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Symposium on  
“Building Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions and Public  
Administration for Advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

# Global Parliamentary Report 2017

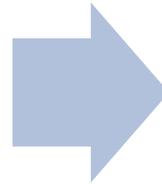
IPU and UNDP

Parliamentary Oversight:  
Parliament’s Power to Hold Government to Account

*Presented by*  
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*Member of Parliament, Bangladesh*  
*Honorary President of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)*

# Global Parliamentary Report

2012:  
Representation  
Citizens' changing  
expectations



2017: Oversight  
Parliament's power  
to hold government  
to account



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# Purpose of the report

A global perspective on how oversight is practiced by parliaments

Recommendations for parliaments, parties, government, civil society

A catalyst for a renewed focus on oversight



# Why is oversight important?

Responds to expectations of people today

Key to achieve Agenda 2030 and SDGs

A marker of parliament's relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

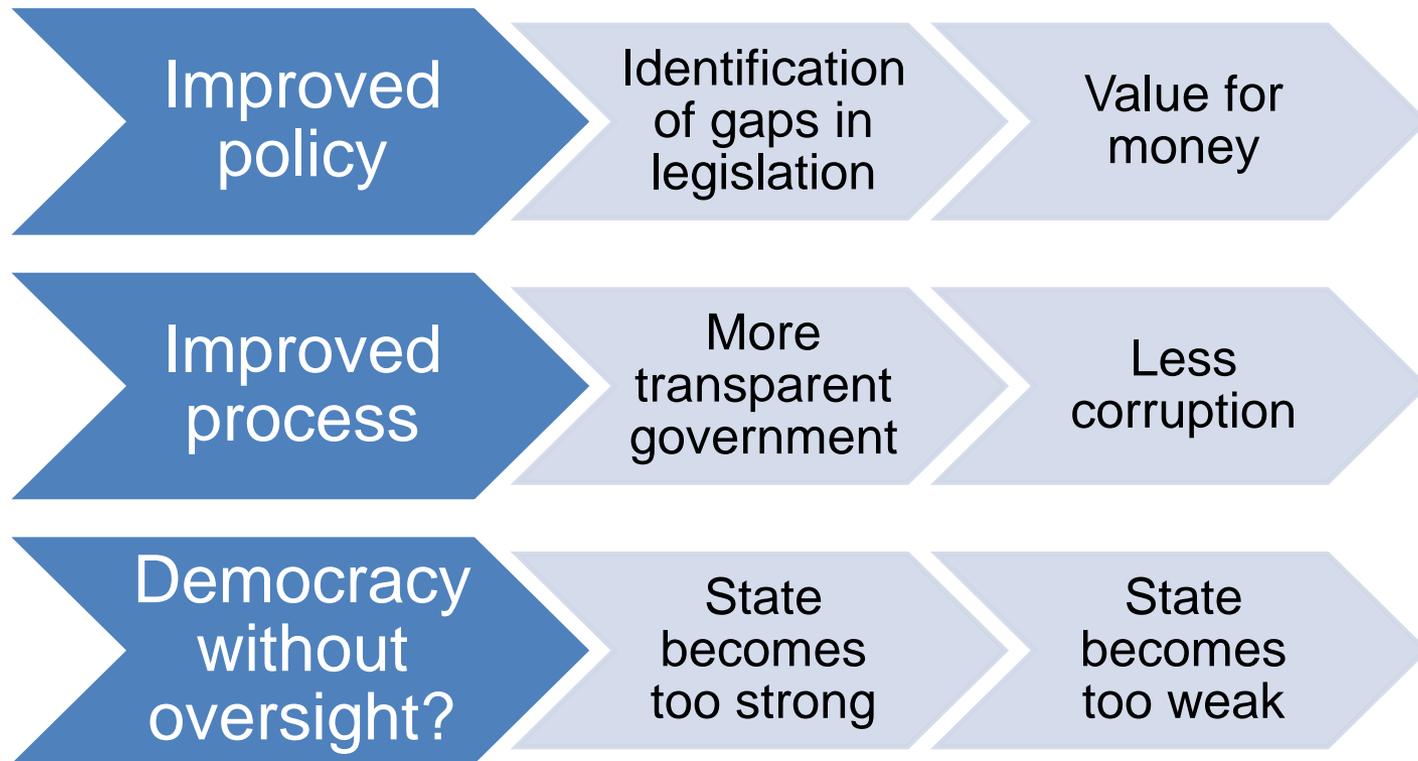


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# Why is oversight important?





