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## **Final Evaluation report on the UNDP Palau Parliament Support Project**

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*The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the IPU*

# Acronyms & Abbreviations

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CDM	Country Development Manager
CO	Country Office
CSDP	Corporate Strategic Development Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
IPU	Inter Parliamentary Union
LNA	Legislative Needs Assessment
LOA	Letter of Agreement
MCO	Multi Country Office
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
MPs	Members of Parliament
OEK	Olbiil Era Kelulau / Congress of Palau
RRF	Results Resource Framework
PSP	Parliamentary Support Programme
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United National Development Programme

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## Executive summary

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- i. This report presents the findings and recommendations of an evaluation undertaken of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Parliament Support Project for Palau. The three-year project commenced in 2010. Its objective was to implement 14 out of 44 recommendations from a Legislative Needs Assessment conducted in 2008 for the Congress of Palau, the Olbiil Era Kelulau (OEK). The project's focus was on strengthening the capacity of the Congress in relation to information technology, research, public outreach and civic education; enhancing the capacity of Congress staff; and supporting OEK members through training and provision of resources.
- ii. The evaluation findings and recommendations are based on interviews with key project participants and beneficiaries conducted during a visit to Palau from 7 to 14 December 2013 and via teleconferences. The evaluation visit also involved site inspections at the Capitol Building of the Congress. Key project documents were also reviewed.
- iii. The open and frank manner in which project participants contributed information and views to the evaluation was of great assistance in the formulation of this report. There is a strong desire to benefit from the work of the past five years, learn lessons for the future and, most importantly, progress issues and activities initiated or identified during the course of the project that would significantly enhance the representative, legislative and oversight roles of the Congress into the future.
- iv. The evaluation was aimed at assessing the project in the areas of project management, project design, relevance and appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness, and impact and sustainability. Findings and recommendations for each of these areas are detailed in this report.
- v. The project was targeted principally at providing key infrastructure and mechanisms through which the Congress of Palau could continue to develop into the future. The Congress has benefited from a number of activities initiated by this project, including the establishment of new services and programs. Most importantly, the project has helped the Congress to develop the strategic directions it wants to pursue to become a more effective and better-connected national legislature.
- vi. The main shortcomings of the project were the absence of longer-term implementation strategies for some of the new services developed, to ensure effective uptake of those services, and lack of follow-up to assist in progressing their integration into the day-to-day work practices of the Congress. While the project did put in place many of the building blocks for future development of the Congress, further work is required before the promise of the project can be fully realised.
- vii. The project helped the Congress develop its roadmap towards the establishment of a more effective institution and helped to instil in members and staff an enthusiasm to take a leading role in implementing that roadmap. With further support, there are significant opportunities for success into the future.

# Summary of findings and recommendations

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## Findings

### Project management

- ◆ The project management arrangements were appropriate to the size of the project, ensured the bulk of the funds were directed to project deliverables and provided for strong local ownership.
- ◆ Earlier identification of a project coordinator to support the project managers would have assisted in progressing outcomes in the initial stages.
- ◆ Appointing a Joint Congressional Committee to implement the corporate plan demonstrates the commitment of the Congress to maintain the momentum for development.
- ◆ The relationship between the Congress of Palau and the UNDP was extremely positive but some procurement decisions led to less than optimum outcomes for infrastructure initiatives.

### Project design

- ◆ The project appropriately targeted key infrastructure and processes that could enhance the capacity of the Congress.
- ◆ Despite the commitment of the Congress to progress initiatives established by the project, the capacity of the Congress to do so without ongoing technical support and funding was overestimated.
- ◆ Project design documents and work plans could be enhanced to provide clarity on the deliverables and the lines of responsibility.
- ◆ Target numbers could be included in project documents.

### Relevance and appropriateness

- ◆ The project was highly relevant because its themes were connected to the broader national development strategy for Palau.
- ◆ The timing of the project was appropriate as it corresponded with the implementation of the medium-term national development strategy.
- ◆ Members and staff of the Congress embraced the objectives of the project, demonstrating its relevance to them.
- ◆ The project themes have been carried through into the 2011-15 Corporate Strategic Development Plan for the Congress of Palau.

### Effectiveness and efficiency

- ◆ Through the project, the Congress of Palau has developed a clear vision for the institution it wishes to become.
- ◆ Priority areas for further development include a new professional staffing structure, a comprehensive professional development program for Members of Congress, and technological enhancement.
- ◆ Induction programs should be broadened to involve a more comprehensive orientation experience for newly elected Members of Congress and induction should also be provided for new staff.
- ◆ Technology initiatives established by the project, such as the intranet and e-library, have not been fully implemented and require further work before their promise is realised.

- ◆ Consensus was achieved on an enhanced budgetary and financial framework but that framework now needs to be implemented.
- ◆ Important first steps have been taken to improve the community outreach of the Congress but individual activities need to be linked into an outreach strategy.
- ◆ The UNDP, IPU and developed parliaments in the region could all contribute to the development of the Congress of Palau into the future.

### **Impact and sustainability**

- ◆ The project has assisted the Congress to recognise what is needed to become an effective modern legislature and the work that must be done to reach its strategic goals.
- ◆ The strategic plan and implementation structures are clear evidence of the project's impact and the commitment of the Congress to sustain the momentum for development.
- ◆ Lack of uptake in technology services means that the investment in infrastructure could be put at risk if further work is not done to ensure those services are utilised as part of the regular work practices of the Congress.

### **Future directions**

- ◆ The project has set in place many of the building blocks needed for the Congress of Palau to become an effective modern legislature.
- ◆ Further technical assistance and funding is required if the strategic goals of the Congress are to be adequately implemented.
- ◆ The development of a professional staffing structure is an immediate priority and work on that needs to commence as soon as possible, with appropriate technical assistance from an international source.

### **Recommendations**

1. Where responsibility for the management of a parliamentary support project is vested in the senior management of a parliament, sufficient authority should be delegated to a project coordinator in the parliament to ensure day-to-day decision-making on the project can be progressed efficiently.
2. Where ICT initiatives are included in a parliamentary support project, better use be made of local ICT expertise and ICT expertise in developed parliaments within the region to ensure effective project management of such initiatives.
3. Project design documents for parliamentary support projects outline with more clarity the plans to be developed, the training to be provided, the equipment to be procured, the facilities to be established and the processes to be reviewed as part of any project.
4. Project design documents outline more clearly the lines of responsibility for establishment of a service and the implementation strategy for uptake of that service.

5. The content and presentation of annual work plans be enhanced to ensure activities of corresponding scale are listed as deliverables for each year, with individual tasks relating to each deliverable listed as sub-categories.
6. Annual work plans include target numbers for training activities, such as workshops or courses.
7. Future support for the Congress of Palau should continue to give priority to those areas of capacity building that link into the broader national development strategy for Palau, particularly enhancement of financial accountability and budgetary processes.
8. The UNDP and IPU establish a joint taskforce to assess options to support the Congress of Palau in implementing the key priorities of its corporate plan over the next two years and engage development partners and neighbouring parliaments in that taskforce.
9. The Congress of Palau actively foster bilateral parliamentary links with other parliaments in the Asia Pacific region to assist it identify those parliaments that may have the capacity and ability to support the ongoing development of the Congress.
10. The Joint Congressional Committee on the Corporate Strategic Development Plan convene a regular roundtable with government agencies and civil society organisations to discuss with them and gain their input into the implementation of the plan.
11. The Joint Congressional Committee on the Corporate Strategic Development Plan present a six-monthly report to both houses of Congress on progress achieved in the implementation of the plan and that report be debated in the Senate and the House of Delegates.
12. Induction programs for parliamentarians should as far as practicable include as facilitators parliamentarians or former parliamentarians who have experience working with a like system of government.
13. Induction programs should be broadened from being standalone events at the beginning of a new Congress and should involve a more comprehensive orientation experience over, at least, the first year of a new Congress.
14. Induction programs be made available to staff of the Congress.
15. The professional development delivered under parliamentary support projects should include training for parliamentary staff on how best to deliver information sessions and briefings for parliamentarians as part of their ongoing orientation.
16. UNDP planning, implementation and monitoring procedures for ICT projects be enhanced to ensure that equipment procured is complete and properly installed, and is being used appropriately and effectively in delivering expected outcomes. This should include a schedule for on-site monitoring and evaluation.

