United Nations

Inter-Parliamentary Union

World e-Parliament Report 2010

Prepared by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

A partnership initiative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Inter-Parliamentary Union inspired by the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society

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Note

The Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliament is a joint partnership initiative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and a group of national and regional parliaments launched in November 2005 on the occasion of the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis. The Global Centre pursues two main objectives: a) strengthening the role of parliaments in the promotion of the Information Society, in light of the WSIS outcome, and b) promoting the use of ICT as a means to modernize parliamentary processes, increase transparency, accountability and participation, and improve inter-parliamentary cooperation. http://www.ictparliament.org
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Foreword

The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament represents a broad partnership initiative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, inspired by the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society. Since its founding in 2006, it has made significant progress in bringing together the parliamentary community of the world around the simple idea that sharing knowledge and good practices in the use of information and communication technologies helps make democracy stronger and more responsive to citizens. The Global Centre has been successful in carrying out this mission because parliaments have shown themselves eager to establish a forum to carry on a dialogue with one another to identify ways to address the institutional and political challenges brought about by today's technologically-pervasive societies.

The rapid growth of information and communication technology has changed the environment within which parliaments operate. Rather than being mere witnesses to these transformative effects, they can choose to use these new opportunities strategically to strengthen development, democracy and political participation by ensuring accessible, transparent and accountable institutional and legislative processes. They also have the opportunity now to engage a new generation of citizens for whom ICT is central to their way of life and to whom the notions of participatory networked societies and social and political engagement through new media are highly valued.

With this second edition of the World e-Parliament Report the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Inter-Parliamentary Union offer parliaments a useful instrument with which to assess the progress made by legislatures in the past two years and draw lessons from different practices and experiences. The Report, based on data contributed by more than one hundred and thirty parliaments from around the world, continues to represent the most authoritative baseline against which legislatures can evaluate their own developments, identify innovative actions, and adopt measures to improve their capacity to participate in the Information Society.

Furthermore, the *World e-Parliament Report 2010* examines how global and regional inter-parliamentary cooperation can exploit synergies among nations to help parliaments in developing countries bridge the digital divide by overcoming the barriers of limited resources and technical constraints. It proposes to the parliamentary and donor communities a shared framework for e-parliament based on strategic goals that serve democracy, good governance, and the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals.

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Daniela Giacomelli coordinated the final production of the Report. The layout, design and all graphic work were done by Ludovica Cavallari.

The Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments, on which the Report is based, was designed by Jeffrey Griffith with important suggestions offered by Giorgina Brown, Thomas Bruce, Gherardo Casini, Eduardo Ghuisolfi, Carlo Marchetti, Ann Macintosh, Cecilia Matanga, Mahesh Perera, Gro Sandgrind, Donna Scheeder, Reynold Schweickhardt, Carlo Simonelli, Piet van Rijn, Joao Viegas Abreu and Flavio Zeni.

The preparation of the Report greatly benefited from the presentations made by members of parliament, Secretaries General, parliamentary officials and experts at the World e-Parliament Conferences in 2008 and 2009 and from the discussions held on those occasions. Where possible, these contributions were openly acknowledged in the footnotes.

Special thanks are due to parliamentary staff and officials from one hundred and thirty four chambers around the world who spent considerable time completing the survey and sharing their experiences. The qualitiy of this Report is a direct result of their thoughtful responses and insights.

Executive summary

THE CHALLENGES FACING PARLIAMENTS

The advent of information and communication technologies (ICT) is altering the economic, social, and political landscape around the world. Statistics on the spread of Internet connectivity and mobile technologies provide ample evidence of the pervasive growth of the Information Society. Its dynamic expansion and continuous evolution have important consequences for public institutions, politicians and government officials, civil society organizations and ordinary citizens, in both developed and developing countries.

Parliaments today find themselves at a crossroads. The rapid growth of ICT is changing the environment within which they operate and influencing how they are perceived by the citizenry. Rather than being mere witnesses to these transformative effects, parliaments are exploring ways to use technology to strengthen democracy and encourage political participation.

A persistent theme expressed by legislatures at the World e-Parliament Conferences is that the values of democracy should guide the policies and plans for implementing ICT in the legislative environment. This approach coincides with the Inter-Parliamentary Union's broad framework that has identified the basic values and the key characteristics of a democratic parliament: one that is representative, transparent, accessible, accountable, and effective.

The *World e-Parliament Report 2010* assists parliamentary leaders, members, and staff in responding to these challenges and exploiting the considerable benefits of ICT in the legislative context. It follows the groundbreaking work of the 2008 edition in documenting the efforts of parliaments to employ modern technologies to strengthen their institutional role. It guides readers through the unique environment of parliaments and technology, and while providing evidence of the complexities of e-parliament, it suggests ways to overcome some of the challenges posed by ICT.

The Report presents the latest data on the use and availability of systems, applications, hardware, and other tools in parliaments around the world, based on the global survey conducted by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament in 2009. A questionnaire was sent to 264 chambers of unicameral and bicameral parliaments in 188 countries and to two regional parliaments. 134 responses were received, marking a significant increase from the 105 responses received in 2007. They include national legislative bodies from 109 countries, one regional legislature from Europe and one regional body from Africa. Taken together, the national legislative bodies participating in the survey represent a membership of almost 27,250 legislators (61%) of the world total of nearly 44,800 members of national parliaments.

The Report highlights two critical issues - communication with citizens and the demand for transparency. It also proposes a methodology for assessing ICT in legislatures and provides a detailed description of the status of e-parliament world-wide. It concludes with an analysis of inter-parliamentary cooperation and proposes to the parliamentary and donor communities a shared framework for e-parliament based on strategic goals that serve democracy, good governance, and the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals.

HOW PARLIAMENTS ARE DOING: MAJOR FINDINGS

Findings regarding how parliaments are doing in communicating with the public suggest there has been some improvement since 2007 and that a greater number of parliaments and members are trying to use these technologies more effectively to engage with citizens. 85% of parliaments reported an increase in communication from citizens using ICT-supported methods. It is likely that audio- and video-based unidirectional methods will be predominant for the next few years. Webcasting, for example, is one of those most frequently used, and it is projected to increase over the next several years. However, the top five methods that are predicted to have the highest growth rates are all interactive (online discussions, online polls, e-petitions, e-consultations on issues and e-consultations on bills). The challenges in using ICT for communication with citizens cited by the largest percentage of parliaments are that members are not familiar with the technology and citizens are not familiar with the legislative process.

Websites have become the primary means by which parliaments make their work known to citizens and by which they can progress towards the goals of transparency and accountability. The extent of documentation on a parliamentary website, along with how complete, timely, and clear it is, provides one of the primary means for judging the level of openness of a parliament. However, while nearly every parliament now has a website, many of these do not yet meet some of the most important recommendations of the IPU *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites*. For example, fully one third of parliamentary websites do not provide the text and status of proposed legislation and only 45% have implemented standards that ensure access to websites for persons with disabilities.

E-parliament builds on the pillars of active engagement, a clear vision, strategic planning, broad-based management, and adequate resources. However, many parliaments lack some of these important elements. Only 43% have a written vision statement, over 40% do not have a strategic plan that is regularly updated, and almost one quarter report that their political leaders at the level of the President/Speaker were engaged very little or not at all. Parliaments must make a strong political commitment to transform their aspirations for increased transparency and accountability into a manageable policy framework for ICT across the whole institution.

Having systems and standards for managing documents in digital formats is an essential element for improving the efficiency of a parliament's operations and increasing its transparency and accessibility. Yet, the findings from the 2009 survey indicate that there has been relatively little progress in systems and standards for parliamentary documents since 2007. Less than half have a system for managing proposed legislation and only 25% use XML for any parliamentary document.

Parliaments have always been information intensive institutions. ICT has created even greater demands for information and has raised the standard by which the currency, completeness, and customization of information are judged. In response to these new demands, some parliamentary libraries have become leaders in integrating technology into their work in new and innovative ways. However, many continue to face challenges that stem from inadequate resources for training, limited availability of technology and, in some cases, lack of understanding of the contribution they can make to the effectiveness of parliamentary business.

E-parliament is rooted in a robust and responsive technical infrastructure. This must include sophisticated and flexible hardware, software, applications, services and security, plus a well trained

staff that understands the legislative environment. Findings from the technical infrastructure section of the 2009 survey suggest that there have been some advances, especially in support for plenary sessions and for training for ICT staff and members. But a number of continuing challenges remain. For example, while 96% of all parliaments have a Local Area Network (LAN), only 72% state that all members and committees are connected to it. In addition, there needs to be more application support for parliament's legislative responsibilities and for functions directly related to oversight.

THE STATE OF E-PARLIAMENT IN 2010

The report provides an overall description of the state of e-parliament in 2010 based on the responses received from parliaments and using a statistical methodology for assessing ICT in legislatures. The methodology assigns a numeric score to each of the six areas included in the 2009 survey: 1) Oversight and management of ICT; 2) Infrastructure, services, applications and training; 3) Systems and standards for creating legislative documents and information; 4) Library and research services; 5) Parliamentary websites; and, 6) Communication between citizens and parliaments. These scores are based on responses to a combination of selected questions. The numeric scores for each area are added together to provide an overall score, based on a maximum of 100%, that reflects the current state of e-parliament world-wide.

The total scores, describing the management and adoption of ICT by individual parliaments around the world, range from a minimum of 13.5% to a maximum of 82.7%. Parliaments at the high end, estimated to be no more than 20% of respondents at most, possess a combination of elements that satisfy the various technology needs of a legislature: a sound management organization, a solid yet flexible infrastructure, systems for managing all parliamentary documents, library and research services well supported by technology and applications, a website offering a great deal of timely and complete information with multiple channels to access it, and a variety of methods for engaging with citizens through traditional communication means as well as new and more interactive media.

Those at the lowest level of adoption do not have an appropriate management structure in place, although a surprising number do better than expected in this area. Yet they lack an adequate infrastructure (some do not have reliable electrical power), often have no systems for managing documents, have very weak libraries and websites with the least amount of information (a few do not have websites at all). Many have no capabilities for using ICT-supported methods to communicate with citizens.

Those in the middle vary in their strengths and weaknesses. While they sometimes have good scores in one or two areas, they do not achieve a high level of adoption in most categories. There is a continued unevenness in implementation similar to what was first observed in the *World e-Parliament Report 2008*. For example, while a few score higher than average for libraries, websites and communication, twice as many score below average in these areas.

As anticipated, the income level of a country is an obstacle for many parliaments in their ability to adopt ICT. This is consistent with the findings from the 2008 Report and continues to be a serious concern. However, a geographic analysis indicates that the legislatures in Latin America have a total score above the average for all parliaments in the survey and also above the mean

total score of the upper middle income group, suggesting an encouraging path of e-parliament development in the region.

The current world-wide state of e-parliament also affects members individually. For example, of the 27,249 parliamentarians represented in the legislatures that responded to the survey: 20% do not have a personal desktop or laptop computer at their disposal; 31% are not provided with access to a parliamentary intranet; 28% cannot access the text and current status of proposed legislation on their parliament's websites; 47% serve in parliaments that have not implemented accessibility standards for persons with disabilities on their websites, making it difficult for these citizens to follow members' and parliament's work; and, 44% do not have access to a library website that organizes information sources based on issues of concern to members.

COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The *World e-Parliament Report 2010* highlights the value of inter-parliamentary cooperation as one of the least expensive and potentially most effective ways for legislatures to address the challenges posed by the Information Society through the enhanced use of ICT. The Report also emphasizes cooperation at the regional level, which offers unique opportunities to share resources, overcome lack of know-how and establish common approaches. The progress made by newly established regional networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America, coupled with the activities of those already in existence at the global, regional and sub-regional levels, are concrete signs of the benefits of ongoing cooperation.

Findings of the Report about collaboration indicate that just over one fourth (28%) of parliaments provide support or would be willing to provide support to other legislatures for developing their use of ICT. On the other hand, 46% reported that they were receiving assistance or would like to receive assistance to improve their use of technology from other parliaments and from outside organizations. This finding underlines the extent of the need and also the significant role that other development actors, in addition to parliaments, can play in helping legislatures to strengthen their ICT capacities.

Because of the critical need for financial and technical support in parliaments in developing countries, the contributions of the international donor community and legislatures in higher income countries are especially important. In order to maximize the benefits of initiatives to strengthen parliaments, there is a need to achieve greater coherence among programmes and to reduce duplication of effort. This will require integrating ICT with other support efforts, rather than treating it as a stand-alone effort. It will also require promoting greater inter-parliamentary collaboration to help emerging democracies and legislatures in low income countries make progress toward e-parliament.

The Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament has articulated an e-Parliament Framework 2010–2020, based on a set of strategic goals for technology in parliament. These goals serve as common principles that underlie the attempt to establish a global effort for facilitating greater coordination and collaboration among parliaments, donors, international organizations and civil society organizations.

The e-Parliament Framework 2010-2020 is centered on five key areas that are targeted for specific action over the next ten years. They include improved policy development, enhanced links between parliaments and citizens, inclusive access to a nation's laws and legislation, implementation of ICT to support fundamental parliamentary functions, and the establishment of a sustained and coordinated technical assistance programme. The results of the 2009 survey provide indicators of the current status of parliaments with respect to these goals; future surveys will assess progress in subsequent years.

WHAT CAN BE DONE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

The strategic goals set by the e-Parliament Framework 2010-2020, combined with the findings from the 2009 survey and the presentations and discussions at the World e-Parliament Conferences, provide a clear plan of action for what needs to be done to move forward. The *World e-Parliament Report 2010* presents an integrated set of recommendations, drawn from all of these sources, organized in the following areas: a) policies; b) planning and management; c) communication; d) transparency and accountability; e) technical infrastructure; and f) regional and global cooperation. Some of these recommendations relate to parliaments at the national level. Others, which involve national parliaments and the international community together, need to be addressed at the international level.

The 2010 Report provides evidence that there are a number of parliaments that have been innovative in their employment of technology and have put it to full and effective use in their daily work. They are attaining a significant degree of openness to the public, and their legislators have the most useful tools at their fingertips to assist them in their law making and oversight activities. Their experience and their knowledge about how to use technology need to be shared with others. On the other hand, there are many parliaments that appear to be adopting "bits and pieces" of technology, but without a coherent and sustained vision. These legislatures are failing significantly to reach the full potential ICT can offer to strengthen the institution; they may, in fact, be falling further behind. The e-Parliament Framework for 2010-2020 will allow parliaments and the international community to measure world-wide progress in addressing these challenges and, most importantly, toward enhancing and sustaining democracy.

Technology enables parliaments to realize the values of transparency, accessibility, and accountability. A website with the most current reports of committee actions and plenary debates ensures a more open institution. Interactive communication tools that enable citizens and civil society organizations to engage with the legislature, through multiple channels, foster greater access for all segments of society, regardless of their physical location or their economic status. Publishing the speeches and votes of members advances the state of accountability, as does the availability of information about the prerogatives, salaries and expenses of leaders, members, and staff.

It can be argued that in the age of the Information Society, the ability of parliaments to fulfil their responsibilities as representatives of the people and to attain the highest levels of openness requires the effective and creative application of ICT in their daily work. It can be further argued that to achieve these goals, parliaments have to be able to share experiences, knowledge, and ideas with each other in regional and international settings in a collaborative global environment.

The national constitution establishes the authority of a legislature. Its capacity to exercise that authority, however, depends on how well it is able to carry out its legislative, oversight, and representational responsibilities. ICT is one of the important means for enabling legislatures to do this effectively. As new communication technologies continue to spread throughout society, parliaments have a real opportunity to harness ICT to establish a stronger linkage between citizens and their representatives. The assumption is that if citizens feel connected, they will be more engaged and the parliament will be perceived as being more relevant and more legitimate. This offers the potential for reversing negative perceptions of political institutions, including legislative bodies.

Contents

Introduction

The release of the *World e-Parliament Report 2008* represented the initial step in documenting the efforts of parliaments to employ information and communication technologies (ICT) as instruments to strengthen their institutional role and democracy. The 2008 Report, the first of its kind, was based on the results of a global survey, undertaken in mid-2007, that examined how legislatures were implementing ICT in a number of critical areas. Its publication was intended to advance the state of knowledge among the parliaments of the world and promote international debate and cooperation on these matters.

The 2008 Report established an authoritative baseline for parliaments and contained specific conclusions about the state of technology in parliaments on a global basis. These allowed parliaments to measure their own use of ICT in daily operations, to confirm strengths and to identify areas for improvement.

The *World e-Parliament Report 2010* follows the path of the 2008 edition in guiding readers through the unique environment of parliaments and technology. Its purpose is to help legislatures – their leaders, members and staff – to harness the potential benefits of ICT for their work and establish key goals and priorities for exploiting this valuable resource. While providing evidence of the complexities of e-parliament, the Report suggests ways to overcome some of the obstacles to the effective use of technology in parliamentary settings.

The 2010 Report presents the latest data on the use and availability of systems, applications, hardware and tools in parliaments all over the world, and where possible it offers comparisons with the 2008 findings. It also provides readers with concrete examples of the adoption of ICT in the most significant areas of the parliamentary business. These come from a variety of sources. First, they are based on direct comments provided by legislatures in response to a survey. Second, they are drawn from the presentations made and discussions held at the World e-Parliament Conferences 2008[1] and 2009,[2] hosted respectively by the European Parliament and by the U.S. House of Representatives. Further input was gathered from other forums and meetings addressing e-parliament issues. And thirdly, the Report was enriched by the analysis of publicly available studies, documents and experiences.

The 2010 Report is intended to be read in conjunction with the 2008 Report. In addition to summarizing a great deal of data, the 2008 Report included a considerable amount of technical information and extended background discussions of key issues related to ICT in parliament. The 2010 Report builds upon this foundation but does not repeat it; instead it updates the contextual information where necessary to reflect recent developments. The primary focus of the 2010 Report is on what is new, what has changed, and what parliaments need to know to move forward in their use of technology.

1 United Nations, European Parliament, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Conference 2008: 25-26 November 2008, European Parliament, Brussels; Report,* [New York]: United Nations, 2009 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

2 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, U.S. House of Representatives, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Conference 2009: 3-4-5 November 2009, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington D.C.; Report,* [New York]: United Nations, 2010 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

METHODOLOGY

The findings presented in the *World e-Parliament Report 2010* are based on the results of the Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments 2009[3] conducted by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament between July and November 2009. Significant enhancements were made to the 2007 version of the survey to address in greater depth some of the most important emerging issues. The survey was also reviewed to ensure coherence with the updated *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites*, released by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in March 2009.[4] Efforts were made to reduce the number of questions while retaining as much consistency as possible with the previous edition.

The survey covered the following six topics:

1. Oversight and management of ICT (30 questions)
2. Infrastructure, services, applications and training (31 questions)
3. Systems and standards for creating legislative documents and information (12 questions)
4. Library and research services (23 questions)
5. Parliamentary websites (22 questions)
6. Communication between citizens and parliaments (21 questions)

The 139 questions were designed to be answered as easily and quickly as possible. The survey relied extensively on a "yes/no" answer format. Topics requiring more detail were addressed through a checklist format. A few questions were open-ended. At the end of each section, respondents had the opportunity to add a qualification or a comment to any question, and to share any lessons learned or good practices they felt to be of interest to others.

The questionnaire was sent to 264 chambers of unicameral and bicameral parliaments in 188 countries and to two regional parliaments. 134 responses were received, marking a significant increase from the 105 responses received in 2007. The chambers and parliaments that responded to the survey are listed in the next pages in Box A.1. They represent national legislative bodies from 109 countries, one regional legislative body from Europe and one regional body from Africa (see Figure A.1).

60 responses (45%) were received from unicameral parliaments, 74 (55%) from bicameral parliaments and two from regional parliaments. Of the 134 replies on which the analyses presented in this Report are based, twelve bicameral parliaments answered the questionnaire as one entity due to their administrative and organizational structure. The results of the survey, therefore, encompass a universe of 146 chambers.

Of these chambers, excluding the two regional parliaments, 13 have less than 50 seats, 35 have 50 to 99 seats, 45 have 100 to 199 seats, 21 have 200 to 299 seats, 13 have 300 to 399 seats and 17 have more than 400 seats (see Figure A.2). Taken together, these national legislative bodies represent a membership of 27,249 legislators, 61% of the world total of 44,788 members of national parliaments (see Figure A.3).

To enable comparisons of the data from the two surveys, questions used in 2009 employed the same or similar language as the questions asked in 2007 whenever possible. Comparing the results of the two surveys on the same or similar questions provides some general indications of trends over the two-year timeframe.

3 See Annex 4.

4 Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites*, [Geneva]: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009 [http://www.ictparliament.org/resources/guidelines_en.pdf].

However, because of differences in the composition of the group of 134 respondents in 2009 and the 105 respondents in 2007 it would not be valid to use these results to determine specific changes in the state of ICT that may have occurred over the two years. To assess such changes more accurately and provide a base for comparing results between the two surveys, it was necessary to identify a subgroup of parliaments that responded to both surveys. This group, which consists of 87 chambers, is referred to throughout this Report as the "2009:2007 Compare Group". Results from this group for each of the two years are presented when it is useful to confirm changes in ICT that have occurred over time. The number of parliaments in the 2009:2007 Compare Group may vary in some instances, such as when a question is posed only to those that answered positively to a preceding question.

Figure A.1: Countries whose parliament or chamber(s) participated in the survey

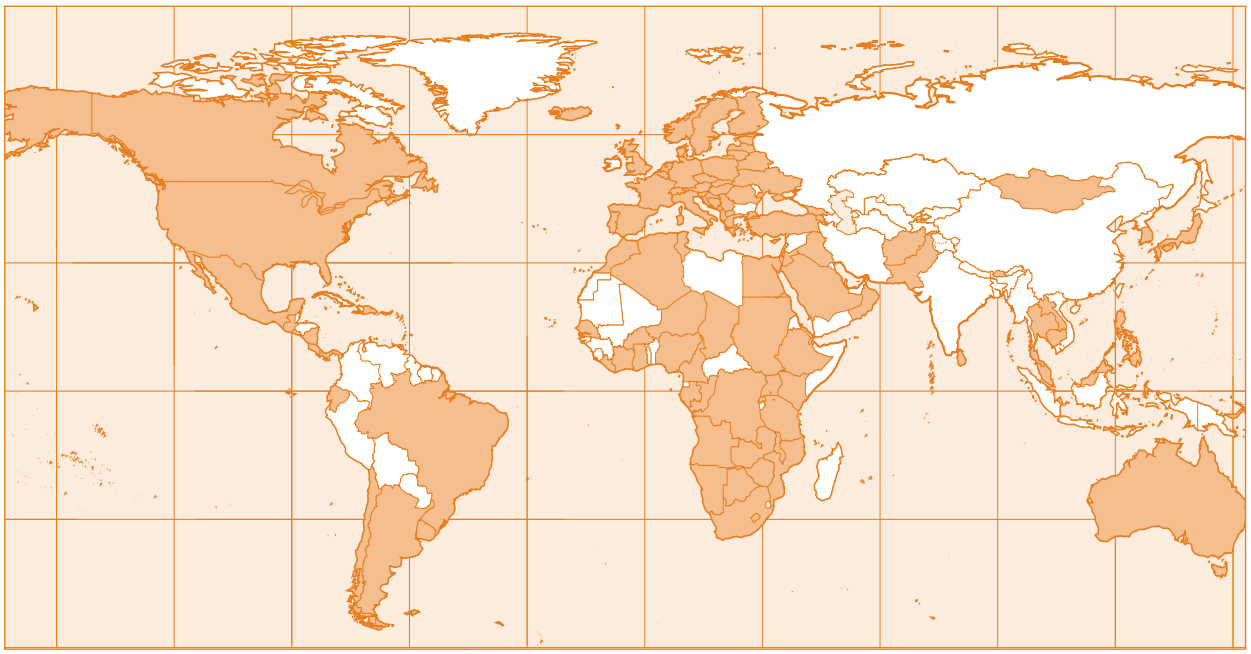


Figure A.2: Number of seats in national chambers that responded or did not respond to the survey

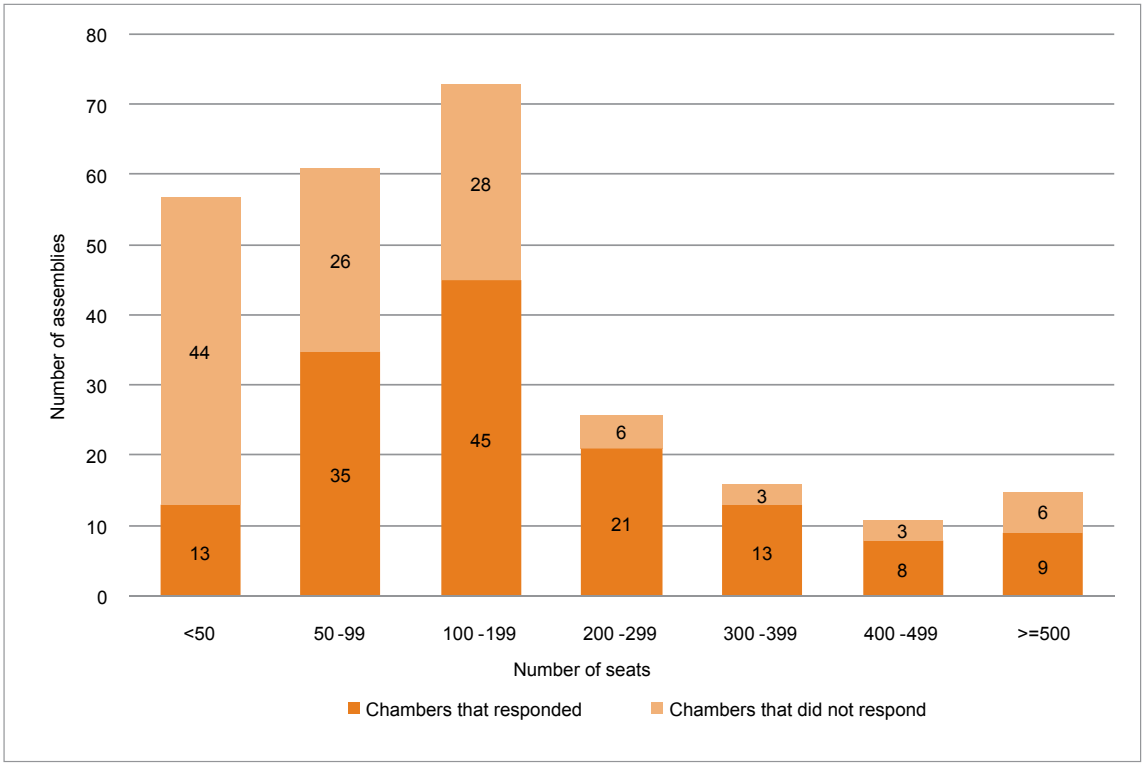
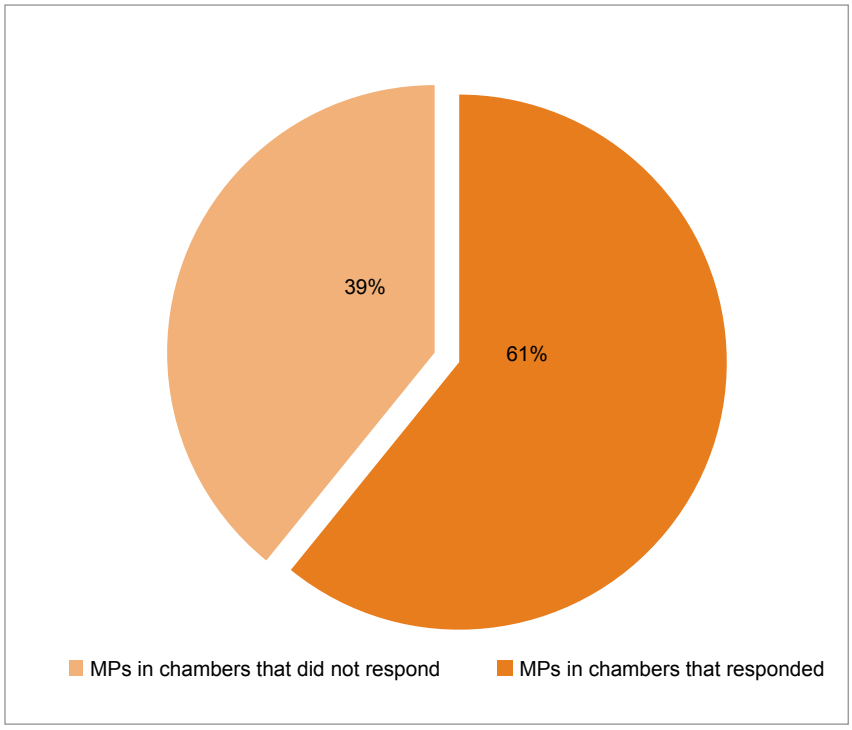


Figure A.3: Percentage of all members of parliament world-wide whose chambers responded or did not respond to the survey



Box A.1: Parliaments and chambers that participated in the 2009 survey

NATIONAL

1. National Assembly of Afghanistan*
2. Parliament of Albania
3. National People's Assembly of Algeria
4. Council of the Nation of Algeria
5. General Council of Andorra
6. National Assembly of Angola
7. Chamber of Deputies of Argentina
8. Senate of Argentina
9. National Assembly of Armenia
10. House of Representatives of Australia
11. Senate of Australia
12. Parliament of Austria*
13. House of Representatives of Belarus
14. Council of the Republic of Belarus
15. House of Representatives of Belgium
16. Senate of Belgium
17. National Council of Bhutan
18. Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina*
19. National Assembly of Botswana
20. Chamber of Deputies of Brazil
21. Federal Senate of Brazil
22. National Assembly of Burkina Faso
23. National Assembly of Cambodia
24. Senate of Cambodia
25. National Assembly of Cameroon
26. House of Commons of Canada
27. Senate of Canada
28. National Assembly of Chad
29. Chamber of Deputies of Chile
30. Senate of Chile
31. National Assembly of Congo
32. Senate of Congo
33. Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica
34. National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire
35. Parliament of Croatia
36. House of Representatives of Cyprus
37. Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic
38. Senate of the Czech Republic
39. National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
40. Parliament of Denmark
41. National Assembly of Djibouti
42. Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic
43. National Assembly of Ecuador
44. People's Assembly of Egypt
45. Legislative Assembly of El Salvador
46. Parliament of Estonia
47. House of the Federation of Ethiopia
48. Parliament of Finland
49. National Assembly of France
50. Senate of France
51. National Assembly of Gabon
52. Parliament of Georgia
53. German Bundestag
54. Federal Council of Germany
55. Parliament of Ghana
56. Hellenic Parliament of Greece
57. Congress of the Republic of Guatemala
58. National Assembly of Hungary
59. Parliament of Iceland
60. Council of Representatives of Iraq
61. Parliament of Israel
62. Chamber of Deputies of Italy
63. Senate of Italy
64. House of Representatives of Japan
65. House of Councillors of Japan
66. House of Representatives of Jordan
67. Senate of Jordan
68. National Assembly of Kenya
69. National Assembly of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
70. Parliament of Latvia
71. National Assembly of Lebanon
72. Parliament of Lesotho*
73. The Liberian Senate
74. Diet of Liechtenstein
75. Parliament of Lithuania
76. Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg
77. National Assembly of Malawi
78. Parliament of Malaysia*
79. National Assembly of Mauritius
80. Chamber of Deputies of Mexico
81. State Great Hural of Mongolia
82. Parliament of Montenegro
83. House of Representatives of Morocco
84. Assembly of the Republic of Mozambique
85. Parliament of Namibia*
86. House of Representatives of the Netherlands
87. Senate of the Netherlands
88. House of Representatives of New Zealand
89. National Assembly of Nicaragua
90. National Assembly of Niger
91. National Assembly of Nigeria*
92. Parliament of Norway
93. State Council of Oman
94. Senate of Pakistan
95. National Assembly of Panama
96. House of Representatives of the Philippines
97. Senate of the Philippines
98. Sejm of Poland
99. Assembly of the Republic of Portugal
100. National Assembly of the Republic of Korea
101. Chamber of Deputies of Romania
102. Senate of Romania
103. Parliament of Rwanda*
104. Consultative Council of Saudi Arabia
105. National Assembly of Senegal
106. National Assembly of Serbia
107. Parliament of Singapore
108. National Council of Slovakia
109. National Assembly of Slovenia
110. Parliament of South Africa*
111. Congress of Deputies of Spain
112. Senate of Spain
113. Parliament of Sri Lanka
114. National Assembly of Sudan
115. Parliament of Sweden
116. Federal Assembly of Switzerland*
117. House of Representatives of Thailand
118. Senate of Thailand
119. Assembly of the Republic of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
120. National Parliament of Timor-Leste
121. Chamber of Deputies of Tunisia
122. Chamber of Councillors of Tunisia
123. Grand National Assembly of Turkey
124. Parliament of Uganda
125. Parliament of Ukraine
126. Parliament of the United Kingdom*
127. National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania
128. House of Representatives of the United States of America
129. House of Representatives of Uruguay
130. Senate of Uruguay
131. National Assembly of Zambia
132. Parliament of Zimbabwe*

REGIONAL

133. European Parliament
134. Pan-African Parliament

* bicameral parliaments that answered as one entity due to their organizational structure

In addition to global findings, the analysis of data was also carried out, when it proved informative, according to countries' income level. The classification of economies is based on World Bank practices[5] and includes the following: Low Income (20 respondents), Lower Middle Income (33 respondents), Upper Middle Income (33 respondents), and High Income (46 respondents). The European Parliament and the Pan-African Parliament were not included in the analyses by income level.

Moreover, when a sufficient number of chambers and parliaments responding to the survey allowed for a geographical representation, further analyses were added to enrich the global findings. For the purposes of this Report, meaningful geographical groupings were possible for the European Union area (33 respondents from the European Union, including the European Parliament), Africa (37 respondents, including the Pan African Parliament) and Latin America (15 respondents).[6]

STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

The *World e-Parliament Report 2010* is organized into three parts that consist of 10 chapters. Part 1 focuses on the challenges that the Information Society poses for parliaments and highlights two critical issues - communication with citizens and the demand for transparency. Part 2 describes the status of ICT in parliament in 2010, including an elaboration of e-parliament levels. Part 3 concentrates on development issues by looking at inter-parliamentary cooperation and collaboration mechanisms and offers a framework for coordinating the efforts of the international community. A final chapter contains the main conclusions and recommendations of the Report. The results from most, but not all survey questions, are included in the relevant chapters.

Throughout the text of the Report, the terms "parliament", "chamber", "legislature" or "respondent" have been used interchangeably to indicate those institutions that replied to the survey. The sources of each figure representing findings from the survey have been identified and made readily visible to assist the reader in referencing questions in the Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments, which is included as an annex to the Report.

5 See Annex 3.
6 See Annex 2.

PART 1

PARLIAMENTS, CITIZENS, AND THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Chapter 1

The Continuing Impact of ICT on the World of Parliaments

ICT TRENDS AND SOCIETY

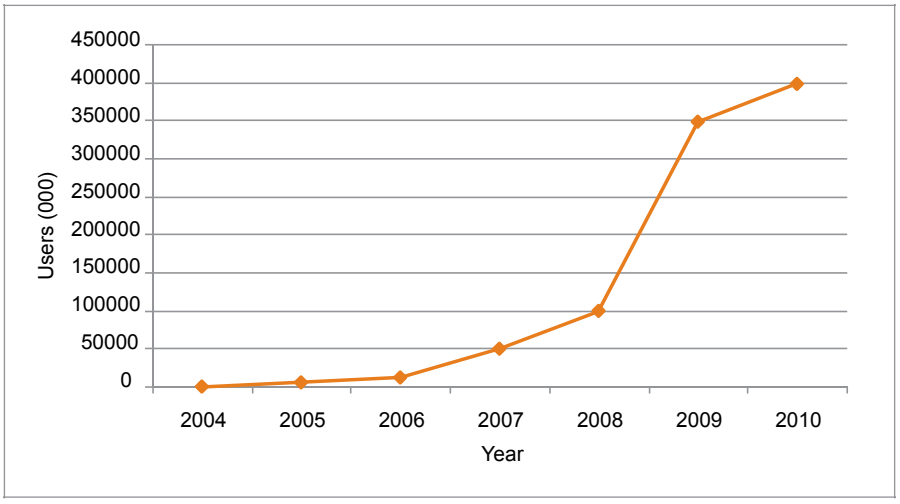
The development of the personal computer, the invention of the Internet, the expansion of the World Wide Web, and the growth of mobile communications are redesigning the landscape of today's society. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have become a key enabler of economic and social advancements and the cause of changes that are occurring at an unprecedented pace with profound impact on a global scale.

The pervasiveness of ICT has not only revolutionized the way production, market access and distribution of goods and services are organized, but it has significantly modified business models and the way enterprises relate to consumers. The Internet and the use of web-based instruments have led to new communication modalities that have forced traditional media – TV, radio and newspapers – to devise new strategies and alternative scenarios for the future of mass communication. In sectors like trade, education, health, banking and agriculture, technology developments have transformed the way users, consumers, producers and clients connect to each other. ICT have also made it possible for people to acquire and exchange information in an increasing variety of formats and to collaborate with one another across national boundaries.

For millions of "digital natives" the daily use of social media and other Internet-based communication technologies is an essential and natural aspect of their life. They employ them to stay connected to each other, to obtain news and information, and to generate content and knowledge.

Statistics show that the use of these technologies has dramatically increased. In six years the number of Facebook active users has reached 400 million, growing from 100 million to 350 million between 2008 and 2009 alone (see Figure 1.1). Today, seven of the top 20 sites accessed by Internet users belong to the family of social websites (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.1: Growth in Facebook users 2004-2010



(Source: Facebook.com)

In this new environment, the spread of Internet connectivity and mobile technologies are becoming essential to economic and social activities and the main instruments of communication and networking. In 2008 subscriptions to mobile carriers surpassed the 4 billions mark and are now estimated at 4.6 billions. In 2009 there were an estimated 1.7 billion Internet users (see Figure 1.3).

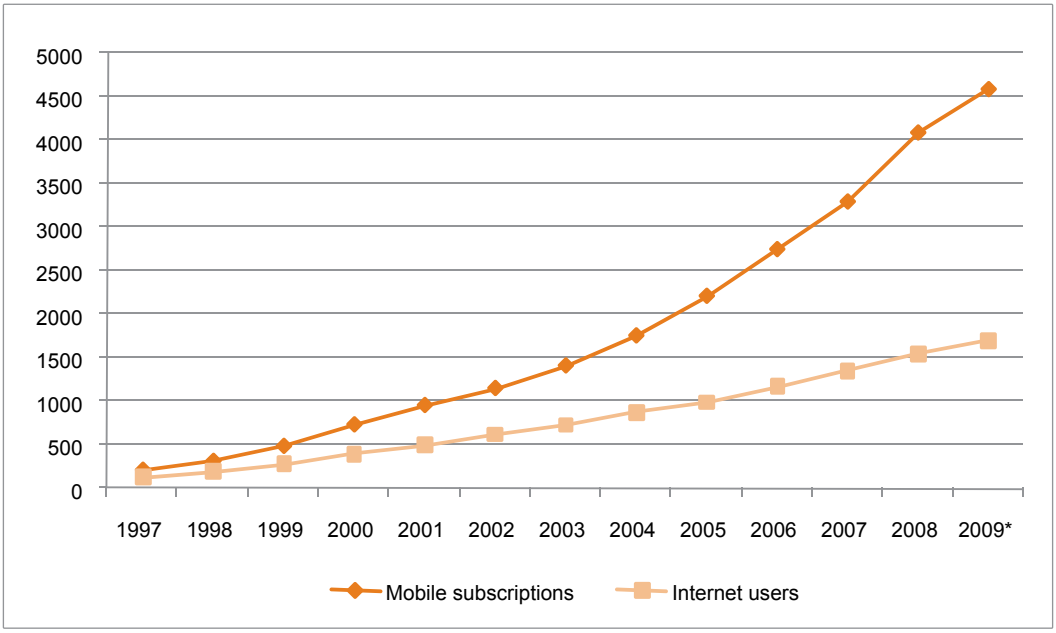
Mobile technology is growing most rapidly, especially in developing countries. As stated by the Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU): "It looks highly likely that global mobile cellular teledensity will surpass 100% within the next decade, and probably earlier".[1] High speed Internet capacity also continues to grow, although at a slower pace. As these trends and technologies come together they will provide the means for nearly universal connectivity.

Figure 1.2: Social websites ranked among top 20 by usage

#2	Facebook
#4	YouTube
#6	Wikipedia
#7	Blogger
#12	Twitter
#17	Wordpress
#18	Myspace

(Source: Alexa.com, 8 March 2010)

Figure 1.3: Growth in mobile subscriptions and Internet users 1997 – 2009 (in millions)



(Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database. * Estimated)

IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE

This dynamic growth and continuous evolution of the Information Society is having important consequences for public governance institutions, politicians and officials, civil society organizations and ordinary citizens, in both developed and developing countries.

From the advent of the printing press to the invention of radio and television, innovations in technology have influenced the ways in which political institutions exercise their role in society and interact with citizens. Today, the same institutions are grappling with this new wave of tech-

1 "Mobile Marvels: A Special Report on Telecoms in Emerging Markets", *The Economist,* 24 September 2009, pp. 1-19.

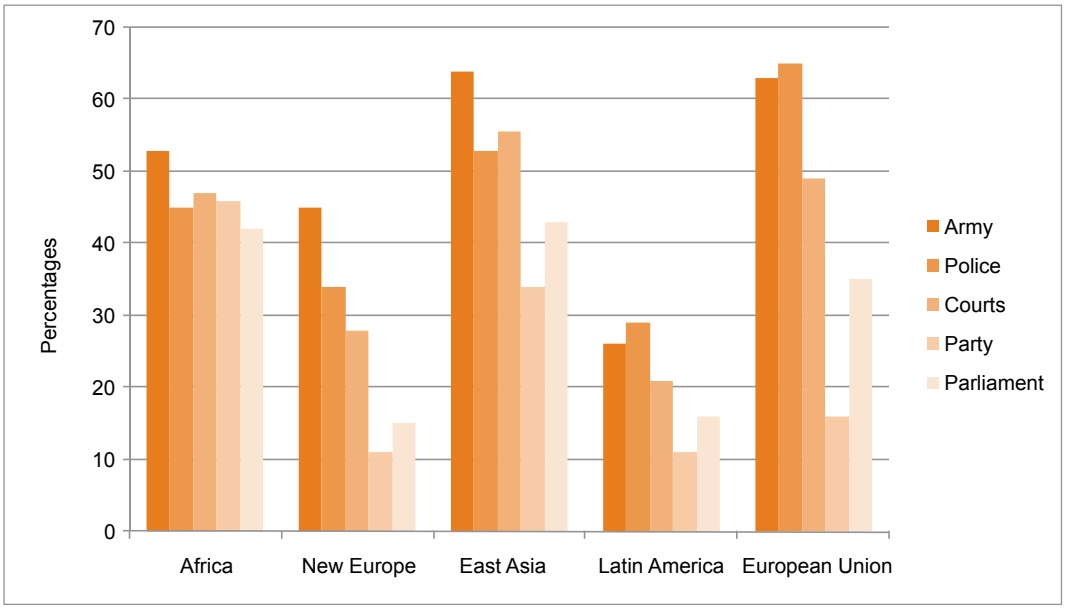
nological change that is once again altering the economic, social and political environment, the governance process and the way dialogue between government entities and the public takes place.

The emergence of a new kind of public sphere – based on the Internet and new forms of social connectivity – is leading to an expansion of the democratic arena and to a potential renewal of the relationship between politics and citizens. New technologies and the use of networks have provided tools for increased participation of the public in political life. Citizens have more opportunities to be informed, higher expectations to make their voice heard, and the possibility to organize themselves into groups and social movements.

Notably, the expansion of opportunities to participate in the political process has coincided with a decline of trust in political institutions and a growing citizens' disaffection from politics.

As highlighted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2006 (see Figure 1.4), parliaments as institutions do not stand high in public esteem, though there are significant regional differences.[2]

Figure 1.4: Trust in national institutions: regional averages



A worldwide opinion poll commissioned by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in September 2009,[3] while confirming a widespread support for democracy, showed that citizens around the world have deep misgivings about the way political life functions in their own countries. "There is a gap between 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".[4]

As further pointed out by Manuel Castells, a noted scholar of communications and the Information Society, the decline of political trust does not necessarily translate into the decline of political participation or in decreased civic engagement. Data on the participation in the past three presidential elections in the United States of America, for example, demonstrate that political

2 For a full interpretation of the results presented in the figure see Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: A Guide to Good Practice*, Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2006, p.110.
3 WorldPublicOpinion.Org, *World Public Opinion on Political Tolerance: A Study of 24 Nations*, Washington, D.C.: WorldPublicOpinion.Org, 2009.
4 Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Opening speech, World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington. D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org].

engagement in the country is increasing. In developing countries, citizens showing less trust in politics are those who are more civically engaged. According to Castells, "it is precisely this growing distance between belief in political institutions and desire for political action that constitutes the crisis of democracy".[5]

At the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, the Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy asked whether faith in democracy and the democratic process is imperiled at the very moment when it is more open and accessible.[6] A similar concern was voiced by a member of the Swedish Parliament:

> "Sweden is an extensive user of the Internet. Most citizens are connected and government agencies use the web as a tool to provide services to citizens. Sweden is ranked high in e-government according to the United Nations. And yet, the level of e-participation is low. A study by the World Internet Institute reported that only 14% of citizens agree that they can influence politicians through the Internet and only 7% believe the Internet will give people more political power. How can we improve the situation so more people believe they can use e-democracy, use e-government to have an impact? Our members tweet and blog and use Facebook but still people do not trust the technology. Do people not trust the technology or do they not trust politicians?"[7]

Scholars and researchers are expanding the scope of their investigations and proposing a variety of views regarding political trust, legitimacy of the institutions, and the changing relation between politics and media. However, consensus has emerged among them on the vast opportunities that technology provides to raise the quality of democratic governance and to overcome some of the challenges that confront many governing institutions. At issue is how best to use these instruments to open new avenues for participation and civic engagement to build trust and legitimacy.

GOVERNING AT A TIME OF TECHNOLOGY CHANGE

During the past decades, many executive and legislative bodies throughout the world have begun to adopt ICT to become more transparent, more accountable, and more efficient. They have invested significant resources to modernize their operations and to implement new technology-based approaches to performing traditional governmental functions.

Since their advent, e-government services have continued to improve and many now compare favorably with the appeal and satisfaction of those offered successfully in the private sector.[8] A number of surveys have documented the fact that the volume of information and the extent of online services provided by political institutions are growing world-wide. In 2008 Darrel West reported that 96% of government websites offered publications that citizens can access and that 75% offered databases.[9] These figures were up from 2001, when they were found to be 75% and 41% respectively. By 2008 services that citizens could utilize fully online were available on 50% of national websites, up significantly from 28% the previous year and only 8% in 2001.

5 Castells, Manuel, *Communication Power,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p.295.
6 Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, Presentation at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington, D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org].
7 Eliza Roszkowska Öberg, Member of the Parliament of Sweden, Intervention at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org].
8 Foreseeresults.com, "E-Government Satisfaction Index", *American Customer Satisfaction Index* (ACSI) Q4/26 January 2010.
9 West, Darrell M, *Improving Technology Utilization in Electronic Government Around the World, 2008*, Governance Studies at Brookings, 2008.

In its 2008 e-Government Survey, the United Nations reported similar progress. "The world average of the global e-government index continues to increase as more countries invest resources in developing websites that are informative. Most countries have e-information on policies, laws and an archive section on their portals/websites".[10] The Survey found that 98% of the 192 governments examined had institutional websites. It also showed that the majority of the countries surveyed were beginning to enter a more advanced phase of e-government and were adding more e-services and e-applications to respond to the needs of their citizens.

These findings on e-government mirror those on e-parliament. In 2007, 95% of the parliaments that responded to the first survey launched by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament[11] reported that they had websites with parliamentary documents and actions available to the public. The results of the 2009 survey place the figure at 97% and suggest that several parliaments have made considerable progress in achieving high levels of openness and transparency, leading to the possibility of greater accountability.

Studies and reports from individual countries provide additional insights into how ICT are having an impact on the relationship between citizens and their governing institutions. A 2009 OECD study documented the substantial progress made by Portugal in transforming its public sector and its service delivery to the benefit of citizens and businesses.

> "By targeted use of e-government, Portugal is in the process of making citizens' and businesses' everyday life easier through administrative simplification supported by an increasing number of coherent and integrated services accessible online. Achieving a simpler public sector more responsive to demands from citizens and businesses requires strong political commitment and drive for achieving administrative simplification and e-government goals. Among its achievements,… [is that]… the time taken to register a company… has been reduced from 54 days to under 48 minutes".[12]

An example of encouraging citizen engagement in the policy setting process was identified in the legal framework of Estonia.

> "In recent years, a systematic approach has been taken by the central government related to enhancing public participation in policymaking. The latter is obviously interrelated with the growth of civil society, voicing strongly the ideals of participatory democracy. An important foundation for e-democracy was established by the Public Information Act at the beginning of 2001. The act obliged all public institutions to create websites and to provide extensive online content of public interest, including drafts of policy documents and legislative acts. Providing information about activities of public institutions is an important prerequisite of transparent and accountable government.
>
> Several important processes for democratic development have stemmed from the Estonian Civil Society Development Concept approved by Parliament in 2002. It is a strategic document defining the mutually complementary roles, mechanisms and priorities of public administration and civic initiative. In 2005, a Code of Good Practice on Involvement was developed by representatives of public sector and civil society organizations, elaborating the key principles that support active and meaningful participation of CSOs and the wider public. The code suggests principles that should be incorporated into the policy planning process".[13]

10 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Division for Public Administration and Development Management, *UN e-Government Survey 2008: From e-Government to Connected Governance*, New York: United Nations, 2008, p.19 [http://www.unpan.org].

11 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, [New York]: United Nations, 2008 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

12 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Making Life Easy for Citizens and Businesses in Portugal: Administrative Simplification and e-Government*, Paris: OECD Publishing, 2009.

13 Hinsberg, Hille, "My better Estonia", in U.S. General Services Administration, Office of Citizen Services and Communications, Centre for Intergovernmental Solutions, *Engaging Citizens in Government* - Intergovernmental Solutions Newsletter Issue 25, Fall 2009, pp. 20-21.

Despite the positive outcomes reported in these studies and country reports, progress in many instances has been uneven, even among high income countries that have achieved positive results in many of their e-government initiatives. West[14] finds that several factors, including institutional arrangements, budget scarcity, group conflict, cultural norms, and prevailing patterns of social and political behavior can restrict or impede government actions, which in turn limit the transformational potential of the Internet and weaken the ability of technology to empower citizens. He stresses the need for government websites to make better use of available technology and address problems of access and democratic outreach.

A primary conclusion from the *World e-Parliament Report 2008* depicted a similar situation. While some parliaments were clearly innovators in their use of ICT, including by using them to connect with the electorate, for most parliaments there was a substantial gap between what was possible with ICT and what had been accomplished. Their use of ICT was best described as uneven.

RESPONDING TO CITIZENS' PRESSURE FOR GREATER CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Today, the advances made by some governments and parliaments in using ICT, the expansion of mobile and fixed connectivity and the release of new devices, coupled with the activism of people on social networks, have led to greater expectations for participation among many citizens.

The extent to which these expectations are met will vary among countries and will depend mainly on non-technical factors, particularly vision, policies, leadership, political commitment, and the civic culture of the community. Other conditions, such as the economic climate or the enactment of appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks will also have a substantial effect.

The advances of ICT alone will never be sufficient to transform the quality of the political life of a society. Many countries have demonstrated that improved services and more open institutions can result from the effective deployment of technology. But achieving a more inclusive dialogue and governance process requires a combination of both public policies and laws promoting a more equitable and people-centred Information Society and the use of ICT instruments as a means to engage citizens in the policy process.

Some countries have already moved forward with the formulation of specific policies that ensure more opportunities for citizen engagement and greater openness, transparency, and accountability. Some of these efforts have originated with the executive through their e-government programmes; others have originated with legislatures as they evolve into e-parliaments.

Among the top 10 countries assessed by the most recent United Nations e-Government Survey,[15] the policy approaches announced by the United Kingdom and Spain well illustrate the ways in which some governments are enhancing their e-government programmes.

A multi-year plan outlined recently by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom includes actions in a number of areas. In his presentation of the initiative, the Prime Minister stressed how "People have rising expectations and aspirations. They want a bigger say and greater accountability in the public sector with services that are universal but also personal and of the highest quality".

14 West, D.M., *Op cit.* p. 2.

15 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Division for Public Administration and Development Management, *UN e-Government Survey 2010: Leveraging e-Government at a Time of Financial and Economic Crisis*, New York: United Nations, 2010 [http://www.unpan.org].

The Prime Minister also emphasized several of the key issues of e-government and e-participation, and the critical role of information to achieve the next transformation of services:

> "Information is the key. An informed citizen is a powerful citizen. We will ensure that people can get access to the information they need to engage in dialogue with public service professionals; and in doing so reduce bureaucratic burdens. This will drive improvements in public services, making them more personal and cost-effective, whilst at the same time strengthening democratic deliberation and giving frontline workers and voluntary organisations the freedom to innovate and respond to new demands in new ways. We are determined to be among the first governments in the world to open up public information in a way that is far more accessible to the general public".

Finally, to ensure access of services to all citizens, the Prime Minister addressed the plans to reduce the digital divide.

> "But in order to achieve our ambitions for this third generation of public services we must ensure that no one in Britain is left behind in this communications revolution. So we will ensure that everyone can use all the facilities that will be available. Through our programme for Digital Britain - high speed broadband will be extended to every home so that we can create genuinely interactive services. There are now 6,000 public places with Internet access in England, including every library - where there are more than 30,000 terminals - many community and adult education centres; and even some pubs. And today I can announce that we will invest a further £30 million with UK Online, championed by [the] digital inclusion taskforce, to get at least another 1 million people online by 2012".[16]

Recent directives from the government of Spain provide another example of how some countries are taking specific steps to ensure access to e-government services. In 2009 the Spanish Council of Ministers approved a Royal Decree whose purpose is to partially implement the Law on Citizens' Electronic Access to Public Services of 2007. The relevant decree (Real Decreto 1671/2009) was published in the Official Gazette of 18 November 2009. The press release describing this recent effort summarized the new regulations as follows:

> "The Law on Citizens' Electronic Access to Public Services (otherwise known as the 'Law on eAdministration') seeks to make the most of information and communication technology (ICT) in an aim to bring citizens closer to the Public Administration while enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the relevant administrative proceedings, so as to enable the citizens' electronic access to most of the public services via the Internet.
>
> The same law officially recognises the right of citizens to communicate electronically with Public Administrations, i.e. to conduct their administrative business by electronic means, 24 hours a day.
>
> Relevant State bodies are obliged to facilitate this via diverse channels such as the Internet, television or other technology. This new right is to be respected by all Public Administrations from 31 December 2009 onwards. Furthermore, this law stipulates that any business conducted by electronic means will be just as valid as if it were conducted by traditional means". [17]

Among the common goals articulated in the policies of these executives are: wider access to information; increased opportunities for citizen engagement; and, reduction of the digital divide.

Parliaments have also put significant emphasis on these goals. But because of their constitutional role as the primary representatives of the people, there is an even greater requirement and a greater challenge to provide effective ways to engage citizens in the policy making process.

16 Gordon Brown, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, *Speech on Smarter Government*, London, 7 December 2009 [http://www.number10.gov.uk].

17 *Adoption of a decree for the implementation of the eGovernment Act* [http://www.epractice.eu/en/news/299507].

As the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives emphasized in her opening speech at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, "…technology provides opportunities for discussion and engagement; it strengthens accountability; ultimately it makes democracies more democratic".[18] Examples from three parliaments illustrate the commitment to these goals by legislatures in different regions of the world.

The Parliament of the Dominican Republic has coordinated with the executive the implementation of a new legal framework that promotes openness and transparency and increases citizen participation. The success of this new framework is demonstrated by some key indicators, including: a) growth in teledensity, resulting in almost 100% of the population having some type of modern telecommunications devices; b) a tripling of Internet subscribers; c) a substantial increase in broadband users; and, 4) an increasing number of mobile Internet users. Collectively these efforts have helped to reduce the digital divide in the country.

In his intervention at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009 the President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic[19] underscored that in his country access to information is a fundamental right, as outlined in the recently enacted Freedom of Information Act. This policy has guided the adoption of a plan for e-parliament. The pillars of this plan include greater efficiency and productivity, improved quality of legislation, better parliament-to-citizens interaction, and greater service to constituents. Transparency is seen as the critical and crosscutting value in connecting all of these pillars, and the Parliament's website plays a key role in achieving that purpose.

The Parliament also believes that before demanding transparency of others it has to be transparent itself. As a result, documents such as its budget, fees paid, and public statements of members are now online; all parliamentary procurements are done through the Internet and all contracts are online; all votes are now validated through a biometric system and made available electronically; and, technology allows the Parliament to respond to 90% of citizens' requests for information within 24 hours.

The President of the Chamber of the Dominican Republic also reported that ICT have helped to improve representation and citizen engagement. Citizens now participate in policy discussions via ICT, and studies conducted by the parliamentary administration have shown an increase in public satisfaction with the legislature.

The vision of the Parliament of Sweden (the Riksdagen)[20] is to make the work of Parliament transparent to the public, and create opportunities for enhanced engagement in, and greater understanding of, the legislative process. The principles of freedom of information and of expression underpin this vision.

The Riksdagen uses all the available tools, including modern technologies, to be open to the public. It places great importance on achieving an Information Society for all so that there are more opportunities for all segments of the society in their diversity to participate in the legislative process. ICT facilitate the internal work of the legislature, but it is equally crucial that this be linked to transparency, enabling the public to understand and follow the legislative process.

The Riksdagen has also reached out to constituencies by conducting regional surveys and establishing panels for citizens to give their views on how best to communicate with the parliament.

18 Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Opening speech, World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington, D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org].

19 Julio César Valentín, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic, Presentation at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org].

20 Anders Forsberg, Secretary General of the Parliament of Sweden, Presentation at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org] .

The South African Parliament[21] has approved a five-year strategy for ICT - *From e-Parliament to e-Democracy* - that aims to deepen and strengthen the culture of popular participation and activism in parliamentary democracy. During the period 2009 – 2014 the Parliament is undertaking a number of projects in support of this strategy, including building an interactive website, establishing interactive Facebook-style pages, and exploiting mobile applications, multi-media services, and web-based TV. The strategy puts a great deal of emphasis on participation by members of parliament and by citizens. A first report on the strategy has been tabled in Parliament, and some issues have already been taken up with the executive. The Parliament will also make incremental investments in the next four years in systems for acquiring, managing, and sharing information; for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the government and its programs; and for increasing opportunities for public engagement. The vision also includes more exchanges and cooperation with other parliaments and parliamentary networks at the international level.

In addition to initiatives led by legislative bodies, notable developments have occurred in the non-profit sector in different countries. As noted by Brandtzæg and Lüders:

> "Today, «all» citizens can in principle produce and share information among themselves. The underlying premises of information dissemination have been turned upside down. Citizens themselves can play a role in determining the flow of information, which is the principle from which we derive the term eCitizen2.0."….
>
> "The definition of an eCitizen2.0 is one who produces and shares public-sector information with others via the Internet. The authorities must dare to undertake a fundamental rethink of the mechanisms used to distribute public-sector information and services. The public sector and eGov need to a greater extent to take as their point of departure the fact that the ordinary citizen is capable of acting as a «supplier» of public-sector information and communication". [22]

A number of initiatives currently under way in a few countries point in that direction. Alternatives to parliament-run online platforms have been developed by non-governmental organizations to provide citizens with additional instruments to scrutinize the parliamentary environment. Significant examples include Australia (*OpenAustralia.org*), France *(NosDeputes.fr)*, Italy (*OpenParlamento.it)*, United Kingdom (*TheyWorkForYou.com*) and the United States *(OpenCongress.org)*. These websites, which often rely on the work of volunteers, have attracted the public's interest by combining new methods of representing and retrieving information with social networking layers that support civic engagement.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Advances in technology are continuing unabated, as outlined by the International Telecommunication Union in its recent report *Measuring the Information Society 2010*[23]. The latest results show that between 2007 and 2008, all 159 countries surveyed improved their Information Development Index (IDI) scores, confirming the ongoing diffusion of ICT and the overall transition to a global Information Society.

At the same time significant barriers remain in all countries, regardless of their income levels. These obstacles keep many citizens from being fully informed and actively engaged, if they choose to be, in the political and policy setting process.

21 Mninwa J. Mahlangu, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa, and, Mzi Mbangula, Divisional Head, Corporate Services (ICT), National Assembly of South Africa. Presentations at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org].

22 Brandtzæg, Petter Bae - Lüders, Marika, *eCitizen 2.0: The Ordinary Citizen as a Supplier of Public Sector Information,* SINTEF, 2009 [http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/FAD/Vedlegg/IKT-politikk/eCitizen20.pdf].

23 International Telecommunication Union, *Measuring the Information Society: the ICT Development Index,* Geneva: International Telecommunication Union, 2009 [http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/publications/idi/2009/index.html].

It is a fundamental challenge of the parliament to ensure that these barriers come down to provide all citizens with the opportunity to engage with the legislature and interact with a transparent, accessible, and accountable representative institution. It is the responsibility of the parliament to establish policies and frameworks that build an open and inclusive Information Society within which citizens have the means for participation.

Different forms of digital divide

Addressing the digital divide remains high on the agenda of national and international policy makers and there are promising signs of progress in this area. An analysis by the International Telecommunication Union of four groups of countries reflecting high, upper, medium, and low IDI levels based on data from 2002 to 2008 shows that the digital divide between the "high" group and each of the other three groups is shrinking.

Mobile cellular penetration in developing countries has more than doubled since 2005, passing the 50 per cent mark and reaching an estimated 57 per 100 inhabitants at the end of 2009. Even though this is well below the average in developed countries, where penetration exceeds 100 per cent, the rate of progress remains remarkable.

Compared to mobile cellular and fixed telephone services, fixed broadband services showed the largest price fall (42%) over this timeframe. However, the percentage of Internet users in developed countries (64%) remains much higher than in the developing world (18%), where four out of five people are still excluded from the benefits of being online.

Despite the seriousness of the gap that still exists, these trends, along with the increased sophistication of mobile devices, provide strong indications that even in developing countries citizens increasingly have access to technologies that can provide them with online information and the capacity to engage with their representatives and parliaments interactively. Legislatures should capitalize on these advances by exploring innovative ways to reach out to their constituencies through mobile technology.

The digital divide, however, goes beyond access to hardware and communications links. Barriers can take many forms, both across and within countries. For example, there still exist wide generational and educational divides between those who are capable of generating information and knowledge using web-based tools and the Internet and those who are not. Barriers also exist for the one-tenth of the world's population with disabilities and for people whose languages are not adequately represented on the Internet. And even in developed economies there are still large underserved areas that have not been reached by broadband services.

The paradox of too much information

User generated content has been hailed as one of the great advances of the Web 2.0 era. However, it has also become more and more difficult for many users to find the most relevant and authoritative information they need amidst the growing volume of available material online.

Similarly, as parliaments work to improve transparency by making their documents available, users can be easily overwhelmed and quickly frustrated as they try to find the most useful description of a bill or understand its likely impact. It is becoming increasingly evident that while

providing all relevant documents and information may be necessary for achieving the goal of parliamentary transparency, it is not sufficient for attaining the goal of civic understanding. Although many parliaments have done a good job making their documents available, what citizens often need even more is an objective summary of the most important issues and a better awareness of the legislative process.

Knowing what works

A fundamental challenge for parliaments is identifying the most effective techniques for fostering participation and how to best employ them. Exchanging experiences among parliaments can be beneficial, but more scientific analyses are also needed. An example is a study published in 2009 which provides a number of informative results.[24]

In the United States it is a common practice for members to visit their constituencies on a regular basis, sometimes as often as weekly. A variety of modalities are used to carry out these meetings, including one called the "town hall meeting", which is open to all constituents. At these sessions members typically talk about what is happening in Congress – what bills are being considered, what oversight or scrutiny is being carried out – and give their views on the major policy issues under debate. Constituents ask questions and are invited to express their opinions to the members.

Technology has enabled a new form of these gatherings, now called tele-town hall meetings. In these meetings, the member speaks by phone from anywhere, rather than having to travel back to the constituency. Citizens dial into a central number where they can listen to the discussion and also ask questions, which are normally pre-screened. Due to the low cost of telephone communication in the United States, it is an inexpensive and effective way for members to interact with a large number of constituents at the same time.

The study evaluated 20 tele-town hall meetings, which included 600 participants discussing a single issue – immigration policy. The analysis compared the participant groups with "control groups" that consisted of people who had expressed interest in the meetings, but who were precluded from taking part in them. Three interviews were later conducted with each group – one before and two following the meeting.

Of special interest for parliaments were the following three findings:

1. The tele-town hall meetings attracted a diverse array of constituents. Participants were from groups usually less engaged in politics or frustrated with the political system. Participation was higher among young people, minorities, women, and those in the lower income brackets;
2. Participants showed increased engagement in politics compared to the control group. Following the meeting they were more likely to vote and more likely to attempt to engage others in discussing the issues; and
3. The meetings were popular with constituents. 95% expressed the willingness to participate in future events.

24 Congressional Management Foundation, *Online Town Hall Meetings: Exploring Democracy in the 21st Century,* Washington, D.C.: Congressional Management Foundation, 2009 [http://www.cmfweb.org].

As more studies of this nature are conducted, parliaments will be able to determine the benefits and limitations of various approaches to enhancing citizen engagement. Parliaments should encourage academic institutions and civil society organizations to undertake independent analyses that will contribute to more successful and cost-effective implementation of new technologies for interacting with the public.

Risks to democratic dialogue

Despite the many positive aspects of the Internet, its openness provides the means for disaffected individuals or groups that are present in every society to carry out activities intended to undermine democratic institutions. Observers have pointed out with concern that the Internet enables extremists to voice their positions on a large platform that provides them with the means potentially to overwhelm those supporting moderation and persuasion, which are essential to democracy. As noted at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, "demagogues can abuse the organizing capabilities of the Internet through the pretense of participatory politics".[25] Perhaps the most threatening example of this darker side of the Internet is the ability of terrorist groups to use it for recruitment and fomenting violence.

While actions can range from the annoying to the misleading, and even produce destructive behaviors, they present particularly difficult issues for democracies, which place a high value on freedom of expression in all forms of communication. These issues will demand greater attention as more parliaments adopt openness, transparency, and participation as fundamental goals of democratic governance.

In responding to these concerns parliaments and legislators will have to work together to develop best practices based on shared experiences and findings from scholarly studies. Leveraging the advantages of ICT to advance parliamentary democracy through greater transparency and citizen engagement will be more beneficial than trying to control access to communications tools or suppress freedom of expression on the Internet. To attempt this would not only be un-democratic, but would probably not be successful.

Costs and opportunities

Even as parliaments gain more understanding about how to employ ICT most effectively, the costs remain a challenge for all parliaments. On the positive side, the continuous and rapid improvement and diffusion of technologies create opportunities for legislatures that have little or no technology in place. By "starting from scratch", as described by the Vice President of the Assembly of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[26], young and emerging democracies can use the latest developments in ICT, explore less expensive alternatives, and benefit from the experiences of others. Often, they can develop systems without having to support and maintain older legacy systems. And if they are willing, they can benefit from collaborative projects.

While learning from others and having access to newer and less expensive technology offer parliaments a number of ways to reduce costs, it is important to underscore that building the technical infrastructure necessary to become an e-parliament still requires a sustained commitment of resources. It takes a robust, comprehensive technical infrastructure to support all of parliament's fundamental activities, but most importantly the political and institutional will to do so.

25 Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, Presentation at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington, D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org].

26 Jani Makraduli, Vice President of the Assembly of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Presentation at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington, D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org].

Political, social and cultural differences

It is important to note that significant differences in culture will affect how parliaments respond to the challenges that technology and the Information Society pose. History, the maturity of political institutions, demographics, the extent of the development of the Information Society, and especially citizens' views and expectations about their relationship to their government and their parliament will all have an influence. Equally important are the parliamentary traditions and procedures, the role of the parliament within the country's governance system, and the attitudes of the members themselves that will affect how a given parliament responds. If members want an open, transparent, and accountable legislature that actively engages citizens and seeks their views on policies, then this is much more likely to happen. If, on the other hand, they see themselves as an elite who, once elected, is less accountable to its constituents than to other political entities, such as a political party or even the executive, then citizens will not become involved.

The nature and degree of independence of the parliament is also a key factor. If the legislature can substantively modify proposed legislation before approving it, if it sets its own priorities, and if it determines and controls its own budget, the results will be very different than if these conditions are not present.

Finally, the social nature of the community of citizens can also make a great difference. This can be seen in the successful efforts in Ghana and South Africa to establish local centers where citizens can gather and have access to shared technology that connects them to the parliament, the government, and other communities in the country. Libraries are important social centers in many countries and these can also become places for citizens to participate in the Information Society. Customs vary among countries, but the opportunities afforded by shared technology resources can help to address many of the challenges faced by parliaments.

E-PARLIAMENT AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES

During the World e-Parliament Conferences 2008 and 2009, Speakers, Presidents and legislators all emphasized the importance of maintaining the parliament's key role in national governance systems as countries transition to a global Information Society. As it was noted, "parliament at its best embodies the distinctive attributes of democracy – discussion and compromise – and it is the means through which public interest is realized".[27] "How can we translate the values of democratic deliberation into the practice of participatory politics on the Internet and through the Internet? These values are: 1) open, informed, transparent debate between persons with different and alternative visions of what constitutes the common good; 2) respect for generally accepted rules that are valid for all; 3) the legitimacy of decisions based on an understanding and acceptance of their contents by their recipients; and, 4) direct participation by men and women, at least at some point in the collective discussion and deliberations".[28] In addition, legislators underscored the fundamental responsibility of parliaments as guardians of critical democratic values in the environment of the Internet, where they may not always be honored.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union's broad framework for describing the contribution of parliaments to democracy[29] should continue to guide the policies and plans of legislatures for implementing

27 Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo, Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, Presentation at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington, D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org/]

28 Maurizio Lupi, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, Presentation at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington, D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org].

29 Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: A Guide to Good Practice*, Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2006.

