

State of  
**DEMOCRACY**  
in Pakistan

PILdAT  
REPORT

Evaluation of Parliament  
2008-2009

PILDAT is an independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit indigenous research and training institution with the mission to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan.

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## PREFACE

The Evaluation of the National Assembly, a report by PILDAT, has been compiled at the conclusion of the first year of the 13th National Assembly of Pakistan after the February 2008 elections.

The report has been compiled using the criteria developed by the **Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)**. This is the first time that any organisation is undertaking the Evaluation of the Parliament using the IPU framework. This report, therefore, provides a baseline on the subject on a criteria that internationally comparable. This report should be viewed as a work-in-progress. The findings contained in the report will be shared with the Parliament and their views sought.

The purpose of the evaluation is to make Parliament more effective, responsive and accountable institution for the people. We hope that this evaluation will help in identifying the weak and strong points of the National Assembly which in turn will help the Assembly, its members, leadership and the secretariat to set in a reform process to address the weaknesses and acknowledge the strengths.

PILDAT gratefully acknowledges the support and cooperation of evaluators, including MNAs, opinion leaders, scholars and the media persons, etc.

Islamabad  
March 2009



## THE PARLIAMENT OF PAKISTAN

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides for a Federal Parliamentary System of government, with President as the Head of State and the popularly elected Prime Minister as Head of government. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a Federal State comprising four provinces of Balochistan, the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) the Punjab and Sindh; Islamabad as the Federal Capital and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

The Federal Legislature is a bicameral Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), composed of the President, the National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly has a total membership of 342 of which 272 members are elected on general seats, 60 seats are reserved for women and 10 for non-Muslim minorities. The National Assembly has a constitutional term of 5 years. The President is elected by the members of the National Assembly, the Senate and the Provincial Assemblies.

The regional composition of the Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) as prescribed in the Constitution of Pakistan is as under:

**Table 1: Constitutional Composition of the National Assembly**

	General	Women	Non-Muslims	Total
<b>Balochistan</b>	14	3		17
<b>NWFP</b>	35	8		43
<b>The Punjab</b>	148	35		183
<b>Sind</b>	61	14		75
<b>FATA</b>	12	-		12
<b>Federal Capital</b>	2	-		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>342</b>

The Senate is a permanent legislative body and the term of its members is six years. However, one-half of its members retire after every three years. The Senate consists of 100 members.

The election to the 13th National Assembly of Pakistan took place on February 18, 2008 and the National Assembly met for the first time on March 17, 2008 to take oath. The first Parliamentary Year of the 13th National Assembly completed on March 16, 2009. As a result of the February 2008 election and the subsequent joining of parties of their choice by the independent members, the 13th National Assembly has the following composition of Political Parties:

**Table 2: Party Position in the 13th National Assembly**

No.	Party	General Seats	Women's Reserved Seats	Non Muslims' Reserved Seats	Total
1	PPPP	99	23	4	126
2	ANP	10	3	0	13
3	MQM	19	5	1	25
4	MMA	6	1	0	7
5	BNP(A)	1	0	0	1
6	Ind	6	0	0	6
7	Tribal Areas	11	0	0	11
8	PML(N)	71	17	3	91
9	PML(Q)	41	10	2	53
10	PML(F)	4	1	0	5
11	PPP(S)	1	0	0	1
12	NPP	1	0	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>340</b>

## The Inter-Parliamentary Union

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the international organisation of Parliaments of sovereign states. It was established in 1889. The Union is the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy. The IPU is based in Geneva, Switzerland and has 154 members and 8 associate members. Pakistan is a member of the IPU.

Drawing extensively from the International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA) State of Democracy Assessment methodology, the IPU developed a framework and a self-assessment toolkit for the Evaluation of Parliaments in 2008. The purpose of the IPU Framework is to assist Parliaments and their members in assessing how their Parliament performs against widely accepted criteria for democratic Parliaments.