17. As a precursor to the initiation of any individual ICT projects for a parliament, an ICT strategic plan be developed for the parliament based on an ICT needs assessment.
18. The intranet and e-library projects at the Congress of Palau be reviewed by specialists with experience in delivering such projects in a parliamentary environment, with the aim of making specific recommendations on how to progress the effective implementation of those projects.
19. Where practicable local suppliers be considered as a first option for procurement of ICT equipment to ensure that after sales technical support is available locally to assist with technical issues and maintenance that will arise over the life of the equipment. Where a local supplier is not available, preference be given to brands of ICT equipment that have dedicated technical support personnel available in-country.
20. The Joint Congressional Committee for the Corporate Strategic Development Plan develop a roadmap for implementation of the joint resolution on budgetary processes and financial oversight, and conduct a workshop with government agencies and appropriate civil society organisations to assist with the development of that roadmap.
21. Future professional development programs designed for Members of Congress by international donors or development agencies give priority to enhancing members' understanding and analysis of financial documents and budgetary processes.
22. The Congress of Palau work with government agencies and private sector organisations in Palau, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to develop an in-country training package for Members of Congress on financial documents and budgetary processes.
23. A comprehensive community outreach strategy for the Congress of Palau be developed with appropriate technical assistance.
24. In examining options for future support for the Congress of Palau, the UNDP give priority to providing further technical assistance for those infrastructure initiatives put in place by the Palau Parliament Support Project to ensure their effective uptake by members and staff of the Congress.
25. Work on the development of a new staffing structure for the Congress of Palau commence as soon as possible, with appropriate technical assistance provided through an international source.



# 1. Introduction

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1.1 The Republic of Palau is an independent Micronesian country in the North Pacific Ocean, located to the southeast of the Philippines. From 1948 to 1978, Palau was a United Nations Trust Territory under the administration of the United States of America. In 1978, Palau opted to become a separate, independent country rather than join the Federated States of Micronesia. Since then it has entered into a Compact of Free Association with the USA, which was ratified in 1993 and came into force on 1 October 1994.

1.2 Palau is a congressional democracy with directly elected executive and legislative branches. Elections are held every four years at the same time as the US presidential elections. All citizens of Palau aged 18 years and older are eligible to vote. The President and Vice President are elected by a countrywide vote.

1.3 The Congress is bicameral, consisting of the Senate, which has nine Senators elected from districts on an at-large basis, and the House of Delegates, which has 16 members, one from each of the 16 states. As well, each state has its own governor and legislature. Traditional decision-making is included in the system through the Council of Chiefs, an advisory body to the President formed from the highest chief from each of the states.

1.4 Palau became a member of the United Nations in 1994. In July 2008 Palau signed the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement under which the UNDP would assist the government in carrying out its development projects.

1.5 A Legislative Needs Assessment was undertaken in 2008 after Palau indicated an interest in being involved in the UNDP's parliamentary support programme in the 2008-2012 cycle. The October 2008 Legislative Needs Assessment Report made 44 recommendations.

1.6 In 2009 a Special Committee of the Congress was established to examine the recommendations of the Legislative Needs Assessment and advise the Congress on their implementation. The Special Committee agreed that the Congress would implement 30 of the 44 recommendations through the use of its own resources and internal processes, while assistance would be sought from the UNDP working together with the Congress to implement the other 14 recommendations (being recommendations 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 21, 25, 28, 37 and 38).

1.7 The three-year Palau Parliament Support Project commenced in January 2010, with funding provided from the UNDP's Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund. The original budget bid for the project was US 290,000 but the actual funding received was US 200,000, a shortfall of US 90,000.

## 2. Evaluation

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2.1 In 2013 the UNDP requested the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to arrange an end of project evaluation of the Palau Parliament Support Project. The terms of reference for the evaluation were:

- ◆ assess the projects' accomplishments and its contributions towards the achievement of the anticipated outcomes, including any constraints on its effectiveness, and any unintended outcomes;
- ◆ assess the direct and indirect effects of the project on intended beneficiaries and broader socio-economic, political, MDG and gender dimensions;
- ◆ assess the appropriateness of the project design particularly as it relates to the achievement of project objectives, its linkages with the government's national strategic plans, and problems it intends to address;
- ◆ assess the management and implementation arrangements of the project, including financial and human resource management, monitoring and oversight as well as the risks and risk management strategies in terms of their contribution to the delivery of project results in accordance with the project Results and Resources Framework (RRF);
- ◆ identify key factors which have contributed to the program's successes and failures;
- ◆ document the lessons learned in the design, delivery, management and monitoring of the project that will add value to similar projects in the future; and
- ◆ recommend options to improve any future UNDP engagement with the Palau Congress.

2.2 Mr Andres Lomp from Australia was appointed by the IPU to undertake the evaluation. He has 27 years of experience working in the parliamentary environment and is currently Director of the Australian Parliament's International and Community Relations Office, which coordinates a Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program linking Australian and Pacific parliaments through twinning arrangements and capacity building projects.

2.3 The evaluation involved:

- ◆ a review of key project documents, including the project design document and the annual work plans;
- ◆ a briefing on the project via teleconference by the Country Development Manager for the United Nations (UN) Joint Presence in Palau;
- ◆ interviews with project participants and civil society representatives as well as site inspections during a visit to Palau from 7 to 14 December 2013; and
- ◆ an interview via teleconference with the UNDP project manager for the Palau Parliament Support Project.

2.4 A list of interviews conducted is provided at Appendix A to this report.

## 3. Project management

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3.1 The management of the project was the responsibility of two bodies: the Congress of Palau and the UNDP. The Congress of Palau was responsible for the day-to-day management of the project while at the same time being the project's major beneficiary. The UNDP was the supplier for the project, by sourcing the funding, consultants and equipment, and at the same time was responsible for quality assurance through monitoring and evaluation.

### Project managers

3.2 The Clerks of the Palau House of Delegates and Senate were the project managers. They were responsible for making the day-to-day decisions on project implementation and elevating to the Project Board any matters that required higher-level consideration and approval. When the project first commenced, the Clerks utilised various staff of the Congress to provide administrative support to the project. In the second half of the project a Clerk Assistant from the Senate undertook a more comprehensive coordination role for the project in support of the project managers.

3.3 The management structure for the project had a number of benefits, according to project participants interviewed in Palau. It cemented ownership of the project in the Congress of Palau from the very outset of the project. It also saved project funds because the responsibilities of project manager were added to the existing responsibilities of the Clerks, thereby mitigating the need to create a specific project manager position with all the costs this would have entailed.

3.4 For parliamentary support projects in other countries (such as Solomon Islands) the UNDP has engaged a chief technical adviser or a senior project manager from outside the country. This has usually required a significant level of funds from the project to be devoted to the salary for the chief technical adviser. This sort of model was not considered necessary in Palau due to the scale of the project and because the Congress was keen to maintain ownership of the project. Vesting project management responsibility in the Clerks was both symbolically and practically significant.