ICT. While the modalities for implementing them might need to adapt to society's technological evolution over the coming years, the basic values outlined in the framework set out the key characteristics of a democratic parliament. They include being:

- ***representative:*** that is, socially and politically representative of the diversity of the people, and ensuring equal opportunities and protections for all its members;
- ***transparent:*** that is, being open to the nation through different media, and transparent in the conduct of its business;
- ***accessible:*** this means involving the public, including the associations and movements of civil society, in the work of parliament;
- ***accountable:*** this involves members of parliament being accountable to the electorate for their performance in office and integrity of conduct; and
- ***effective:*** this means the effective organization of business in accordance with these democratic values, and the performance of parliament's legislative and oversight functions in a manner that serves the needs of the whole population.

The merits of using ICT as a means to achieve and sustain the achievement of these goals are evident. The degree and kinds of technology adoption undertaken by parliaments will be critical in determining their e-parliament levels (see Chapter 8).

As stated in the *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, the term e-parliament describes the institutional approach to the use of ICT. It is a concept that continues to evolve as innovative uses of technology are adopted by parliaments and as the global information society advances. However, in spite of the two years that have elapsed since the first Report, the definition first proposed in the 2008 document remains valid:

> "An e-parliament is a legislature that is empowered to be more open, transparent and accountable through ICT. It also empowers people, in all their diversity, to be more engaged in public life by providing higher quality information and greater access to documents and activities of the legislative body. An e-parliament is an efficient organization where stakeholders use information and communication technologies to perform their primary functions of lawmaking, representation, and oversight more effectively. Through the application of modern technology and standards and the adoption of supportive policies, an e-parliament fosters the development of an equitable and inclusive information society".[30]

It is too early to say to what extent new technologies and the challenges they pose truly portend a change in the nature of parliamentary democracy and the relationship between citizens and their political bodies. It is likely, however, that new approaches for perpetuating the values embodied in democratic institutions and the relationship between legislatures and citizens will emerge as the Information Society evolves over the next ten years. It is therefore clear that legislatures will have to continue to adapt to fulfil their deliberative role in a society in which technology increasingly provides the means for citizens and communities to engage in politics and civic activities. The chapters that follow consider some of the most important ways parliaments are striving to achieve this goal.

30 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, [New York]: United Nations, 2008, p.12 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

Chapter 2

Communication between Parliaments and Citizens

Advances in interactive and multimedia technologies have helped place the topic of communication between the electorate and its representative institutions high on the agenda of parliaments' leadership and members. These enhancements are occurring at a time of increasing citizens' distrust of politics and politicians, growing demands for more transparent and accountable institutions, and people's rising desire for greater civic engagement.

The nature of communication between parliaments and citizens is affected by technology at several levels: between members and the electorate; between committees and citizens, and between the institution and the society. These levels must be analyzed separately to understand the issues associated with each of them and collectively to appreciate their full effect on the work of the parliament and its members.

There are many ways in which dialogue between the electorate and its representatives occurs, beginning with the oldest and most fundamental – the process of election. In between one election and the next, parliamentarians who have tried to be responsive to their constituents have used a variety of communication methods such as letters, phone calls, petitions, and meetings. Technology, however, has now given citizens the opportunity to carry out the dialogue more actively and with continuity, for example by intervening through electronic petitions and online public debates.

One of the most significant impacts on legislatures has occurred because technology has increased the possibilities for two-way communication. While many in parliament have adopted technology as a convenient means for enhancing communication from members to citizens, it has been more challenging to employ ICT to support useful and informative dialogue from citizens to members. The very speed and convenience with which exchanges can take place can also create problems because of the sheer number of messages and comments that can be generated by the public.

Box 2.1

The Internet revolution has increased the volume of correspondence dramatically. I have received over 50,000 letters this year, about 1,200 letters per week. Fortunately new technologies allow me and my staff to deal with them effectively. We log and track and respond to these letters in an organized and hopefully timely manner through a sophisticated correspondence management software programme.

David Price, Chairman of the House Democracy Partnership, U.S. House of Representatives
Statement at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009

In addition to the difficulties that the volume of exchanges can present to members, ICT-supported communication raises other concerns such as:

- Interaction – does the method support communication in one direction only or does it support interaction and exchange?
- Responsiveness – are members and institutions able to respond to citizens' comments and questions in a timely and effective manner?
- Representativeness – are there means to help members and institutions judge how representative the comments of the constituents they serve are?
- Value – how informed and useful is the input of citizens for determining policy?

Of particular importance is the question of how best to assess the significance of comments from the public and how these should inform the work of parliaments and the decisions of members. It can be difficult in fact to determine how representative the comments received are and on what information sources they are based on. Implicit in this concern is the question of the role that communications from citizens should have on the actions and votes of a member. Participants at the World e-Parliament Conference 2008,[1] for example, discussed at length whether members should primarily be conveyors of their constituents' opinions on policy issues or representatives who make decisions based on what they consider to be in the best interests of their constituents, taking the views of citizens into account as they deem appropriate.

Important policy issues are complex and even members must often specialize in certain areas. Since parliamentarians do not have the time to become expert in everything, they frequently rely on trusted colleagues, the party, or other sources to assist them in making decisions about what to support. This challenge is even greater for citizens, who rarely have the time or the expertise to understand the important differences among policy options, and must often rely on civil societies, lobbying groups, and others to keep them informed.

In addition, technologies that solicit citizen views can be subject to their own particular limitations. Open discussion forums, for example, can be dominated by a few articulate and adamant participants; online polls can be susceptible to electronic "ballot stuffing"; and large numbers of e-mails can be generated by outside groups that provide easy means for citizens to register their views in what can sometimes appear to be a robotic fashion.

Box 2.2

Over the last year I found myself as parliamentarian at the centre of a legislative issue that provoked global interest: the import of the products of seal hunting into the European Union. I must have had snail mail and e-mail from at least half of Canada, many people in the United States of America, most of Greenland, many indigenous peoples of the Artic and a few of my own voters in the United Kingdom. My frustration in all of that communication was that despite our attempts with videos and statements to get a real debate going, what we experienced instead was "astro-turf lobbying".

Diana Wallis, Vice President of the European Parliament
Statement at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009

Many members have understandably faced problems adopting some of the newest technologies for communication. A recent Hansard Society report[2] found that members of parliament in the

1 United Nations, European Parliament, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Conference 2008: 25-26 November 2008, European Parliament, Brussels; Report*, [New York]: United Nations, 2009 [http://www.ictparliament.org/worldeparliamentconference2008/].

2 Hansard Society, *MPs online: connecting with constituents*, London: Hansard Society Publications, 2009 [http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/files/folders/1688/download.aspx].

United Kingdom are using the Internet primarily to inform their constituents rather than engage with them. The study reported that the most widely used digital media are those which are mainly passive in nature, such as websites. Interactive forms of media which could be used by members to develop a two-way dialogue with their constituents, such as blogs and social networking, are used less commonly. Where these tools are used, it is often in passive "send" mode with few members exploiting their full interactive potential. Key findings from the research showed that 92% of members use e-mail, 83% have a personal website, but only 23% use social networking and just 11% blog.

Taken together, these challenges help to explain why many political institutions have approached their use with caution and often have had mixed results. For its study of e-government, the United Nations has constructed an index that measures the "e-participation" level of countries. This index takes into account whether the websites of the governments provide information about opportunities to comment on policies and offer tools for citizens to register their views. It also assesses the willingness of governments to take citizens' opinions into account in the decision making process and subsequently inform citizens of how this was done. The 2008 study found that 82% of the countries surveyed rank in the lower one third in measures of utilization of e-participation technologies.[3]

Many parliaments have been similarly slow to adopt interactive technologies. The *World e-Parliament Report 2008* found that 88% of respondents reported that the public can contact the parliament by e-mail to express opinions, with chambers in the high and upper middle income groups reaching 100% and 97% respectively. However, only 23% had systems for managing these e-mails, suggesting that most parliaments lacked the tools to make effective use of these messages once they were received.[4]

Furthermore, the 2008 Report showed relatively low use of online discussion groups. Only 18% of respondents stated that citizens could express their opinion through such means. Parliaments in the high income group were more likely to have such systems, but this was the case for only 24%. Equally indicative of the uncertainty with which such technologies are viewed, almost 50% of parliaments in the high income group had no plans to implement online discussion groups. In a separate study of e-participation among 10 parliaments, Lasse Berntzen, *et al.,* concluded that "Most parliaments are still not using the full range of Internet technologies as participatory tools in order to involve citizens".[5]

The studies on e-government and e-parliament cited above suggest that in 2008 political institutions were taking a conservative approach to technology-based engagement with citizens. Findings from the 2009 survey, presented later in this chapter, do indicate greater activity among many parliaments as they expand their capacity in this area.

Examples of relevant initiatives were presented at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009.[6] The Parliament of Ghana made efforts to connect to the people through the use of technology.

3 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Division for Public Administration and Development Management, *UN e-Government Survey 2008: From e-Government to Connected Governance,* New York: United Nations, 2008 [http://www.unpan.org].

4 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008,* [New York]: United Nations, 2008, p.138 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

5 Berntzen, Lasse - Healy, Mike - Hahamis, Panos - Dunville, Debra - Esteves, José, "Parliamentary Web Presence: a Comparative Review", *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on e-Government: Pittsburgh*, *12-13 October 2006* [ed. by] Dan Remenyi, Reading: Academic Conferences Ltd, 2006, pp. 17-25.

6 Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo, Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana; and Mninwa J. Mahlangu, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa. Intervention at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington D.C. [http://www.ictparliament.org/].

Among them the most innovative are a public-private partnership with a TV station to cover plenary sessions in full and the live broadcast of plenary meetings and committee hearings. 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 use their phones to contact "call in" programmes where parliament and policy issues are being discussed. Other efforts include the development of the Parliament's own radio station to broadcast plenary sessions and the use of Facebook to hold open discussions on relevant topics once a week.

The Parliament of South Africa has recently implemented 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 teleconferencing through satellite links allow all provinces to participate in the debate and share experiences. The programme is supported by radio interviews and phone-in programmes with members before and after the event.

The 2008 presidential election in the United States also provides an excellent example of innovative uses of technology to communicate with voters. Two observations about the election have been made that are of particular relevance to this discussion. First, the winning candidate made use of a broad range of techniques and did not rely on just one or two channels to communicate his message. These included web pages, e-mails, audio, video, and text messaging, as well as social networking resources. One of the purposes in doing this was to ensure outreach to as many as possible using the methods that were most likely to be used by the various recipients. With this same purpose in mind, the candidate also relied equally heavily on more traditional methods of communication, such as mailings, door-to-door canvassing, phone calls, and rallies. It was a campaign that took place on both sides of the digital divide.

It is likely that another reason for the apparent success in using technology to communicate with voters during the election was the emerging receptiveness of many in the electorate to the use of these technologies. A study of the Pew Research Center found that "…74% of Internet users - representing 55% of the entire adult population - went online in 2008 to get involved in the political process or to get news and information about the election. This marks the first time that a Pew Internet & American Life Project survey has found that more than half of the voting-age population used the Internet to get involved in the political process during an election year".[7]

RESULTS AND FINDINGS FROM THE 2007 SURVEY

The findings presented in the *World e-Parliament Report 2008* provided an assessment of the state of communication technology in parliaments at that time. The Report concluded that while there had been some progress in using ICT to disseminate information to the public, there were few truly interactive parliamentary websites. They were primarily used as a one-way communication device by members, parliaments and political parties. Some experiments with blogs and other interactive features were underway, and there were several efforts in different countries to develop online discussions and receive citizens' comments on pending legislation and policies under consideration by parliament. The *World e-Parliament Report 2008* expressed the view that these initiatives, if carried out, could be helpful in identifying good practices for engaging citizens more actively.

7 Smith, Aaron, *The Internet's Role in Campaign 2008*, Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2009.

The 2008 Report also noted that:

- e-mail was the primary way for citizens to contact parliaments electronically;
- in 83% of parliaments someone within the legislature responded to e-mails from citizens;
- very few chambers had e-mail management systems in place and over 60% in the high income group had no plans to implement one;
- only 18% of chambers had the capacity for holding online group discussions;
- only 20% of chambers had other methods besides e-mail for enabling citizens to make their views known to the parliament; they viewed them as serving the goals of listening to the concerns of citizens and engaging them in policy discussions. Parliaments and chambers in the Latin American group reported the highest percentage of those providing such mechanisms for online citizen input (64%).

For member communication with citizens, the survey found the following:

- in 42% of the chambers members used websites to communicate their positions; however, there was a wide variation by income level with 73% in the high income group compared to none in the low income group;
- there was some experimentation by members using blogs to communicate ongoing activities to constituents, but the numbers were very small;
- only 16% of chambers and parliaments offered other electronic means for enabling members and parties to communicate their views. Traditional broadcasting through TV and radio programmes were identified most often, while some parliaments were making use of webcasting technology.

The 2008 Report cited a number of concerns that needed to be better understood and resolved in the future. In particular, it noted the potential for unmet expectations on the part of the public. If citizens believe that parliaments or individual members employ new technology but never take into account the public's input when developing positions, they could become disenchanted and further disengaged from parliament. The Report suggested that parliaments should pursue the use of ICT in a coherent, strategic fashion that invites public interaction with the parliamentary process and fosters effective multi-directional communication with citizens. They also have to consider what other factors beyond technology need to be addressed to help increase public trust in parliament as an institution.

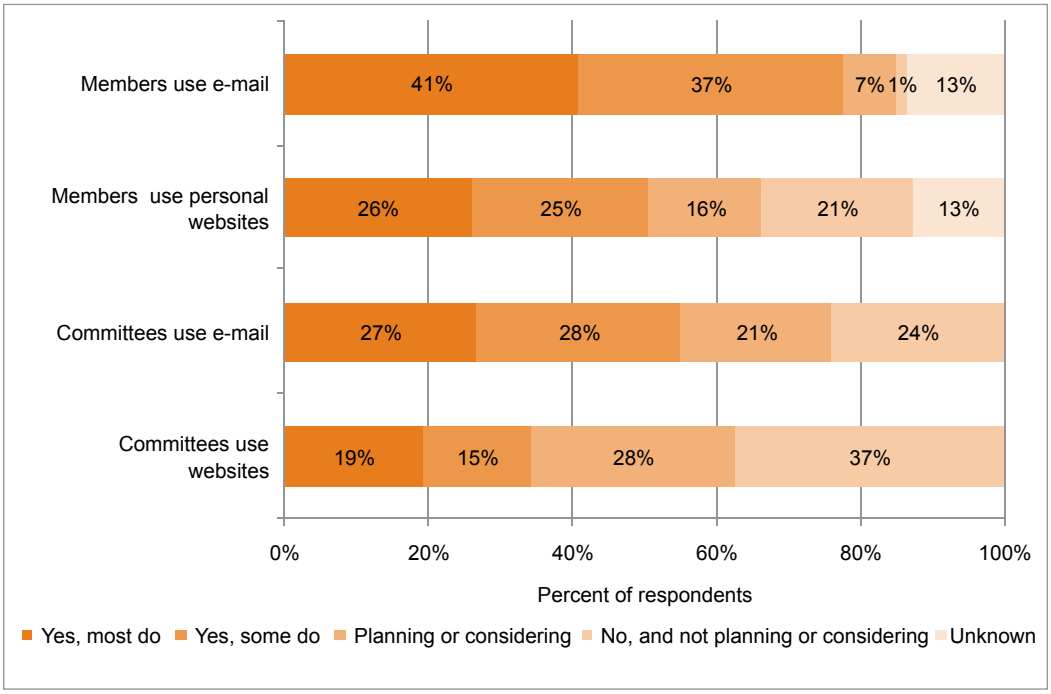
RESULTS AND FINDINGS FROM THE 2009 SURVEY

Because communication technologies have been among the most rapidly evolving fields in ICT over the past two years, the latest survey investigated in greater depth several issues that had not been included in the previous one. It asked more detailed questions about the use of e-mail and websites by members and by committees (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of the parliaments' websites). It added queries about a wider range of communication technologies and inquired about the purposes and objectives of their use. It also asked when, during the legislative process, the views of citizens were sought. As communication with young people is an issue of growing interest, two questions were also added about this topic. And because a great deal can be learned from sharing information about problems encountered, the survey asked about the challenges parliaments had experienced in using technology for communication. Finally, the survey inquired about the trends in communication with citizens once technology had been introduced by the parliament.

Members' use of e-mail

Of the parliaments responding to the survey, 78% reported that most or some members use e-mail to communicate with citizens, as shown in Figure 2.1. This included 41% stating that most members use e-mail, and 37% indicating that some members use it. In addition, 7% reported that members are planning or considering using e-mail. Only one chamber said no; the rest (13%) reported that the answer was unknown.[8]

Figure 2.1: Use of e-mail and websites by members and committees to communicate with citizens



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Questions 1, 4, 7 and 9; 134 respondents)

In 2007 the survey asked whether citizens could contact parliaments via e-mail: 88% said yes[9] and 59% confirmed that members received these e-mails (as well as others, including parliamentary officials, committees, and parties).[10] Despite the slight differences in wording between the two surveys it seems reasonable to conclude that the use of e-mail by members is increasing.

In 2009, 88% of parliaments also reported that most (43%) or some (45%) members who use e-mail respond to messages from citizens.[11] In 2007, 83% of respondents said that members or others in parliament responded to e-mails.[12] The results from 2009, therefore, suggest that the responsiveness of members to e-mail has also increased. Although this is a positive finding, the characteristics of the response cannot be determined from these survey questions alone. For example, is the response a pro forma reply, is it a fuller reply, and is there an attempt to summarize the e-mails and share the results with citizens? Also, the survey did not ask how soon a message is answered.

8 Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 4.
9 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, [New York]: United Nations, 2008, p.128 [http://www.ictparliament.org].
10 *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, cit., p.129 [http://www.ictparliament.org].
11 Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 5.
12 *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, cit., p.129 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

Despite these positive indications of more use and greater responsiveness on the part of members, only 21% of parliaments reported having an automated system to support handling and answering incoming e-mail.[13] In 2007, the question about e-mail systems was not exactly the same (it included reference to the use of a "knowledge base") but it was similar enough to warrant a comparison. As seen in Figure 2.2, responses of the 2009:2007 Compare Group[14] suggest that there has been no improvement in this situation in the last two years.

Figure 2.2: Automated e-mail management system

Automated e-mail management system?	2007	2009
Yes	21%	21%
Planning or considering	32%	25%
No and not planning or considering	47%	54%

(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 6; Survey 2007, Section 8, Question 5)

While it is not yet clear how significant a limitation this may be, the effectiveness of e-mail as a means of communication with citizens can be highly dependent on the availability of an automated system to assist members record, categorize, and respond to messages. There is also some risk that citizens may lose confidence if they have no indication that members are able to take their comments into account.

Committees' use of e-mail

Parliaments reported that committees also use e-mail: a combined total of 55% of respondents said that most (27%) or some (28%) committees use e-mail to communicate with citizens (Figure 2.1). In addition, 21% are planning or considering using it, but 24% are not.[15] In the 2007 survey, the comparable figure for committees using e-mail was 41%. As with members, therefore, it appears that committee use of e-mail is increasing. Also positive is the fact that a very high percentage report that most or some committees respond to e-mail (95% for committees versus 88% for members).[16]

It is difficult to draw any conclusions regarding the 24% who say that committees do not use e-mail and are not planning or considering using it. For some, this may be an issue of rules or procedures; others may not see e-mail as useful or valuable for their work; for others, it may be a matter of resources.

Members' use of websites

As Figure 2.1 shows, 51% of parliaments reported that most or some members use websites to communicate with citizens. Although the questions were posed slightly differently,[17] the percentages for the 2009:2007 Compare Group - 50% and 45% respectively - reflect an increase in members' use of websites since 2007[18].

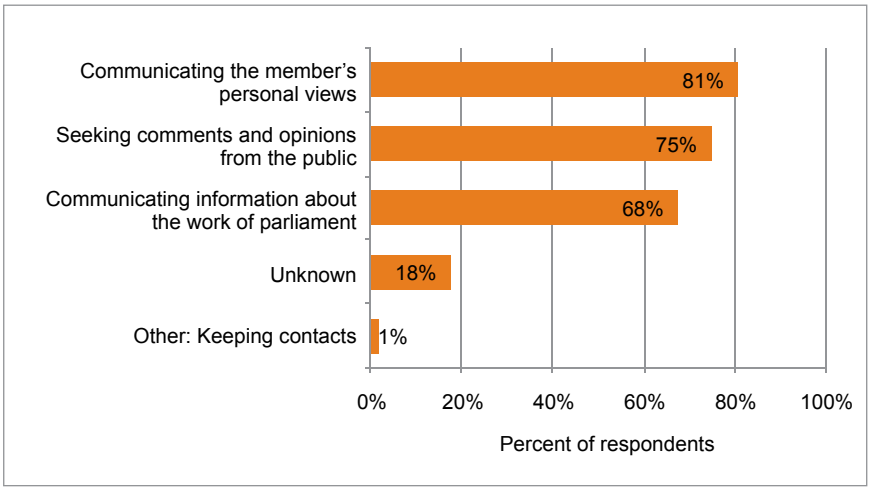
13 Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 6.
14 As noted in the Introduction, the 2009:2007 Compare Group is comprised of those 87 assemblies that responded the survey in both years.
15 Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 9.
16 Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Questions 5 and 10.
17 2009: Do Members use personal websites to communicate with citizens; 2007: Do Members use websites to communicate their views on policy issues and proposed legislation. However, in 2009, the survey also asked what purposes members use websites for and 81% of parliaments said "Communicating the member's personal views".
18 *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, cit., p.135 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

20% of parliaments, however, indicated that members do not use personal websites and are not planning or considering doing it. There could be several reasons for this: they may not have specific constituencies they need to communicate with, they may lack the resources or the knowledge to create and manage a website, or they may not find such websites valuable.

Parliaments gave the following purposes for which members use websites (see Figure 2.3):
- Communicate member's personal views – 81%
- Seek comments and opinions from the public – 75%
- Communicate information about the work of parliament – 68%

The relatively high percentages for each of these purposes suggest that many members who do have websites are trying to use them for two-way communication, both to explain their own views on issues and to seek the views of the public. Because members are the most direct representatives of their constituents, this interactive use of websites can be viewed as a positive finding. However, it is important to point out that this is happening in only 75% of the 51% of chambers that report that members maintain personal websites. In other words, only 38% of parliaments (75% of 51%) report that members are using websites to seek comments and opinions from the public.

Figure 2.3: Purposes for which members use websites



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 2; 68 respondents (51%) responding "yes" to Question 1)

Committees' use of websites

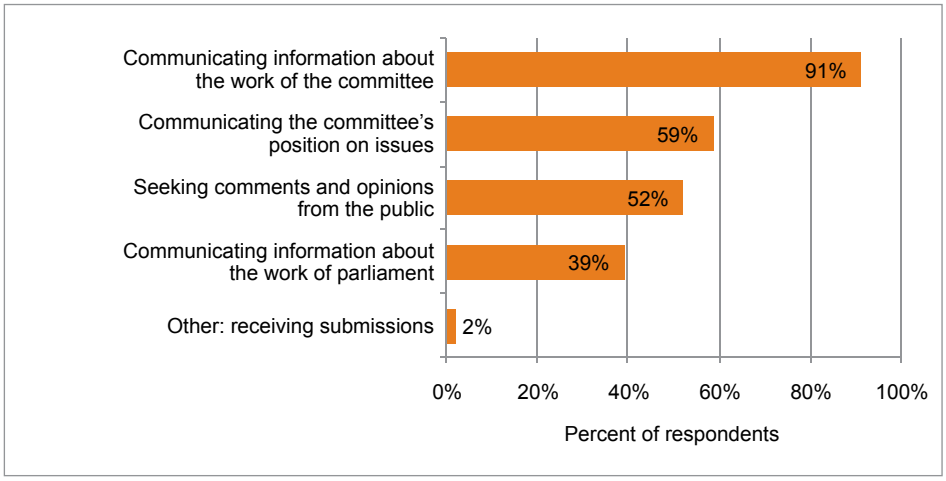
34% of parliaments reported that all or at least some committees use websites to communicate with citizens. An additional 28% said they are planning or considering it (see Figure 2.1). While these are positive findings, the survey could not provide any insight into why 37% of parliaments said their committees do not use websites and were not planning or considering using them (see Figure 2.1). It is possible that committees in these parliaments do not have significant legislative or oversight roles, do not value websites, or lack the technical knowledge and resources to support them effectively.

Of those that do use websites, 91% reported that their purpose was to communicate information about the work of the committee; and 59% said that it was to communicate the committee's position on issues. Just over half (52%) stated it was to seek comments and opinions from the public

(see Figure 2.4). This result, which compares to the one concerning the purpose for members' websites, could be interpreted as a missed opportunity of some significance for parliaments in which committees play a major legislative or oversight role.

Finally, it is worth noting that communicating information about the work of parliament was the last priority for both members and committees, although the percentage is much higher for members (68%) than it is for committees (39%).

Figure 2.4: Purposes for which committees use websites



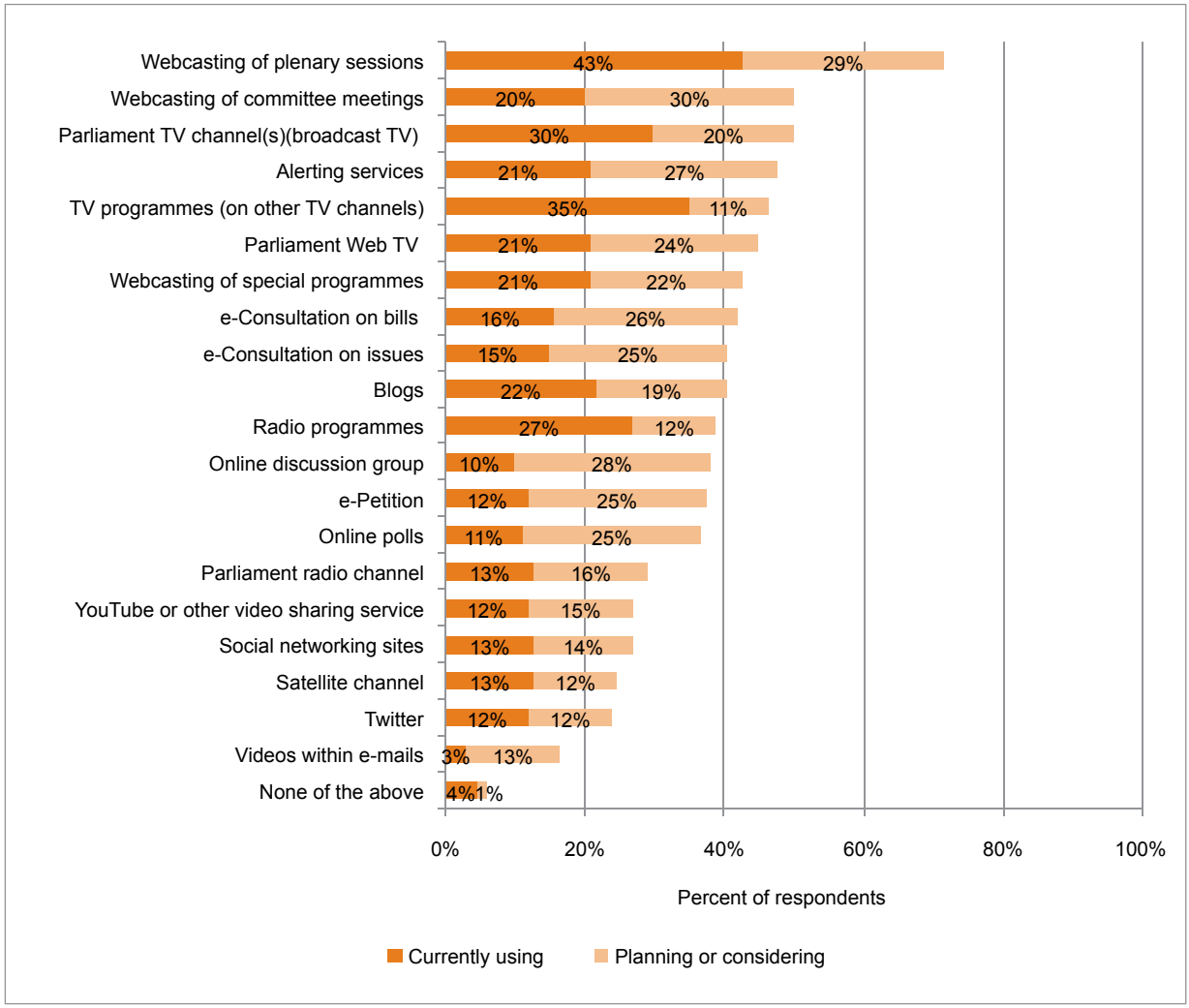
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 8; 46 respondents – 34% responding "yes" to Question 7)

Other methods being used

In addition to websites and e-mail, the 2009 survey asked what other methods parliaments or members were currently using or considering using to communicate with citizens. A list of twenty-one options was provided, including "None" which was selected by 5% of respondents.

The method in use by the largest number of parliaments (43%) is webcasting of plenary sessions. This technology was also selected by the second largest number of parliaments (29%) that are planning or considering using other methods of communication, a result which reflects the growing popularity of webcasting among legislatures (Figure 2.5). Given that the technology for webcasting has become easier and less costly over time, and considering the importance of plenary sessions, this finding is not surprising. If all those that are planning or considering this technology are able to implement it, webcasting of plenary sessions will be provided by over 70% of parliaments in the next few years. This will have an important impact on transparency. It could also support citizens' understanding of the legislative process, as more advanced legislative information systems are now able to link the text of proposed bills to video records of the debate on those bills in plenary.

Figure 2.5: Communication technologies used or planned/being considered by parliaments



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 11; 134 respondents)

After webcasting of plenary sessions, the next most popular methods in use are:

- TV programmes (on channels other than a parliamentary TV channel) - 35%
- A parliamentary TV channel - 30%
- Radio programmes (other than on a parliamentary radio channel) - 27%

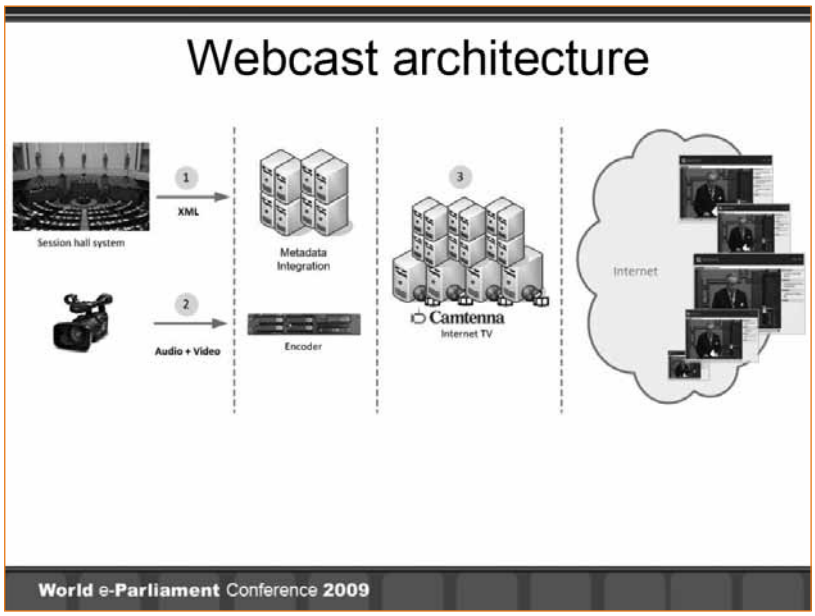
These are relatively well established technologies and it is understandable that they have come to be used by a quarter to a third of parliaments. However, it is important to note that all of them are uni-directional – from the parliament to the citizen - and do not foster interaction.

A group of relatively newer methods is currently used by approximately a fifth of responding parliaments (between 20% to 22%):

- Blogs - 22%
- Alerting services - 21%
- Parliamentary web TV - 21%
- Webcast of special programmes - 21%
- Webcast of committee sessions - 20%

Three of these make use of webcasting, which together with the top choice (webcasting of plenary sessions), is another indication of the growing use of this technology. The Parliament of Finland offers an example of effective use of webcasting. Figure 2.6 presents a view of the architecture that the Parliament has implemented to webcast its plenary sessions. The system is particularly notable for its use of XML to integrate metadata with the video and make it available on the Internet.

Figure 2.6: Webcast architecture of the Parliament of Finland



(Source: Presentation by Juha-Pekka Leskinen, IT Manager, and Petteri Nyman, Web Producer, Parliament of Finland, at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009)

A special event on Parliamentary Web TV, held at the World e-Parliament Conference 2008, provided an opportunity to showcase the efforts of several parliaments in broadcasting the activities of their institutions to the public. For example, on its Web TV channel the Chamber of Deputies of Chile provides live broadcasting of plenary sessions as well as material for civic education. Programmes are indexed so that they can be retrieved at any point in time making it possible to locate segments where a particular parliamentarian is speaking. In order to facilitate access by citizens with auditory impairments, closed captioning[19] is made available.

Webcasting can be a particularly effective mechanism for reaching the public when the population is broadly dispersed over a large geographic area and there is widespread penetration of the Internet. In the case of Brazil the large size of the country and the substantial number of homes with cable TV and Internet access made WebTV an attractive mechanism for distributing broadcasts from the Parliament. The latest features of their system include search capabilities, links to other available information, and video chat that allows people to ask questions during committee meetings. Likewise, the newest version of the European Parliament's Web TV is designed to reach a broad audience across the many countries within the European Union. A special feature of their broadband-based system is the ability to provide information in multiple languages. Viewers are able to select particular programs and see them at their convenience rather than having to adhere to a preset schedule. In addition to coverage of plenary sessions and an

19 Closed captioning is the text of the words being spoken in a video which appears at the bottom of the screen. It allows those with auditory impairments to understand what is being said.

increasing number of committee meetings, the European Parliament's Web TV offers additional channels with programming for schoolchildren, special topical programmes that feature citizens offering their views, and programmes that feature members and their views on issues before the Parliament.

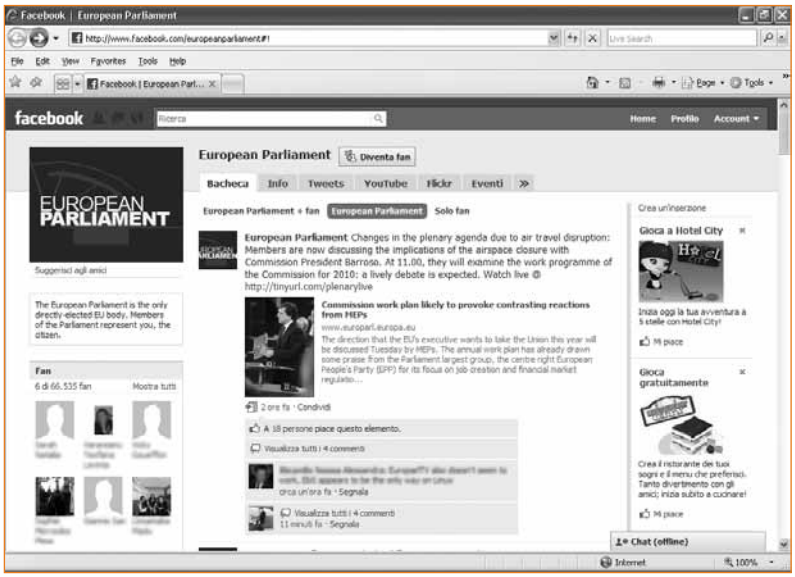
Finally, there are 10 technology-based methods currently in use by the fewest parliaments (between 10% to 16%):

- e-Consultation on bills - 16%
- e-Consultation on issues - 15%
- Parliamentary radio channel - 13%
- Social networking such as Facebook - 13%
- Satellite channel - 13%
- e-Petition - 12%
- YouTube or other video sharing service - 12%
- Twitter - 12%
- Online polls - 11%
- Online discussion groups - 10%

Of these ten, seven are interactive. These also include some of the most recently developed technologies, such as social networking, Twitter, and YouTube. Given their relative newness, it is understandable that fewer legislatures are currently making use of them, especially because their value to parliaments, compared to other approaches such as webcasting, is yet to be determined.

An example of the use of Facebook was provided by the European Parliament (Figure 2.7) at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009. The communication campaign for the recent election of the European Parliament 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 slideshows, and provided information on the campaign activities going on all over Europe. However, Facebook was considered the most successful of the tools and was used to post parliamentary news and to host debates. In conveying effectively its message, and to build reputation and trust with the public, the Parliament placed particular emphasis in communicating as a non partisan institution, using an informal tone and generating content easy to share.

Figure 2.7: The Facebook page of the European Parliament

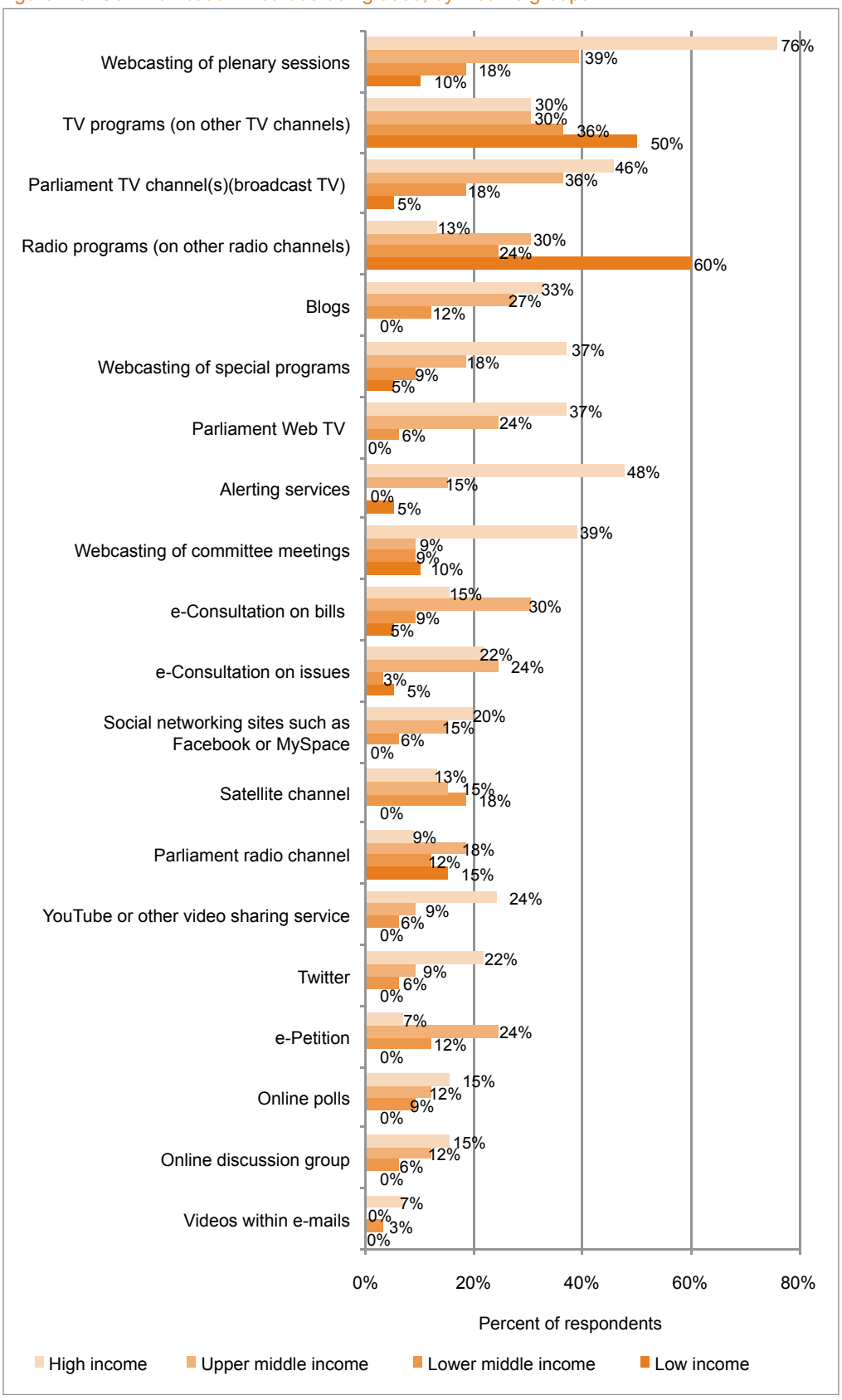


(Source: http://www.facebook.com/europeanparliament)

Methods used by income groups

In light of the preceding discussion, it is useful to note the relationship between income levels and the methods currently in use. Figure 2.8 shows that a larger percentage of parliaments in the low income group use TV programmes (on other TV channels) and radio programmes (on other radio channels) than do parliaments at higher income levels. They are also more likely to use a satellite channel. There are several possible explanations for why these technologies are in greater use in developing countries. It may be that they are leveraging existing infrastructure already in place and able to reach more citizens. Compared to broadband, TV and radio probably have a much higher level of penetration. Also, there may not be adequate understanding of how some of the newer technologies can be implemented with reasonable investments.

Figure 2.8: Communication methods being used, by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 11; 134 respondents)

Methods being planned or considered

The order of the top 10 methods for all respondents changes when looking at those which parliaments are planning or considering using:

- Webcasting of committee sessions – 30%
- Webcasting of plenary sessions – 29%
- Online discussion groups – 28%
- Alerting services – 27%
- e-Consultation on bills – 26%
- e-Consultation on issues – 25%
- e-Petition – 25%
- Online polls – 25%
- Parliament Web TV – 24%
- Webcasting of special programmes – 22%

These methods are evenly divided between those that are one-directional and those that are two-directional or interactive. The five interactive ones – online discussion groups, e-consultation on bills and on issues, online polls and e-petition – are designed purposefully to obtain citizen input. And four of the one-directional methods involve webcasting, again reflecting the growing popularity of this technology.

Methods that will be used the most in the near term

By combining the percentages for the methods being used now and those being planned or considered, it is possible to estimate those that will be used by the most parliaments in the future. Not all parliaments will be able or will decide to implement all the methods they are planning or considering, but the resulting scores provide an indication of their relative popularity in the next years. As previously noted, webcasting of plenary sessions occupies the number one spot.

- Webcasting of plenary sessions – 72%
- Webcasting of committee sessions – 50%
- Parliament TV channel(s) (broadcast TV) – 50%
- Alerting services – 48%
- TV programmes (on other TV channels) – 46%
- Parliament Web TV – 45%
- Webcasting of special programmes –43%
- e-Consultation on bills – 42%
- Blogs – 41%
- e-Consultation on issues – 40%

Video technologies predominate in this list: six of the top seven involve webcasting or broadcasting. In addition, the top seven are all uni-directional; only the bottom three are interactive. It thus appears that for the near term, methods that are uni-directional will still be the ones used by the most parliaments.

Technologies projected to have the largest rates of growth

It is also possible to estimate the future rate of growth in usage for each technology in parliament by comparing the percentage of parliaments reporting that they are planning or considering using it with the percentage that are currently using it.[20] Calculating this number for all technolo-

20 For example, 20% of parliaments reported that they are currently webcasting committee sessions; 30% reported that they are planning or considering doing it. By dividing the percentage planning or considering (30%) by the percentage currently using (20%), the projected growth for webcasting committee sessions is estimated to be 150%.

gies makes it possible to estimate those technologies that will grow the most among parliaments based on their current level of usage. The results for the top 10 are as follows.[21]

- Online discussion groups – 280%
- Online polls – 227%
- e-Petition – 208%
- e-Consultation on issues – 167%
- e-Consultation on bills – 163%
- Webcasting of committee sessions – 150%
- Alerting services – 129%
- YouTube/other video sharing service – 125%
- Parliament radio channel – 123%
- Parliament Web TV – 114%

In this list the top five methods projected to have the highest percentage of growth are all interactive. The bottom five are all uni-directional. One conclusion is that while uni-directional communication technologies will be used by the most parliaments in the near term, more interactive technologies may be used by many more parliaments in the longer term. Based on the estimated growth of mobile phones, especially in developing countries, it is possible that methods for communicating with citizens using this technology will also become available in many parliaments.

Evaluation of methods

As noted in Chapter 1, one of the most pressing needs is for more research and evaluation of the efficacy of various technology-based methods of communication. In the 2009 survey only 23 parliaments (17%) reported that they had conducted any formal or informal assessments, although 51% were planning or considering doing it.[22] Of those that had conducted evaluations, the survey asked which methods had been found to be *very valuable*, *sometimes valuable*, and *not valuable*. With so few respondents to this question, the results must be viewed as interesting, possibly indicative, but certainly not authoritative. Only three methods were assessed by more than 15 parliaments; the results for these three are shown in Figure 2.9.

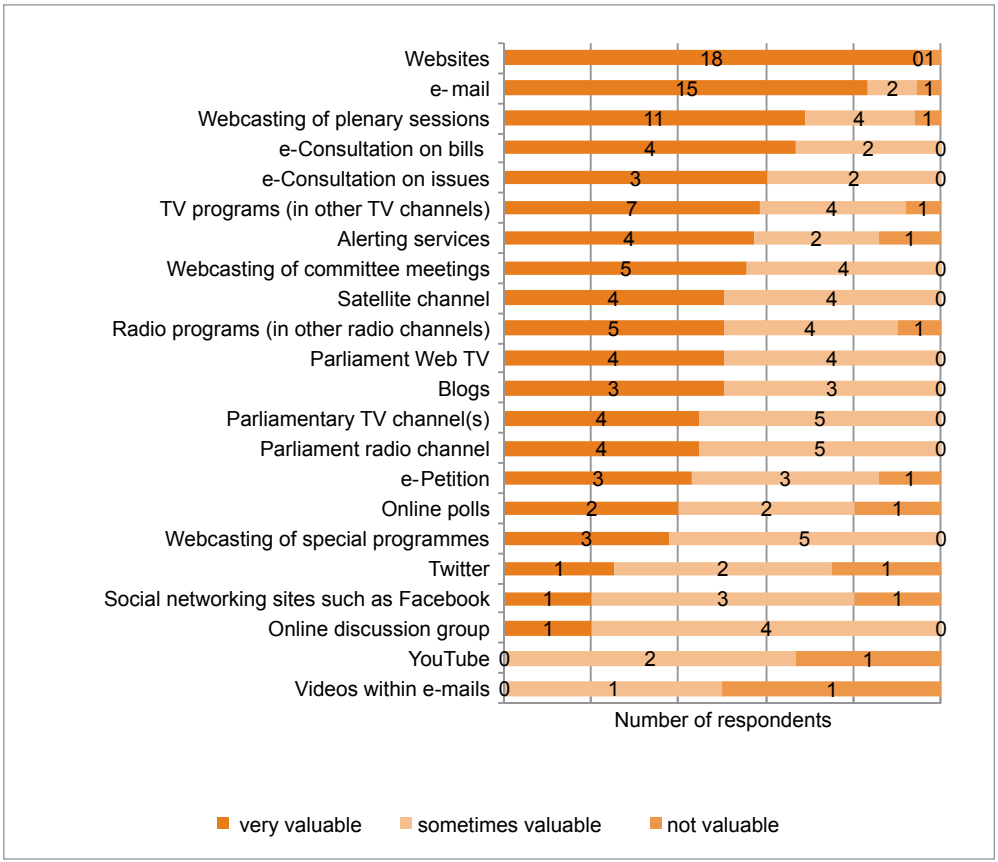
Figure 2.9: Evaluation of technology-based methods of communication

Method	Number of parliaments that ranked method as:		
	Very Valuable	Sometimes Valuable	Not valuable
Websites	18	0	1
E-mail	15	2	1
Webcasting of plenary sessions	11	4	1

Given the large percentage of parliaments that employ these methods, the number of those that found them *very valuable* seems logical. Of the remaining methods, only one was assessed by more than ten parliaments; all the rest by nine or fewer, making the results too small to generalize. For future discussion and comparisons the ratings for all technologies are shown in Figure 2.10.

21 Video within e-mails was omitted from this calculation because it has such a low level of usage (3%) that its projected growth (433%) based on the percentage planning or considering it (13%) is judged to be not relevant for this discussion.
22 Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 15.

Figure 2.10: Ratings of technology-based methods of communication



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 16; 134 respondents)

Objectives of parliaments in using technologies for communication

Parliaments that use or are planning or considering using ICT-based methods to communicate with citizens were asked to name their three most important objectives.[23] The ones cited by the largest number of parliaments were:

- Inform citizens about policy issues and proposed legislation - 67%;
- Explain what the parliament does - 59%;
- Engage more citizens in the political process - 54%.

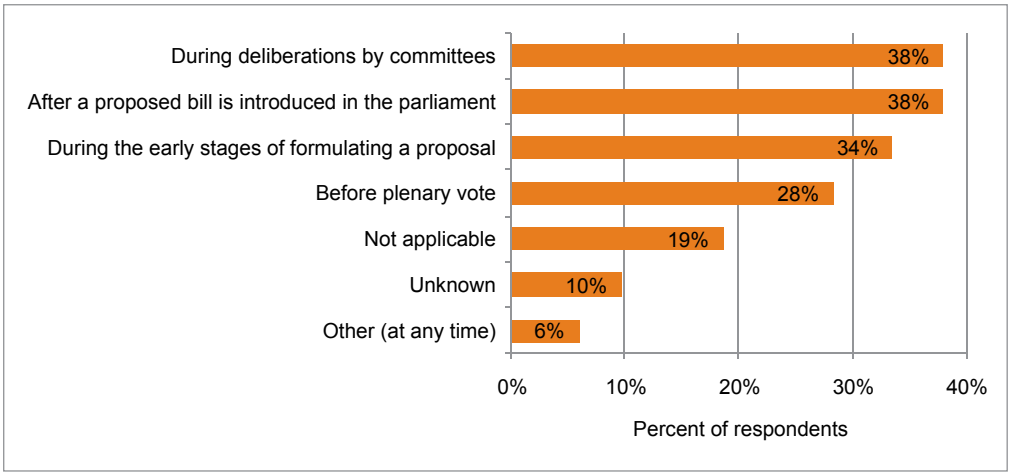
Although the question about the objectives of communication methods had slightly different options in 2007 and in 2009, both surveys did contain one answer that was the same: "Inform citizens about policy issues and proposed legislation". In 2007, 28% of respondents selected this as one of the objectives; in 2009, 67% selected it. This suggests a greater awareness and commitment today, compared to two years ago, on the part of parliaments to use communication tools to provide more information to citizens and to be more transparent.

When do parliaments consult citizens?

It is useful to know when parliaments use ICT-based tools to consult with citizens. Their answers to this question are shown in Figure 2.11. Two points are worth noting about these results.

23 Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 17.

Figure 2.11: When do parliaments consult with citizens?



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 12; 134 respondents)

First, parliaments consult throughout the process, but more of them consult in the early stages of the legislative process – during the early stages of formulating a proposal (34%), after the proposal has been introduced in parliament (38%), and during deliberations by committees (38%). Somewhat fewer (28%) said during plenary vote.

Second, the percentages are relatively evenly distributed among the various stages; no one stage is indicated significantly more often than another, suggesting that there are several useful times during these early periods for parliaments to seek the views of citizens.

Box 2.3

The e-Democracy programme

Digital participatory lawmaking process in Brazil

Launched in June 2009 by the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, the "e-Democracia" programme aims to engage the public in the law-making process in order to achieve concrete legislative results.

Relying on the use of social media, combined with offline legislative events (e.g. committee hearings, conferences), the initiative is intended to reach a broad audience that includes citizens, parliamentarians, civil servants, researchers, non-governmental organizations, and interest groups.

Such a programme is driven by a belief that the lawmaking process can benefit from the convergence of political representation and citizen participation, in a virtuous cycle where one model strengthens the other.

The backbone of the initiative is its website (http://www.edemocracia.gov.br) which provides a multiple participatory mechanism that allows users to be involved in three core moments of the law-making process:

- *The sharing of information about a problem that needs to be addressed by law;*
- *The identification and discussion of possible solutions to the problem; and*
- *The drafting of a bill itself.*

How would the participation in the policy-making process be possible in such a complex legislative work? People in contemporaneous societies are very diverse in terms of interests, experiences, expertise, and values. The great challenge of making social participation possible is to find out how to take advantage of such diversity in a way that is very useful to the policy-making system. It has been called 'non-structured qualified participation': the kind of participation which allows people to share their professional experience, expertise, interests and values a) in different scales, b) in all policy-making cycle phases, and also c) for different purposes.

It is a way to apply crowdsourcing for legislative purposes. The "e-Democracia" programme website provides management tools to assemble the diffuse participation by regular citizens and minority groups. The main goal is to facilitate access to the decision-making process by people not associated with strong groups of interest and corporations that have access to the centre of power in Brazil using the traditional ways to influence politicians.

Cont'd

Since June 2009, five thematic legislative virtual communities were created as well as a "Citizen Room", a free virtual arena to discuss any legislative subject. 2,900 members were registered. Eighteen thematic forums and 50 sub-forums were created with about 450 contributions.

Among the five legislative virtual communities the most successful one so far is the "Youth Statute community" whereby some ideas and suggestions delivered by youngsters throughout Brazil were taken seriously by policy-makers and reflected in the bill draft text.

For example, youngsters posted ideas about the need to offer professional programmes during undergraduate courses in colleges. These suggestions were transformed into legal text and the congressmen in charge of that subject have approved their inclusion in the final draft. This text is under consideration to become a law.

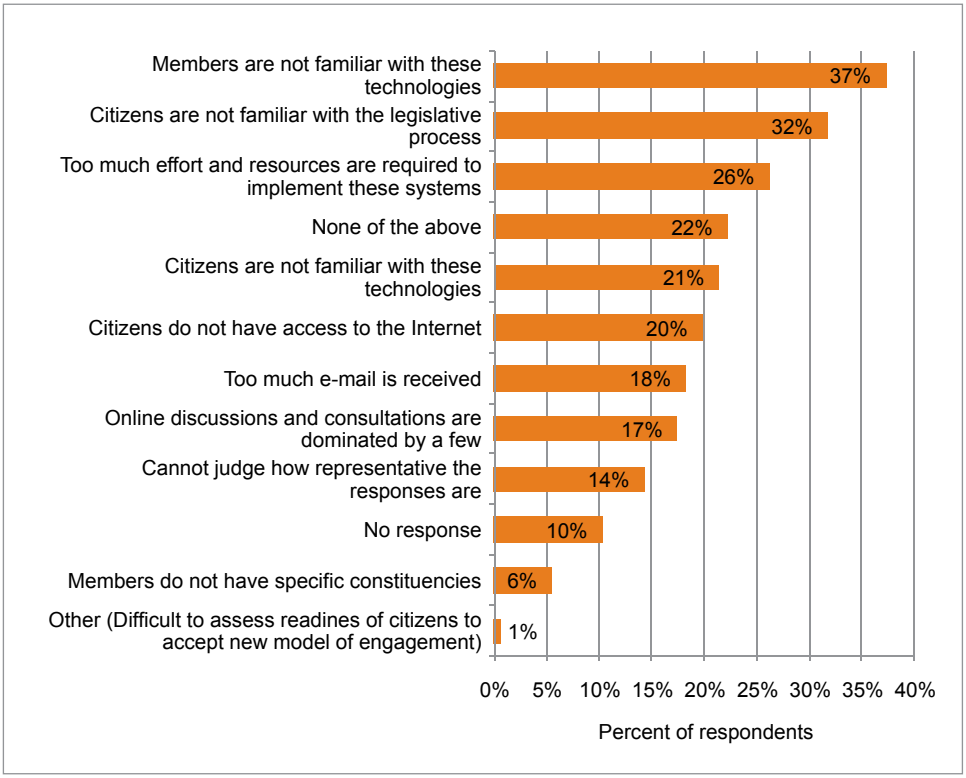
In addition to increasing citizens' participation, "e-Democracia" programme has brought great improvement for transparency. Participants and the overall society could finally better understand the legislative process that is normally complex and confusing.

(Source: Andréa Perna, Manager, Legislative Governance Bureau, and Cristiano Faria, co-Developer of the e-Democracia programme, Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, Contribution to the *World e-Parliament Report 2010*)

Challenges

Parliaments, committees and members face a number of challenges in using the newest communication technologies. As shown in Figure 2.12 the problem mentioned by the most parliaments is that *members are not familiar with these technologies* (37%). This finding underscores the point made by a number of speakers at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009 about the need of more orientation and training for members of parliaments in the use of ICT. In addition, over a quarter of parliaments stated that too much effort and resources are required to implement ICT systems. The internal problems for parliaments, therefore, are the needs for increased training and technical support.

Figure 2.12: Challenges in using communication technologies



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 18; 126 respondents – 94% responding "yes" at least once in Questions 1,4,7,9 and 11)

The challenge for citizens cited by the largest percentage of parliaments is that they are not familiar with the legislative process (32%). It would seem incumbent on parliaments to address this problem through more targeted communication campaigns and effective explanatory material on their websites, an issue that will be examined in Chapter 3.

Citizens face other problems as well. A fifth of all parliaments reported that citizens are not familiar with the technology and an equal percentage stated that they do not have access to the technology. These two well documented aspects of the digital divide represent a significant difficulty, especially for developing countries. But as Chapter 1 suggested, the growth in the use of mobile phones may be one of the solutions in the next ten years, at least for accessing the necessary technology. And access should help to improve the problem of familiarity with the technology.

Three challenges that are inherent in communication technology were cited by a small but significant percentage of parliaments: too much e-mail is received (18%); discussions can be dominated by a few (17%); and, it is difficult to judge how representative the responses received are (14%). There are proven solutions to some of these problems, including better tools for managing e-mail and moderation of discussion groups. Determining the representativeness of responses can be more difficult, but some potential solutions, such as registration of participants, are possible. In this context, it is important to note that only 30% of parliaments always (10%) or sometimes (20%) use special tools to help collect citizens' comments and categorize them more efficiently.[24] Sharing of knowledge by those with experience using these tools could be helpful, especially for the 40% of parliaments that reported to be planning or considering their use.

It is worth noting that 22% of parliaments stated that they experienced none of these problems.

Communication with young people

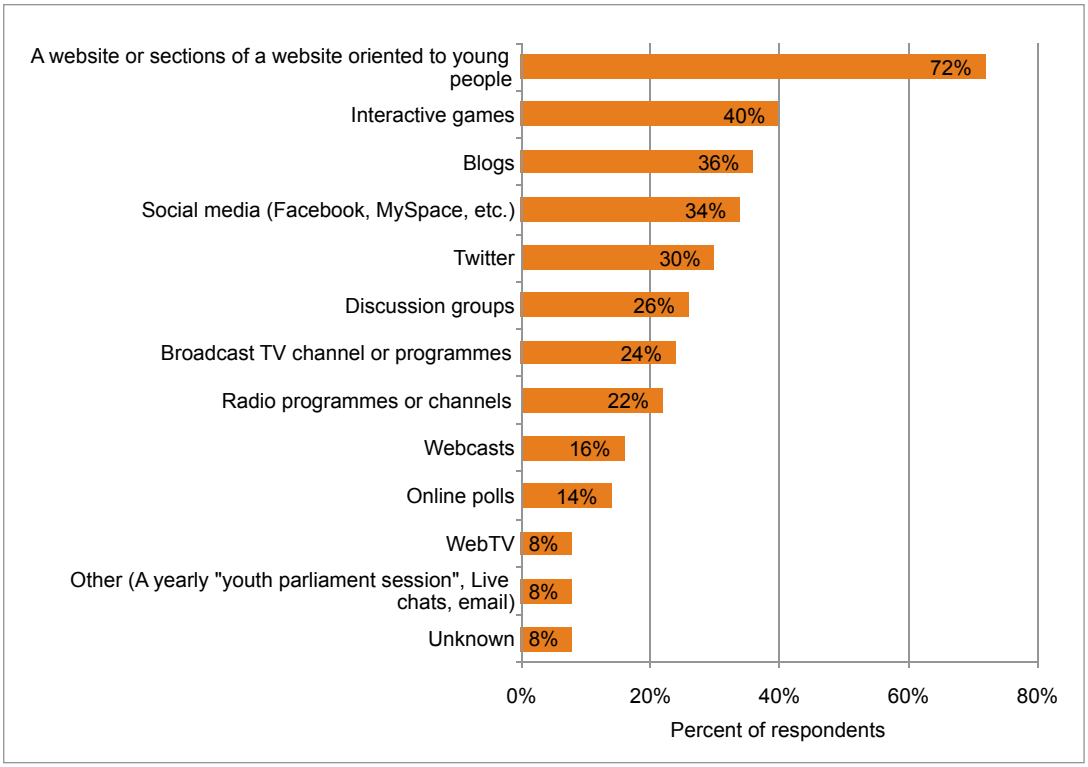
Initiatives to communicate with young people are clearly of interest to a number of parliaments. When asked whether the parliament or members use ICT-based methods for this purpose, 50 respondents (37%) replied positively, and another 48 (36%) indicated that they were planning or considering doing so.[25] Just over one quarter (27%) replied no and that they were not planning or considering it.

Figure 2.13 shows the methods currently being employed by the 50 parliaments that have initiatives underway. Almost three quarters (72%) use a website or sections of a website oriented to them. As an indication of the perceived value of a dedicated website or page(s), this approach is used by more than twice as many parliaments as almost any other method. The exception is interactive games, which are used by 40% of those trying to engage young people.

It is particularly interesting to note that after websites, the next four methods used by the most parliaments are all interactive in some form: interactive games (40%); blogs (36%); social media such as Facebook (34%); and Twitter (30%).

24 Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 20.
25 Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 13.

Figure 2.13: Methods used to communicate with young people



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 14; 50 respondents – 37% responding "yes" to Question 13)

As Figure 2.14 shows, the use of these methods to communicate with young people is in sharp contrast to the percentage of parliaments that use them on their website to communicate with the general public. The implication of these findings is that parliaments are sensitive to the needs of the audience. They adapt their methods of communication to those preferred by younger generations, and are developing their outreach programmes accordingly.

Figure 2.14: Comparison of methods used to communicate with citizens and with young people

Method	Percent of parliaments communicating with young people	Percent of parliaments communicating with citizens
1. Websites	72%	97%
2. Interactive games	40%	(not asked in survey)
3. Blogs	36%	22%
4. Social media	34%	13%
5. Twitter	30%	12%

(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Questions 1, 11, and 14)

As illustrated in Box 2.4, an interesting example of two-way communication with young people, which used mobile and fixed phone-based polls, took place in Namibia under the aegis of the Parliament.

Box 2.4

The "Listen Loud Campaign" Project

The Project aimed to capture the voices and the perspectives of children and young people of Namibia regarding the issues that affect their lives through mobile phone-based opinion polls.

During the 5 weeks prior to the presidential and parliamentary elections in Namibia in November 2009, young Namibians could call a toll free number to express their views on themes such as Education, HIV/AIDS, Health, Child Protection, Employment, Participation and Environment.

The opinions collected will be presented to the Children's Parliament in 2010 where young people themselves will discuss these topics and make recommendations to the parliamentarians for consideration. With the inception of the new Parliament, these recommendations were expected to form the starting point for appropriate guidelines and action in favour of children and young people, reflecting issues that affect their well-being.

The Project was implemented by the Namibian Institute for Democracy (NID) under the auspices of the Unicef office in Namibia, the Parliament of Namibia, and the Regional ICT Strategy of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.

The project implemented an innovative and creative way to deploy opinion polls through VoIP (voice over IP) applications and to collect opinions of the citizenry through mobile phones. The technological core of the project was Interactive Voice Response (IVR). This is a web-based technology which allows a caller to make toll-free calls, listen to instructions in the languages of one's choice, and choose the opinion that is closest to her/his view.

The project in numbers:

- *Number of calls received: almost 20,000 in 5 weeks of campaign (an average of 4,000 calls per week);*
- *Number of SMS received: 250 messages over four weeks period;*
- *Duration of the project: 7 months.*

(Source: Namibian Institute for Democracy, *Catching the voice of the Born-free generation of Namibia through mobile phones*, [ed. by] Theunis Keulder, Regional Director, Swakopmund: Namibian Institute for Democracy, 2009)

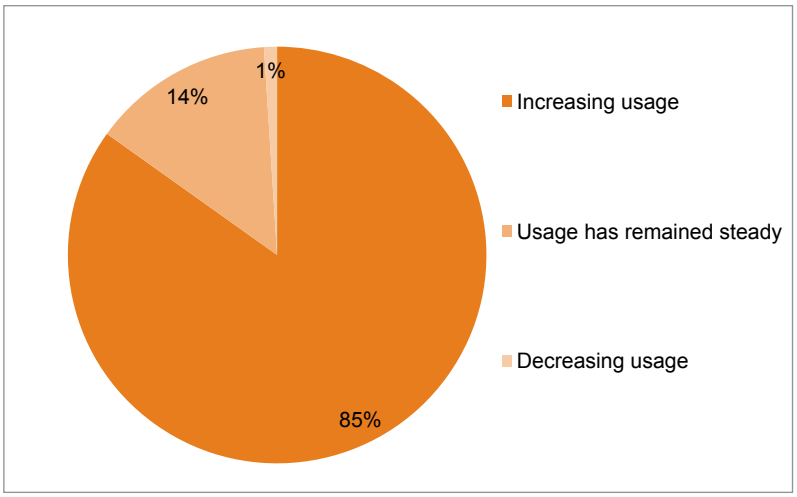
Citizens' use of technology to communicate with parliaments

The survey asked parliaments about the trend in citizens' use of the various ICT-based communication methods since their introduction. Percentages are based on the number of parliaments (99 of the 134) that said they are actually using technology for this purpose.

The results, shown in Figure 2.15, are very promising: 85% of parliaments reported that the use of ICT methods by citizens for communication had increased since their introduction; 14% said it had remained steady; and only 1% reported that it was decreasing. Other positive findings regarding the use of technology to conduct town hall meetings with hundreds of citizens were noted in Chapter 1. Results from a study[26] revealed that this technology-supported method was very popular among participants and it attracted a diverse array of constituents who showed increased engagement after the meeting. The findings from this study and the results from the 2009 survey shown in Figure 2.15 offer good reasons for parliaments to be optimistic about the potential of ICT to improve communication with citizens.

26 Congressional Management Foundation, *Online Town Hall Meetings: Exploring Democracy in the 21st Century*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Management Foundation, 2009 [http://www.cmfweb.org].

Figure 2.15: Trend in citizen use of technology-based communication methods



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 21; 99 respondents who use ICT for communication)

Members, committees, and parliaments

The findings from the 2009 survey reflect a number of the differences in the ways that members, committees, and parliaments communicate with citizens. Perhaps most significant is that members in a larger percentage of parliaments seek the views of the public than do committees or parliaments themselves. This finding is logical if it is assumed that within the legislative body it is the people's representative – the member of parliament - who most often has direct interaction with citizens. It is the member to whom citizens would reasonably turn to express their views. This is also a positive finding. It means that in many parliaments, members are actively using communication technology to engage the public and seek their opinions.

It is probable that the institution of the parliament itself is seen as less approachable. While the Speaker or President represents the institution at the highest level, it is doubtful that most citizens would address their concerns directly to the institutional leadership, and it is likely that there are few exchanges between the public and the legislature itself. It is therefore understandable that most parliaments, as institutions, use ICT to inform citizens about policy issues and proposed legislation and to explain what the parliament does rather than try to engage them in dialogue.

Committees have a different role and potentially a different reason for communicating with citizens. To the extent that they play a significant part in policy making and legislation, they are in a position to benefit from the use of technology to obtain citizens' views, particularly if the process can be well managed and results in informative comments. This is a substantial challenge, however, and it may help to explain why committees in only 34% of all parliaments were reported to use websites. And just over half of this already low percentage reported that committees use websites to seek comments and opinions from the public. As illustrated in Box 2.5, an example of the way committees can solicit opinions by the public comes from the system established by the Senate of Chile called the Virtual Senator.

Box 2.5

The Virtual Senator

Through this system, individuals can register their vote and can provide comments or proposed text to a bill. Registered users are notified by e-mail if the bill in question has been voted on in Senate sessions or in a committee meeting, and when a new bill is published on the Virtual Senator website for discussion and 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. Citizens take their participation through the Virtual Senator seriously; 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 outcome showed that registered users would like to have the chance to debate among themselves, as well as to have statistics that relate to their contributions.

(Source: Presentation of Mr. Patricio Alvarez Cabezas, Director of IT of the Senate of Chile, at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009)

Most parliaments report that one of their top objectives is to explain the workings of the parliament itself. Consistent with this is the finding that uni-directional communication technologies will be dominant in the near term. If, as many parliaments suggest in reporting on their plans, interactive technologies become more prevalent over the long term, it will be interesting to observe how they will be used by the institution, and if they will be used in equal measure by committees and members.

Given these comparative differences among members, committees, and the parliament, the finding of most concern is that the challenge in using ICT for communication cited by the most parliaments is the lack of familiarity of members with the technology. Parliaments and many committees often have resources to help them overcome this barrier. Members in many parliaments, however, will need additional help beyond their own means to deal with this problem.

Finally, an opportunity for members, committees, and the parliament alike is the projected growth in the use of mobile phones. This technology has the potential for informing and engaging citizens in innovative ways, and it is relatively inexpensive, easy to use, and rapidly becoming ubiquitous.

SUMMARY

Communication technologies have undergone a number of significant advances in the last two years, and their impact - both actual and potential - on the interaction between parliaments and citizen is considerable. So too are the challenges inherent in these new methods as legislatures, committees, and members try to utilize them in the most constructive ways. The ease with which these technologies can be used to generate messages and comments can sometimes overwhelm the resources that parliaments have for dealing with them. It can also be difficult to determine how representative such views from the public are and how informed they may be. This has led in the past to a certain caution in their adoption by members, committees, and parliaments.

The findings from the 2007 survey concluded that while there had been some progress in using ICT to disseminate information to the public, there were few truly interactive parliamentary websites. There were some experiments with blogs and other interactive technologies underway, and there were efforts in a few countries to develop online discussions and to receive citizen comments. The findings from the 2009 survey, however, suggest this situation may be changing and that a greater number of parliaments, committees and members are trying to use these technologies more effectively to engage with citizens.

In 2009, 78% of parliaments reported that most or some members use e-mail to communicate with citizens, an increase over the findings from 2007. 88% reported that most or some of the members who use e-mail reply in some manner to these messages, suggesting that the responsiveness of members to e-mail has also increased in the last two years. Nevertheless, only 21% of parliaments are using an automated system to support handling and answering incoming e-mail; 27% said they were planning or considering such a system; but 52% said no and that were not planning or considering it.

Slightly more than half of the parliaments responding to the survey reported that members use websites. The reason listed most often was to communicate the member's personal views. However, three quarters also said that members sought comments and opinions from the public, a positive finding that can affect citizens' perceptions of the accessibility of their representatives.

More parliaments than in 2007 reported that committees use e-mail, although their percentage (55%) continues to be smaller than the percentage for members (78%). A large number of legislatures stated that committees do respond to these messages. However, only a third of parliaments reported that committees use websites, and 91% stated that the purpose was to communicate information about the work of the committee. Just over half (51%) said that it was to seek comments and opinions from the public.

