projects Director, U.S. House of Representatives• Arik Fischel, Head of the IT Department, Parliament of Israel• Bruno Penne, IT Expert, House of Representatives of Belgium• Brian Keenan, ParInfo Administrator, Publishing Section Information Access Branch, Department of Parliamentary Services, Parliament of Australia <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>

01:00 pm - 02:30 pm	Lunch break
02:30 pm - 03:45 pm	<p>How important are international and regional networks to support the responsibilities of Parliaments?</p> <p><i>Chair: Hafnaoui Amrani, President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament (ASGP) and Secretary General, Council of the Nation of Algeria</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohamed Abou Zeid, Member of the Parliament of Egypt • Lim In Gyu, Deputy Secretary General of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea • Piotr Nowina-Konopka, co-Director of the ECPRD and Director for Relations with National Parliaments, European Parliament • William T. Pound, Executive Director, National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) • Moir Fraser, Chair of the IFLA Parliamentary Library and Research Services Section and Librarian of the Parliament of New Zealand <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
03:45 pm - 04:15 pm	Coffee break
04:15 pm - 06:00 pm	Parallel sessions
Special event	<p>The use of new social media and other Internet communication tools in the parliamentary environment: lessons learned</p> <p><i>Chair: James G. Kwanya Rege, Member of the Parliament of Kenya</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sérgio Sampaio de Almeida, Director General and Andréa Perna, Manager, Legislative Governance Bureau, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil • Patricio Alvarez Cabezas, Director of IT, Senate of Chile • Stephen Clark, Head of Web Communications, European Parliament <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
	<p>Security and reliability of technical infrastructures: challenges for parliaments</p> <p><i>Chair: Javier de Andrés Blasco, Coordinator, Center for Information and Communication Technologies, Congress of Deputies, Spain</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lou Magnotti, Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, U.S. House of Representatives • David Addow-Quarshie, IT Director, Parliament of Ghana • Antonio Saad, ICT Director, National Assembly of Panama <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
06:30 pm - 08:30 pm	Reception hosted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union
General session	
Specialized session	

Agenda

5 November 2009

09:00 am - 10:45 am	Parallel sessions
General session	<p>Systems for managing the lifecycle of legislative documentation <i>Chair: José Pedro Montero, Secretary General of the House of Representatives of Uruguay</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innis Montgomery, Director of Technology, Parliamentary ICT, Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland • Fernando Milan Zuber, IT Director, Chamber of Deputies of Mexico • Cecilia Matanga, Programme Officer, Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, UN/DESA <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
Specialized session	<p>Technology options for recording and reporting floor and committee proceedings <i>Chair: Jeff Griffith, Senior Advisor, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Reeves, Deputy Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives • Paulo Henrique Alves Araújo, Project Manager, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil • Carlo Marchetti, Head of the Information Systems Development Office of the Senate of Italy • Juha-Pekka Leskinen, IT Manager, and Petteri Nyman, Web Producer, Parliament of Finland <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
10:45 am - 11:15 am	Coffee break
11:15 am - 01:00 pm	Parallel sessions
General session	<p>Chamber technologies: experiences and trends <i>Chair: Luc Blondeel, Secretary General of the Senate of Belgium</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shin Hang Jin, Director, Legislative Information System Office, Assembly of the Republic of Korea • Oleksiy Sydorenko, Head, Computer Systems (IT) Department, Parliament of Ukraine • Hernán Figueroa, Director of IT, Chamber of Deputies of Chile • João Viegas Abreu, Director of IT, National Assembly of Portugal and ECPRD Coordinator of the ICT Working Group <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
Specialized session	<p>Enhancing research services for members and committees through ICT <i>Chair: Marianne Gei-Khoibes, Director Library and Computer Services, National Assembly of Namibia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rae Ellen Best, Librarian, US House of Representatives • John Pullinger, Director General and Librarian, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland • Alim Garga, Deputy Director, Library and Information Services, National Assembly of Cameroon • Santo Voeuk, Director of Library and Research Services, Senate of Cambodia • Raissa Teodori, Secretary, IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments and Head of the Special Collections Office, Library, Senate of Italy <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
01:00 pm - 02:30 pm	Lunch break

02:30 pm - 05:30 pm	High-level panel
High-level panel	<p>Promoting democracy and inter-parliamentary cooperation: a collaborative approach to institutional building through a shared framework for e-parliament</p> <p><i>Chair: Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations</i></p> <p>Presentation: <i>The status of ICT in Parliament</i> - Jeff Griffith, Senior Advisor, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament</p> <p><i>Interventions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union • James Michel, Ambassador, Counselor to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) • Hafnaoui Amrani, President, Association of Secretaries General of Parliament (ASGP) and Secretary General, Council of the Nation of Algeria • Julie T. Katzman, General Manager of the Multilateral Investment Fund • Paul Mitchell, Manager of the Development Communication Division, The World Bank <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
	05:30 pm - 06:00 pm
06:00 pm - 08:00 pm	Capitol tours