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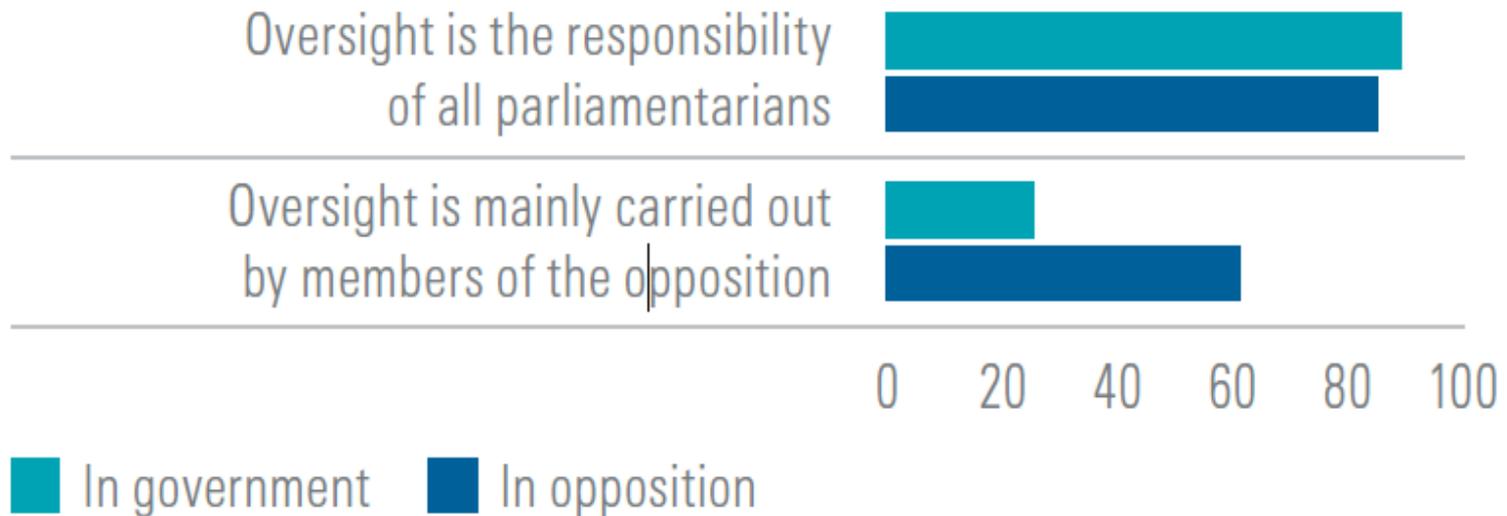
# Oversight is political

*“The important thing is to put government under pressure. Even if it is your own party that is in government.”*

*Baroness Gloria Hooper, Member of the House of Lords, United Kingdom*

# Who is responsible for oversight? Government? Opposition?

Percentage of MPs who agree or strongly agree with these statements



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# Political space for oversight

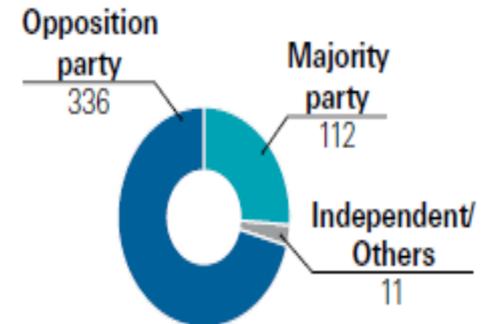
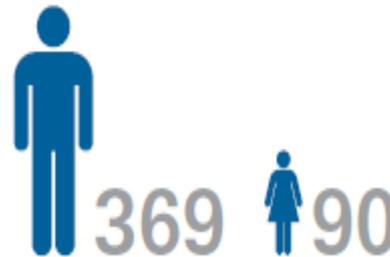
## Protecting the rights of MPs to carry out oversight