Besides e-mail and websites, parliaments use, or are planning or considering using, a variety of other methods to communicate with the public, but no single method is currently in use by half or more of all parliaments. The method implemented by the largest number of parliaments (43%) is webcasting of plenary sessions. The next most popular methods utilize audio or video technology. Of the ten methods in use by the fewest parliaments (between 10% to 16%), seven are interactive and include some of the newest technologies, such as Twitter and YouTube. Based on what parliaments are currently using and what they report that they are planning or considering using, it is likely that audio- and video-based, one-way technologies will be predominant for the next few years. However, of the technologies that have the largest projected growth, the top

five are all interactive. Because these technologies are starting with the smallest installed base among parliaments, they will come online over a longer period of time. Very few parliaments have conducted assessments of these new methods – clearly an opportunity for sharing experiences and perhaps collaboration. Also, given the growth of mobile phones, future surveys will need to address how methods of communication are being adapted to this increasingly prevalent technology.

Parliaments are confronted with a number of significant challenges in implementing new communication technologies. First is the fact that in many legislatures (37%) members are not familiar with the technology. Citizens are also challenged by the technology, both in terms of familiarity (21%) and access (20%). But for the public, the problem noted by the largest number of parliaments (32%) is their grasp of the legislative process. This is an obvious challenge, but also an opportunity for parliaments, committees, and members in their collective efforts to make the legislature more transparent by making it more understandable.

Parliaments also want to engage with young people. Over 70% reported that they have initiatives underway or are planning/considering them. Most use web technology for this purpose, combined in many cases with some form of new interactive technology, such as games, blogs, and social media. In fact these technologies are used by more parliaments to communicate with young generations than they are to communicate with the general public.

The most positive finding is that among parliaments that have implemented ICT-based methods for communication, 85% reported increased usage by citizens. This suggests that there are good reasons for parliaments to be optimistic about the potential of ICT to improve communication and to engage all citizens in the public life of their nation.

Chapter 3

Becoming an Open Parliament: Evolving Standards for Transparency and Accessibility

The availability of the record of a parliament's activities, along with the completeness, timeliness, and clarity of its documentation, provides the means for judging the level of openness a parliament has achieved. Transparency and accountability are the pillars on which openness rests, and the standards for these two goals have evolved significantly over the last decade as citizens have come to demand more from their governing institutions. This has occurred in part because technology makes it easier to be open, thereby raising public expectations, and in part because an increasing number of public bodies world-wide have already moved to new levels of transparency and accessibility, thereby raising the bar for others.

Box 3.1

Websites play an important role for parliaments in supporting their basic mandates, in particular the representative, legislative and oversight functions. Also, for effective transparency and accountability. A major challenge is how to develop websites that serve different purposes and the needs of all users. It is often difficult to ensure that the information on parliamentary website is clear and understandable to those inside and outside the decision making process and that includes members, staff as well as the public at large.

Ms. Matilda Katopola, Secretary General of the Parliament of Malawi
Statement at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009

Websites have become the primary means by which parliaments make their work and their documents known to civil society, to the media and, most importantly, directly to citizens. Parliamentary websites provide a variety of information sources, and while many of these are available independently, it is the ability with which they integrate a broad array of legislative and policy data and documents that gives them such high value. A parliament that is seeking to become more transparent will provide citizens with timely access to the most current information about proposed legislation, oversight activities, and the national budget through its website. It will also provide the means for understanding how the parliament works, who its members are, what they have done, and how to communicate with them. To respond to a diversity of learning styles, it will offer information in different formats, including text and video, using a variety of tools that enable citizens to find what they are looking for quickly and easily, and to understand it. And to be inclusive they will adopt standards that lower barriers to public records for all citizens.

Official parliamentary websites, however, are not the only source for citizens to obtain information about the legislature. Websites dealing with public policy and with legislative and oversight issues are maintained by civil society, lobbying groups, political parties, and commercial companies. Especially among higher income countries, there is a wide range of web-based sources that provide information similar to that offered on parliamentary sites, frequently with innovative features for search and display. They often have particular viewpoints and include commentary about the work of the parliament. These sites are likely to continue to grow on a world-wide basis as access to technology increases, economic and political issues become more globally intertwined, and more parliaments make their core documents available in a format that allows for easy re-use and integration with other online resources.

This increase in the number of sources that provide information and opinions about public policy issues makes it imperative that the official site of the legislature be authoritative and non-partisan. It must also be well managed and supported so that it can respond to the growing needs of both citizens and members, keep pace with advances in technology, and further the values of transparency and accessibility of the parliamentary institution.

During the past decade the goals of parliamentary websites have become more complex and more challenging. They began with the objective of providing basic information about the history, the functions, the leadership, and the membership of the legislature. They were soon tasked to provide copies of official texts of proposed legislation, then the verbatim accounts of debates and summaries of plenary actions, and copies of committee documents. When webcasting technologies became available, they were utilized to provide live coverage of plenary sessions and other official meetings. And as the interactive web has emerged some parliaments have added new tools on their sites that encourage two-way communication between members, committees and citizens, inviting them to share their views and engaging them in the policy process.

Websites also have had to improve methods of access to their content. In addition to obtaining copies of texts, many members and citizens now use search engines to find specific documents and speeches. Alerting services enable them to be notified of the introduction of, and changes in, proposed legislation, the filing of committee documents, and members' activities and speeches. Increasingly, they can learn about the parliament through a variety of media such as audio or video webcasting, live or through an on-demand archive.

Parliaments have been further challenged to improve the design and usability of their websites so that they are understandable and easy to navigate. They have also had to enhance accessibility, ensuring that they can be available to all, including persons with disabilities. And they have had to address a variety of related issues, such as the use of multiple official languages.

Beyond becoming critical resources for helping parliaments to achieve greater efficiency in their processes, the fundamental purpose of parliamentary websites is to support the goals of transparency and accessibility. Simply offering the major legislative documents or providing informative videos is not sufficient to achieve the goal of an open and transparent legislative body. These features must be designed to serve the larger objective of actively engaging citizens in the legislative process. This was one of the main reasons for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to undertake a revision of its *Guidelines for the Content and Structure of Parliamentary Websites*, published

in 2000[1]. The revised *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites*, published in March 2009,[2] update the previous recommendations in the areas of content, tools, design, and management. One of their most important strategic values is to serve as a set of recommendations and standards for helping parliaments assess their level of accountability, accessibility and transparency.

Box 3.2

The website of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal provides an example of how parliaments are using websites to engage citizens. It contains a special section dedicated to citizens called "Citizen's space". The section provides services such as e-mail, e-petition and systems to contact parliamentary departments and political groups.

(Source: http://www.parlamento.pt/Paginas/default.aspx)

RESULTS AND FINDINGS FROM THE 2007 SURVEY

The findings from the 2007 survey, as reported in the *World e-Parliament Report 2008,*[3] provided a baseline assessment of the state of parliamentary websites at that time. The survey documented that 95% of respondents had websites and the remaining 5% were planning to establish one. It also found that many committees and members maintained websites.

Other significant findings from 2007 are listed below by category.

Goals and management:

- The Secretary General and the Director of ICT play key roles in establishing the goals for websites;
- Over one third of respondents reported that the President or Speaker is also engaged in setting goals for the website.

Information and documents:

- Many websites met a number of the 2000 IPU *Guidelines* for information;
- However, many items recommended in the 2000 IPU *Guidelines* had not been incorporated in the websites. Most of these fell into two categories:
    - committee documents;
    - documents that provide some kind of explanatory information.

1 Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Guidelines for the Content and Structure of Parliamentary Web Sites,* [Geneva]: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2000 [http://www.ipu.org/cntr-e/web.pdf].
2 Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites*, [Geneva]: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009 [http://www.ictparliament.org/resources/guidelines_en.pdf].
3 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, [New York]: United Nations, 2008, pp.109-110 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

Linking of documents:
- More work needed to be done to link legislation to other related documents that could assist the user in obtaining a more complete representation of the information relevant to specific bills under consideration;
- When links from proposed legislation to related documents were provided, they were most often to plenary debate on the bill, relevant laws and statutes, and committee reports about the legislation.

Interface design:
- A significant number of respondents reported consulting with users on the design of the website interface and using formal usability testing (or were planning to do so);
- However, only 30% had met mandated standards of accessibility in support of persons with disabilities, although 40% were planning or considering doing so;
- 20% were not planning on meeting such standards or reported that such standards were not applicable.

Use of audio and video technology:
- Many reported that they broadcast some or all plenary sessions by television;
- An increasing number were also making them accessible on the Internet via webcasting;
- Over half maintained archives of these recordings.

Notification systems and services:
- Less than 50% had websites offering users e-mail notification of proposed legislation, committee actions and plenary sessions.

Differences between websites for parliament and the public:
- Many of the respondents that maintained a separate website for the public reported that the public version of the website did not provide committee votes and minutes, impact assessments for bills, and explanations of legislative actions and bills, while the version used by parliament did. The public also was less likely to be consulted concerning website design.

Availability of legislative documents in downloadable formats:
- Of those who addressed this issue, the majority made their files available for downloading and 21% were planning or considering doing so.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS FROM THE 2009 SURVEY

The website section of the 2009 Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments was substantially modified from the 2007 version to reflect the changes introduced in the new IPU *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites,* published in March 2009. One of the objectives was to learn how well parliaments were able to meet the standards proposed by the new guidelines and what areas posed the greatest challenges to them.[4]

The survey section focused on the following four categories, which are used in this Chapter to present the findings:

- General information about the parliament;
- Specific information regarding legislative, oversight, and budget documents;

4 Because the 2009 survey was based on the updated guidelines, the language of many of the questions is different from that used in the 2007 survey. However, comparisons will be made in those cases in which the wording is the same or similar enough to draw valid conclusions. As noted in the Introduction to this report, such comparisons will be based only on those parliaments that responded to both the 2007 and the 2009 survey, thereby ensuring that the comparison is based on the same group of respondents.

- Tools available to users for finding and viewing information;
- Usability and accessibility of the site.

In 2009, 97% of parliaments reported that they have a website and 3% were planning one. These figures, which are similar to those from 2007, reflect the central role that websites have come to play for parliaments, regardless of income level or geographic region.

Taken together, the findings from the survey offer an assessment of the completeness, timeliness, and accessibility of a website and therefore provide important measures of the openness of the parliament itself. In broad terms, the first two categories – *General information about the parliament* and *Specific information regarding legislation, budget and oversight* – relate primarily to the willingness of the parliament to make its work known to citizens. The categories of *Tools available to users* and *Usability and accessibility*[5] relate to the willingness of the institution to use ICT to ensure that the greatest number of citizens have the means to easily learn about the activities of the parliament.

General information

One of the first goals of a parliamentary website is to provide citizens with a basic understanding of their legislature. This includes practical information such as how to visit the parliament, how to obtain its documents online or in printed form, and what information services it provides. The website needs to give an overview of a parliament's history, activities, and organization, including its various committees and commissions and its leadership. Of special importance is information about members, past and present, and their representational duties and activities. This relates directly to accountability. Also in this category is an explanation of how parliament works. Although much of this information is static, it is essential for communicating to the public the role of the legislature and its place in society.

The 2009 survey assessed the following areas, with the numbers in parentheses indicating the number of items listed under each:

- Access to the parliament (4)
- History and role (3)
- Functions, compositions, and activities (7)
- Elected leaders (3)
- Committees, commissions, and other non-plenary bodies (7)
- Members of parliament (11)
- Political parties in parliament (2)
- Elections and the electoral process (5)
- Administration of parliament (2)
- Publications, documents, and information services (3)
- General links to websites (7)

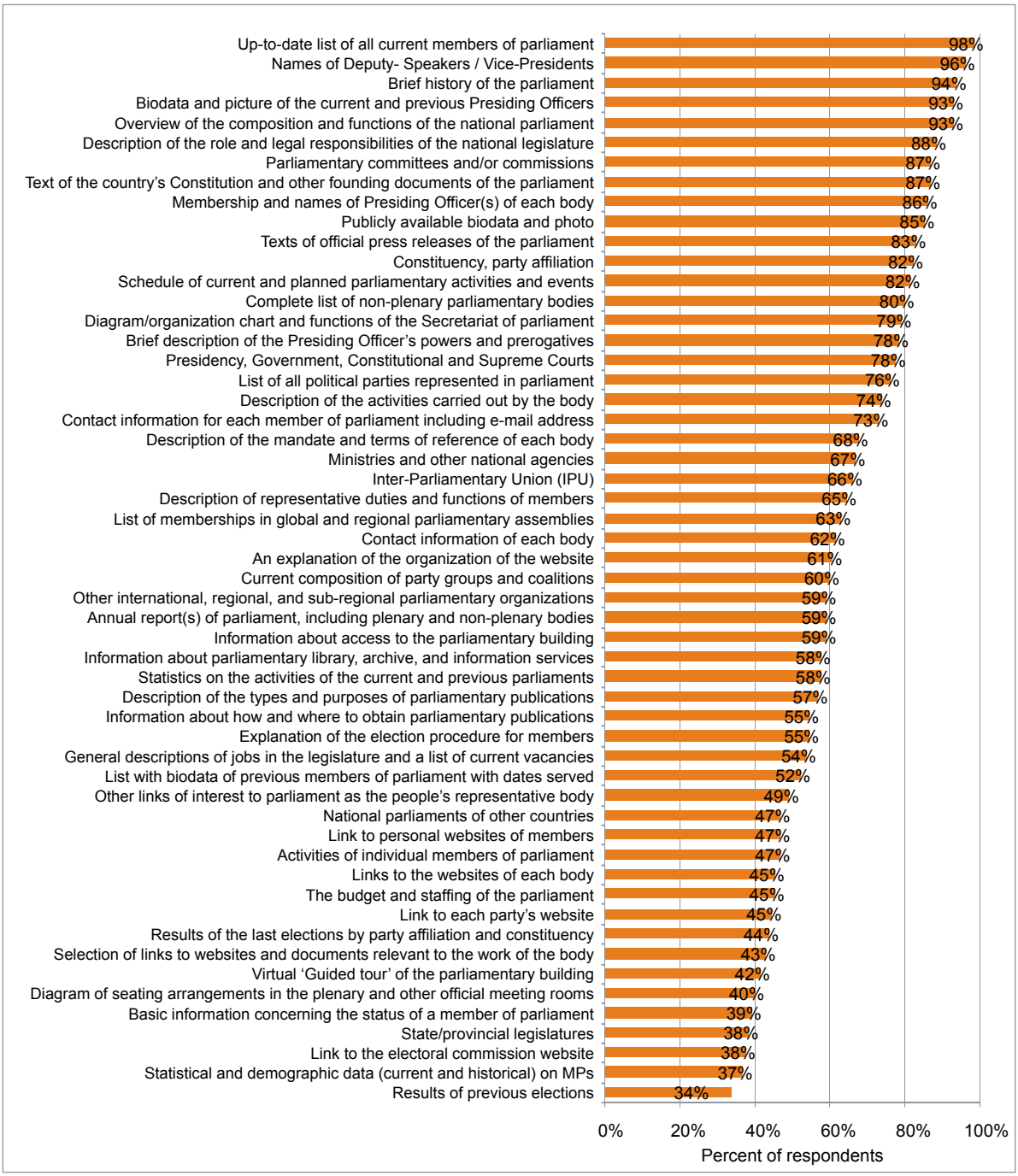
These 11 areas included a total of 54 individual items. 70% of these items were reported by over half of the parliaments to be on their websites; over three quarters of parliaments indicated that they have at least a third of these items. The average percentage of parliaments across all 54 items was 64%. Figure 3.1 shows all items ranked by the percentage of parliaments that have each item on their websites.

5 The term "accessibility" used in the context of the survey refers to accessibility for persons with disabilities.

It is also useful to note the individual items found on the websites of the largest and smallest percentages of parliaments. The top five listed below were reported to be present on the websites of over 90% of all parliaments:

1. Up-to-date list of all current members of parliament (98%);
2. Names of Deputy Speakers/Vice Presidents (96%);
3. Brief history of the parliament (94%);
4. Biodata and current picture of the current and previous Presiding Officers (93%);
5. Overview of the composition and functions of the national parliament (93%).

Figure 3.1: General information about parliament included on the website, sorted by percentage



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 4; 130 respondents – 97% responding "yes" to Question 1)

The bottom five were reported to be present by fewer than 40% or parliaments:

1. Basic information concerning the status of a member of parliament, such as immunity, salaries and allowances, codes of conduct and ethics, etc (39%);
2. Links to websites of state/provincial legislatures (38%);
3. Link to the electoral commission website (38%);
4. Statistical and demographic data (current and historical) on members of parliament (37%);
5. Results of previous elections (34%).

Figure 3.2: General information about parliament included on the website, sorted by areas

(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 4; 130 respondents – 97% responding "yes" to Question 1)

Figure 3.2 shows all items organized by areas. The average percentage of the items checked by parliaments within each area was calculated to facilitate comparisons among them. The area *History and role of parliament* had the highest average percentage of items (90%); the area *Elections and electoral systems* had the lowest (46%). Other than *Elections and electoral systems,* all areas had an average percentage of 50% or more of all parliaments. These scores are, of course, affected by the number of items within each area and by the fact that not all items are applicable to all parliaments. An example of the latter is that not all parliaments have assigned seats in plenary, therefore placing a limit on the number of parliaments which will have this item on their websites.

Given the finding noted above that over half of the parliaments have 70% of the information items, one may conclude that legislative bodies are being relatively successful in their efforts to provide citizens with *general information* about the parliament. However, it is important to recall that this is the most basic and static information about the legislature. It is the minimal starting point for transparency and accountability. Viewed from this perspective it is a concern that a much higher percentage of parliaments does not have an even larger percentage of these general information items on their website.

Legislation, budget and oversight (scrutiny)

Legislative, oversight and budget responsibilities are the core of the work of most parliaments. A legislature becomes increasingly transparent to citizens as its documents and related information sources in these critical domains are made available on the website. Because the nature and extent of these responsibilities vary among legislatures, however, the survey included questions about all three but with the understanding that they may not be equally applicable to all parliaments. In addition, because policy work takes place in their plenary sessions in nearly all parliaments and in their committees/commissions in many parliaments, the survey included questions about the documents and information available from these bodies. In this way, the survey was able to examine the transparency of the work of the parliament from the point of view both of its functions (legislative, oversight, etc.) and its organizational bodies (plenary, committees, etc.). Finally, the survey asked a number of questions that pertained to introductory and background information covering such things as *Today's business schedule* and a *Glossary of parliamentary terms and procedures.*

The six areas under this category (legislation, oversight, budget, committees, plenary, and introductory material) included a total of 34 individual items. As shown in Figure 3.3, over half of the parliaments reported having 38% or more of these items on their websites. This figure is in contrast to the 70% of *General information* items cited in the preceding discussion. Furthermore, the average percentage of parliaments having any of the items under *General information* is 64%; the average percentage of parliaments having any of the items under *Legislation, Budget, and Oversight* is 46%.

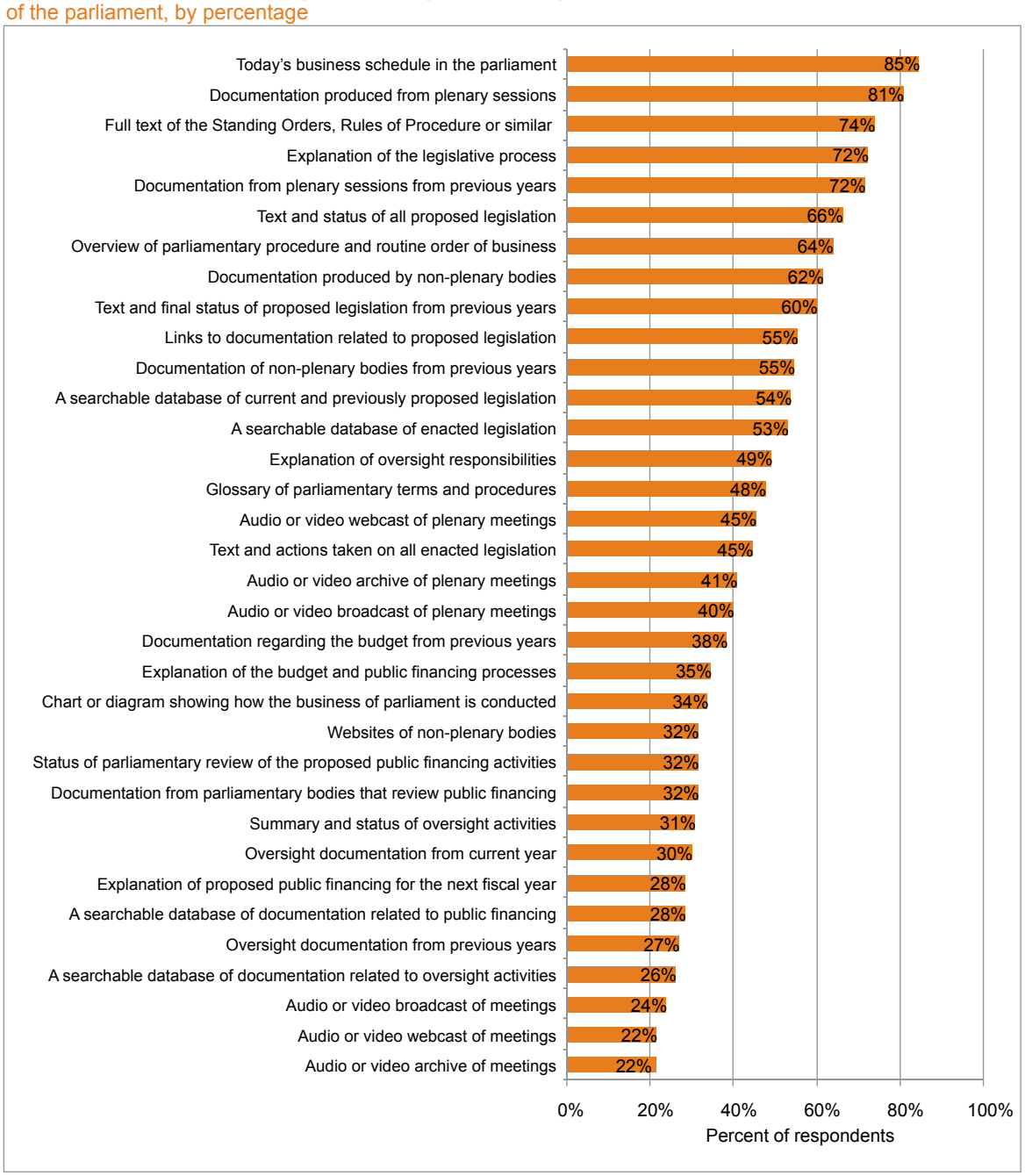
It is informative to note the individual items that were checked by the highest and lowest percentages of parliaments. The top five were reported to be present on the websites of over 70% of all parliaments:

1. Today's business schedule of the parliament (85%);
2. Documentation produced from plenary sessions (81%);
3. Full text of the Standing Orders, Rules of Procedure, etc (74%);
4. Explanation of the legislative process (72%);
5. Documentation from plenary sessions from previous years (72%).

Because of the critical importance of legislation, it is worth noting that the *Text and status of all proposed legislation* ranked 6th on the list and was on the websites of 66% of parliaments. The complete list of the remaining top 10 is:

6. Text and status of all proposed legislation (66%);
7. Overview of parliamentary procedures and routine order of business (64%);
8. Documentation produced by non-plenary bodies (62%);
9. Text and final status of proposed legislation from previous years (60%);
10. Links to documentation related to proposed legislation (55%); and Documentation of non-plenary bodies from previous years (55%).

Figure 3.3: Information about legislation, budget and oversight activities included on the website of the parliament, by percentage



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 5; 130 respondents – 97% responding "yes" to Question 1)

At one level it is understandable that information about the actual work of parliament, which is more dynamic and more difficult to track on a timely basis, is present on fewer websites than general information about the parliament. On the other hand, these baseline data show the size of the challenge facing parliaments in their efforts to achieve a higher level of transparency.

There are also significant differences among the areas within this category. These can be seen in Figure 3.4 below, which shows the average percentage of parliaments having items in each of the areas.

Figure 3.4: Average percentage of parliaments having items in each area

Introductory material	61%
Legislation	58%
Plenary	56%
Committees	36%
Oversight (scrutiny)	33%
Budget	32%

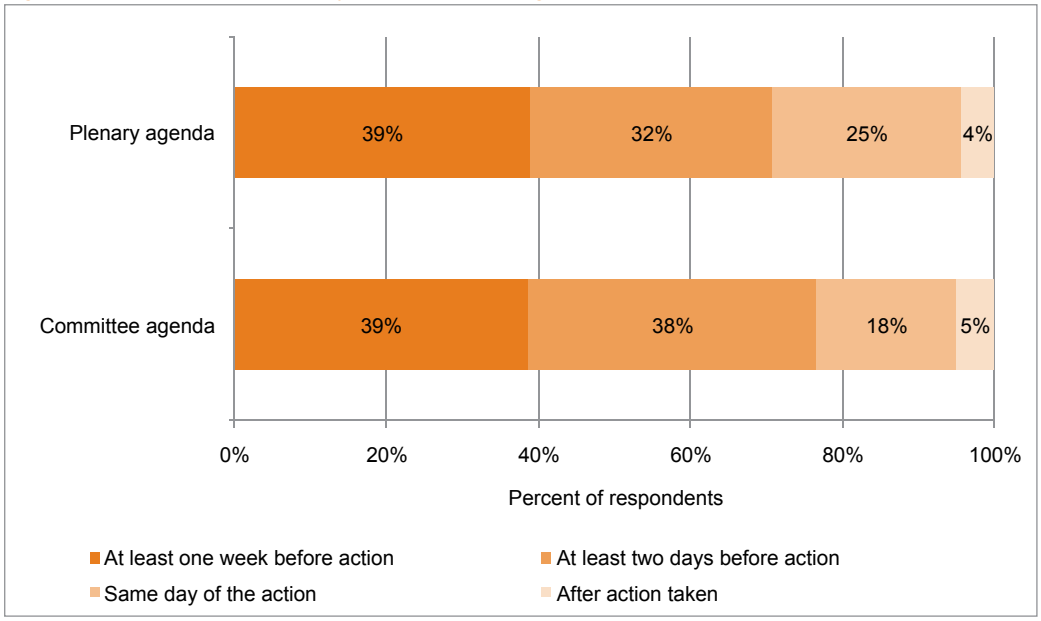
Some of these differences might be attributed to variations in the role of committees/commissions in parliaments. Not all committees have significant legislative or oversight responsibilities, and the documents and other information about their activities may not be produced or may not be considered important. The same might be said regarding differences in the oversight and budget responsibilities among parliaments. However, the relatively low percentage of parliaments that provide documents and information in these areas means that it is difficult for the media, civil society organizations, and the public to follow these processes. Future surveys will attempt to link these findings more closely to the actual authority of committees/commissions and to the responsibilities of the parliament for oversight and for budget approval.

While the presence of legislative, oversight, and budget documents on websites is important, several of their characteristics also affect their value and are an additional indication of transparency. These include timeliness, completeness, and clarity.

Timeliness refers to how soon a document can be seen on the website. If a document is available to citizens relatively quickly, for example within 24 hours after its preparation, this is an indication of greater openness of the parliament; if they are available only after a considerable time has elapsed, especially if they are available to members well before the public, then openness declines.

The survey asked about the availability of four types of documents: plenary and committee agendas, proposed legislation, and records of plenary proceedings. As shown in Figure 3.5 over 70% of parliaments make plenary agendas available at least two days before action; 77% make committee agendas available in this same time period. While these percentages may be considered satisfactory by some, the fact is that agendas need to be available even sooner, especially if citizens, civil societies, and other interested and affected groups wish to follow the discussion and possibly contribute to it.

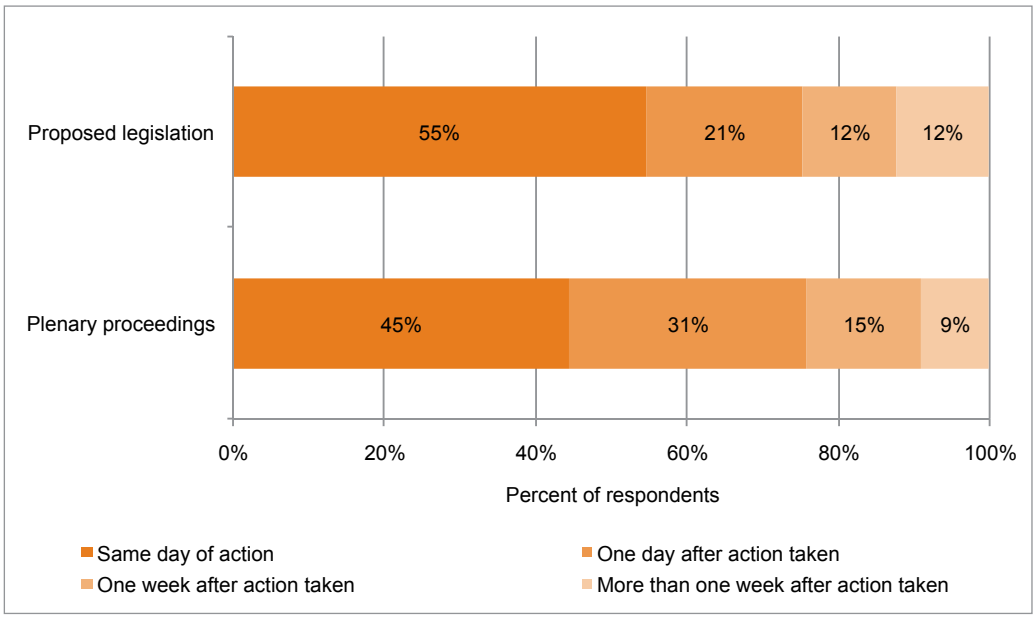
Figure 3.5: Timeliness of plenary and committee agendas on the website of the parliament



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 7; Plenary agenda= 120 respondents. Committee agenda= 103 respondents. These figures exclude respondents who checked "not applicable" in response to the questions)

In over 75% of parliaments proposed legislation is available within one day after action on the bill (for example, upon introduction, or amendments by a committee). Plenary proceedings are available on 76% of parliamentary websites within one day of the session (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6: Timeliness of bills and plenary proceedings on the website of the parliament



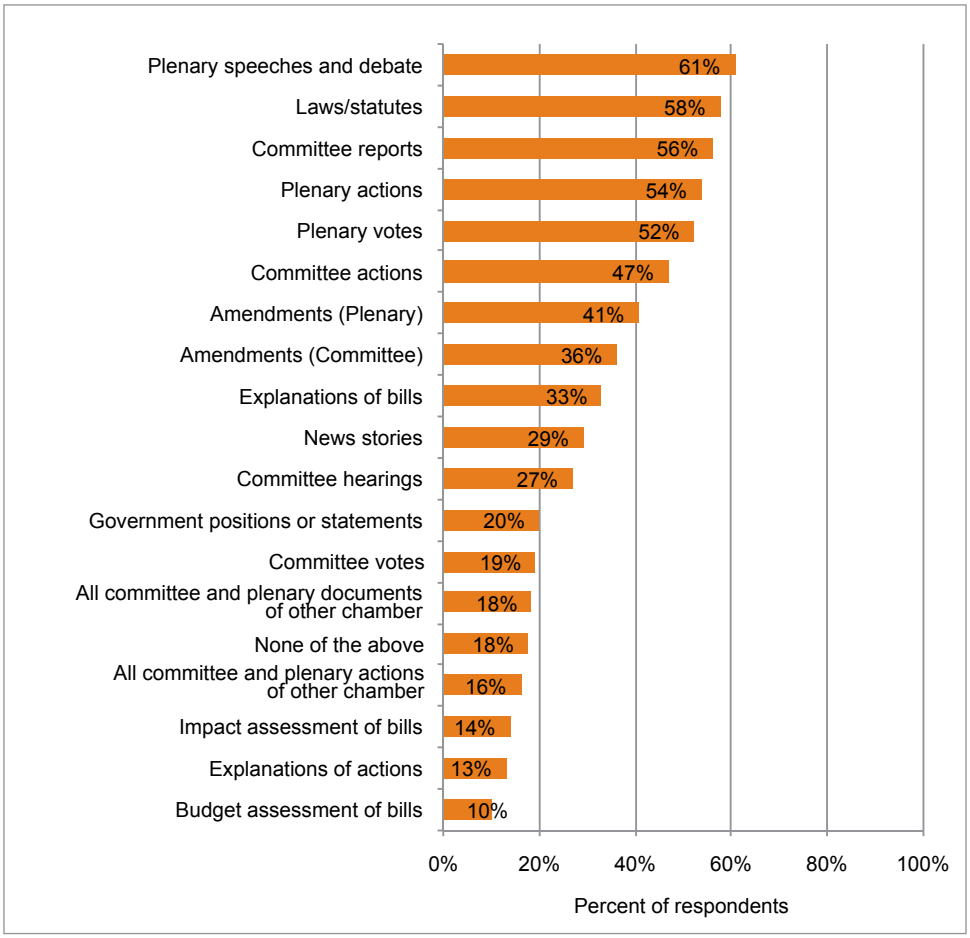
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 7; Proposed legislation= 106 respondents. Plenary proceedings= 112 respondents. These figures exclude respondents who checked "not applicable" in response to the question)

Although the wording of the 2007 survey on timeliness was slightly different,[6] it was similar enough to suggest that there has been a slight improvement in the availability of proposed legislation among the 2009:2007 Compare Group. In 2007, 68% of parliaments in the Compare Group reported that proposed legislation was available within one day of action; in 2009, 72% of parliaments made it available within one day.

Finally, the 2009 survey asked whether parliamentary documentation[7] was available to the public on the website as soon as it is available to members and official. 72% of parliaments said always or most of the time. Although this percentage is a positive sign, there is clearly room for improvement, as it was also found that 9% said rarely or never.

Completeness. Proposed legislation on a website cannot be considered to be complete based solely on the availability of its text. To understand the status and the meaning of a bill, members and citizens need the associated reports prepared by committees, subject experts, and others; descriptions of all the actions taken on the legislation; the amendments proposed and their status; links to parliamentary debate and votes on the bill, and other related material. Proposed legislation is the type of document that benefits most from the capacity of the web to link related documents to each other on a timely basis. Achieving completeness requires understanding the scope and importance of this requirement and providing the means to address it. The absence of completeness in documentation translates into a lower level of transparency.

Figure 3.7: Percentage of chambers that have various items hyperlinked to proposed legislation on their website



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 6; 130 respondents – 97% responding "yes" to Question 1)

Figure 3.7 shows the percentage of parliaments that reported links between proposed legislation and 18 related documents and items of information. Five of these are linked to bills by at least 50% of parliaments:

1. Plenary speeches and debate (61%);
2. Laws and statutes (58%);
3. Committee reports (56%);
4. Plenary actions (54%);
5. Plenary votes (52%).

6 Survey 2007, Section 7, Question 6 reads: "Please check all the types of documents and activities that are included or linked on the website for Parliament and the time when each is made available". For each item, the time options were: "same day, next day; within a week; longer; not applicable".

7 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 16. No distinction was made by type of document.

All other items listed in Figure 3.7 are linked by less than 50% of parliaments. However, the percentage of parliaments linking various documents did rise slightly in 2009. Figure 3.8 shows the percentage of parliaments in the 2009:2007 Compare Group that linked to each of the items. There were increases for 10 items and decreases for 6. The average increase for the 19 items was 2.5%. The largest increases occurred for links to committee actions (+20%) and plenary actions (+10%). All other increases were less than 5%.

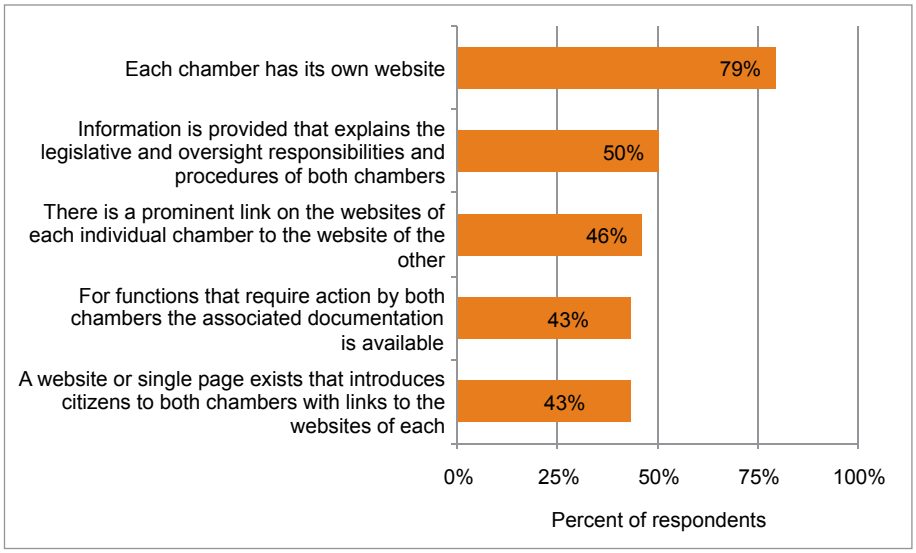
Figure 3.8: Percentage of chambers that have various items linked to proposed legislation on their website: 2007 and 2009

Items	2007 (83)	2009 (86)	Diff.
Plenary speeches and debate (*plenary debate* in 2007)	61%	64%	3%
Committee reports	54%	57%	3%
Plenary actions	46%	56%	10%
Laws/statutes	58%	56%	-2%
Plenary votes	49%	53%	4%
Committee actions	29%	49%	20%
Amendments (Plenary)	42%	45%	3%
Amendments (Committee)	39%	43%	4%
Explanations of bills	34%	33%	-1%
Committee hearings	30%	29%	-1%
News stories	30%	28%	-2%
None of the above (*no response* in 2007)	28%	21%	-7%
Committee votes	17%	20%	3%
Government positions or statements	20%	20%	0%
Impact assessment of bills	12%	17%	5%
All committee and plenary actions of other chamber*	16%	16%	0%
All committee and plenary documents of other chamber*	14%	16%	2%
Explanations of actions	17%	14%	-3%
Budget assessment of bills	13%	12%	-1%

* = if bicameral parliament

An additional criterion for completeness pertains to bicameral legislatures. 79% of assemblies in bicameral legislatures that responded to the survey reported that each chamber has its own website. The survey asked several questions about coordination and linkage between these websites. It is a concern that 50% or fewer responded affirmatively to each of the items (See Figure 3.9). Of particular note in this context is that even when action by both chambers is required, only 43% reported that their websites include the actions of the other chamber.

Figure 3.9: Website coordination and linkage between chambers of bicameral parliaments



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 19; 72 assemblies in bicameral parliaments)

Clarity and explanatory material. Since proposed legislation often deals with current statutes and, if passed, must be incorporated into the existing body of law, it is usually drafted in legal language that can be difficult to understand. A number of parliaments have begun to recognize the importance of providing explanations of bills and legislative actions in language understandable to citizens. Even some members request this type of language as a supplement to the more formal legal style in which bills are normally drafted.

Related to the need for language that is more easily understood is the need to provide documents that explain the possible impact of proposed legislation. Predicting the effect of a bill can involve a great many uncertainties and preparing valid impact assessments can be very difficult. Nevertheless, such efforts can at least provide a description of some of the *possible* ways in which the proposed legislation may affect the country, and they can serve as a factual basis for judging some of the more extreme claims of a bill's advocates and opponents. A number of parliaments have successfully used the work of experts to better understand and assess the impact of proposed budgetary measures.[8]

In addition to the challenge of understanding legislative texts, there is the challenge of understanding legislative procedures. Standing orders and the rules of procedure can seem obscure and arcane to many citizens and in some cases even to new members joining the parliament. They have often evolved over a long time and their purposes can be difficult to grasp. Moreover, the complexity of legislative procedures can be an impediment to the transparency of parliaments.

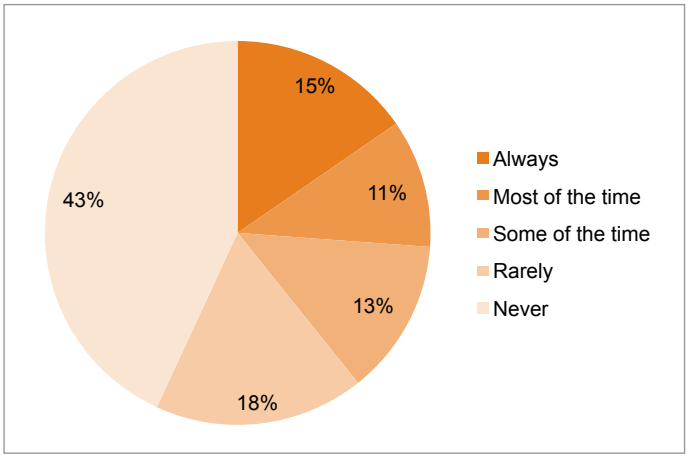
Providing information to make legislation and legislative procedures more understandable is a need that many parliaments are just beginning to acknowledge. Also, some do not feel it is the responsibility of the parliament to provide anything more than the actual texts, leaving it to others, such as civil societies, to offer explanations and interpretations.

It may not be surprising, therefore, to find that many parliaments do not provide a great deal of this type of information. Only 36% said that they provide explanatory material always or most of the time and 48% said rarely or never.[9] Impact assessments are even less common. They are provided always or most of the time by only 26% of parliaments; 61% said rarely or never

8 See, for example, the U.S. Congressional Budget Office (http://www.cbo.gov).
9 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 17.

(see Figure 3.10). When asked about items that are linked to bills on the website (see Figure 3.7 discussed previously), 33% indicated that they link to explanations of bills. The other three items in this category – impact assessments of bills, explanations of actions, and budget assessments of bills – were at the bottom of the list, all linked by fewer that 15% of parliaments.

Figure 3.10: Availability on the website of material that explains the context and assesses the impact of proposed legislation



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 18; 130 respondents – 97% responding "yes" to Question 1)

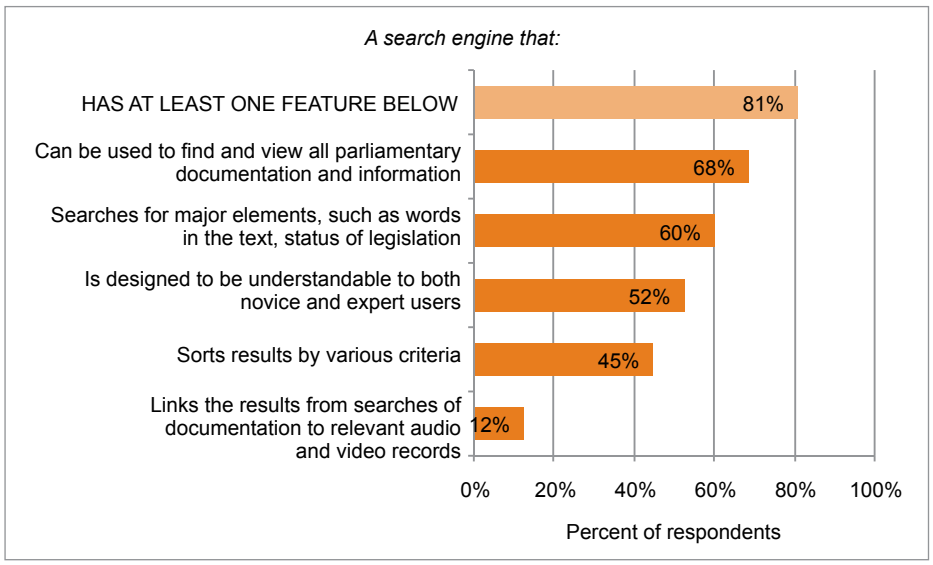
Tools available to users

As the documents and information available on parliamentary websites continue to grow in volume and complexity, it is increasingly important to offer software tools that enable both members and citizens to find and display that content easily. Providing different types of tools is also necessary because of the advances in technology that allow the use of a variety of devices to access websites from different locations. Search engines that can serve the needs of both members and citizens, at both the beginning and advanced levels, are also essential. Methods for providing audio and video webcasting, and the archives required for on-demand access are increasingly important. Alerting services and mobile access have also become valuable. Many of these new and highly useful means of access, however, require adequate security and means of authentication. And finally, the availability and the capabilities of these tools have a direct effect on the accessibility of the parliament to citizens.

Search engines

81% of parliaments reported that they have a search engine with at least one of the features listed in Figure 3.11. Because of differences in wording in the 2007 survey, it is difficult to determine whether this represents an improvement. The 2007 question that is most similar to the language shown in Figure 3.11 asked whether the parliament had *a search engine that allows users to search full text of proposed legislation, parliamentary documents, and actions.* In 2007, 68% of the Compare Group, said they did have such a search engine. In 2009, 66% of the Compare Group answered positively to the similar question in Figure 3.11 (*Can be used to find and view all parliamentary documentation and information*).

Figure 3.11: Tools for finding and viewing information available on the website of the parliament



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 8; 130 respondents – 97% responding "yes" to Question 1)

Webcasting and broadcasting

47% of parliaments indicated that they have the capacity to broadcast or webcast live meetings of any parliamentary body as well as parliamentary events and programmes. However, Figure 3.11 shows that only 12% of parliaments are able to link searches for documents to relevant audio and video records. Also, only 32% reported that they have an archive that permits on-demand viewing.[10] As noted in Chapter 2, webcasting of both plenary and committee meetings are expected to grow in the next several years among parliaments, and therefore there are expectations that these modalities of searching will increase over time.

Alerting services

47% of parliaments reported that they have alerting services for at least one type of document or activity.[11] This finding appears to be somewhat inconsistent with the finding shown in Figure 2.5 which indicates that alerting services are in use in 21% of parliaments, and planned or being considered by 27%. The difference may be attributable to the fact that the percentages shown in Figure 2.5 were in response to a question about the use of alerting services to communicate with citizens. It is possible that while more than 47% of parliaments have an alerting service of some type available to members, many of them may not yet have extended this to citizens. Alternatively, it is arguable that the difference in the results of these questions is not significant since the combined percentage of parliaments that reported having one in place or are being planned (Figure 2.5) is equal to the percentage that reported that they have one on their website. Future surveys will seek to clarify this issue.

Mobile services

Only 19% of parliaments reported that they provide mobile services for members that enable them to access information and documentation as they are made available on the website. 12% provide such services for the public.[12] As the use of mobile phones continues to grow in all countries, and as more parliaments develop services designed to work with such devices, these percentages should grow. Because some mobile devices, such as so-called smart phones, have inherent limitations – for example, small screens – the information services available will have to be

10 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 8b.
11 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 8c.
12 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 8d.

tailored to work within these constraints. However, the projected ubiquity of mobile telephony, especially in developing countries, and the release of new devices with enhanced functionality offers parliaments an excellent opportunity to improve their accessibility.

Security and authentication

These features will grow in importance as members increasingly use the website to work remotely. Authentication services, especially digital signatures will also be necessary for citizens, civil societies, and others who rely on parliamentary websites to obtain accurate copies of legislation and other documents. 25% of parliaments currently provide secure services for members and 9% provide authentication services such as digital signatures.[13]

Documents downloadable in bulk

An issue of continuing interest to many in civil society is whether parliaments make their documents available to the public not only on the web but also in downloadable formats that can be incorporated into systems developed by others. When this occurs, groups within civil society are able to create systems that offer views of parliamentary actions that are not normally available on the official websites of the legislative body. This practice of being able to download documents, often in open formats, is occurring increasingly as a part of e-government programs. In the 2009 survey 44% of parliaments reported that they were providing this service and 30% reported that they were planning or considering doing it.[14]

Usability and accessibility of the site

Just as with parliamentary documents, the tools for finding and viewing information on websites must be understandable to citizens. The ability to use these tools depends on a number of design techniques and standards. These include the methods that have been identified through various usability studies for making a website intuitively easier to navigate and accessibility standards that ensure persons with disabilities are able to use them. They also include recommendations contained in the IPU *Guidelines* for responding to the challenge of multiple languages within a country.

Usability tools and techniques

Usability depends first on knowing the needs of those who use a website, including both members and the public. 73% of parliaments reported that they base the content and the design of the site on an understanding of the needs of different groups of users.[15] However, only 38% reported the employment of usability testing and other methods for ensuring that the design of the website is understandable by its intended audiences. As websites offer more content and more sophisticated means for finding and viewing information, the need to ensure usability increases. However, the cost of meeting this criterion also increases and it may be that it is currently beyond the reach of many legislatures. If so, this is an example in which the experiences of those parliaments that have employed such techniques can be valuable to others and worth sharing.

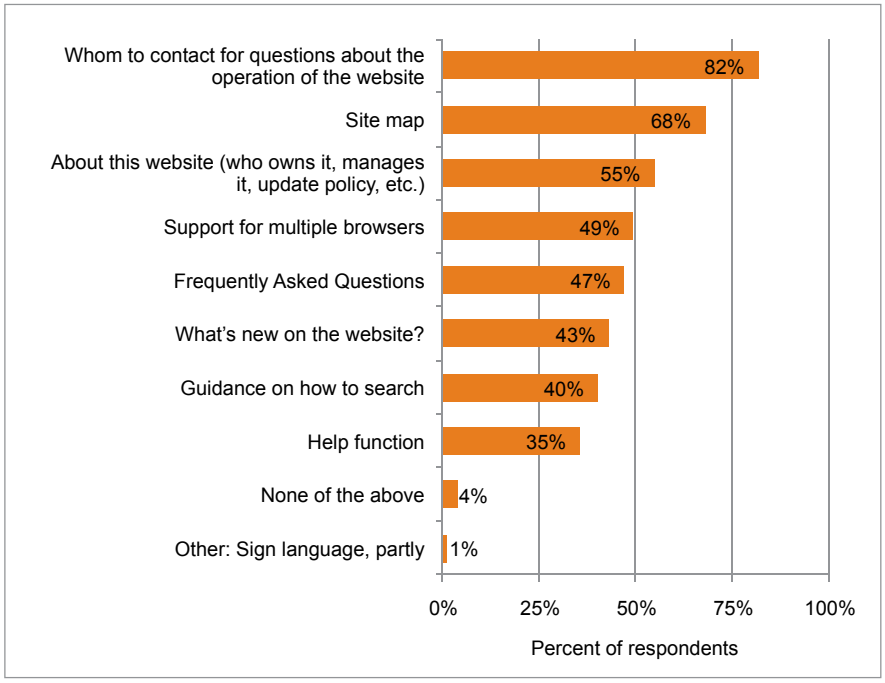
Design elements

General experience with both public and private sector websites has led to a relatively common set of design elements that help to make a website easier for users. The percentages of parliaments that include each of these elements in their websites are shown in Figure 3.12. While it is positive that 82% tell users whom to contact for questions about the operation of the website,

13 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 8e.
14 Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 8.
15 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 9.

only three of the eight elements are found on over 50% of the sites. *Guidance on how to search* and a *Help function* are available on 40% or fewer. This finding is consistent with the relatively low percentages of parliaments that provide material that explains proposed legislation and the legislative process.

Figure 3.12: Design elements available to users on the website of the parliament



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 14; 130 respondents – 97% responding "yes" to Question 1)

Accessibility

The survey found that 45% of parliaments do follow accessibility standards to ensure that the website can be made available to persons with disabilities. Such standards are one of the most helpful ways to narrow a critical part of the digital divide; it is essential that more parliaments implement them as soon as possible. A related but differently worded question in the 2007 survey found an even lower percentage adhering to such standards. The 2009 finding, therefore, suggests there may be some improvement in this area.

Languages

Parliaments of countries with multiple official languages face one of the major hurdles of the digital divide. The baseline data provided by the 2009 survey gives an informative picture of the current state of efforts to address this challenge.[16]

Parliaments in countries with single/multiple languages:
- 59% have one official language;
- 22% have two official languages;
- 18% have three or more official languages.

Of those with two official languages (29 parliaments):
- 28% offer the website *completely* in both languages;

16 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Questions 10-13.

- 10% offer the website *at least partially* in both languages;
- 62% offer the website *in only one language*.

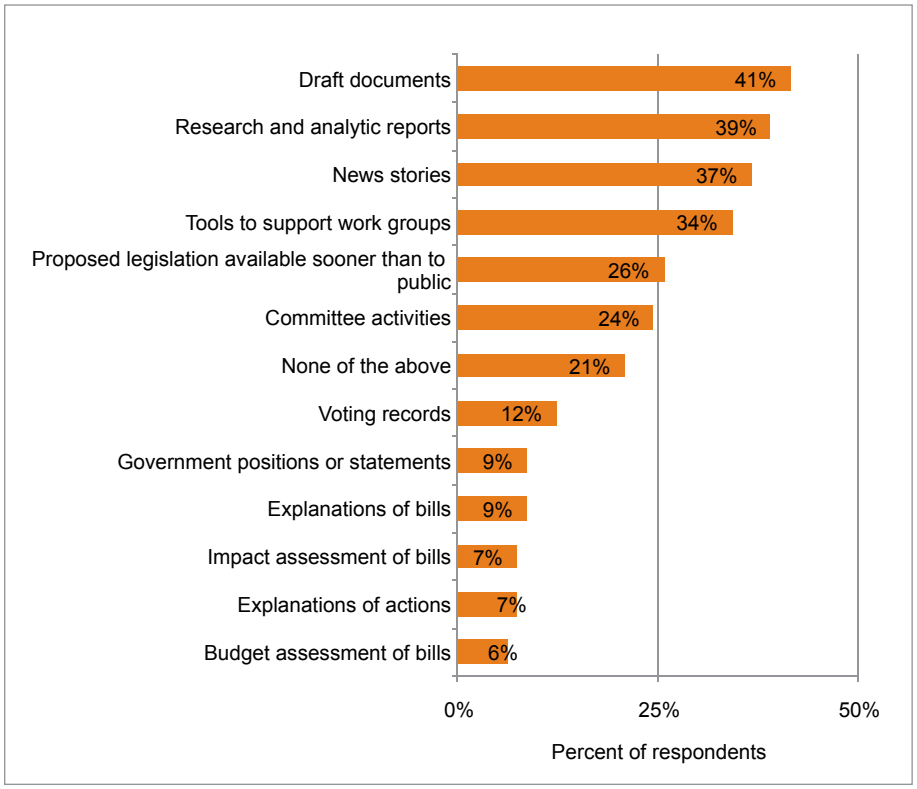
Of those with three or more official languages (24 parliaments):
- 4% offer the website *completely* in all languages;
- 67% offer the website *at least partially* in several languages;
- 29% offer the website *in only one language*.

Intranets for members only

Parliamentary websites are also important tools for members, committees, and staff. They are often the fastest and most reliable vehicle for obtaining copies of draft bills, receiving agendas, getting summaries of committee actions and the text of committee documents, and learning what members have said and how they have voted. They have become essential for enabling the parliamentary leadership and members to carry out their legislative and oversight work.

Many parliaments now maintain websites on intranets for members-only (61%) or are planning/considering them (22%).[17] While a strong case can be made for enabling members to work in a confidential environment, in the context of transparency the issue is whether the internal website provides documents or tools that should be available to the public as well.

Figure 3.13: Information and services available to members and staff only



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 22; 82 respondents – 61% responding "yes" to Question 21)

17 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 20.

As shown in Figure 3.13, the items provided by the most parliaments on these members-only intranets are:

- Draft documents - 41%;
- Research and analytic reports - 39%;
- News stories - 37%;
- Tools to support work groups - 34%.

It is reasonable that documents still in draft form should not be available on a public website until they are formally introduced, assuming that there are opportunities for citizens to view them once they have been released. And to be both efficient and effective, tools to support working groups should to be limited to those who are actually members of the working group itself. Other means are available to encourage public input on the activities of such groups if they wish to have it. A case can also be made for restricting access to news stories if access for the parliament is through a paid subscription service that charges on the basis of the number of users.

Limiting access to research and analytic reports can be more controversial, and depends on a number of factors such as the reasons for the confidentiality and the potential impact on their value to members if they were written for a broader public audience. This is an issue that requires more understanding than the 2009 survey can provide regarding the purpose and use of such reports.

Other items in Figure 3.13 also require more analysis to assess their impact. For example, 26% make proposed legislation available to members sooner than to the public. This may not be a concern if the legislation is still in draft form, or if the delay is very brief, such as the time to prepare the bill in final format. Longer delays could be a problem. The restriction of voting records by 12% is a concern as well since it represents a key component of transparency and accountability, and should not be restricted to members only. Finally, in light of the previous discussion regarding the small percentages of parliaments who are able to provide explanatory material and impact assessments, the fact that 6% to 9% limit access to these kinds of documents bears further analysis.

Improvements planned

Over 80% of parliaments reported plans to improve their websites, again underscoring the importance of this instrument for achieving transparency and accessibility. The wide range of comments, grouped into general categories below, illustrates the scope of, and commitment to this effort by legislatures in both developed and developing countries:

- Conduct a general review of the website using the IPU *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites,* including through the creation of a dedicated working group.
- Redesign the website, develop a new information architecture and undertake a general reorganization of the content, including by moving to a Content Management System (CMS);
- Make available online a searchable database of all parliamentary documents (laws, amendments etc.) accessible by all users;
- Make documentation available using XML standards;
- Develop tools to interact with citizens including those allowing them to discuss proposed legislation online;
- Enable members of parliament and citizens to access information and documentation available on the website through mobile devices;

- Make the website dynamic, develop alerting services and better search engines;
- Develop capacity to broadcast or webcast live meetings;
- Develop an archive of broadcast or webcast meetings;
- Increase usability and accessibility, and make the website conform to the W3C standards;
- Make the website available in more languages;
- Create a dedicated section for young people;
- Develop web pages of members and committees.

Box 3.3

A Parliamentary Information Management Committee represented by the Senate, the House and the Library of the Parliament will be developing a proposal for consideration by both houses to do a comprehensive overhaul of the Parliamentary Internet Site in order to meet the principles of Access, Engagement and Education.

Respondent to the 2009 Survey

SUMMARY

Websites have become the primary means by which parliaments make their work known to citizens and by which they can achieve a higher degree of transparency and accountability. Parliamentary websites provide a variety of information sources, and while many of these can be accessed independently, it is the ability of web technology to integrate a broad array of legislative and policy data and documents that makes them especially valuable.

A parliament that is seeking to become more open will provide citizens with timely access to the most current information about the whole spectrum of documentation related to law-making, oversight (including the national budget) and representation through its website. It will also provide the means for understanding what the parliament does, who its members are, what they have accomplished, and how to communicate with them. It will offer information in different formats, including text and video, using a variety of tools that enable citizens to find what they are looking for quickly and easily, and to understand it. The extent of documentation on a parliamentary website, along with its characteristics, such as completeness, timeliness, and clarity, offer one method for judging the level of transparency a parliament has achieved, or is striving to achieve. The tools on the website for finding, viewing, and explaining that documentation are an indication of its openness to all citizens.

The findings of the 2007 survey reported in the *World e-Parliament Report 2008* documented the widespread use of parliamentary websites. Most of these websites did an acceptable job of providing general information about the parliament, but many did not incorporate important information about legislative activities, especially committee documents and explanatory material. The 2008 Report also found that more work needed to be done in linking relevant information to proposed legislation to provide a more complete picture of the bill. A substantial number of parliaments employed formal usability testing (or were planning to) but far fewer were meeting accessibility standards for persons with disabilities. Many were broadcasting plenary sessions and a large number were planning to do so.

The website section of the 2009 Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments was based on the revised IPU *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites*. They are organized into four categories: 1) General infor-

mation about the parliament; 2) Specific information regarding the legislative, oversight, and budget work of the parliament; 3) Tools for finding and viewing information; and, 4) Usability and accessibility of the site. Because this is the first effort to assess the state of parliamentary websites based on the new IPU *Guidelines*, the findings must be viewed primarily as baseline data although some comparisons are possible with the 2007 findings when similar questions were used.

General information

This category includes practical information such as how to visit the parliament, how to obtain its documents online or in printed form, and what information services it provides. It also covers a parliament's history, activities, organization, and basic responsibilities. Of special importance is information about members, past and present, and their representational duties and activities.

The survey found that over half of the parliaments have 70% or more of the items that provide general information. This represents the most basic and most static information about the legislature, and it is the minimal starting point for transparency. From this perspective, these figures are a concern, especially because many parliaments have had websites for a number of years. It can be argued that the percentage of parliaments and the percentage of items should each be much higher.

Legislation, oversight, budget

The core of the work of a parliament falls under its legislative, oversight, and budget responsibilities. This work takes place in nearly all parliaments in their plenary sessions and in many parliaments in committees.

The survey included a total of 34 individual items covering each of these areas of work, as well as the activities of plenaries and committees. Over half of the parliaments reported that they have 38% or more of these items on their website. Information was provided by more parliaments (over 50%) about legislation and plenary activities; significantly less than 50% provided information about committee activities and about oversight and budget review work. This latter finding may reflect differences in the role that committees play in some parliaments and differences among legislatures in their responsibilities for oversight and budget review.

The timeliness of the documentation provided is satisfactory overall, although agendas could be made available sooner in many parliaments. Completeness, however, as measured by the number of relevant items linked to proposed legislation, still needs to be improved in many parliaments. And efforts to achieve greater clarity by providing material that explains bills and offers an assessment of their impact occur in very few parliaments.

Tools

The tools available on websites help citizens find and view information in a variety of ways, and, if they are well designed, enable them to do this easily. 81% of parliaments reported that they have a *search engine* with at least one of five important features. Because of differences in wording in the 2007 survey, it is difficult to determine whether this represents an improvement in the following two years. 47% of parliaments indicated that they have the capacity to *broadcast or webcast live meetings* of any parliamentary body as well as parliamentary events and programmes. 47% of parliaments have *alerting services* for at least one type of document or activity. But only 19% of parliaments provide mobile services for members that enable them to access information and documentation as they are made available on the website. 12% provide such services for the pub-

lic. The growth of mobile phones in all countries should lead to some growth in these services. Only 25% of parliaments currently provide secure services for members and only 9% provide authentication services such as digital signatures.

Usability and accessibility tools and techniques

The standards and methods for ensuring the usability and accessibility of a website have become increasingly important. 73% of parliaments base the content and the design of their site on an understanding of the needs of different groups of users. However, only 38% employ usability testing and other methods for ensuring that the design of the website is understandable by its intended audiences. The survey found that 45% of parliaments do follow standards to ensure that the website can be accessed by persons with disabilities; this means that over half do not, a finding of some concern. Multiple languages remain a challenge for many parliaments trying to make their websites accessible to all citizens.

Many parliaments now maintain websites on intranets for members-only (61%) or are planning/considering them (22%). There are some issues concerning the information available on these websites and whether it should be made available to the public, especially with regard to research reports, voting records, and explanatory material.

While many parliaments state that they want to be open by being more transparent, accountable and accessible, the collective findings from the 2009 survey suggest that much still needs to be done by many parliaments to achieve these goals. Transparency requires that more documentation be made available. In some cases it needs to be more current; in many cases it needs to be more complete; and in nearly all cases, it needs to be more understandable. Openness to all requires that more parliaments implement capable search engines, extend webcasting, increase alerting services, greatly enhance mobile services, and add authentication functions. And it requires usability testing and the implementation of accessibility standards for persons with disabilities by well over half of all parliaments.

PART 2

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION OF E-PARLIAMENT

Chapter 4

Envisioning, Planning, and Managing for e-Parliament

ICT can help a parliament achieve its aspirations for transparency, accountability, accessibility, and better communication with the electorate, but an institutional commitment to develop an explicit e-parliament vision is a necessary first step. An inclusive vision must evolve out of the collaborative efforts of the leadership of parliament, its members, senior officials, and staff. It should translate into a policy statement providing guidance on the e-parliament goals to be pursued by the institution, as well as address more specific issues such as when and how to engage the public in the policy making process, what channels of communication to support, and how to overcome the many challenges posed by the digital divide. Related objectives need to be established so that ICT can be implemented in accordance with best practices and standards. These may range from the use of technology to improve the efficiency of parliamentary operations to ensuring the security of systems and the appropriate degree of privacy for members' and citizens' communications.

As highlighted in the *World e-Parliament Report 2008*[1], the vision should embody the fundamental values of the parliament and address such concerns as:

- Achieving *transparency and openness* for both the parliament as an institution and the members as individual representatives of their constituencies;
- Providing *universal access to authoritative public documentation* for citizens regardless of their personal resources or abilities;
- Improving the mechanisms for *accountability* of parliament and its members to their electorate;
- Enabling *dialogue* between the parliament - and its members - and the citizenry;
- Ensuring *access* to authoritative information and the *security* and *privacy* of personal information;
- Supporting the *work of the parliament* in an efficient and cost-effective manner;
- Participating in the *global Information Society*.

Box 4.1

> *The strategic planning and management of the use of ICT in parliament is integral to and must proceed from an overall effort towards the strategic management of the legislative framework, its systems and processes. For this reason, ICT programme planning, management and oversight must be built on a clear and comprehensive vision of what we want or hope our parliaments to be.*
>
> Marilyn B. Barua-Yap, Secretary General, House of Representatives of the Philippines
> Statement at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009

1 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008,* [New York]: United Nations, 2008, p.16, [http://www.ictparliament.org].

An effective policy statement must also take into account the nature and role of the parliament, its institutional context, and its capacity to adopt innovative technologies. It has to place a high value on improving support for parliamentary functions through the use of technology, rather then considering ICT advances as ends in themselves. It must also delineate, implicitly or explicitly, the enabling environment for its accomplishment.

To move from the articulation of the vision to its implementation requires the engagement of the Presiding Officers, the members, the Secretary General, the Director of ICT, and key parliamentary staff. Without the support of the President/Speaker – or designated parliament leadership – it is likely that ICT will remain marginal to the overall institutional development. Also, technology is disruptive to current practice and operations, it requires changes in behavior, and it demands financial and staff resources over time. Without support at the highest level, these challenges will continue to be substantial barriers to e-parliament. Members must also be engaged both to identify their priorities and to be willing to review, test, and then employ solutions that meet their needs.

The Secretary General has a vital role in informing and advising the leadership and the members of the benefits and the limitations of technology and in overseeing its planning and implementation by the technical managers and staff. The Director of ICT should ensure that the ICT staff understand the nature and needs of legislatures, especially as they differ from other public and private sector entities. They must also have expert knowledge of the technologies most likely to be useful to the legislature. Other officials of the secretariat have an important role in ensuring broad-based interaction and involvement of staff in carrying out the e-parliament transformative process throughout the institution.

The organizational structure for implementing ICT should encourage ideas and contributions at all levels and foster a high degree of cooperation and collaboration. There are various ways to achieve these objectives through mechanisms with various degrees of formality, such as committees, working groups or ad hoc meetings. It is especially important that all stakeholders possess the motivation to work together, recognize their interdependence, and be focused on the needs of parliament as a whole before their particular department or organization needs.

Implementation requires strategic planning and the discipline of formal project management. Strategic planning links the goals and objectives of the vision to projects and proposals of members, stakeholders, and other users, assesses their feasibility and cost, and outlines plans, schedules, and resource requirements. The strategic planning process enables a parliament to establish priorities and to allocate resources accordingly. It also ensures that tradeoffs and compromises among competing requirements are made taking into account the probable consequences of those decisions.

Finally, adopting ICT is an investment that requires adequate financial and staff resources. Funding is always insufficient to meet demand; sound management and planning processes enable parliaments to assess the full scope of the requirements and to allocate appropriately. Staff resources require particular attention due to the special nature of parliamentary bodies and the need to involve ICT experts who understand the way parliament works.

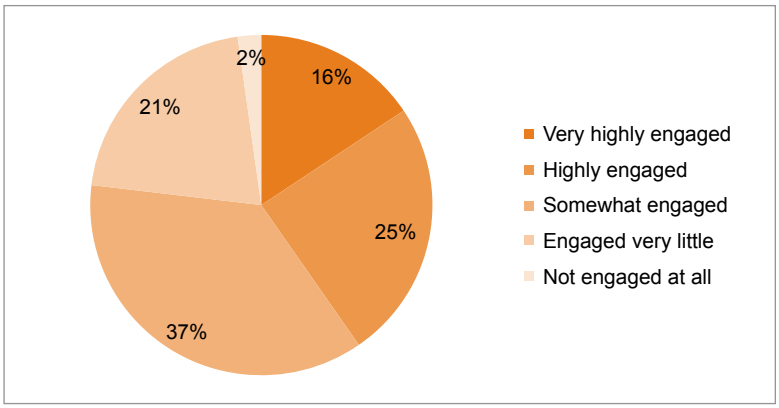
RESULTS AND FINDINGS FROM THE 2009 SURVEY

The 2009 Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments focused on five key aspects related to envisioning, planning, and managing for e-parliament: 1) the extent of engagement of the parliamentary leadership; 2) the involvement of stakeholders in proposing ideas and setting goals and objectives; 3) the modalities of oversight and direction; 4) visions statements, strategic planning and project management; and, 5) the resources committed to ICT, including both staff and funding.

Engagement of leaders

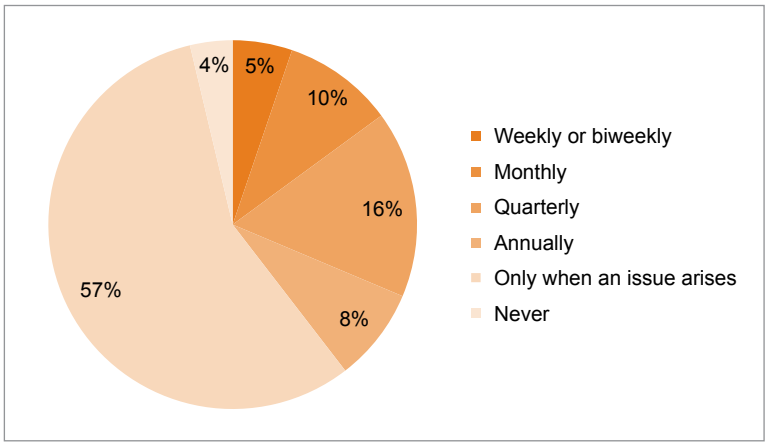
41% of parliaments reported that political leaders - at the level of the Speaker/President or the Vice Speaker/Vice President - were engaged in ICT "very highly" or "highly"; 23% reported that they were engaged "very little" or "not at all" (see Figure 4.1). The fact that almost twice as many parliaments reported that political leaders were engaged at the highest levels is positive. While this does not translate into the commitment of a significant amount of time devoted to ICT by the leadership, it does not necessarily need to. Nearly two thirds of parliaments reported that political leaders were engaged with e-parliament issues either "annually" or "only when an issue arises" (see Figure 4.2). This reflects the reality of the time constraints of those in leadership positions. However, with competent senior managers, this does not mean less effective decision making or weak guidance if the political and institutional support is felt throughout the organization.

