

Delegation Report

Sixth Westminster Workshop on Parliamentary Financial Oversight of Aid Effectiveness July 4 to 7, 2016



Sen. Allyson Baksh
Dr. Lackram Bodoë, MP
Ms. Candice Skerrette

Approval and Travel Details

Cabinet approved the attendance of Sen. Allyson Baksh, Government Senator, Dr. Lakram Bodoie, MP, Member for Fyzabad and Ms. Candice Skerrette, Procedural Clerk to attend the Sixth Westminster Workshop on Parliamentary Financial Oversight of Aid Effectiveness held at the Houses of Parliament, London, United Kingdom from July 4 to 7, 2016.

Sen. Allyson Baksh, Dr. Lakram Bodoie and Ms. Candice Skerrette departed Trinidad and Tobago on Saturday July 02, 2016 and arrived on Sunday July 03, 2016. For the outward journey, the delegation departed London on Friday July 08, 2016 for Trinidad and Tobago.

Conference Attendance

The Conference was attended by forty-eight (48) members and (23) parliamentary officials from twenty nine (29) parliaments. The list of participants is provided in the Appendix.

Workshop Overview

The Sixth Westminster Workshop identified the key stages for parliamentary interventions and sought to strengthen the knowledge and skills of parliamentarians and parliamentary officials in conducting effective financial oversight of aid flows. The programme explored regulatory frameworks required to ensure that parliaments are an integral stakeholder in the aid management cycle.

Workshop Aim

To enhance the capacity and effectiveness of parliamentarians and parliamentary officials in the financial scrutiny and oversight of aid by both aid donors and recipient countries. It looked at the different structures and approaches across the Commonwealth.

Workshop Objectives

The Workshop explored:

- the role of parliaments in the oversight of aid effectiveness;
- the role of parliaments in financial oversight of development finance;
- how to strengthen outreach and engagement with development actors;
- similarities and differences between Commonwealth legislatures highlighting good practice examples;
- how to run an independent and effective Public Accounts Committee (PAC);
- tracking performance and measuring committee effectiveness;
- strengthening legislative budget scrutiny practices;
- building mechanisms for transparency and curbing corruption in the development sector;
- the importance of effective data collection and aid reporting for informed decision making;
- possible solutions to the common issues faced by small legislatures;
- ensuring gender-sensitive approaches in budgeting and auditing practices; and

- Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees (CAPAC) benchmarking processes.

Welcome and Introductions

Welcome addresses were expressed by Mr. Andrew Tuggey, CBE, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), United Kingdom (UK), Chief Executive and Mr. Ian Liddell-Grainger MP, Chair of the Executive Committee. Thereafter, all delegates introduced themselves. On behalf of all at CPA, UK and all participants of the workshop, Mr. Andrew Tuggey expressed condolences to those affected by last week's terrorist attack in Dhaka.



Workshop Sessions

The Conference took place at the United Kingdom Houses of Parliament, London. The workshop venue was Portcullis House which is adjacent to the Palace of Westminster and plenary sessions were conducted at the Attlee Suite.

Session 1: Oversight of the Effectiveness of Aid – What is the role of Parliaments?

The first session gave an overview of the role of parliamentarians in overseeing the effectiveness of aid and was chaired by Rt Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP, former International Development Secretary.

The session examined tools that parliaments need to conduct effective oversight of development. Mr. Mitchell stressed the importance of having an independent watchdog to demonstrate objectively that aid money was well spent, noting that the UK Government set up the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) in 2011.

Mr. Hugo Gorst-Williams, representative from the Department for International Development (DfID), informed delegates of the important role for political institutions, including parliaments, set out in the recent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that parliaments can be a platform for lesson-learning and knowledge-sharing. The session's second speaker, Lord Chidgey, Liberal Democrat Peer called on parliaments to be recognised as key state institutions and not merely stakeholders, noting that they were the elected voice of the people.

Session 2: Post-2015 Aid Architecture - The Complex Age of Choice?

The second session took a more in-depth look at the post-2015 aid architecture and was chaired by Rt Hon. Lord Bruce of Bennachie, former Chair of the House of Commons International Development Committee.