## Questions and Topics in the Evaluation Framework

The IPU defines a democratic Parliament as one that is:

- Representative
- Transparent
- Accessible
- Accountable
- Effective

The Evaluation Framework consists of a set of questions each of which covers one aspect of a democratic Parliament. The method of Evaluation involves answering the questions which relate to the nature and work of the Parliament concerned. These questions, 48 in total, are grouped under the following six topics:

1. The Representativeness of Parliament
2. Parliamentary Oversight over the Executive
3. Parliament's Legislative Capacity
4. The Transparency and Accessibility of Parliament
5. The Accountability of Parliament
6. Parliament's Involvement in International Policy

The Evaluation is based on Value Judgments of how Parliament measures against each of the criteria. It is to be expected that a Parliament may not attain the highest score for every question since Parliament, like democracy, can always be strengthened. The evaluator has to assign a score from 1 to 5 against each question; 1 representing the minimum score and 5 representing the maximum. PILDAT averaged the scores assigned by 28 evaluators and then converted the score to percentage for simplification and better understanding.

## The IPU Scenarios of Evaluation

The IPU depicts various possible scenarios of when, why and how the framework can be used to carry out an evaluation. This evaluation is based on the scenario when a non-governmental organisation (in this case, PILDAT: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency) undertakes the assessment of Parliament.



## Objectives of the Evaluation

PILDAT is an independent, non-partisan think tank dedicated to strengthening of democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan and elsewhere. PILDAT focuses on Parliament for capacity building of the parliamentarians, parliamentary committees, parliamentary processes and the Parliament as a whole as an institution. PILDAT compiles and publishes a yearly, and later for the entire term, Citizens' Report on the Performance of the National Assembly. The latest of such report has been published for the first year of the 13th National Assembly. This year started on March 17, 2008 with the oath-taking of the newly-elected Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and concluded on March 16, 2009.

This is the first time that PILDAT is undertaking the evaluation of the Parliament using the IPU framework. The purpose of the evaluation is to make Parliament more effective, responsive and accountable institution for the people. We hope that this evaluation will help in identifying the weak and strong points of the National Assembly which in turn will help the Assembly, its members, leadership and the Secretariat to set in a reform process to address the weaknesses and acknowledge the strengths. This effort is not meant to malign, defame or even criticise the National Assembly; it is also not an exercise in finger-pointing; it is basically a modest but sincere effort on the part of the citizens to assist their highest representative institution to further improve and strengthen.

## A Pilot Project Setting the Baseline

PILDAT plans to undertake yearly evaluation of the National Assembly. The evaluation conducted for the Parliamentary year from March 17, 2008 to March 16, 2009 is a pilot project to set the baseline for the subsequent evaluations.

## The Evaluating Group

The evaluation was carried out by a group under the PILDAT initiative. This is a diverse group consisting of Members of the National Assembly representing various political parties, Journalists who cover the proceedings of the National Assembly, Political Scientists, Analysts, Academicians, Senior Statesmen, Former senior Civil Servants, and Lawyers. The group consists of the following persons:

## Members of Parliament

1. **Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi**, MNA; Deputy Speaker, National Assembly (NWFP, PPPP)
2. **Ms. Anusha Rahman**, MNA (Punjab, PML-N)
3. **Dr. Donya Aziz**, MNA (Punjab, PML)
4. **Mr. Faiz Tamman**, MNA (Punjab, PML-N)
5. **Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan**, MNA (Punjab, PML-N)
6. **Mr. Mohammad Baligh ur Rehman**, MNA (Punjab, PML-N)
7. **Ms. Nafisa Shah**, MNA (Sindh, PPPP)
8. **Ms. Nosheen Saeed**, MNA (Punjab, PML)
9. **Ms. Nuzhat Sadiq**, MNA (Punjab, PML-N)
10. **Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb**, MNA (Punjab, PML-N)
11. **Ms. Tasneem Siddiqui**, MNA (Punjab, PML-N)
12. **Senator Tahir Mashhadi**, (Sindh, MQM)
13. **Mr. Shaukat Ullah**, MNA (FATA, IND)
14. **Ms. Sherry Rehman**, MNA; Former Federal Minister for Information (Sindh, PPPP)