Figure 4.1: Level of engagement of political leaders of the parliament in ICT



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 4; 134 respondents)

Figure 4.2: Frequency of political engagement with the issue of ICT in parliament

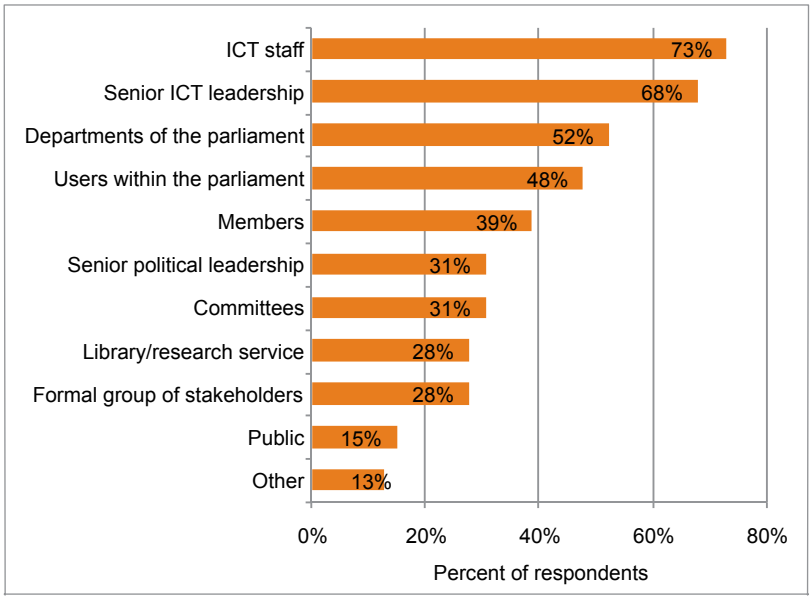


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 5; 134 respondents)

Involvement of stakeholders in proposing ideas and setting goals and objectives

In many parliaments ideas and proposals for technology goals and projects come from a range of officials, staff, and users. ICT staff and senior ICT leadership are mentioned in 73% and 68% of parliaments respectively. Others involved include departments of the parliament (52% of parliaments), users (48%), and members (39%). Senior political leadership of the parliament is mentioned by 31% of parliaments (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Source of ideas and proposals for ICT goals and projects



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 3; 134 respondents)

While it is understandable that many legislatures would seek the views of ICT leadership and staff, given their knowledge of the field and the increasing complexity of technology, it appears encouraging, but certainly not fully satisfactory, that departments and users are mentioned by about half of parliaments.

It is of some concern that members are mentioned as contributing ideas by only 39% of parliaments. In the 2009:2007 Compare Group[2] the percentage of parliaments reporting that members contribute ideas went from 47% in 2007 to 37% in 2009. The survey does not include any questions that might help to explain this decrease. Chapter 2 noted that the challenge in using ICT for communication reported by the most parliaments was that members were not familiar with the technology. At the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, a number of participants cited the need of members for training in the use of technology.[3] On the other hand, some members are increasingly knowledgeable about technology and demand more from their parliament's administration. A variety of conflicting factors are at work in this instance but the effective management of ICT in a legislature requires being able to address members at both ends of the knowledge spectrum and with very different sets of requirements.

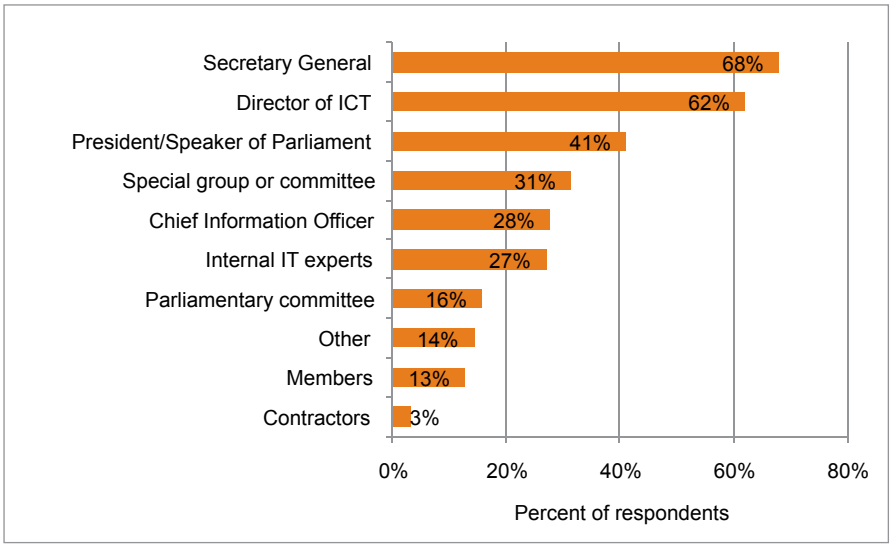
Although ideas for ICT come from many individuals and groups, the lead responsibility in most parliaments for translating the policy directives into specific goals and objectives rests with the

2 As described in the Introduction, the 2009:2007 Compare Group is a subgroup of parliaments that responded to both the 2009 and 2007 survey. This group consists of 87 chambers.

3 World e-Parliament Conference 2009, High-level panel "Connecting Parliaments and citizens: new technologies to foster openness, transparency and accountability".

Secretary General (68%) and the Director of ICT (62%). 41% of parliaments report that the President/Speaker is also involved. Others are mentioned by less than a third of parliaments (see Figure 4.4). Results from the 2009:2007 Compare Group indicate an increase in the number of parliaments reporting that these three officials bear this responsibility.

Figure 4.4: Establishment of goals and objectives for ICT in parliament/chamber



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 2; 134 respondents)

Box 4.2

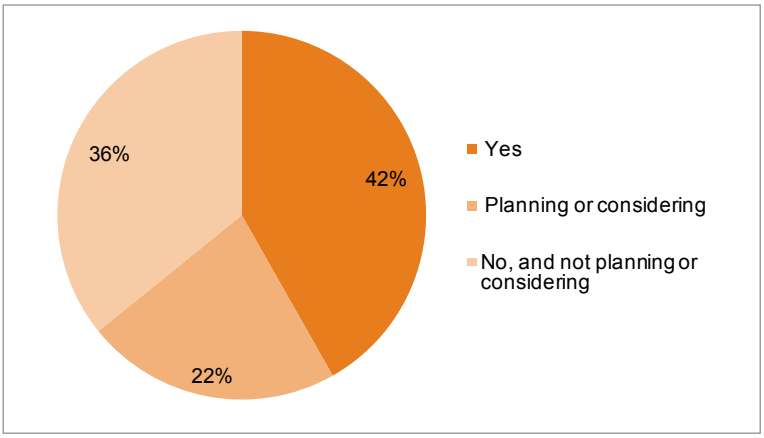
When creating a strategy, it is important to involve all players in the development and implementation of the vision, including parliamentarians, ICT Directors and other parliamentary officials.

Anders Forsberg, Secretary General of the Parliament of Sweden
Statement at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009

Oversight and management

While the Secretary General and the ICT Director have the primary management responsibility for technology in most parliaments, the 2009 survey found that over 60% of parliaments have established, or are considering establishing, a specially designated committee or group that provides direction and oversight for the use of ICT (see Figure 4.5). Staff are part of this group in 74% of parliaments and members in 51%.[4] Given the imperative for ICT to accommodate the needs of many users, such a mechanism can be an effective vehicle for channeling different views and requirements in an inclusive way. However, it would be preferable if a larger percentage of parliaments included members as part of such committees.

Figure 4.5: Special committee or group provides direction and oversight for the use of ICT in parliament

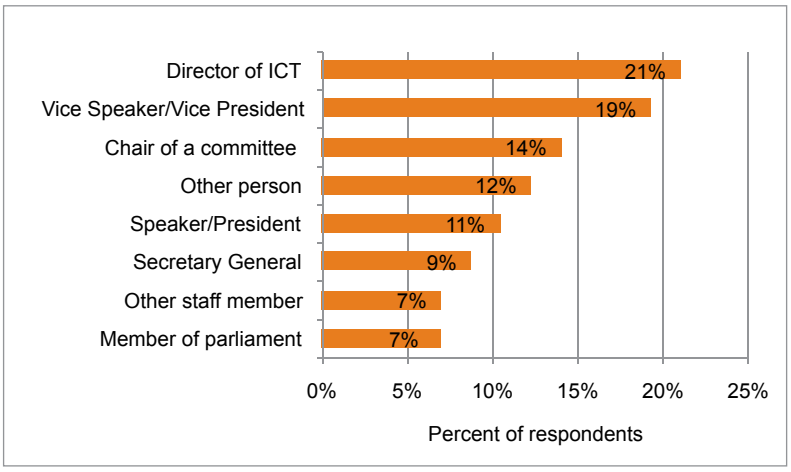


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 6; 134 respondents)

4 Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 7.

It is interesting to note the variety of people who chair these groups. As shown in Figure 4.6, no single individual or official predominates.

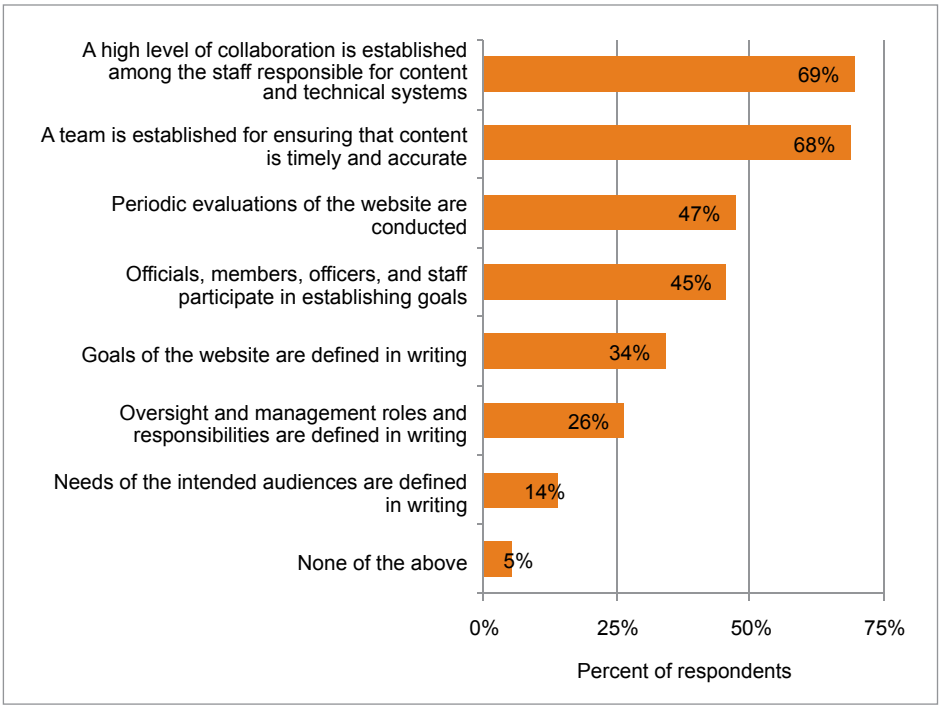
Figure 4.6: Chairs of specially designated committees for ICT



(Source: 2008 Survey, Section 1, Question 8; 57 resp. – 42% responding yes to Question 6)

This collaborative approach to overseeing ICT in general is reflected in the management of parliamentary websites. As shown in Figure 4.7, 45% of parliaments report that officials, members, officers, and staff participate in setting the goals for the website. In addition, 69% have established a high level of collaboration among the staff responsible for content and the staff responsible for technical systems; and 68% have established a team for ensuring that content is timely and accurate. These indicators of collaboration in the operation of websites are positive, and a good model for the operation of ICT throughout the legislature.

Figure 4.7: Activities that take place in the management of the parliamentary website



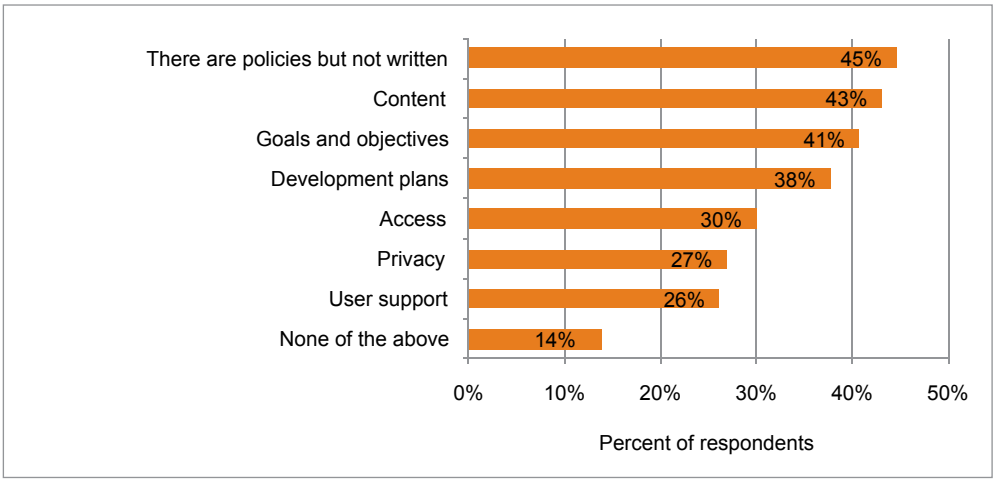
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 15; 130 respondents – 97% responding "yes" to Question 1)

Vision statements, strategic planning, and project management

A vision for ICT is a critical requirement, but to be most effective it needs to be a written policy statement so that all those who implement or use technology can understand the goals and objectives of the legislature. In the 2009 survey 43% of parliaments reported that they have a written vision statement for ICT; 40% stated that they are planning or considering one; 18% said they did not have one and were not planning or considering one.[5]

In the 2007 survey, 61% of parliaments stated that they had a vision statement, from which it may appear that a significant decrease took place in the past two years. However, as the question posed in 2007 did not specify a "written" statement, it is likely that more parliaments have established a vision by some means, even if it has not been formally written. For example, the 2009 survey asked whether there were written policies for the website in six areas (content, goals and objectives, development plans, access, privacy, and user support). While over 40% of parliaments reported having written policies for several of these areas, 45% of parliaments reported that they did have such policies, but they were not written (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8: Written policies for the parliamentary website



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 3; 130 respondents – 97% responding "yes" to Question 1)

While some may argue that a policy statement articulated by the President/Speaker is sufficient to delineate the vision of the institution, the reality is that Presidents/Speakers can change and interpretations of verbal statements can shift over time and be understood in different ways by different individuals. In some parliaments, the President/Speaker's term is limited and there may be a reluctance to commit to a vision that could be short lived. This constraint does not obviate the importance of an agreed vision; in some cases it makes it even more important. Visions that can change in a short period of time make it difficult to manage the long term investment that ICT require.

In other cases, an unwritten vision statement may be seen as politically more flexible and therefore useful when there is disagreement over goals and priorities. Nevertheless, such disagreements must be resolved before there can be adequate planning and allocation of resources for technology.

5 Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 9. These percentages add to more than 100% because of rounding.

59% of parliaments report that they have a strategic plan with goals, objectives, and timetables for ICT.[6] A data analysis using the 2009:2007 Compare Group indicates that there has been a decline over the past two years as in 2007 75% of parliaments possessed a strategic plan while in 2009 the number decreases to 64%. In 2007 and 2009 over 80% of those who do have a strategic plan reported that it was regularly updated.[7] In a question newly introduced in the 2009 survey, 61% of parliaments reported that they had established criteria to measure the success of the plan.[8] In a related finding, 47% indicated that they conduct periodic evaluations of the parliamentary website.[9] Taken together these findings suggest that in parliaments in which it is utilized (approximately 60%), strategic planning is well managed by most; however, it needs to be employed on an urgent basis in many more parliaments.

40% of parliaments reported that they employ the methodology of project management for ICT initiatives; another 40% reported that they are planning or considering it. While this is substantially less than the 66% who said they use project management in 2007, that survey did not include the option of "planning or considering". The percentages from 2009 are probably a more accurate reflection of the situation in parliaments.

Staffing

The 2009 survey sought to compare the number of users of ICT in parliament (actual or potential) with the number of ICT staff available to support them. Users were defined as members or staff, either internal or external (contractors or consultants). Figure 4.9 shows the ratio of staff to users for four different groups, based on the number of users. As this Figure illustrates, the ratio staff to users tends to get smaller as the number of users increases. That is, the more users, the fewer the number of staff there are to support them. This finding reflects the economy of scale that one would expect to find for technology. For example, the number of staff needed to develop and maintain a website does not increase in direct proportion to the number of people who use that site, although the number of staff needed to install and maintain PCs to access the site will increase. On the other hand, there is a certain minimum number of staff needed to maintain basic ICT services, which is reflected in the higher staff to user ratios in parliaments with fewer users.

Figure 4.9: Ratio of ICT staff to users

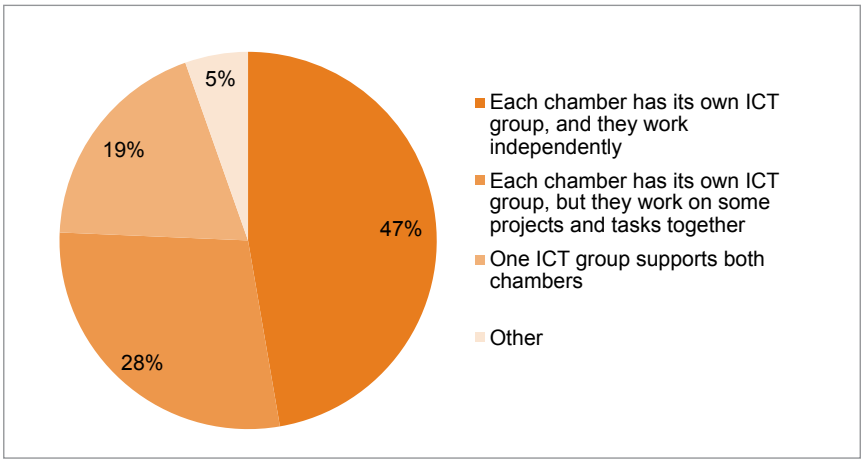
Number of Users	Average number of users	Average number of ICT staff	Ratio of staff to users
Less than 300 users	258	20	1:8
300-500 users	390	28	1:14
500-1100 users	818	45	1:18
More than 1100 users	3219	113	1:29

(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Questions 14 and 15; 134 respondents)

Figure 4.10 shows the degree to which ICT staff are shared between chambers in bicameral parliaments. Even though there may be legal, political, and constitutional reasons for having separate groups that do not work together in bicameral systems, these figures imply that there are missed opportunities for collaboration and shared costs for almost half of the bicameral parliaments that responded to the survey.

6 Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 10.
7 Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 11.
8 Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 12.
9 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 15.

Figure 4.10: Provision of ICT support for bicameral parliaments



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 1; 74 respondents)

Funding

Obtaining valid data on ICT budgets presented a number of challenges in the 2009 survey as it did for the 2007 survey. Some respondents did not include all costs for the parliament or for ICT and some treated staff costs differently. Nevertheless, to present meaningful results it was possible to use the information provided by 112 chambers, which represents a substantial increase over the 56 chamber used in the 2007 survey.

Interestingly, the average and median figures for ICT budgets as a percentage of the total budget of the chambers were almost the same in 2009 (4.3% and 2.6% respectively) as they were in 2007 (4.4% and 2.8%).[10]

There is a wide difference, however, between the high and low end of the range of responses. 25% reported that the ICT budget was less than 1% of the total budget for parliament, while 25% reported that it was 5% or more. This represents a very wide range that has obvious impacts on the capacity of many parliaments to initiate and sustain the use of technology.

As challenging as it can be to fund ICT, the results from the 2009 survey suggest that the level of financial support in parliaments may not be all that different from some private sector organizations. For example, a recent survey by Ziff Davis, the publisher of CIO Insight[11] revealed that in 2010 approximately 58% of IT departments had budgets of less than 3% of corporate revenue. While corporate revenue is higher than public funding would be, the comparison is still informative.

10 Sources: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 17 and Survey 2007, Section 2, Questions 19 and 20.
11 See http://www.cioinsight.com.

SUMMARY

An institutional commitment to develop an explicit e-parliament vision is a necessary first step in using ICT to help a parliament achieve its aspirations for transparency, accountability, accessibility, and better communication with the electorate. E-parliament builds on the pillars of active engagement, a clear vision, broad based management and adequate resources. The highest political leaders of the parliament need to be involved in establishing the vision and setting the goals for ICT in the legislature. The vision should be translated into a policy statement so that it can be widely shared and supported. While direct management can be delegated to the Secretary General and the Director of ICT, the President or Speaker must continuously affirm the objectives of the parliament in its use of technology. Ideas and proposals for using ICT to enhance the work of the plenary, committees, members, the secretariat and other users, should be widely encouraged. In support of this objective, a specially designated committee or group can provide direction and oversight to help ensure that ICT address the parliament's most important needs and supports its goals for transparency, accessibility, and efficiency. Effective management also requires the use of specific tools, techniques, and documents. A strategic plan needs to be drafted in concert with the principles enunciated in the vision and regularly updated on the basis of established criteria; project management techniques must be employed to ensure the timely completion of initiatives within staff capabilities and allotted financial resources.

In light of these requirements, some of the findings from the 2009 Survey of ICT in Parliaments showed that many chambers are doing well, while other findings underscored the need for substantial improvements on a world-wide basis. 41% of parliaments reported that political leaders at the level of the President/Speaker were very highly or highly engaged in ICT, but 23% reported that they were engaged very little or not at all. To some extent the establishment of a special committee or group to provide oversight and direction, along with leadership by the Secretary General and the Director of ICT, can compensate for absence of involvement at the top. It is positive that over 60% of parliaments have established such groups and that the Secretary General and the Director of ICT establish goals and objectives in 68% and 60% of parliaments respectively. In addition, a number of parliaments seek ideas and proposals for the use of ICT from a wide range of users. Unfortunately, fewer than 50% of parliaments receive ideas from those other than the staff and leaders of ICT. Members are reported to be a source of proposals in less that 40% of parliaments.

The availability of a written vision statement in only 43% of parliaments is a significant concern. While many would state that they do possess a vision, the fact that it cannot be published means that it cannot be widely shared and known. It also means that it will be more challenging to determine which technology initiatives should have the highest priority. A higher percentage of parliaments state that they have a strategic plan that is regularly updated, although this is lower than the percentage of legislatures that reported having plans in 2007. The conclusion is that strategic planning appears to be well managed by the parliaments that exercise it, although many more parliaments still need to implement it.

The size of the staff (internal and external) depends in part on the number of users (members + staff), although the ratio of staff to users decreases as the number of users grows. This is a natural result of the economies of scale that can be achieved through technology. The ratio of staff to users based on the mean is reported to be approximately 1:22; based on the median, it is approximately 1:33.

The reported funding for ICT as a percentage of the total budget for the entire parliament averages just above 4%. The range is from less that 1% to 5% or more among those with the lowest and highest percentages. Additional research will be required to provide a more detailed and more precise picture of the funding for technology in parliament. As with staffing, more analysis will also be needed to determine an optimum range for parliaments, which will likely vary according to the types of technologies implemented.

Chapter 5
Systems and standards for parliamentary documents

Systems for managing documentation in digital formats can make parliamentary operations efficient and help increase the transparency of the institution. These systems are evolving to encompass the entire lifecycle of documents from creation through management, dissemination, and long term preservation. Within these phases documents may be edited and amended by various "authors"; exchanged with different organizations and systems; transformed, for purposes such as searching; validated and certified via digital signatures; rendered in various modes, including printing on paper and online displays; and integrated with other documents.

As described in Chapter 3, the nature of what can be considered parliamentary documentation is also expanding. Audio and video formats are increasingly available, enriching and diversifying the record of parliamentary activities. Because of the current state of the technology, most parliaments must manage written and audio/video records through parallel but separate systems. However, some progress is being made in integrating these different formats at a basic level. For example, 12% of parliaments report that they have a retrieval engine that can link the results from searches of documentation to relevant audio and video records.[1] Since these developments are at an early stage and because documents remain the primary and most frequently used records of parliaments, this chapter focuses on the technologies for creating and maintaining those in written formats.

Standards for documents – especially open standards for tagging the elements of records so that they can be interpreted properly by computers for editing, rendering, searching, exchanging, and preserving – are vital. Documents prepared in proprietary formats, that is formats that can only be used with particular software or specific hardware, constrain the options available for managing them, limit the capacity for meeting future requirements, and may cost more to maintain. However, there is no doubt that implementing open standards such as those based on XML is challenging for most parliaments, especially because these standards can be complex to initiate and require knowledgeable staff who are trained in their use. Collaborative efforts among parliaments can offer a number of benefits in addressing these challenges.

The preservation of the written parliamentary record in digital format poses its own set of issues especially because of the need for effective policies, sound management practices, and the capacity to accommodate constantly evolving technologies. Different organizations within a parliament may have overlapping responsibilities for managing, distributing, and preserving its records, and it can sometimes be difficult to reconcile competing mandates. Potential conflicts may need to be resolved by the Secretary General or occasionally by higher authorities or bodies.

1 Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 8.

To develop systems, to implement open standards, and to establish policies governing parliamentary documents require a multi-year effort supported by the leadership of the parliament. Short-term and long-term planning must be undertaken to acquire the needed technical skills and infrastructure, and cooperation from users must be secured, particularly from those in the parliamentary administration whose work procedures will change. In addition, one of the most fundamental requirements is a culture that recognizes the importance of and is dedicated to managing its documents. The experiences of many parliaments show that it is important not to underestimate the time, commitment and dedication needed to build and sustain effective systems for creating and managing written records of the parliament. The long-term benefits, however, can be substantial.

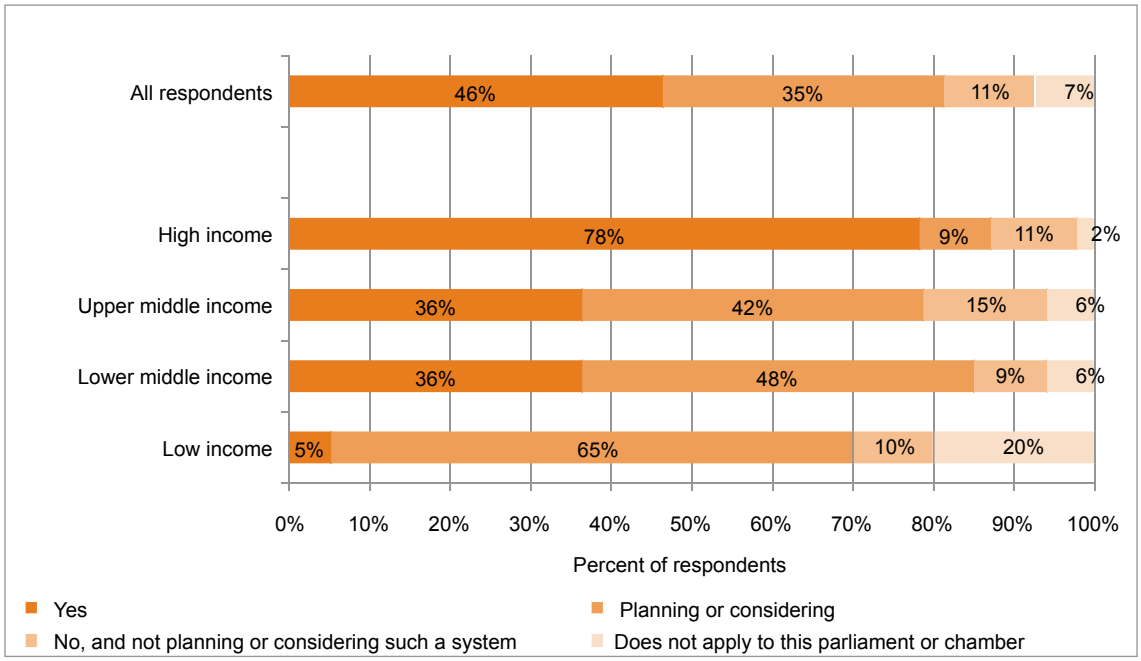
RESULTS AND FINDINGS FROM THE 2009 SURVEY

The 2009 Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments focused on several components of standards and systems for parliamentary documents: 1) document management systems for proposed legislation; 2) document management systems for other types of documents, such as plenary and committee reports; 3) the use of XML; and, 4) digital preservation programmes.

Document management systems for bills

46% of all parliaments reported that they have a document management system (DMS) for the text of bills as they move through the legislative process. As in 2007, the income level of the country is highly correlated with whether a parliament has a system (see Figure 5.1). Only 5% of parliaments in countries in the low income group have a DMS compared to 78% of parliaments in countries in the high income group.

Figure 5.1: Parliaments with systems for managing the text of bills, by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 1; 134 respondents)

Figure 5.2: DMS for bills - 2009:2007 Compare Group

DMS for Bills	2009	2007	Diff.
Yes	48%	46%	2%
Planning or considering	30%	37%	-7%
No, and not planning or considering	14%	11%	3%
Does not apply	8%	6%	2%

(Sources: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 1; Survey 2007, Section 3, Question 1; 87 respondents)

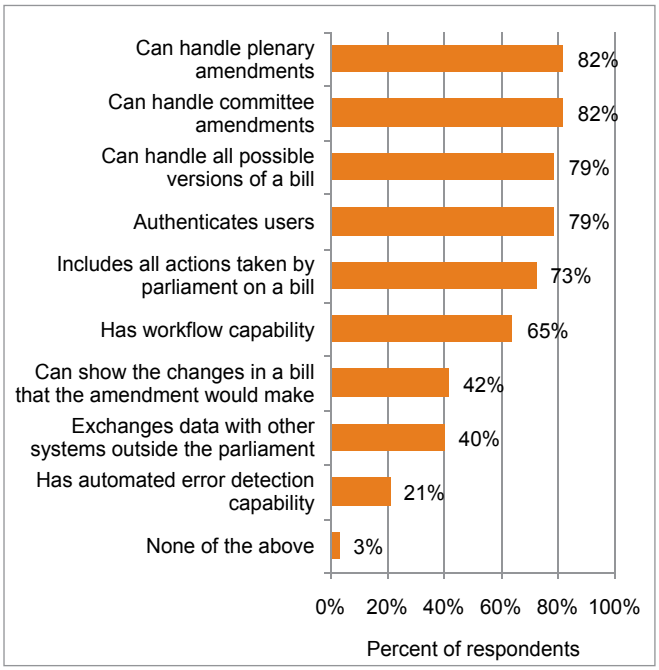
As shown in Figure 5.2, the analysis of the responses of the 2009:2007 Compare Group indicates a very small increase since 2007, from 46% to 48%. However, fewer parliaments are planning or considering a system than in 2007 (-7%), and more are not planning or considering a system (3%).

There are several possible explanations for the little progress in the implementation of document management systems for proposed legislation evidenced by data. As it takes time to build systems that meet complex requirements such as managing bills, it may take several more years before the base numbers first documented in 2007 begin to improve. Systems such as these can also require changes in procedures which many parliaments may find difficult to adopt or accept. Also, managing legislative documents may not be considered as central to the work of some parliaments in comparison with other functions, as for example conducting plenary sessions or carrying out oversight of the government. Future surveys may need to determine the relative weight of this activity compared to other legal responsibilities and correlate it with the implementation of a DMS.

As highlighted in the *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, systems for managing bills must have a number of characteristics to be responsive to the needs of the members and staff of parliaments. The survey focused on several of these, including:

- *Workflow.* This allows bills to be moved automatically and smoothly among the members, officers and organizational units responsible for preparing and distributing them. Workflow also includes the ability to control versions so that authorized changes by one person or office are not overwritten by another.
- *Accommodations of all versions of bills.* It is important that all versions of proposed bills be introduced in the system as soon as possible. These include preliminary versions that are under active consideration for presentation to the body; versions that are considered and reported by committees, along with committee amendments if they are part of the process; versions considered and voted upon in plenary sessions, along with amendments considered in plenary; and versions sent from the legislature to the executive.
- *Exchange and integration of documents and information.* To have the complete legislative history of an act, it is essential that a bill system be able to integrate relevant documents and information related to a specific measure, such as amendments, plenary votes, status steps, and committee reports and activities, along with documents from other chambers, the government, or the judiciary.
- *Accommodation of bills with special formats.* Some types of bills, such as those dealing with the budget, may have particular requirements that affect their presentation online and in paper. A bill system must accommodate these requirements.
- *Authentication of users.* This is a crucial security procedure for ensuring the accuracy and authoritativeness of the text of the bill. There are various ways to implement authentication and the most secure systems may require both a fixed password and a constantly changing password or a physical token.

Figure 5.3: Features of DMS for bills

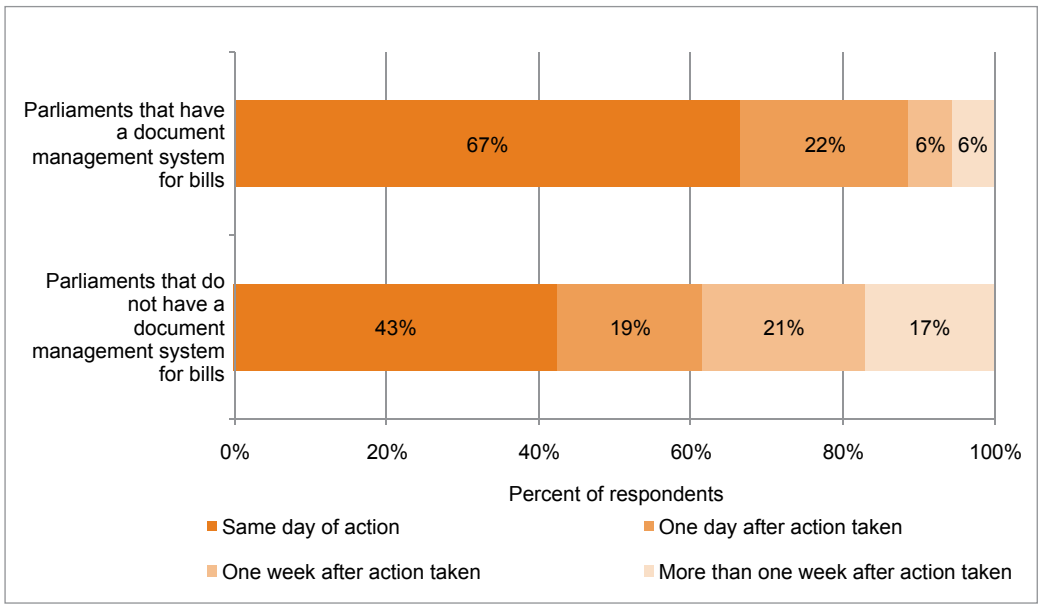


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 2; 62 respondents – 46% responding "yes" to Question 1)

For those parliaments that have deployed a DMS for bills, Figure 5.3 shows their capabilities. Well over 75% of parliaments have four of the nine features listed in the figure and two thirds have six of the nine. The features listed by less than half of all parliaments are among the most difficult to implement. One conclusion is that while there has been little increase in the number of parliaments using document management systems, those that are in place have many of the important functions that enhance their usefulness.

One of the values of document management systems is that they enable parliaments to make proposed legislation available sooner. Figure 5.4 analyzes the timeframe within which bills are made available in parliaments that have and do not have a DMS. 90% of parliaments that have a DMS make bills available on the same day or one day after action, but only 62% of those that do not have a DMS meet this criterion.

Figure 5.4: Timeliness of availability of bills by parliaments with and without a DMS

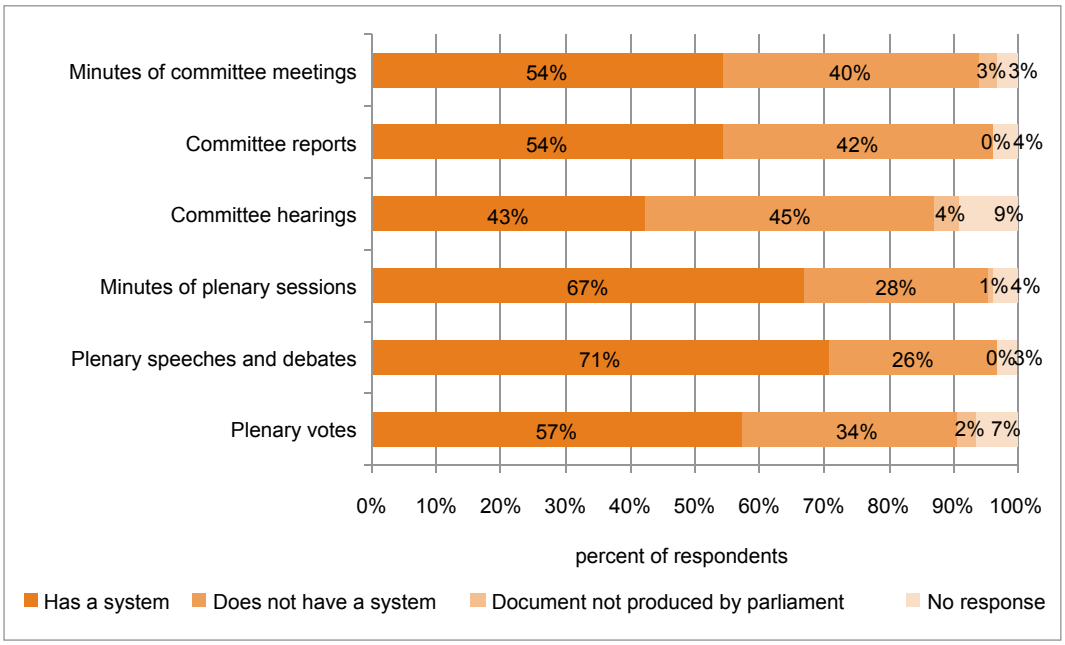


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 1 and Section 5, Question 7b; 101 respondents)

Document management systems for other documents

More parliaments have systems for managing committee and plenary documents than they do for managing bills and amendments (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: DMS for committee and plenary documents



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 5; 133 respondents)

The wording and structure of the questions in the 2007 survey were sufficiently different to preclude an exact comparison with earlier findings. However, it is useful to note the percentage of all parliaments that acknowledged having a system for each of these documents in the two surveys. The results shown in Figure 5.6 indicate that in both years, with the exception of committee hearings, more than half of all parliaments reported that they have such systems. While differences in the surveys prevent us from concluding that there has been an actual increase in the last two years, it is reasonable to characterize the relatively large percentages for some documents such as plenary minutes (67%) and plenary speeches and debates (71%) as positive findings.

Figure 5.6: Percentage of all parliaments with DMS for managing other documents

Have a DMS for managing:	2009	2007
Committee meeting minutes	54%	52%
Committee reports	54%	47%
Committee hearings	43%	42%
Plenary minutes	67%	50%
Plenary speeches and debates	71%	59%
Plenary votes	57%	52%

(Sources: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 5; 133 respondents; Survey 2007, Section 4, Questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11)

The 2009 percentages of those that have a DMS for these documents are even higher if one excludes from the group those that said the document is not produced by the parliament or gave no response. The percentages based only on parliaments producing the documents are shown in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7: Parliaments producing each document with DMS

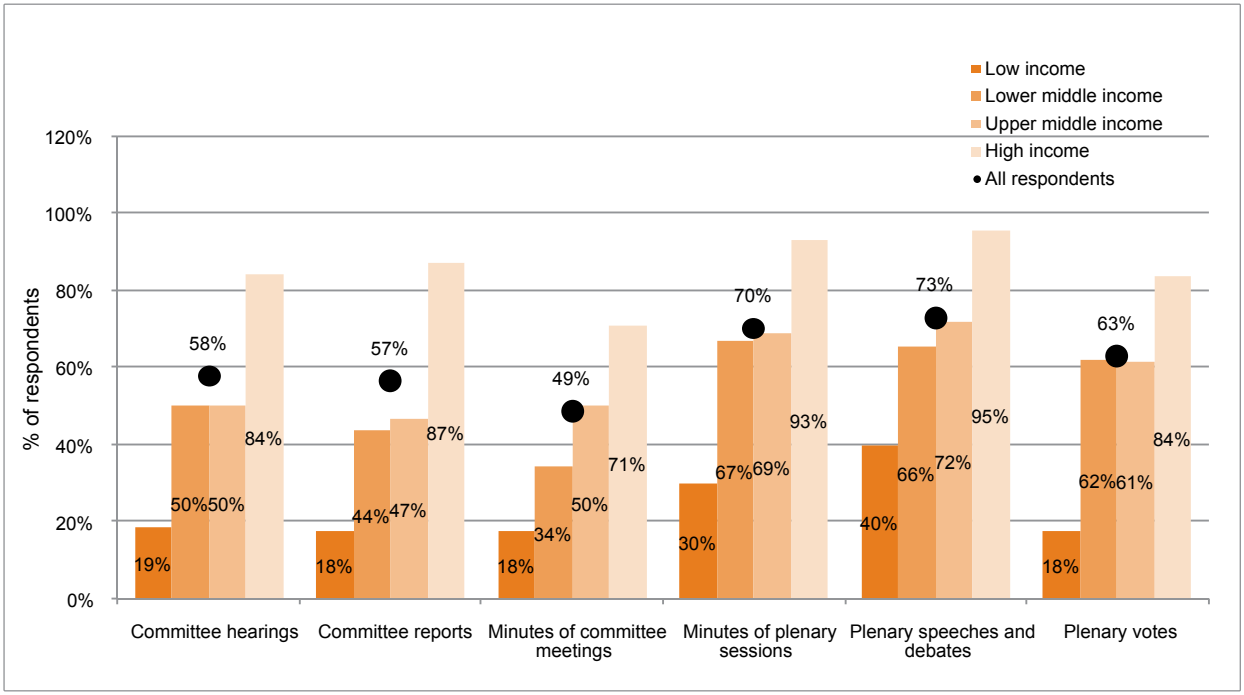
Have a DMS for managing:	2009	Respondents
Committee meeting minutes	57%	125
Committee reports	56%	128
Committee hearings	49%	117
Plenary minutes	71%	126
Plenary speeches and debates	73%	129
Plenary votes	63%	121

(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 5; respondents vary as shown)

In general, these are positive findings, especially in light of the lower percentage of parliaments that have systems for managing bills. It also adds weight to the interpretation that the lower percentages of DMS for bills is caused by the different levels of responsibility for proposed legislation among assemblies, with some of them not giving it as high a priority. Chambers that do not have a major role in considering proposed legislation are without one of the most important means for affecting public policy. A document management system for bills will not address this issue, but for legislatures that do have legislative responsibilities, it is a critical tool.

As with bills, the income level of the country associates significantly with the deployment of a system for managing committee and plenary documents. For countries in the low income group the percentage of parliaments that have a DMS is less than 20% for four of the six types of documents considered (see Figure 5.8). Only for plenary minutes (30%) and plenary speeches and debates (40%) do the percentages rise above a fifth of parliaments in this income group.

Figure 5.8: Parliaments with DMS for committee and plenary documents, average by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 5)

Participants at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009 stressed that 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 ensuring a high quality and sustainable documentation process. One such possibility is the *Bungeni* Parliamentary and Legislative Information System being developed as part of the *Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan*, a project of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs funded by the Italian Development Cooperation (see Box 5.1)

Box 5.1

Bungeni: Parliamentary and Legislative Information System

Bungeni is an open source Parliamentary and Legislative Information System that aims to make parliaments more open and accessible to citizens, virtually allowing them "inside parliament", or "bungeni" in Swahili.

The Bungeni system covers the entire document life-cycle of parliamentary documents from drafting to publication and supports the whole range of parliamentary documents: questions, motions, bills, tabled documents, etc. It meets typical legislative document archival requirements by recording multiple versions of a document at various points in time through various stages of the parliamentary process.

Bungeni is made up of three components:

- **Bungeni Portal***: the web site that the public see with all the information about the parliament and the parliamentary activities. Bungeni Portal navigation has been designed with usability in mind and has been sampled from a variety of parliamentary websites. It covers topics and issues that are typically present in parliamentary websites. It also allows citizens to post comments, suggest amendments and track items that may be of interest to them.*
- **Bungeni MembersSpace:** *a website where members of parliament have the opportunity to directly communicate with citizens and highlight their own activities. Members can create their own content which can be in the form of blogs, events, documents to download, links, and news. Citizens may be allowed by members to access their space and to comment, post a document for comment or take part in polls or surveys to gauge the mood of citizens on specific issues.*
- **Bungeni Workspace:** *is for registered parliament users, such as members of parliament, staff of the Secretary General's and Speaker's offices and committees' clerks. This is the space where all the content of Bungeni Portal and Bungeni MembersSpace is generated. Accessing Bungeni Workspace requires a user to authenticate and only authorised users have access to it. Different users have different workspaces that suit their roles, responsibilities and requirements.*

Bungeni is available in several languages (English, French, Portuguese, and Swahili) and, being fully internationalised, can be translated into others.

The Bungeni pre-deployment phase began in February 2010 with testing by 14 parliaments. Features tuning and localisation following feedback from these parliaments will take place in the second quarter of 2010. The deployment is foreseen in the third quarter of 2010.

The deployment in parliaments will coincide with the progressive involvement of developers from those institutions, as well as from the wider open source community, in supporting the localisation and development of additional features, under the coordination of the Bungeni Development Team.

For more information: http://www.bungeni.org

Despite constructive and hopeful initiatives such as *Bungeni*, the findings from the survey underscore that there is still a large percentage of parliaments that do not have a document management system for bills or for other types of documents. This problem is especially severe for parliaments in low income countries. These findings are worrisome because they mean that the capabilities of legislatures to manage the parliamentary process effectively and to provide accurate and current documentation to the electorate are reduced.

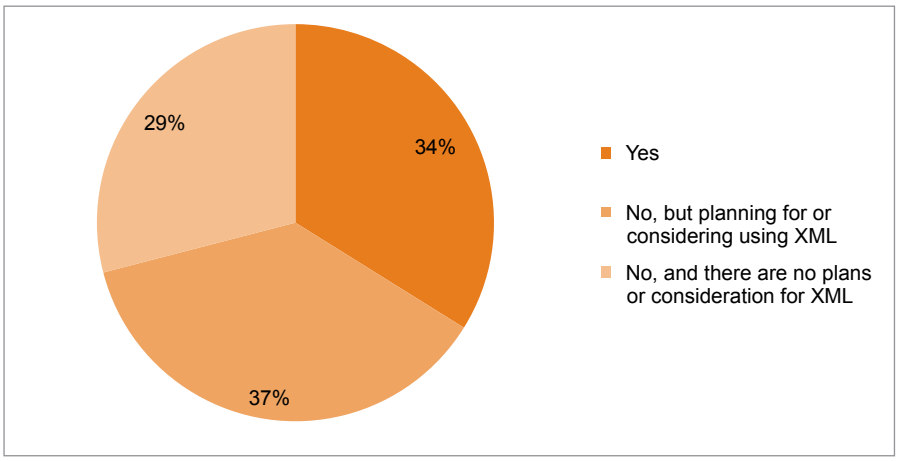
Use of XML

As outlined in the 2008 edition of this Report, there are a number of important advantages to the use of open standards in parliaments:

- *Exchange of documents.* Open standards make it easier to share documents between individuals and organizations, even if they use different software for editing and managing documents. They can facilitate such exchanges between departments within a parliament, with another chamber, between the parliament and the government, with citizens and civil society organizations, and with legislative bodies and organizations in other countries.
- *Search.* Search engines can provide more accurate results and users can formulate more precise queries if data is tagged for its specific content. Open standards permit documents to be indexed with a variety of search engines, thereby giving legislatures choices in the selection of a technology.
- *Linking among documents.* Legislative documents are highly interrelated. Open standards allow links among documents to be created automatically and even have the potential, depending on the depth of tagging, to support linking between elements within documents. For example, a section of a proposed bill could be automatically linked to the portion of an existing law that it would amend.
- *Multiple forms of output.* A source document tagged with an open standard could be rendered into different appearances such as for an online website, a paper copy, or a version modified to be incorporated into another document. XML can also be used to produce versions which could be easier for persons with disabilities to access by supporting, for example, large type fonts or audio output.
- *Consistency in formatting.* Tagging standards can be used to encourage or even enforce proper formatting so that members and others who prepare the texts do not have to know the exact conventions used when they draft bills or amendments.
- *Ease of preparation.* Open standards can be demanding to use but once understood they can ease the effort required to prepare a bill or amendment by guiding the drafter through the required formatting steps.
- *Preservation.* One of the most important uses of open standards is to ensure the long-term preservation of documents. Proprietary systems change constantly in response to market pressures for new capabilities. As these systems are enhanced, they often reach a point where they cannot be used to access documents prepared using older versions of the same software. Over time this has the potential for making it difficult, if not impossible, to access digital documents.
- *Access for citizens.* The problem of long-term preservation becomes most acute in the context of ensuring permanent access for citizens to legislative documents. Documents in digital formats that are accessible today may become inaccessible over time because previous media, software, and proprietary formats are no longer supported. And this could prevent public institutions from guaranteeing that archived public records in digital formats will remain accessible in the future.

The survey results suggest that the percentage of all parliaments that have implemented or are planning or considering implementing XML for bills has not increased significantly in the last two years (see Figure 5.9). 34% of those that have a system for managing bills currently use XML. This represents 16% of the 134 parliaments responding to the 2009 survey. The comparable figure for the 2007 survey was 12%. While 16% represents a 30% increase over 12%, it still means that fewer than 20% of parliaments are using XML in document management systems for bills.

Figure 5.9: Use of XML for bills



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 3; 62 respondents – 46% responding "yes" to Question 1)

This lack of significant progress is seen even more clearly in the results from the 2009:2007 Compare Group which show that those using XML and those planning or considering the use of XML actually declined (see Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10: Parliaments using XML for bills - 2009:2007 Compare Group

Use XML for Bills	2009	2007	Diff.
Yes	31%	33%	-2%
No, but planning or considering	36%	44%	-8%
No, and not planning or considering	33%	23%	10%

(Sources: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 3; Survey 2007, Section 5, Question 2)

The situation is much the same for other parliamentary documents. Figure 5.11 shows the percentages of parliaments with systems that use XML as the document standard in 2009 and 2007. The differences in the structure of the questions prevent a more precise assessment of changes over time using the 2009:2007 Compare Group, but the general conclusion that emerges from these percentages is that relatively few parliaments have implemented an open standard for their documents.

Figure 5.11: Parliaments with a DMS using XML in all documents

DMS using XML standard for:	2009: Yes	2007: Yes	Diff.
Bills	34%	30%	+4%
Committee meeting minutes	14%	14%	0%
Committee reports	18%	19%	-1%
Committee hearings	11%	18%	-7%
Plenary minutes	19%	14%	+5%
Plenary speeches	20%	21%	-1%
Plenary votes	17%	15%	+2%

(Sources: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 6; Survey 2007, Sections 3 and 4)

Implementation of XML poses a number of challenges. In the 2009 survey, parliaments using XML, or that have tried to use it, were asked which problems they had experienced. Figure 5.12 summarizes responses from two groups: those currently using XML[2] (34 parliaments) and all those that identified at least one challenge on the list (59 parliaments). This latter group includes parliaments in the first group and those that are not currently using XML but have faced barriers in trying to implement it.

Figure 5.12: Challenges in using XML

Challenges	Parliaments that identified at least one challenge (Total=59)	Parliaments currently using XML (Total=34)
Lack of staff knowledge and training	59%	26%
Lack of financial resources	44%	15%
Finding authoring / editing software	41%	26%
Complexity of using XML	34%	26%
Difficulty in developing a DTD or schema	34%	26%
Lack of management support	24%	12%
User resistance	14%	12%
Other	7%	9%
None of the above	N/A	29%

(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 7; number of respondents varies by row and column)

Several findings contained in Figure 5.12 are particularly informative. For the 34 parliaments currently using XML there was a relatively even distribution among four challenges, all identified by at least a quarter of the respondents: lack of staff knowledge and training, finding software for authoring and editing, the complexity of using XML, and difficulty in developing a Document Type Definition (DTD)[3] or schema. It is interesting that the challenge checked by the most parliaments, however, was "None of the above".

For the 59 parliaments that identified at least one item (whether they are currently using XML or not), the challenge mentioned by the most parliaments was the lack of staff knowledge and training (59%). The other obstacles mentioned by the most parliaments were the lack of financial resources (44%) and finding authoring and editing software (41%). If legislatures currently using XML are removed from the combined group, the remaining 37 parliaments, which have presumably experienced challenges in trying to implement XML, cite the top two problems - staff knowledge and training and financial resources - even more frequently (70% and 57%, respectively).

There are a variety of ways to address these issues, all involving some form of cooperation among parliaments and the support of the international community. Because parliaments represent a relatively small market, commercial solutions are not always available or appropriate. Sharing knowledge and collaborating on initiatives can sometimes yield better results, especially for parliaments in developing countries. While primary responsibility for financial resources must always rest with the legislature itself, well formulated and managed startup support from outside organizations can have a significant effect, particularly for training staff and establishing initial schema. Distance learning can often help, particularly when it is difficult and expensive for

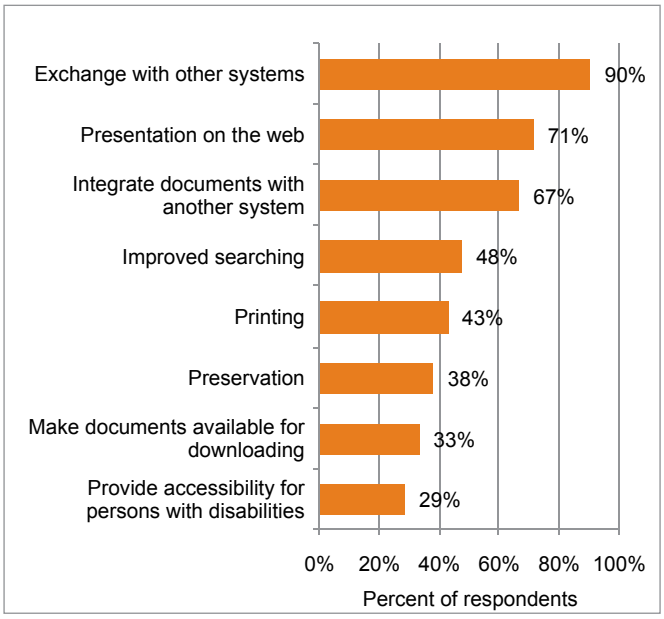
2 This group consists of those who said they are using XML for bills (Section 3, Question 3) and / or for other documents (Section 3, Question 5).

3 A Document Type Definition is an XML schema that defines the set and structure of XML markups contained in the document.

staff to leave their parliaments for extended periods. One such project being carried out by the Inter-American Development Bank with funding of the Italian Development Cooperation aims to provide an e-learning system for parliamentary staff in Latin America. Cooperative regional efforts can be useful for addressing problems such as the need for versions of software in appropriate language. Collaboration among those who share common legislative backgrounds can also be useful for dealing with DTDs and schemas that need to be adapted to particular traditions and procedures. Partnerships between parliaments can be valuable if they involve a legislature that has successfully implemented XML and one that is just beginning. Sustained mentoring of staff who are learning to use XML soon after they have had a basic introductory course can be highly beneficial. Both parliaments would need to agree on a plan for such support, including schedules, time commitment and responsiveness of the donating parliament, and the obligations of the receiving parliament.

It can be particularly helpful for parliaments to share examples of the benefits derived from XML. The 2009 survey provides a useful picture of some of these. Parliaments that are currently using XML were asked how it is being employed. The results, shown in Figure 5.13, highlight exchanging documents with other systems (90%), presenting documents on the web (71%), integrating documents with another system (67%), and improving searching (48%). Printing and preservation were also mentioned by 43% and 38% of parliaments respectively. So far only 29% are using XML to provide accessibility for persons with disabilities. This list illustrates both the range and the value of the goals that XML supports. Future objectives will likely include the rendering of parliamentary information on mobile communication devices, increased support for accessibility by persons with disabilities, and more effective integration with new web technologies. The important point is that open standards such as XML offer greater flexibility for meeting both current and future needs for parliamentary document systems.

Figure 5.13: Purposes for using XML

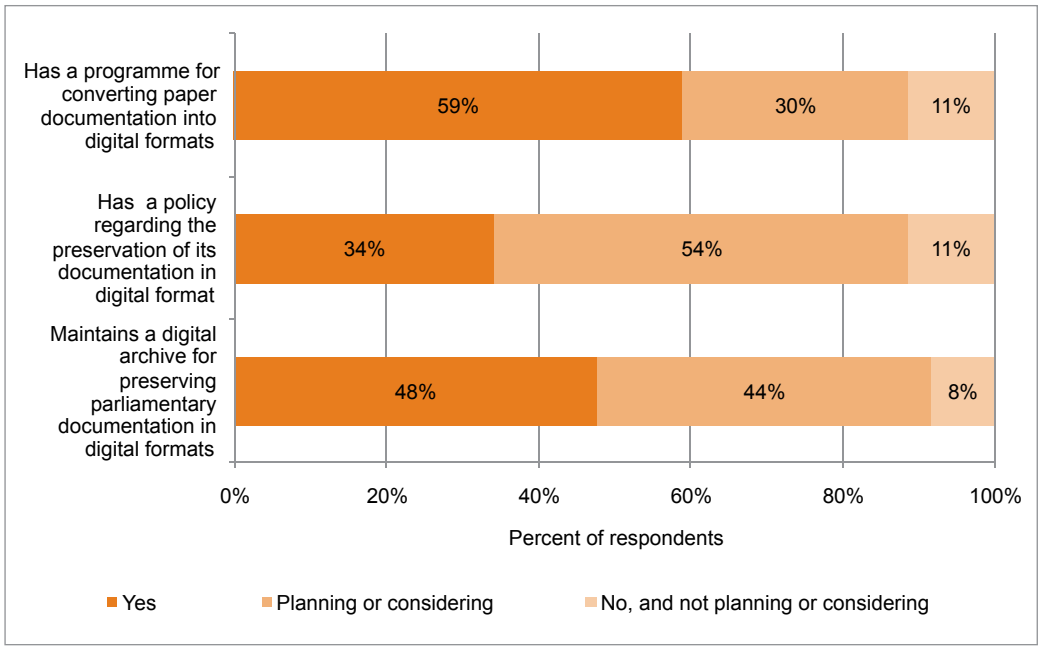


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 4; 21 respondents – 16% responding “yes” to Question 3)

Digital preservation programmes

The majority of parliaments (59%) have programmes for converting paper documentation into digital formats or are planning or considering them (30%). Some parliaments have also established or are considering establishing a policy for the preservation of their documentation in digital formats (34% and 54% respectively). Nearly half already maintain a digital archive (see Figure 5.14). Parliaments also reported that on average they have bills and plenary speeches in digital format for approximately half the number of years they have them available in any format.[4]

Figure 5.14: Preservation of digital documents



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Questions 9, 11 and 12; 134 respondents)

These findings suggest that many parliaments are making progress in ensuring the preservation of their digital records. However, substantial challenges lie ahead, especially as technology continues to evolve and as more parliaments move toward operations that are primarily paperless. Open standards such as XML can play an important role because they are less dependent on changes in the underlying hardware and application software. But for the near term, dual preservation modes – in paper and in digital format – are likely to be necessary. This is a particularly complex problem because a variety of people and bodies with complementary responsibilities, but sometimes conflicting goals, are usually involved in solving it, including archivists, technologists, and librarians.

4 Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Question 10.

DEVELOPMENT OF LEGISLATIVE OPEN DOCUMENT STANDARDS

Since the publication of the *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, which highlighted some notable efforts in the field of open document standards,[5] several parliaments have been involved in initiatives aiming at adopting open document standards. Three of these deserve mention in this Report in view of the progress made and their potential impact on other legislatures and systems.

Brazilian Legal and Legislative Information Portal (LexML Brazil)

Computer controlled legal and legislative information in Brazil was born in the 1970s. From then onwards, a series of different databases were developed by different government entities. Almost forty years later, the LexML Brazil portal was launched. Its purpose is to unify, organize and facilitate access to legislative and legal information made available in digital form by several bodies of the executive, legislative and judiciary branches, the Office of the Federal Solicitor General (AGU), and the Office of the General Prosecutor, at the federal, state, municipal and district levels.

The system was developed on the basis of the information already released to the general public, the adoption of an improved process of generation of new information, and the ongoing concern to preserve digital information in a centralized form and make it available to the general public in an efficient way.

It must be emphasized that this is a joint initiative of different participating bodies, under the leadership of the Federal Senate of Brazil, and the result of the political will of different actors. A network of technical staff, led by an Information Management Committee, was established to organize the legal and legislative information available in digital form from the three branches of government

Figure 5.15: Homepage of LexML

(Source: http://www.lexml.gov.br)

The LexML Brazil portal was officially launched on 30 June 2009, with an initial collection of 1.2 million documents from the Office of the Federal Solicitor General (AGU); the State Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais; the House of Representatives; the National Justice Board; the Superior Board of Labor Justice (CSJT); the Office of the Comptroller General (CGU); the National Press; the São Carlos Town Council (SP); the Office of the Federal Prosecutor-General; the Federal Senate; the Higher Court of Justice (STJ); the Supreme Federal Court (STF); the Brazilian Court of Audit (TCU); the Higher Labor Court (TST); and the Higher Electoral Court (TSE). As of February 2010, LexML Brazil collected more than 1.4 million documents.

5 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, [New York]: United Nations, 2008, pp.80-84 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

In its work, LexML Brazil was influenced by the *Norme in Rete*[6] project for persistent identifiers and by *Akoma Ntoso*[7] for XML schema specification.

The portal 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 institutions 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.

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 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.

XML at the European Parliament

The European Parliament's increasing role in the European Union law-making process has resulted in an increasing workload for the institution's members and officials, and in an increasing pressure on its working processes and information systems. The IT environment supporting the legislative process has grown increasingly complex and fragmented over time. In particular, the tools that support document and content management during legislative procedures are numerous, heterogeneous, functionally and technically limited, and insufficiently integrated.

The complexity and limitations of existing IT systems represent a growing risk and constraint for the efficiency and effectiveness of the European Parliament's legislative process. The e-Parliament Programme is the change programme that has been initiated to consolidate, streamline and strengthen the information systems supporting the EP's legislative process over a period of four years.

Legislative documents are currently managed on the basis of unstructured data. This makes the production of legislative content and documents difficult, time-consuming, inconsistent, and insufficiently flexible. Furthermore, these documents are stored in multiple repositories at different stages of the legislative process, which makes their tracking, location and retrieval challenging and conveys risks regarding their consistency across the legislative production chain. In addition, there is no common way of exchanging these documents across the different IT applications supporting the legislative process.

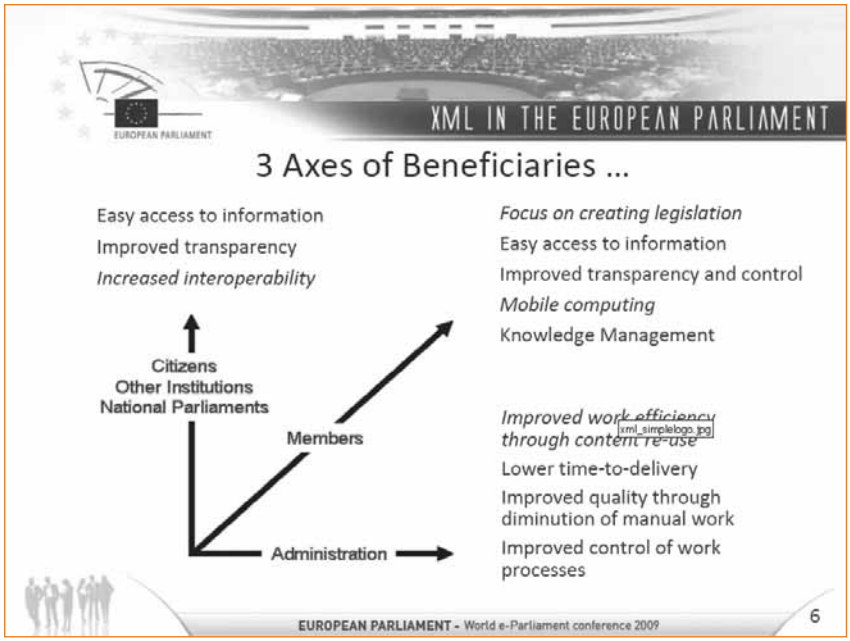
The e-Parliament Programme aims to remedy these shortcomings by supporting the transition from a legislative production chain managed on the basis of unstructured data (Word documents) to a legislative production chain managed on the basis of structured data (XML-tagged content).

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

6 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, [New York]: United Nations, 2008, p.80 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

7 http://www.akomantoso.org

Figure 5.16: Beneficiaries of XML in the European Parliament



(Source: Presentation by Flemming Sorensen, Head of Service, Directorate General for Innovation and Support, European Parliament, at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009)

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 the European 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, the European Parliament would eventually like to be able to exchange documents in XML format with the European Council, the European Commission, and national parliaments.

The European Parliament opted not to develop its own XML standard, but to comply with an existing standard, the *MetaLex/CEN* standard.[8] The e-Parliament Programme will derive its own XML schema from *Akoma Ntoso,*[9] 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.

Integration of Akoma Ntoso and MetaLex/CEN

Akoma Ntoso, a multi-country collaborative initiative of the "Africa i-Parliament Action Plan",[10] a project carried out by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is a set of common XML standards that allow the efficient exchange and reuse of parliamentary, legislative, and judiciary documents. It is a collection of technology-neutral XML machine-readable descriptions of official documents, such as legislation, debate records, and minutes, that enable

8 See description in the following section.
9 See description in the following section.
10 See http://www.parliaments.info, and http://www.akomantoso.org.

the addition of a descriptive structure (markup) to the content. *Akoma Ntoso* XML schema makes the structure and semantic components of digital documents accessible, thereby supporting the creation of high value information services.

MetaLex/CEN, a product of the European Committee for Standardization,[11] is an interchange format, a lowest common denominator for other standards, intended not to replace jurisdiction-specific standards and vendor-specific formats in the publications process but to impose a standardized view on legal documents for the purposes of information exchange and interoperability in the context of software development. To meet these requirements, *MetaLex/CEN* defines a mechanism for schema extension, adding metadata, cross-referencing, constructing compound documents, and a basic naming convention.

An initiative is being undertaken that could lead to the integration of these two standards into a single "Legal XML Family of Standards", for marking up legal information including legislative, parliamentary, and judiciary documents. It is being developed with the awareness that many national and local XML legal standards already exist or are being developed inside parliaments, governments, and academic and commercial organizations. On the other hand, many countries have not yet adopted XML in any official form for the publication of legal documents on the Web, nor for managing the archiving of these documents.

The initiative intends to achieve two specific purposes:

- To make available a meta-level XML language that provides the infrastructure for the interchange and the interoperability of heterogeneous legal and parliamentary documents that use different pre-existing legal XML standards. This is specifically made possible by *Metalex/CEN*.
- To make available a document-level XML language that provides the vocabulary, constraints, philosophy, and tools necessary to mark up legal and parliamentary documents of institutions for a wide range of uses and with a strong emphasis on structure and semantics beyond printing and on-screen presentation. This is specifically made possible by *Akoma Ntoso*.

11 The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) is a business facilitator in Europe, removing trade barriers for European industry and consumers. Its mission is to foster the European economy in global trading, the welfare of European citizens and the environment. Through its services its 31 national members work together to provide voluntary European standards and other technical specifications.

SUMMARY

Improving the efficiency of a parliament's operations and increasing its transparency and accessibility requires a system for managing documents in digital formats. The functions that these systems must support have grown to encompass a broad range of life cycle activities from creation through preservation. Audio and video formats are also becoming increasingly useful for recording and rendering the work of the parliament. While written records are still the dominant mode, the integration of these with records in different formats is likely to become important in the future as more parliaments adopt technologies such as webcasting of plenary sessions and committee meetings.

Although their implementation can be challenging, open standards for documents are an essential component of these systems. Standards are needed to provide the functionality and flexibility required by parliaments for diverse requirements such as searching, exchanging, integrating, rendering, and particularly for ensuring the long term availability of digital records at an affordable cost.

XML supports the values of transparency, accessibility, and accountability in a variety of ways. For example, it can help make documents more accessible to persons with disabilities or allow documents to be re-used in innovative and informative ways by civil society organizations.

Because of the complexity of their requirements and their impact on so many aspects of parliamentary operations, document management systems based on open standards take time, resources, and knowledgeable staff to build and sustain. They require strong management support and cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders. They also must be based upon a culture that recognizes the importance of, and is dedicated to managing its documents. Since they are a primary source of information for parliamentary websites, they demand a high degree of accuracy, reliability, and commitment from the leadership and the parliamentary administration, including ICT staff.

Findings from the 2009 survey indicate that there has been relatively little progress since 2007 in the number of parliaments that have systems for managing proposed legislation (from 43% in 2007 to 46% in 2009). The analysis of responses from the 2009:2007 Compare Group also suggests that there has been a decrease in the number of parliaments planning or considering such systems and an increase in the number of legislatures not planning or considering one at all. The percentage of parliaments that have systems for documents other than bills are more encouraging, reaching as high as 71% for plenary speeches and debates. Over half of all parliaments reported having systems for five of the six types of committee and plenary documents included in the 2009 survey. The lower percentage of parliaments having systems for bills may be due to their greater complexity or possibly to the fact that some parliaments may not have legislative responsibilities that make a DMS for bills a high priority.

The implementation of open document standards – XML specifically – has also lagged. 34% of parliaments that have a system for managing bills currently use XML. This represents 16% of the parliaments responding to the 2009 survey. The comparable figure for the 2007 survey was 12%. While 16% in 2009 represents a 30% increase over 2007, it is still well below a fifth of all parliaments that responded to the survey. The situation is much the same for other parliamentary records. Of those that have systems for managing a variety of committee and plenary documents,

the percentages of parliaments using XML range from 11% to 20%. Overall, only 25% of parliaments (34 of the 134 that responded to the survey) use XML for any parliamentary document.

The survey highlights some of the major challenges in implementing XML and reasons why progress has been so slow. These include lack of staff knowledge and training, lack of financial resources, and difficulties in finding adequate authoring and editing software. A number of these barriers can be overcome through various modalities of cooperation among parliaments and the support of the international community. Funds and activities targeted to training and supporting startup efforts can be helpful, as can distance learning systems, cooperative regional efforts to find or develop software that can be shared, and partnerships between a technically advanced parliament and a parliament in the early stages of its adoption of ICT. Equally valuable would be the sharing of experiences, through a variety of channels, which illustrates some of the ways to acquire and maximize the benefits offered by XML. These include improvements made possible by XML for exchanging, integrating, and searching documents, and for providing greater transparency through timely and enhanced presentation on parliamentary websites.