An EU-perspective was brought by Ms. Chantal Marijnissen, Deputy Head of Unit, DG EuropeAid, European Commission who stressed that the EU links development co-operation with security and foreign policies.

Dr. Annalisa Prizzon from the Overseas Development Institute gave a presentation on research carried out to investigate the range of financing options now available, noting that development financing is now in an "age of choice". She added that this made it even more vital for development partners to give developing countries what they actually need.

The final speaker of this session, Ms. Raundi Halvorson-Quevedo, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), used her presentation to focus on a new statistical measure for aid, TOSSD (Total Official Support for Sustainable Development) and how it can complement traditional Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).

Session 3: Donor Country Strategies - Opportunities and Challenges for Parliaments

The third session examined country development strategy planning and the opportunities and challenges for parliaments and was chaired by Sir Hugh Bayley, former UK parliamentarian. It looked at parliament's role in formulating donor country strategies and scrutinizing their implementation.

Speaking via video-link from Tunisia, Hon. Olfa Soukri, MP, from the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund raised the issue of transparency, stating that parliaments need to become more transparent in order to improve the credibility of their role in development financing.

Mr. Marc Cohen from the African Development Bank informed delegates how the priorities and

policies of aid are changing rapidly and that there is now a huge amount of competition, challenges and opportunities amongst aid agencies.

Mr. Matthew Martin from Development Finance International gave an overview of various country case studies. He suggested that parliaments should hold annual debates on aid effectiveness, and argued that both donor and recipient countries needed to have strong policy commitments.

Session 4: The Role of Parliaments in the Oversight of Aid Spending: A Donor Parliament Perspective

The fourth session began with a wide-ranging discussion on the role of parliaments in the oversight of aid spending, from the point of view of a donor parliament. The EU-perspective was presented by Dag Sourander and Christian Meseth from the European Parliament's Committee on Development (DEVE), one of the most influential committees in the parliament.

Mr. Meseth informed delegates of EU's work with national parliaments in recipient countries to ensure accountability of development aid and that there was a general push towards strengthening domestic accountability. An important question came from Hon. Matthew Cooper Waletofea, MP from the Solomon Islands, pointing out that it was difficult to pursue a "one-size-fits-all" approach to aid oversight. He stated that small island nations struggled with the bureaucratic capacity to handle relationships with large organisations such as the EU.

Session 5: Anti-Corruption Strategies of Aid

The fifth session focused on the important topic of ensuring that tackling corruption played a central role in aid policies and it was chaired by Baroness Vivien Stern, CBE, Vice-Chair, All Party Parliamentary Group on Anti-Corruption, and featured a key-note speech from Phil Mason, the Head of Anti-Corruption Policies at Department for International Development (DfID).

Mr. Mason noted how DfID was putting a greater emphasis on empowerment, accountability and monitoring. He also posed an important question, "How can governments and aid agencies balance a zero tolerance approach to tackling corruption, whilst still ensuring that aid is delivered to high-risk environments?"

Session 6: Aid, National Budgets and Legislative Budget Oversight

The sixth session was chaired by Mr. Simon Gill, Project Director, Budget Strengthening Initiative, Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Delegates split into small groups composed of members from different countries in order to tackle a range of budgetary questions. These included key questions such as identifying the stage that the legislature should directly intervene in the budgetary process.

Session 7: Case Studies – What Does Effective Budgeting Look Like?

The seventh session focused on case-studies of effective budgeting in practice and was chaired by Rt Hon. David Hanson, MP.

The first speaker, Ms. Claire Schouten, Senior Program Officer, International Budget Partnership gave an interesting presentation on the 2015 Open Budget Survey. The survey, an independent survey held every two years, looked at various indicators including the availability, comprehensiveness and timeliness of the budgetary process, based on international standards from organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and OECD. She noted that many countries lacked formal oversight and that auditing systems often lacked quality assurance systems.

Mr. Simon Gill, Project Director, Budget Strengthening Initiative, Overseas Development Institute gave a detailed overview of an example of good practice, namely the website of the budgetary process in Uganda Budget Information, Ministry of Financial Planning and Economic Development (<http://budget.go.ug/>).