3.5 Appointment of the Clerks as project managers demonstrated the commitment of the Congress to the objectives of the project. It also meant that resources from within the Congress could be mobilised for project activities, as the chief executives of the parliamentary administration were able to use their authority to commit people to undertake duties in support of the project. With the project budget originally estimated at US 290,000, but with only US 200,000 secured for implementation, saving on the salary costs of a project manager from outside the Congress was necessary to ensure that sufficient funds were available for delivery of project activities rather than being absorbed by project administration.

3.6 In discussions with UNDP staff it was recognised that placing project manager responsibilities on the two chief executives of the parliament added to their already significant workloads. This resulted in some early implementation delays for the project. Implementation was improved when a Clerk Assistant from the Senate was enlisted to take on a larger coordination role for the project, providing a more consistent approach to project implementation.

### **Project Board**

3.7 The senior decision making and oversight body for the project was the Project Board chaired by the Vice Presidents of the two houses of Congress, and including a group of representative Delegates and Senators, the project managers and the UNDP representative. They agreed on the annual work plans and reviewed progress in project implementation. Participants in the project indicated that the project board structure and membership reinforced the strong local ownership of the project. It also ensured key project partners were engaged with each other throughout the course of the project.

3.8 At the conclusion of the project, a Joint Congressional Committee was established to progress the implementation of the new corporate plan, one of the major outputs from the project. This demonstrated an ongoing commitment from the Congress to maintain the momentum for development sparked by the project. It is perhaps the strongest illustration of the confidence that the Congress had in both the directions of the project and the management arrangements for it. The decision to establish this Joint Committee for the 9<sup>th</sup> OEK demonstrated a keen desire to have an effective transition from the delivery of the project to the delivery of the new strategic plan for the Congress.

### **UNDP role**

3.9 The project design document emphasised the importance of partnerships in the delivery of the project. The partnership between the Congress of Palau and the UNDP was the cornerstone of the project.

3.10 The UNDP Multi-Country Office based in Suva, Fiji was responsible for the UNDP's management of the project, with one staff member of that office serving as UNDP project manager. The Country Development Manager at the UN Joint Presence in Palau provided an in-country facilitation role for the project when issues relating to the project required in-country liaison between the UNDP and the Congress of Palau.

3.11 The UNDP project manager generally travelled to Palau once a year to assess progress and to help plan the next year's work. In one particular year the project manager visited Palau twice. Quarterly reports were used to monitor progress in the implementation of the project. An annual report provided the basis for reviewing the outcomes achieved over a 12-month period and to help set the work plan for the activities to be undertaken the following year.

3.12 Project beneficiaries in the Congress expressed considerable satisfaction with the UNDP's management role in the project. Feedback from past and current project managers and board representatives indicated that they worked well with UNDP representatives and appreciated the UNDP's support during the course of the project activities. One significant comment was that the UNDP's support was the first time direct assistance had been provided to the Congress of Palau as usually most development support in Palau was provided to or through the government.

3.13 While noting their overall satisfaction with the management of the project, some project participants indicated that from time to time the significant distance between the project managers at the Congress and the UNDP project manager in Suva did have some impact on project activities as communication was not as direct as would have been possible if the UNDP project manager had been based in Palau. In particular, it was suggested there could have been more consultation on consultants to be used for particular project activities, as some of the consultants were not familiar with congressional systems of government, and there were some difficulties with procurement processes, leading to less than optimum outcomes in relation to supply of ICT equipment.

## **Findings**

3.14 The project management structure and arrangements for the Palau Parliament Support Project were appropriate to the size of the project, ensured that the bulk of funds were directed to project deliverables rather than administration, and provided for strong local ownership of the project. But if project management responsibility is to be vested in the chief executives of a parliament, then appropriate support arrangements need to be developed from the very outset of a project.

3.15 Given the variety of significant issues with which Clerks must deal, particularly during the sitting periods of a parliament, when they also serve as chief procedural advisers to the Presiding Officers and to parliamentarians, it is likely that their capacity to maintain project momentum during and leading up to such sitting periods is more limited. If authority for day-to-day decision-making is not delegated to other parliamentary staff then activities will inevitably be delayed.

3.16 Earlier identification of a project coordinator within the parliament to support the project managers with day-to-day implementation of the project would have assisted in progressing project outcomes in its initial stages. Delegation of authority within the Congress for day-to-day decision-making remains an issue to be addressed and will impede implementation of the corporate plan unless more decision making authority is delegated.

3.17 The decision to transition from a project board to a Joint Congressional Committee to implement the corporate plan is a significant and highly commendable outcome for the project as it demonstrates the commitment of the Congress to maintain the momentum of development sparked by the project.

3.18 Overall the relationship between the Congress of Palau and the UNDP was extremely positive. Some differences of opinion were evident in relation to procurement sources and some of the decisions taken did not contribute to an optimal outcome for some of the infrastructure initiatives under the project.

### ***Recommendations***

1. Where responsibility for the management of a parliamentary support project is vested in the senior management of a parliament, sufficient authority should be delegated to a project coordinator in the parliament to ensure day-to-day decision-making on the project can be progressed efficiently.
2. Where ICT initiatives are included in a parliamentary support project, better use be made of local ICT expertise and ICT expertise in developed parliaments within the region to ensure effective project management of such initiatives.

## 4. Project design

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4.1 The project responded to a Legislative Needs Assessment undertaken in 2008 that identified 44 recommendations for strengthening the capacity of the Congress of Palau. Of those 44 recommendations the Palau Congress identified 14 for which it required support and technical assistance and those 14 recommendations became the focus of the project.

4.2 The UNDP noted in its project design document that prefacing a legislative support program design process with a Legislative Needs Assessment “provides a strong basis for developing meaningful local ownership and engagement with local counterparts and development partners”. Evidence for this can be found in other jurisdictions in the Pacific region, including Solomon Islands and Samoa, where legislative needs assessments have preceded the development of parliamentary support projects that have been embraced by the governments and parliaments of those countries and that have attracted significant funding from development partners. Basing the Parliament Support Project for Palau on a needs assessment endorsed by the Congress of Palau similarly ensured a strong local commitment to the project. It also meant that the project was founded on sound principles of effective development.

4.3 In Palau, the establishment of a Special Congressional Committee to examine the recommendations of the Legislative Needs Assessment demonstrated strong local ownership of and commitment to the process for implementation of the needs assessment. By identifying those matters for which the Congress required UNDP support and technical advice, the Congressional Committee recognised the value of a genuine partnership in delivering project outcomes.

4.4 The project design document drew on UNDP’s experience in developing other parliamentary capacity building projects in the Pacific region, specifically for Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands and Fiji. Five key areas from those projects were highlighted as being interventions with which the UNDP had relevant expertise that would enable it to deliver the recommended outcomes in Palau. Those five areas were:

- ◆ conduct of induction programs and workshops for parliamentarians to help them better understand the scope of their jobs and the national and development issues requiring their attention;
- ◆ targeted training for parliamentary staff to enhance their professional skills in supporting the work of the parliament, underpinned by the formulation of key policies to support that work;
- ◆ support for accountability processes, including capacity building for scrutiny committees and better linkages among participants in the nation’s accountability framework;
- ◆ improvement of specific services available in the parliament to support the work of parliamentarians, including improved technology and enhanced library and research capacity; and
- ◆ development of a more strategic approach to community engagement with the parliament through print, online and event based outreach by the parliament.

4.5 Unlike other UNDP projects in the Pacific region, which were all-encompassing projects based on their legislative needs assessments, the Palau project was focused on only 14 specific recommendations of its needs assessment. This meant that responsibility for the broader work required to implement the other 30 recommendations remained with the Congress of Palau.