XML is at a crucial stage in its development in parliaments. Despite previously noted commitments to the goal of using this open standard, its 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. Significant and highly beneficial multi-national discussions and collaborative initiatives are taking place in Europe, Africa, and Latin America. They could have a positive impact in meeting a number of these challenges.

Finally, the findings suggest that many parliaments are making progress in the policies, management practices, and technologies needed to preserve digital documents. For the near term it is clear that dual systems for paper and digital formats are required, but as technologies evolve and parliaments adapt to them, more sophisticated technical solutions and open standards for all records, including those in written, audio, and video formats, will be required.

Chapter 6
Library and Research Services

Parliamentary library and research services have a special role to play in leveraging technologies to the benefit of their whole institution. They provide information and research support to all members and to committees. They understand how to integrate parliamentary documents to create a more complete and useful legislative record; and they can provide a more thorough understanding of the political, economic, and social context of a bill by linking it to resources outside the parliament. Libraries have always been able to carry out these tasks after action on a bill had been completed and to create a useful and comprehensive history of the legislation that could be placed in a collection or archive. Information and communication technologies now make it possible for this to happen much more quickly and to deliver this information to members and committees as they consider the bill. Web technology allows libraries to design portals that give easy access to the text of bills, committee reports, plenary debate and to documents from outside the parliament that are highly relevant to proposed legislation. Collections of resources and archives organized and maintained by libraries and research services can now be dynamic tools accessed on a daily basis by parliamentarians and the public to provide background and context to current policy debates.

However, only a few parliamentary library and research services have been able to develop and provide this advanced assistance. Many are small, resource constrained and lagging behind in their adoption of technology even as ICT move forward in other parts of the institution. The challenges that some libraries face include lack of recognition of the contribution that they can make to e-parliament, inadequate staff training and limited access to technology. Nevertheless, the knowledge embodied in librarianship remains available, and the opportunities are still there to leverage that discipline to the benefit of all. Acquiring, organizing and integrating parliamentary and external information sources in a way that enables the creation of a parliamentary knowledge base has major value for legislative institutions. A solid ICT infrastructure combined with skilled library and research staff can greatly enhance member access to key information resources whether the resources are from inside the legislature, from other parts of the government, or from a variety of outside sources.

Box 6.1

Parliament is an information intensive and information demanding institution. Therefore, acquiring, organizing, managing, distributing and preserving information is fundamental to its constitutional mandate. Parliament creates and requires information from many external sources including the government, the judiciary, civil society, experts, the media, academicians, international organizations and other legislative bodies and citizens. To ensure that both parliament and the citizens are properly informed in today's fast evolving environment it is increasingly important to have a comprehensive approach to identifying, managing, and providing access to critical resources that will enhance connectivity among citizens on the one hand and parliaments on the other. The use of ICT to enhance these processes cannot be over emphasized in the work of all parliaments. Consequently, there is the need to strive to find new technologies to foster openness, transparency and accountability between parliaments and the citizenry.

Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo, Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana
Presentation at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009

The findings from the 2007 survey underscored the actual and potential importance of libraries and research services in parliaments. That survey indicated that libraries and research staff in a number of legislatures were at the forefront of using ICT to perform their work, whether for acquiring documents and other information, conducting research, preparing reports, or disseminating information. They used the Internet as a major source of information for internal purposes and to provide information to the citizens. However, the report identified a number of weaknesses as well: for example, less than 30% of chambers reported having a policy for retaining digital resources permanently; less than half of chambers stated that they had an intranet that provided access to library and research services; and, only 30% of chambers had installed a system that supported collaboration among library and research staff.

Box 6.2

Parliamentary library and research services need technology to help understand and interact with customers; create new services for members to use; mobilize information and deliver it, digitize content and manage digital assets with the same care previously given to physical assets; and manage activities better and drive efficiency.

John Pullinger, Director General and Librarian of the Parliament of the United Kingdom
Presentation at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009

Today, parliamentary library and research services face a number of complex and challenging opportunities to use technology to improve their services. Examples include handling inquiries from, and interactions with, members of parliament and their assistants more efficiently; creating personalized alerting services delivered to a variety of devices including hand-held; building parliamentary information management services that are closely integrated with procedural applications as well as with Internet and intranet offerings; preserving parliamentary documentation in digital formats; and sharing knowledge and experience both with those within the national parliament and with those in other parliaments.

Box 6.3

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 quickly access an increasing 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.

Alessandro Palanza, Deputy Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy
Statement at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009

The newest technologies and social media pose an additional set of challenges for many libraries. While it is not yet clear how these technologies can be used most constructively, libraries and research services have begun to explore how they may use the tools to increase and enhance their capacity to serve members and committees (and the public, for those having that mandate) more effectively. Discussions among parliamentary library and research services and more targeted questions in future surveys will be needed to provide further understanding of the possibilities and limitations of the latest ICT developments for enhancing services.

Box 6.4

The Library of the National Congress of Chile has developed its research service in ways that are strengthening the relationship between the parliament and its clients. By listening to the needs of members the Library has built an array of new services that support social interaction with different communities of users. This has resulted in a new culture of sharing as compared to the traditionally closed environment within parliaments. The goal is to stimulate the development of cyber-citizen meeting spaces in which the Library and members participate, creating public value for all.

(Source: from the contribution of Soledad Ferreiro, Director of the Library of the Parliament of Chile, at the World e-Parliament Conference 2008)

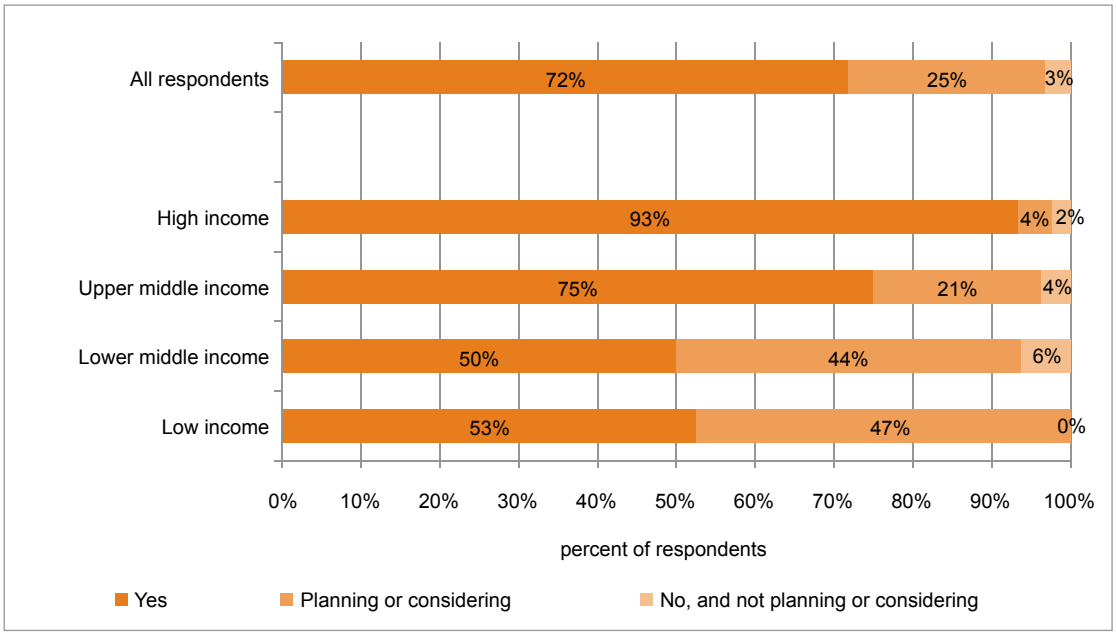
RESULTS AND FINDINGS FROM THE 2009 SURVEY

The 2009 survey focused primarily on the provision of digital information services and other means by which library and research services are supporting parliament. An initial question, however, served to verify whether parliaments even had a library or an information centre to serve its members. 93% of legislatures replied positively, while 2% said planning or considering, and 4% said no and not planning or considering.[1] Therefore, the findings that follow apply to the 125 parliaments that have a library.[2]

Basic capacities

72% of parliaments reported that their libraries have an automated system for managing library resources, 25% are planning or considering one and 3% are not planning or considering it.[3] Figure 6.1 shows these percentages by income groups. While 50% or more of parliaments in low or lower middle income groups have systems, the contrast with those in the upper middle income (75%) and high income groups (93%) indicates the size of the gap that exists among parliaments.

Figure 6.1: Use of an automated system for managing library resources, by income groups

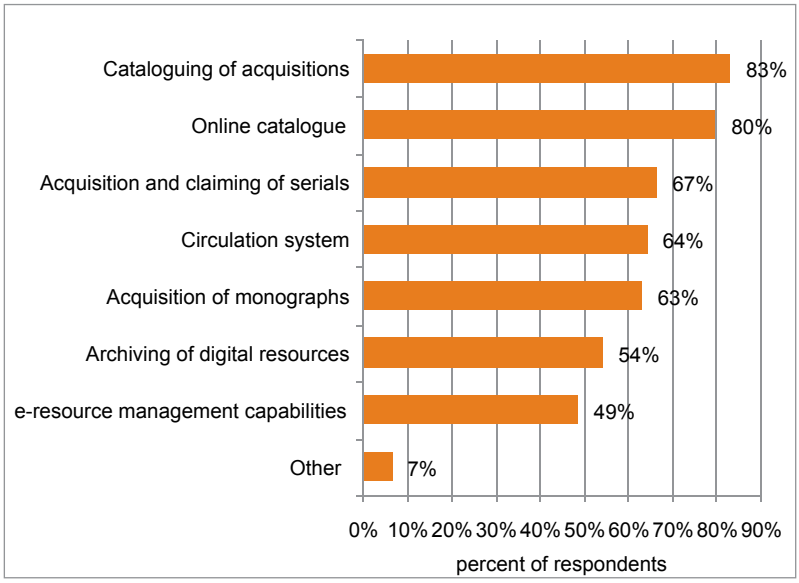


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 2; 125 respondents – 93% responding yes to Question 1)

1 Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 1.
2 A few parliaments said that they do not have a parliamentary library, but they do receive information and research services from other sources, such as the national library.
3 The percentages for the 2009:2007 Compare Group are similar, showing a very slight decline in those with a system (from 75% to 73% but an increase in those planning/considering from 19% to 25%).

Most parliaments reported that their automated systems for managing resources have essential capabilities, including cataloguing of acquisitions (83%), an online catalogue (80%), management of serials (67%), circulation (64%), and acquisition of monographs (63%). Over half (54%) have the ability to archive digital resources and almost half (49%) have systems that support the management of e-resources (see Figure 6.2). These are important findings because they attest how much ICT can assist with the basic management of information resources. In other areas, however, such as the provision of more innovative digital services, many libraries are lagging behind.

Figure 6.2: Capabilities of automated systems for managing library resources

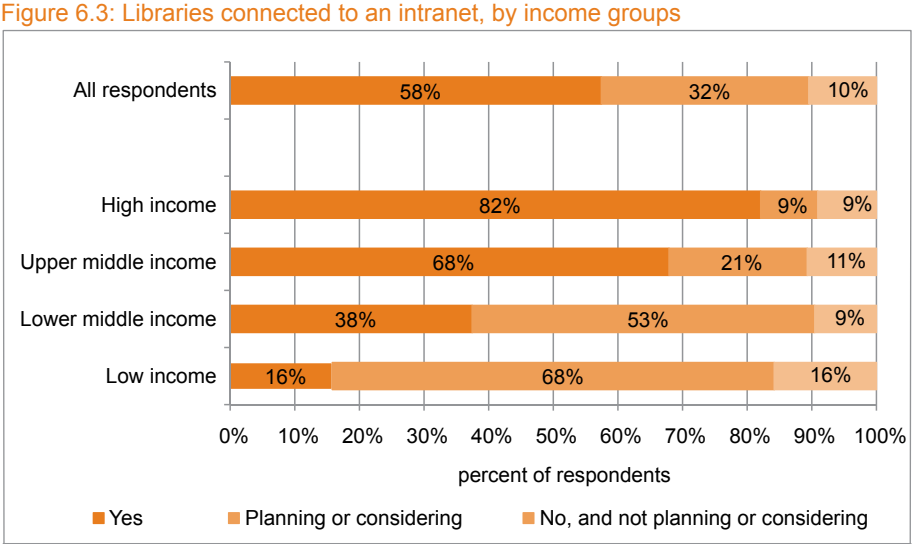


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 3; 90 respondents – 72% (of 93%) responding "yes" to Question 2)

Digital services

As reported in Chapter 7, 96% of parliaments have a local area network (LAN). However, only 58% of libraries report that they are connected to an intranet. The difference between libraries in parliaments in high and low income countries is especially stark (see Figure 6.3). Lack of connectivity to an intranet represents a serious constraint on the ability of libraries to offer digital services to members, committees, and the political leadership.

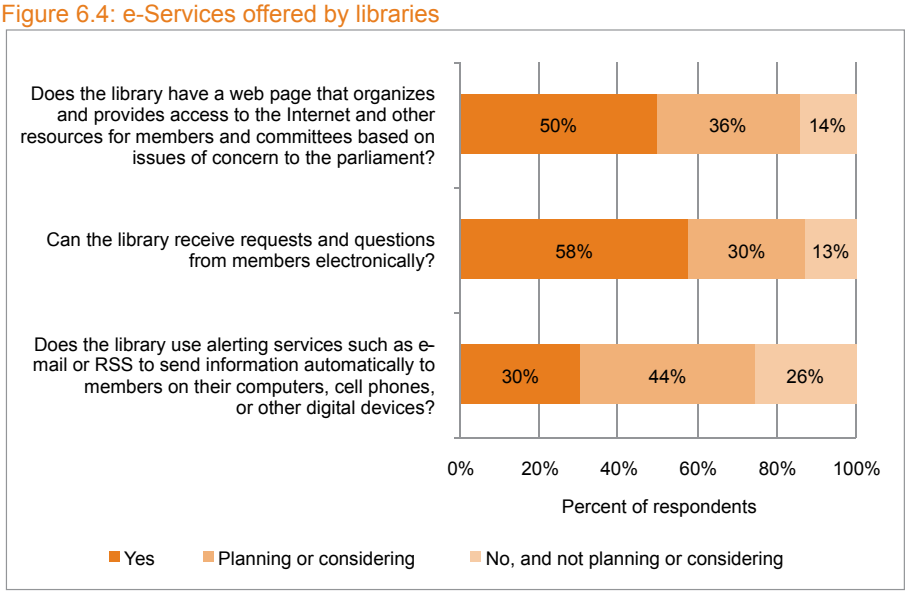
Figure 6.3: Libraries connected to an intranet, by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 5; 125 respondents – 93% responding "yes" to Question 1)

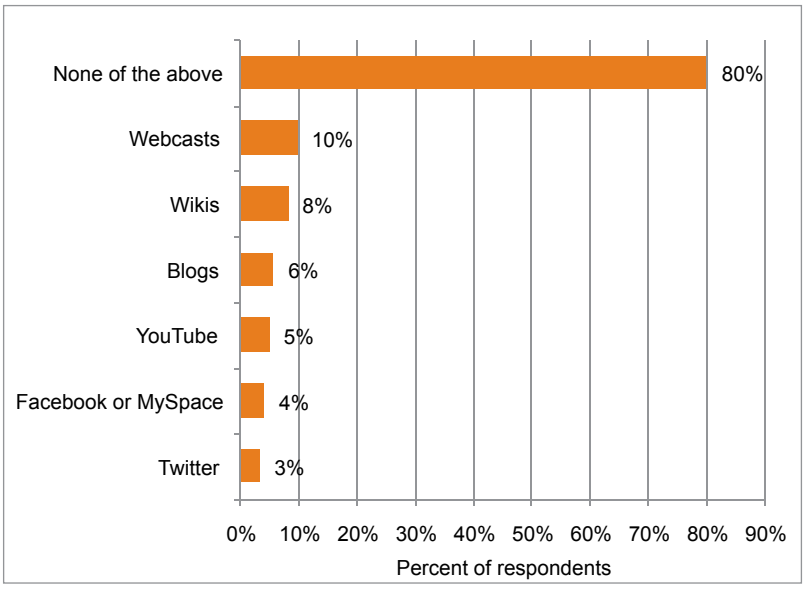
The relatively large percentage of 2009 respondents that are not connected represents a limit on the number of libraries that can provide a variety of e-services, such as the design and maintenance of a web page that organizes access to policy and legislative related material, real time access to local news services, receipt of requests and questions from members electronically, and the availability of alerting services (see Figure 6.4). Using an intranet as the delivery mechanism also has the potential to enable members and staff to access these services on an "anywhere, anytime" basis, assuming remote access is provided. While many are planning or considering offering these services, connection to the parliament's intranet is a critical requirement that must be addressed first.

Figure 6.4: e-Services offered by libraries



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Questions 6, 7 and 8; 125 respondents – 93% responding "yes" to Question 1)

Figure 6.5: Newest technology tools being used in parliamentary libraries



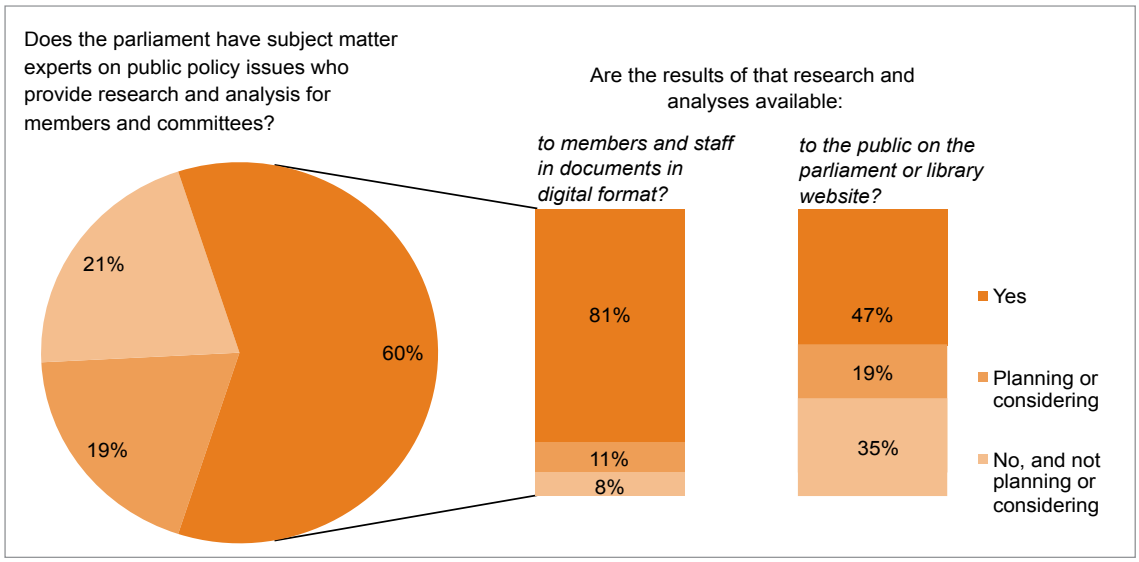
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 9; 125 respondents – 93% responding "yes" to Question 1)

As shown in Figure 6.5, most libraries and research services are not yet using the latest web technologies to support their work for the parliament (such as wikis, blogs, etc.). These results do not shed light on the reason for it. It is possible that libraries and research services have yet to determine how to use these tools effectively or simply do not find them useful for their work.

Collaboration using technology tools is also low. Just over one quarter of parliaments reported that libraries use software to support collaboration among library and research staff. These figures actually declined for the 2009:2007 Compare Group. While there are many ways to collaborate that do not require ICT, technology can make this process faster, more efficient, and often more effective. Even in libraries with a very small staff, the use of technology for sharing information resources offers a number of benefits. It can help a single librarian working collaborate with colleagues in other parts of the institution and in other government bodies.

As reported in Chapter 7, nearly all parliaments (97%) have access to the Internet, which suggests that their libraries and research services have the capacity to obtain free resources available through the web. These free resources usually do not include the expert analyses found in purchased journals and reports. It is a positive finding, therefore, that the majority of libraries are able to purchase online journals. Over half of the parliaments (54%) reported that they buy online journals and databases that contain expert research and analysis of public policy issues.[4] In addition to these valuable external resources, 60% of parliaments have in-house subject matter experts. And of those who do, over 80% make the results of their research and analyses available in digital format to members and committees (see Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.6: Availability of subject matter experts



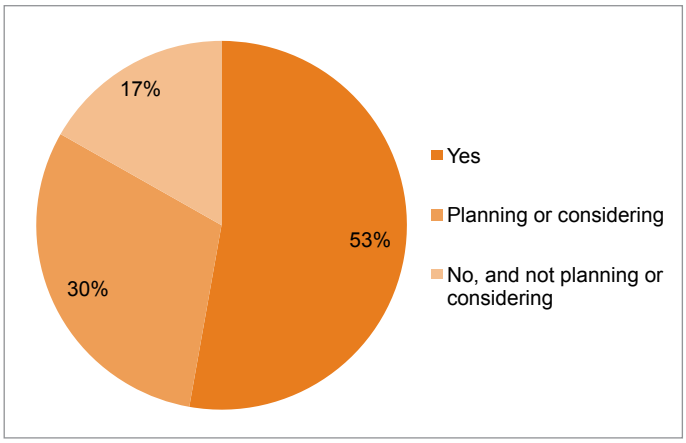
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 21; 125 respondents – 93% responding "yes" to Question 1; Questions 22 and 23; 75 respondents – 60% (of 93%) responding "yes" to Question 21)

Taken together, these findings indicate that over half of parliamentary library and research services have the capacity to acquire and make available a wide variety of free and purchased information and analytic resources in digital form. However, these findings also indicate that over 40% of parliamentary libraries lack this capacity. There is some evidence, however, that libraries are making positive efforts to improve this situation, particularly in relation to free internet resources. For example, as noted in Figure 6.4, 50% of libraries have a web page that provides access to Internet resources organized on the basis of issues of interest to the members and committees; 36% are planning or considering such a service. These percentages are somewhat higher than results from the 2007 survey, which asked questions that were similar, although not exactly the same.[5] Thus, even if parliaments cannot afford to purchase information resources, many of them are providing enhanced access to free Internet resources.

Many libraries also provide an important service by maintaining an archive of parliamentary documents in digital form. Over 80% of all parliaments either have an archive or are planning or considering one (see Figure 6.7). The documents currently retained, as shown in Figure 6.8, include bills, plenary documents, committee documents, research reports, and background materials.

4 Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 11.
5 See, for example, *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, Figure 7.3, p. 115 and Figure 7.6, p. 117.

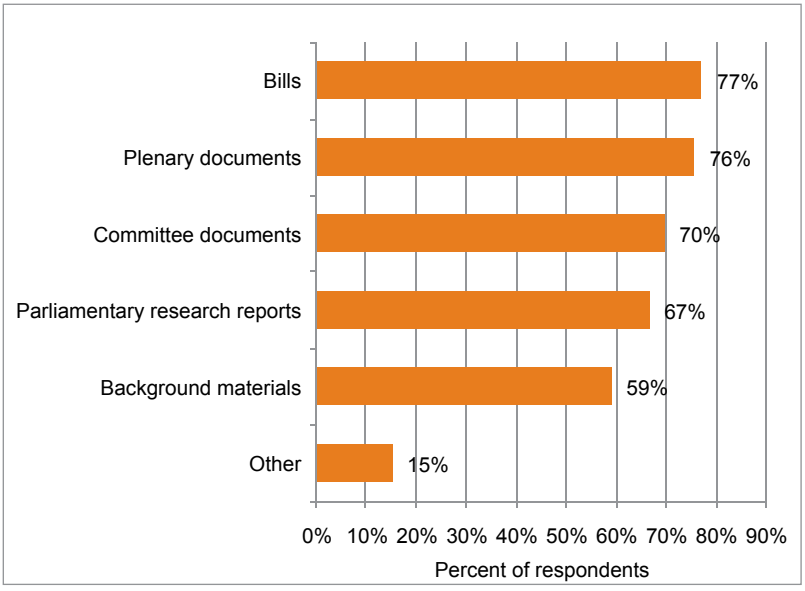
Figure 6.7: Archive for digital documents



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 13; 125 respondents – 93% responding "yes" to Question 1)

This is a positive finding and illustrates the special contribution that libraries can play in this area, as they often have, in maintaining archival sets of printed parliamentary documentation. While some of the departments and offices in the parliament that produce these documents may retain them for extended periods, it is often the case that these authoring groups are focused more on publishing the latest version of the document and less on retaining earlier versions or preserving documents from previous years. The documents that they keep will usually be their own; they rarely have the same level of interest in retaining documents from other groups. It is also important to note that in some countries, other institutions such as the national library or the national archive have this responsibility, but that libraries are often able to provide more convenient and more timely access to older material.

Figure 6.8: Documents maintained in the archive in digital format



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 14; 66 respondents – 53% (of 93%) responding "yes" to Question 13)

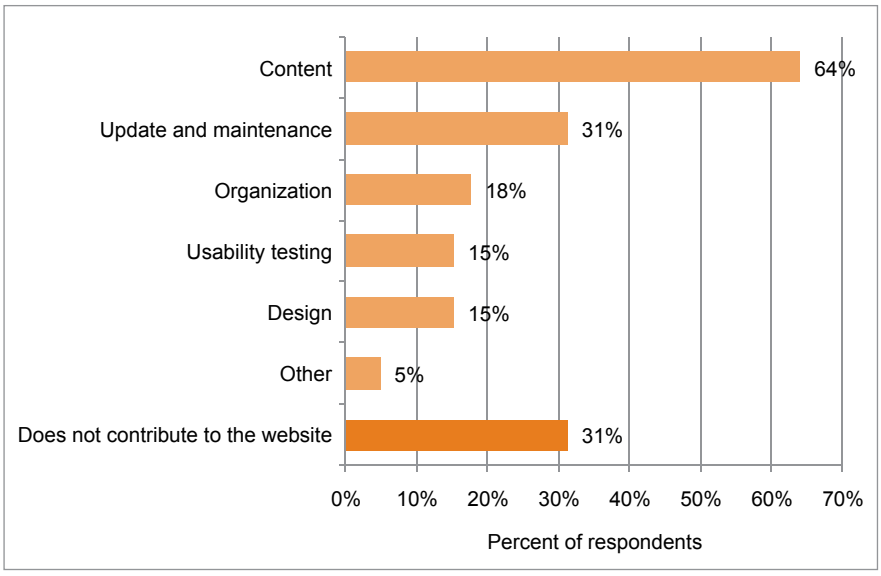
Libraries have a strong interest in all parliamentary documents and they have the knowledge and methodologies for ensuring long term access for the parliament, and sometimes for the public. The advent of digital archives makes this task easier because there is not the recurrent need to find additional space for a growing paper collection. On the other hand, digital archives are particularly sensitive to changes in technology. This

is an ongoing concern that requires collaboration between librarians, archivists, and technologists. It is also an example of the challenges inherent in the digital preservation of all types of parliamentary information and the importance of open standards such as XML.

Other services

Libraries provide a number of other important ICT-related services that support parliaments. Many libraries and research services contribute to the content of the external website of the institution. A significant number are engaged in updating and maintaining the website, and smaller but important percentages are involved in the organization, testing, and design of the site (see Figure 6.9).

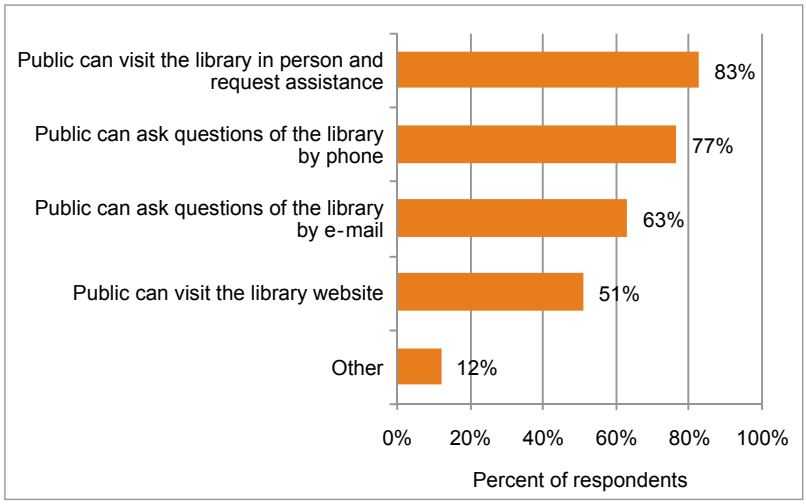
Figure 6.9: Library's contribution to the website of the parliament



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 19; 125 respondents – 93% responding "yes" to Question 1)

The mission of two thirds of parliamentary libraries includes serving the public. Many offer in-person services, and just over half allow the public to visit the library's website (see Figure 6.10). This percentage will presumably grow as more libraries acquire the technical and staff capacity to develop their own websites, or contribute content to the parliament's website. As shown in Figure 6.6, 47% of parliaments permit the work of their subject matter experts to be available to the public on the websites of the parliament or the library. However, 35% do not and are not planning or considering doing so, a decision which prevents the public from accessing valuable information.

Figure 6.10: Services available to the public

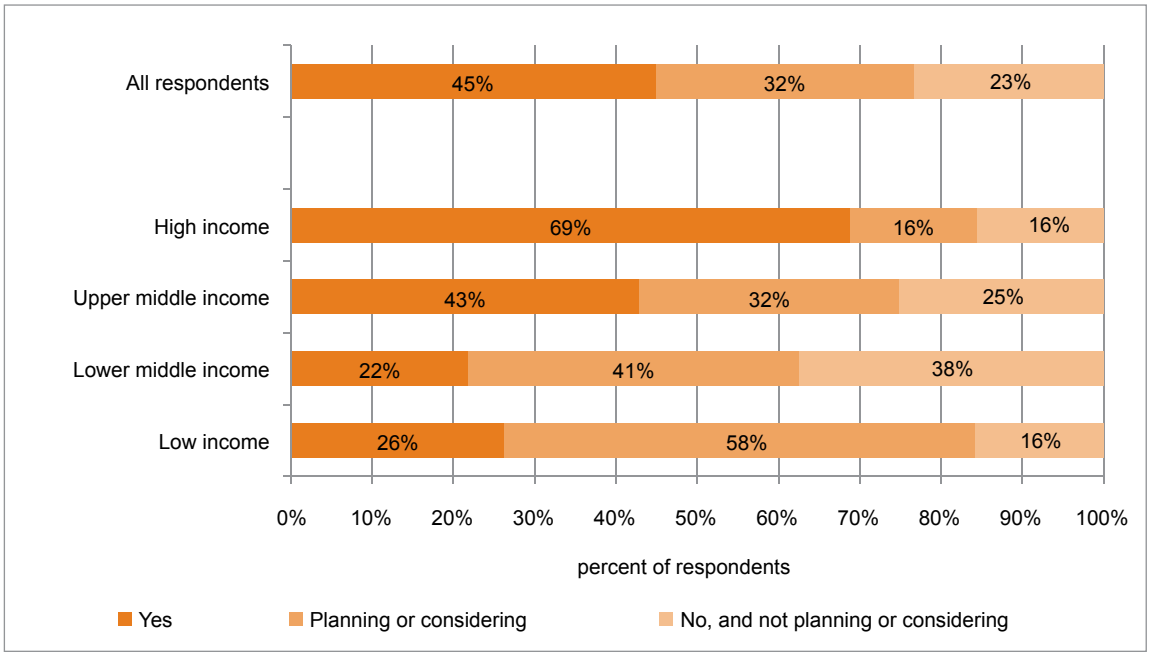


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 16; 82 respondents – 66% (of 93%) responding "yes" to Question 15)

Management issues

The survey looked at several technology issues related to cooperation and to ICT support. 45% of libraries participate in formal online networks for sharing information with other libraries and research services (see Figure 6.11). While this represents almost half of all parliaments, it is less than the almost two thirds of parliaments themselves that reported that they participate in formal networks for the exchange of information and experiences regarding ICT.[6] The disparity for libraries in parliaments in lower income countries is even greater. As shown in Figure 6.11, libraries in the high income group are 2 ½ to 3 times more likely to participate in a network than their counterparts in the lower middle and low income groups.

Figure 6.11: Libraries that participate in networks, by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 17; 125 respondents – 93% responding "yes" to Question 1)

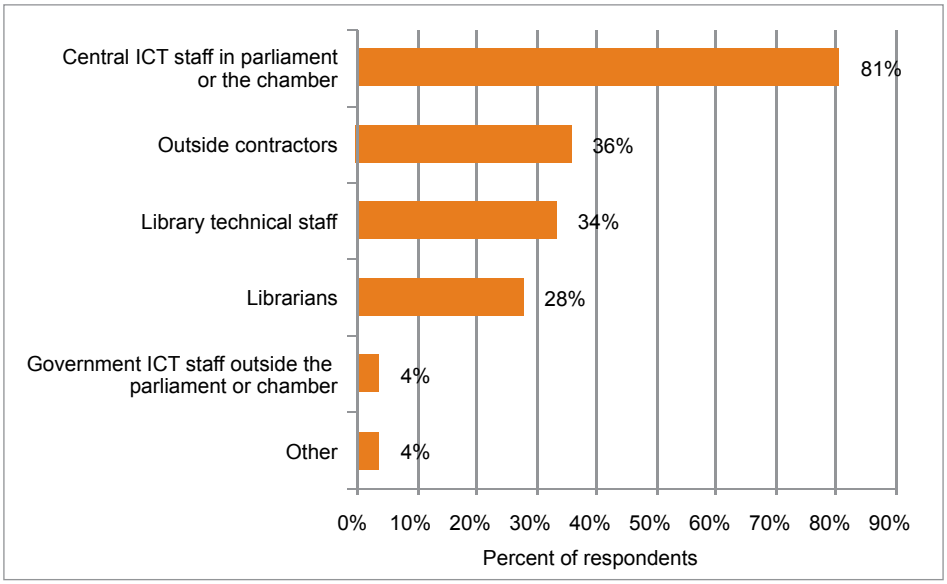
For possibly different reasons, only 43% of libraries that purchase subscriptions to online journals and databases do so through a consortium. Since consortia are often able to negotiate lower prices, this finding is a concern. It may be that such consortia are not available in all regions. This warrants further research to determine the causes. Since a large percentage of parliaments participate in networks for the exchange of information regarding ICT, it would seem possible that the number of consortia available to libraries for joint purchasing could improve with greater awareness and concerted efforts.[7]

ICT support for libraries continues to come from a variety of sources, as it did in 2007. For over 80% it is provided by central ICT staff in the parliament; for 36% it is provided by outside contractors; and for 34% it is provided by library technical staff (see Figure 6.12). The challenge is to be able use these diverse resources to enhance the information services for members and committees in new and innovative ways.

6 See Chapter 9 for additional elements on this discussion.

7 Similar concerns were expressed by the representative of eIFL.net at a training jointly organized by the IFLA Parliamentary Library and Research Services Section, the Italian Joint Parliamentary Library and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament in August 2009. eIFL.net (http://www.eifl.net) is a not for profit organization that supports and advocates for the wide availability of electronic resources by library users in transitional and developing countries, and aims to assist national library communities in building sustainable national library consortia.

Figure 6.12: Staff support for ICT in libraries



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 4; 125 respondents – 93% responding "yes" to Question 1)

SUMMARY

Parliaments have always been information intensive institutions. E-parliament has created even greater demand for information and has raised the bar by requiring that information be more current, more complete, and more tailored to the individual needs of members and committees. Libraries and research services have the knowledge and the discipline to meet these requirements, but they must have access to the technology and they must have a staff that understands how to use ICT well and is skilled in its use.

Libraries know how to acquire, integrate, and deliver information in the most helpful ways. They also know how to preserve it and ensure its continuous availability. However, only a few libraries have been able to respond effectively and creatively to the increasing demands of parliaments by integrating technology into their work in new and innovative ways. Those that have are clearly leaders in their field. But many libraries continue to face challenges that stem from inadequate resources for training, limited availability of technology and, in some cases, lack of understanding of the contribution they can make to e-parliaments.

While findings from the 2007 and 2009 surveys indicate that many libraries have been able to adopt new technologies to support their traditional tasks of acquiring, organizing, and managing information resources, many still face problems such as lack of connectivity to the parliament's intranet and the absence of preservation plans for digital resources. Advances in technology offer a number of possibilities for improving services, for example by managing requests from members online, developing personalized alerting services, creating information management systems that link parliamentary documents with information available on the Web, and using ICT-supported networks to share knowledge and ideas.

The newest technologies present opportunities as well as challenges. It is not yet clear how libraries can benefit from the most recent developments such as wikis, blogs, and YouTube, even as

they are becoming more common in the parliamentary environment. This uncertainty makes the exchange of ideas through library networks even more necessary and valuable.

Most parliamentary libraries have basic ICT-supported capabilities such as systems for managing library resources. However, over 40% are not connected to a parliamentary intranet, even though LANs are in place in nearly all legislatures. This severely limits the nature and extent of e-services that libraries can provide, such as online access to information sources that are organized according to the policy issues that the parliament is addressing. Nevertheless, 50% of libraries are able to offer this type of service. Over half subscribe to online journals and databases and over 60% have subject matter experts much of whose work is made available in digital formats.

Libraries contribute to e-parliament in a number of other ways. Many are taking an active role in maintaining an archive of parliamentary documents in digital formats. Over 50% do this already and an additional 30% are planning or considering doing it. These archives include some of the most important parliamentary documents, such as bills, plenary documents, committee documents, and research reports. Libraries also contribute to the website of the parliament, most often by providing some of its content. A significant number are also engaged in updating and maintaining the website, and some are involved in the organization, testing, and design of the site. Two thirds of parliamentary libraries serve the public and a majority of these allow public access to the library's website.

Only 45% of libraries participate in formal online networks for sharing information with other libraries and research services. This is less than the 59% of parliaments that participate in formal networks for the exchange of information and experiences regarding ICT.

Libraries in parliaments in the low income group continue to face significant challenges. Compared to those in the high income group, far fewer have systems to manage traditional library resources, are connected to the parliament's intranet, and participate in networks for the exchange of information, ideas, and best practices.

Chapter 7
Responsive and Robust Technical Infrastructures

The building blocks of a robust and responsive technical infrastructure create the foundation for e-parliament. This includes hardware, software, applications and services, and a well trained staff who understands the nature of a legislative body.

The basic technologies that are essential for e-parliament are similar to those needed by other large public and private institutions in the Information Society. This similarity enables parliaments to benefit from the many improvements that are continually being made as well as the ongoing reduction in costs due to technology developments. For example, not only are desktop and laptop computers becoming less expensive, but they are also becoming more powerful and available in a variety of forms that make them easier to use in more locations. Netbooks, smart phones and e-book readers are rapidly changing the ability of everyone to have access to some level of computing and communication capacity.

Similarly the availability of open source software that can address the needs of parliaments is beneficial. While there are issues of training and support for these programmes, they have significant potential for ICT in legislatures and they continue to grow. *Bungeni*[1] offers an example of complete applications built on open source software that support major parliamentary activities.

Local area networks are essential to the work undertaken daily in parliaments, which involves multiple actors – members and staff – and multiple bodies – the committees, the plenary and the various offices. A wired network requires a labor intensive effort to build and to maintain, yet it is one of the most important instruments for a public institution. Wireless capabilities provide additional advantages for mobility and access, but there is still a fundamental need for a wired system to ensure adequate bandwidth and security.

The Internet has become a critical resource for parliaments. Fortunately the world is experiencing a growing connectivity and many developing countries are gaining increased access to the global network. The challenge, however, is to provide sufficient bandwidth to support the many types of information that are becoming available. This is a challenge that even developed countries face, and a number of them are initiating policies and programmes to address this issue. As noted in previous chapters, mobile communication systems and devices are also growing and improving dramatically, and parliaments should take full advantage of them.

More opportunities for external communication – whether wired or wireless – expand the need for better security, safeguarding of member confidentiality, and adequate defenses against hacking and cybercrime. While some parliaments have long recognized the critical nature of this

1 See Chapter 5 on Systems and standards for parliamentary documents.

requirement, others have been slower to take appropriate measures.[2] This is a challenge that parliaments acting on their own can solve only in part. It calls for coordinated efforts with other public institutions within the country and with other organizations on a global basis. These efforts need to encompass both sound polices and best practices.

Parliaments must also develop the services that support the acquisition, maintenance and use of basic technical components such as computers and networks. These include a help desk, data network operations centers and application development teams. These services, in turn, support the most important legislative, oversight and representational work of parliaments by enabling them to create and manage documents, record and publish proceedings of plenary and committee meetings, and communicate with citizens.

A number of parliaments have begun to implement technological solutions on the floor, adding considerably to the efficiency of plenary sessions. These include workstations for every member, electronic voting, the availability of internal documents and agendas in digital format, large display screens, and access to e-mail and the Internet from the member's seat. Workstations often have a very small footprint, which is important for preserving the historic buildings in which many parliaments work. The introduction of these technologies on the floor has been possible due to the investments made by parliaments on basic infrastructure, including physical devices, communications networks and the staff to support them.

The single most important element of the technical infrastructure is the staff. PCs, networks, and applications must be acquired and supported by people who have expert knowledge and an understanding of legislative bodies. They can be internal employees or external contractors hired to fill gaps in capacity and knowledge. It is essential that those who allocate parliament's resources understand the critical importance of capable and well trained staff.

While ICT staff need the most current information and training, there is also a growing recognition of the need for educating members about technology, as well as staff of the parliamentary administration, who are often among the most frequent users of systems and generate their content. To be used effectively, technology can no longer be the province of a few; members and staff at all levels must have an understanding of its strengths and limitations.

Even though costs are decreasing, there is a minimum level of investment that must be borne by every parliament, even those in developing countries. Contributions from the international community or outside organizations may be helpful for startup, but ongoing support, upgrades, and maintenance remain the responsibility of the parliament itself. The findings presented in Chapter 4 suggest that ICT require somewhere between 3% and 4% of the total budget of the parliament.

As stated numerous times in this document and in the 2008 Report, technology is not an end in itself. A robust and responsive infrastructure is the means by which parliaments become more efficient and more importantly, more transparent, accessible and accountable to the public. It is one of the essential ingredients for achieving these goals in the modern political world.

2 World e-Parliament Conference 2009, Washington D.C., November 2009. Specialized Session on Security and reliability of technical infrastructures: challenges for parliaments,. [http://www.ictparliament.org/wepc2009/].

RESULTS AND FINDINGS FROM THE 2009 SURVEY

The 2009 survey focused on four key requirements for building a robust and responsive infrastructure for a legislature: 1) basic technologies and services, such as the acquisition and management of PCs, networks, and software; 2) systems that provide support for the most essential functions of a parliament, such as managing documents and conducting plenary sessions; 3) levels of service and staff support; and, 4) training for technical staff, members, and other users.

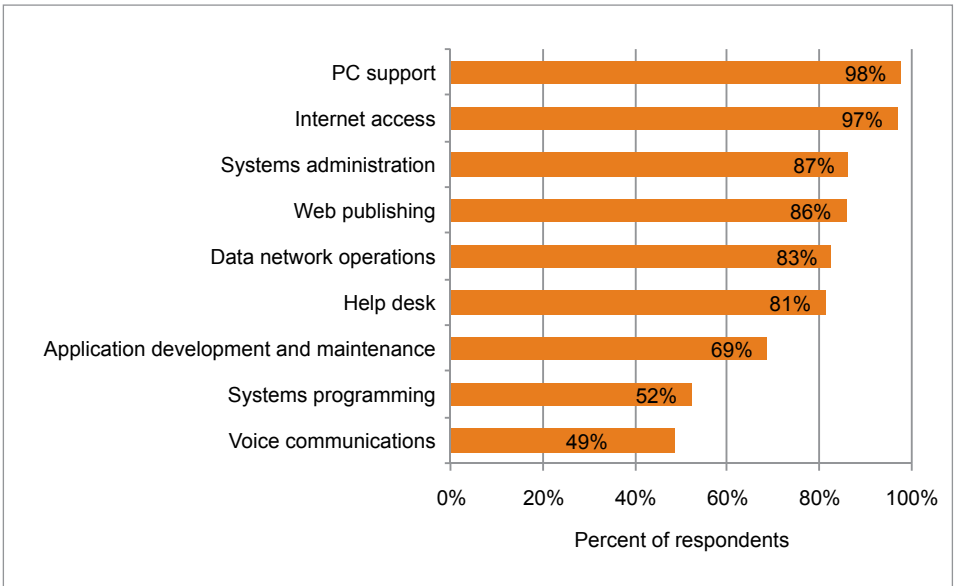
Basic technical services

Reliable electrical power is one of the basic prerequisites for any public institution using technology. It is a concern, therefore, that in response to the question "Does the parliament have reliable electrical power 24 hours per day?" 16% of chambers replied "No".[3] This represents an increase since 2007 in the number of parliaments that have to address this problem. In the 2009:2007 Compare Group, the percentage rose from 6% to 10% in the two years between the surveys. Whatever the causes may be – weakening economic conditions, technical limitations or poor management of critical resources – the fact is that this is an obstacle as serious as the digital divide.

As shown in Figure 7.1, most parliaments reported that they are able to provide basic ICT services such as PC support, systems administration, web publishing, and network operations. These results are similar to those from the 2007 survey, although there has been a decline of 18 percentage points in application development and maintenance services[4] (the extent of this drop is confirmed by an analysis of the 2009:2007 Compare Group which showed a decline of 16%).

In addition to the services shown in Figure 7.1, 96% of parliaments have a local area network (LAN) and the average number of physical connections reported per parliament is 2.171[5]. Also, 77% of parliaments have wireless access and 8% are planning or considering it. However, 15% reported that they do not have wireless access and are not planning or considering it.[6]

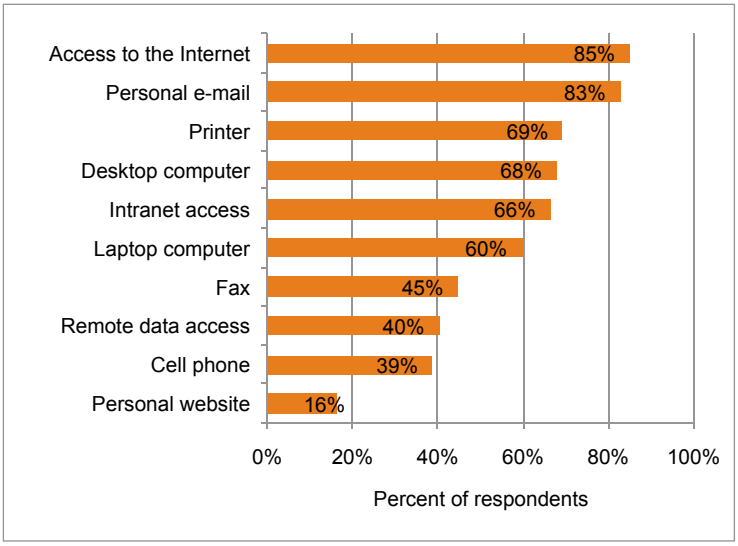
Figure 7.1: General ICT services available in the parliament



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 1; 134 respondents)

3 Source. Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 13.
4 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, [New York]: United Nations, 2008, p.39, [http://www.ictparliament.org].
5 Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Questions 4 and 5.
6 Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 9.

Figure 7.2: ICT services provided by parliaments to members



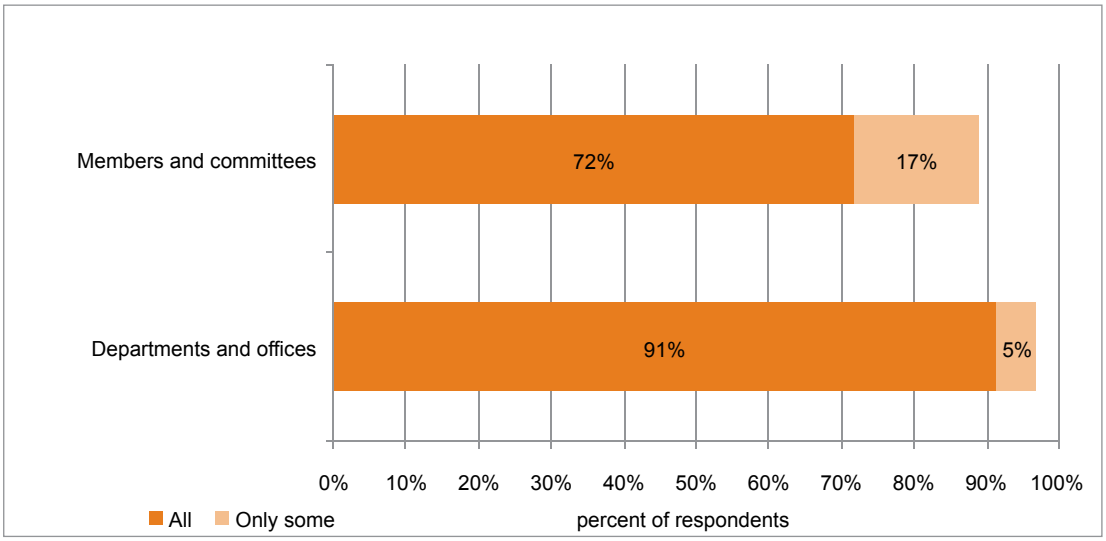
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 2; 134 respondents)

Most parliaments are also able to provide basic equipment and important technical services for members, such as access to the Internet, personal e-mail, printers and a PC (see Figure 7.2). 80% of parliaments provide members with either a desktop PC or a laptop; 48% are able to supply both.[7]

Taken together these findings suggest that most parliaments are doing reasonably well in providing members with basic technology to support their work and communication with citizens, although 20% still do not provide legislators with a computer and 15% do not provide them with access to the Internet.

It is also important to note that while nearly all parliaments have a LAN and 92% report that all departments and offices are connected, only 72% state that all members and committees are connected (see Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: Members, committees and departments connected to the LAN



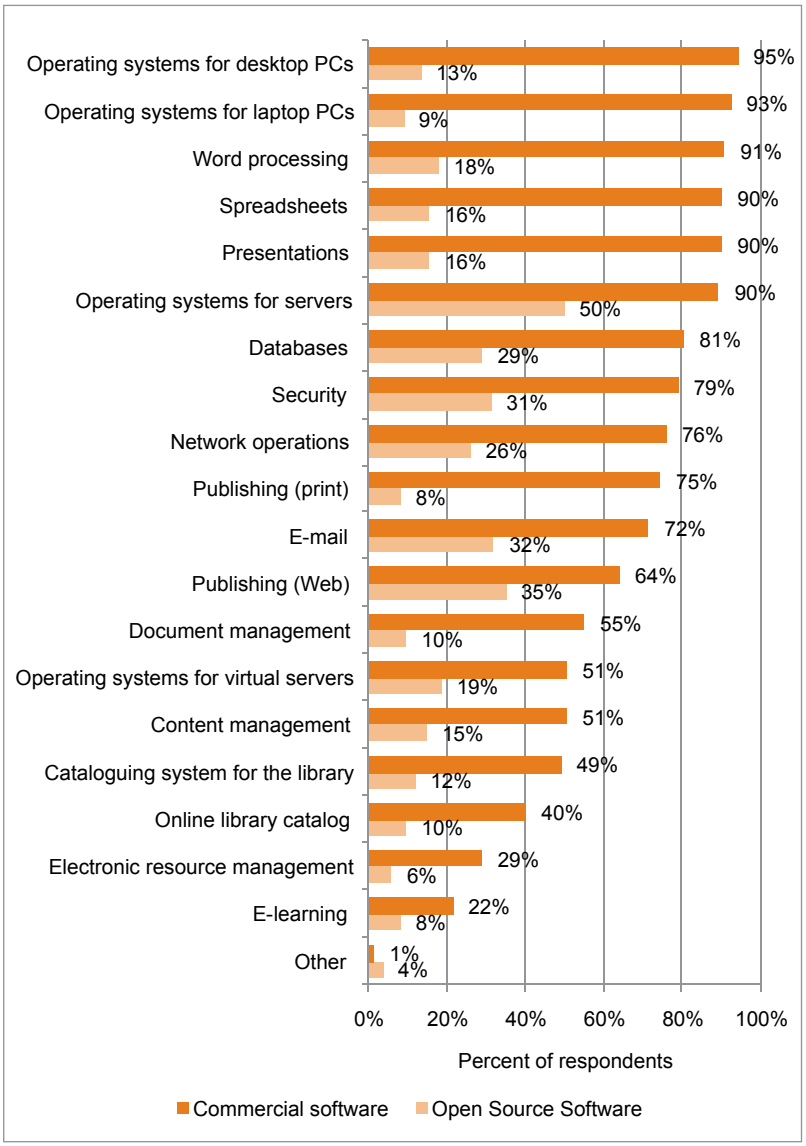
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 6; 128 respondents – 96% responding "yes" to Question 4)

The full value of a LAN for a parliament can only be realized when all members and committees are connected. The lack of complete connectivity can create duplication of work, makes the parliament less efficient, and risks excluding some users from having timely access to important information and documents. A necessary criterion for an e-parliament is that all members and committees are connected by a local area network.

7 Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 2. This finding is based on a separate analysis of the data not shown in Figure 7.2.

Open source software can be of particular interest to parliaments since it can help reduce costs. Figure 7.4 shows the comparative use of commercial software and open source software by parliaments for various operations, services, and applications.

Figure 7.4: Use of commercial and open source software



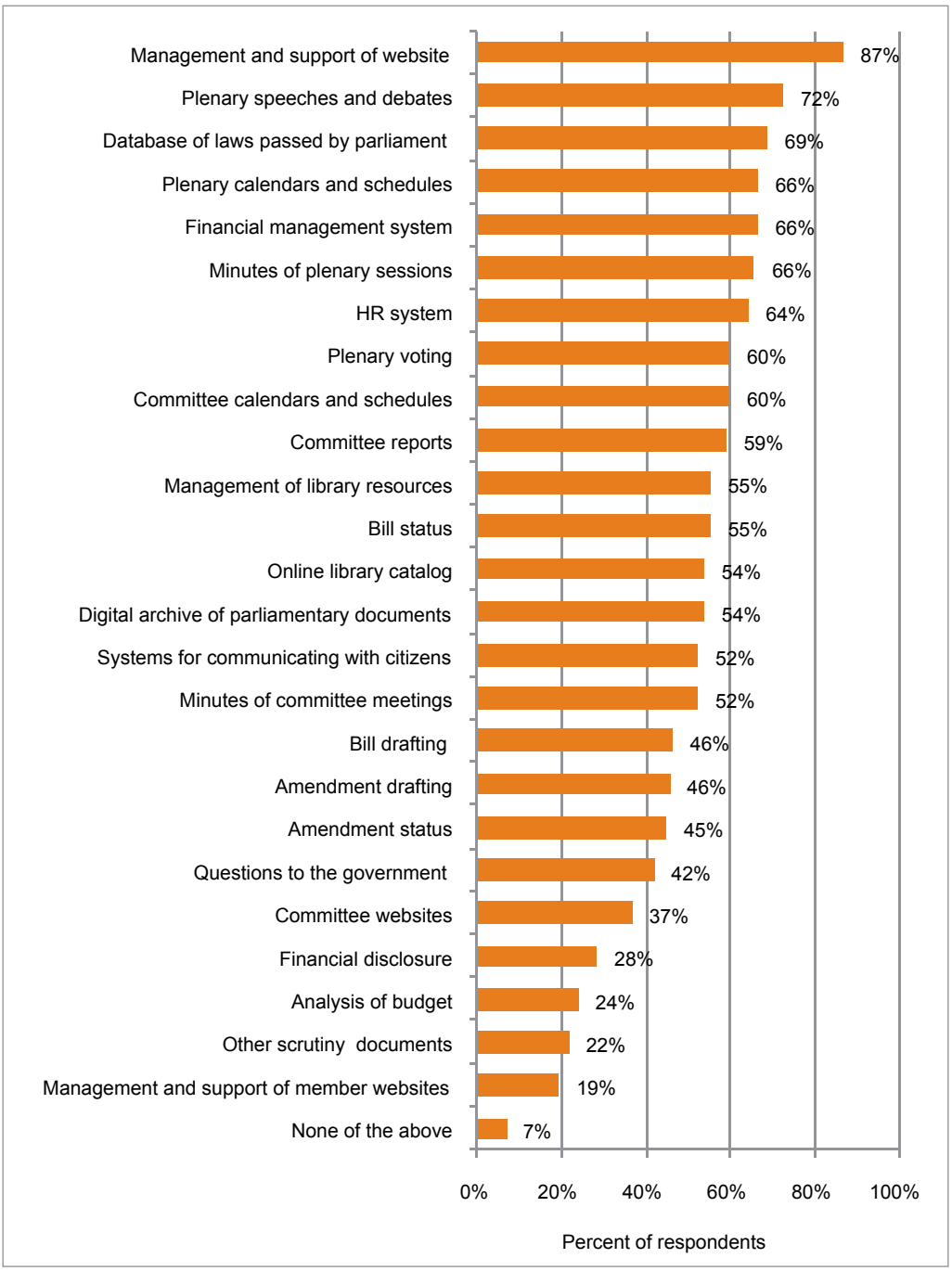
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 14; 134 respondents)

Additional analyses of the responses to this question indicate that 74% of parliaments use open source software for at least one purpose; two parliaments reported that they use open source exclusively; and eight institutions use open source for more purposes than they use commercial software. Open source was used by the largest percentage of parliaments for operating systems for servers (50%) and web publishing (35%). The average percentage of parliaments using commercial software for any one application is 65%; the average using open source software is 18%. These findings document the relative dominance of commercial software among parliaments today.

Support for parliamentary functions

One of the primary values of the basic tools and services of technology is that they enable a parliament to create systems that serve its legislative, oversight, and representational work. Figure 7.5 shows the percentage of parliaments that have implemented a system to support the most important activities of a legislature.

Figure 7.5: Parliamentary functions supported by ICT



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 15; 134 respondents)

Among the top 10 functions supported by ICT in most parliaments, four relate to plenary activities, two to the work of committees, two to administration, one to legislation, and one to communication. Figure 7.6 provides the details.[8]

Figure 7.6: Categories of top 10 functions supported by technology

Category	Function	% of parliaments
Communication	Management/support of the website	87%
Plenary	Plenary speeches and debates	72%
Legislation	Database of laws	69%
Plenary	Plenary calendars and schedules	66%
Administration	Financial management	66%
Plenary	Minutes of sessions	66%
Administration	Human resources	64%
Plenary	Voting	60%
Committees	Calendars and schedules	60%
Committees	Reports	59%

(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 15; 134 respondents)

Given the importance of websites for providing transparency and accessibility to the parliament, it is a positive finding that the function supported by the largest percentage of parliaments is the management of their website (87%). It is also notable that all of the functions supporting the work of the plenary included in the survey are ranked among the top 10. Because much of the work in many parliaments takes place in plenary, this finding is understandable. ICT can help plenary sessions be more efficiently conducted and reported. In addition, since nearly all parliaments must be able to manage their finances and provide services related to human resources, it is reasonable that many parliaments have applications to support this work.

It is somewhat of a concern that of the five functions that relate to legislation, only one – a database of laws passed by the parliament – ranks in the top 10, and only one other – the status of bills – has been implemented by at least 50% of all parliaments. The remaining three legislative applications – bill drafting, amendment drafting and amendment status – fall below 50%. And functions supporting oversight and budget review fall even below these three.

Finally, as seen in Figure 7.5, the only communication function supported by a large number of parliaments is the management of the website. Support for other communication methods has been implemented in just over half (52%), while support for committee websites, member websites, and financial disclosure, which is especially important for accountability, falls even lower.

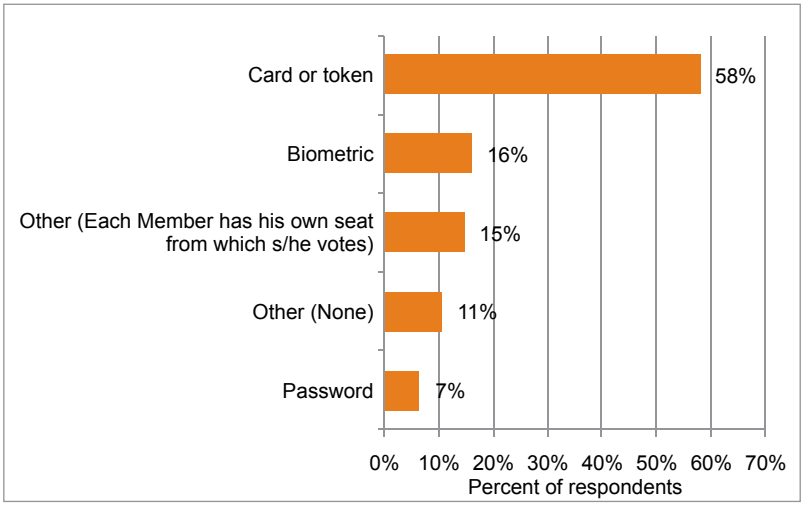
There are other findings from the survey that show considerable support for the work of the plenary. However, support for other functions directly related to legislation, budget, oversight, and communication is lagging behind.

8 Of the 25 functions included in this question, 5 relate directly to legislation, 5 to communication, 4 to the plenary, 3 to committees, 3 to oversight and the budget, 3 to information support, and 2 to administration.

Support for plenary activities

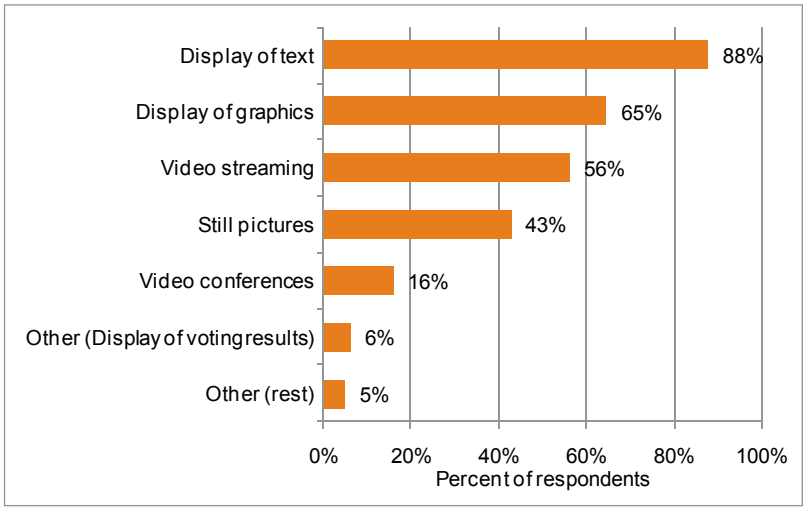
In addition to the applications noted above, many parliaments have introduced a number of technologies directly on the floor. For example, 81% of parliaments either have electronic voting systems in the plenary or are planning or considering it. The average number of times these systems are used in a year is reported to be close to 1.000.[9] The primary mode of authentication is a card or token (58%); other methods, currently used in far fewer parliaments include biometrics, seat location, and passwords. Four legislatures reported that they use two methods (see Figure 7.7).

Figure 7.7: Methods of identification and authentication for e-voting



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 19; 74 respondents – 56% responding "yes" to Question 16)

Figure 7.8: Purposes for digital displays in plenary



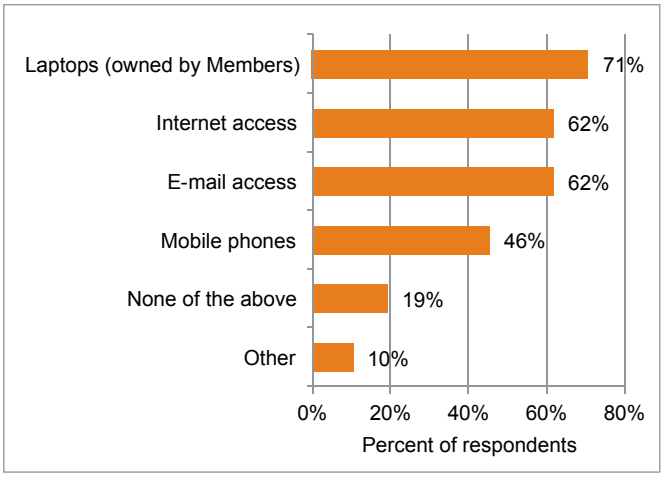
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 21; 82 respondents – 61% responding "yes" to Question 20)

Digital displays are used in the plenary halls of 62% of parliaments, and an additional 19% are planning or considering their use.[10] The purpose identified by most parliaments in Figure 7.8 is to display text (88%), followed by the display of graphics (65%), and video streaming (56%).

9 Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 16.
10 Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 20.

Just over half of all parliaments either provide members with a PC in the plenary room or are planning or considering it (29% and 25% respectively).[11] However, 71% allow members to bring their own PCs into the chamber and most permit Internet and e-mail access. Mobile phones are permitted by 46% of parliaments (see Figure 7.9).

Figure 7.9: Technologies and services permitted in plenary



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 24; 134 respondents)

Among the chambers that have introduced workstations on the floor are the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea – using touchscreens for voting - and the Parliament of Ukraine. They both refer to their plenary as "digital chambers" and made fast progresses in linking system, databases and services to each member's workstation on the floor (see Figures 7.10 and 7.11).

Figure 7.10: Use of digital displays and workstations at the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea

(Source: Presentation by Shin Hang Jin, Director, Legislative Information System Office, National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009)

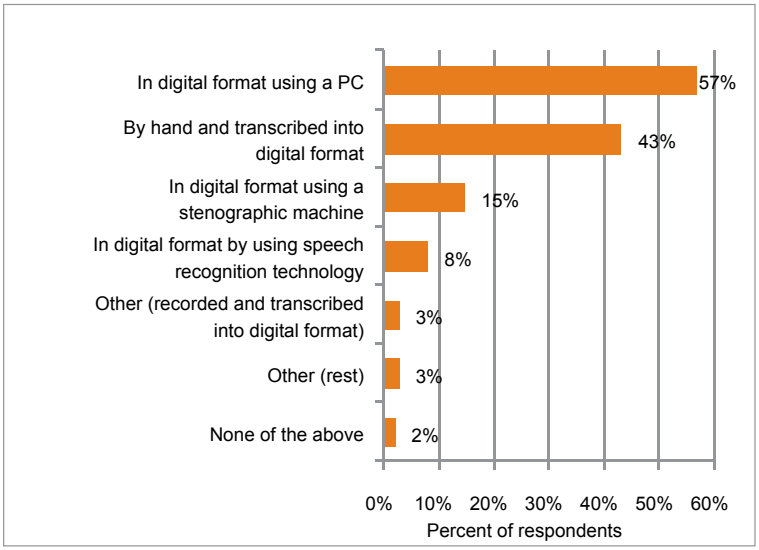
Figure 7.11: Members' workstation of the Parliament of Ukraine

(Source: Presentation by Oleksiy Sydorenko, Head, Computer Systems (IT) Department, Parliament of Ukraine, at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009)

11 Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 22.

Parliaments employ a variety of techniques to prepare verbatim reports of plenary sessions, and 25% reported using more than one (see Figure 7.12). Technology is essential for enabling parliaments to provide current records of their proceedings both for themselves and for the public. As noted in Chapter 2, a number of parliaments are now offering video webcasts of plenary proceedings (43%) or are planning or considering it (29%). Depending on how many parliaments decide to implement this technology, webcasting may become one of the predominant modes for providing timely verbatim records.

Figure 7.12: Preparation of verbatim reports



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 25; 134 respondents)

Digital text versions, however, still offer a number of advantages, such as ease of searching and the ability to read through a report quickly. For these reasons, and because webcasting technologies are still comparatively more expensive, both for the provider and for the recipient, many parliaments, especially those in low income countries are still seeking affordable but efficient methods for creating plenary records. This sentiment was clearly expressed by participants at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009 during the session on technology options for recording and reporting floor and committee proceedings.[12]

It is highly likely that the applications that have been developed to support plenary sessions, together with the technologies that have been introduced on the floor have helped to improve the distribution of documents, make operations more efficient, and enable the record to be made available more quickly. They also provide the underpinnings to transparency and accountability.

What is not known from the survey and requires further research is how helpful the individual members find these technologies to be in their deliberations and which ones they find to be the most useful. Parliaments need to be as efficient as is reasonable given the nature of their mandate, but the legislative process is one of proposal, discussion, and compromise. This process is dependent on accurate and current information and analysis, and the availability of convenient (and sometimes confidential) communication channels. To be of the greatest benefit to parliaments and legislators, chamber technologies need to be planned to support all of these requirements.

12 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, U.S. House of Representatives, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Conference 2009: 3-4-5 November 2009, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington D.C; Report*, [New York]: United Nations, 2010 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

Service levels and ICT staff

Having agreements with external contractors on the level of service to be provided - and the means for measuring those levels - is a best practice in ICT. Figure 7.13 shows the percentage of parliaments that have service level agreements (SLAs) with external contractors and with internal clients - i.e., structures within the parliament for whom the ICT department provides equipment or services.

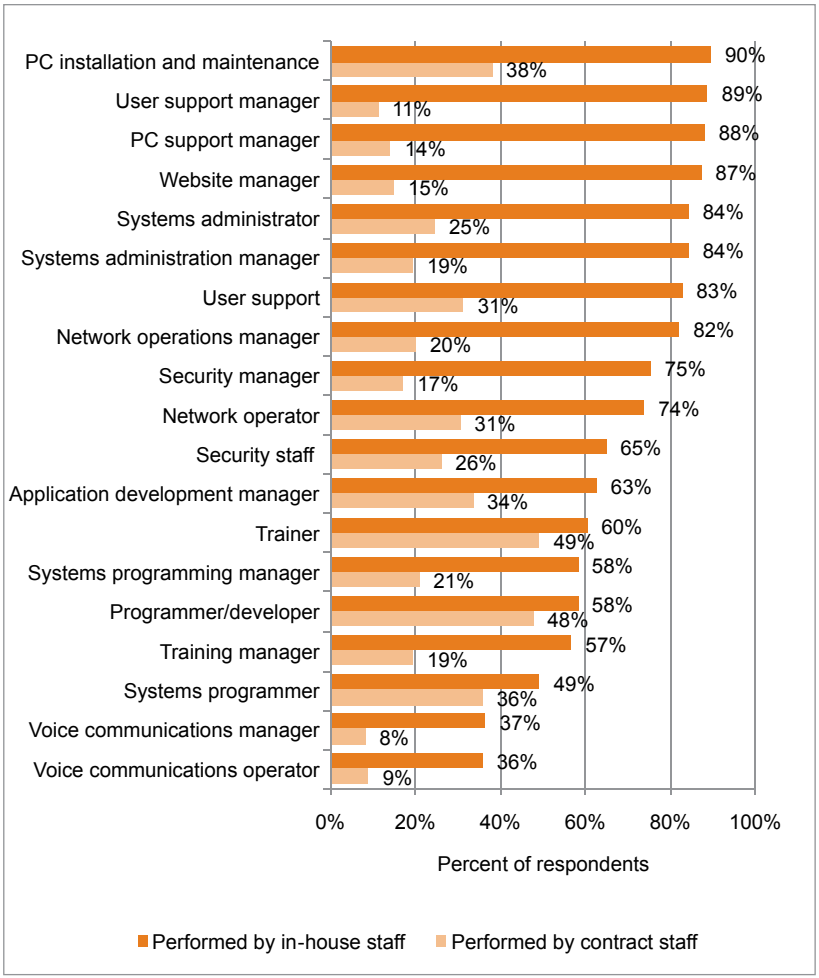
As Figure 7.13 indicates, parliaments are more demanding of external contractors than they are of their own ICT departments for achieving specific levels of service.

