

## **III\* Interparliamentary co-operation**

### **Communication from Mr Everhard Voss (Germany), Ougadougou Session (September 2001)**

**Mr Everhard VOSS** (Germany) described the various methods of interparliamentary co-operation carried out by the Bundestag.

He referred to the interparliamentary support programmes which had as an aim providing the experience of the Bundestag to help build the rule of law. This had been started in the 1990s in new countries in Eastern Europe. This was an important co-sponsored project with the French National Assembly. It had established seminars which had been held in various countries and further seminars would be held. Those attending had usually been invited by the Secretary General of the parliament. There were also mixed missions comprising members of parliament and officials. There was a working group established with the Duma on various matters and this was done on the decision of the President of the Council of Elders in the German Bundestag.

Political foundations were also involved in this process. The aim of these foundations was to build up understanding of the rules of parliament. Staff exchange programmes were a very important part of this process. Those who had been on such staff exchange programmes were able to contribute. Such exchanges took place with various countries, either annually or biannually and there was increasing interest in this.

There was also an interparliamentary internship programme which would aim to show young people how parliaments worked. This was done in conjunction with Hamburg University and invited people from Eastern Europe, France and the United States. Those taking part had to be academics not older than 30. They received an allowance. Members of parliament gave them space in their offices and they were involved in the University.

Political foundations were linked to political parties so young internees got a wide view of politics. Those taking part were selected by a member of parliament, a professor and an official and there was a large number of applications. Interns were sponsored by individual members of parliament and an internship lasted for five and a half months. France had been involved because of the 1963 Treaty and the US was involved because of the 300th Anniversary

of German immigration to the US coast. The scheme was so included to school children aged 16-18 and 18-22 year old students who were on exchanges which aimed to improve their vocational skills. Eleven thousand youngsters so far had taken part in this.

Such programmes were implemented by way of an approach to the Secretary General. There was a division of twelve people which dealt with international relations and was financed by the Bundestag. Political responsibility for this was with the Council of Elders. The Speaker welcomed and said goodbye to all those taking part in such schemes.

\*

\* \*

**Mr Robert MYTTENAERE** thanked Mr VOSS and noted in the context of the amendment of the Rules of the ASGP that one of the objectives of the ASGP was to include international co-operation. His report had shown that one way this was clearly in effect

**Mr Prosper VOKOUMA** (Burkina Faso) thanked Mr VOSS. So far Burkina Faso had worked with political foundations rather than parliaments but hoped to work with the Bundestag in the future. He particularly wanted to thank Mr Voss because the Speaker of the Bundestag had contributed to the present conference by way of giving photocopiers.

He wondered whether it would be possible to establish a study of those programmes for co-operation which were continuing and to list their objectives. This would be a very useful thing to collect. He noted that Mr SANTARA and he and others had spent three weeks in Quebec which he had found very useful. He thought that Burkina would benefit from the support of other countries in a similar way and noted that there were similar joint projects run with Rwanda and Burundi.

**Mr Pierre HONTBEYRIE** (National Assembly, France) gave some examples of further co-operation between the French National Assembly and the Bundestag. He said that co-operation had been strengthened under the TACIS programme of the European Union directed to the Duma which had started in 1995 and had run for 5 years. There also were internship programmes by which students studied at university and worked with parliamentarians. Six students were taken each year from each country that participated. There was also a programme of exchange students which involved shorter visits. Exchange programmes also took place between civil servants. Originally these were

aimed to be for one year but actually tended to last longer than that. Such visiting civil servants had the same conditions as other colleagues. He noted that there was a German intern and for the first time a French intern to the Bundestag, and he noted the positive nature of such exchanges.

**Mr Robert MYTTENAERE** asked whether language was a problem.

**Mr Everhard VOSS** (Germany) said that it was not because everyone was asked whether they spoke French or English and if not they were provided with interpreters.

**Mr Rex OWUSU-ANSAH** (Ghana) noted that one of his colleagues was going to go to Germany. There were strong links between Germany and Ghana. He wondered why donors had to do the work to find people interested and asked whether the ASGP or the IPU could provide details of what was available.

**Mr Martin CHUNGONG** said that the IPU already promoted the discussion of technical assistance to parliaments and was collating details about the activities of what was done in the sphere of international co-operation. It was quite difficult to get information on what parliaments were doing but he hoped to report before the end of the year.

**Mr Ishwar UPADHYAY** (Nepal) noted after the elections in East Timor the overwhelming majority being taken by one party. He asked what the differences were between the various parties' proposals in respect of the Constitution.

**Mr Madelain FILS-AIMÉ** (Haiti) noted that East Timor was on the right road to democracy because of the UN's work. He thought that outsiders from the region should not try to interfere in East Timor, but those countries who were from within the region should be first in line to give assistance. He noted that the high turnover of members and officials in parliament meant that there was a constant drain on trained personnel. He also noted the need for training those who were potential MPs.

**Mr Robert MYTTENAERE**, answering for Mr CHUNGONG and Mr VOSS who had left, said that there were two major problems and one of them was that members of parliament frequently left. The second problem was that who was to decide on those to be trained: was it a matter for political parties in emerging countries perhaps? In Haiti, many officials left after an election but although this was a loss for parliament they did take their skills to other areas.

**Mr Rex OWUSU-ANSAH** (Ghana) asked what would happen if the system in Timor Lorosae could not be made to work within 90 days. In 1992 in Ghana, when the Constitution was being drafted, there was a body of informa-

tion about the make-up of a country for those framing a Constitution. He asked who was to decide on the model for the Constitution.

**Mrs SÁ CARVALHO**, President, noted Mrs HARYANTO's point and said that the problem of refugees was being worked on. The Indonesian Speaker was coming to Portugal and hoped to assist in resolving the problem.

As far as Mr UPADHYAY of Nepal's point was concerned, there was also a very small party in Timor with a long history of fighting alongside Fretilin. Before the election all the parties agreed to accept the result of the elections, but just at the end of the elections some of them said that they suspected the motives of the UN which annoyed the United Nations. The differences between Fretilin's proposal and those of the other parties was unknown because only Fretilin's plan had been published. It had been publicly available since 1975. There was a general consensus that a solution had to be worked out.

Turning to the point made by Mr FILS-AIMÉ of Haiti, she said that those who were there to assist in building a country should not try to influence politicians. When she had been in Timor Lorosae there had been some confusion about her role, which was only one of being an IPU-appointed expert. But there was never to be any political discussion.

On the point made by Mr OWUSU-ANSAH of Ghana, she said that all parties had agreed on a 90 day period and that was irrespective of whether there was enough time or not. They were all keen for the United Nations to go and the United Nations itself was keen to leave. Also she pointed out that 90 days meant the end of that current year which coincided with the First Declaration of Independence. She thought that the majority represented by Fretilin was probably enough and that there would be no need to rewrite the draft Constitution, although it had to be debated. Experts were there to provide information. It was proposed to have constitutional experts available to help and find the final drafting of the Constitution.

**Mr Robert MYTTENAERE** thanked Mrs SÁ CARVALHO for her communication.