4.6 UNDP staff interviewed during the evaluation indicated that the UNDP project was designed to support the Congress of Palau in establishing some key processes and infrastructure that would enable it to progress its corporate development beyond the life of the project. It was recognised that once those processes and infrastructure were put in place, it would be the responsibility of the Congress to progress the implementation of the initiatives. In principle this was a sensible approach taking into consideration the budget secured for the project and the keen desire of the Congress to take responsibility for its ongoing development into the future.

4.7 However, the current state of play in relation to some of the activities initiated by the UNDP project suggests there may have been an overestimation of the capacity of the Congress to sustain particular initiatives once the infrastructure was provided by the UNDP. While initiatives such as the development of an intranet service and the establishment of a library were delivered, the project only managed to implement the basic infrastructure. The services are not being used to any great extent (as discussed in further detail later in this report). A common refrain during the course of the evaluation was that the Congress would need further technical assistance and funding if the promise of these services was to be realised.

4.8 This suggests that the project design was incomplete or inadequate in some areas. While infrastructure initiatives, such as development of the intranet, were focused on putting in place the hardware and providing some initial technical support, training and policy development, the initial set-up does not appear to have been linked to a broader implementation strategy that would have provided a roadmap for uptake of the new services. There was an expectation that the Congress would be able to progress the implementation once the service was put in place but that expectation has not been realised to date. While it is true that the UNDP has delivered on its promise to set up an intranet service, that service is hardly being used and so it is not possible at this stage to assess that the project has met its objective of enhancing the information and research capacity of the Congress.

4.9 This leads to a consideration of the overall project design document. That document was an important launching pad for the project as it sought to define the parameters of the project and, at the same time, market the project to development partners.

4.10 The project design document outlined the background to and reasons for the project, the key themes to be pursued, the UNDP's experience in delivering capacity building based on those themes, the strategic directions the project would follow, the management structure for the project, a results and resources framework, and a risk analysis. While substantial in its detail and appropriate in its direction, the project design document could have been better framed.



4.11 As an example, the project document presented the challenges and issues to be addressed as a brief narrative that brought together into a few paragraphs myriad issues from development of a library to production of a corporate plan and development of a handbook. The document would have benefited from an improved structure that outlined in more clarity the following issues:

- ◆ plans that needed to be developed for the parliament (eg corporate plan, community outreach plan, ICT strategic plan);
- ◆ training programs that needed to be arranged;
- ◆ equipment and other resources that needed to be procured;
- ◆ facilities that needed to be established; and
- ◆ processes that needed to be reviewed and remodelled.

4.12 The project design could have been clearer on the limits of the project and provided a more definite outline of UNDP responsibilities compared with Congress of Palau responsibilities in delivering on specific initiatives. It could have identified more comprehensively the risks associated with delivery of infrastructure initiatives involving technology, because there might then have been a clearer understanding that establishment of an effective new service, such as an intranet, requires significantly more support than the provision of the infrastructure and some initial training and policy development. The issue of business process redesign does not appear to have featured in the project design, which was an important omission.

4.13 Another key document guiding the project was the annual work plan which identified the delivery of project activities each year, including the expected results, timeframes for delivery, budgets for each activity and who was responsible for delivery. Within each of the annual work plans examined during this evaluation there was a mixture of significant, larger scale projects alongside a listing of smaller scale tasks. Also mixed in to the work plans were the project management tasks, such as board meetings and reporting.

4.14 An improved design and format for the work plan, as well as clarity and consistency in the level and type of activity that should be included in the work plan, would enhance the document as a planning tool and as a reference point for evaluation. The work plan would also benefit from including target numbers for particular activities (such as numbers of staff or members expected to participate in a workshop), to assist with the assessment of whether a planned activity was delivered in line with expectations.

## **Findings**

4.15 The project design reflected the more limited nature of the UNDP assignment for the Congress of Palau compared to some of the all-encompassing projects established elsewhere in the Pacific region. As such it appropriately targeted key infrastructure and processes that could enhance the capacity of the Congress of Palau.

4.16 While the design took on board the Congress of Palau's commitment to progress its corporate development beyond the life of the project, it overestimated the capacity of the Congress to deliver on that commitment without ongoing technical support and funding. This is evidenced by the slow uptake of major project initiatives such as the intranet. UNDP experience with other projects could have been better applied to this project to alert it to the risks associated with infrastructure initiatives in the Pacific region.

4.17 UNDP project documents and work plans would benefit from some enhancements in structure, presentation and content to provide clarity on the deliverables and the lines of responsibility between project partners, particularly when each of the project partners is responsible for implementing different stages of a particular initiative, such as an intranet service.

### ***Recommendations***

3. Project design documents for parliamentary support projects outline with more clarity the plans to be developed, the training to be provided, the equipment to be procured, the facilities to be established and the processes to be reviewed as part of any project.
4. Project design documents outline more clearly the lines of responsibility for establishment of a service and the implementation strategy for uptake of that service.
5. The content and presentation of annual work plans be enhanced to ensure activities of corresponding scale are listed as deliverables for each year, with individual tasks relating to each deliverable listed as sub-categories.
6. Annual work plans include target numbers for training activities, such as workshops or courses.

## 5. Relevance and appropriateness

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5.1 The Republic of Palau has a National Master Development Plan, prepared in 1996, that sets out a 20-year development plan for Palau. It also has a Medium Term Development Strategy that seeks to improve national development on a sustainable basis over the medium-term. Relevant to the Congress, the development strategy seeks to achieve consensus for change, political stability, improved performance of government and government entities, an environment that is more conducive to private sector development, and improved transparency of policy development and implementation. In each of these areas, the Congress of Palau has a significant role to play as a forum for debate on how to achieve the development objectives, for enacting laws that support national goals, and for scrutiny of government actions in delivering development on a national scale.

5.2 By seeking to enhance the capacity of the Congress in fulfilling its representative, legislative and oversight responsibilities, the Palau Parliament Support Project was connected to both the long-term development plan and the medium-term development strategy for Palau. The overarching themes of the project struck a chord with many of the project participants interviewed for this evaluation.

5.3 The need for a more professional parliamentary service with staff appointments based on merit and outside of the political process was seen as crucial for enhancing the institutional capacity to support the Congress, its members and its committees. Skills development programs were recognised as being vital for a heightened capacity among both parliamentarians and staff to meet the legislative, representative and scrutiny functions of the Congress. Enhanced services, with a strong emphasis on improved technological capacity, were viewed as critical for the effective functioning of a 21<sup>st</sup> century legislature. Better engagement with the community was recognised as a necessity to maintain the legitimacy of the Congress in a world of increased connectivity between people.

5.4 There was a strong sense that the project had enhanced understanding within the Congress about the need for action in each of these areas. Through the groundwork it has laid, participants felt the project had ignited a spark within the Congress for increased professionalism and better connectivity at a variety of levels. It was noted that successful change in the parliamentary environment would occur incrementally. At the same time, it was recognised that the project has helped the Congress, its members and its staff to develop the initial roadmap towards the establishment of a more effective institution and has helped to instil in them enthusiasm to take a leading role in implementing that roadmap.

5.5 Civil society representatives interviewed during the evaluation indicated that they supported the directions of the project in seeking to place the Congress on a more professional footing, to enhance its capacity for deeper analysis of key national issues and scrutiny of the government, and to connect more effectively with the community. The President of the Chamber of Commerce, who also serves as an adviser to the President of Palau, viewed the project as extremely relevant to the future development of Palau, noting that it no longer was an option for key national

institutions to continue on a business as usual footing. He noted that the demands of a modern world and public expectations that elected representatives will deliver outcomes for the community require a national legislature that is better equipped to develop a modern legislative framework for the nation, to debate and analyse key policy issues facing the country, and to scrutinise the actions of government in administering programs and services for the community.