Figure 7.13: Service level agreements

Service level agreements	with contractors	with internal clients
Yes with all	24%	11%
Yes with some	61%	28%
Planning or considering	9%	24%
No, and not planning or considering	7%	37%

(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Questions 11-12; 123 and 120 respondents respectively)

Figure 7.14: Functions performed by in-house staff and contractors



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 26; 134 respondents)

Data from the 2009 survey suggest that parliaments tend to rely more on internal staff than on contractors. For all respondents, the average number of internal ICT staff is 38 compared to 13 contractors. For the 2009:2007 Compare Group the numbers show an almost 40% increase in the average number of internal staff (from 34 in 2007 to 47 in 2009). For contractors the 2009:2007 Compare Group shows a 20% decline (from 23 in 2007 to 18 in 2009).[13]

In this context it is useful to note how parliaments tend to use external contractors versus internal staff. Figure 7.14 shows the functions performed by these two groups.

13 Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Questions 15 and 16; Survey 2007, Section 1, Questions 12 and 14.

As was found in the 2007 survey, parliaments tend to use their own staff rather than contractors to *manage* ICT functions. They also show greater reliance on internal staff for functions that are closer to the user, such as PC installation, maintenance, and support and user support. There are no functions for which more parliaments reported using external contractors than internal staff.

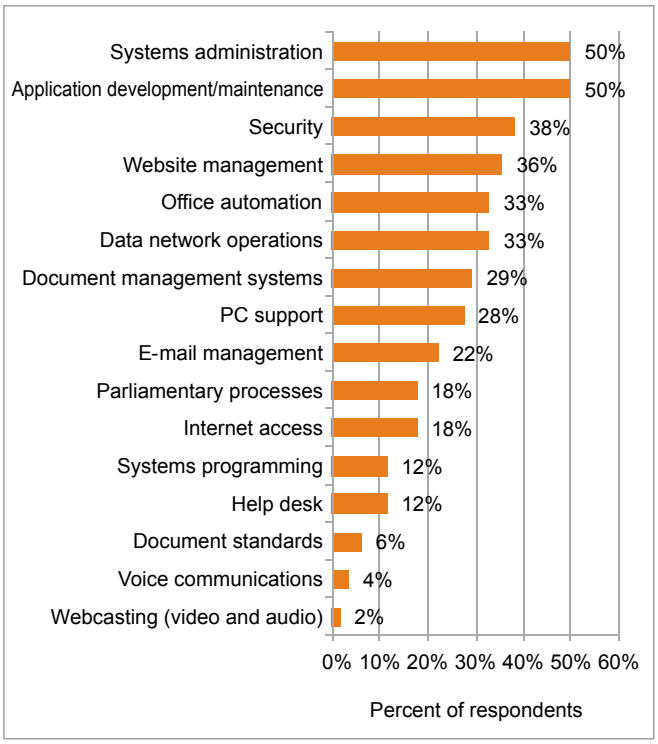
Two areas in which contractors play a relatively larger role are Application Development - both as managers and as programmers/developers - and Training - both as managers and as trainers. Based on the analysis of the responses by the 2009:2007 Compare Group, the percentage of parliaments using internal managers and staff for Application Development actually declined by about 10% in the past two years; the percentage of parliaments using contractors as programmers/developers increased by more than 25%.

Interestingly, results from the 2009:2007 Compare Group indicate that the percentage of parliaments using both internal staff and contractors for Training increased. This suggests that parliaments are placing more emphasis on training and are more likely to use both parliamentary staff and contractors for this function. Given other findings from the survey and the emphasis placed on the need for training by many participants at the World e-Parliament Conference 2009, this is a positive sign.

Training

84% of parliaments provide training, through either internal or outside services, for in-house ICT staff. Although the wording of the question regarding training in the 2007 survey was somewhat different, it was similar enough for comparison purposes. The analysis of the responses of the 2009:2007 Compare Group shows a substantial and positive increase, from 67% to 82%.

Figure 7.15: Training priorities



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 29; 112 respondents – 84% responding "yes" to Question 27)

The average percentage of staff receiving training is 46%; the median is 40%. The figures for 2009:2007 Compare Group are similar and have remained the same during the past two years: the average was 49% and the median was 50% for both years of the survey.[14] These findings may mean that while more parliaments have recognized the need for and the value of training for their own staff, there are limits to how many can be provided with training in a year.

Figure 7.15 shows a wide range of training needs for ICT staff. One half of all parliaments listed systems administration and application development among their top five priorities. Four other areas were listed by approximately one third of respondents: security (38%), website management (36%), office automation (33%), and data network operations (33%). Given the increasing concern

14 Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Questions 27 and 28; Survey 2007, Section 2, Question 16 and 17.

over security, it is a good sign that parliaments are seeking training for their staff in this critical area. The fact that many parliaments also listed office automation indicates the basic level at which many legislatures must begin their training.

The importance of training for others besides ICT staff is also being recognized. Figure 7.16 shows the percentage of parliaments that provide technology training or orientation for members and for non-ICT staff. The fact that almost 90% of parliaments either have such training/orientation programmes or are planning or considering them is very positive.

Figure 7.16: Provision of training to members and non-ICT staff

Response	Members	Non-ICT Staff
Yes	61%	71%
Planning or considering	26%	19%
No, and not planning or considering	13%	10%

(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Questions 30 and 31; 134 respondents)

SUMMARY

E-parliament is built on the foundation of a robust and responsive technical infrastructure. That foundation must include hardware, software, applications, services and security, and a well trained staff that understands the legislative environment. Advances in PCs and servers, software (particularly open source), networks, applications, and communications (especially web-based social media and mobile communication services), are providing more technical options at lower costs for parliaments to become more efficient and to increase their levels of transparency, accessibility and accountability. Well trained staff, however, including both internal and external contractors, are the single most important requirement for building and supporting the necessary infrastructure. The need for educating members and staff of the secretariat, who are primary users of technology is also being recognized. The infrastructure cannot be maintained, however, without a dedicated commitment to multi-year financial resources.

Findings from the 2009 survey regarding the technical infrastructure of parliaments suggest that there have been some advances, but also a number of continuing challenges. For example, there was an increase in the number of parliaments lacking reliable electrical power. This is an obstacle as fundamental and as serious as the digital divide.

Most parliaments, however, are doing reasonably well in providing members with the basic technology to support their legislative and oversight work and to be able to communicate with citizens. Among parliaments that have local area networks, though, almost 30% report that not all members and committees are connected. This can lead to duplicate work and to the risk of not providing timely access to information and documents to all concerned.

The use of open source software among parliament is still at a relatively low level and tends to be concentrated in a few areas, such as server operating systems.

Given the importance of websites for providing transparency and accessibility to the parliament, it is a positive finding that management and support of the website is the function supported by

the largest percentage of parliaments (87%). It is a concern, however, that of the five functions that relate to legislation, only one – a database of laws passed by the parliament – ranks in the top 10, and one other – the status of bills – has been implemented by only 55% of all parliaments. The remaining three legislative applications – bill drafting, amendment drafting, and amendment status – fall below 50%. And functions supporting oversight and budget review fall below these three.

There is considerable support for the work of the plenary. Among the top 10 activities supported through ICT by the most parliaments, the largest number (4) relate to the plenary. ICT help these sessions be more efficiently conducted and reported. Many parliaments have introduced or are planning or considering introducing a number of technologies on the floor. This includes those that have e-voting systems (81%) and digital displays (62%), and provide or are planning or considering providing personal computers (54%). Parliaments also employ a variety of techniques, including webcasting, to record and provide verbatim reports of plenary sessions. What is not known from the survey and requires further research is how helpful the individual members find these technologies to be in their deliberations and which ones they find to be the most useful.

Data from the 2009 survey also suggest that parliaments are relying more on internal staff than on contractors. Most parliaments use their own staff rather than contractors to manage ICT functions and for functions that are closer to the user, such as PC installation, maintenance, and support and user support. Two areas in which contractors play a relatively larger role are Application Development and Training.

There are indications of a growing recognition of the importance of training. 84% of parliaments now provide training for in-house ICT staff, a decisive increase from 2007. Also, there has been an increase in the percentage of parliaments that assign both internal staff and contractors to this function. The average percentage of staff receiving training each year among all parliaments is close to 50%, a figure comparable to the findings of 2007. Among the top training priorities for the most parliaments are systems administration, website management, and security. A large percentage of parliaments are also providing ICT training or orientation courses for members (61%) or are planning or considering providing it (26%). Even more of them already provide training to non-ICT staff (71%), and 19% are planning or considering it.

The overall sense from these findings is that many parliaments are making progress in implementing a robust and responsive infrastructure, particularly in providing technical support for members and plenary activities, and in conducting training programmes. However, in addition to the serious problems faced by those that do not have reliable electrical power, areas of concern are the lack of connectivity of all members and committees to intranets and the lag in development of applications that support legislative activities.

Chapter 8
The State of e-Parliament in 2010

In 2007 the survey launched by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament assessed for the first time the state of e-parliament in the world's legislatures. Based on the survey results, the *World e-Parliament Report 2008* identified three levels of adoption of technology. At the high end some legislatures were very successful in their use of ICT to support their goals. They had developed systems and were using open standards for managing most of their critical documents, had websites that presented current activities of the parliament in multiple formats, including real time video, and were creating archives of this information. They were building a wide ranging policy and legislative knowledge base available to members and the public. Legislators had computers in their offices and a laptop that provided remote access to parliament and its information. Many were exploring new ICT-based methods for communicating with citizens and for engaging them in constructive discussions of policy options. However, the survey estimated that less than 10% of respondents fell into this category, and these parliaments were all from either the high or upper middle income groups.

At the lower end, at least 10% of chambers were so constrained by resources that they could not provide even the most basic ICT services. And, based on responses to a variety of survey questions, the percentage of those that were unable to provide basic ICT services could have been as high as 30%. On the positive side, many of these parliaments had developed plans for building their ICT capacities to enhance the effectiveness of their operations. Some had established strategies that could be implemented as the resources became available.

In the middle were parliaments whose ICT systems and services would have to be described as uneven at best. Many of them had implemented ICT applications that served some of their most important functions. But many of these applications appeared to be operating at the lowest level of utility and had not been enhanced in a way that took advantage of technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness, or offered additional services. They had, for example, developed websites that had the text of bills, but did not have information about committee activities or links to related information or documents. Committees may have had websites, but they lacked standards for what should appear on the site or be retained. Many of these websites still needed a search engine for finding bills and related documents. In effect, many of these chambers had introduced some of the important ICT tools but their implementation was limited to the most essential services.

Overall the 2008 analysis made evident that there was a substantial gap in most parliaments between what is possible with ICT to support the values and goals of parliaments and what had been accomplished. This gap was especially pronounced among legislatures from countries with lower income levels.

For the 2010 analysis, this Report is proposing a statistical methodology for assessing ICT in legislatures that results in a more detailed description of their e-parliament status. The methodology assigns a numeric score to each of the six areas included in the 2009 survey: 1) Oversight and management of ICT; 2) Infrastructure, services, applications and training; 3) Systems and standards for creating legislative documents and information; 4) Library and research services; 5) Parliamentary websites; and, 6) Communication between citizens and parliament. These numeric values are added together to provide an overall score that reflects the current state of e-parliament world-wide, according to the 134 responses to the survey. The same methodology could be applied by individual parliaments to enable them to determine their relative strengths and weaknesses.

The e-parliament elements included in the methodology reflect the most important aspects identified and described by parliamentary leaders, officials, members and experts in presentations at the three World e-Parliament Conferences in 2007, 2008 and 2009. They also take into account the results of the 2007 and 2009 surveys and the findings of independent studies and research carried out on this subject.

Scores resulting from the methodology were derived from responses to selected survey questions linked to each of the six ICT areas. Some questions were excluded because they were informative but did not lend themselves to a comparative assessment. Others were deemed not as relevant as the questions included, or were judged to be insufficiently accurate or valid to warrant being part of the methodology at this time. A total of 44 of the 138 questions were used to calculate the scores, with many of them containing multiple parts.

While the methodology serves as a useful tool for looking at the state of ICT adoption in parliaments, it also has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. It is based on answers provided by each parliament, which have not been independently verified. This type of self-assessment is a valid approach, especially when the goal is to seek improvement, but the completeness and accuracy of the answers are dependent on the individuals that filled out the questionnaire. Also, not all questions apply to all parliaments because of differences in their authorities, environment and circumstances. While the methodology has tried to take this into account, it is very important to emphasize that variations among parliaments may affect any assessments that are made.

Conducting this type of assessment provides an indication of the overall state of ICT adoption in parliaments. It can be applied across the global community of legislatures, within regions, and to individual parliaments. However, it must be stressed that the methodology has not been developed with the purpose of ranking parliaments individually. Rather it is intended to assess whether legislatures have applied technologies effectively in all six domains, to identify strengths and weaknesses and to highlight where improvements can be made. Finally, the methodology establishes a baseline for measuring progress over time. A detailed explanation of the methodology is contained in Annex 1.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

E-parliament at the global level

Figure 8.1 presents the global scores for each of the six areas used in the survey. "Infrastructure, services, applications, and training" has the highest score (66%) among the six.[1] It is clear from this finding that many parliaments are making progress in implementing some of the major components of an adequate technical environment, and providing the necessary related services. Although building and maintaining a robust and responsive infrastructure may initially be costly, this can be easier to accomplish than developing complex systems that require specialized skills and changes in work patterns and practices, such as a document management system based on XML, which generally takes longer. Infrastructure, applications and services also benefits from being the most visible and often the most immediately useful component of e-parliament. An additional and positive reason that this area has scored the highest is that many parliaments are providing training programmes for ICT staff and for members.

"Oversight and management of ICT" has the second highest average score (51.3%). This is a positive finding because good planning and management is a prerequisite for the effective use of the resources required to implement technology efficiently. Nevertheless, the score represents only half of the maximum value, suggesting that there is considerable room for improvement in this area. In particular, this score indicates that there are still not enough parliaments whose senior leadership is engaged in ICT issues, and that many do not have written vision statements and regularly updated strategic plans. Despite the fact that these are sound management practices generally utilized in other organizations, many parliaments have been slow to employ them in both developing and developed countries.

"Communication between citizens and parliament" has the lowest score (27.5%). Given the challenges described in Chapter 2 that parliaments, committees, and members face in using advanced ICT-supported methods of communication, this is an understandable finding. Other reasons that may be contributing to this lower score include the fact that some of these communications technologies have emerged relatively recently, the lack of knowledge about which of the new media are the most useful for interacting with citizens, and the institutional or procedural constraints to be overcome for their implementation. What is particularly promising in this area is the large percentage of parliaments that are using interactive technologies to communicate with young people.

The scores for the three remaining areas cluster together: "Document systems and standards" (46.0%); "Parliamentary websites" (45.0%); and "Library and research services" (42.7%). These scores fall below 50% of the possible highest score and reflect the concerns noted in earlier chapters. Not enough parliaments have a document management system for proposed legislation and too few have adopted XML for any type of documents. While nearly all parliaments have a website, the score indicates the difficulty in building a successful one that meets most of the recommendations contained in the IPU *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites*.[2] Gaps are particularly serious in legislative, oversight, and budgetary information and in the implementation of standards for persons with disabilities. The relatively low score for libraries and research services is an indication of lack of support for this vital resource. This is a major limitation because parliamentary library and research services are the primary sources for objective and non partisan information and analysis, and a key means for ensuring the independence and effectiveness of the legislature.

1 Scores are presented as a percentage of the total points obtained divided by the maximum points possible for each of the six areas. Total score is based on the weighted average of the six areas.

2 Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites*, [Geneva]: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009 [http://www.ictparliament.org/resources/guidelines_en.pdf].

Figure 8.1: Global scores in each area for all parliaments[3]

Areas	Maximum Points	Average Points	Score* (Max=100)
Oversight and management of ICT	15	7.7	51.3%
Infrastructure, services, applications and training	15	9.9	66.0%
Document systems and standards	15	6.9	46.0%
Library and research services	15	6.4	42.7%
Parliamentary websites	20	9.0	45.0%
Communication between citizens and parliament	20	5.5	27.5%
Total	100	45.4	45.4%

(The score is calculated by dividing the Average Points attained by all parliaments by the maximum number of points possible)

Levels of ICT adoption

The methodology used to analyze the 2009 survey results affords a reasonably precise description of the levels of ICT adoption. Because of the differences in some of the questions in the two surveys, it is not possible to do an exact comparison between 2007 and 2009 results. It is feasible, however, to obtain an accurate picture of the parliaments using ICT successfully today, and the most important challenges that confront the parliaments whose scores indicate a very low level of adoption.

The overall score, which combines all six areas, can be used to determine which parliaments are at the highest level of ICT adoption and to describe their characteristics. Similarly, scores at the lowest level indicate those parliaments that do not have adequate ICT systems and services in place to provide the most basic support. It is important to note that there is not a specific score that marks a particular level; there is instead a continuum along which all parliaments are arrayed. The greater specificity of the scoring criteria, however, facilitates a fuller understanding of strengths and weaknesses at the global, regional, and national levels.

The total scores describing the management and adoption of ICT by individual parliaments around the world, range from 13.5% to 82.7% (of a maximum score of 100%). Of all parliaments participating in the survey, only 20% achieved a total score represented by at least two thirds of the maximum possible score (66 over 100), and consistently reached the upper or high scores in all six areas.

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that those at the high end are more likely to possess a combination of elements that satisfy the various technology needs of a legislature: a sound management organization, a solid yet flexible infrastructure, systems for managing all parliamentary documents, library and research services well supported by technology and applications, a website offering a great deal of timely and complete information with multiple channels to access it, and a variety of methods for engaging with citizens through traditional communication means as well as new and more interactive media.

Those at the lowest level of adoption do not have an appropriate management structure in place, although a surprising number do better than expected in this area. They lack an adequate infrastructure (some do not have reliable electrical power), often have no systems for managing documents, have very weak libraries, and have websites with the least amount of information (a

3 Library score adjusted for those who use sources outside the parliament for this service.

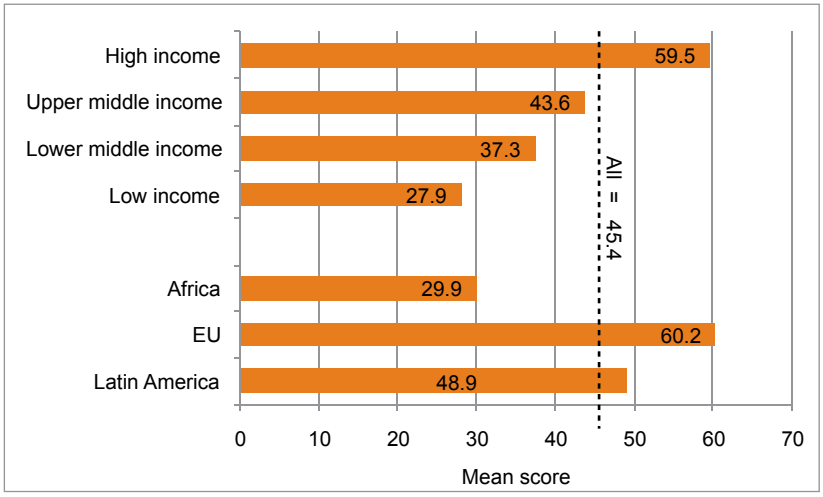
few do not have websites at all). Many have no capabilities for using ICT-supported methods to communicate with citizens.

Those in the middle vary in their strengths and weaknesses. While they sometimes have good scores in one or two areas, they have usually not achieved a high level of adoption in most categories. There is a continued unevenness in implementation similar to what was first observed in the *World e-Parliament Report 2008*. For example, just as many parliaments score above average as below average in infrastructure and document management systems. Also, while a few score higher than average for libraries, websites and communication, twice as many score below average in these three areas.

Levels of ICT adoption by income groups

Figure 8.2 shows the total score by income groups and by selected regions. As in 2008, there were sufficient responses to the survey to allow analysis of three regions[4] – Africa, Latin America, and the European Union. The general pattern shown in Figure 8.2 is consistent with other findings in this Report: the income level of a country often has a strong relationship to the level of adoption of ICT in parliament.

Figure 8.2: Average total e-parliament score by income groups and by region[5]



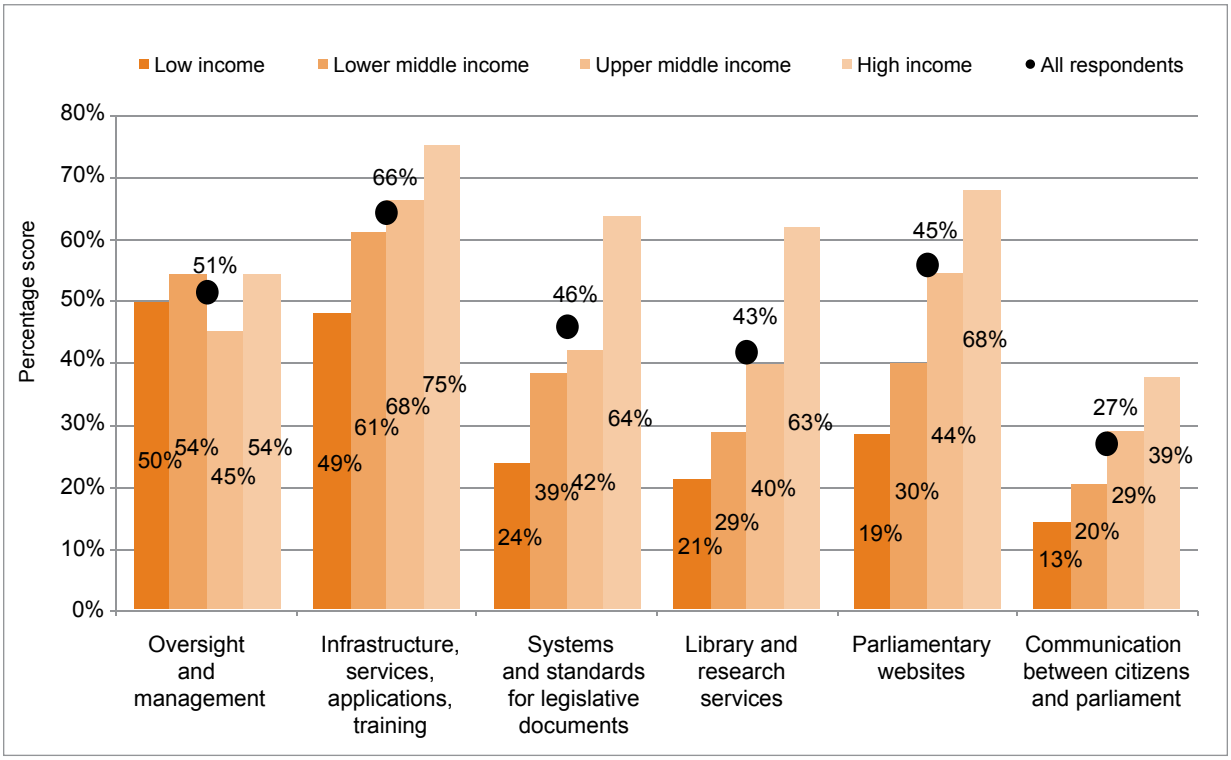
It is interesting to note that the legislatures in Latin America achieve a total score that is above the average total score for all parliaments and the mean score of the upper middle income group, suggesting an encouraging path of e-parliament development in the region.

Parliaments in the African continent are among those most affected by income level in their ICT deployment and will possibly need various forms of assistance – such as skills development, knowledge transfer, and financial support – to make progress in the next years.

4 See Annex 2.
5 There is a slight difference in the overall score in Figure 8.1 (45.4) and this figure (45.2) due to rounding.

Figure 8.3, which shows the scores for each area by income groups, indicates that this general pattern varies among areas of ICT. For example, the extent of the differences in "Oversight and management of ICT" and "Infrastructure, services, applications, and training" is much less between parliaments in the low and high income groups than the differences in other areas. This is similar to the findings noted above that suggest that ICT management and infrastructure are areas in which legislatures in developing countries are doing comparatively better than in other areas.

Figure 8.3: Average scores for each area of e-parliament by income groups[6]



It is particularly interesting to note that the size of the difference between parliaments in the high income group and parliaments in all other income groups is very large for document management systems, libraries, and websites, suggesting a substantial gap in these three domains. This difference is further reflected in the fact that the absolute difference in total scores between each group and its neighbors in the next highest income level is largest for those from the high income group (see Figure 8.2). That is, the gap in performance between those in the high income group and those in the upper middle income group is substantially greater than the gap between those in the upper middle income group compared to those in the lower middle income group, and those in the lower middle income group compared to those in the lower income group. This indicates that parliaments in the high income group are operating at a more advanced ICT level in both absolute and relative terms. Whether this gap continues to widen or narrow will be an issue for future surveys and analyses, as there is still room for improvement even in the high income group, as shown in Figure 8.4.

6 The scores in Figure 8.3 are calculated by dividing the average number of points for each area by the maximum number of points possible for each area. See Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.4: Difference in each area between maximum points and average points for parliaments in the high income group[7]

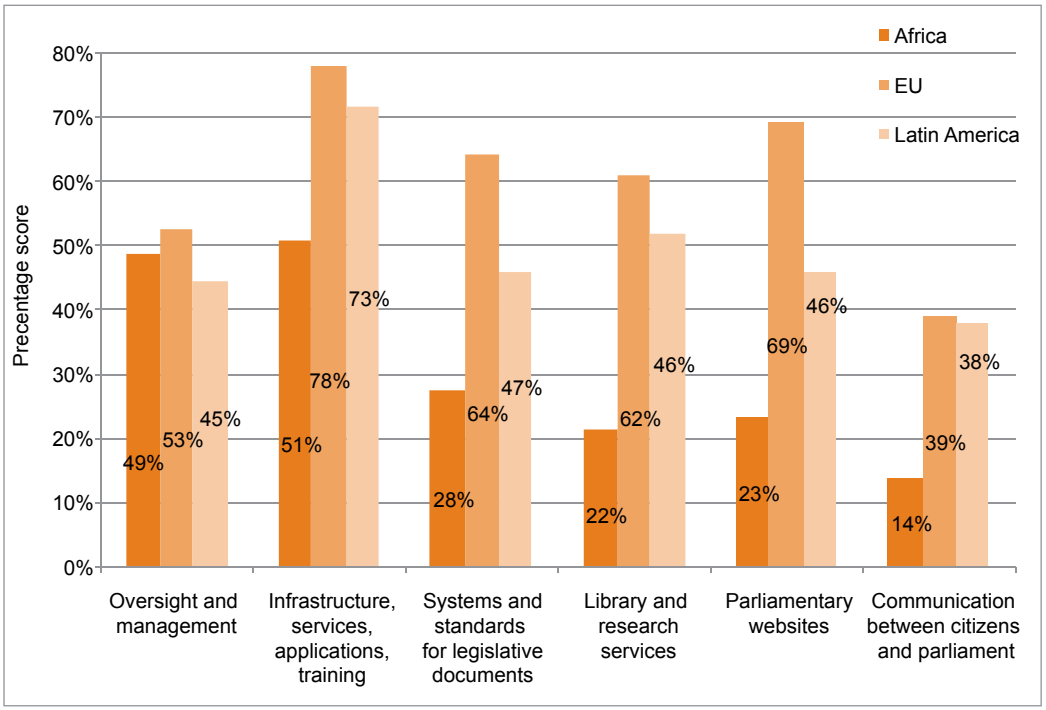
Areas	Maximum Points	Average Points	Diff.
Oversight and management of ICT	15	8.1	-6.9
Infrastructure, services, applications and training	15	11.2	-3.8
Document systems and standards	15	9.6	-5.4
Library and research services	15	9.4	-5.6
Parliamentary websites	20	13.5	-6.5
Communication between citizens and parliament	20	7.7	-12.3
Total	100	59.5	-40.5

Levels of ICT adoption by selected regions

Figure 8.5 shows the average scores for each ICT area for the selected regions. The findings suggest that these regions are fairly comparable in "Oversight and management of ICT" and that parliaments in the European Union are well advanced in the development of their websites.

Interestingly, parliaments in Latin America do almost as well as those in the European Union in three areas: "Infrastructure, services, applications and training", "Library and research services", and "Communication between citizens and parliament". This suggests, among other things, that south-south cooperation could potentially be as useful as north-south, particularly in "Communication between citizens and parliament" where nearly all legislatures are progressing slowly but deliberately. There may also be important cultural differences that need to be taken into account when considering the experiences of other parliaments in each of these areas.

Figure 8.5: Average points for each area of e-parliament by selected regions



7 Library score adjusted for those parliaments that use outside sources for this service.

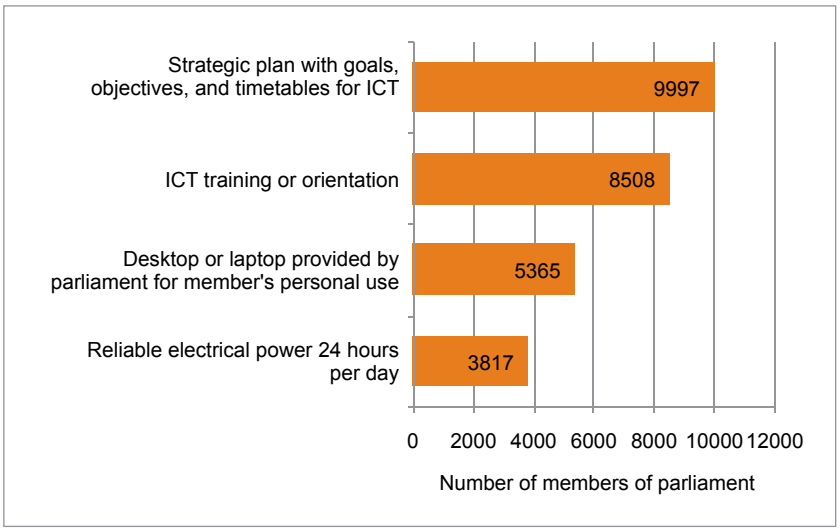
The impact on members of parliaments

An alternative way of looking at levels of e-parliament is to examine the relationship between the adoption of technology and its impact on legislators. Figures 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, and 8.9 provide some indications of how the current world-wide state of e-parliament affects members individually. [8]

Of the 27,249 parliamentarians represented in the legislatures that responded to the survey:

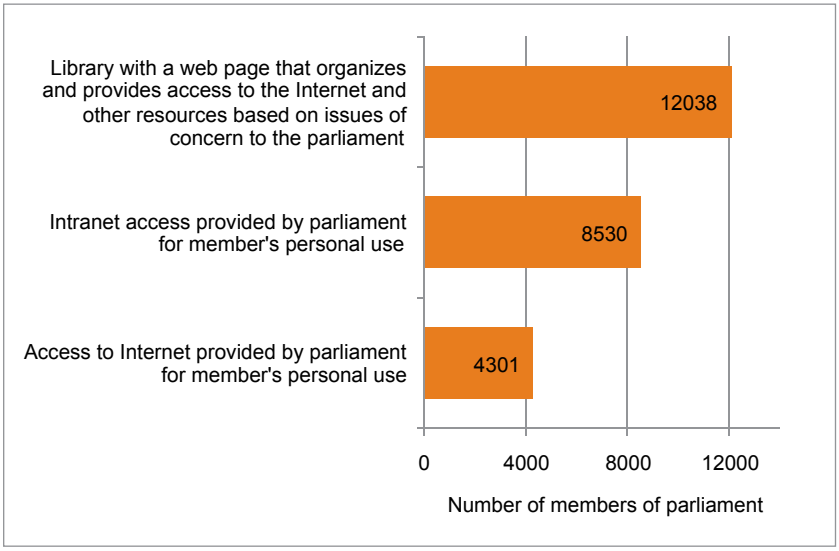
- 3,817 (14 %) cannot count on reliable electrical power in the parliament.
- 5,365 (20%) do not have a personal desktop or laptop computer at their disposal.
- 8,508 (31%) are not offered any type of ICT training or orientation programmes by their parliament.
- 9,997 (37%) work in legislatures that have not yet devised a strategic plan for ICT.

Figure 8.6: Number of members in parliaments that lack the items listed, in the areas of infrastructure and management



These represent serious infrastructure and managerial obstacles that are preventing members of parliament from using technologies to the benefit of their daily work (see Figure 8.6).

Figure 8.7: Number of members in parliaments that lack the items listed, in the areas of access to information and research



As shown in Figure 8.7, other obstacles influencing the ability of members to search for information and make informed decisions have the following impact on legislators:

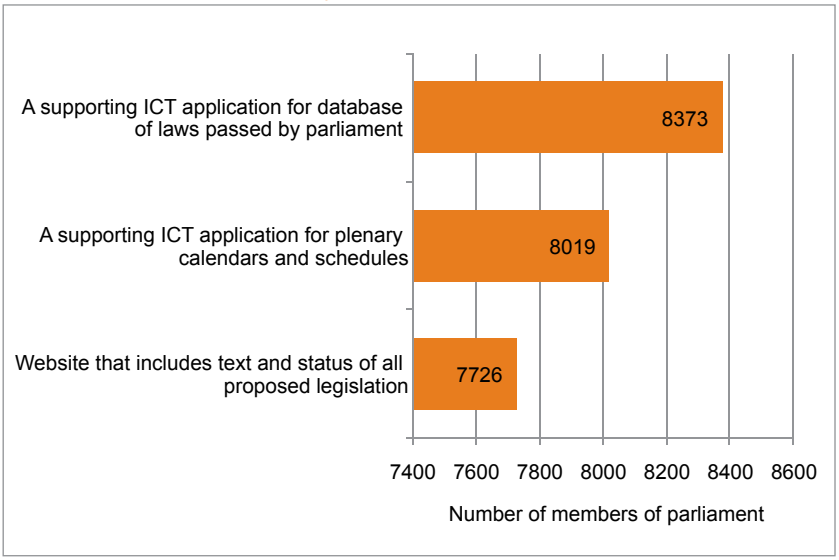
- 4,301 (16%) do not have personal access to the Internet in the parliament.
- 8,530 (31%) are not provided with personal access to the parliament's intranet.
- 12,038 (44%) do not have access to a library website that organizes information on issues of concern to members.

8 The data provided in these Figures was obtained by crossreferencing selected questions from the survey and the total number of seats of the chambers that responded to it.

Figure 8.8 highlights how the lack of ICT applications can create additional barriers by making it more difficult for members to have easy access to key parliamentary information:

- 7,726 (28%) cannot access the text and current status of proposed legislation on their parliament's websites.
- 8,019 (29%) cannot access the plenary calendars and schedules on-line, either through an intranet or the Internet.
- 8,373 (31%) cannot access a database with the laws passed by the parliament.

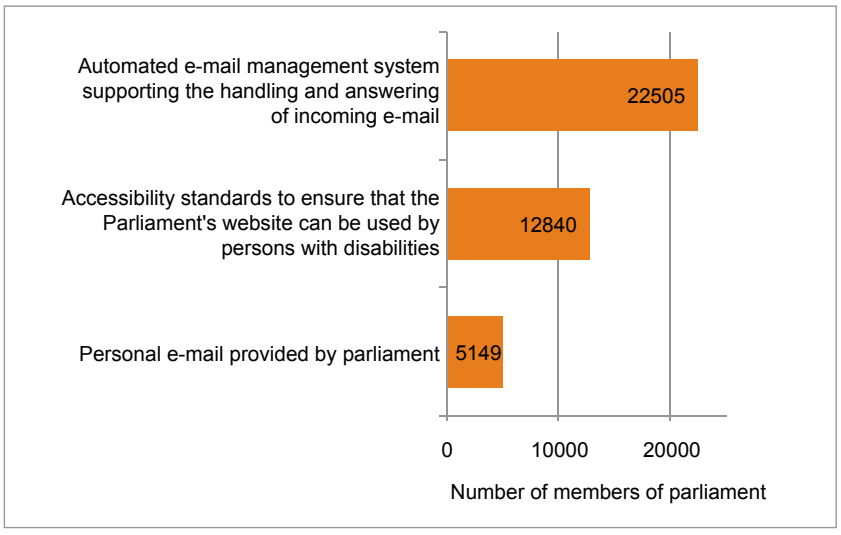
Figure 8.8: Number of members in parliaments that lack the items listed, in the area of access to parliamentary documents



Lastly, Figure 8.9 shows how the lack of software and systems is affecting the possibility of members to be in contact with their constituencies:

- 5,149 (19%) are not yet provided with personal e-mail accounts by their parliament.
- 12,840 (47%) serve in parliaments that have not implemented accessibility standards for persons with disabilities on their websites, disallowing these citizens to follow members' and parliament's work.
- 22,505 (83%) are in parliaments that do not provide a system for managing and supporting the answering of incoming e-mail.

Figure 8.9: Number of members in parliaments that lack the items listed, in the area of communication with citizens



ICT and the values of parliamentary democracy

As repeatedly stated in this Report, technology is not an end in itself but one of the means for supporting the work of legislative bodies throughout the world. While in today's world many legislatures have acknowledged the role of ICT in assisting parliament's most important responsibilities - representation, lawmaking and scrutiny - the link between technology adoption and parliamentary democratic values may be less evident.

An informative and useful step for parliaments is to associate the results of the survey and the scoring methodology to the framework describing the parliamentary contribution to democracy defined by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.[9] This framework, discussed extensively in the *World e-Parliament Report 2008* and recalled in Chapter 1 of this Report, identifies a number of important parliamentary objectives and values. These include transparency, accessibility, accountability, and effectiveness. The definition of e-parliament used by this report reflects these values and expands on them to take into account the impact of technology:

> "An e-parliament is a legislature that is empowered to be more **open, transparent** and **accountable** through ICT. It also empowers people, in all their diversity, to be more **engaged** in public life by providing **higher quality information** and **greater access** to documents and activities of the legislative body. An e-parliament is an **efficient organization** where stakeholders use information and communication technologies to **perform their primary functions** of lawmaking, representation, and oversight **more effectively.** Through the application of modern technology and standards and the adoption of supportive policies, an e-parliament fosters the development of an equitable and inclusive information society."

The six areas of technology assessed through the scoring criteria are closely tied to the values of parliamentary democracy. Based on the discussion and findings in Chapter 3, for example, the score for parliamentary websites has a natural and close relationship to the value of transparency. This encompasses both the documents that parliaments provide to the public and the tools available to citizens to find and access them. The scoring criteria for "Parliamentary websites" contained questions regarding legislative, budget, and oversight information and documents; tools for searching them; and standards for ensuring that websites are accessible to persons with disabilities. Making the text of proposed legislation available is clearly related to transparency, as is publishing the speeches and debate in plenary on a timely basis.

Accessibility in the IPU framework refers to involving the public, including the associations and movements of civil society, in the work of parliament. The scoring criteria for "Communication between citizens and parliament" include survey questions on the various ways that parliaments, committees, and members engage with citizens, as well as methods available to citizens to be involved with the legislature. Although many of the communication methods surveyed are uni-directional – that is from the parliament or its members to the public – a number of them included in the criteria are more interactive and the scores for this area reflect their use.

The IPU framework describes accountability as members of parliament being responsible to the electorate for their performance in office and the integrity of their conduct. The definition of e-parliament includes the institution itself as well as the members. Some of the questions related to transparency are also related to, and overlap with accountability. These questions, most of which are in the section of the survey dealing with websites, cover three areas: a) the roles, responsi-

9 Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: A Guide to Good Practice,* Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2006.

bilities, and organization of parliament, its committees, and its members, thereby defining what parliaments and members should be accountable for; b) the leaders and the members and the constituencies they represent, thereby identifying who should be accountable; and, c) the actions of the parliament and its members in the current and previous years, which provide the basis for judging accountability.

Effectiveness can be assessed at the local, national, and international level in the IPU framework. At all three levels it refers to the effective organization of business in accordance with democratic norms and values. The e-parliament definition expands this to include efficiency. These two values of efficiency and effectiveness are reflected in the ranking criteria that relate to a) oversight and management of ICT; b) document systems and standards; c) libraries and research services; and, d) infrastructure, applications, services and training. Taken together, these areas enable parliaments to be more efficient in their operations, for example by producing and disseminating documents more quickly, and more effective in fulfilling their responsibilities, for example through the ability to access independent sources of information and analysis when considering policy issues and proposed legislation.

A summary of these values and the findings from the survey that relate to them most directly are shown in Box 8.1. Although these findings do not fully reflect all facets of transparency, accessibility and effectiveness, they do demonstrate the contribution that technology can provide to achieving higher standards in these four areas. The survey results therefore provide some indication of the extent to which parliaments have used technology in support of these values, but can not be interpreted as an indicator of their attainment in absolute terms for the simple reason that ICT represents only one of the means for parliament to achieve these objectives.

By presenting this analysis the intention of this document is to raise awareness among parliamentary leaders, members, and staff about the nexus between ICT adoption and transparency, accountability, accessibility, and effectiveness, which could play an important role at the time of envisioning, planning and managing ICT in the parliamentary context. As more parliaments are able to provide voting records to the public, enhance their websites by adhering to standards for persons with disabilities, and connect their libraries to local area networks, their accountability, transparency, accessibility and efficiency will also improve. Tracked over time, the survey questions can also provide an indication of progress of ICT adoption according to these values.

Box 8.1: Survey findings relevant to values and objectives

Transparency: *being open to the nation through different media, and transparent in the conduct of its business*

Relevant findings from the survey questions relating to this objective:

- *Information available on websites, including:*
  - Documents and information about actions
  - Quality of information
  - Explanations of information
- *Tools for finding, receiving, and viewing information*
- *Standards of accessibility (for persons with disabilities)*

Accessibility: *involving the public, including the associations and movements of civil society, in the work of parliament*

Relevant findings from the survey questions relating to this objective:

- *Communication methods and channels*
- *Interactive tools*

Accountability: *members of parliament being accountable to the electorate for their performance in office and integrity of conduct*

Relevant findings from the survey questions relating to this objective:

- *Roles, responsibilities, and organization of parliament, its committees, and its members*
- *Leaders, members and the constituencies they represent*
- *Actions of the parliament and its members in the current and previous years*

Efficiency and effectiveness: *the organization of business is done in accordance with these democratic values, and the performance of parliament's legislative and oversight functions in a manner that serves the needs of the whole population.*

Relevant findings from the survey questions relating to this objective:

- *Envisioning, planning, and managing*
- *Document systems and standards*
- *Libraries and research services*
- *Infrastructure*

SUMMARY

For its 2010 analysis the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament developed a statistical methodology for assessing the state of ICT in legislatures. The methodology assigns a numeric score to each of the six areas included in the 2009 survey and then calculates an overall score that reflects the current state of e-parliament world-wide. Scores are given as a percentage of 100, which reflects the highest score possible for each area and also for the total.

Among the six categories, infrastructure receives the highest score (66%). It is clear from this finding that many parliaments are achieving some success in implementing a robust and responsive ICT infrastructure. Building an infrastructure may be initially costly, but it is often a critical first step before undertaking more complex applications. The high score for infrastructure also reflects the fact that more parliaments are providing training programmes for ICT staff and for members.

Oversight and management of ICT has the second highest average score (51.3%). This is a positive finding but it still reaches only 50% of the mark, suggesting that there is considerable room for improvement. In particular, this score indicates that there are still not enough parliaments whose senior leadership is engaged in ICT issues, and that have written vision statements and regularly updated strategic plans.

The scores for the three remaining areas are at about the same level: document management systems and standards (46%); parliamentary websites (45%); and libraries and research services (42.7%). These scores are all less than 50% of the maximum possible and reflect the fact that not enough parliaments have key capabilities, such as a document management system for proposed legislation, XML for any type of documents, and a successful website that meets most of the IPU recommended guidelines. The relatively low score for libraries and research services is an indication of lack of support for this vital resource.

Communication between citizens and parliament has the lowest score (27.5%). There are a number of challenges that parliaments, committees, and members face in using new and advanced ICT-supported methods of communication, including the lack of knowledge about which of the new media are the most useful. It is promising that a large percentage of parliaments are using interactive technologies to communicate with young people.

This methodology makes it possible to determine which parliaments are at the highest and lowest levels of e-parliament and to describe their characteristics. It is important to note that there is not a specific score that marks a particular level; there is instead a continuum along which all parliaments are arrayed. The specificity of the scoring criteria provides a fuller understanding of strengths and weaknesses at the global, regional, and national levels.

Based on their scores, parliaments at the top level are more likely to have sound management, a solid yet flexible infrastructure, systems for managing all parliamentary documents, library and research services well supported by ICT, a website offering a great deal of timely and complete information with multiple channels to access it, and a variety of methods for engaging with citizens through traditional communication means as well as new and more interactive media. Those at the lowest level of adoption do not have an appropriate management structure in place (although a surprising number do better than expected in this area). They lack an adequate infrastructure (some do not have reliable electrical power), often have no systems for managing documents, have very weak libraries, and websites with the least amount of information (a few do not have websites at all). Many have no capabilities for using ICT-supported methods to communicate with citizens. Those in the middle vary in their strengths and weaknesses. While they sometimes have good scores in one or two areas, they have usually not achieved a high level of adoption in most categories. There is a continued unevenness in implementation similar to what was first observed in the 2008 Report.

Analyses of the scoring factors by income groups indicate that income level often has a direct relationship to the level of adoption of ICT. However, the pattern varies among areas of ICT. For example, the extent of the differences in oversight and management of ICT and in infrastructure applications, services and training is much less between parliaments in the low and high income groups than the differences in other areas. The size of the difference between parliaments in the high income group and all other income groups is also very large for document management systems, libraries, and websites, suggesting a substantial gap in these three areas. At the regional

level, the parliaments in Latin America achieve a total score that is above the average total score for all parliaments and the mean score of the upper middle income group, suggesting an encouraging path of e-parliament development for these legislatures.

An alternative way of looking at levels of e-parliament is to examine the relationship between the adoption of technology and its impact on legislators. The analysis suggests that there are serious infrastructure and managerial obstacles that prevent members from using technologies that could be of benefit in their daily work; limit their access to key parliamentary information and documents as well as policy related research and analyses; and constrain their ability to be in contact with their constituencies. For example, of the 27,249 legislators represented in parliaments that responded to the survey, 16% do not have personal access to the Internet in their parliament; 20% do not have a personal desktop or laptop computer at their disposal; 28% cannot access the text and current status of proposed legislation on their parliament's websites; 31% are not offered any type of ICT training or orientation programs by their parliament; and 47% serve in parliaments that have not implemented accessibility standards for persons with disabilities on their websites, disallowing these citizens the ability to follow members' and parliament's work.

Finally, it is useful to consider the relationship between the results of the survey and the IPU framework that describes the parliamentary contribution to democracy, focusing on the characteristics of transparency, accessibility, accountability, and effectiveness. Although the findings do not fully reflect all facets of these values, they do assess e-parliament elements that contribute to them in important ways. For example, making the text of proposed legislation available is clearly related to transparency, as is publishing the speeches and debate in plenary on a timely basis. Similarly, the use of interactive communication tools is related to accessibility as defined by the IPU, because it supports the engagement of citizens and civic society organizations in the work of the parliament. The survey results therefore provide some indication of the extent to which parliaments have achieved these values and the opportunities that exist for reaching a higher level. Tracked over time, the survey questions can also provide an indication of progress in achieving these values.

PART 3

STRENGTHENING LEGISLATURES THROUGH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Chapter 9
Cooperation and Collaboration

Since the release of the first World e-Parliament Report in 2008, the theme of information and communication technologies in parliament has received growing international attention, both at the global and regional levels. It has attracted the interest of Speakers and Presiding Officers, members, parliamentary staff and experts in legislatures around the world.

At the highest political level, for example, three important gatherings of Speakers and Presidents of legislative bodies dealt with e-parliament related issues in the second half of 2009 and first quarter of 2010. The VIII meeting of the Speakers of Parliaments of G8 countries[1] (Rome, September 2009) addressed the topic of "the use of new communication technologies in the relationship between parliaments and civil society", the V Ibero-American Parliamentary Forum[2] (Lisbon, November 2009) discussed "information and communication technologies at the service of modern parliaments", and the 20th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth[3] (Delhi, January 2010) reflected on "the use of technology in the parliamentary context". Also, at the 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (Arusha, October 2009) legislators addressed "the role of parliament in shaping the Information Society" from the perspective of e-parliament.

Over the last three years the annual World e-Parliament Conference[4] has emerged as the most recognized and respected forum of the community of parliaments for addressing both the policy and technical issues involving the use of information and communication technology in the legislative setting. These meetings have created the opportunity for an increasingly sophisticated and extensive parliamentary dialogue on e-parliament. The growing participation of parliamentary delegations to this annual meeting testifies to the desire of legislatures to more effectively harness ICT for strengthening their institutional responsibilities and their interest in sharing good practices, experiences, and concerns among peers. In 2007 the first conference attracted to Geneva about 250 participants from 70 delegations; in 2008 the second conference brought together more than 300 participants from 80 delegations to the European Parliament in Brussels; and the third meeting in 2009 saw more than 400 participants from over 90 parliamentary delegations convening at the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington D.C. The expansion of policy and technical subjects dealt with by this conference, the attendance of parliamentary leaders and experts, the quality of the debates, and the perception of the meeting as a true platform for ongoing dialogue were at the centre of the increased involvement of legislatures from around the world.

In all of these global meetings, participants highlighted the value of inter-parliamentary cooperation as one of the least expensive and potentially most effective ways for parliaments to develop e-parliament policies and enhance their use of technology. Emphasis was also placed on coopera-

1 http://g8presidenti.camera.it/inglese/303/schedabase.asp
2 http://www.forumlisboa2009.parlamento.pt/
3 http://www.cspoc.org/
4 http://www.ictparliament.org/index.php/world-e-parliament-conferences

tion at the regional level, which, despite language and communication barriers, offers unique opportunities to share resources, overcome lack of know-how and establish common approaches.

Furthermore, these meetings made evident how the current context of Information Society developments 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 possibility to overcome geographical barriers and to learn from each other.

At this pivotal time, consensus has emerged on the need for the international community - including the community of technologically advanced legislatures - to strongly support parliaments in developing nations through capacity development and to help them make concrete progress in e-parliament. While acknowledging the obstacles posed by the digital divide, it has also become evident that parliaments in emerging democracies and developing nations should accept the responsibility of making fundamental and sustained ICT investments even if they appear expensive. Appropriate and cost effective communication technologies, based on the latest developments, can be leveraged to support a more informed, competent, transparent, and accountable legislature. There is a need for these legislatures to commit their own human and financial resources to ICT improvements, in addition to those of supporting organizations, as an important means to enhance their law-making, oversight, and representative responsibilities.

RECENT PROGRESS IN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

The 2008 Report described several existing mechanisms for fostering global and regional cooperation[5], such as the ASGP, ECPRD, NCSL, APKN, Red FTiP, and IFLA.[6] This Report focuses its attention on the progress made in the last two years by some of these networks and by newly established efforts to enhance technologies in the parliamentary environment.

IFLA Section on Parliamentary Library and Research Services

The Section on Parliamentary Library and Research Services of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is a worldwide network of 111 members from 50 countries that facilitates the exchange of knowledge and expertise among parliamentary libraries through annual conferences and workshops. The Section, which is the largest professional network dealing with library and information services in the parliamentary environment, has no permanent secretariat, is entirely managed through the voluntary work of the membership and holds its annual conference in conjunction with the IFLA annual meeting.

Legislators rely on a great amount of information as they prepare and vote on legislation, monitor issues, develop policy solutions, influence government decision-making and assess the success of government programmes. Parliamentary libraries contribute to the effectiveness of parliaments by providing members with authoritative, independent, non-partisan and relevant information, particularly in developing countries where often governments remain the main keepers of information. As libraries and research services have evolved greatly in the last decades due to the emergence of new technologies, the most recent meetings of the Section have increasingly turned their focus to the role that ICT can play in strengthening parliamentary information

5 United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, [New York]: United Nations, 2008, pp.141-150 [http://www.ictparliament.org].

6 Association of Secretaries General of Parliament (ASGP), European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN), Red de los Funcionarios Tecnólogos en los Parlamentos (Red FTiP), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

services (Cape Town, 2007[7]; Ottawa, 2008[8]; Rome, 2009[9]). It is also notable that in 2008 the Section organized a joint meeting with the IPU and the ASGP on "Informing Democracy: Building Capacity to Meet Parliamentarians' Information and Knowledge Needs"[10], which also partially addressed innovation aspects of servicing members of parliaments.

In particular, the last meeting of the Section held in Rome in August 2009 on "Digital Information for Democracy: Management, Access and Preservation" explored key cross-cutting topics falling in between the traditional library challenges and the IT environments, such as websites (Internet and intranet) and digital reference/information services; digitization processes and preservation; social networking tools and collaborative work; improved efficiency of library services through ICT; and, deployment of open source software. The meeting attracted more than 200 librarians, researchers and IT managers representing 64 countries and 86 legislative assemblies. In its three days of intensive discussions, the meeting emphasized the need to support the role of librarians in exploring innovation by building cooperative relations with parliamentary ICT experts, the necessity of using standards across libraries, and of cooperating and networking at different levels with parliamentary and non-parliamentary libraries.

In conjunction with this meeting, the IFLA Section, the Italian Joint Parliamentary Library and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament organized the workshop "Leveraging Technology for Parliamentary Library and Research Services" as a training module that targeted 45 librarians and ICT experts from more than 20 developing countries. The training represented a successful example of a collaborative effort among the partners.

The Section recently published a revised edition of the *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries*[11], which take into account the changes in the provision of information services due to the development of the Internet and ICT management tools. It is also preparing the next annual meeting to be held in Sweden in 2010 on the theme "Open Access to Parliamentary Information".

These are all promising signs for the adoption of technology by parliamentary libraries, particularly in view of the findings outlined in Chapter 6. The work undertaken by the Section has made its members increasingly aware of the challenges and opportunities of innovation and of how to professionally apply technology tools, including new media, in the library context. However, more needs to be done through external funding to mobilize the expertise of the Section membership to support parliamentary libraries in developing nations that need assistance and skills development.

The Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network

The institution of the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN) was discussed for the first time at a meeting hosted by the National Assembly of Nigeria in Abuja in November 2007. In June 2008, the APKN was formally established as a result of the conference hosted by the People's Assembly of Egypt in Cairo, where representatives of 36 parliamentary assemblies from across Africa finalized its Charter. As of 2009, the Charter had been officially endorsed by 14 parliamentary assemblies.[12]

7 http://ifla.parliament.gov.za/Intro.aspx
8 http://www.preifla2008.ca/
9 http://www.preifla2009.parlamento.it/
10 http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/asgp08.htm
11 Cuninghame, Keith, *Guidelines for Legislative Libraries* [2nd completely updated and enl. edition], Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 2009.
12 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 APKN mission is to support the work of African assemblies by establishing mechanisms and procedures for exchanging information and experience in areas of common interest. It also intends to strengthen cooperation for institutional development, capacity building and staff training, and collaborate on technology development to serve parliamentary functions. The major areas of cooperation include legislative processes, information and research services, information and communication technologies, and public information and media relations.

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

Although the setting up of these governance mechanisms is still in process, a number of important activities have already been realized. Under the APKN framework, a set of Legislative Drafting Guidelines[13] were elaborated in five languages (Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish) and the Africa News Monitor[14] system was deployed to facilitate the retrieval of useful on-line news from around the world.

In March 2009, African legislators met in Kigali at the conference "Development of an equitable Information Society in Africa: The role of Parliaments" hosted by the Parliament of Rwanda and organized in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) under the aegis of the Pan African Parliament. Subsequently, the ICT Thematic Group of the APKN met in Cape Town to discuss Internet Governance issues in Africa and what role parliaments can play in ensuring the development of an equitable Information Society. Participants agreed on an action plan[15] to be implemented before the next APKN Conference scheduled for October 2010. It must be noted that in October 2009, the APKN's mandate received strong support from the Pan African Parliament Speakers' Conference in Johannesburg, raising expectations for the realization of a wider membership during 2010.

In December 2009, the three-day workshop "Strengthening the Cooperation among Parliamentary Libraries in the Framework of the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN)" was hosted by the Italian Joint Parliamentary Library in Rome and supported by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament and the Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan, with the cooperation of the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments. This meeting led to the establishment of the Working Group on Information and Research within the APKN. The Working Group will enable parliamentary libraries of African assemblies to join efforts and resources using ICT tools in order to enhance the quality of their services. Heads of parliamentary libraries and senior library staff of 23 parliamentary assemblies committed to undertake the following main activities in 2010: a) building a directory of parliamentary libraries in Africa; b) preparing four common dossiers on topics of continental relevance; c) creating a multilingual subject index for documents retrieval across languages; and d) building an African repository of laws on Information Society-related issues.

Despite the many challenges ahead, the progress made by the APKN is evident and commendable. The network represents an enormous opportunity for African assemblies to make advancements in various areas of parliamentary work through the sharing of available resources and

13 http://drafting.apkn.org
14 http://anm.apkn.org
15 http://www.parliaments.info/documents/apkn-action-plan-ict

knowledge, by strengthening regional inter-parliamentary cooperation at many levels, and by finding common ground for institutional developments.

Secretaries General Forum of Asia-Pacific Parliaments

In July 2009, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea organized and hosted the first Secretaries General Forum of Asia-Pacific Parliaments (SGFAPP). The Forum was held in response to the need for more systematic and consistent exchange of information among parliaments in the region. The five-day event focusing on e-parliament brought together 83 delegates from 42 parliaments of 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 shall be held on a regular basis. The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea committed providing support to the Forum in the future, including by building a dedicated website.

Inter-parliamentary network in Latin America and the Caribbean

During a workshop held in November 2009 representatives of parliaments from Latin America and the Caribbean agreed to put in motion a process of regional dialogue designed to establish a formal mechanism of inter-parliamentary cooperation in the region. The meeting, titled "The Impact of New Technologies in Parliament's Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean", was organized by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in collaboration with the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The event was attended by more than 75 participants, including members of parliament, Secretaries General, and ICT Directors, representing 21 countries of the region. The workshop built on the results of a meeting held in 2007 that brought together ICT staff of Latin American legislatures to discuss possible models of cooperation designed to support ICT in parliaments.

Participants adopted a final communiqué that stressed the importance of ICT to strengthen parliaments' legislative, representational and oversight functions, and called on the IDB to facilitate the creation of an inter-parliamentary network on the use of ICT in parliaments.

The next steps towards the creation of the network will be supported by the IDB through its project "Connected Parliaments: Impact of New Technologies in the Transformation of the Legislative Branch".

EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENTARY NETWORKS

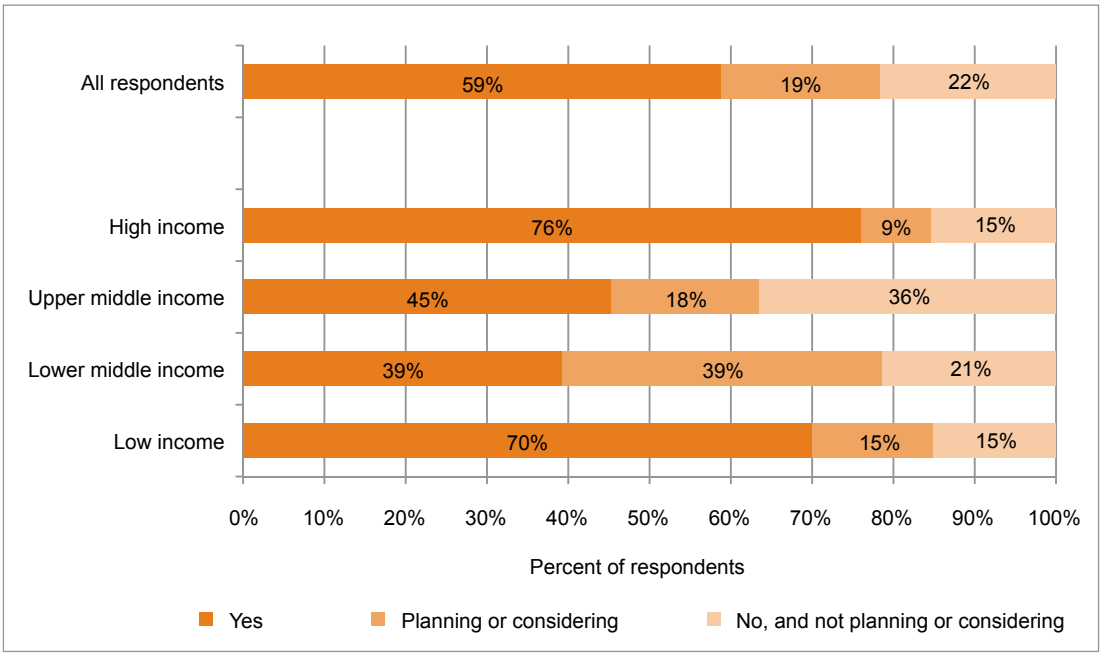
The progress made by the newly established regional networks, coupled with the activities of those already in existence at the global, regional and sub-regional levels, is reflected in the 2009 survey findings. Figure 9.1 shows the level of participation of parliaments in formal mechanisms of cooperation dealing with ICT issues. 59% of parliaments reported that they were members of at least one parliamentary network, while 19% are considering joining one. However, 22% stated that they are not considering becoming a member of formal mechanisms of cooperation on ICT issues. This may be due to their lack of opportunity to do so, either because some networks are not yet fully established or because there are no plans to establish one in their particular region.

As previously noted, parliament-to-parliament exchanges can be a cost effective means of addressing common challenges. Therefore, it is a concern that at this time, when sharing the benefits of ICT can be especially helpful, at least 40% of parliaments do not have current exchanges with peers.

The analysis of participation by income level shows an interesting pattern. Legislatures in the high and low income groups have the largest percentage of participation (76% and 70% respectively), while the participation of those in the upper and lower middle income groups is at about 40%. However, chambers in the lower middle income group show stronger intentions than those in the upper middle income group to join a formal network in the near future. These results may reflect the efforts that are being made in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean to consolidate new instruments of inter-parliamentary cooperation. When asked to identify the networks in which they participated, parliaments mentioned the European Centre for Parliamentary Documentation and Research (ECPRD) and the Africa Parliament Knowledge Network (APKN) most frequently. Although not formally a network, the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament received the third highest number of listings.

Other networks less frequently mentioned by legislatures include IPEX (Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange), GLIN (Global Legislative Information Network), the SADC Parliamentary Forum's IT experts forum, the Parliamentary Association of Secretaries General of the Portuguese Speaking Parliaments, and the Nordic Countries Parliaments ICT Conference.

Figure 9.1: Participation in formal networks concerning ICT, by income groups



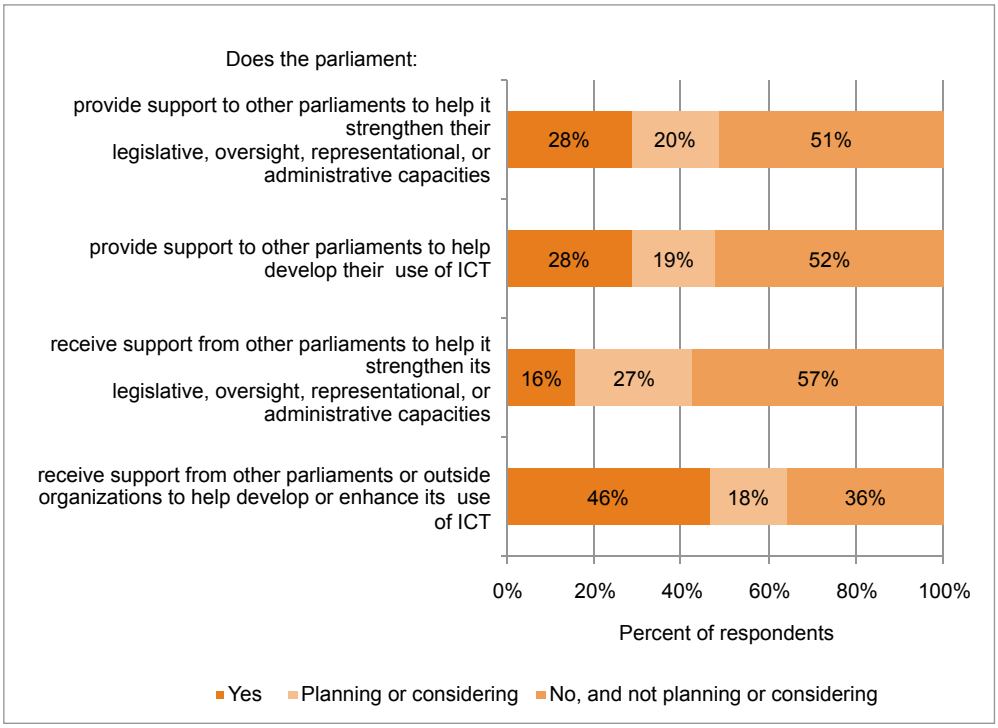
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 18: 134 respondents)

THE NATURE OF INTER-PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

To understand the current nature of inter-parliamentary cooperation and institutional development in the ICT domain, the 2009 survey asked all parliaments whether they were providing support to other legislatures to help them strengthen their legislative, oversight, representational or administrative capacities. It also posed a more precise question concerning e-parliament by requesting legislatures to indicate if they were *providing* support, or would be *willing to provide* support, to other chambers in the ICT area. Two similar questions inquired whether parliaments were *receiving* support to strengthen their legislative, oversight, representative or administrative capacities and to enhance the use of ICT. It must be noted that in the latter instance the survey asked if the support was received not only from other parliaments but also from outside organizations.

As Figure 9.2 shows, just over one fourth (28%) of parliaments provide support to other legislatures in the broader areas of parliamentary development and for developing their use of ICT. Only 16% of legislatures, however, receive support in legislative, oversight, representational or administrative capacities, suggesting a concentration of inter-parliamentary cooperation towards a fewer number of parliamentary bodies. On the other hand, 46% reported that they were receiving assistance (or would like to receive support) in the area of ICT from other parliaments and outside organizations. This finding underlines the significant role that other actors may play, in addition to parliaments, in helping legislatures to strengthen their capacities in ICT and subsequently the importance of coordinating actions between these actors and the contributing parliaments.

Figure 9.2: Areas of inter-parliamentary cooperation



(Source: 2009 survey, Section 1, Questions 20, 26, 23, 28; 134 respondents)

A positive finding seen in Figure 9.2 is that the percentages of parliaments that are planning or considering receiving assistance to improve their legislative, oversight, representational or administrative capacities (27%) or in ICT (18%) is matched by the percentages of parliaments planning or considering providing this support (20% and 19% respectively). Over half of parliaments do not provide, or plan to provide support in either areas (51% and 52%). But while 57% do not currently receive, and do not intend to receive assistance from other parliaments on general parliamentary development, the number of legislatures decreases to 36% with

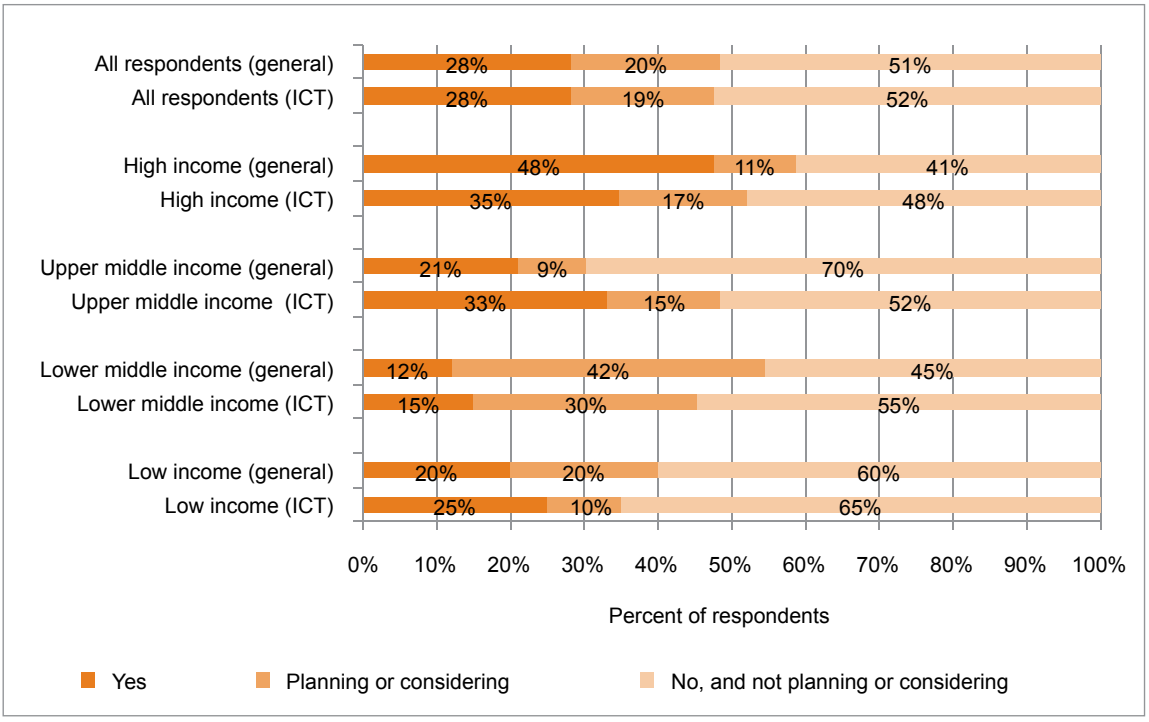
regard to ICT, suggesting that more parliaments want support to improve the state of their technology.

As expected, the largest percentage of parliaments contributing to capacity development comes from the high and upper middle income groups. Unexpectedly, though, there are also significant percentages of parliaments in the low and lower middle income groups providing or considering providing assistance (see Figure 9.3). This is an interesting result as it suggests ongoing and possibly increasing south-south inter-parliamentary cooperation or even south-north exchanges, a finding that is worth exploring in future analyses.

With regard to ICT, parliaments in the upper and lower middle income groups show a somewhat similar pattern when combining those that provide assistance with those planning or considering (48% and 45% respectively). However, in the upper middle income group the legislatures that currently provide support are twice the percentage of those in the lower middle income group.

