International Day of Democracy
Declarations on Parliamentary Openness

Transparency International Bangladesh
15 September 2012
International Day of Democracy

• The UN General Assembly, in resolution A/62/7 (2007) adopted in the context of the 20th anniversary of the 1st International Conference of New or Restored Democracies

• Encourage Governments to strengthen national programmes devoted to the promotion and consolidation of democracy

• This year's theme -- democracy education
  • Indispensable for institutionalization of democracy
  • Citizens must fully understand their rights & responsibilities
    • “Why should I vote?”
    • “How can I influence my leaders?”
    • “What can I reasonably expect from my elected representatives?”
    • “What are my constitutional rights?”

World e-Parliament Conference 2012, Rome, 15 September
Declaration to be formally released
প্রজাতন্ত্রের সকল ক্ষমতার মালিক জনগণ;
এবং জনগণের পক্ষে সেই ক্ষমতার প্রয়োগ কেবল এই সংবিধানের অধীন ও কর্তৃত্বে কার্যকর হইবে।

অনুচ্ছেদ : ৭(১)
TIB Initiatives on Parliamentary Effectiveness

- Parliament Watch series
- Diagnostic Study on Election Commission
- Policy advocacy on Election Commission & Election Reforms
- CRC – Choose the Right Candidate
- Face the Public (for MPs)
- Electoral Process Tracking
- Political Party Financing
- Local Participation in Nomination for National Elections
- Citizens Charter on the Role of Parliament and MPs
- Draft Code of Conduct of MPs
- Electoral Pledge – Mid-term Review (incl role of Parliament)
- Assessment of MPs delivery against Commitment (forthcoming)
Why Parliamentary Openness?

- Indispensable for democratic institutionalization and accountable governance
- Enables citizens to be informed about the work of parliament
- Empowers citizens to engage in the legislative process
- Allows citizens to hold parliamentarians to account
- Allows citizens to assess if Parliament is meeting their expectations, esp holding the Government accountable
- Ensures that citizens’ interests are represented
- Complements the need for broader governmental openness
- Facilitates parliament and government collaboration with citizens and civil society
Scope of the Declaration

• Promoting a Culture of Openness
• Making Parliamentary Information Transparent
• Easing Access to Parliamentary Information
• Enabling Electronic Communication of Parliamentary Information

85 supporting national & international organizations from 60 countries
Parliament should promote a Culture of Openness

1. Recognize that people are the owners of Parliamentary Information
2. Advance a Culture of Openness through Legislation
3. Protect a Culture of Openness through Oversight
4. Promote Civic Education
5. Engage Citizens and Civil Society
6. Protect an Independent Civil Society
7. Enable Effective Parliamentary Monitoring
8. Sharing Good Practice
9. Ensuring Legal Recourse
10. Disseminating Complete Information
11. Providing Timely Information
12. Ensuring Accurate Information
Making Parliamentary Information Transparent

• Adopting Policies on Parliamentary Transparency
• Providing Information on Parliament’s Roles and Functions
• Providing Information on Members of Parliament
• Providing Information on Parliamentary Staff and Administration
• Informing Citizens regarding the Parliamentary Agenda
• Engaging Citizens on Draft Legislation
• Publishing Records of Committee Proceedings
• Recording Parliamentary Votes
• Publishing Records of Plenary Proceedings
• Publishing Reports Created by or Provided to Parliament
• Providing Information on the Budget and Expenditures
• Disclosing Assets and Ensuring the Integrity of Members
• Disclosing Information on Unethical Conduct and Conflicts of Interest
• Providing Access to Historical Information
Easing Access to Parliamentary Information

- Providing Multiple Channels for Accessing Information
- Ensuring Physical Access
- Guaranteeing Access by the Media
- Providing Live and On-Demand Broadcasts and Streaming
- Facilitating Access throughout the Country
- Using Plain Language
- Using Multiple National or Working Languages
- Granting Free Access
Enabling Electronic Communication of Parliamentary Information

- Providing Information in Open and Structured Formats
- Ensuring Technological Usability
- Protecting Citizen Privacy
- Using Non-Proprietary Formats and Open-Source Software
- Allowing Downloadability for Reuse
- Maintaining Parliamentary Websites
- Using Easy and Stable Search Mechanisms
- Linking Related Information
- Enabling Use of Alert Services
- Facilitating Two-Way Communication
## Parliamentary Openness: Bangladesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Subject/indicator</th>
<th>Consistent</th>
<th>Inconsistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>People’s ownership of Parliamentary Information</td>
<td>Limited – Parliamentary Website exists</td>
<td>Shortage of information, not updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Advance culture of openness</td>
<td>RTI Act 2009 adopted</td>
<td>No active initiative to implement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Protection of culture of openness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Practically non-existent Draft Code of Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Promotion of Civic Education</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Practically non-existent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Engage Citizens &amp; Civil Society</td>
<td>Occasionally, indirectly, in a limited way</td>
<td>No direct public engagement except in selected law making/amendments such as RTI, ACC Act, WB Protection Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Enable Parliamentary monitoring</td>
<td>Indirectly, reluctantly</td>
<td>Not welcomed, rather negatively responded</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Good Practice Sharing</td>
<td>Regional &amp; International sharing</td>
<td>Limited result, little or now disclosure of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Disseminating complete, timely and accurate information</td>
<td>Very limited, delayed (bulletins)</td>
<td>Not proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Disclosure of information on MPs</td>
<td>Nothing more than what is submitted to EC</td>
<td>No disclosure even on attendance by name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Disclosure of information on officials</td>
<td>Contact number disclosed</td>
<td>Not enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Committee proceedings</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not disclosed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Parliamentary proceedings</td>
<td>Prepared</td>
<td>Not open to all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Roll call /electronic voting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly voice vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Budget &amp; expenditure</td>
<td>National budget &amp; public income-expenditures disclosed</td>
<td>Limited disclosure on defence budget Parliamentary budget &amp; expenses not disclosed</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Disclosure of Wealth Statement</td>
<td>Submitted to EC during election</td>
<td>Not submitted to nor disclosed by Parliament; Data to EC Not updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Conduct and Integrity of MPs</td>
<td>Indecent statement often expunged</td>
<td>Misconduct hardly controlled Draft Code of Conduct pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Scope of observance of proceedings by public and media</td>
<td>Subject to speaker’s consent Media allowed entry</td>
<td>Standing Committee work are not open to public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Broadcast of proceedings</td>
<td>By State TV and Radio</td>
<td>Not online Committee proceedings not disclosed live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Enabling Electronic Communication</td>
<td>Extremely limited</td>
<td>Technologically very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Two-way communication</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>No visible effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Close to moderately consistent</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
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TIB Demands and aims at:

- An effective and pro-people Parliament
- Laws and practices to be gradually consistent with the Declaration to ensure that Parliamentary ownership belongs to the people, especially:
  - Full disclosure and access to proceedings and records to ensure monitoring of the Parliament by the people
  - Full disclosure and periodic updating of income and wealth statement of MPs
  - Digitization of parliamentary information to ensure real-time, updated and interactive flow and disclosure
  - Greater engagement of people in the parliamentary procedure including law making
- Stop Parliament boycott by law, and restrict collective absence to maximum 30 days with no more than 7 successive working days
- Adopt Code of Conduct of MPs
- Law to prevent Conflict of Interest
- Reform of provision on floor crossing (Article 70)
Thank you
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