Session 8: The Role of Parliamentary Budget Offices and Independent Fiscal Institutions

The eighth session drilled down into some of the structures available in parliament to help legislators carry out their scrutiny role, especially Parliamentary Budget Offices (PBO) and Independent Fiscal Institutions (IFIs). Mr. David Lloyd gave an overview of the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit and current examples were offered by the chair of the session, Ms. Helen Goodman MP, a member of the Treasury Committee, House of Commons.

Another practical case study for delegates came from Hon. Ndung'u James Mathenge MP, member Public Accounts Committee of Kenya. He described the role of Kenya's PBO to help move the role of legislators away from being merely rubber-stampers, to providing a more detailed and analytical role of budgetary processes.

Session 9: Strengthening Peer-to-Peer Collaboration for Aid Effectiveness

The ninth session provided an overview of measures to strengthen peer-to-peer collaboration for aid effectiveness and was chaired by Lord Chidgey, Political Coordinator, Southern African Development Community & Aid Effectiveness, Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA). The first speaker was Ms. Maureen O'Sullivan, TD, Ireland, member of the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa. She stressed the need for an equal partnership between donor and recipient countries and called on donors to appear before parliaments and parliamentary committees.

Hon. Eneas Chomice, Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Economy of Mozambique, gave some practical examples of how parliaments can ensure effective oversight and scrutiny of Official Development Assistance.

Day 3 – Wednesday July 6, 2016

Delegates were split into smaller groups for sessions ten to fifteen. Sen. Baksh and Dr. Lakram Bodoie were placed in the non-PAC group (Group B) and Ms. Skerrette was placed in PAC members and Clerks group (Group A). Both groups were facilitated at various locations in the Palace of Westminster.

Session 10a: How Can PACs Scrutinise Responses to National Crises? (Group A)

This session discussed methods that governments can respond effectively to emergency situations, direct multi-stakeholder efforts and monitor humanitarian finance flows (both national and international) to ensure effective relief efforts for those most in need. A recent report by the Department for International Development, House of Commons was discussed, which focused on the need to strengthen its systems for resourcing and assessing the performance of its humanitarian interventions, as well as improving its oversight of partners.

Session 10b: What Constitutes an Effective Parliamentary Select Committee? (Group B)

This session explored the key features of an effective parliamentary select (departmental) committees and the role of parliamentary committees in scrutinising the work of the government. Discussions followed on the conditions and success factors that make for an effective select committee as well as performance benchmarks.

Session 11a: Westminster-style PAC Hearing Exercise & Feedback (Group A)

This exercise explored scrutiny techniques using a real life case study on the scrutiny of humanitarian finance from a donor perspective and how a PAC conducted an oral evidence session. Delegates were informed of the recent PAC enquiry into DFID's management of global crises and considered how development finance was allocated and monitored effectively in emergency situations across the world.

Session 11b: Holding a Committee Enquiry – How to Work with Reluctant Witnesses? (Group B)

This session discussed the statutory powers of committees versus their effective implementation. It questioned whether “soft power” obtained through the use of media and public pressure could be a more effective tool and explored the challenges committees face in questioning witnesses and techniques that can be used to overcome them.

Session 12b: Using Financial Information to Improve Scrutiny (Group B)

This session considered the role of non-PAC committees in financial scrutiny, including the examination of how spending relates to policies, implementation and delivery. Delegates discussed examples on examinations from within their respective countries and the ways non-PAC committees can ensure public money was being spent wisely and effectively.

Session 13a: The Role of PACs in Helping Governments Better Understand Emerging Risk (Group A)

This session discussed the remit of Westminster-style public accounts committees to examine government spending and its core focus was ex-post scrutiny of public expenditure. However, a case was made for improving the public accounts by analysing emerging risks in the spending and financial health of government departments. The session also discussed whether PACs should have a stronger focus on identifying emerging risks in public spending.