Overall, the results shown in Figure 9.3 indicate a willingness to provide ICT support across income groups, particularly from countries with lower income levels. Results also underscore the fact that only 35% of parliaments from the high income group currently provide support to other parliaments, and 17% are considering following their example. Regrettably, this means that the ICT expertise of 48% of legislatures from the high income group is not yet being made available to other parliaments.

Figure 9.3: Areas of provision of support, by income groups

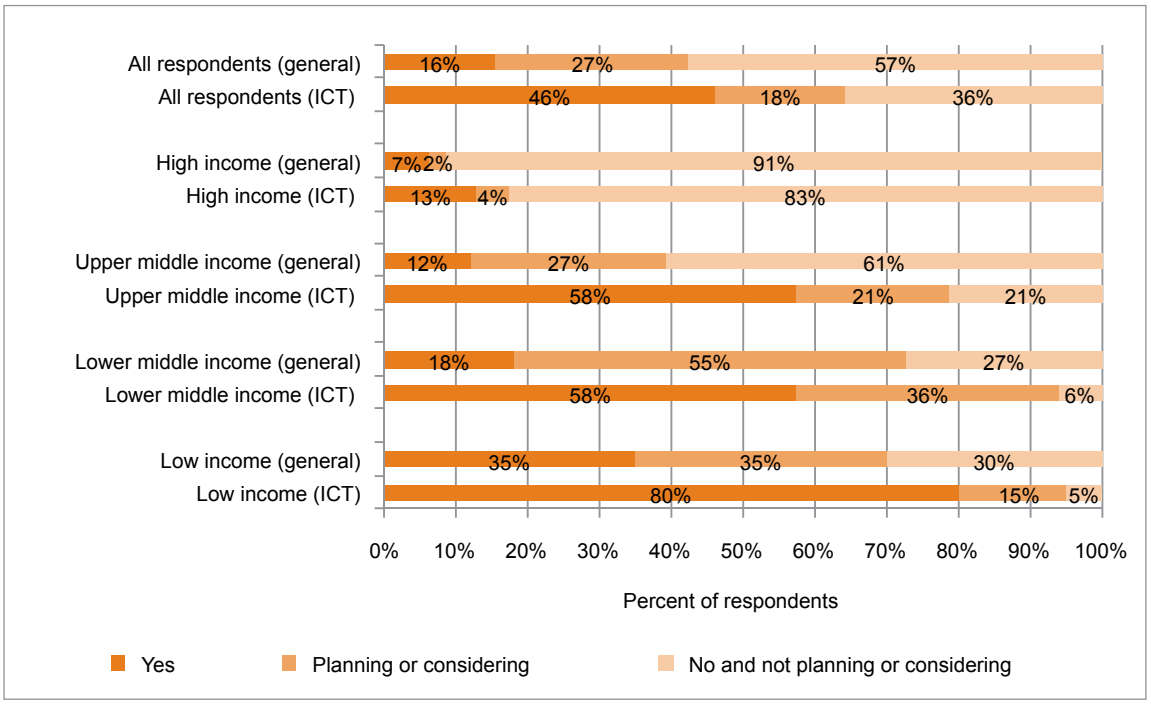


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Questions 20 and 23)

Parliaments in the high income group are understandably the least interested in receiving support in both areas, although 17% are either receiving or planning to receive assistance in ICT (see Figure 9.4). Surprisingly, the percentage of those in the upper and lower middle income groups currently receiving support in ICT either from other parliaments or outside organizations is similar (58%), and relatively large percentages of legislatures in both income groups would like to receive ICT support (21% and 36% respectively). The number of legislatures receiving support is the largest in the low income group (80%), providing a clear indication that the combined efforts of the donor and parliament community are directed to those most in need.

Many parliaments from the upper middle, lower middle and low income groups (27%, 55% and 35% respectively) are also looking for support from other parliamentary assemblies to strengthen their legislative, oversight, representational or administrative capacities.

Figure 9.4: Areas of reception of support, by income groups



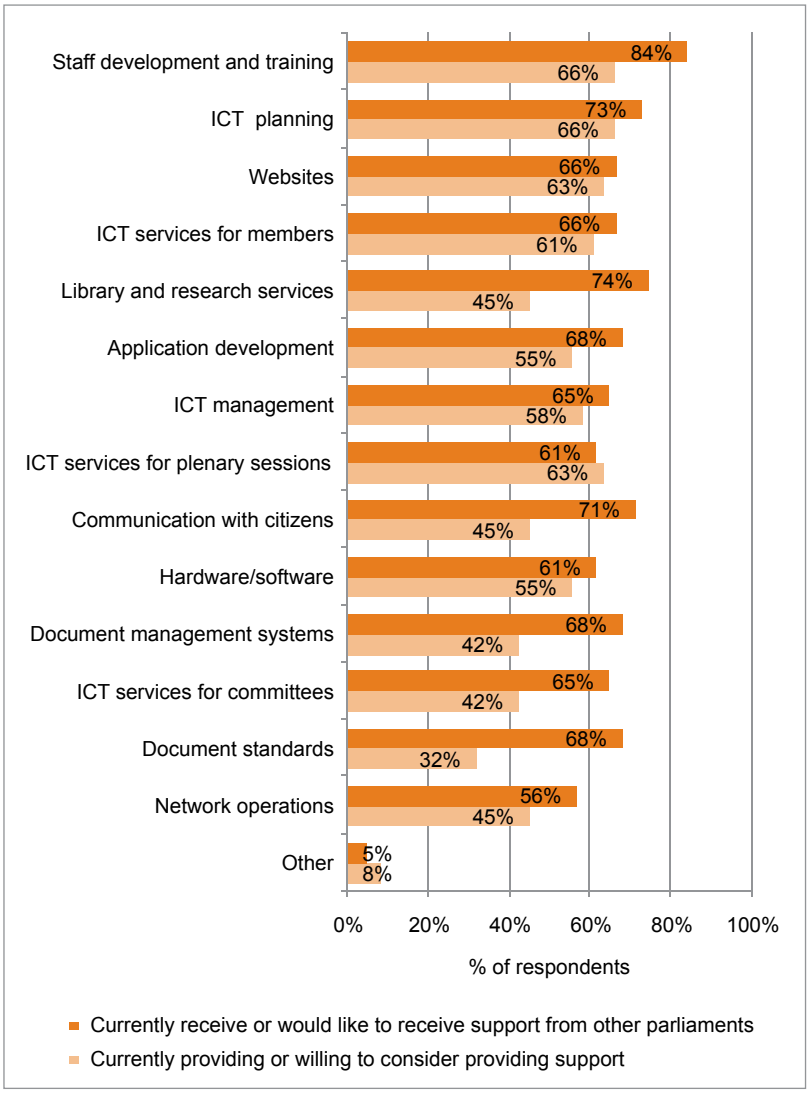
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Questions 26 and 28)

SPECIFIC AREAS OF ICT SUPPORT

While it was not possible through the survey to obtain results concerning the incidence or degree of the assistance provided, two questions were posed to those that either currently provide or currently receive support for ICT regarding the specific areas in which assistance was offered and needed. Despite the limited number of respondents (28% and 46% respectively), these questions provide useful guidance, especially with regard to the ICT areas in which parliaments would like to receive assistance.

Figure 9.5 shows a combined view of the areas in which support is provided or received. The five areas in which the most parliaments are providing or are willing to provide support are: Staff development and training (66%), ICT planning (66%), Websites (63%), ICT services for plenary sessions (63%) and ICT services for members (61%). These are all specific areas addressed in previous chapters of this Report and considered essential to make improvements in e-parliament.

Figure 9.5: Specific areas of support in ICT among parliaments



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Questions 24 and 29)

Understandably, the two areas where the fewest parliaments are providing or are willing to provide assistance are "document management systems" and "document standards", which were already highlighted in previous chapters as weaker areas in many legislatures.

The top four areas – all of them over 70% - showing the largest percentages of parliaments that are receiving and would like to receive support are: Staff development and training (84%), Library and research services (73%), ICT planning (73%), and Communication with citizens (71%). While two of these match with what the most legislatures provide and are willing to (Staff development and training and ICT planning), the other two show a large gap between what is wanted and what is provided (Libraries and research services and Communication with citizens). It is interesting to note that assistance in all ICT areas listed in Figure 9.5 is needed by more than 50% of requesting parliaments.

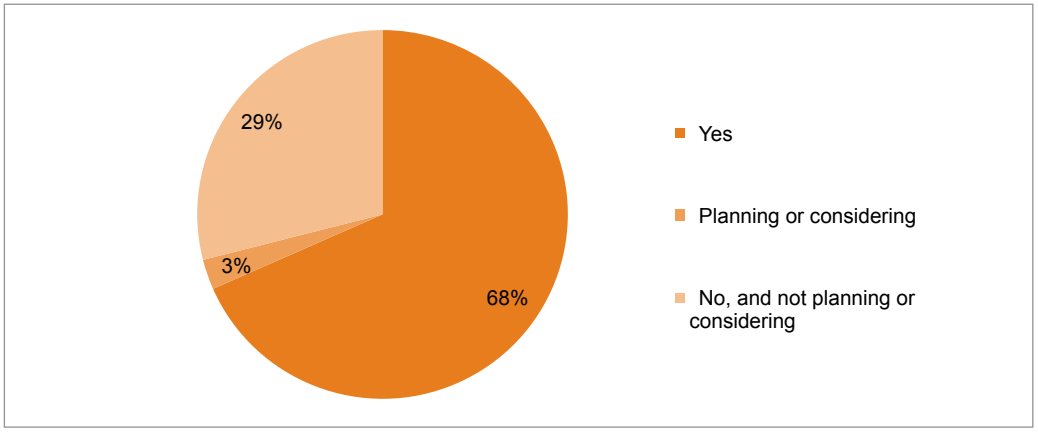
Figure 9.5 also identifies the gaps in the specific ICT areas between what parliaments provide or are willing to provide and what parliaments receive or would like to receive. The greatest challenges in terms of ICT assistance, reflecting a gap bigger than 25%, are in Document standards (34%), Library and research services (29%), Document management systems (26%) and Communication with citizens (26%).

Conversely, the areas currently presenting the best opportunities for ICT cooperation are those where the gap between the offer and demand of support is less than 10%: ICT services for

plenary, Websites, ICT services for members, Hardware and software, ICT planning, and ICT management.

Finally, it is interesting to note that of the 38% of parliaments currently providing assistance to other parliaments, 68% have a committee or an office responsible for it (see Figure 9.6).

Figure 9.6: Parliaments that have a committee or office responsible for assistance



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 22)

THE CHALLENGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Parliaments are continuing to seek more effective mechanisms of cooperation and collaboration to reinforce their capacity to use information and communication technologies in legislative settings. Inter-parliamentary sharing of practices and experiences at many levels are increasingly contributing to building knowledge, sharing solutions, improving human resources skills, and setting benchmarks and standards. However, the rich expertise embodied within inter-parliamentary networks is not always made available outside the domain of the network, nor translated into concrete collaboration and assistance programmes between individual parliaments.

This type of support is more often carried out through parliament-to-parliament relations, or through triangular modalities, frequently in the context of agreements and partnerships that exist among chambers and parliaments on an array of topics. Parliamentary assistance is delivered in the form of advisory services, seminars and workshops, study tours, and training, and less frequently by the provision of infrastructure, applications, and systems, as in the case of the e-PAI initiative described in Box 9.1. These items are generally obtained through a parliament's own allocations or from outside organizations and donors. And as survey findings suggest, there is significant support provided by these actors to strengthen ICT use in parliaments.

Today, leveraging the forces of all players in an effective and coordinated aid effort is the main challenge for the international community. Long-term and sustainable achievements can only be reached by mapping and sharing information and by jointly exploiting the knowledge of parliamentary associations and networks, the expertise residing in parliaments willing to provide support and in those not yet engaged, the engagement of the leaderships and administrations in recipient legislatures, and the funding and technical capacity of multilateral and bilateral development agencies.

Box 9.1

e-Parliament Assistance Initiative (e-PAI)

The e-PAI Project was launched last November to assist countries in need of IT infrastructure in laying the groundwork for e-Parliament. Korea's flagship electronics companies such as Samsung and LG provide technical assistance for the Project.

Starting from Cambodia, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea has donated a total of 400 computers to Nepal and Lao in Asia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Ethiopia in Africa and Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in Central Asia.

Marking the 1-year anniversary of this project next month, the Korean National Assembly plans to upgrade e-PAI both in quality and quantity.

A survey revealed that 25 countries have expressed interest in the e-PAI Project with the number of computers in demand reaching 1,200. We plan to hand over 150 PCs to Mongolia, the Philippines and Cambodia by the end of this month and additional 150 PCs to Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi by the end of this year.

By the year 2010, a total of 550 PCs will be secured to meet the needs.

The expansion of technology cooperation is also under review to donate software packages enabling the e-Bills System and the Parliamentary Information System and to facilitate knowledge-sharing in overall parliamentary administration.

The e-Bills System helps to track all bills in the legislative process from introduction to committee deliberation to house floor consideration. The Parliamentary Information System provides all legislative information relating to bills under deliberation and laws enacted or amended.

Had it not been for generous assistance from countries around the world, Korea's economy and democracy would not be where it stands now. To pay back what we owed, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea wishes to find what it can do to make a contribution to advancing global e-democracy. I hope the seeds we plant with PCs will bloom into flowers of global e-democracy.

Park Kye-Dong, Secretary General of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea.
Communication to the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament (ASGP), October 2009, Geneva

SUMMARY

The theme of information and communication technologies in parliament has received growing international attention, including among Speakers and Presiding Officers, legislators, parliamentary staff and experts. Over the last three years the annual World e-Parliament Conference[16] has emerged as the most recognized and respected forum of the community of parliaments for addressing both the policy and technical issues involving the use of ICT in the legislative setting. At these gatherings, delegations repeatedly highlighted the value of inter-parliamentary cooperation and collaboration through networks and associations as one of the least expensive and potentially most effective ways for parliaments to develop e-parliament policies and enhance their use of technology.

In the past two years, the progress made by parliamentary networks such as the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments, the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN) and the Secretaries General Forum of Asia-Pacific Parliaments (SGFAPP), as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean, has been notable and commendable.

However, the level of participation of parliaments in formal mechanisms of cooperation dealing with ICT issues is not fully satisfactory. While almost 60% of parliaments reported that they are members of at least one parliamentary network, 22% stated that they are not considering such participation. Interestingly, legislatures in the high and low income groups have the largest percentages of participation (76% and 70% respectively), while the participation of those in the upper and lower middle income groups is at about 40%. Given the demonstrated value of cooperation, more needs to be done to encourage active involvement by parliaments from all income groups.

At the international level, consensus emerged on the need for the international community - including the community of technologically advanced legislatures - to strongly support parliaments in developing nations at this pivotal time through collaboration on capacity development and to help them make concrete progress in e-parliament. The 2009 survey asked a series of questions that provide indications about the primary areas and the level of collaboration. Just over one fourth (28%) of parliaments provide support to other legislatures for developing their use of ICT. On the other hand, 46% of parliaments reported that they were receiving, or would like to receive assistance in the area of ICT from other parliaments and outside organizations. This finding underlines the significant role that other development actors play, in addition to parliaments, in helping legislatures to strengthen their capacities in ICT.

Survey results also suggest ongoing and possibly increasing south-south inter-parliamentary cooperation or even south-north exchanges, a finding that is worth exploring in future analyses. Another interesting finding is the indication of a great willingness to provide ICT support across income groups, particularly from countries with lower income levels. Results also underscore that only 35% of the potential support from legislatures from high income countries has been mobilized so far. Regrettably, the ICT expertise of 48% of legislatures from the high income group is not yet being made available to other parliaments. The number of legislatures receiving support is the largest in the low income group (80%), providing a clear indication that the combined efforts of the donor and parliament community are directed to those most in need.

16 http://www.ictparliament.org/index.php/world-e-parliament-conferences

A deeper analysis of data shows that assistance in all ICT specific areas listed in the survey is needed by more than 50% of requesting parliaments. The gaps in specific ICT areas between what the most parliaments provide and are willing to provide and what the most parliaments receive and would like to receive reveal that the greatest challenges are in the areas of Document standards (34%), Library and research services (29%), Document management systems (26%) and Communication with citizens (26%). The ICT areas currently presenting the easiest opportunities for concrete collaboration among parliaments are those where the gap between the offer and demand of assistance is smallest: ICT services for plenary, Websites, ICT services for members, Hardware and software, ICT planning, and ICT management.

Against these findings, parliaments are continuing to seek more effective mechanisms of cooperation and collaboration to respond to the needs and concerns of legislatures around the world. However, it is only by leveraging the forces of all the actors concerned – such as parliamentary associations and networks, legislatures and donors - that long-term and sustainable achievements will be reached.

Chapter 10
The e-Parliament Framework 2010 - 2020

The first edition of the World e-Parliament Report found that in 2008 only a few legislatures were able to make highly effective use of technology to support their legislative, representative and oversight responsibilities. The implementation of technology by most parliaments was uneven, with parliaments in developing countries facing considerable challenges, especially in terms of resources, both financial and human, and knowledge. Although there has been some progress in certain areas over the past two years, the results from the 2009 survey confirm that legislatures in most developing countries are still far behind and that even parliaments in developed nations could do more to deploy ICT in parliament at their full potential.

As highlighted in Chapter 8, parliaments in low and lower middle income level countries fall well below the average total score for e-parliament (Figure 8.3). Parliaments from countries in the upper middle income group are also below this average. Furthermore, findings from the 2009 survey analyzed by income levels, illustrated in the next pages of this chapter, indicate that the gap is especially severe in the areas of "Communication between parliaments and citizens"; "Systems and standards for creating legislative documents"; "Library and research services"; and "Parliamentary websites". Results also show that many parliaments in the high income group are far from harnessing technology fully and need to make additional efforts, particularly in the areas of "Communication between citizens and parliament", and "Systems and standards for creating legislative documents".

While parliaments continue to struggle to capitalize on the advantages of ICT in their complex legislative settings, there are no doubts that in the next ten years the transition to a global Information Society will further accelerate, demanding governing institutions to adapt to a different environment profoundly altered in its social, economic and cultural components. Unless parliaments can adapt to the rapid evolution brought about by technological changes, it is unlikely that they will be able to meet the expectations of their constituents for higher standards of accountability, transparency, accessibility and effectiveness as well as for more participatory and democratic governance. And since parliaments could be affected in different ways by their inability to fully exploit ICT, these challenges will not be limited to legislatures in poorer nations; rather, they will require a global and coordinated response by nearly all legislative bodies in the next years.

As highlighted in Chapter 9, efforts at cooperation and collaboration among legislative bodies are of particular importance in the field of information and communication technologies, where there are immense opportunities to take advantage of the possibilities offered by knowledge transfer, implementation of open standards, collaborative software development, and exchange of practices and in-house developed products. It is likely that these efforts will benefit greatly by being rooted in regional and global inter-parliamentary networks as they strive for sustainability and ownership, and at the same time receive the support of peers.

Equally vital is the assistance of the international community of donors and development agencies. Predictable and coherent aid initiatives are essential for parliaments with less advanced technology that seek to reinforce their law-making, representative and scrutiny functions through ICT.

KEY AREAS FOR A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO INSTITUTION BUILDING

The Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament[1] acknowledged the long-term challenge of strengthening parliamentary institutions through ICT at its third high-level meeting in March 2009, where it identified a forward-looking framework centred on strategic goals for technology in parliament. In its final Statement, the Board called "on all parliaments, international organizations and development partners to unite their efforts around these strategic goals as guiding principles to support all parliaments to play a key role in shaping the society of the future and to harness modern technologies to become truly representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective institutions".[2] The World e-Parliament Conference 2009, in its final session, discussed the framework and expressed support for the concept of a coordinated strategy that would help pull together resources and coordinate actions. The Framework's strategic goals can facilitate greater coordination and collaboration among all relevant actors – parliaments, donors, international organizations and civil society organizations – to achieve the common targets over a ten-year span (2010-2020).

These targets are grouped in five key areas that address 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 lawmaking 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.

For each strategic goal under these areas, the Board proposed benchmarks to measure the level of success reached on a global basis for the short (2010-2012)[3], medium (2013-2016) and long term (2017-2020) (See Figure 10.11).

Establish national and international policies to create an Information Society that is equitable and inclusive

The diffusion of ICT and technological innovation not only affects parliaments by providing them with the opportunity to perform their legislative, oversight and representational functions more effectively, but also calls on them to play a vital role in fostering national and international policies as countries transition to a global Information Society.

The effectiveness with which parliaments will use technology for listening to citizens, gathering information resources, connecting with other parliaments and linking to the rest of the world will

1 The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament is guided by a high-level Board composed of Speakers and Presidents of Parliaments, the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for Economic and Social Affairs and the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
2 Budapest Statement, third high-level meeting of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.
3 The targets for the near term are based on the current state as indicated by the 2009 survey.

significantly influence their ability to act as representative institutions in an increasingly complex global environment. Their success in positively shaping the society of the future through their policy initiatives will impact the capacity of the governed to enjoy the benefit of new knowledge and innovation.

Most legislators underestimate their pivotal role in the development of an equitable and inclusive Information Society and only a few parliaments are in the forefront of establishing national ICT policies, as well as national consultative mechanisms, which can benefit the legislature's own use of technology and also help narrow the digital divide within their country.

Many parliaments are not actively engaged at the international level, such as through the World Summit on the Information Society process, to represent their citizens' needs and views. Members of parliament do not have adequate forums for sharing and debating legislative and regulatory approaches to trans-border concerns, nor have instruments for exchanging knowledge and legislative practices. Achieving effective global policies in areas such as cybercrime, online privacy, security, broadband development and Internet governance requires a consistent international approach in which all parliaments and legislators are fully engaged.

Strategic goals

1.1 Establishment of an annual meeting to enhance dialogue among legislators for addressing Information Society-related issues, including Internet Governance, and the sharing of experiences and legislative practices.

Measures of Success

Regular participation by 50 parliaments by 2012; by 100 parliaments at the level of Chairs of Committee by 2015; by 150 parliaments at the level of Chairs of Committee by 2020.

1.2 Fostering parliamentary hearings and discussions at national level on the status of the Information Society.

Measures of Success

Online publication of reports of hearings and discussions held by parliaments regarding the status of the Information Society in their respective countries. Inclusion of these reports in the Digital Library of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. 25% of all parliaments by 2012; 50% by 2015; 100% by 2020.

1.3 Fostering the contribution of parliaments to the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society and its follow-up process.

Measures of Success

Acknowledgment of parliaments' efforts in the WSIS Forums and recognition of the role of parliaments in the review of the WSIS in 2015.

1.4 Development of a legal repository containing policies, laws, and regulations dealing with issues of the Information Society, organized by topic and approved by the parliaments.

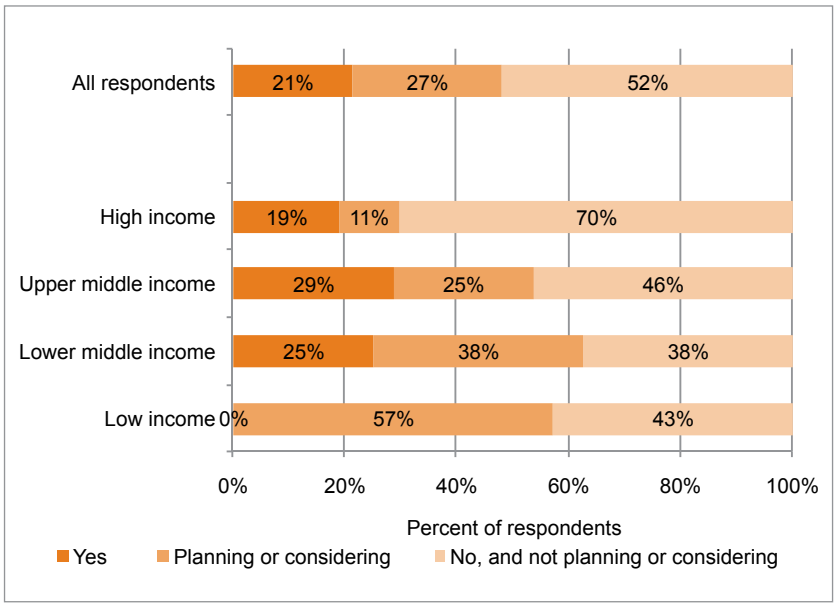
Measures of Success

Coverage of 40% of parliaments by 2012; 75% by 2015; 95% by 2020, based upon regular support from library and research sections of parliaments in updating the legal repository.

Enhance the connection between legislatures and constituencies

Developing sound policies, including those for the Information Society, requires listening to the concerns of citizens and engaging them in debates on critical issues. As seen in Chapter 2, ICT can provide powerful instruments to help parliaments communicate with their constituency. Results from the 2009 survey show that a greater number of legislatures and members are trying to use technologies more effectively to engage with citizens. Many parliaments, however, still lag behind in providing citizens with access to their work and the means for participation in the political dialogue.

Figure 10.1: Automated e-mail management system in use supporting the handling and answering of incoming e-mail by members, by income groups



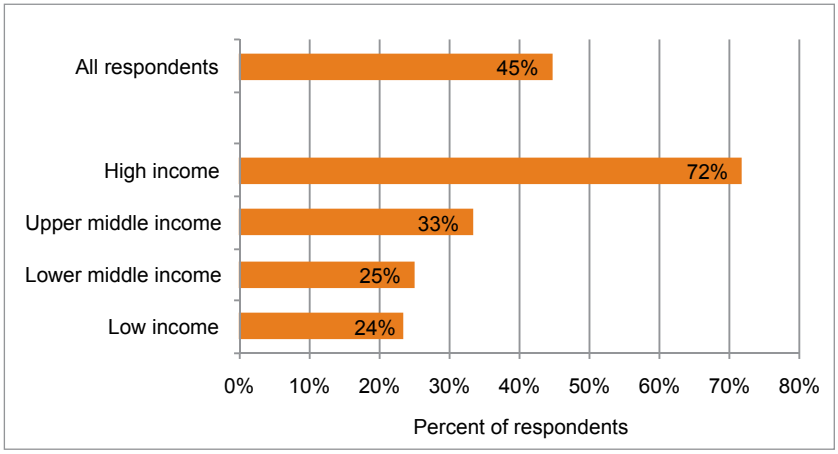
(Source: Survey 2009, Section 6, Question 6)

In 2009, 88% of parliaments reported that *most or some* members who use e-mail respond to messages from citizens (most=43%; some=45%). Despite these positive indications, as shown in Figure 10.1, none of the parliaments in the low income group are using an automated system to support handling and answering incoming e-mail and less than 30% in the other groups use such a system. It is also of great concern that 70% of parliaments in the high income group are neither using nor planning to use one. This significantly affects the ability of members to organize, understand, and manage these communications from citizens to inform their policy making decisions.

The survey also found that only 24% of parliaments in the low income group follow standards to ensure that the website can be used by persons with disabilities (see Figure 10.2). Percentages are not much higher for parliaments in the lower middle income group (25%) and parliaments in the upper middle income group (33%). As underlined in Chapter 3, this is a finding of great concern since ensuring such accessibility standards is one of the important ways to reduce a part of the digital divide within the country and to provide access to all citizens on equal terms.

Even in countries that lack sufficient Internet penetration, it is possible, as has been reported at the World e-Parliament Conferences, to use local entities such as community centres, schools and public libraries to enable more citizens to have access to the parliament and to engage in the policy making process.

Figure 10.2: Implementation of W3C standards or other applicable standards to ensure that the website can be used by persons with disabilities, by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 9b)

Strategic goals

2.1 Fostering the employment of all available tools, including new media and mobile technologies, to provide citizens with improved access to the work of parliament and means of participation in the political dialogue.

Measures of Success

Two way e-mail communication between members and citizens with tools to assist parliaments and members in managing and responding to electronic message from constituents. 50% of parliaments by 2012; 75% by 2015; 90% by 2020.

Increased use of interactive technology tools by parliaments to connect to citizens and to offer them the means to express their opinions (e-petitions, forums, etc.). 25% by 2010; 50% by 2015; 75% by 2020.

Adoption of accessibility standards in parliamentary websites to allow access to persons with disabilities. 50% of parliaments by 2012; 75% of parliaments by 2015, 100% of parliaments by 2020.

Access to parliamentary websites in multiple languages. 50% of parliaments with multiple official languages by 2012; 75% by 2015; 100% by 2020.

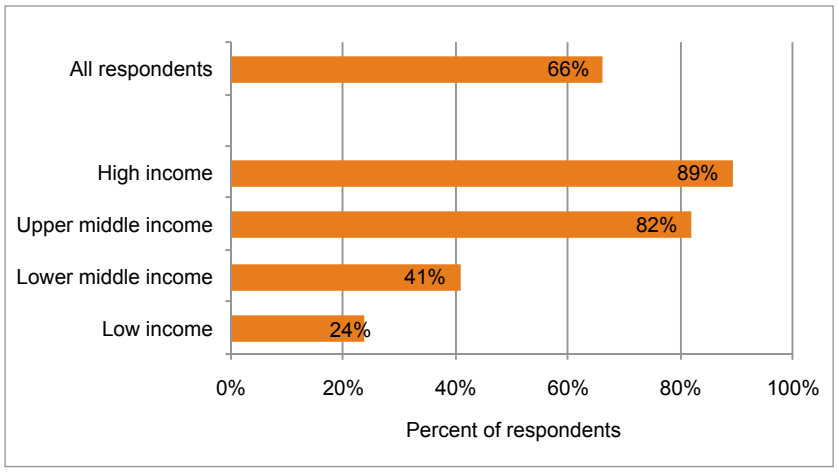
Improve the equality of access to the law and the lawmaking process of the country

The World Summit on the Information Society outcome urged governments to create public systems of information on country laws and regulations using the potential of ICT. Equitable and permanent public access to authentic legal information is considered a necessary requirement for a just and democratic society, an important instrument to support economic development and a prerequisite for the effective enforcement of the rule of law.

In many countries, parliaments do not provide access to the full body of the laws that are in legal force at any given time or to the law-making process. As shown in Figure 10.3, only 24% of parliaments in the low income group, and 41% of parliaments in the lower middle income group,

provide the *text and status of all proposed legislation* on their websites, thereby excluding the population from knowing about and being engaged in this vital democratic process.

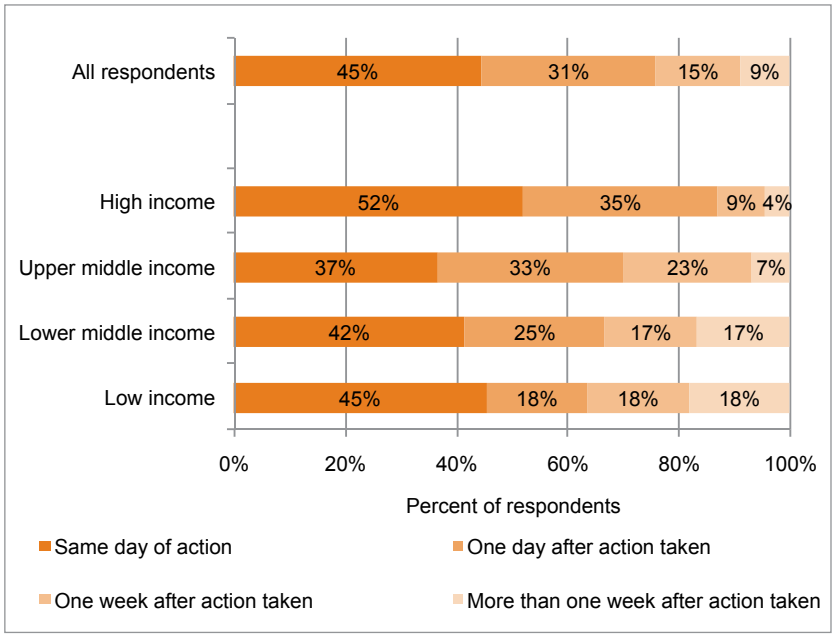
Figure 10.3: Websites that include text and status of all proposed legislation, by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 5b)

It is also of great concern that almost one fifth of parliaments in the low income group (18%) and in the lower middle income group (17%) require a week or more after actions has been taken to make plenary proceedings available on their website (see Figure 10.4). Similarly, it is problematic that even some of those in the upper middle income and high income groups are unable to provide these essential documents on their websites within a week, as this deprives citizens of prompt information on how issues were debated and voted for.

Figure 10.4: Timeliness of plenary proceedings on the website of the parliament, by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 5, Question 7b)

Strategic goals

3.1 Promoting the development of parliamentary websites that convey the work of the parliament in a way that is accurate, timely, and complete.

Measures of Success

Websites with complete legislation information and documentation in 50% of parliaments by 2012; 75% by 2015; 100% by 2020.

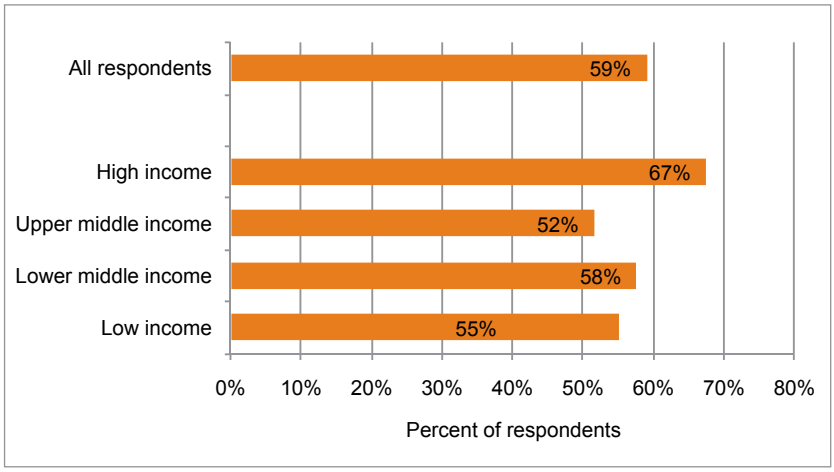
Information and documentation available for downloading in open standard formats from 25% of parliaments by 2012; 50% by 2015; 75% by 2020.

Strategy to create, in conjunction with the executive and judicial branches, national databases with all of a country's laws in force updated on a timely basis and accessible to all citizens. 25% of parliaments by 2012; 50% by 2015; 90% by 2020.

Ensure that all legislatures around the world can harness ICT tools in the service of the legislative, oversight and representative functions

Achieving the goal of placing technology at the service of the constitutional functions of a parliament and of democratic governance requires a consistent and effective investment in ICT tools and resources. As was true in 2007, results from the 2009 survey confirm that a significant gap remains between what is needed in implementing ICT to support the work of the legislative body and what has been actually accomplished by many parliaments. This can be seen in several areas, including strategic planning, infrastructure, training, library and research services, and inter-parliamentary cooperation.

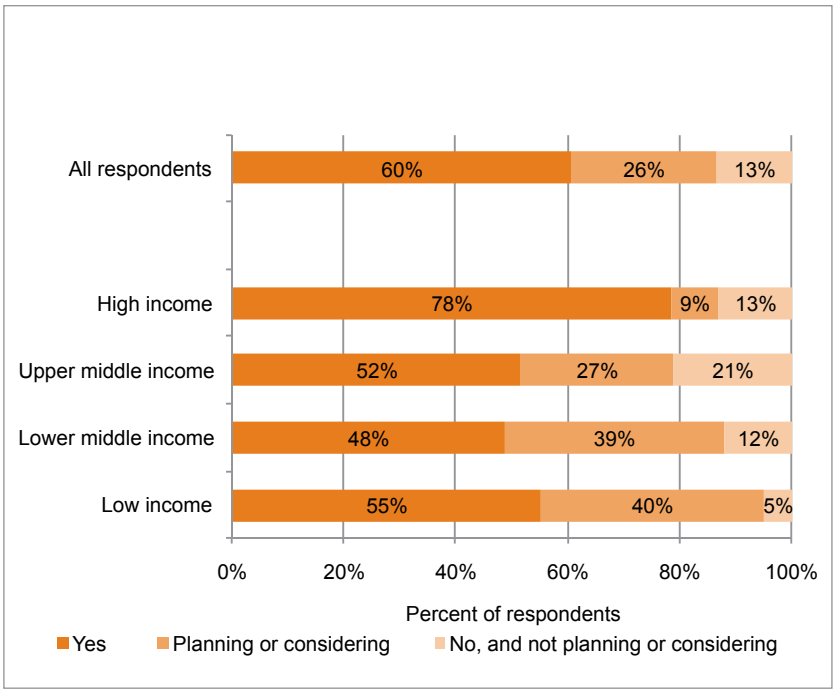
Figure 10.5: Parliaments that have a strategic plan with goals, objectives, and timetables for ICT, by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 1, Question 10)

Strategic planning can be well managed by most parliaments regardless of their country's income level. Figure 10.5 highlights that even in the low income group more than 50% of parliaments have a strategic plan with goals, objectives, and timetables for ICT. Strategic planning is one of the less expensive and most beneficial activities in the ICT domain because it enables comparison of costs and benefits and allows for close monitoring of progress. Yet, many legislatures are missing this opportunity. As discussed in Chapter 4, strategic planning needs to be implemented on an urgent basis in many more parliaments.

Figure 10.6: Parliaments that provide ICT training or orientation for members, by income groups

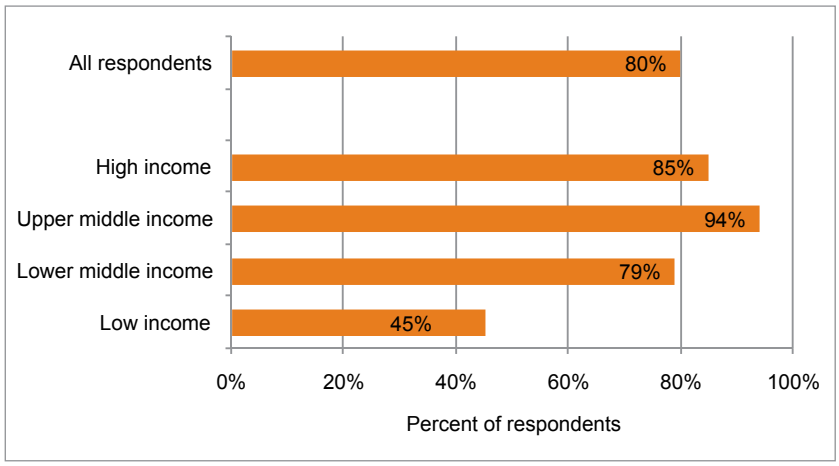


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 30)

Results show that there is a relatively good level of engagement by parliaments in training legislators. Figure 10.6 illustrates that despite income differences most parliaments provide training/orientation programmes for members or are planning or considering them. Additional efforts, though, need to be made, even by the upper and lower middle income groups, to ensure that these programmes are actually implemented and that a greater number of legislators have a better understanding of ICT.

A robust technical infrastructure is essential as a foundation for implementing ICT in parliaments. As pointed out in Chapter 7, findings from the 2009 survey suggest that there have been some advances, but also a number of continuing challenges. Parliaments in developing countries, in particular, lack adequate infrastructures and systems to support their legislative, oversight and representational work. Figure 10.7 shows that only 45% of parliaments in the low income group provide each member with a computer for personal use, possibly excluding many of them from acquiring important resources and up to date information.

Figure 10.7: Parliaments that provide a computer (desktop or laptop) to each member for personal use, by income groups

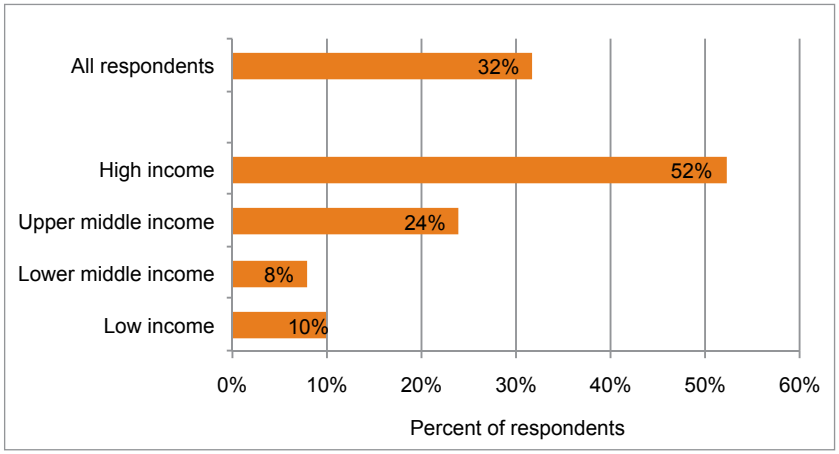


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 2)

As shown in Chapter 5 the income level of the country is also significantly associated with whether a parliament has a document management system. Only 5% of parliaments in the low income group and 36% in the lower and upper middle income groups have a document management system for the text of bills as they move through the legislative process (see Figure 5.1). In addition, for countries in the low income group the percentage of parliaments that have a document management system for committee and plenary documents is less than 20% for four of the six types of documents considered in the survey (see Figure 5.8).

Figure 10.8 below shows that only 10% of parliaments in the low income group and 8% in the lower middle income group use XML as the document standard in at least one system.

Figure 10.8: Parliaments using XML in at least one system, by income groups

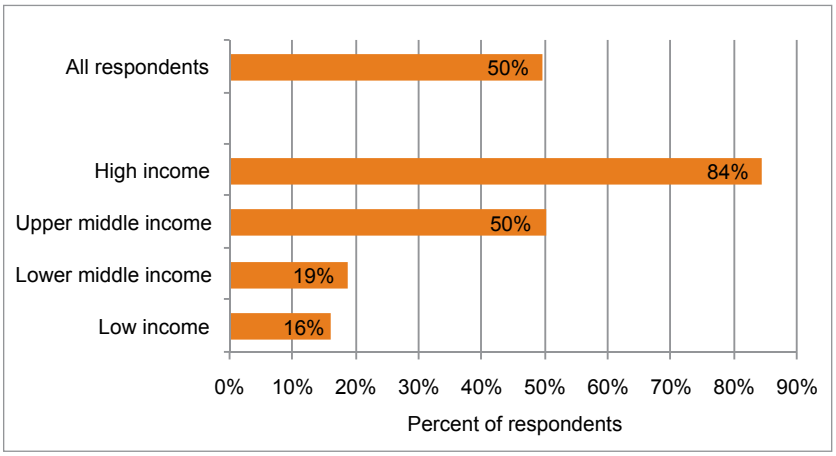


(Source: Survey 2009, Section 3, Questions 4 and 6)

As highlighted in Chapter 6 (Figure 6.1), while 50% or more of parliaments in the low or lower middle income groups have an automated system for managing library resources, the contrast with those in the upper middle income (75%) and high income groups (93%) indicates the size of the gap that exists among parliaments.

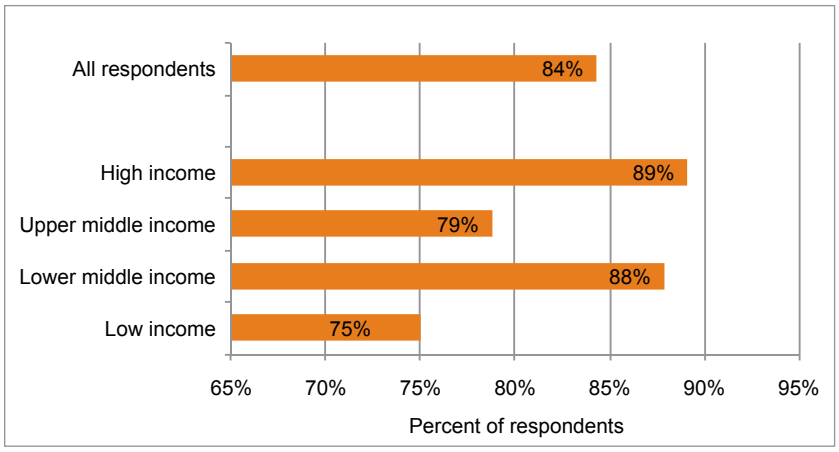
This contrast is also very evident with regard to providing online access to information sources that are organized according to the policy issues that the parliament is addressing. Figure 10.9 shows that only 16% of parliaments in the low income group and 19% in the lower middle income group have libraries that are able to offer this valuable service, compared to 84% in the high income group.

Figure 10.9: Libraries that have a web page that organizes and provides access to the Internet and other resources for members and committees based on issues of concern to the parliament, by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 4, Question 6)

Figure 10.10: Parliaments that provide training, through either internal or outside services, for in-house ICT staff, by income groups



(Source: Survey 2009, Section 2, Question 27)

Parliamentary staff, particularly in developing nations, need continuing training to upgrade their skills and keep pace with ICT developments. It is a positive finding that 75% of parliaments in the low income group provide training for in-house ICT staff, through either internal or outside services (Figure 10.10). This attests to the recognition by most parliaments in developing nations of the importance of training programmes. These efforts should continue to be encouraged and sustained.

Mechanisms for the exchange of information among parliaments regarding the implementation of technology can be very beneficial. As highlighted in Chapter 9, many parliaments already participate in ICT networks (see Figure 9.1). It is particularly striking that parliaments in the low income group are as likely to participate as those in the high income group. Also of note is that 46% of all parliaments receive or expressed a desire to receive support in ICT from other parliaments; this includes well over half of all parliaments in the upper middle, lower middle and low income groups (Figures 9.2 and 9.4). There is a key challenge that arises here, however, because participation in a network does not necessarily translate into concrete support at the level of individual parliaments. This may be improved by a better match between funding directed to capacity development and the use of the available expertise in networks.

Strategic goals

4.1 Fostering the active engagement of the leaders and members of parliament in establishing a vision for e-parliament.

Measures of Success

75% of parliaments by 2012 have a written vision statement; 90% by 2015; 95% by 2020.

Orientation to ICT provided to all current and newly elected members. 75% of all parliaments by 2012; 90% by 2015; 95% by 2018.

4.2 Promoting the elaboration of strategic plans, updated regularly, for the use of ICT that directly improve the operational capacity of parliaments to fulfil their legislative, oversight and representational responsibilities.

Measures of Success

75% of parliaments by 2012 have ICT strategic plans; 90% by 2015; 95% by 2020.

4.3 Promoting the development and maintenance of adequate infrastructures and systems in all parliaments to support their legislative, oversight, and representational work.

Measures of Success

All members have a personal computer and access to the Internet. 75% by 2012; 95% by 2015.

A document management system capable of preparing and managing all parliamentary documentation is operational in 50% of all parliaments by 2012; 75% by 2015; 95% by 2020.

Mobile access for all members is available in 60% of all parliaments by 2012; 75% by 2015; 95% by 2020.

Information and research services supported by ICT and linked to the legislative and policy issues that confront the parliament is available in 50% of legislatures by 2012; 75% by 2015; 95% by 2020.

4.4 Advocating for and promoting annual training programmes for at least 50% of staff engaged in the development, support, or use of ICT.

Measures of Success

50% of all parliaments provide annual training for at least 50% of staff engaged in the development, support, or use of ICT by 2012; 75% by 2015; 95% by 2018.

4.5 Fostering the regular exchange of information, experiences and practices among Parliaments at the international level .

Measures of Success

Participation in the World e-Parliament Conference series: 120 delegations by 2012; 150 delegations by 2015; 175 delegations by 2020.

Responses to the global survey on ICT in Parliament: 140 assemblies by 2012; 150 assemblies by 2016; 175 assemblies by 2020.

Develop a more robust and well coordinated programme of technical assistance

Many legislatures in developing countries and emerging democracies increasingly seek financial and technical assistance from different sources to accompany their own efforts to introduce modern technologies in support of the parliamentary process. As indicated in Chapter 9, there are a number of areas needing attention from the international community, such as human resources development in the ICT domain, the development of systems and standards for managing parliamentary documents, strengthening libraries and research services use of ICT, and enhancing communication between parliaments and citizens.

In addition, initiatives devoted to parliamentary strengthening carried out by contributing parliaments, bilateral donors, international organizations, academic centres, and non governmental organizations have frequently failed to pay adequate attention to the full array of parliamentary functions that ICT tools are able to address. A fair amount of the assistance provided, therefore, is likely to be under-utilized and ill spent due to insufficient coordination and planning, and lack of ownership, strategy and sustainability.

There is no doubt that global coordination among all the actors involved - including recipient parliaments - needs to encourage greater coherence of action, avoid the risk of overlapping efforts, and foster better analyses of lessons learned. International organizations and development

partners assisting legislatures should work in close coordination to use resources efficiently and should increasingly rely on the expertise available in parliaments. On the other hand, there is a need for parliaments receiving assistance to better leverage resources by ensuring greater coordination between external and internal funding in a responsible manner.

It is evident that over the past years the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament has achieved great success in creating a global community and important partnerships that accompany its work around common objectives. Also, it has raised the level of understanding among legislators about the Information Society and the role that members can play in shaping it; it has unveiled to many parliaments, regardless of their development level, the immense potential of ICT as a means to modernize parliamentary processes, increase transparency, accountability and participation, and improve inter-parliamentary cooperation; and, it has helped establish standards for all parliaments in several technical areas.

Today, this global community views the Centre as part of a broad international endeavor that is already affecting the way parliaments are dealing with modern technologies, from both the political and technical perspectives. It considers the Centre to be an important player in the current debate on the politics of technology in parliament, and, at the same time, a growing hub of coordination of the assistance provided for the ICT needs of legislatures.

Parliaments in developing nations and in emerging democracies recognize the importance of the Centre as a source of services and of support for a new approach to technical assistance in the ICT domain that mobilizes the expertise of advanced parliaments to respond to the needs of peer institutions, thereby reinforcing inter-parliamentary cooperation and future bilateral partnerships. They see the Centre as well placed to coordinate with agencies and donors the initiatives of the international community in this sector.

Strategic goals

5.1 Establishment of a consultative mechanism to coordinate technical assistance in the area of ICT and parliament within the WSIS implementation process.

Measures of Success

Participation of 15 partners by 2012; 25 partners by 2015; 35 partners by 2020.

5.2 Establishment of an online facility to map technical assistance on ICT in parliament around the world.

Measures of Success

Mapping of 30% of all parliaments by 2012; 70% by 2015; 100% by 2020.

5.3 Increasing the amount of the core budget available to the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to act as a hub for information, research, documentation and networking, as well as to provide technical assistance on requests of parliaments and generate partnerships with advanced legislatures.

Measures of Success

Core operative budget: 1.5 million USD annually by 2012; 2 million annually by 2015.

Technical assistance budget: 2 million USD by 2010; 5 million USD by 2013; 10 million USD by 2016.

Figure 10.11: e-Parliament Framework 2010 – 2020

Strategic goals	Short Term 2010-2012	Medium Term 2013-2016	Long Term 2017-2020+
1. Establish national and international policies to create an equitable and inclusive Information Society			
1.1 Establishment of an annual meeting to enhance dialogue among legislators for addressing Information Society-related issues, including Internet Governance, and the sharing of experiences and legislative practices			
Measures of Success			
Annual meeting	Participation by 50 parliaments	Participation by 100 parliaments at level of Chairs of Committees	Participation by 150 parliaments at level of Chairs of Committees
1.2 Fostering parliamentary hearings and discussions at national level on the status of the Information Society			
Measures of Success			
Online publication of reports of hearings and discussions held by parliaments regarding the status of the Information Society in their respective countries. Inclusion of the reports in the Digital Library of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament	25% of parliaments	50% of parliaments	100% of parliaments
1.3 Fostering the contribution of parliaments to the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society and its follow-up process			
Measures of Success			
Greater recognition of the role of parliaments in the review of the WSIS in 2015	Increasing recognition of parliaments' efforts at WSIS Forums	Acknowledgment of role of parliaments at WSIS 2015	
1.4. Development of a legal repository containing policies, laws, and regulations dealing with issues of the Information Society, organized by topic and approved by the parliaments			
Measures of Success			
Coverage of 40% of parliaments by 2012; 75% by 2015; 95% by 2020, based upon regular support from library and research sections of parliaments in updating the legal repository	40% of parliaments	75% of parliaments	95% of parliaments

2.	**Enhance the connection between legislatures and constituencies**			
2.1.	Fostering the employment of all available tools, including new media and mobile technologies, to provide citizens with improved access to the work of parliament and means of participation in the political dialogue			
	Measures of Success			
	Two way e-mail communication between members and citizens with tools to assist parliaments and members in managing and responding to electronic messages from constituents	50% of parliaments	75% of parliaments	90% of parliaments
	Increased use of interactive technology tools by parliaments to connect to citizens and to offer them the means to express their opinions (e-petitions, forums, etc.)	25% of parliaments	50% of parliaments	75% of parliaments
	Adoption of usability standards in parliamentary websites to allow access to persons with disabilities	50% of parliaments	75% of parliaments	100% of parliaments
	Access to parliamentary websites in multiple languages	50% of parliaments with multiple official languages	75% of parliaments with multiple official languages	100% of parliaments with multiple official languages
3.	**Improve the equality of access to the law and the lawmaking process of the country**			
3.1	Promoting the development of parliamentary websites that convey the work of the parliament in a way that is accurate, timely, and complete			
	Measures of Success			
	Websites with complete legislation information and documentation	50% of parliaments	75% of parliaments	100% of parliaments
	Information and documentation available for downloading in open standard formats	25% of parliaments	50% of parliaments	75% of parliaments
	Strategy to create, in conjunction with the executive and judicial branches, national databases with all of a country's laws in force updated on a timely basis and accessible to all citizens	25% of parliaments	50% of parliaments	90% of parliaments
4.	**Ensure that all legislatures around the world can harness ICT tools in the service of the legislative, oversight and representative functions**			
4.1	Fostering the active engagement of the leaders and members of parliament in establishing a vision for e-parliament			
	Measures of Success			
	Parliaments having a written vision statement	75% of parliaments	90% of parliaments	95% of parliaments
	Orientation to ICT provided to all current and newly elected members	75% of parliaments	90% of parliaments	95% of parliaments
4.2	Promoting the elaboration of strategic plans, updated regularly, for the use of ICT that directly improve the operational capacity of parliaments to fulfil their legislative, oversight and representational responsibilities			
	Measures of Success			
	Parliaments having regularly updated ICT strategic plans	75% of parliaments	90% of parliaments	95% of parliaments

4.3.	Promoting the development and maintenance of adequate infrastructures and systems in all parliaments to support their legislative, oversight, and representational work			
	Measures of Success			
	All members have a personal computer and access to the Internet.	75% of parliaments	95% of parliaments	
	A document management system capable of preparing and managing all parliamentary documentation is operational	50% of parliaments	75% of parliaments	95% of parliaments
	Mobile access for all members is available	60% of parliaments	75% of parliaments	95% of parliaments
	Information and research services supported by ICT and linked to the legislative and policy issues that confront the parliament is available	50% of parliaments	75% of parliaments	95% of parliaments
4.4	Advocating for and promoting annual training programmes for at least 50% of staff engaged in the development, support, or use of ICT			
	Measures of Success			
	Parliaments provide annual training for at least 50% of staff engaged in the development and support of ICT	50% of parliaments	75% of parliaments	95% of parliaments
4.5	Fostering the regular exchange of information, experiences and practices among Parliaments at the international level			
	Measures of Success			
	Participation to the World e-Parliament Conference series	120 delegations	150 delegations	175 delegations
	Responses to the global survey on ICT in Parliament	140 assemblies	150 assemblies	175 assemblies
5.	**Develop a more robust and well coordinated programme of technical assistance**			
5.1	Establishment of a consultative mechanism to coordinate technical assistance in the area of ICT and parliament within the WSIS implementation process			
	Measure of success			
	Participation of partners	15 partners	25 partners	35 partners
5.2	Establishment of an online facility to map technical assistance on ICT in Parliament around the world			
	Measure of success			
	Mapping of parliaments	30% of parliaments	70% of parliaments	100% of parliaments
5.3	Increasing the amount of the core budget available to the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to act as a hub for information, research, documentation and networking, as well as to provide technical assistance on requests of parliaments and generate partnerships with advanced legislatures			
	Measure of success			
	Core operative budget	$1.5 million annually	$2 million annually	
	Technical assistance budget	$2 million annually	$5 million annually (2013)	$10 million annually (2016)

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS FOR ACHIEVING SUCCESS

Endorsing and implementing the e-Parliament Framework 2010 – 2020 and achieving its proposed strategic goals requires two essential ingredients: a) extensive inter-parliamentary collaboration and greater interaction with multilateral and bilateral efforts; and b) stronger integration of ICT in other support efforts.

Collaboration among parliaments and interaction with the donor community

As underscored in Chapter 9, parliaments are unique institutions and therefore the single most helpful resource for enhancing ICT is often other parliaments. While parliaments can learn a great deal from the private sector, what works well there does not always work well in legislatures.

The need for a strong alliance and more structured cooperation among parliaments is critical in the field of ICT because exploiting the immense opportunities offered by technology can benefit greatly from a high degree of collaboration between legislatures. Advanced parliaments possess the best expertise and most useful experiences in the technical dimension. However, too frequently their expertise has not been fully engaged in development projects.

Inter-parliamentary collaboration is a fundamental mechanism for improving technology in parliaments and needs to take place at the bi-lateral, regional, and global level. Through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, the sharing of knowledge and experience in the use of ICT and in policy development can become more systematic to achieve widespread success in furthering e-parliament processes and in strengthening legislatures. The role of formal parliamentary networks, and their relations to the Centre, are essential to reinforce ties, exchange expertise, and transfer appropriate know-how and technological applications. Parliaments in developed countries and with advanced technological infrastructures have a special opportunity to support parliaments in developing countries by lending staff expertise and by providing material assistance.

The growing partnerships around the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament should be reinforced and sustained by all actors to better interrelate research and operational work, to leverage the wide-ranging capabilities of the whole international system, and to exploit the opportunities for interregional cooperation and exchanges. Within the e-Parliament Framework 2010 – 2020, the Centre shall act as a catalyst and clearing house for information, research, innovation and technology in parliament, as well as a hub for capacity development. It will do this without substituting or overlapping with other bilateral and multilateral activities or organizations, but rather by multiplying their effects, enhancing their visibility, expanding the space for knowledge development, and creating the conditions to support legislatures that intend to use new technologies as instruments for democracy and good governance.

Integrating ICT with other support actions

It is equally vital that ICT-related contributions from parliaments and from the international community of donors be closely integrated with broader programmes to strengthen parliaments. The challenge for the international community is to understand and promote the role that ICT plays in supporting the various capacities they seek to improve and the democratic values they seek to achieve.

The implementation of ICT must be closely coordinated with efforts to enhance those capabilities that are central to the work of the parliament. Projects to strengthen the law-making, oversight and representational responsibilities of parliaments must also incorporate initiatives to enhance the use of ICT in their support.

Furthermore, externally supported programmes that include the enhancement of ICT as part of their objectives need to ensure that these technology initiatives are incorporated within the overall technology plans of the parliament. Having a strategic plan for ICT in parliament is essential for achieving the necessary level of integration between any assistance programmes and efforts already underway or planned. Attention should also be given to special collaborative efforts in ICT by different stakeholders, such as universities, centres of excellence, institutes and foundations to develop common applications, shared solutions and joint activities.

The way forward

Parliaments face many challenges in using technology to help them to meet the growing expectations of their citizens for transparency, accessibility, and effectiveness. These challenges are especially serious for developing countries but they pose problems as well for those in the higher income group. No parliament has all the solutions and all parliaments benefit from sharing experiences and ideas.

The e-Parliament Framework 2010-2020 proposed by the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament offers an ambitious vision that is nevertheless attainable and provides the benchmarks for assessing the progress of the world of parliaments and the international community. Achieving this vision by 2020 requires farsightedness and a true spirit of collaboration, engagement and policy direction by parliamentary leaders, the dedicated and coordinated commitment of donors and parliaments, and concerted action at the global, regional and national level.

SUMMARY

All parliaments face significant challenges in attempting to adjust to the Information Society. Because these developments are felt throughout the world they require a global and coordinated response by legislative bodies. To meet these challenges, the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament has articulated an e-Parliament Framework 2010 – 2020, based on a set of strategic goals for technology in parliament. These goals serve as common principles that can guide and lead to greater coordination and collaboration among parliaments and between legislatures, donors, international organizations and civil society organizations.

The e-Parliament Framework 2010 - 2020 is centred on five key areas for action over the next ten years. They include:

- Information Society policy development
- Enhancing the link between parliaments and the citizens they represent
- Ensuring access by all to a country's laws and legislation
- Making it possible for all legislatures to implement ICT to support fundamental parliamentary functions
- Establishing a sustained and coordinated technical assistance programme.

The success of parliaments in enacting strong information society policies will result in part from their acknowledgement of the global nature of these challenges. Yet, many legislators underestimate their role in this process and have not adequately participated in regional and international forums that are addressing issues like cybersecurity, privacy, and broadband development.

Listening to the concerns of citizens and engaging them in the policy making process are critical components of democratic governance. While responses to the 2009 survey show that a greater number of legislatures and members are trying to use technologies more effectively to engage with citizens, much remains to be done before this goal is reached. It is of special concern that developing countries are least likely to have communication tools to reach their citizens.

Providing permanent public access to the laws and proposed legislation of a country is another major requirement for fostering democracy and the rule of law, and for ensuring an informed citizenry. However, many countries still fail to make the laws governing the country easily accessible; nor do many parliaments provide timely information about the lawmaking process. For example, a substantial number of parliaments at all income levels take a week or more to post information about their plenary sessions on their websites.

It is well documented that ICT tools can assist parliaments in performing their legislative, oversight, and representative functions. However, legislatures have been slow in transforming this potential into accomplishments. The 2009 survey results show that strategic planning needs to be implemented in more parliaments, that parliaments in developing countries have insufficient infrastructures for supporting their work, that there are too few fully operational document management systems, that progress in adopting XML has been slow, and that libraries often lack sufficient ICT support to accomplish their role. While the figures for training of ICT staff and members are positive, more needs to be done to improve member understanding and use of ICT and to sustain the training efforts in developing countries.

Because of the critical need of parliaments in developing countries for financial and technical support, the contributions of the international donor community and legislatures in higher income countries are especially important. In order to maximize the benefits of parliamentary assistance initiatives, greater coherence among programmes must be achieved and duplication of effort reduced. It is also vital to recognize that ICT is essential to the success of efforts directed at strengthening the most important functions of parliaments and that technology must be a central part of all such programmes. In addition, promoting more inter-parliamentary collaboration in capacity development can contribute substantially to a more effective and sustainable approach to helping emerging democracies and legislatures in low income countries make progress toward e-parliament.

Within the e-Parliament Framework 2010 – 2020, the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament shall act as a catalyst and clearing house for information, research, innovation and technology, as well as a hub for a new approach to technical assistance in the ICT domain that, in cooperation with the donor community, mobilizes the expertise of advanced parliaments to respond to the needs of peer institutions. The results of the 2009 survey provide indicators of the current status of parliaments in relation to the goals expressed in the Framework. Future surveys will be instrumental in monitoring progress made at the global level.

Major Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusions

This final chapter summarizes the most significant findings concerning the status of ICT in parliaments based upon the 2009 survey, draws conclusions about the overall status of e-parliament at the global level, and provides insights into the impact of e-parliament developments on legislators. It also makes recommendations for how parliaments, individually and collectively, and the international community can work together within a common framework to advance the use of ICT in parliamentary settings to strengthen democracy.

HOW PARLIAMENTS ARE DOING: MAJOR FINDINGS

The survey results offer an extensive view of the major areas of ICT implementation, including communicating with the public; standards for transparency and accessibility, especially for parliamentary websites; oversight and management of ICT; systems and standards for parliamentary documents; libraries and research services; and, infrastructure, services, applications and training. The following sections provide a summary of the key findings in each of these specific areas.

Communicating with the public

Members and committees use of e-mail and websites

- 78% of parliaments reported that most or some members use e-mail to communicate with citizens, an increase over the findings from 2007.
- 88% reported that most or some of the members reply to these messages, suggesting that the responsiveness of members to e-mail has also increased in the last two years.
- 55% of parliaments reported that most or some committees use e-mail, again more than in 2007.
- However, only 21% of parliaments have a system to help manage e-mail.
- 51% of parliaments reported that most or some members have personal websites; of these, 75% said that one of the functions of personal websites was to seek comments and opinions from the public.
- However, only a third of parliaments reported that most or some committees have websites, and just over half (52%) of these said that the purpose was to seek comments and opinions from the public.

Other communication methods used or being planned

- Besides e-mail and websites, the method implemented by the largest proportion of parliaments (43%) for communication is webcasting of plenary sessions.

- The next most popular methods utilize audio or video technology (TV programmes, parliamentary TV channels and radio programmes).
- Of the ten least widely used methods (10% - 16%), seven are interactive and include some of the newest technologies, such as Twitter and YouTube.
- It is likely that audio- and video-based one-way technologies will be predominant for the next few years.
- However, of the technologies that have the largest projected growth among parliaments, the top five are all interactive (online discussions, online polls, e-petitions, e-consultations on issues and e-consultations on bills).

Challenges cited by parliaments

- When asked about the challenges encountered in using technologies to communicate with citizens, the issue mentioned by the largest percentage of legislatures (37%) was the lack of familiarity of members with technology.
- Many parliaments also reported that citizens were not familiar with technology (21%) nor had access to it (20%).
- The challenge for citizens cited by the largest percentage of parliaments is that they are not familiar with the legislative process (32%).

Communicating with young people

- Over 70% of parliaments reported that they have initiatives underway to communicate with young people or are planning them. Most use web technology for this purpose, combined in many cases with some form of new interactive technology, such as games, blogs and social media.

Impact on communication with citizens

- 85% of parliaments reported an increase in communication with citizens using ICT-supported methods.

Standards for transparency and accessibility

General information about parliaments and members

- Only one-third of the items in the general information category were found on the websites of most parliaments. This is the most basic and most static information about the legislature, and it is the minimal starting point for accountability.

Documents and information about the core work: legislation and oversight in committees and plenary

- Fully one third of parliamentary websites do not provide the text and status of proposed legislation.
- 81% of parliaments do provide documentation about plenary activities.
- Significantly less than 50% provide information about committee activities and about their oversight and budget review work.
- Completeness is still lacking, as measured by the number of relevant items linked to proposed legislation: only half of all parliaments link bills to at least five of the 18 most relevant information items and documents identified in the survey.
- Only 36% said they provide explanatory material about proposed legislation and procedural steps always or most of the time and 48% said rarely or never.

Tools for finding and viewing information

- 81% of parliaments reported that they have a search engine with at least one of five important features.
- Fewer than 50% reported that they had the capacity to broadcast or webcast live meetings of any parliamentary body, event or programme, although over 30% are planning or considering this capability.
- Only 32% have an archive that permits on-demand viewing of webcasts.
- Less than half offer alerting services for at least one type of document or activity.

Usability and accessibility

- Only 45% have implemented standards that ensure access to websites by persons with disabilities.

Vision, strategic planning, and effective management

- Only 41% of parliaments reported that political leaders at the level of the President/Speaker were highly engaged in envisioning e-parliament, and almost one-quarter reported that they were engaged very little or not at all.
- Only 43% of parliaments have a written vision statement.
- Over 40% do not have a strategic plan for ICT that is regularly updated.
- However, over 60% of parliaments have established a special committee or group to provide oversight and direction for ICT.
- The Secretary General and the Director of ICT establish goals and objectives in 68% and 60% of parliaments respectively.

Systems and standards for parliamentary documents

- There was only a minor increase from 43% to 46% of parliaments that have systems for managing proposed legislation.
- However, over 70% indicated that they have systems for managing plenary speeches.
- Over half of all parliaments reported having systems for at least five types of committee and plenary documents (minutes, hearings, reports, speeches and debates, and votes).
- Overall, only 25% of all parliaments use XML for any document.

Library and research services

- Most parliamentary libraries have basic ICT-supported capabilities such as systems for managing library resources.
- However, over 40% are not connected to a parliamentary intranet, even though Local Area Networks (LANs) are in place in nearly all legislatures. This limits their ability to provide members and committees with digital information services.
- Only half of parliamentary libraries are able to deliver online topical information related to policies considered by the parliament.
- Just over half subscribe to online journals and databases.
- 60% have subject matter experts, much of whose work is made available in digital formats.
- Over 50% are taking an active role in maintaining an archive of parliamentary documents in digital formats.
- An important percentage (although less than half) of libraries also contribute to the website of the parliament, most often by providing some of its content, but also by updating and maintaining the website, and by being involved in the organization, testing, and design of the site.

Building a responsive and robust technical infrastructure

Basic technical services

- 80% of parliaments provide members with either a desktop or a laptop computer; 48% are able to supply both.
- 97% of parliaments have Internet access, but not all of them provide Internet access to each member for their own use.
- 96% of parliaments have Local Area Networks (LANs); however, only 72% state that all members and committees are connected.
- The number of parliaments reporting that they lack reliable electrical power increased from 6% to 10%.

Support for parliamentary functions

- Many parliaments provide ICT support for recording plenary activities, including speeches and debates (72%), calendars and schedules (66%), minutes (66%), and voting (60%).
- However, in many parliaments the calendars and schedules for plenary sessions would ideally be made available earlier than is currently the case.
- Application support for legislative work is less prevalent; of five legislative activities included in the survey, only two - a database of laws passed by parliament and a system for tracking bill status - are supported by at least 50% of parliaments
- Support for functions directly related to budget, oversight, and communication is lagging even further behind.

Training

- 84% of parliaments provide training, through either internal or outside sources, for in-house ICT staff, a substantial increase over 2007.
- A large percentage of parliaments are also providing ICT training or orientation courses for members (61%) or plan to do so (26%).
- Even more already provide training to non-ICT staff (71%).

The state of e-parliament in 2010

The *World e-Parliament Report 2010* assessed the state of e-parliament in the world's legislatures based on the responses received from parliaments and on a statistical methodology that assigns a numeric score to each of the six areas included in the 2009 survey. The e-parliament elements included in the methodology reflect the most important aspects identified by parliamentary leaders, members, staff and experts in presentations at the three World e-Parliament Conferences in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The total scores measuring ICT use in individual parliaments range from a minimum of 13.5% to a maximum of 82.7%. Of all parliaments participating in the survey, 20% achieved a total score represented by at least two thirds of the maximum possible score (66 over 100), and consistently reached upper or high scores in all six areas. This group represents the most advanced users of ICT.

These parliaments are more likely to possess a combination of elements that satisfy the various technology needs of a legislature. These include:

- a sound management organization;
- a solid yet flexible infrastructure and systems for managing all parliamentary documents;
- library and research services well supported by technology and applications;
- a website offering a great deal of timely and complete information with multiple channels to access it; and,

- a variety of methods for engaging with citizens through traditional communication means as well as new and more interactive media.