5.6 From discussions with project participants and from observations during site inspections at the Capitol, the main shortcoming of the project was the lack of follow through in ensuring that key deliverables were properly functioning and being utilised as planned. Examples are noted in the sections of the report that follow. A redeeming opportunity is offered by the fact that the Congress of Palau is keen to engage with development partners such as the UNDP into the future to access the technical assistance and funding that is crucial for successful delivery of their roadmap towards a 21<sup>st</sup> century institution.

### ***Findings***

5.7 The consensus view during the evaluation was that the project was highly relevant because its themes were connected to the broader national development strategy for Palau. The project helped to demonstrate that an effective national legislature, which fulfils its representative, legislative and oversight responsibilities, is vital for sustainable national development.

5.8 There was also agreement that the timing of the project was appropriate as it was being undertaken at the same time as the medium-term national strategy was being implemented. In this way the Congress was moving in unison with broader national efforts at enhancing capacity.

5.9 As Members of Congress and congressional staff embraced both the aims and achievements of the project, it was clear that the project was relevant to their hopes for better services and systems in support of the Congress. As the project themes are now reflected in the corporate plan for the Congress, the objectives of the project have been integrated into a broader vision for the Congress. Continued interest in maintaining the momentum of the project into the future is further evidence of how relevant and appropriate the objectives and activities of the project were.

### ***Recommendations***

7. Future support for the Congress of Palau should continue to give priority to those areas of capacity building that link into the broader national development strategy for Palau, particularly enhancement of financial accountability and budgetary processes.

## 6. Effectiveness and efficiency

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6.1 Activities were delivered under each of the five project themes. In most cases, the project laid the foundations for enhanced capacity into the future, by putting in place the building blocks on which future work can be undertaken. This is understandable as delivery of major initiatives, such as the establishment of an e-library, is a significant project in itself that involves various stages including procurement of equipment, provision of training and redesign of work practices. Such major initiatives and changes to the way a parliament operates cannot always be implemented within the timeframe of a single support project.

6.2 For a number of the technology initiatives established and supported by this project, only limited benefit is currently being experienced from the work undertaken. Unless there is follow-up and progress in the immediate future there is a risk that some of the services will fall by the wayside and not be used as they had been planned. This could lead to disengagement from and disenchantment with the project outcomes and is therefore directly related to the sustainability of the project outcomes. To understand the significance of these issues, the following section of the report presents an analysis of some of the key initiatives supported under the project.

### Strategic planning

6.3 A significant achievement for the Congress was the development of its first-ever Corporate Strategic Development Plan, spanning the years 2011-15. The plan was developed through a workshop organised as a key activity of the project. It represents a comprehensive framework for development of the Congress.

6.4 The corporate plan outlines four strategic goals:

- ◆ To improve the institutional capacity of the OEK;
- ◆ To improve the development and scrutiny of legislation;
- ◆ To increase and improve oversight of the Executive; and
- ◆ To improve the representation role of OEK members and to increase the outreach work of the OEK.

6.5 A Joint Congressional Committee has been established to oversee implementation of the plan and the Clerks of the Senate and the House of Delegates have been appointed as the project managers. This mirrors the project management framework that was used during the Parliament Support Project. As noted earlier in this report, this demonstrates that the project was instrumental in assisting the Congress move towards a more strategic framework for its ongoing development.

6.6 Members of Congress and staff interviewed during the evaluation indicated their strong commitment to the corporate plan, although the content of the corporate plan has yet to filter down to some staff. The development of the corporate plan appears to have been undertaken by a more select group within the Congress rather than through a comprehensive consultation process involving people at all levels of the organisation.

6.7 There continues to be debate about some of the more contentious areas of the plan, such as the proposal for a joint research unit for committees, with a number of people suggesting that this proposal is unlikely to survive. It was noted that while Members of the Congress are comfortable with the idea that technical services, such as ICT support and library services, can be provided jointly to the two houses, many consider that the procedural and research capacity of the two houses should be kept separate to preserve the independence of the houses. This debate reflects a healthy regard for the corporate plan as a living document.

6.8 In terms of priorities for implementation, those interviewed for this evaluation generally agreed that the following issues were the most pressing:

- ◆ development of an effective and responsive staff structure with a clear and transparent recruitment policy and clear staff responsibilities and pay grades;
- ◆ enhancing the capacity of members through a professional development program; and
- ◆ establishing an e-Congress through a comprehensive program of technological enhancement.

6.9 For each of these areas it was recognised that technical assistance and funding would be the key to realising the goals of the corporate plan. An implementation roadmap has been developed, that reflects good planning principles, but there is a level of uncertainty about how best to progress some of these key issues. There is a keen desire for international support over the life of the plan to help guide and advise on its implementation.

## **Findings**

6.10 Through the UNDP project, the Congress of Palau has developed a clear vision for the institution it wishes to become in the years ahead. This is a major achievement. An important task in the year ahead is to engage all stakeholders within and outside of the Congress with that vision.

6.11 Three priority areas for implementation, identified by those who participated in this evaluation, are the development of a professional staffing structure, establishment of a comprehensive professional development program for members, and technological enhancement moving towards the realisation of an e-Congress. All are seen as vital to enhance the professionalism and capacity of the Congress.

6.12 The UNDP and IPU could usefully assist with this process by tapping into their network of parliamentary contacts and development partners to initiate a new model of support for Palau focusing on implementation of key initiatives in the corporate plan identified by the Congress as requiring technical support. The IPU could ask its member parliaments from around the region to indicate projects in Palau they could support with technical advice, tapping into the goodwill often found among developed parliaments to assist neighbouring parliaments that have particular development needs. The UNDP could convene a meeting of regional development partners to determine funding options to allow that technical support to be provided.

6.13 In this regard, the Australian Parliament has indicated it is willing to contribute up to \$10,000 through its Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program to kick-start the process of building broad based international support for the next stage of development for the Congress of Palau. It hopes that other development partners and developed parliaments in the region can also make a commitment to that ongoing development.

6.14 The Congress of Palau could also take a proactive role in this by seeking to engage developed parliaments in the region by fostering bilateral ties with those parliaments. While currently the Congress of Palau participates in parliamentary associations such as the IPU, its direct parliament-to-parliament links have not been developed to any great degree. More active pursuit of bilateral parliamentary links could help to identify those parliaments in the region that are willing to support the ongoing development of the Congress.

### ***Recommendations***

8. The UNDP and IPU establish a joint taskforce to assess options to support the Congress of Palau in implementing the key priorities of its corporate plan over the next two years and engage development partners and neighbouring parliaments in that taskforce.
9. The Congress of Palau actively foster bilateral parliamentary links with other parliaments in the Asia Pacific region to assist it identify those parliaments that may have the capacity and ability to support the ongoing development of the Congress.
10. The Joint Congressional Committee on the Corporate Strategic Development Plan convene a regular roundtable with government agencies and civil society organisations to discuss with them and gain their input into the implementation of the plan.
11. The Joint Congressional Committee on the Corporate Strategic Development Plan present a six-monthly report to both houses of Congress on progress achieved in the implementation of the plan and that report be debated in the Senate and the House of Delegates.

### **Professional skills development**

6.15 The principal mechanism used by the project for parliamentary skills development of Palau Delegates and Senators was an induction program, coordinated at the commencement of the 8<sup>th</sup> OEK in 2008 and the 9<sup>th</sup> OEK in 2012. The induction program included contributions from agencies in Palau with budgetary and financial oversight responsibilities, to help build relationships between the Congress and those agencies and to emphasise the important role that Members of Congress play in financial oversight. The induction program also canvassed the engagement that Members of Congress should have with broader national development objectives and the Millennium Development Goals. A handbook was also produced as a resource for members.