Session 13b: Westminster-style Committee Hearing Exercise (Group B)

This interactive exercise explored scrutiny techniques using a real life case study on the scrutiny of development finance. Delegates acted as members of a parliamentary committee on sustainable development and conducted an oral evidence session on a current enquiry. This “mock” Committee questioned witnesses on how to ensure that adequate finance was allocated to the National Action Plans. The exercise discussed effective gender strategies, auditing and budgets, disaggregated data and the importance of ensuring that development efforts have an equal effect on all groups of the society.

Session 14a: Auditing Major Projects (Group A)

This session provided an overview of key common weaknesses that hinder the successful delivery of major projects and discussed the structures and information required for their effective oversight. Delegates discussed the PAC’s role in monitoring large public investment projects and ensuring effective oversight of multi-national projects.

Session 14b: Westminster-style Committee Hearing Feedback Session (Group B)

Delegates shared feedback and insights on the Westminster-style Committee Hearing exercise and discussed ways to improve the effectiveness of parliamentary committees.

Session 15a: Good Practice Standards for PACs – CAPAC Working Group Consultation (Group A)

This session allowed delegates to feed into the CAPAC’s Good Practice Standards for PACs by sharing their experiences and views on what should be good practice benchmarks for PAC work and how they can lead to strengthening public accountability processes worldwide. This study was launched in April 2016.

Session 16: Aid Transparency and Effective Data Management

The sixteenth session focused on the importance of effective data management in promoting aid transparency and was chaired by Lord Purvis of Tweed. It looked at the outcomes of the 2011 Busan agreement which contained a commitment by donors to improve transparency.

Mr. Rupert Simons, Chief Executive Officer, Publish What You Fund, gave an overview of the current state of transparency, arguing that after five (5) years there was still a lack of transparency and both donor countries and many aid agencies needed to open up their processes.

Mr. Marc Cohen from the African Development Bank, also spoke of the important role that open data can play and the benefits for donors of becoming more transparent, including improved reputation, greater visibility and better quality of data. Mr. Simons also spoke of the role that parliamentarians can play in using data and that open data empowers legislatures by putting them on an equal footing with executives.

Mr. David Roach, Executive Director, Co-Founder of Catalpa International (via video link from Timor Leste) said that although a lot of data was available, it was not necessarily accessible and consumable. He argued that much of the data that exists does not go beyond a spreadsheet and that new technologies should be used to bring the data to life, giving a clearer and more realistic picture of how aid is used.

Session 17: Mechanisms for Effective Aid Scrutiny: ICAI Case Study

Rt Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP, Former International Development Secretary, House of Commons chaired session seventeen. He described the process of setting up the watchdog and the importance of its independence to reassure taxpayers that their money was being fairly and effectively spent. He added that it was important for the ICAI and similar watchdogs to report to the legislature rather than the executive.

Ms. Andrea Baron, Head of the ICAI Secretariat gave an overview of the work of the watchdog, insisting that scrutiny had never been as important as it is today and that the challenge for ICAI was for it to remain relevant and robust. Delegates also heard from Mr. Peter Grant, a consultant working with ICAI to review programmes dealing with violence against women and girls. He explained the process to review work and the importance of liaising with global and regional programmes, non-governmental organisations and individual countries.

Session 18: Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for Effective Development Cooperation

The eighteenth session was chaired by Hon. Maria Andersson Willner, MP, Foreign Affairs Committee Member, Sweden. The session covered the importance of developing partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure effective development cooperation. Ms. Amy Dodd, Director, UK Aid Network, reiterated the importance of accountability and transparency and stated it was vital for all partners to agree on a common approach to transparency.

Ms. Claire Schouten, Senior Program Officer, International Budget Partnership spoke of the need to create a budget accountability “ecosystem”, with better engagement with civil society leading to improved development outcomes. Thereafter, Mr. Darian Stibbe, Executive Director, The Partnering Initiative looked at the importance of building links with the private sector, arguing that it would lead to a virtuous circle creating greater prosperity for both business and society.

The session ended with delegates split into three (3) groups, looking in-depth at civil society, NGOs and the private sector.

Closing Statement and the Way Forward

Baroness Hooper, a member of CPA UK’s Executive Committee thanked all delegates, chairs and

speakers for their participation. She noted the similarities that existed amongst all participants in the challenges faced to ensure proper oversight of aid effectiveness.

