

Budget Module: Parliamentary Approval of the Budget

Week 5: February 16, 2009

Learning Objectives

At the end of this week, you should be able to meet the following learning objectives:

- Discuss the pros and cons of opening committee proceedings to the public;
- Assess practices for media access to parliament in your country;
- Understand the steps involved in organizing public hearings on the budget.

Instructions:

Step 1: Read

Begin this final week by reading **Unit 6: Opening Up the Parliamentary Process**. Unit 6 considers the advantages and disadvantages of opening proceedings to the public and the media and the role of public hearings by parliamentary committees.

You are also encouraged to read through Unit 7 entitled **Strengthening Parliamentary Involvement**. This unit draws together the issues that have been discussed through the use of a diagnostic questionnaire to conduct an assessment of the budgetary role of parliament in your country. Completing this practical exercise will also assist your preparations for the final project which is due by **Friday 20 March 2009**.

Step 2: Respond

Work through the end of unit questions listed at the end of the unit.

Step 3: Self-Test

Test your work against the sample answers listed on the "self-test" posted on the website's Workbook page. Sample answers to Unit 6 have been posted.

Step 4: E-Discussion

There are three discussion questions for Unit 6:

- 1. How open is the parliamentary budget process in your country? Do the media (a) provide full and informative coverage of the parliamentary budget debate and (b) report fairly on opposition criticisms of the budget?**
- 2. How does media access to parliament compare against the recommendations of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association? How far do you agree with the view that there is a conflict between transparency and effectiveness when considering the openness of parliaments?**
- 3. This is the final week of the moderated discussion. How would you prioritise the reforms needed in your country to ensure that parliament exercises effective financial scrutiny?**

Thank you to those of you who have contributed to the discussions over the last 5 weeks. I have enjoyed the Module and learnt a great deal from the various submissions and trust you have also found the experiences of others informative, interesting and useful. Many people are unaware of the work and role of parliamentary staff, but without doubt they are vital to the smooth and effective functioning of the legislature. I hope very much this and future modules will assist your work at the centre of the parliamentary process.

I look forward to reading all your final projects!

Anthony