6.16 All Delegates and Senators interviewed for this evaluation praised the establishment of an induction program for the Congress, noting that they had gained considerable value from the information provided during the orientation sessions. The choice of a state Senator from Hawaii to be facilitator for the 2012 induction program was widely praised with Delegates and Senators indicating that it was beneficial to be guided by a fellow parliamentarian and one who clearly understood and had experience working in a congressional system of government. This was contrasted with some other consultants who had been used for the project and whose lack of familiarity with the congressional system of Palau caused issues of concern for some Delegates and Senators.

6.17 The two induction programs were standalone events undertaken at the commencement of the new Congress to help Senators and Delegates gain grounding in the procedures and processes of the parliament. While supporting the continuation of such orientation sessions at the commencement of a new Congress, Senators and Delegates who were interviewed for this evaluation indicated that often many of the more detailed questions they had about parliamentary processes and procedures, and how to operate effectively in the parliament, only started to emerge once they had some experience working in the Congress.

6.18 They suggested that follow-up sessions should be considered part and parcel of any induction program for Delegates and Senators. At the very least they wanted those sessions to be held throughout the first year of a new Congress, and indicated that ongoing information sessions, briefings, seminars and workshops should be available to all Senators and Delegates, regardless of whether they are newly elected. Some of those sessions could be targeted at specific functions within the Congress, such as the role of committee chairs. The need for a more comprehensive induction program is recognised in the 2011-15 corporate plan for the Congress of Palau.

6.19 Parliamentary staff suggested that induction programs should also be directed to the staff who work with Delegates and Senators, as there is often changeover of staff when new Members of Congress are elected. Orientation sessions for such staff would ensure that they are better prepared from the outset of the new Congress to support the work of Senators and Delegates.

6.20 Some training in research and in computing was made available to staff during the project. The issue of increased training opportunities for staff is complicated by the fact that the staffing structure in the Congress does not currently provide for ongoing staff, and there is considerable changeover of staff after each election. This means investment in training may be lost if staff are replaced after an election. Addressing the staffing structure issue, by moving to a parliamentary service with ongoing staff rather than just contract staff, will allow for staff training to be dealt with in a more comprehensive way.

6.21 Civil society representatives reinforced the need for a comprehensive induction program for newly elected Members of Congress, noting that in Palau in general the provision of orientation to people who take up a new profession is not sufficiently robust. It was suggested that such orientation should include one-on-one



or smaller group sessions to allow for more mentoring style conversations for members. It was felt that an induction program held over the course of a year should also be able to focus on issues such as negotiation skills, policy analysis and understanding of financial documents and budgetary processes. The Chamber of Commerce suggested such skills are crucial for Members of Congress and there should be opportunities for members to access professional development programs in those areas. One suggestion was to run shorter sessions that are repeated over the course of a week to allow for more intensive engagement with members in smaller group situations rather than simply conducting large group seminars.

## **Findings**

6.22 The experience of Palau Senators and Delegates with the induction programs arranged during the project confirmed the importance and value of orientation sessions for newly elected parliamentarians, particularly when they are delivered by people who understand and have experience working in a like system of government.

6.23 However the existing model for induction, which emphasises a standalone orientation session at the start of a new Congress, needs to be broadened to provide for a more intensive and comprehensive induction experience. This should include information sessions, briefings, seminars and workshops throughout, at the very least, the first year of a new Congress. It could include opportunities for one-on-one and smaller group sessions. A broader range of topics relevant to the work of parliamentarians could also be included, such as negotiation and debating skills, chairing of meetings and committees, and detailed scrutiny of financial documents and budgets.

6.24 Lack of orientation for new staff who work for Members of Congress is a significant missing link in the current induction approach. Orientations sessions for such staff would benefit them and the members they serve.

6.25 While the extent of training available may be limited by the budget for a project, budget limitations could be overcome to a certain extent by placing emphasis on training of parliamentary staff from within the country to deliver follow-up sessions, so that Members of Congress get used to seeking advice from parliamentary staff on an ongoing basis.

## **Recommendations**

12. Induction programs for parliamentarians should as far as practicable include as facilitators parliamentarians or former parliamentarians who have experience working with a like system of government.
13. Induction programs should be broadened from being standalone events at the beginning of a new Congress and should involve a more comprehensive orientation experience over, at least, the first year of a new Congress.
14. Induction programs be made available to staff of the Congress.

15. The professional development delivered under parliamentary support projects should include training for parliamentary staff on how best to deliver information sessions and briefings for parliamentarians as part of their ongoing orientation.

## Information and research

6.26 The project sought to boost the information and research capacity of the Congress through a number of key activities. It was recognised that improved information sources and access to research for members and staff would enhance the capabilities of the Congress in debate and scrutiny to support its legislative, representative and oversight functions. Activities delivered by the project included:

- ◆ establishment of a library and employment of a librarian;
- ◆ installation of a master server and other IT infrastructure for electronic records storage and to support online information services; and
- ◆ establishment of an intranet and a policy for online usage.

6.27 At face value these are worthy landmarks for the project. However uptake of library services and the intranet is extremely limited at present, and the project has not delivered an e-library service as originally hoped. The e-library is simply an icon on the intranet site with no site map designed for such a service and no library material available to access online.

6.28 Establishment of the library in the Capitol building was a major undertaking that required procurement of equipment, sorting through the existing collection, moving the collection from the old library facility, development of systems, and installation of shelving and other furniture. A full-time librarian has been engaged. She advised that the current collection includes approximately 2,000 documents.

6.29 A number of issues were noted with the current library during an inspection of it. One of the most significant documents for a parliament is the country's legal code, but the library only has one copy and the online version, by subscription at a cost of US 1,000 per annum, is not affordable for the library at present. Three computers have been provided by the project to assist with information searches, however those computers currently stand idle as back-up power packs were not provided as part of the procurement, and the computers therefore have not been put into use.

6.30 Currently the main users of the library appear to be the legal units of the Congress. Some information requests are received from Members of Congress and from some members of the public who have heard there is a library at the Congress.

6.31 The Congress is keen to implement an e-library as part of a broader vision for an e-Congress. Some work on the e-library has begun with the commencement of online cataloguing of the collection. But this work has had to stop as the librarian has run out of bar codes used in online cataloguing. The cost of sufficient barcodes to complete this work is approximately US 150.

6.32 Two other initial requirements for the e-library are development of a site map and digitising of congressional records back to the commencement of the first Congress. Development of a site map would require expertise currently not available in the Congress. The project did engage a library consultant from Hawaii to assist with the development of the e-library but that work has not progressed any further at this stage. The digitising of records has not been possible as an appropriate scanner that was to be delivered by the project (and that was requested many months ago) has yet to be procured.

6.33 While an intranet has been developed, everyone interviewed indicated that it is hardly being used in the Congress. While the Senate loads onto the intranet status tables of bills, the House of Delegates is currently not using the intranet. A number of reasons were cited for the lack of uptake including slow bandwidth that makes accessing the intranet cumbersome and frustrating; so few documents and so little information on the intranet that it is of little current use; a basic design that does not attract users to the service; lack of knowledge and skills on uploading of information; and a general level of comfort with traditional paper based options. In addition, technical support has not been readily available to the IT officer in the Congress since the establishment of the intranet to assist him in progressing this initiative.

6.34 Despite the current shortcomings with the intranet, many of those interviewed were keen to see the intranet become a key service of the Congress, to save on print costs, to allow for remote access to information (particularly as many people live more than 30 minutes' drive from the Capitol) and to increase the efficiency of business processes in the Congress. But to achieve this much work is needed on the overall design, initial uploading of information, remodelling of business processes and training for users.