Those at the lowest level of adoption have limited ICT capabilities for supporting their legislatures. They tend to lack:
- an appropriate management structure;
- an adequate infrastructure (some do not have reliable electrical power);
- systems for managing documents; and,
- capabilities for using ICT-supported methods to communicate with citizens.

They also have very weak libraries and websites with the least amount of information, and in a few cases no websites at all.

Those in the middle vary in their strengths and weaknesses. While they may have good scores in one or two domains, they usually do not achieve a high level of adoption in most areas. This confirms a continued unevenness in ICT adoption and implementation among a large group of parliaments, similar to what was first observed in the *World e-Parliament Report 2008*.

The results contained in both Reports indicate that the income level of a country often has a direct relationship to the level of adoption of ICT in parliament. One promising finding is that legislatures in Latin America achieve a total score that is above the average total score for all parliaments and above the mean score of the upper middle income group, suggesting an encouraging path of e-parliament development in the region. African parliaments are among those most affected in their ICT deployment by the lack of resources. To make progress in the next years, they will likely need various forms of assistance – such as skills development, knowledge transfer, and financial support.

The impact on members of parliaments

The Report presents some of the findings from the perspective of legislators to show the impact of technology on the ability of members to perform their daily work.

Of the 27,249 parliamentarians represented in the legislatures that responded to the survey:

Infrastructure and managerial barriers
- 3,817 (14%) cannot count on reliable electrical power in the parliament.
- 5,365 (20%) do not have a personal desktop or laptop computer at their disposal.
- 8,508 (31%) are not offered any type of ICT training or orientation programmes by their parliament.
- 9,997 (37%) work in legislatures that have not yet devised a strategic plan for ICT.

Barriers to information gathering
- 4,301 (16%) do not have personal access to Internet in the parliament.
- 8,530 (31%) are not provided with personal access to the parliament's intranet.
- 12,038 (44%) do not have access to a library website that organizes information on issues of concern to members.

Barriers to access of key parliamentary documents
- 7,726 (28%) cannot access the text and current status of proposed legislation on their parliament's websites.

- 8,019 (29%) cannot access plenary calendars and schedules on-line, either through an intranet or the Internet.
- 8,373 (31%) cannot access a database with the laws passed by the parliament.

Barriers to communication

- 5,149 (19%) are not yet provided with personal e-mail accounts by their parliament.
- 12,840 (47%) serve in parliaments that have not implemented accessibility standards for persons with disabilities on their websites, disallowing these citizens from following members' and parliament's work.
- 22,505 (83%) are in parliaments that do not provide a system for managing and supporting the answering of incoming e-mail.

Cooperation and collaboration at the international level

The 2010 Report highlights the value of inter-parliamentary cooperation as one of the least expensive and potentially most effective ways for legislatures to enhance their use of technology. It also emphasizes cooperation at the regional level, which, despite language and communication barriers, offers unique opportunities to share resources, overcome lack of know-how and establish common approaches. The progress made in establishing regional networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America, coupled with the activities of those already in existence at the global, regional and sub-regional levels, are concrete signs of this positive cooperation.

Survey findings indicate the following key points about collaboration:

- Slightly more than one fourth (28%) of parliaments provide support to other legislatures for developing their use of ICT.
- 46% reported that they were receiving or seeking assistance in ICT from other parliaments and from outside organizations that are instrumental in helping legislatures to strengthen their capacities in ICT.
- There is ongoing and possibly increasing south-south inter-parliamentary cooperation, and even south-north exchanges and a willingness to provide ICT support among parliaments from all income groups, including from countries with lower income levels.
- 35% of parliaments from high income countries currently provide support to other parliaments, and 17% are planning or considering following their example. Regrettably, the ICT expertise of 48% of legislatures from high income countries is not yet being made available to other parliaments.
- The number of legislatures receiving support is largest in the low income countries (80%), indicating that the combined efforts of the donor and parliamentary communities are directed to those most in need.
- The largest gaps between the percentage of parliaments that provide (or are willing to provide) certain types of assistance and the percentage of parliaments that receive (or would like to receive) that type of assistance are in document standards (34%), library and research services (29%), document management systems (26%), and communication with citizens (26%).
- The smallest gaps, and therefore the areas that currently offer the most opportunities for collaboration among parliaments, are: ICT services for plenary; parliamentary websites; ICT services for members; hardware and software; ICT planning; and ICT management.

To address the challenges of implementing technology, especially for parliaments in developing countries, and to leverage the willingness expressed by many to provide assistance in this effort, the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament has articulated a forward-looking

e-Parliament Framework 2010 – 2020 centred on a set of strategic goals. These goals provide guiding principles to the various multilateral and global efforts that could facilitate more effective coordination and collaboration in strengthening parliaments through ICT. The Framework also establishes specific benchmarks for assessing progress.

The e-Parliament Framework 2010 - 2020 addresses five key areas that are targeted for specific action over the next ten years. They include:

- Development of Information Society policies that advance equity and inclusiveness
- Enhancing the link between parliaments and citizens
- Ensuring access by all to a country's laws and legislation and the legislative process
- Implementing ICT to support fundamental parliamentary functions
- Establishing sustained and coordinated technical assistance programmes.

The e-Parliament Framework 2010 - 2020 places particular emphasis on greater coherence and harmonization among parliamentary assistance initiatives to reduce duplication and enable a more effective and sustainable approach to helping emerging democracies and legislatures in low income countries make progress toward e-parliament.

WHAT CAN BE DONE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

This Report proposes a number of recommendations to advance the state of e-parliament in all countries. They are organized into the following areas: a) policies; b) planning and management; c) communication; d) transparency and accountability; e) technical infrastructure; f) regional and global cooperation. Some of these recommendations relate to parliaments at the national level. Others, which involve national parliaments and the international community together, need to be addressed at the regional and global level.

Policies

- Promote the establishment and implementation of national ICT policies, as well as a national consultative process, which can lead to the creation of an open and inclusive society, help narrow the digital divide, and guide parliament in its own use of technology.
- Ensure that citizens have access to all laws passed by parliament and the ability to follow the law-making process, including having access to the full text and status of all proposed legislation.
    - Develop a strategy to create, in conjunction with the executive and judicial branches, national databases containing all of a country's laws in force updated on a timely basis and accessible to all citizens.
- Foster the active engagement of the leaders and members of parliament in establishing a vision for e-parliament and providing oversight of its implementation.
    - Involve members and committees as well citizens and stakeholders from civil society organizations in formulating the vision;
    - Anchor the vision in the values that embody the contribution of parliament to democracy – representation, transparency, accessibility, accountability and effectiveness.

Planning and management

- Involve members and staff in proposing ideas for the use of technology in the work of the parliament and providing support for its implementation.
- Based on the vision for e-parliament, develop a strategic plan that leads to specific projects, schedules, and the allocation of resources, both human and financial, from internal and external sources.
    - Establish criteria for evaluating the success of the plan.
    - Review and update the plan regularly.
- Orient all members to the possibilities and uses of ICT by offering appropriate training and information programmes.
- Orient ICT staff to the nature of legislative bodies and provide them with the most appropriate and current technical training.

Communication

- Explore and evaluate the use of interactive technology tools to connect parliaments with citizens and to offer them the means to express their opinions.
- Foster the employment of all tools judged to be useful and effective in the parliamentary environment, including new media and mobile technologies, to provide citizens with improved access to the work of parliament and increased means of participation in the political dialogue.
- Enable all members and their constituents to communicate by e-mail, as well as other interactive technologies, when feasible.
    - Provide members with systems for managing e-mail so that they can be better informed about the views of their constituents and more responsive to their concerns.

Transparency and accountability

- Promote the development of websites that convey the work of the parliament in ways that are accurate, timely, and complete. Follow the IPU's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* to meet international standards for:
    - General information about parliament;
    - Documents and information concerning legislation, oversight, and the budget, as well as the activities of members, committees and the plenary;
    - Tools available to users for finding and viewing information;
    - Best practices for usability and standards to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to parliamentary websites.

Technical infrastructure and information support

- Promote the development and maintenance of adequate technical infrastructures and systems in all parliaments to support their legislative, oversight, and representational work by providing:
    - All members with a personal computer, LAN connection, and access to the Internet;
    - A document management system capable of preparing and managing all parliamentary documentation;
    - Use of XML as the document standard;
    - Mobile access for all members;
    - Automated systems for managing library resources;
    - Development of digital services for members and committees based on greater access to technology and technical support;

- Access to relevant electronic resources, also through cooperative agreements with other libraries;
- Information and research services supported by ICT and linked to the legislative and policy issues that confront the parliament.

Regional and global cooperation

- Foster the regular exchange of information, experiences, and practices among parliaments at the regional and global level.
- Support staff to travel to regional and global network meetings as part of their training.
- Support the collaborative development of systems, applications and solutions particularly to leverage limited funding.
- Extend support to newly established networks, and to the processes for their creation in regions where there are none.
- When possible, establish clear links among global associations and regional networks.
- Encourage parliaments with advanced technological infrastructures and expert knowledge to support parliaments in developing countries by lending staff expertise and by providing material assistance.
- Work to ensure that ICT-related contributions from parliaments and from the international community of donors are closely integrated.
- Ensure that externally supported programmes that include the enhancement of ICT as part of their objectives are integrated with the overall technology plans of the parliament.
- Establish and maintain an online facility to map assistance for ICT in parliaments around the world with a view to share solutions and knowledge.
- Encourage dialogue among legislators for addressing Information Society-related issues and the sharing of experiences and legislative practices at the international level.
- Adopt the e-Parliament Framework 2010 - 2020 and the goals and benchmarks it provides to make it possible to advance globally and to evaluate how well the world of parliaments and the international community are doing in attaining these goals.
- Establish a consultative mechanism to coordinate assistance to parliaments in the area of ICT within the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) implementation process.
- Support the work of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to act as a hub for information, research, documentation and networking, as well as to provide assistance and generate partnerships with donors and advanced legislatures. Through the Centre, encourage the exchange of lessons learned and good practices among programmes of support to parliament.

CONCLUSIONS

As discussed throughout this Report, ICT enables parliaments to strengthen their capacity for effective law making, oversight, and representation. A document management system for proposed legislation provides members with timely access to bills and amendments while they are still being drafted. Library and research services that use technology to find and present information dealing with pressing policy issues being considered by the parliament assist members and committees conduct oversight of government programs more effectively. And a system for receiving and categorizing e-mail from constituents helps members keep abreast of the opinions and concerns of those they represent.

Technology enables parliaments to realize the values of transparency, accessibility, and accountability. A website with the most current reports of committee actions and plenary debates ensures a more open institution. Interactive communication tools that enable citizens and civil society organizations to engage with the legislature, through multiple channels, foster greater access for all segments of society, regardless of their physical location or their economic status. Publishing the speeches and votes of members advances the state of accountability, as does the availability of information about the prerogatives, salaries and expenses of leaders, members, and staff.

It is arguable, in fact, that in the age of the Information Society, the ability of parliaments to fulfil their responsibilities as representatives of the people and to attain the highest levels of openness requires the effective and creative application of information and communication technologies in their daily work. It can be further argued that to achieve these goals, parliaments have to be able to share experiences, knowledge, and ideas with each other in regional and international settings in a collaborative global environment.

Reaching the highest levels of e-parliament allows legislatures to operate at a level of competence and efficiency that is the hallmark of successful organizations and institutions. Parliaments that attain these levels are able to conduct their work in the most effective manner and, at the same time, be transparent and accessible to the public. This is part of the unique nature of legislative bodies. They must be engaged with the citizens they represent, open to a variety of views and opinions, able to negotiate and compromise, and fully accountable for their decisions and actions. While doing all of this, they must also be efficient and fully transparent in their use of public resources. Achieving these diverse and sometimes conflicting goals depends increasingly on the appropriate use of technology. As the findings have repeatedly documented, this requires both intellectual and financial resources. As the Report also notes, many of those that have greater resources are working at a level that is substantially higher than their peers.

The positive interpretation of these findings is that those at the highest level of e-parliament are breaking new ground and setting new standards of excellence, and that sharing this knowledge could benefit all parliaments.

There is another interpretation, however, based on a concern that the technology gap among parliaments is growing wider and that the rapid pace of change in the Information Society is causing many parliaments to lag further behind in their ability to adopt and utilize appropriate technologies. This increasingly limits their capacity to meet their most important responsibilities as the primary representative of the citizens of the country; it constrains their ability to be transparent and accessible; and it affects their capacity to ensure an open and inclusive Information Society.

The oldest national parliament was founded over 1,000 years ago; some legislatures can trace their origins back several centuries. A number of today's legislatures that are relatively new were established within the last 50 years. It has been only in the last two to three decades, however, that modern information and communication technologies have had a significant impact on public institutions. While the vast majority of parliaments has been in existence longer than today's technologies and have exercised their responsibilities without it, there is the possibility that those that today do not adapt to the changes being brought about by the Information Society will not thrive. They will, in fact, be at risk of losing their perceived relevance and therefore their perceived legitimacy. While this may not represent a "crisis" as some might argue, it will undoubtedly result in some parliaments becoming less significant and less important in the future. And, without an

effective and capable legislature the ability of a country to maintain a healthy democracy will be weakened.

Modern parliaments must work and communicate in ways that are congruent with the ways in which their citizens work and communicate. This means that they cannot be too far ahead or behind their citizens in their use of technology. For countries that are currently less advanced in their use of ICT, however, this does not mean that the parliament should hold back in its implementation of technology. Rather it should demonstrate leadership by using ICT tools to reach out to their citizens in ways not previously possible and that are consistent with the history and political culture of the society.

The seeds of the solutions to these challenges can be found in the findings from the 2009 survey, the contributions of parliamentary leaders and experts at the World e-Parliament Conferences, and the insights of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The survey has confirmed that some parliaments are technically well advanced and the areas of greatest need among those that are less so. It has also confirmed that many parliaments, especially in developing countries, and even a majority of those that are further ahead economically, welcome help from other parliaments to improve the state of their technology. Together these findings confirm the potential value of an international effort that builds upon and extends the inter-connectedness of parliaments through existing regional and international networks. In areas where such associations do not exist, their establishment must be encouraged and sustained. In areas where they do exist, there needs to be a strong focus on mutual assistance and the exchange of ideas.

Thus, the needs are well documented and the expertise to address them is known to exist in legislatures that have achieved high e-parliament levels. The challenge is to establish and carry out a programme for matching the two. The strategic goals proposed by the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament and the means for attaining them are especially relevant to this task. The e-Parliament Framework 2010 - 2020 presented in this Report is based on the accumulated experience and knowledge of parliaments that have successfully adopted ICT, and on donor initiatives that integrate technology closely into their efforts to improve law making, oversight, and representation. The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament serves legislatures as a critical vehicle for bringing together the world of parliaments and the international system to tackle these challenges. Continued support for its work, in concert with the parliamentary and donor communities, will be instrumental for ensuring that collaborative approaches for elevating the ICT capabilities of all parliaments are achieved.

The national constitution establishes the authority of a legislature. Its capacity to exercise that authority, however, depends on how well it is able to carry out its legislative, oversight, and representational responsibilities. ICT are one of the critical means that enables legislatures to do this effectively. As the use of new communication technologies continues to spread throughout society, parliaments have a real opportunity to exploit them to establish a stronger linkage between citizens and their representatives. The assumption is that if citizens feel connected, they will be more engaged and the parliament will be perceived as being more relevant and more legitimate. This offers the potential for reversing negative perceptions of political institutions, including legislative bodies.

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Boxes

Figures

ANNEXES

Annex 1
Methodology for Assessing the State of e-Parliament

Purpose

- Establish criteria for assessing the level of ICT adoption globally among all parliaments;
- Provide a tool to assist an individual parliament assess the state of its own technology level.

Description of the methodology

The methodology is based on the survey questions and the six areas of technology which they assess:

1. Oversight and management of ICT;
2. Infrastructure, services, applications and training;
3. Systems and standards for creating legislative documents and information;
4. Library and research services;
5. Parliamentary websites;
6. Communication between citizens and parliaments.

Each of these areas was assigned a weight intended to reflect its relative value with respect to the others. Because of the importance of parliamentary websites, especially for achieving the goal of transparency, and the importance of communication between citizens and parliaments, particularly for attaining the goal of accessibility and engagement of citizens, these areas were each assigned a weight of 20. The other four areas were deemed to be of equal value to each other and assigned a weight of 15.

Each area was then broken down into sub-areas that identified its key components; these sub-areas were also assigned weights that reflected their importance relative to other sub-areas. The combined weights of the sub-areas under a given area totaled the weight assigned to that area. In Table 1, column 1 shows the list of all areas and sub-areas; column 3 shows the weight of each area; and column 4 shows the weight of each sub-area.

Questions from the survey were then associated with their logical sub-areas (see Table 1, column 2). In some cases a single question defined a sub-area. For example, under the area of "Oversight and management of ICT", for the sub-area "Engagement of leaders", question 4 of section 1 of the survey is used to assess that sub-area. In other cases, two or more questions were used. For example, the sub-area of "Strategic planning" is assessed by questions 11 and 12 of section 1 under the same area "Oversight and management of ICT". A maximum score for some questions was used where the total score could potentially exceed the total allowed for that question.

In view of the scope of the effort only a number of selected questions from the survey were

used. Some questions were excluded because they were informative but did not lend themselves to a comparative assessment. Others were deemed not as relevant as the questions that were selected or were judged to be insufficiently accurate or valid to warrant inclusion in the methodology at this time. A total of 44 of the 138 questions were used to calculate the scores, with many of these questions containing multiple parts.

Once the questions were grouped in their respective areas and sub-areas, they were each assigned a maximum score and a method for determining that score based on the answer.

Scoring example 1:

Area: Oversight and management of ICT

Sub-area: Engagement of leaders

Section 1, question 4 (What is the engagement level of political leaders..?)

Parliaments that responded "very highly" received a score of 3; those that responded "highly" received a score of 2. No other responses to this question received points.

Scoring example 2:

Area: Infrastructure, Services, Applications, Training

Sub-area: Basic support services

Section 2, question 1 (listing 9 general services, such as Help desk, etc.)

Parliaments received a point for each service checked; the total was divided by 9, the maximum score for that question

There are obvious limits to the level of detail that can be assessed using the survey questions. For example under "Parliamentary websites", question 5(b) from Section 5 of the survey asks whether the texts of proposed legislation are available from current and previous years. It does not however ask how far back that text is available. Similarly, question 5(b) asks if a searchable database of bills is available but not which elements of bills can be searched. Reaching this level of detail in every sub-area would require far more detailed questions than is possible in the current version of the Global Survey of ICT in Parliament.

Limits of the methodology

The methodology is based on the answers provided by each parliament. The accuracy of the methodology therefore depends on the accuracy of those answers, which could not be independently verified. In this sense the survey is a self assessment. But self assessment is a valid approach, especially when parliaments are seeking to identify their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, not all questions apply to all parliaments. The survey and methodology did try to take this into account whenever possible.

Scoring Methodology for Assessing the State of e-Parliament

1	2	3	4	5
Primary Areas and Sub-Areas	Relevant Questions: Section#/ Question#	Weight for each area	Weight for each sub-area	Basis for Score
Oversight and Management		15		
Engagement of leaders	S1/Q4		3	Very=3; Highly=2
Ideas, goals, objectives	S1/Q3		1	1/10 for each check
Oversight, management	S1/Q6		3	yes=3; planning=1.5
Vision statement	S1/Q9		3	yes=3; planning=1.5
Strategic planning			3	
Have a plan	S1/Q10			yes=1.5
Updated regularly	S1/Q11			yes=1.5
Project management	S1/Q13		2	yes=2; planning=1
Infrastructure, Services, Applications, Training		15		
Basic support services			7	
General services	S2/Q1			1/9 for each check
Specific support/services	S2/Q2			1/10 for each check
LAN	S2/Q4			yes=1
Internet access	S2/Q7			yes=1
Wireless	S2/Q9			yes=1
24 hour power	S2/Q13			yes=1
Parliament functions supported	S2/Q15			1/25 for each check
Service levels and staffing	S2/Q11,12		1	0.5 for each “yes for all”; 0.25 for each “yes for some”
Plenary support	S2/Q16, 20, 22		3	1 for each “yes” 16, 20, 22
Training			4	
Training programme for staff	S2/Q27			yes=2
Percentage of staff trained	S2/Q28			1>75%; 0.5>50%; 0.25>25%
Training/orientation programme for members	S2/Q30			yes=1
Systems and Standards for Creating Legislative Documents and Information		15		
Document Management System – bills			4	
Have system	S3/Q1			yes=2; planning=1
Uses XML	S3/Q3			yes=2; planning=1
Document Management System for other documents	S3/Q5a-f		4	1 for each check; max=4
XML used in these documents	S3/Q6a-f		4	1 for each check; max=4
Preservation of digital documents			2	
Preservation policy for digital documents	S3/Q11			yes=2; planning=1
High speed download of documents	S3/Q12		1	yes=1; planning=1/2
Library and Research Services		15		
Has library	S4/Q1		1	yes=1
Digital services			10	
Connected to intranet	S4/Q5			yes=2
Webpage organized by issues	S4/Q6			yes=2

Receive requests electronically	S4/Q7			yes=2
Alerting services	S4/Q8			yes=2
Tools to support work	S4/Q9			1/2 for each check; max=2
Other services			4	
Contribute to parliamentary website	S4/Q19			1 for each check; max=4
Parliamentary Websites		20		
General information	S5/Q4a-k		2	(1 for each check/55)*2
Info regarding legislation, budget, oversight	S5/Q5a-f		6	(1 for each check/35)*6
Completeness (links to bills)	S5/Q6		2	(1 for each check/16)*2
Timeliness (proposed legislation after action)	S5/Q7b		1	Same day=1; One day after=0.75; One week after=0.5
Tools			6	
Search engine	S5/Q8a			(1 for each check)/5*3
Broadcasting/Webcasting	S5/Q8b			Live=2
Alerting services	S5/Q8c			(1 for each check)/6
Usability and accessibility			3	
Accessibility guidelines	S5/Q9b			yes=3
Communication:Citizens and Parliaments		20		
Websites				
Members use websites	S6/Q1		3	Most=3; Some=2
E-mail				
Members use e-mail	S6/Q4		3	Most=3;Some=2
Other methods				
Methods used	S6/Q11		10	Each method used=0.5
Communicate with young people				
Methods	S6/Q14		4	Each method used=0.33
Total questions used to compute status	44			
Total questions in survey	138			
Total category weights		100		
Total score possible for all questions			100	

Annex 2
Geographical groupings

EUROPEAN UNION AREA	LATIN AMERICA	AFRICA
• Parliament of Austria • House of Representatives of Belgium • Senate of Belgium • House of Representatives of Cyprus • Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic • Senate of the Czech Republic • Parliament of Denmark • Parliament of Estonia • Parliament of Finland • National Assembly of France • Senate of France • German Bundestag • Federal Council of Germany • Hellenic Parliament of Greece • National Assembly of Hungary • Chamber of Deputies of Italy • Senate of Italy • Parliament of Latvia • Parliament of Lithuania • Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg • House of Representatives of the Netherlands • Senate of the Netherlands • Sejm of Poland • Assembly of the Republic of Portugal • Chamber of Deputies of Romania • Senate of Romania • National Council of Slovakia • National Assembly of Slovenia • Congress of Deputies of Spain • Senate of Spain • Parliament of Sweden • Parliament of the United Kingdom • European Parliament	• Chamber of Deputies of Argentina • Senate of Argentina • Chamber of Deputies of Brazil • Federal Senate of Brazil • Chamber of Deputies of Chile • Senate of Chile • Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica • National Assembly of Ecuador • Legislative Assembly of El Salvador • Congress of the Republic of Guatemala • Chamber of Deputies of Mexico • National Assembly of Nicaragua • National Assembly of Panama • House of Representatives of Uruguay • Senate of Uruguay	• National People's Assembly of Algeria • Council of the Nation of Algeria • National Assembly of Angola • National Assembly of Botswana • National Assembly of Burkina Faso • National Assembly of Cameroon • National Assembly of Chad • National Assembly of Congo • Senate of Congo • National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire • National Assembly of Democratic Republic of the Congo • National Assembly of Djibouti • People's Assembly of Egypt • House of the Federation of Ethiopia • National Assembly of Gabon • Parliament of Ghana • National Assembly of Kenya • Parliament of Lesotho • The Liberian Senate • National Assembly of Malawi • National Assembly of Mauritius • House of Representatives of Morocco • Assembly of the Republic of Mozambique • Parliament of Namibia • National Assembly of Niger • National Assembly of Nigeria • Parliament of Rwanda • National Assembly of Senegal • Parliament of South Africa • National Assembly of Sudan • Chamber of Deputies of Tunisia • Chamber of Councillors of Tunisia • Parliament of Uganda • National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania • National Assembly of Zambia • Parliament of Zimbabwe • Pan-African Parliament

Annex 3
Classification of economies[1]

High Income	Upper Middle Income	Lower Middle income	Low Income
Andorra	Algeria	Albania	Afghanistan
Antigua and Barbuda	American Samoa	Angola	Bangladesh
Aruba	Argentina	Armenia	Benin
Australia	Belarus	Azerbaijan	Burkina Faso
Austria	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Belize	Burundi
Bahamas, The	Botswana	Bhutan	Cambodia
Bahrain	Brazil	Bolivia	Central African Republic
Barbados	Bulgaria	Cameroon	Chad
Belgium	Chile	Cape Verde	Comoros
Bermuda	Colombia	China	Congo, Dem. Rep.
Brunei Darussalam	Costa Rica	Congo, Rep.	Eritrea
Canada	Cuba	Côte d'Ivoire	Ethiopia
Cayman Islands	Dominica	Djibouti	Gambia, The
Channel Islands	Dominican Republic	Ecuador	Ghana
Croatia	Fiji	Egypt, Arab Rep.	Guinea
Cyprus	Gabon	El Salvador	Guinea-Bissau
Czech Republic	Grenada	Georgia	Haiti
Denmark	Jamaica	Guatemala	Kenya
Equatorial Guinea	Kazakhstan	Guyana	Korea, Dem. Rep.
Estonia	Latvia	Honduras	Kyrgyz Republic
Faeroe Islands	Lebanon	India	Lao PDR
Finland	Libya	Indonesia	Liberia
France	Lithuania	Iran, Islamic Rep.	Madagascar
French Polynesia	Macedonia, FYR	Iraq	Malawi
Germany	Malaysia	Jordan	Mali
Greece	Mauritius	Kiribati	Mauritania
Greenland	Mayotte	Kosovo	Mozambique
Guam	Mexico	Lesotho	Myanmar
Hong Kong, SAR, China	Montenegro	Maldives	Nepal
Hungary	Namibia	Marshall Islands	Niger
Iceland	Palau	Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	Rwanda
Ireland	Panama	Moldova	Senegal
Isle of Man	Peru	Mongolia	Sierra Leone
Israel	Poland	Morocco	Somalia
Italy	Romania	Nicaragua	Tajikistan
Japan	Russian Federation	Nigeria	Tanzania
Korea, Rep.	Serbia	Pakistan	Togo
Kuwait	Seychelles	Papua New Guinea	Uganda
Liechtenstein	South Africa	Paraguay	Uzbekistan
Luxembourg	St. Kitts and Nevis	Philippines	Vietnam
Macao, SAR, China	St. Lucia	Samoa	Yemen, Rep.
Malta	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	São Tomé and Principe	Zambia
Monaco	Suriname	Solomon Islands	Zimbabwe
Netherlands	Turkey	Sri Lanka	
Netherlands Antilles	Uruguay	Sudan	
New Caledonia	Venezuela, RB	Swaziland	
New Zealand		Syrian Arab Republic	
Northern Mariana Islands		Thailand	
Norway		Timor-Leste	
Oman		Tonga	

1 Based on the *World Bank list of economies*, July 2009.

High Income	Upper Middle Income	Lower Middle income	Low Income
Portugal Puerto Rico Qatar San Marino Saudi Arabia Singapore Slovak Republic Slovenia Spain Sweden Switzerland Trinidad and Tobago United Arab Emirates United Kingdom United States Virgin Islands (U.S.)		Tunisia Turkmenistan Ukraine Vanuatu West Bank and Gaza	

This table classifies all World Bank member economies, and all other economies with populations of more than 30,000. For operational and analytical purposes, economies are divided among income groups according to 2008 gross national income (GNI) per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method. The groups are: low income, $975 or less; lower middle income, $976–3,855; upper middle income, $3,856–11,905; and high income, $11,906 or more.

Annex 4
Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments 2009

CONTACT AND ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide the information requested below.

Parliament or chamber: .....

Country: .....

Person to contact if there are questions about the responses to the survey:

First name: .....

Last Name: .....

Title: .....

Email address: .....

Phone number: .....

SECTION 1
OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT OF ICT

Purpose. This section asks how strategic direction is given for ICT, how priorities are established, and how ICT is managed. It also asks about staff and financial resources, and about cooperation with other parliaments.

1. **For bicameral parliaments only. Please select the option below that best describes how ICT support is provided.**

- ☐ Each chamber has its own ICT group, and they work independently
- ☐ Each chamber has its own ICT group, but they work on some projects and tasks together
- ☐ One ICT group supports both chambers
- ☐ Other (please describe in the comment box at the end of this section.)

2. **Who establishes the goals and objectives for ICT in the parliament or chamber?**
(Check all that apply)

- ☐ President/Speaker of parliament or chamber
- ☐ Parliamentary committee
- ☐ Members
- ☐ Secretary General
- ☐ Chief Information Officer
- ☐ Director of ICT
- ☐ Special group or committee
- ☐ Internal IT experts
- ☐ Contractors
- ☐ Other *(Please specify)*

3. **Where do ideas and proposals for ICT goals and projects come from?**
(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Senior political leadership
- ☐ Senior ICT leadership
- ☐ Members
- ☐ Committees
- ☐ Departments of the parliament
- ☐ Formal group of stakeholders, such as an advisory group, special committee, or governing board
- ☐ ICT staff
- ☐ Library/research services
- ☐ Users within the parliament
- ☐ Public
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*

4. **What is the level of engagement of the political leaders (for example, at the level of the Speaker/President, Vice Speaker/Vice President) of the parliament in ICT?**

- ☐ Very highly engaged
- ☐ Highly engaged
- ☐ Somewhat engaged
- ☐ Engaged very little
- ☐ Not engaged at all

5. **How often do the political leaders engage with the issue of ICT in parliament?**

□ Weekly or biweekly
□ Monthly
□ Quarterly
□ Annually
□ Only when an issue arises
□ Never

6. **Is there a specially designated committee or group that provides direction and oversight for the use of ICT in the parliament?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 7*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 9*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 9*

7. **If yes, what is the composition of the group?**

(Check all that apply)
Chairs of committees or commissions
Members
Staff
Outside experts
Other *(please specify)*

8. **Who chairs the group?**

□ Speaker/President
□ Vice Speaker/Vice President
□ Chair of a committee
□ Member of parliament
□ Secretary General
□ Director of ICT
□ Other staff member
□ Other person *(please specify)*

9. **Does the parliament have a written vision statement for ICT?**

□ Yes
□ Planning or considering
□ No, and not planning or considering

10. **Does the parliament have a strategic plan with goals, objectives, and timetables for ICT?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 11*
□ No => *Go to question 13*

11. **If yes, is the strategic plan updated regularly?**

□ Yes
□ No

12. **Has the parliament established criteria and indicators to measure the success of its plan?**

□ Yes
□ No

13. **Is a formal project management methodology used for implementing new initiatives?**
□ Yes
□ Planning or considering
□ No, and not planning or considering

14. **Approximately how many total users of ICT (actual or potential users) are there within the parliament – members and staff combined - but excluding the public?**
Approximate number of users (members+staff) =

15. **Approximately how many total internal parliamentary ICT staff does the parliament employ? (Please estimate full time equivalent, for example two staff working half time would be equivalent to one full time staff member)**
Approximate number of parliamentary ICT staff =

16. **Approximately how many total external contract or consultant ICT staff does the parliament employ? (Please estimate full time equivalent, for example two staff working half time would be equivalent to one full time staff member)**
Approximate number of contract staff =

17. **What are the approximate budget of the parliament and the approximate budget for ICT for the most recent year available? Please give the amount in the local currency and then indicate the name of the currency.**
Most recent year available =
Approximate total budget for parliament or chamber =
Approximate total budget for ICT in parliament or chamber =
Currency is

18. **Does the parliament participate in any formal networks of parliaments for the exchange of information and experiences regarding ICT?**
□ Yes => *Go to question 19*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 20*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 20*

19. **If yes, which ones?**

20. **Does the parliament currently provide support to other parliaments to help them strengthen their legislative, oversight, representational, or administrative capacities?**
□ Yes => *Go to question 21*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 23*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 23*

21. **If yes, which other parliaments does the parliament or chamber support?**

22. **Does the parliament have a committee or office that is responsible for this activity?**
□ Yes
□ Planning or considering
□ No, and not planning or considering

23. **Does the parliament currently provide support, or would it be willing to consider providing support to other parliaments to help develop or enhance their use of ICT?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 24*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 26*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 26*

24. **If yes, in what areas does the parliament currently provide support, or would it be willing to consider offering support to other parliaments to help develop or enhance their use of ICT?**

	Currently providing support	Willing to consider providing support
ICT planning	□	□
ICT management	□	□
Hardware/software	□	□
Network operations	□	□
Application development	□	□
Staff development and training	□	□
Document management systems	□	□
Document standards	□	□
ICT services for members	□	□
ICT services for committees	□	□
ICT services for plenary	□	□
Websites	□	□
Library and research services	□	□
Communication with citizens	□	□
Other *(please specify)*	□	□

25. **To which other parliaments or parliamentary assemblies does the parliament provide support to help develop or enhance their use of ICT?**

26. **Does the parliament currently receive support from other parliaments to help it strengthen its legislative, oversight, representational, or administrative capacities?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 27*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 28*
□ No and not planning or considering => *Go to question 28*

27. **If yes, from which other parliaments does the parliament receive support?**

28. **Does the parliament currently receive support, or would it like to receive support from other parliaments or outside organizations to help develop or enhance its use of ICT?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 29*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to Additional comments*
□ No and not planning or considering => *Go Additional comments*

29. **In what areas does the parliament currently receive, or would it like to receive support from other parliaments to help develop or enhance its use of ICT?**

	Currently receive support from other parliaments	Would like to receive support from other parliaments
ICT planning	☐	☐
ICT management	☐	☐
Hardware/software	☐	☐
Network operations	☐	☐
Application development	☐	☐
Staff development and training	☐	☐
Document management systems	☐	☐
Document standards	☐	☐
ICT services for members	☐	☐
ICT services for committees	☐	☐
ICT services for plenary	☐	☐
Websites	☐	☐
Library and research services	☐	☐
Communication with citizens	☐	☐
Other *(please specify)*	☐	☐

30. **From which other parliaments or parliamentary assemblies does the parliament or chamber receive support to help develop or enhance its use of ICT?**

Additional comments and good practices. In the box below, please add any **additional comments** the parliament wishes to make in response to any of the questions in this section. The parliament is also invited to describe briefly any **lessons learned or good practices** it has implemented in dealing with the topics covered in this section of the survey.

SECTION 2
INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES, APPLICATIONS, AND TRAINING

Purpose. This section asks about ICT services, technical infrastructure, applications, and training. The purpose is to understand the scope of ICT systems and services available within the parliament and the training provided to staff to support them. Please note that ICT services include voice and data communication services.

1. **Please indicate which of the <u>following general ICT</u> services are available in the parliament or chamber.**

(Check all that apply)

- □ Application development and maintenance
- □ Data network operations
- □ Help desk
- □ PC support
- □ Systems administration
- □ Systems programming
- □ Voice communications
- □ Web publishing
- □ Internet access
- □ None of the above

2. **Please indicate which of the following are provided by parliament to each <u>member of parliament</u> for his or her <u>personal use</u>**

(Check all that apply)

- □ Desktop computer
- □ Laptop computer
- □ Printer
- □ Fax
- □ Intranet access
- □ Access to the Internet
- □ Remote data access
- □ Cell phone
- □ Personal e-mail
- □ Personal website
- □ None of the above

3. **How many desktop and laptop PCs supported by the parliament are currently in use by members of parliament and staff?**

   Desktops =

   Laptops =

4. **Does the parliament have a local area network (LAN)?**

- □ Yes => *Go to question 5*
- □ Planning or considering => *Go to question 7*
- □ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 7*

5. **If yes, how many physical connections (NOT counting wireless connections) does the LAN have?**

   Total LAN connections =

6. **Who is connected to the LAN?**

(Check all that apply)

- □ All members and committees
- □ Only some members and committees
- □ No members or committees
- □ All departments and offices
- □ Only some departments and offices
- □ No departments or offices

7. **Does the parliament have Internet access?**

- □ Yes => *Go to question 8*
- □ Planning or considering => *Go to question 9*
- □ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 9*

8. **If yes, what is the overall maximum bandwidth of the parliament's connection to the Internet?**

Overall maximum bandwidth (please indicate the value in kilobit) =

9. **Does the parliament have wireless access to the Intranet or the Internet?**

- □ Yes => *Go to question 10*
- □ Planning or considering => *Go to question 11*
- □ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 11*

10. **If yes, how many wireless access points does the parliament have?**

Total number of wireless access points=

11. **Does the parliament have written service level agreements with contractors who provide it with equipment or services?**

- □ Yes with all
- □ Yes with some
- □ Planning or considering
- □ No, and not planning or considering
- □ Do not use outside contractors

12. **Does the ICT office have written service level agreements with organizations within the parliament for whom it provides equipment or services?**

- □ Yes with all
- □ Yes with some
- □ Planning or considering
- □ No, and not planning or considering
- □ Does not provide equipment or services to organizations within the parliament.

13. **Does the parliament have reliable electrical power 24 hours per day?**

- □ Yes
- □ No

14. **For those operations, services, and general applications which the parliament supports, please indicate if it uses commercial software or open source software?**
Check both columns if both kinds of software are used. Leave both columns blank for a specific operation, service or general application that it does not support.

	Commercial software	Open Source Software
Operating systems for servers	☐	☐
Operating systems for virtual servers	☐	☐
Network operations	☐	☐
Security	☐	☐
Operating systems for desktop PCs	☐	☐
Operating systems for laptop PCs	☐	☐
Content management	☐	☐
Document management	☐	☐
Databases	☐	☐
E-mail	☐	☐
E-learning	☐	☐
Word processing	☐	☐
Spreadsheets	☐	☐
Presentations	☐	☐
Publishing (print)	☐	☐
Publishing (Web)	☐	☐
Cataloguing system for the library	☐	☐
Electronic resource management	☐	☐
Online library catalog	☐	☐
Other *(please specify)*		

15. **Please indicate for which of the following parliamentary functions, activities, or services there is a supporting ICT application.**
(Check all that apply)

☐ Bill drafting
☐ Amendment drafting
☐ Bill status
☐ Amendment status
☐ Database of laws passed by parliament
☐ Analysis of budget proposed by the government
☐ Plenary calendars and schedules
☐ Minutes of plenary sessions
☐ Plenary speeches and debates
☐ Plenary voting
☐ Committee reports
☐ Committee calendars and schedules
☐ Minutes of committee meetings
☐ Committee websites
☐ Management and support of website for parliament
☐ Management and support of member websites
☐ Systems for communicating with constituents (e-mail, blogs, etc)
☐ Questions to the government
☐ Other scrutiny documents
☐ Management of library resources
☐ Online library catalog

□ Digital archive of parliamentary documents
□ Financial disclosure
□ HR system
□ Financial management system
□ None of the above

16. **Is an electronic voting system used in the plenary room (floor/hemicycle)?**
□ Yes => *Go to question 17*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 20*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 20*

17. **How many voting access points are there in the plenary room?**

18. **How many times is the system used for voting in an average year?**

19. **What method of identification or authentication is used for voting?**
(*Check all that apply)*
□ Card or token
□ Biometric
□ Password
□ Other *(Please specify)*

20. **Are digital displays used in the plenary room?**
□ Yes => *Go to question 21*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 22*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 22*

21. **If yes, for what purposes?**
(*Check all that apply)*
□ Video streaming
□ Display of text
□ Display of graphics
□ Still pictures
□ Video conferences
□ Other *(Please specify)*

22. **Are members provided with PCs or laptops in the plenary room by the parliament?**
□ Yes => *Go to question 23*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 24*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 24*

23. **If yes, what method of authentication is used for accessing information**
(*Check all that apply)*
□ Card or token
□ Biometric
□ Password
□ Other *(Please specify)*
□ None

24. **Which of the following technologies or services <u>can be used</u> by members in the plenary room?**

(*Check all that apply)*

- □ Laptops (owned by Members)
- □ Mobile phones
- □ E-mail access
- □ Internet access
- □ None of the above
- □ Other *(Please specify)*

25. **How are verbatim reports of plenary sessions prepared?**

(Check all that apply)

- □ By hand and transcribed into digital format
- □ In digital format using a PC
- □ In digital format using a stenographic machine
- □ In digital format by using speech recognition technology
- □ None of the above
- □ Other *(Please specify)*

26. **Please indicate which functions are performed by in-house staff and which are performed by contractors. If they are performed by both in-house staff and also by contractors, check both boxes. If the function is not performed in the parliament, do not check either box.**

	Performed by in-house staff	Performed by contract staff
Application development manager	□	□
Website manager	□	□
Network operations manager	□	□
Security manager	□	□
User support manager	□	□
PC support manager	□	□
Training manager	□	□
Systems administration manager	□	□
Systems programming manager	□	□
Voice communications manager	□	□
Programmer/developer	□	□
Network operator	□	□
User support	□	□
PC installation, maintenance, and support	□	□
Trainer	□	□
Systems administrator	□	□
Systems programmer	□	□
Security staff	□	□
Voice communications operator	□	□
Other *(please specify)*		

27. **Does the parliament provide training, through either internal or outside services, for in-house ICT staff?**

- □ Yes => *Go to question 28*
- □ No => *Go to question 30*

28. **If yes, what percentage of in-house ICT staff received training in the last year?**
Percentage of in-house ICT staff receiving training last year = %

29. **What were the top five (5) training priorities in the last year?**
(Check only five (5) or fewer)
- ☐ Application development and maintenance
- ☐ Document management systems
- ☐ Document standards
- ☐ Data network operations
- ☐ Help desk
- ☐ PC support
- ☐ Office automation (word processing, spreadsheets, presentations)
- ☐ E-mail management
- ☐ Systems administration
- ☐ Systems programming
- ☐ Voice communications
- ☐ Website management
- ☐ Webcasting (video and audio)
- ☐ Internet access
- ☐ Security
- ☐ Parliamentary processes

30. **Does the parliament provide ICT training or orientation for members?**
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Planning or considering
- ☐ No, and not planning or considering

31. **Does the parliament provide ICT training or orientation for non-ICT staff?**
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Planning or considering
- ☐ No, and not planning or considering

Additional comments and good practices. In the box below, please add any **additional comments** the parliament wishes to make in response to any of the questions in this section. The parliament is also invited to describe briefly any **lessons learned or good practices** it has implemented in dealing with the topics covered in this section of the survey.

SECTION 3
SYSTEMS AND STANDARDS FOR CREATING LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION

Purpose. This section asks about systems and standards for creating and managing various types of legislative documents and information. It covers bills, amendments, and committee and plenary documentation.

1. **Does the parliament have a system for managing the texts of bills in digital format as they move through the legislative process?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 2*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 5*
□ No, and not planning or considering such a system => *Go to question 5*
□ Does not apply to this parliament or chamber => *Go to question 5*

2. **If yes, which of the following features does the system have?**

(Check all that apply)
□ Authenticates users
□ Has workflow capability
□ Exchanges data with other systems outside the parliament
□ Can handle all possible versions of a bill
□ Can handle committee amendments
□ Can handle plenary amendments
□ Can show the changes in a bill that the amendment would make
□ Includes all actions taken by parliament on a bill
□ Has automated error detection capability
□ None of the above

3. **Does the system use XML for the document standard?**

□ Yes => Go to question 4
□ No, but planning for or considering using XML => *Go to question 5*
□ No, and there are no plans or consideration for XML => *Go to question 5*

4. **If the system uses XML, what is it used for?**

(Check all that apply)
□ Printing
□ Presentation on the web
□ Preservation
□ Exchange with other systems
□ Provide accessibility for persons with disabilities
□ Make documents available for downloading
□ Integrate documents with another system
□ Improve searching
□ Other *(please specify)*

5. **For each type of committee and plenary documentation listed below check whether the parliament has a system or not for preparing and managing the text in digital format. If parliament does not produce the document, check the third column.**

	Have a system	Do not have a system	Document not produced by parliament
Minutes of committee meetings	☐	☐	☐
Committee reports	☐	☐	☐
Committee hearings	☐	☐	☐
Minutes of plenary sessions	☐	☐	☐
Plenary speeches and debates	☐	☐	☐
Plenary votes	☐	☐	☐

6. **For each type of documentation** *for which there is a system in place, as indicated in question 5 above*, **check below the status of XML for that system.**

	Uses XML	Planning or considering XML	Not planning to use XML
Minutes of committee meetings	☐	☐	☐
Committee reports	☐	☐	☐
Committee hearings	☐	☐	☐
Minutes of plenary sessions	☐	☐	☐
Plenary speeches and debates	☐	☐	☐
Plenary votes	☐	☐	☐

7. **If the parliament is using, or has tried to use XML as the standard for any of the types of documentation mentioned above, what challenges did it experience?**

(Check all that apply)

☐ Difficulty in developing a DTD or Schema
☐ Difficulty in finding or developing software for authoring and editing
☐ Lack of staff knowledge and training
☐ Lack of financial resources
☐ Lack of management support
☐ Complexity of using XML
☐ User resistance
☐ None of the above
☐ Other *(please specify)*

8. **Does the parliament make its documentation available in bulk for high speed downloading by those outside the parliament?**

☐ Yes
☐ Planning or considering
☐ No, and not planning or considering

9. **Does the parliament have a program for converting paper documentation into digital formats?**

☐ Yes
☐ Planning or considering
☐ No, and not planning or considering

10. **For approximately how many years does the parliament have the text of bills and plenary speeches and debates available in <u>any</u> format, and for how many years does it have them available in <u>digital</u> format?**

Document	Number of years available in ANY format	Number of years available in DIGITAL format
Text of bills	□	□
Plenary speeches and debates	□	□

11. **Has the parliament established a policy regarding the preservation of its documentation in digital format?**

□ Yes
□ Planning or considering
□ No, and not planning or considering

12. **Does the parliament currently maintain a <u>digital</u> archive for preserving parliamentary documentation in <u>digital</u> formats?**

□ Yes
□ Planning or considering
□ No, and not planning or considering

Additional comments and good practices. In the box below, please add any **additional comments** the parliament wishes to make in response to any of the questions in this section. The parliament is also invited to describe briefly any **lessons learned or good practices** implemented in dealing with the topics covered in this section of the survey.

SECTION 4
LIBRARY AND RESEARCH SERVICES

Purpose. This section asks how ICT supports library and research services available to the parliament and its members and some of the characteristics of that support. It also asks about the availability of services to the public.

1. **Does the parliament have a library or information center to serve its members?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 2*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to Section 5*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to Section 5*

If the parliament DOES NOT have a library, skip the rest of Section 4 and go to Section 5: Parliamentary Websites.
If the parliament DOES have a library, continue with the rest of the questions in this section.

2. **Does the library have an automated system for managing library resources?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 3*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 4*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 4*

3. **If yes, which of the following capabilities does the system include?**

(Check all that apply)
□ Acquisition of monographs
□ Acquisition and claiming of serials
□ Circulation system
□ Cataloguing of acquisitions
□ Online catalog
□ Archiving of digital resources
□ e-resource management capabilities
□ Other *(please specify)*

4. **Who provides ICT support for the library?**

(Check all that apply)
□ Library technical staff
□ Librarians
□ Central ICT staff in parliament or the chamber
□ Government ICT staff outside the parliament or chamber
□ Outside contractors
□ Other *(please specify)*

5. **Is the library connected to an intranet that enables it to make its services available to members?**

□ Yes
□ Planning or considering
□ No, and not planning or considering

6. **Does the library have a web page that organizes and provides access to the Internet and other resources for members and committees based on issues of concern to the parliament?**
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Planning or considering
- ☐ No, and not planning or considering

7. **Can the library receive requests and questions from members electronically?**
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Planning or considering
- ☐ No, and not planning or considering

8. **Does the library use alerting services such as e-mail or RSS to send information automatically to members on their computers, cell phones, or other digital devices?**
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Planning or considering
- ☐ No, and not planning or considering

9. **Which of the following tools does the library use in its work to support the parliament?**
(Check all that apply)
- ☐ Wikis
- ☐ Blogs
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Facebook or MySpace
- ☐ Webcasts
- ☐ None of the above

10. **Does the library use any software to support collaboration among library staff or among library and research staff?**
- ☐ Yes (please name the software)
- ☐ Planning or considering
- ☐ No, and not planning or considering

11. **Does the library purchase subscriptions to online journals and databases that contain expert research and analysis on public policy issues such as energy, the environment, the economy, etc.?**
- ☐ Yes => *Go to question 12*
- ☐ Planning or considering => *Go to question 13*
- ☐ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 13*

12. **If yes, does the library participate in consortia to purchase these subscriptions?**
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Planning or considering
- ☐ No, and not planning or considering

13. **Does the library maintain an archive of parliamentary documentation in digital formats?**
- □ Yes => *Go to question 14*
- □ Planning or considering => *Go to question 15*
- □ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 15*

14. **If yes, which of the following documents does it archive in digital format?**
(Check all that apply)
- □ Bills
- □ Committee documents
- □ Plenary documents
- □ Background materials
- □ Parliamentary research reports
- □ Other *(please specify)*

15. **Does the mission of the library include serving the public as well as the parliament?**
- □ Yes => *Go to question 16*
- □ Planning or considering => *Go to question 17*
- □ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 17*

16. **If yes, how are services made available to the public?**
(Check all that apply)
- □ Public can visit the library in person and request assistance
- □ Public can visit the library website
- □ Public can ask questions of the library by phone
- □ Public can ask questions of the library by e-mail
- □ Other *(please specify)*

17. **Does the library participate in any formal online networks for sharing information with other libraries or research services?**
- □ Yes => *Go to question 18*
- □ Planning or considering => *Go to question 19*
- □ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 19*

18. **If yes, which ones?**

19. **In what areas does the library contribute to the parliament's website?**
(Check all that apply)
- □ Design
- □ Organization
- □ Content
- □ Update and maintenance
- □ Usability testing
- □ Other *(please specify)*
- □ Does not contribute to the website

20. **For bicameral parliaments: Does the parliament have a library for each chamber or does one library serve both chambers?**

- □ Each chamber has its own library
- □ One library serves both chambers
- □ Other arrangement *(please describe briefly)*

21. **Does the parliament have subject matter experts on public policy issues who provide research and analysis for members and committees?**

- □ Yes => *Go to question 22*
- □ Planning or considering => *Go to Additional comments*
- □ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to Additional comments*

22. **If yes, are the results of that research and analyses <u>available to members and staff</u> in documents in digital format?**

- □ Yes
- □ Planning or considering
- □ No, and not planning or considering

23. **If yes, are the results of that research and analyses <u>available to the public</u> on the parliament or library website?**

- □ Yes
- □ Planning or considering
- □ No, and not planning or considering

Additional comments and good practices. In the box below, please add any **additional comments** the parliament wishes to make in response to any of the questions in this section. The parliament is also invited to describe briefly any **lessons learned or good practices** implemented in dealing with the topics covered in this section of the survey.

SECTION 5
PARLIAMENTARY WEBSITES

Purpose. This section asks about parliamentary websites available to members and the public. The purpose is to understand the goals, management, content, and features of these websites, and how ICT supports them. The final questions in this section ask about websites and intranet services available to members and staff only.

1. **Does the parliament have a publicly available website?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 2*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 21*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 21*

If the parliament does not yet have a website, skip to question 21 in this section.
If the parliament does have a website, continue with question 2.

2. **Who establishes the overall goals for the website?**

(Check all that apply)
□ The President/Speaker of the parliament or chamber
□ Parliamentary committee
□ Members
□ Specially designated committee or group
□ Secretary General
□ Director of ICT
□ Other *(please specify)*

3. **Are there written policies for the website regarding the following?**

(Check all that apply)
□ Goals and objectives
□ Development plans
□ Content
□ Privacy
□ Access
□ User support
□ There are policies for these areas but they are not written
□ None of the above

4. **Please check all the types of general information about parliament listed in (a) – (k) below that are included on the website of the parliament** *(Check all that apply)*

a. Access to parliament
□ Information about access to the parliamentary building
□ Diagram of seating arrangements in the plenary and other official meeting rooms
□ Virtual 'Guided tour' of the parliamentary building
□ An explanation of the organization of the website
□ None of the above

b. History and role
□ Brief history of the parliament
□ Description of the role and legal responsibilities of the national legislature
□ Text of the country's Constitution and other founding documents relevant to the work of the parliament
□ None of the above

c. Functions, composition, and activities

□ Overview of the composition and functions of the national parliament
□ The budget and staffing of the parliament
□ Schedule of current and planned parliamentary activities and events
□ List of memberships in global and regional parliamentary assemblies
□ Annual report(s) of parliament, including plenary and non-plenary bodies
□ Statistics on the activities of the current and previous parliaments
□ Texts of official press releases of the parliament
□ None of the above

d. Elected leaders

□ Biodata and picture of the current and previous Presiding Officers
□ Brief description of the Presiding Officer's powers and prerogatives
□ Names of Deputy-Speakers /Vice-Presidents
□ None of the above

e. Parliamentary committees, commissions, and other non-plenary bodies

□ Complete list of non-plenary parliamentary bodies
□ Description of the mandate and terms of reference of each body
□ Description of the activities carried out by the body
□ Membership and names of Presiding Officer(s) of each body
□ Contact information (addresses, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail) of each body
□ Links to the websites of each body
□ Selection of links to websites and documents relevant to the work of the body
□ None of the above

f. Members of parliament

□ Up-to-date list of all current members of parliament
□ Publicly available biodata and photo
□ Constituency, party affiliation
□ Parliamentary committees and/or commissions
□ Link to personal website
□ Description of representative duties and functions of members
□ Contact information for each member of parliament including e-mail address
□ Activities of individual members of parliament, such as legislative proposals, questions, interpellations, motions, political declarations, voting record, etc.
□ Basic information concerning the status of a member of parliament, such as immunity, salaries and allowances, codes of conduct and ethics, etc.
□ Statistical and demographic data (current and historical) on MPs
□ List with biodata of previous members of parliament with dates served
□ None of the above

g. Political parties in parliament

□ List of all political parties represented in parliament
□ Link to each party's website
□ None of the above

h. Elections and electoral systems

□ Explanation of the election procedure for members
□ Link to the electoral commission website

□ Results of the last elections by party affiliation and constituency
□ Current composition of party groups and coalitions
□ Results of previous elections
□ None of the above

i. Administration of parliament
□ Diagram/organization chart and functions of the Secretariat of parliament
□ General descriptions of jobs in the legislature and a list of current vacancies
□ None of the above

j. Publications, documents, and information services.
□ Description of the types and purposes of parliamentary publications
□ Information about how and where to obtain parliamentary publications
□ Information about parliamentary library, archive, and information services
□ None of the above

k. General links to websites
□ Presidency, government, Constitutional and Supreme Courts
□ Ministries and other national agencies
□ State/provincial legislatures
□ Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
□ Other international, regional, and sub-regional parliamentary organizations
□ National parliaments of other countries
□ Other links of interest to parliament as the people's representative body
□ None of the above

5. **Please check all the types of information about legislation, budget, and oversight activities listed in (a) – (f) below that are included on the website**

(Check all that apply)

a. General information
□ Today's business schedule in the parliament
□ Glossary of parliamentary terms and procedures
□ Overview of parliamentary procedure and routine order of business
□ Full text of the Standing Orders, Rules of Procedure or similar rule-setting documents
□ Chart or diagram showing how the business of parliament is conducted
□ None of the above

b. Legislation
□ Explanation of the legislative process
□ Text and status of all proposed legislation
□ Links to documentation related to proposed legislation
□ Text and final status of proposed legislation from previous years
□ Text and actions taken on all enacted legislation
□ A searchable database of current and previously proposed legislation
□ A searchable database of enacted legislation
□ None of the above

c. Budget/Public Financing
□ Explanation of the budget and public financing processes
□ Explanation of proposed budget/public financing for the next fiscal year

□ Status of parliamentary review of the proposed budget/public financing activities
□ Documentation from parliamentary bodies that review public financing activities
□ Documentation regarding the budget from previous years
□ A searchable database of documentation related to budget/public financing from the current and previous years
□ None of the above

d. Oversight (Scrutiny) of the government by the parliament
□ Explanation of oversight responsibilities and the activities of oversight bodies
□ Summary and status of oversight activities
□ Oversight documentation from current year
□ Oversight documentation from previous years
□ A searchable database of documentation related to oversight activities from the current and previous years
□ None of the above

e. Activities of committees, commissions, and other non-plenary bodies
□ Documentation produced by non-plenary bodies
□ Documentation of non-plenary bodies from previous years
□ Websites of non-plenary bodies
□ Audio or video broadcast of meetings
□ Audio or video webcast of meetings
□ Audio or video archive of meetings
□ None of the above

f. Plenary activities and documentation
□ Documentation produced from plenary sessions
□ Documentation from plenary sessions from previous years
□ Audio or video broadcast of plenary meetings
□ Audio or video webcast of plenary meetings
□ Audio or video archive of plenary meetings
□ None of the above

g. Please specify any other type of information available on the website:

6. **Please check below the <u>items that are hyperlinked directly to proposed legislation</u> on the website**

(Check all that apply)
□ Amendments (Plenary)
□ Amendments (Committee)
□ Committee actions
□ Committee reports
□ Committee votes
□ Committee hearings
□ Plenary actions
□ Plenary speeches and debate
□ Plenary votes
□ Laws/statutes
□ Explanations of bills
□ Explanations of actions

□ Impact assessment of bills
□ Budget assessment of bills
□ News stories
□ Government positions or statements
□ All committee and plenary actions of other chamber (if bicameral parliament)
□ All committee and plenary documents of other chamber (if bicameral parliament)
□ None of the above
□ Other *(please specify)*

7. **When are the following documents *usually available* on the website of the parliament after they have been prepared?**

a) Agendas

	At least one week before action	**At least two days before action**	**Same day of action**	**After action taken**	**Not applicable**
Committee agenda	□	□	□	□	□
Plenary agenda	□	□	□	□	□

b) Legislation and plenary proceedings

	Same day of action	One day after action taken	One week after action taken	More than one week after action taken	Not applicable
Proposed legislation	□	□	□	□	□
Plenary proceedings	□	□	□	□	□

8. **Which of the following tools for finding and viewing information are available on the website?**

(Check all that apply)

a. A search engine with the following features:

□ Can be used to find and view all parliamentary documentation and information
□ Searches for major elements, such as words in the text, status of legislation, and other components that may be required
□ Sorts results by various criteria
□ Is designed to be understandable to both novice and expert users
□ Links the results from searches of documentation to relevant audio and video records
□ None of the above

b. Broadcasting and webcasting capabilities:

□ Capacity to broadcast or webcast live meetings of any parliamentary body as well as parliamentary events and programs
□ An archive of broadcast or webcast meetings, events, and programs that permits on-demand viewing
□ None of the above

c. Alerting services for the following types of documentation:

□ Introduction of, and changes to, the status of legislation
□ Changes to the text of legislation
□ Members' activities
□ Committee activities
□ Oversight and scrutiny activities

□ Plenary activities
□ None of the above

d. Mobile services:
□ Mobile services that enable members to access information and documentation as they are made available on the website
□ Mobile services that enable the public to access information and documentation as they are made available on the website
□ None of the above

e. Security and authentication:
□ Secure services that enable MPs to receive, view, and exchange information and documentation on a confidential basis
□ Authentication services, such as digital signatures that enable the authenticity of documentation and information to be verified by any user of the website
□ None of the above

9. **Which of the following tools and guidelines for design are used?**
(Check all that apply)
a. Usability tools
□ Content and design are based on an understanding of needs of different user groups
□ User testing and other usability methods employed to ensure that the design and use of the website is understandable by its intended audiences
□ None of the above

b. Accessibility standards
□ W3C standards or other applicable standards implemented to ensure that the website can be used by persons with disabilities
□ No accessibility standards are used

10. **How many official languages are recognized in the country?**

11. **In how many official languages is the website available in full?**

12. **In how many official languages is the website partially available?**

13. **Is a complete or partial version of the site provided in one of the languages commonly used for international communication?**
□ Yes, complete version is provided *(please specify language(s):*
□ Yes, partial version is provided *(please specify language(s):*
□ Planning or considering
□ No, and not planning or considering

14. **Which of the following design elements are available to users?**
(Check all that apply)
□ Frequently Asked Questions
□ What's new on the website?
□ Site map
□ About this website (who owns it, manages it, update policy, etc.)
□ Help function

- ☐ Whom to contact for questions about the operation of the website
- ☐ Guidance on how to search
- ☐ Support for multiple browsers
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*

15. **Which of the following activities take place in the management of the website?**
(Check all that apply)
- ☐ Officials, members, officers, and staff participate in establishing goals
- ☐ Goals of the website are defined in writing
- ☐ Needs of the intended audiences are defined in writing
- ☐ Periodic evaluations of the website are conducted
- ☐ Oversight and management roles and responsibilities are defined in writing
- ☐ A team is established for ensuring that content is timely and accurate
- ☐ A high level of collaboration is established among the staff responsible for content and the staff responsible for technical systems
- ☐ None of the above

16. **Is parliamentary documentation, such as the text of proposed legislation, committee schedules, and plenary proceedings, available to the public on the website as soon as it is available to members and officials?**
- ☐ Always
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Some of the time
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

17. **Is explanatory material provided on the website to make the text of legislation and procedural steps as understandable as possible?**
- ☐ Always
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Some of the time
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

18. **Is material that explains the context and assesses the possible impact of proposed legislation available on the website?**
- ☐ Always
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Some of the time
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

19. **For bicameral parliaments only, which of the following are present?**
(Check all that apply)
- ☐ Each chamber has its own website
- ☐ A website or single page exists that introduces citizens to both chambers with links to the websites of each
- ☐ There is a prominent link on the websites of each individual chamber to the website of the other
- ☐ Information is provided that explains the legislative and oversight responsibilities and procedures of both chambers.

□ For functions that require action by both chambers, such as passing proposed legislation, the associated documentation reflects the activities and the decisions taken by both chambers.

20. **Please describe briefly any improvements the parliament is planning for the website.**

21. **Does the parliament have a website or other intranet services for members and staff only?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 22*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to Additional comments*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to Additional comments*

22. **What information and services are available to members and staff only (and not available on the public website)?**

(Check all that apply)

□ Proposed legislation available sooner than to public
□ Draft documents
□ Voting records
□ Research and analytic reports
□ Committee activities
□ Explanations of bills
□ Explanations of actions
□ Impact assessment of bills
□ Budget assessment of bills
□ News stories
□ Government positions or statements
□ Tools to support work groups
□ None of the above

Additional comments and good practices. In the box below, please add any **additional comments** the parliament wishes to make in response to any of the questions in this section. The parliament is also invited to describe briefly any **lessons learned or good practices** implemented in dealing with the topics covered in this section of the survey.

SECTION 6
COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITIZENS AND PARLIAMENT

Purpose. This section asks about the use of ICT-based systems for supporting communication between citizens and parliament. It also asks about some of the features of these systems and the experience of the parliament in using them.

1. **Do Members use personal websites to communicate with citizens?**

□ Yes, most do => *Go to question 2*
□ Yes, some do => *Go to question 2*
□ Planning or considering. => *Go to question 4*
□ No, and not planning or considering. => *Go to question 4*
□ Unknown => *Go to question 4*

2. **If yes, for what purposes do they use them?**

(Check all that apply)
□ Communicating information about the work of parliament
□ Communicating the member's personal views
□ Seeking comments and opinions from the public
□ Unknown
□ Other *(please specify)*

3. **Who hosts the websites for members?**

(Check all that apply)
□ Parliament hosts websites for members
□ Members host their own websites
□ Political parties host websites for members
□ Other *(please specify)*

4. **Do Members use e-mail to communicate with citizens?**

□ Yes, most do => *Go to question 5*
□ Yes, some do => *Go to question 5*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 7*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 7*
□ Unknown => *Go to question 7*

5. **If yes, do members respond to e-mail messages from citizens?**

□ Yes, most do at least some of the time
□ Yes, some do at least some of the time
□ No, but planning or considering
□ No, and not planning or considering
□ Unknown

6. **Is there an automated e-mail management system in use supporting the handling and answering of incoming e-mail?**

□ Yes
□ Planning or considering
□ No, and not planning or considering

7. **Do Committees use websites to communicate with citizens?**

□ Yes, most do => *Go to question 8*
□ Yes, some do => *Go to question 8*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 9*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 9*

8. **If yes, for what purposes do they use them?**

(Check all that apply)

□ Communicating information about the work of parliament
□ Communicating information about the work of the committee
□ Communicating the committee's position on issues
□ Seeking comments and opinions from the public
□ Other *(please specify)*

9. **Do committees use e-mail to communicate with citizens?**

□ Yes, most do => *Go to question 10*
□ Yes, some do => *Go to question 10*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 11*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 11*

10. **If yes, do committees respond to e-mail messages from citizens?**

□ Yes, most do at least some of the time
□ Yes, some do at least some of the time
□ Planning or considering
□ No, and not planning or considering

11. **Beside personal e-mails and websites, which of the following methods for communicating with citizens are the parliament or members** *currently using* **or** *planning or considering using?*

Method of communication	Currently using	Planning or considering
e-Petition	□	□
e-Consultation on bills	□	□
e-Consultation on issues	□	□
Online discussion group	□	□
Blogs	□	□
Videos within e-mails	□	□
Webcasting of committee meetings	□	□
Parliament radio channel	□	□
Radio programs (on other radio channels)	□	□
Webcasting of plenary sessions	□	□
Webcasting of special programs	□	□
Satellite channel	□	□
Parliament Web TV	□	□
Parliament TV channel(s) (broadcast TV)	□	□
TV programs (on other TV channels)	□	□
YouTube or other video sharing service	□	□
Twitter	□	□
Social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace	□	□
Online polls	□	□

Alerting services	□	□
None of the above	□	□

12. **If the parliament or members use ICT-based tools to consult with citizens, when is this usually done?**

(Check all that apply)

□ During the early stages of formulating a proposal
□ After a proposed bill is introduced in the parliament
□ During deliberations by committees
□ Before plenary vote
□ Other *(please specify)*

13. **Does the parliament or do members use any ICT-based methods to communicate specifically with young people?**

□ Yes => *Go to question 14*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 15*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 15*

14. **If yes, what ICT-based methods does the parliament or members use?**

(Check all that apply)

□ A website or sections of a website oriented to young people
□ Interactive games
□ Social media (Facebook, MySpace, etc)
□ Broadcast TV channel or programs
□ Webcasts
□ WebTV
□ Radio programs or channels
□ Twitter
□ Blogs
□ Discussion groups
□ Online polls
□ Other (Please specify)

15. **Has the parliament conducted any formal or informal assessments of the value of any of the methods listed in question 11 above, including of e-mail and websites?** *(e.g. are they useful in supporting the work of parliament or in increasing communication between citizens and parliament, etc.?)*

□ Yes => *Go to question 16*
□ Planning or considering => *Go to question 17*
□ No, and not planning or considering => *Go to question 17*

16. **If the answer to question 15 is "Yes", please rate the value to the work of the parliament of any of the technologies that the parliament has assessed.**

Method of communication	Not valuable	Sometimes valuable	Very valuable
e-mail	☐	☐	☐
Websites	☐	☐	☐
e-Petition	☐	☐	☐
e-Consultation on bills	☐	☐	☐
e-Consultation on issues	☐	☐	☐
Online discussion group	☐	☐	☐
Blogs	☐	☐	☐
Videos within e-mails	☐	☐	☐
Webcasting of committee meetings	☐	☐	☐
Parliament radio channel	☐	☐	☐
Radio programs (in other radio channels)	☐	☐	☐
Webcasting of plenary sessions	☐	☐	☐
Webcasting of special programs	☐	☐	☐
Satellite channel	☐	☐	☐
Parliament Web TV	☐	☐	☐
TV programs (in other TV channels)	☐	☐	☐
Parliamentary TV channel(s)	☐	☐	☐
YouTube	☐	☐	☐
Twitter	☐	☐	☐
Social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace	☐	☐	☐
Online polls	☐	☐	☐
Alerting services	☐	☐	☐

Go to question 17

17. **If the parliament uses, or is planning to use, any of the technologies listed in question 16 above, what are the three (3) most important objectives in employing these technologies?**

(Check only the three most important objectives)

- ☐ Engage more citizens in the political process
- ☐ Inform citizens about policy issues and proposed legislation
- ☐ Reach out to minorities
- ☐ Explain what the parliament does
- ☐ Facilitate an exchange of views
- ☐ Enhance the legitimacy of the legislative process
- ☐ Explain proposed legislation
- ☐ Engage young people
- ☐ Include citizens in the decision making process
- ☐ Improve policy and legislation
- ☐ Conduct a poll of citizens opinions on issues or legislation
- ☐ Do not use or not planning to use any of these methods
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*

18. **If the parliament uses, or has used, any of the technologies listed in question 16 above, what challenges have been encountered?**

(Check all that apply)

- □ Members are not familiar with these technologies
- □ Citizens do not have access to the Internet
- □ Citizens are not familiar with these technologies
- □ Too much e-mail is received
- □ Citizens are not familiar with the legislative process
- □ Online discussions and consultations are dominated by a few
- □ Too much effort and resources are required to implement these systems
- □ Members do not have specific constituencies
- □ Cannot judge how representative the responses are
- □ None of the above
- □ Other *(please specify)*

19. **Does the parliament permanently retain electronic communications received from citizens?**

- □ Yes
- □ Planning or considering
- □ No, and not planning or considering

20. **Does the parliament use any special tools which help to collect citizens' comments and categorize them more efficiently?**

- □ Yes, always or almost always
- □ Sometimes
- □ Planning or considering
- □ No, and not planning or considering

21. **What has been the trend in usage by citizens of the various ICT-based methods for communicating with parliament since they have been introduced?**

- □ Increasing usage
- □ Decreasing usage
- □ Usage has remained steady
- □ Citizens do not use ICT-based methods to communicate with parliament
- □ Other *(please specify)*

Additional comments and good practices. In the box below, please add any **additional comments** the parliament wishes to make in response to any of the questions in this section. The parliament is also invited to describe briefly any **lessons learned or good practices** implemented in dealing with the topics covered in this section of the survey.

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