## Analysts & Media Persons

15. **Mr. Asif Bashir Chaudhry**, Parliamentary Reporter, Geo-news
16. **Mr. Asim Awan**, Reporter, Dawn News TV
17. **Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Abdul Qadir Baloch**, Former Governor of Balochistan; a former candidate for the membership of the National assembly during February 2008 Election.
18. **Dr. Hassan-Askari Rizvi**, Former Chairman, Political Science Department, Punjab University; eminent Political Analyst and Newspaper Columnist
19. **Ms. Huma Baqai**, Associate Professor, International Relations, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi; PTV Talk Show Host
20. **Dr. Mohammad Waseem**, Political Analyst; Former Chairman Department of International Relations, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad
21. **Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Moin ud Din Haider**, Former Governor of Sindh Province
22. **Mr. Mujeeb-Ur-Rehman Shami**, Editor in Chief, Daily Pakistan
23. **Dr. Parvez Hassan**, Senior Advocate, Managing Partner Hassan and Hassan Associates, Former Secretary General Tehreek-e-Insaaf Pakistan.
24. **Mr. Shafqat Mahmood**, Former Senator and Federal Minister; Political Analyst and Newspaper Columnist
25. **Mr. Shahid Hamid**, Senior Advocate Supreme Court; Former Governor of the Punjab Province; Former Caretaker Federal Minister
26. **Mr. Talat Hussain**, Director News and Current Affairs, Aaj TV
27. **Mr. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob**, Executive Director, PILDAT
28. **Ms. Aasiya Riaz**, Joint Director, PILDAT

## The Evaluation Results

### 1. Representativeness of the National Assembly

Nine (9) sub-areas were evaluated to determine the Representativeness of the National Assembly. These sub-areas ranged from *Diversity of Representation; Women's Representation; Representation of Marginalised Groups and Regions; Internal Party Arrangements to Ensure Balanced Representation; Freedom to the Opposition; Infrastructure of the National Assembly to Freedom and Security for Dissenting Members.*

#### The Weakest Aspect of the Representativeness of the National Assembly: Near Impossibility of a Person of Average Means to get Elected to the Parliament

The weakest aspect of the Representativeness of the National Assembly is that it is extremely difficult for a person of average means to get elected to Parliament. The question '*How easy is it for a person of average means to be elected to Parliament?*' received **28 % score** which is the minimum among the scores received by 9 sub-areas under the Representativeness of the National Assembly. Incidentally, this is also the minimum score of any question in the entire evaluation.

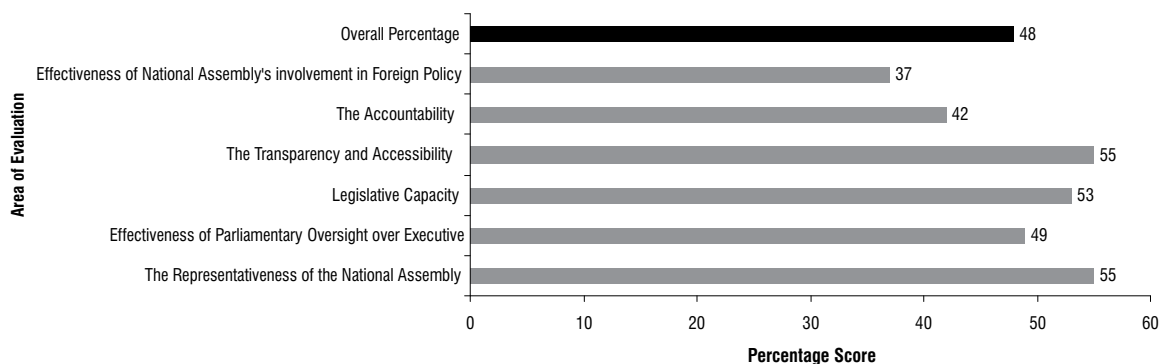
#### The Strongest Aspect of the Representativeness of the National Assembly: Composition of the Assembly is Representative of Women

The strongest aspect of the representativeness of the National Assembly turned out to be that the Composition of the National Assembly is a good representative of Women. As the representation of Women in the 13th National Assembly stands at 76 or 22.2 %, the question '*How representative of women is the composition of National Assembly?*' received the maximum scores 71 % while evaluating the Representativeness of the National Assembly.