6.35 Another issue raised in relation to ICT services was that much of the procurement that occurred for the project was undertaken from overseas sources rather than through local suppliers. While the UN Joint Presence in Palau had recommended that local suppliers be used, the program managers at the Congress had insisted on the equipment being sourced from outside Palau as they felt that it would be cheaper to acquire equipment from an overseas source.

6.36 It was suggested, both by those currently working in the Congress and by the Chamber of Commerce, that it would be preferable if local suppliers were considered as a first option whenever procuring equipment. The Chamber noted that tender and procurement processes in Palau are robust.

6.37 To illustrate why the local supplier option would be preferable, it was noted that the servers provided by the project were a computing brand for which a dedicated service technician is not available in Palau. It was suggested that at the very least it should have been a brand that had technicians based in Palau.

## **Findings**

6.38 The project provided certain building blocks for future development of an information and research service for the Congress but was not able to deliver a complete outcome that would currently demonstrate enhanced capacity. It is only a work in progress and there are a number of significant gaps that need attention before these services start delivering on their promise.

6.39 There is a strong desire to move towards an online information service as part of a bold vision for an e-Congress. But funding and technical assistance would be required to move this initiative forward. There is currently no ICT plan for the Congress so the ICT initiatives commenced under this project lack connection to a broader strategy for enhancing the ICT capacity of the Congress.

6.40 In the delivery of the ICT initiatives there have been a number of challenges that have meant that some of those initiatives are not delivering the outcomes that were hoped for. Some activities have not been completed as the required equipment ran out part way through an activity, some equipment was only partially delivered and is not currently functional, and some equipment has not been delivered preventing completion of the activity.

6.41 There is a need to undertake a more comprehensive assessment of the ICT initiatives that have been commenced for the Congress of Palau and how they should best be progressed. There is also a need for the UNDP to use the experience of these ICT initiatives in Palau to assess its planning, implementation and monitoring processes for ICT projects, particularly where the UNDP contribution is only part of a broader technological development.

## **Recommendations**

16. UNDP planning, implementation and monitoring procedures for ICT projects be enhanced to ensure that equipment procured is complete and properly installed, and is being used appropriately and effectively in delivering expected outcomes. This should include a schedule for on-site monitoring and evaluation.
17. As a precursor to the initiation of any individual ICT projects for a parliament, an ICT strategic plan be developed for the parliament based on an ICT needs assessment.
18. The intranet and e-library projects at the Congress of Palau be reviewed by specialists with experience in delivering such projects in a parliamentary environment, with the aim of making specific recommendations on how to progress the effective implementation of those projects.

19. Where practicable local suppliers be considered as a first option for procurement of ICT equipment to ensure that after sales technical support is available locally to assist with technical issues and maintenance that will arise over the life of the equipment. Where a local supplier is not available, preference be given to brands of ICT equipment that have dedicated technical support personnel available in-country.

## **Financial oversight**

6.42 Another important achievement for the Congress through the project was a joint resolution on financial oversight passed by both houses in February 2012. That resolution was the outcome of a workshop organised by the project. The resolution was “to encourage joint partnership by the Senate and the House of Delegates in establishing a government budgeting process that will promote accountability in public financial management”.

6.43 The joint resolution provides a foundation stone for enhanced financial oversight and accountability by laying out the principles and approaches to be taken for constructive congressional and community engagement on the budget processes and for scrutiny of public spending. It envisages an active partnership between the Congress, the Office of the Public Auditor, government agencies, civil society organisations, and regional and international agencies in delivering a more open and accountable budget and financial oversight framework.

6.44 Implementation of the measures outlined within the joint resolution remains a work in progress. Civil society representatives such as the Chamber of Commerce expressed some frustration with the lack of resolve to implement measures once agreed. There was also a view that understanding of budget measures, financial documents and accounting practices remained weak among the membership of the Congress, impeding adequate scrutiny of the national budget and the government’s implementation of budget measures.

6.45 Senators and Delegates interviewed for this evaluation indicated an ongoing need and desire to enhance their skills in relation to financial scrutiny. It was highlighted as an area for more concentrated professional development.

## **Findings**

6.46 It is widely recognised in Palau, including among Senators and Delegates, that the Congress needs to enhance its financial oversight of the executive. The joint resolution passed by both houses in February 2012 provides the roadmap for improved budget processes and accountability.

6.47 The Parliament Support Project played a significant role in delivering a consensus resolution for an enhanced budgetary and financial scrutiny framework. The 9th OEK needs to actively work towards implementing that resolution to help increase community confidence in the ability of the Congress to effectively fulfil its oversight role. There also needs to be an active program of professional development for Members of Congress to enhance their understanding of financial documents and budgetary processes.

## **Recommendations**

20. The Joint Congressional Committee for the Corporate Strategic Development Plan develop a roadmap for implementation of the joint resolution on budgetary processes and financial oversight, and conduct a workshop with government agencies and appropriate civil society organisations to assist with the development of that roadmap.
21. Future professional development programs designed for Members of Congress by international donors or development agencies give priority to enhancing members' understanding and analysis of financial documents and budgetary processes.
22. The Congress of Palau work with government agencies and private sector organisations in Palau, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to develop an in-country training package for Members of Congress on financial documents and budgetary processes.

## **Community outreach**

6.48 The project helped the Congress initiate some outreach activities, including an OEK open day and a women's forum. Both were considered successful events, although the open day first held in 2012 was not repeated in 2013.

6.49 At the same time, understanding about the need for the Congress to engage with the community was increased through processes such as the development of the joint resolution on budgetary processes and financial oversight. That resolution proposes a number of mechanisms for enhanced engagement between the Congress, government agencies and civil society organisations.

6.50 According to one media representative interviewed for this evaluation, provision of information by the Congress to the media has improved lately, particularly through the public information officers of the Congress. This increased information is helping the media in its reporting of the Congress. But lack of online information and a one-month turnaround for transcripts of congressional proceedings currently impede broader media and community engagement with the Congress.

6.51 Efforts to increase community engagement by the Congress have been appreciated and some of the events held have demonstrated what is possible. But no overall community outreach strategy exists for the Congress at present. Activities undertaken, such as the OEK open day, are ad hoc and not linked in to a defined plan for enhancing community engagement.

6.52 Community outreach has been identified in the corporate plan as a matter for attention. But lack of expertise in the Congress in developing an outreach strategy is an impediment to that goal being achieved in the immediate future unless outside technical assistance can be provided to the Congress.

## ***Findings***

6.53 The Congress of Palau has taken some important first steps towards increased engagement with the community, including through its open day and women's forum and through provision of regular information to the media. But those efforts need to be linked to a more comprehensive strategy for community engagement.

6.54 While enhanced community engagement is identified as a priority in the corporate plan, limited experience within the Congress with the development of an outreach strategy means that assistance will be required not only in developing the strategy but also in helping to put in place key initiatives that would be included within such a strategy. Development of online information would need to be an important component of that strategy to ensure the Congress is responsive to the expectations of a modern community.

## ***Recommendations***

23. A comprehensive community outreach strategy for the Congress of Palau be developed with appropriate technical assistance.

## 7. Impact and sustainability

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7.1 One of the key objectives of the project was to set in place the mechanisms and systems that would assist with building the capacity of the Congress in the shorter term and enable ongoing development of the Congress in the longer term. The project was based on an understanding that the UNDP would provide support for some key initiatives that could be used by the Congress to bring about the transformation needed to become a 21<sup>st</sup> century legislature.

7.2 As detailed earlier in this report, those key initiatives included:

- ◆ establishment of an induction program for members of Congress;
- ◆ development of a new library for the Congress;
- ◆ adoption of a corporate strategic development plan for the Congress for 2011-15;
- ◆ creation of an intranet service for the Congress;
- ◆ agreement on a financial oversight framework involving the Senate and the House of Delegates; and
- ◆ commencement of outreach activities to encourage community engagement with the Congress.