Other Activities

On Monday July 4, 2016, delegates attended a Welcome Reception CPA Room, Westminster Hall. The reception was hosted by Mr. Ian Liddell-Grainger MP, Chair, CPA, UK Executive Committee and a welcome address was given by Baroness Verma, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development.

On Tuesday July 5, 2016, delegates were given the opportunity to view a live sitting of the House of Commons.

On Thursday July 7, 2016, delegates participated in a working breakfast entitled, “Reducing Tax Evasion and Avoidance and the Role of Parliamentarians: An Introduction to the OECD Inclusive Framework for Base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) Implementation and Outcomes of the Kyoto Meeting” chaired by Rt Hon. David Hanson, MP, CPA UK Executive Committee member. The keynote speech was given by Mr. Joseph Stead, OECD and he highlighted how BEPS was of major significance for developing countries due to their heavy reliance on corporate income tax.

Recommendations

The parliamentary committee’s role is to scrutinize the work of the executive and report on any breaches/non-compliance. One of the issues that stood out is the “post-legislative” scrutiny tool which used benchmarks to measure performance and policy effectiveness.

In seeking evidence, parliamentary committees need to look at the spending patterns and objectives of the entities examined in order to figure out whether delivery outcomes were met. For example, Is there a causal link between spending and outcomes, does it overlap on other budgets? Are there gaps/weaknesses that need to be addressed? What do users of the program think?

The following three (3) initiatives are recommended:

1.) International Development Act

This is geared towards building economic growth and creating jobs in developing countries and creates new markets for British countries to invest. In 2013, the UK delivered on its pledge to spend 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) as official development assistance (ODA).

2.) Corporate Social Responsibility (bounded) 20%

After group discussions, delegates learnt of Mauritius initiatives to assess and take responsibility of corporations’ effects on environmental and social wellbeing. Delegates indicated that making organizations bounded by 20%, promotes positive social and environmental change in Trinidad & Tobago.

3.) Adaptation of best standard practices in the work of other international parliamentary committees.

Conclusion

The workshop was useful and beneficial to delegates as new parliamentarians and it is recommended that the experience be made available to other parliamentarians.

One of the shortfalls of the workshop was the inability to observe a real committee hearing in the UK parliament which would have allowed a more hands-on approach. Another shortfall was that the workshop venue was not large enough to accommodate the number of delegates and some delegates felt disadvantaged based on the assigned seats at the venue.

Expression of Thanks

The delegation expressed its appreciation to the Clerk of the House and officials from the High Commission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, London for making the overall visit an enjoyable experience.

Submitted by,

Sen. Allyson Baksh
Government Senator

Dr. Lackram Bodoie, MP
Member for Fyzabad

Ms. Candice Skerrette
Procedural Clerk

August 24, 2016

Participants List

Bangladesh	
Hon. Muhiuddin Alamgir, MP	Chair, Public Accounts Committee
Hon. Mohammed Shubid Ali Bhuyian, MP	Chair, Standing Committee on Minister of Defence
Md. Ohiduzzaman	Senior Assistant Secretary
Cameroon	
Hon. Martin Atinda Mboni, MP	Member for Meme West
Cayman Islands	
Hon. Bernie Bush, MLA	Deputy Leader, Opposition
Hon. Winston Connolly, MLA	Independent
Cyprus	
Andreas Neofytou	Parliamentary Staff
EU/European Parliament	
Christian Meseth	Parliamentary Staff
Dag Sourander	Parliamentary Staff
Ghana	
Hon. Ibrahim Abubakari, MP	Member for Salaga South
Hon. Papa Owusu-Ankomah, MP	Member for Sekondi
Ayisha Salifu	Parliamentary Staff
Guyana	
Nickalai Pryce	Clerk, Public Accounts Committee
India	
Hon. Bhartruhari Mahtab, MP	Member for Cuttack (Odisha)
Hon. A.P. Jithender Reddy, MP	Member for Mahabubnagar (Telangana)
Abhijeet Kumar	Joint Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat
Ireland	
Hon. Maureen O'Sullivan, TD	Member for Dublin Central
Simon Murtagh	-
Islamic Republic of Pakistan	
Hon. Noon Rana Muhammad Qasin, MNA	NA-153 (Multan VI)
Hon. Chaudry Riaz-ul-Haq, MNA	NA,147 (Okara-V)
Sen. Lt. (R) Abdul Qayyum	Chair, Standing Committee on Defence Production
Sher Dil Khan	Director, (Budget), National Assembly Secretariat
Jamaica	
Hon. Leslie Campbell, MP	Member for North East, St. Catherine
Hon. Dwayne Vaz, MP	Member for Westmoreland Central
Kenya	
Hon. Ndung'u James Mathenge, MP	Member for Kiieni
Hon. Dr. Otuoma Paul Nyongesa, MP	Member for Funyula