Cases being examined by the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, 2016

459 MPs  
in 42 countries

### Most common violations

- 1 Lack of fair trial and other unfair proceedings
- 2 Undue suspension and loss of parliamentary mandate
- 3 Violation of freedom of expression
- 4 Arbitrary detention of parliamentary mandate



Source: IPU (2017). *Violations of the Human Rights of MPs – 2016*.



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Oversight requires  
capacity - an  
effective system of  
oversight remains an  
aspiration in many  
parliaments

# The enabling environment for parliamentary oversight

## Oversight and accountability: the parliamentary environment

Culture	Processes	Relationships	MPs
Political space	Mandate	External oversight institutions	Incentives
Government	Powers	Civil society	Public demand
Role of the opposition	Tools	Media	
Political parties	Resources	Citizens	



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# The network of oversight relationships

## Formal and informal approaches

External oversight institutions (SAI; NHRI, Ombudspersons)

Relationships with stakeholders (civil society; citizen consultations etc)





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# Oversight requires personal commitment

*«A parliamentarian who is not  
curious is a curious  
parliamentarian»*

*Michèle André, Senator, France*

# Why is oversight difficult?

## Challenges

### Political environment

- “a non-cooperative government that doesn’t tolerate the opposition” (opposition MP from Guinea)

### Party politics

- “fear of embarrassing government” (MP from governing party in Mauritius)

### Resources

- “lack of funding for committees” (opposition MP from Ireland)

### Competing demands

- “more often than not constituency issues take precedence over national issues” (MP from Bhutan)

### Parliamentary powers

- “lack of implementation by the government of the recommendations of standing committees” (MP from governing party in Pakistan)

### MPs’ commitment

- “commitment from MPs to carry out oversight from implementation through to impact in our society” (opposition MP from Indonesia)

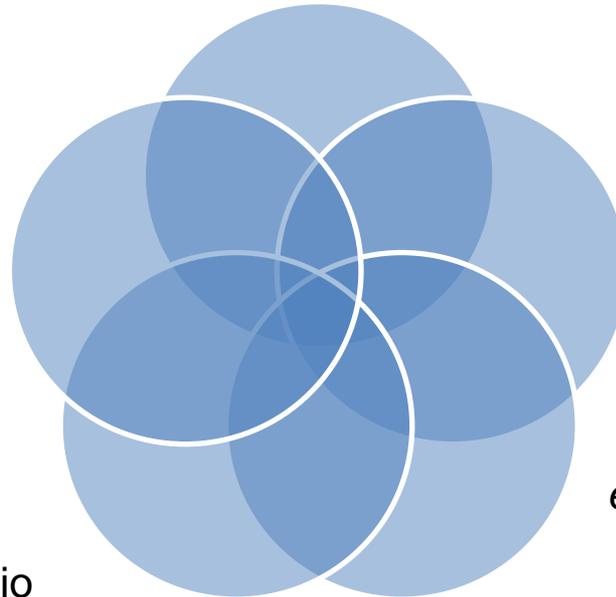


# Incentives and motivations

*probity* – assessing the presence or absence of corruption

*effectiveness* – assessing the degree to which actions have their intended effects

*efficiency* – assessing the ratio of costs to benefits



*fidelity* – assessing the degree to which government follows the law

*equity* – assessing the fairness of government distribution of costs or benefits





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# Oversight is the marker of Parliament's relevance in the 21st century

