

South African Institute of International Affairs

Lesotho Democracy Programme

**‘Civil Society and Parliament
Lessons from SADC’**

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SADC parliaments – the challenges for civil society



- Closed, exclusive & elitist ethos
- Public apathy or cynicism/distrust
- Poor information dissemination
- Poor parliamentary management
- Weak civil society & capacity
- Parliament's capacity weak & dominated by executive

Considerations on SADC parliaments and civil society



- Who, or what, acted as the midwife of respective SADC parliaments?
- Colonial, civil war, revolutionary, Marxist, apartheid, military & monarchical
- Constitutional status, powers and imperatives of parliament
- Presidential, or parliamentary or mixed?
- Form of electoral system

Understanding representative democracy



- Pure democracy
- Participatory democracy
- Representative democracy
- The representative linkage and role
- Holding MPs to account

The social contract - Zambia



- MPs must earn nomination
- MPs must earn our vote
- What are the qualities & qualifications of our MPs
- MPs must seek, carry out and renew their mandate
- MPs must agree to conduct a code of conduct
- MPs must agree to regularly attend Parliament
- MPs must conduct regular constituency meetings
- MPs must consult constituents and renew their mandate every year

SADC Parliaments reaching out to constituencies



- The Namibia parliamentary bus
- SA – taking parliament to the people
- Malawi schools programme
- Kgotla and Tinkhundla & pitsos

What can be done to improve civil society engagement with parliament?



- Show relevance and clear mandate
- Become 'sectorally' organised
- Understand how parliament works
- Shadow parliament
- Develop working relationship with your MP
- Make written and oral submissions to Parliament
- Develop working relationship with the media

Lobbying – what is it and why do it?

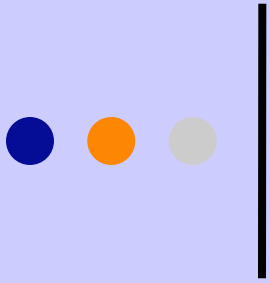


- Traditionally, lobby was meeting place to talk to MPs in parliament
- Lobbying means attention and awareness-raising
- Lobbying is educative & showing a better way
- Lobbying is action and outcome orientated
- Lobbying can be short and issue-based or part of longer campaign
- Lobbying **MUST** be strategic
- Lobbying is **NOT** protesting

How to run a successful campaign



- Identify why your issue important
- Identify why change should be made
- Link within and across-sectoral supporters
- Identify who you should be talking to & lobbying!
- Letter writing
- Petitions
- Public events
- Using the media
- Using technology



Thank you

Questions and clarifications