

# Parliamentary Staff Institute

December 2010



David Price, Chairman • David Dreier, Ranking Republican Member

## ***Strengthening Committee Operations in the Legislature***

Developing the capacity of legislative staff is a central component of the House Democracy Partnership's work with its partner legislatures. From December 13-17, 2010, the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) organized a weeklong Parliamentary Staff Institute on strengthening committee operations for staff from 13 HDP partner countries: Afghanistan, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Macedonia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Peru, and Timor-Leste. This program was organized in cooperation with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Parliamentary Staff Institute included roundtable discussions with officials from the Congressional Research Service and key committee staff of the U.S. House of Representatives. The program also featured a presentation by committee staff from the National Assembly of Macedonia, which recently established public hearings practices and guidelines with support from the National Democratic Institute.

The program provided the participants an overview of committee operations in the U.S. Congress by highlighting committee structure and operations including developing the committee's policy agenda, managing committee resources and staffing. It also covered topics such as internal and external policy analysis resources, the oversight role and oversight tools available to the committee as well as legislative and executive branch relations. Emphasis was placed on organizing, preparing and conducting public hearings, mark up sessions, oversight and field hearings. The program closed with a brainstorming session in which participants were asked to develop specific action plans for implementing their ideas.

This was the seventh Parliamentary Staff Institute organized by HDP since the commission was established in 2005. In addition to its Parliamentary Staff Institutes, HDP's programs for legislative staff have included combined Member/Staff training seminars in Washington, Regional Staff Institutes in Kenya and Macedonia, and delegations of current and/or retired U.S. congressional staff to advise HDP partners in targeted areas of development.



*Mr. Giovanni Forno, Committee Clerk of the Peruvian Congress, taking notes during the Staff Institute.*