# Oversight and SDGs

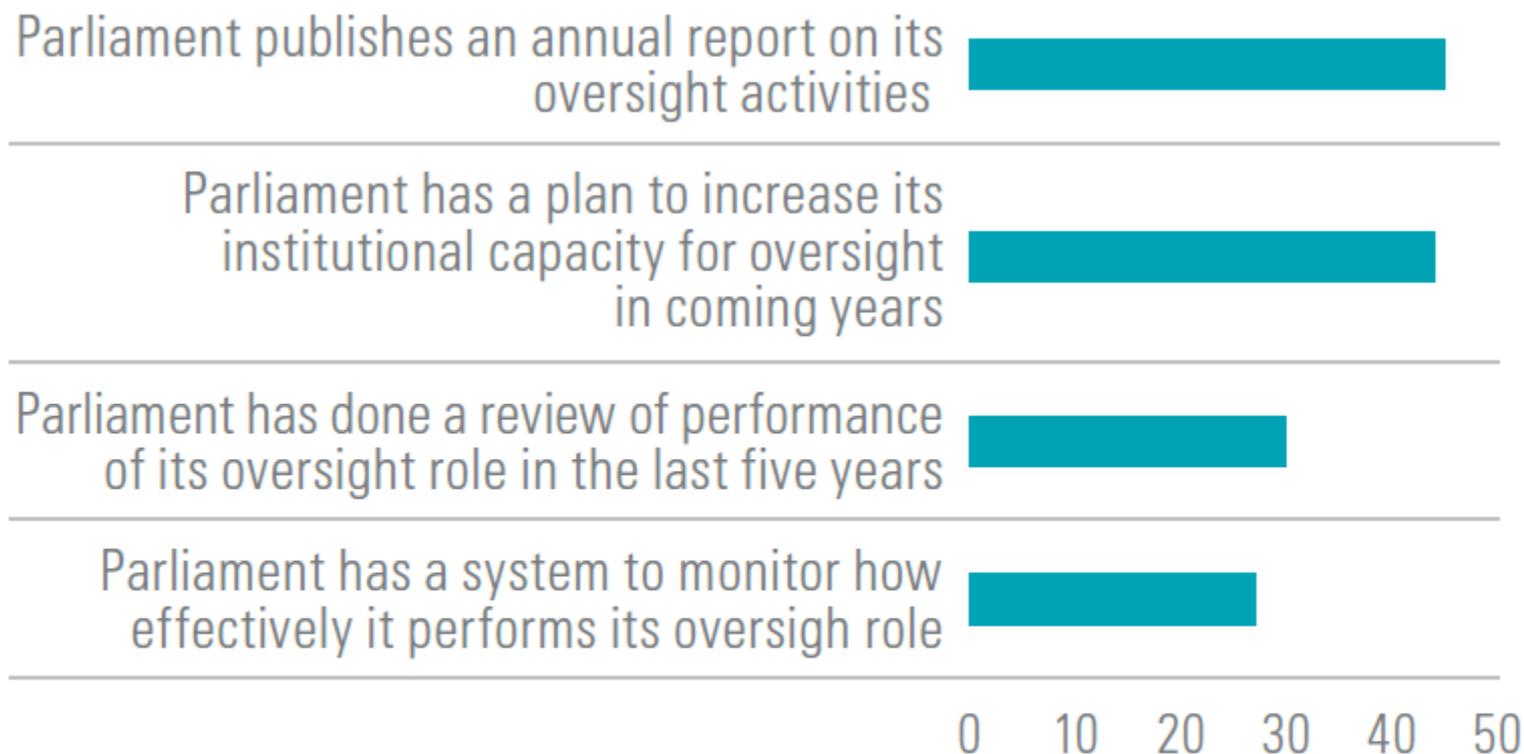
Mainstreaming SDGs in parliament

Assessing parliament's preparedness for SDGs

Oversight of national progress reports on SDGs



# Parliament's own accountability



Source: IPU/UNDP (2016). *Questionnaire for parliaments, question 2 (base for question: 103 parliamentary chambers).*



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# Main findings

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**Parliamentary oversight is and will remain a political activity**

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**An effective system of oversight remains an aspiration for many parliaments**

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**Most MPs express commitment to oversight. But in practice, prioritization and capacity issues often limit their engagement in oversight activities**

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**Oversight is a marker of parliament's relevance in the 21st century**

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# Recommendations for change



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*Thank  
you*