#### The Overall Score for the Representativeness of the National Assembly

The Representativeness of the National Assembly won 55 % score. Since the overall score is 48 %, the score for the Representativeness is above average.

### Evaluation of the Parliament



## 2. Effectiveness of the Parliamentary Oversight over the Executive

Eight (8) sub-areas were evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the Parliamentary Oversight over the Executive. These sub-areas included *Procedures; Effectiveness of Committees; the Budget Process; Scrutiny of Executive Appointments; Autonomy of the Assembly* and *Research Facilities*.

### **The Weakest Aspect of the Parliamentary Oversight over the Executive: Inability to Scrutinise Executive Appointments**

The weakest aspect of the Parliamentary Oversight over the Executive was evaluated to be the inability of the National Assembly to scrutinise the appointments to the executive posts. The question '*How effectively can parliament scrutinise appointments to executive posts, and hold their occupants to account?*' received the minimum score i.e. **35 %** under the evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Parliamentary Oversight over the Executive.

### **The Strongest Aspect of the Parliamentary Oversight over the Executive: Autonomy of the National Assembly**

The strongest aspect of the Parliamentary Oversight over the Executive turned out to be the Autonomy of the National Assembly from the control of the Executive. The question '*How far is Parliament autonomous in practice from the executive, e.g. through control over its own budget, agenda, timetable, personnel, etc.?*' received the maximum score that is **64 %**.

### **Overall Effectiveness of the National Assembly in Oversight of the Executive**

The overall Effectiveness of the National Assembly in Oversight of the Executive was evaluated to receive **49 %** Score.

## 3. Effectiveness of the Legislative Capacity of the National Assembly

Effectiveness of the Legislative Capacity of the National Assembly was evaluated in 7 sub-areas including *Procedures for Full and Open Debates; Effectiveness of Committees to Amend Draft Legislation; Procedure to Consult Various Interest Groups on Legislation; Facilities to Introduce Private Member's Bill; Conformity of Legislation to the Constitution* and *Incorporation of Gender Equality Perspective in Assembly Working*.

### **The Weakest Aspect of the Effectiveness of the Legislative Capacity of the National Assembly: Weak Process to Consult Various Interest Groups over Legislation**

The question '*How systematic and transparent are the procedures for consultation with relevant groups and interests in the course of legislation?*' received the minimum score under this category i.e., **44 %**.

### **The Strongest Aspect of the Effectiveness of the Legislative Capacity of the National Assembly: Satisfactory Parliamentary Procedures for Full and Open Debate on Legislation in the Assembly**

The question '*How satisfactory are the procedures for subjecting draft legislation to full and open debate in the parliament?*' received the maximum score that is **56 %**.

### **The Overall Effectiveness of Legislative Capacity of the National Assembly**

The overall Effectiveness of the Legislative Capacity of the National Assembly was evaluated to score **53 %** marks.

## 4. The Transparency and Accessibility of the National Assembly

There were a total of 7 questions to evaluate the Transparency and Accessibility of the National Assembly. These questions related to *Media Access to the Assembly; Freedom of Journalists to Cover the Assembly Proceedings; Communication with the General Public; Ability to Attract Youth to the Assembly's Work; Channels of Direct*

*Communication by the People to the Members of the Assembly; Availability of Channels of Communication with the Assembly to Civil Society Groups and Opportunity to Citizens' Direct Involvement in Legislation.*

**The Weakest Aspect of the Transparency and Accessibility of the National Assembly: Very Little Opportunity to Citizens of Direct Involvement in Legislation through Citizens' Initiatives, Referenda, etc.**

The question '*How much opportunity do citizens have for direct involvement in legislation (e.g. through citizens' initiatives, referenda, etc.?)*' received the minimum score under this category i.e. **37 %**.

**The Strongest Aspect of the Transparency and Accessibility of the National Assembly: Ample Freedom to Journalists in Reporting on the National Assembly and its Members**

The question '*How free from restrictions are journalists in reporting on National assembly and the activities of its members?*' received the maximum score that is **76 %**. Incidentally this question received the highest score in the entire evaluation which underscores the freedom of the media in reporting on parliament and parliamentarians.