Sen. Billow Kerow	Chair, Finance, Commerce and Budget Committee
Sen. Henry Tiole Ndiema	Member for Trans Nzoia County
Mainah Wanjiku	Parliamentary Staff
Kiribati	
Hon. England Thomas Iuta, MP	Chair, Opposition Party
Hon. Tibanga Taratai, MP	Member for Banaba
George Mackenzie	Parliamentary Staff
Maldives	
Hon. Fayyaz Ismail, MP	Member for Gamu
Hon. Abdulla Khaleel, MP	Member for Nilandhoo
Malta	
Hon. Karl Gouder, MP	Member for District 10
Ian Paul Bajada	Parliamentary Staff
Mauritius	
Hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea, MP	Member for 3 Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis Central
Hon. Purmanund Jhugroo, MP	Government Chief Whip
Mozambique	
Hon. Fernando Bismarque, MP	Member for Nampula
Hon. Eneas Da Conceicao Comiche, MP	Chair, Planning and Budget Committee
Hon. Antonio Timba, MP	Member for Maputo City
Arsenio Paulo	Parliamentary Staff
Arlegia Ubisse	Clerk, Planning and Budget Committee
Namibia	
Hon. Peter Change Kamunguisi Razungana Kazongominja, MP	Chair, Standing Committee: Public Accounts and Economy
Norbert Uuyuni	Parliamentary Staff
Nigeria	
Hon. Adeyinka Ayantunji Ajayi, MP	Chair, House Committee on Aid, Loans and Debt Management
Sen. Barau I. Jibrin	Senator
Dr. Abel Ochigbo	Clerk, House Committee on Appropriation
Sierra Leone	
Hon. Alhassan Jero Kamara, MP	Member for 48
Hon. Komba Koedoyoma, MP	Deputy Chair, Public Accounts Committee
Hon. Hassan Sheriff, MP	Chair, Finance Committee
David Saffa	Chair, Public Accounts Committee
Solomon Islands	
Hon. Ishmael Mali Avui, MP	Chair, Public Expenditure Committee
Hon. Matthew Cooper Waletofea, MP	Chair, Constitutional Review Committee
Gregory Lini Fineanganofa	Parliamentary Staff
Sri Lanka	
Hon. Kavinda Heshan Jayawardena, MP	Member for Ja-Ela, Gampaha District

Hon. Mathiaparanan Abraham Sumanthiran, MP	Chair, Committee on Public Finance
Anusha Kushani Rohanadeera	Assistant Secretary General
Swaziland	
Hon. Phila Buthelazi, MP	Chair, Ministry of Natural Resources Portfolio Committee
Hon. Thulisile Dladla, MP	Chair, Public Accounts Committee
Arthur Mordaunt	Clerk, Public Accounts Committee
Sweden	
Hon. Maria Andersson Willner, MP	-
Tanzania	
Hon. Khalfan Hilaly Aeshi, MP	Member for Sumbawanga
Hon. Rose Kamli Sukum, MP	Special Seat
Aziza Makwai	Parliamentary Staff
Tuvalu	
Hon. Otinielu Tauteleimalae Tausi, MP	Speaker
Uganda	
Martha Kaganzi	Clerk, Public Accounts Committee
Ukraine	
Hon. Yuriy Levchenko, MP	Member for Shevchenkivskyy