7.3 Members of Congress and parliamentary staff interviewed for this evaluation indicated that the project had helped them to come to a better understanding of the systems and processes that are needed within a modern legislature. They all recognised that the initiatives put in place by the project had to be continued into the future if the Congress was to effectively fulfil its representative, legislative and oversight responsibilities. Members and staff were keen to see the programs and services established by the project progressed so that they become fully enshrined as the standard practices and processes of the Congress.

7.4 The corporate plan for 2011-15 provides documentary evidence that the Congress has embedded within its strategic directions some of the key themes of the project. The four strategic goals of the corporate plan have evolved from the objectives of the project.

7.5 A Joint Congressional Committee has been established to progress the implementation of the corporate plan, demonstrating the commitment of the Congress to continuing the work commenced through the project. In a detailed discussion with the committee during the evaluation, they recognised the project's impact on thinking within the Congress and confirmed the keen desire within the Congress to use the programs and services established by the project to enhance the skills within and the practices of the Congress.

7.6 Civil society representatives interviewed for the evaluation also indicated that the project had been important in bringing to the attention of the Congress the requirements for being an effective modern legislature. Their major concern was to ensure that the initiatives established by the project, such as the framework for financial oversight, would be implemented through actions that the Congress took.



7.7 In discussions with project participants and beneficiaries, the biggest concern about the sustainability of the project outcomes was the extent to which future technical support and funding could be secured for implementation of key initiatives within the corporate plan. It was recognised that in some of the priority areas of the plan, such as development of an effective and responsive staff structure, the Congress does not have the professional capacity to progress the work without international technical assistance.

7.8 As noted earlier in the report, lack of uptake in services such as the intranet also indicates that the sustainability of project outcomes is dependent on further work to ensure that those services are actually being used as they were intended. Otherwise there is a risk that the project will have invested in infrastructure that has had minimal impact on the work practices of the Congress.

### ***Findings***

7.9 The project has had a significant impact on the Congress of Palau. Initiatives supported by the project have assisted Senators, Delegates and staff to recognise the requirements of an effective modern legislature and to both understand and accept the work they need to undertake to achieve their strategic goals.

7.10 The strategic plan and implementation structures put in place by the Congress with the support of the project are clear evidence of the project's impact and the commitment to ensure that the momentum for development is sustained.

7.11 While there has been an investment in infrastructure in support of that development, the lack of uptake in some services means that the sustainability of the project outcomes is at risk unless further work is done to ensure that the services are being used as part of the regular work practices of the Congress. Further technical assistance is vital to progress that work.

### ***Recommendations***

24. In examining options for future support for the Congress of Palau, the UNDP give priority to providing further technical assistance for those infrastructure initiatives put in place by the Palau Parliament Support Project to ensure their effective uptake by members and staff of the Congress.

## 8. Future directions

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8.1 At the conclusion of the evaluation visit to Palau, the preliminary findings and recommendations from the evaluation were presented to the Joint Congressional Committee on the Corporate Strategic Development Plan. The committee's views were sought on their priorities for the next two years, and these are highlighted in this section of the report, which looks at future directions for the development of the Congress of Palau.

8.2 As noted earlier in this report, for the committee the three priority areas for strategic development are:

- ◆ development of an effective and responsive staff structure with a clear and transparent recruitment policy and clear staff responsibilities and pay grades;
- ◆ enhancing the capacity of members through a professional development program; and
- ◆ establishing an e-Congress through a comprehensive program of technological enhancement.

8.3 The committee's view was that work on the staff structure should commence as soon as possible, so that the work can be concluded well in advance of the next elections for the Congress. There was a concern that if the work was not completed prior to the next Congress then existing processes for recruitment of staff would be followed and this would delay any change in the staffing structure for several years.

8.4 Committee members were clear that technical assistance from outside Palau would be needed to assist the Congress develop the new staff structure. They indicated a preference for someone who had experience in developing corporate and staffing structures for a parliamentary institution.

8.5 There was also considerable discussion around the technical services provided by the project and the lack of uptake of services such as the intranet. As indicated earlier in this report, there is a keen desire to see those services being used throughout the Congress. But the prospects for this without further technical assistance are limited.

8.6 Members of Congress are also keen to progress their professional development to maintain the momentum of learning set in train by the project. In particular they are keen to engage with other parliamentarians (or former parliamentarians) who can share their experiences and knowledge. In this regard, they saw value in being proactive in developing bilateral links with parliaments in the region to tap into the knowledge and experience that can be found in those parliaments.

## ***Findings***

8.7 The Congress of Palau working with the UNDP has progressed a number of significant initiatives to enhance its capacity towards the achievement of its strategic goals, outlined in its Corporate Strategic Development Plan for 2011-15. It acknowledges the support and assistance it has been provided through the Palau Parliament Support Project, which has set in place many of the building blocks needed to become an effective modern legislature. It also recognises the work that remains to be done. During the evaluation, Senators, Delegates and staff indicated their commitment to progress that work but also signalled the need for further technical assistance and funding to achieve their goals.

8.8 The highest priority for achieving future progress in the development of the Congress is providing an effective and responsive staff structure for the Congress. Work on the structure needs to begin as soon as possible.

## ***Recommendations***

25. Work on the development of a new staffing structure for the Congress of Palau commence as soon as possible, with appropriate technical assistance provided through an international source.

## Appendix A: Evaluation program

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### Wednesday, 4 December 2013

Pre-visit briefing via teleconference by Ms Sharon Sakuma, Country Development Manager, United Nations Joint Presence in Palau

### Monday, 9 December 2013

Meetings with:

- ◆ Ms Sharon Sakuma, Country Development Manager, United Nations Joint Presence in Palau
- ◆ Senator Kathy Kesolei, former Chairperson of the Joint Committee on Corporate Strategic Development Plan (CSDP), 8<sup>th</sup> OEK; Mr Roman Yano, former Project Manager and Clerk of the House of Delegates; and Ms Lisa E Rdiall, Project Assistant and Assistant Clerk on Committee Affairs

### Tuesday, 10 December 2013

Meetings with:

- ◆ Ms Aurea Gerundo-Dizon, Senior reporter, *Islands Times* newspaper
- ◆ Ms Ann L Pedro, Project Manager and Clerk of the Senate; Mr Marcello Ngirkelau, Project Manager and Clerk of the House of Delegates; and Ms Lisa E Rdiall, Project Assistant and Assistant Clerk on Committee Affairs
- ◆ Mr Lucio Obakerbau, OEK ICT Department
- ◆ Ms Pasquana Tirso, OEK Librarian

Inspection of the ICT facilities and the Library at the Capitol Building of the Congress of Palau

### Wednesday, 11 December 2013

Meetings with:

- ◆ OEK Joint Committee on CSDP, 9<sup>th</sup> OEK – Senator Rukebai Inabo (Chairperson); Senator Surangel S Whipps Jr; Delegate Lee Otobed (Co-Chairperson); and Delegate Marino Ngemaes
- ◆ The Honourable Sabino Anastacio, Speaker of the House of Delegates, 9<sup>th</sup> OEK

### Thursday, 12 December 2013

Meetings with:

- ◆ Staff of the OEK
- ◆ Mr Kaleb S Udui Jr, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Adviser to the President of Palau

**Friday, 13 December 2013**

Presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations to OEK Joint Committee on CSDP, 9<sup>th</sup> OEK and validation of findings and recommendations

Presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations to Ms Sharon Sakuma, Country Development Manager, United Nations Joint Presence in Palau and validation of findings and recommendations

**Monday, 16 December 2013**

Interview via teleconference with Mr Brian Lenga, UNDP Project Manager for the Palau Parliament Support Project during the project