**Overall Transparency and Accessibility of National Assembly**

The overall Transparency and Accessibility of the National Assembly has received **55 %** scores.

## 5. The Accountability of the National Assembly

Seven (7) detailed sub-areas were evaluated in order to determine the Accountability of the National Assembly. These sub-areas included *Availability of a Proper System for Members of the National Assembly to Report Back to their Constituents on their Performance; Accountability of the Members through Election; Observance of the Code of Conduct by the Members; Transparency of Procedures to Prevent Conflict of Interest by the Members; Oversight of Funding to Candidates and Parties, Acceptable System of Determining Members' Salaries; Availability of a Proper System of Measuring Public Confidence in the Assembly.*

**The weakest aspects of the Accountability of the National Assembly: a) Transparency of Procedures to Prevent Conflict of Interest in the Conduct of Parliamentary Business; b) Lack of Systematic Monitoring of Public Confidence in the National Assembly; c) Oversight of Funding to Candidates and Political Parties**

Three weak areas were identified under this head of evaluation as three questions received three least scores which were almost equal. The question that received the minimum score in this aspect of the evaluation was: '*How transparent and robust are the procedures for preventing conflict of financial and other interest in the conduct of parliamentary business?*' and it received a score of **38 %**. Two other questions which received almost the same score i.e. **39 %** each were: '*How systematic is the monitoring and review of levels of public confidence in the National Assembly?*' and '*How adequate is the oversight of party and candidates funding to ensure that members preserve independence in the performance of their duties?*'

**Relatively strong aspects of the Accountability of the National Assembly: Electoral System that Ensures National Assembly's Accountability to the Electorate and System of Determining Members' Salaries**

**49 %** was the score in response to the question, '*How effective is the system for ensuring the observance of agreed codes of conduct by members?*' Although, relatively speaking, this is the highest score, it is rather low in the absolute sense as it is even below 50 % mark.

**Overall Score for the Accountability of the National Assembly**

Overall the Accountability of the National Assembly got **42 %** Score. Among the 6 parameters against which the National Assembly was evaluated, this parameter got the lowest score after only the Involvement of the National Assembly in International Policy

## 6. Effectiveness of the National Assembly's Involvement in International Policy

Ten (10) sub-areas were evaluated to determine the Effectiveness of the National Assembly's Involvement in International Policy (popularly known as 'Foreign Policy' in Pakistan). These sub-areas were: ***Ability of the Parliament to Scrutinise and Contribute to the Government's Foreign Policy***; ***Availability of Information to Parliament on on-going Negotiations with International Entities***; ***Ability to Influence the Commitments made by the Government to International Entities***; ***Parliament's Ability to Influence the Monitoring Reports submitted by the Government as a part of its International Commitments***; ***Parliament's Ability to Monitor Government's Development Policy as a Donor or Recipient*** (Mostly as a recipient in the case of Pakistan); ***Oversight of the Deployment of Country's troops abroad***; ***Parliament's Effectiveness to Foster Political Dialogue for Resolving Domestic and International Conflicts***; ***Effectiveness of Inter-parliamentary Cooperation at the Domestic and International Level*** and finally the ***Ability of the Parliament to Scrutinise the Policies and Performance of International Entities like the UN to which the country contributes***.

**The weakest aspect of the National Assembly's Effectiveness in Foreign Policy: Weak or Non-Existent Parliamentary Oversight of the Deployment of the Country's Armed Forces Abroad**

The question that received the minimum score in this category was: ***'How rigorous is parliamentary oversight of the deployment of the country's armed forces abroad?'*** The score was **30 %**.

**The strongest aspect of the National Assembly's Effectiveness in Foreign Policy: Effectiveness in Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation**

**48 %** was the score in response to the question, ***'How effective is Parliament in inter-parliamentary cooperation at regional and global levels?'*** Of all the 10 questions asked in this category, this question received the maximum score

**Overall Score for the Effectiveness of the National Assembly's Involvement in Foreign Policy**

Overall Effectiveness of the National Assembly's Involvement in International or Foreign Policy was rated as **37 %**. This was the lowest rating of the six main areas of evaluation indicating the ineffectiveness of the National Assembly in the area of International Policy.

