Parliament and Civil Society Organisations: Effective Collaboration for Stronger Democracy

Inter Pares Partnership with the National Assembly of Botswana

Gaborone, Botswana
Wednesday, 19 March 2025

PROGRAMME

About Workshop	The workshop is organized as part of the Inter Pares Partnership with the National Assembly of Botswana. The partnership facilitates the exchange of knowledge, experiences and practices between the National Assembly of Botswana and EU Member States Parliaments on several priority themes, including representation and citizen engagement. The National Assembly has made important steps forward to open up the parliament to citizens. This includes the creation of the innovative Botswana Speaks platform which connects citizens with MPs and facilitates policy dialogue between the public and the parliament. The National Assembly is currently interested in attracting more users to the platform and transforming it into a more effective communication channel between MPs and citizens. The Parliament is also interested in introducing a new system of citizen petitions. Strengthening the engagement with the civil society organizations and intensifying public consultations across parliamentary committees is another priority area which the National Assembly looks forward to enhancing. In response to the above, the workshop gathers the Members and staff of the National Assembly of Botswana, local civil society organizations, representatives of the Parliament of Denmark (Folketing), the French National Assembly and international expert scholars, to reflect on the role of civil society engagement with parliaments and to discuss effective mechanisms for enhancing Parliament-CSO collaboration.
Date / Time	Friday, 19 March: 08:30 – 14:00 Gaborone Time
Venue	Protea Hotel by Marriott Gaborone Masa Square
Languages	English

Participants	

National Assembly of Botswana *(Speakers & Moderators)*

- Hon. Goretetse Kekgonegile, Chairperson of the Committee on Labour and Home Affairs
- Silas Sehularo, Chief Public Relations Officer

Parliament of Denmark (Folketing)

- Flemming Kordt Wessel, Head of Section, International Secretariat
- Anton Høj Jacobsen, Senior Legal Adviser

National Assembly of France

- Philippe Dautry, Former Senior Adviser, Former Head of Staff of the General Rapporteur of the Budget and Finance committee, and Former Head of Staff of the Committee for Evaluation and Oversight of Public Policies

Experts

- Prof. Cristina Leston-Bandeira, Chair, International Parliamentary Engagement Network (IPEN)
- Prof. Helen Xanthaki, Professor of Law and Legislative drafting; the Dean of Postgraduate Laws Programmes at the University College London (UCL)
- Dr Maria Mousmouti, Professor at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies of the University of London
- Juliet Ollard, Senior Researcher (IPEN); Senior Engagement Officer in the bicameral Public Engagement Team (Select Committees), House of Commons, UK

Local Civil Society Organizations from Botswana

- Kagiso Molatlhwa, Executive Director, BOCONGO – Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations
- Laone Desert, Young Minds Africa
- Tuduetso Madi, Organisation for Youth and Elections in Botswana
- Sonia Gaobolae, Botswana Centre for Public Integrity
- Ida Mokereitane, Emang Basadi Association
- Kabo Diamond Moseki, Kalahari Research Conservation
- Lerako Gaotsenelelwe, Motheo O Mosha
- Lorato Ramokhutshwane, Center for Democracy & Electoral Awareness
- Boitumelo Pauline Marumo, Bokamoso Resilience Initiative

European Union Delegation to Botswana and SADC

- Clement Boutillier, Acting Head of Delegation
- Samantha Refilwe Pilane, Press and Information Officer
- Boitshoko Nyatshane, Programme Officer, Social Affairs

Inter Pares/International IDEA

- Sophie Guruli, Senior Programme Officer
- Carlotta Viaggio, Programme Assistant

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Master of Ceremonies: ***Sophie Guruli,*** *Senior Programme Officer, Inter Pares/International IDEA*

08.30 – 08.45 (15 min)	**Opening remarks** ● **Hon. Goretetse Kekgonegile**, Chairperson of the Committee on Labour and home Affairs, National Assembly of Botswana (tbc) ● **Clement Boutillier**, Acting Head of EU Delegation to Botswana and SADC
08.45 – 09.25 (40 min)	**Parliaments' engagement with civil society: promoting representative, participatory and inclusive processes** *Moderated by: Prof. **Cristina Leston-Bandeira**, IPEN Chair* The session will focus on the role and importance of civil society engagement with parliaments for enhancing democratic processes in the country. It will examine the topic from both parliament and CSO perspectives, and share insights into the accomplishments, challenges and the future of parliament-civil society collaboration. The session will reflect on opportunities for improving engagement mechanisms and practices by parliaments and how CSOs can offer more meaningful contribution to policy-making processes. *Presenters:* ● Hon. **Goretetse Kekgonegile**, Chairperson of the Committee on Labour and home Affairs, National Assembly of Botswana (tbc) ● **Kagiso Molatlhwa,** Executive Director, BOCONGO – Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations **Discussion**
09.25 – 10.35 (70 min)	**Public consultations: global trends and practices** *Moderated by: **Juliet Ollard**, Senior Researcher, IPEN* The session will focus on public consultations as an important mechanism to promote democratic processes at national level. The participants will discuss the benefits of public consultations both from the perspective of parliaments as well as of citizens, civil society organizations, and various interest groups. The emphasis will be made on the importance of quality of engagement, diversity and inclusion, and evaluation of impact. Presenter: Prof. **Cristina Leston-Bandeira**, IPEN Chair *Contributors:* ● **Anton Høj Jacobsen**, Senior Legal Adviser, Parliament of Denmark (Folketing) ● **Philippe Dautry**, Former Senior Adviser, Former Head of Staff of the General Rapporteur of the Budget and Finance committee, Former Head of Staff of the Committee for Evaluation and Oversight of Public Policies, French National Assembly ● Dr. **Maria Mousmouti**, Inter Pares Expert **Discussion**

10.35 – 10.50	*Coffee Break*
10.50 – 12.20 (90 min)	**How to put public consultations into practice: simulation exercise** *Facilitated by: Prof.* ***Cristina Leston-Bandeira,*** *and* ***Juliet Ollard****, IPEN* *Engaging:* ● National Assembly of Botswana ● Local CSOs from Botswana ● EU Member States Parliaments **Session output:** Developing a public consultations checklist
12:20 – 12:30 (10 min)	**Vote of Thanks** ● **Sophie Guruli**, Senior Programme Officer, Inter Pares/International IDEA
12.30 – 14.00	*Lunch*