Developing a research service for the Myanmar Parliament

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Agenda

• Myanmar
• The Hluttaw (Parliament)
• LRIS Development
• Launching the Research Service
• Key milestones for the Research Service
• Plans for the future
• Acknowledgements
MYANMAR
Myanmar

- The largest country in mainland South East Asia
- 160,000 sq miles or 677,000 sq km
- A population of 51.3 million
- Diverse ethnic groups
- Borders with China, Thailand, Bangladesh, Laos, India
THE HLUTTAW (MYANMAR PARLIAMENT)
2015 General Election

- Election Laws were promulgated in March 2010
- About half the population were eligible to vote, and 76.6% of them did vote
- A by-election was held on 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2012 to replace the members who had been appointed as Ministers and to allow a more democratic representation
- Our next election is eagerly anticipated on 8\textsuperscript{th} November, 2015
The Hluttaw (Parliament)

- The Hluttaw or **Union Assembly** is a bi-cameral Parliament
- The **Pyithu Hluttaw** is the House of Representatives:
  - MPs are elected from geographic constituencies with a quarter from the military appointed by the Commander-in-Chief
- The **Amyotha Hluttaw** is the House of Nationalities:
  - MPs from Regions and States with a quarter from the military appointed by the Commander-in-Chief
- The **Pyidaungsu Hluttaw** is the Union Assembly with members of both Houses
- The **President** is elected by the MPs, not the people
Goals for the Hluttaw

• Review about 300 laws by the end of 2015
• Improve the legislation by better informed debate on bills
• Increase parliamentary scrutiny of government activity, especially financial scrutiny
• Develop processes and procedures for public consultation on bills
Parliament’s Development Programme

• The Hluttaw rejoined the IPU after a long gap
• Parliamentary leadership requested IPU assistance
• UNDP/IPU Parliamentary Support Programme was developed and approved
• Speakers and Directors-General actively shape and steer the support programme
• Further assistance is most welcome to reach our goals more quickly
Priority development areas

• Learning Centre
• Digital Parliament
• Research Services
EARLY LRIS DEVELOPMENT IN 2013
Development of Hluttaw Library

• In May 2012 there was an IPU assessment mission to evaluate the Hluttaw Library and ICT
• The Library was outside the parliamentary complex and there were only 7 staff at that time
Information Needs Assessment

• Information needs assessment interviewed 40 MPs in February 2013
• Completed an analysis of the topics MPs were interested in
LRIS Development Plan 2013

• Work on policy and guidelines
• Build a broader parliamentary library collection
• Recruit new staff
• Train staff to deliver new services
  – Research Services
  – Digital Library and services
  – Information management services
Staff numbers have grown

September 2013 with international experts from NZ, and UK House of Commons
CREATING A RESEARCH SERVICE IN 2014
Key Outcomes in 2014

• There are now research services available for MPs in the Hluttaw, with the assistance of the House of Commons project
• The new research services had a direct impact on the behaviour and effectiveness of some MPs
• It was slower than anticipated to support the necessary skills improvements in the researchers.
• More work was needed in 2015 to continue the development of research services in the Hluttaw.
Project approach

The long-term placement of the House of Commons parliamentary research specialist to manage the project, train staff and support the establishment of the research service, with a skilled project officer/interpreter, appears to have been a successful approach.
Project approach – key elements

• a strong focus on workplace-based training, with researchers working on research work for MPs
• a strong focus on individual and small group coaching and mentoring
• a tailored workshop programme (54 workshops on research and professional skills have been conducted from January to December 2014)
Key elements of project approach continued

• the agreement of a Research Service Development Action Plan with Hluttaw managers to guide activities

• support for research managers, such as through the development of management guidelines, to develop the management of research services and to promote its long-term sustainability
Launch of Research Service – May 2014

• the launch of research services to enable research staff to develop their skills on real research tasks, while also satisfying a strong demand from MPs for specialist support
Service Delivery

• Two of the three Hluttaw now have functional research services

• 18 Research Briefings on topical political issues and legislation were prepared

• Confidential enquiries for MPs, Committees and senior staff:
  – 114 enquiries answered by November 2014 on subjects such as international development loans to the Government; domestic violence laws; economic development; dam construction; and land law reform.
CONSOLIDATING THE RESEARCH SERVICE IN 2015
Key outcomes in 2015

• Research services are now being guided by a Hluttaw Research Service Annual Work Plan

• Positive feedback was received from MPs about the services

• All 3 Hluttaws/Houses now have a Research Service and published Guides on how to use the Research Service
Project approach

• the piloting of new services to enable staff to develop their skills on real tasks
• support for managers to promote the long-term sustainability of research services
Research Services statistics

• 25 Research Briefings were published in the first six months of 2015 (up from 17 in 2014)

• The uptake of Research Briefings by MPs remains high. 4460 individual paper copies were taken by Members

• Overall enquiry numbers across the three Hluttaw have more than doubled from 114 in the year 2014, to 120 for the first six months of 2015
Staffing and management

- Staffing levels increased to 41 to deliver more service
- Research Managers have developed service standards and training plans and are coaching their research teams
- Good processes for work flow management, editing and proof reading are now in place.
LOOKING AHEAD
Research Managers study trip

• Research Managers will visit the House of Commons for 2 weeks in October
• Intensive mentoring and on the job observation of a mature Research Service
Preparing for the 2016 Parliament

• Key Issues Briefings
• Planning to welcome new MPs and brief them about Research Services
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