## Recommendations

### Improving the Representativeness of National Assembly

#### 1. Make it Possible for a Person of Average Means to be Elected to the Parliament

The least scores in the entire process of evaluation have been assigned to the possibility of a person of average means to get elected as a member of the National Assembly in Pakistan. According to the declaration of assets by MNAs of the 12th National Assembly, average value of assets owned by an MNA and his/her spouse and children during 2005-06 was Rs. 38.5 million. Although many think that this value is grossly under-reported, even this value is far above the 'average means.' Only MQM and MMA (including Jama'at-e-Islami) are considered to be the parties where candidates of average means are awarded party tickets to contest elections and parties cover most of the election-related expenses. This reflects in the comparison of average value of assets of each MNA in different parties during 2005-06. according to which an average MNA of MQM is worth Rs. 4.47 Million only compared to Rs. 81.57 Million for a PTI MNA; Rs. 61.05 Million for a PML-N MNA and Rs. 55.77 Million for a PML-Q MNA and Rs. 33.68 Million for a PPP MNA.

If democracy and Parliament have to become relevant to common people and they have to have faith in democracy and democratic institutions, the Parliament must legislate tough measures to discourage the role of big money in politics. The Election Commission has to strictly enforce the election spending limits prescribed in the laws and the political parties must ensure that sincere, dedicated and able candidates are preferred irrespective of their financial standing and the party organisation should mobilise funds for such candidates' election campaigns. The Parliament should seriously consider state funding for political parties in proportion to their electoral popularity in order to discourage the influence of big money in politics and election. Unfortunately the Parliament has not considered this problem an issue and that makes the problem even worse.

### Improving the Effectiveness of Parliamentary Oversight over the Executive

#### 2. Make the Parliament's Role in the Budget Process Effective

The current role of the Parliament in the Budget process is that of a rubber stamp. The Parliament has no capacity to study, analyse and form an independent opinion about the budget presented by the executive. A very low score (42 %) was assigned to the effectiveness of the National Assembly in the Budget Process. It is important that the National Assembly changes its Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business to allow the Committees to examine the Demands for Grants. The period of the parliamentary budget debate should also be extended to at least 2 months instead of the present 2 to 3 weeks only. The National Assembly should either establish its own Budget Office as is the trend in the established and even new democracies of the world or hire expertise to give it an independent advice on the budget presented by the executive.

#### 3. Let Parliament have a Role in Scrutinising Key Appointments

Parliamentary Committees should have a role in scrutinising senior executive appointments which, at present, is the sole preserve of the President and /or Prime Minister. For example such senior appointments as that of the Chief Election Commissioner, Chief Justice of Pakistan, Chairman of Federal Public Service Commission, Auditor General, Chairman National Accountability Bureau, etc., should all be reviewed by the National Assembly committees.

#### 4. Provide Adequate and Non-partisan Research Service in the Parliament

Effectiveness of the parliamentarians is directly dependent on the adequate and independent research service available to parliamentarians. It is important to establish a Parliamentary Research Service free from executive influence and of high quality to facilitate the function of parliamentarians and parliamentary committees.

## National Assembly's Legislative Capacity

### 5. Institute Systematic and Transparent Procedures for Consulting Citizens' Groups and Experts while Framing Laws

At present Parliamentary Committees seldom consult independent experts or various interest groups while considering new laws. Some committees have undertaken path-breaking initiatives but generally this is an exception. It is important that the Parliament suitably amends the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business to institute a proper transparent system of consulting independent experts and interest groups such as professional bodies while considering laws.

### 6. Attract young people to the working of National Assembly

The evaluation revealed that the National Assembly has been unable to attract young people to the working of the National Assembly. It is strongly recommended that the National Assembly institutes a proper programme to attract young persons for visit to the Assembly, witness proceedings and ask questions about its working. The Assembly should employ trained staff to conduct the visits and make young people aware of the Assembly working. In the long term this will be helpful in creating a positive image about the public representatives and democratic institutions and strengthen democracy.

### 7. Involve Public in the Legislative Process

The National Assembly should make arrangements and modify rules, if necessary, to involve people in the legislative process. Bills should be publicised in advance so that people can express their opinion about the proposed law through their respective MNAs. Committees considering laws should publicise their meetings and encourage common people to convey their opinions regarding the legislations under consideration.

## The Accountability of Parliament

### 8. Institute Transparent and Robust Procedures and Mechanisms to Prevent Conflicts of Financial and Other Interest in the Conduct of Parliamentary Business

There should be a Register of Members' Interests kept in the Parliament with a registrar notifying all such interests on the Assembly website and alerting the concerned committee about any possible conflict of interest. The practice in the UK Parliament can be taken as an example of good practice.

### 9. Establish a System of Adequate Oversight over Funding of Candidates and Parties during and after Election

The Election Commission should make sure that the existing laws in this respect are enforced in letter and spirit. The Parliament should plug the gaps by passing additional legislation in order to make sure that influence of big money on politics and parliamentarians is avoided and corrupt practices are curbed.

### 10. Set up a System to Monitor and Review Levels of Public Confidence in Parliament

Besides public opinion surveys, the Parliament itself should devise a system to know and monitor how people view the Parliament and what is their level of confidence. A continuous process can alert the elected representatives of an impending crisis of confidence.

## Effectiveness of the National Assembly's Involvement in the Foreign Policy

### 11. Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs should Adopt a Pro-active Role in Formulating, Shaping and Overseeing the Foreign Policy

As the Foreign Policy assumes a much more important position in the national affairs, its impact on the country becomes more profound. The National Assembly and its Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs have seldom played any significant role in formulating and shaping the country's foreign policy. It is a standard practice for Parliaments to give significant input to the framing of public policies especially the Foreign Policy but the case of Pakistan indicates ineffectiveness of the National Assembly in this context.



The Standing Committee should take up a pro-active role in seeking information on the foreign policy from the executive (Foreign Ministry in this case), hold public hearings, call experts for input and send written recommendations to the government for possible implementation. The committee should employ research and analysis staff on its pay rolls and hold more frequent meetings. The committee should meet at least once a month as fast developments are taking place in this field. The committee may also consider holding joint meetings with its counterpart committee in the Senate and the Standing Committees on Defence in the two houses. The Committee should also monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by the committee. The monitoring procedures of the Indian Parliamentary Committees may also be studied for adaptation by the Pakistani Parliament.

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EVALUATION OF PARLIAMENT  
2008-2009

**Table 3: Detailed Evaluation of the National Assembly**

No.	Parameter and Sub-Area of Evaluation	Score (%)
<b>1</b>	<b>The Representativeness of the National Assembly</b>	<b>55</b>
1.1	How adequately does the Parliament represent the diversity of political opinion in the country (e.g. as reflected in votes for the respective political parties)?	64
1.2	How representative of women is the composition of Parliament?	71
1.3	How representative of marginalized groups and regions is the compositions of Parliament?	53
1.4	How easy is it for a person of average means to be elected to Parliament?	28
1.5	How adequate are internal party arrangements imbalances in parliamentary representation?	39
1.6	How adequate are arrangements for ensuring that opposition and minority parties or groups and their members can effectively contribute to the work of Parliament?	52
1.7	How conducive is the infrastructure of parliament, and its unwritten mores, to the participation of women and men?	56
1.8	How secure is the right of all members to express their opinions freely and how well are members protected from executive or legal interference?	69
1.9	How effective is parliament as a forum for debate on questions of public concern?	66
<b>2</b>	<b>Effectiveness of Parliamentary Oversight over the Executive</b>	<b>49</b>
2.1	How rigorous and systematic are the procedures whereby member can question the executive and secure adequate information	56
2.2	How effective are specialist committees in carrying out their oversight function?	57
2.3	How well is parliament able to influence and scrutinize the national budget, through all its stages?	44
2.4	How effectively can parliament scrutinizes appointments to executive posts, and holds their occupants to account?	35
2.5	How far is parliament able to hold non-elected public bodies to account?	42
2.6	How far is parliament autonomous in practice from the executive, e.g. through control over its own budget, agenda, timetable personal, etc.?	64
2.7	How adequate are the members and expertise of professional staff to support members, individually and collectively, in the effective performance of their duties?	48
2.8	How adequate are the research, information and other facilities available to all members and their groups?	46
<b>3</b>	<b>National Assemblys Legislative Capacity</b>	<b>53</b>
3.1	How satisfactory are the procedures for subjecting draft legislation to full and open debate in parliament?	56
3.2	How effective are committee procedures for scrutinizing and amending draft legislation?	60
3.3	How systematic and transparent are the procedures for consultation with relevant groups and interests in the course of legislation?	44
3.4	How adequate are the opportunities for individual members to introduce draft legislation?	54
3.5	How effective is parliament in ensuring that legislation enacted is clear, concise and intelligible?	54
3.6	How careful is parliament in ensuring that legislation enacted is consistent with the constitution and the human rights of the population?	54
3.7	How careful is the parliament in ensuring a gender-equality perspective in its work?	47
<b>4</b>	<b>The Transparency and Accessibility of the National assembly</b>	<b>55</b>
4.1	How open and accessible to the media and the public are the proceeding of parliament and its committees?	70
4.2	How free from restrictions are journalists in reporting on parliament and the activities of its members?	76
4.3	How effective is parliament in informing the public about its work, through a variety of channels?	63

PILDAT  
EVALUATION OF PARLIAMENT  
2008-2009

No.	Parameter and Sub-Area of Evaluation	Score (%)
4.4	How extensive and successful are attempts to interest young people in the work of parliament?	44
4.5	How adequate are the opportunities for electors to express their views and concerns directly to their representative, regardless of party affiliations?	46
4.6	How user-friendly is the procedure for individuals and groups to make submissions to a parliamentary committee or commission of enquiry?	45
4.7	How much opportunity do citizens have for direct involvement in legislation (e.g. through citizens initiatives, referenda, etc.)?	37
<b>5</b>	<b>The Accountability of Parliament</b>	<b>42</b>
5.1	How systematic are arrangements for members to report to their constituents about their performances in office?	40
5.2	How effective is the electoral system in ensuring the accountability of parliament, individually and collectively, to the electorate?	46
5.3	How effective is the system for ensuring the observance of agreed codes of conduct by members?	49
5.4	How transparent and robust are the procedures for preventing conflicts of financial and other interest in the conduct of parliamentary business?	38
5.5	How adequate is the oversight of party and candidate funding to ensure that members preserve independence in the performance of their duties?	39
5.6	How publicly acceptable is the system whereby members salaries are determined?	46
5.7	How systematic is the monitoring and review of levels of public confidence in parliament?	39
<b>6</b>	<b>Effectiveness of the National Assemblys Involvement in Foreign Policy</b>	<b>37</b>
6.1	How effective is parliament able to scrutinize and contribute to the governments foreign policy?	35
6.2	How adequate and timely is the information available to parliament about the governments negotiating positions in regional and global bodies?	33
6.3	How far is parliament able to influence the binding legal or financial commitments made by the government in the international fora, such as the UN?	35
6.4	How effective is parliament in ensuring that international commitments are implemented at the national level?	34
6.5	How effectively is parliament able to scrutinize and contribute to national reports to international monitoring mechanisms and ensuring follow-up on their recommendations?	37
6.6	How effective is parliamentary monitoring of the governments development policy, whether as donor or recipient of international development aid?	37
6.7	How rigorous is parliamentary oversight of the deployment of the countrys armed forces abroad?	30
6.8	How active is parliament in fostering political dialogue for conflict resolution, both at home and abroad?	43
6.9	How effective is parliament in inter-parliamentary cooperation at regional and global levels?	48
6.1	How far is parliament able to scrutinize the policies and performance of international organizations like the UN, World Bank and IMF to which its government contributes financial, human and material resources?	34
<b>Overall Evaluation Score for the National Assembly</b>		<b>48</b>