International Day of Democracy
Declaration on Parliamentary Openness

Transparency International Bangladesh
15 September 2012

International Day of Democracy

- The UN General Assembly, in resolution A/62/7 (2007) adopted in the context of the 20th anniversary of the 1st International Conference of New or Restored Democracies

- Encourage Governments to strengthen national programmes devoted to the promotion and consolidation of democracy

- This year's theme -- democracy education
  - Indispensable for institutionalization of democracy
  - Citizens must fully understand their rights & responsibilities
    - "Why should I vote?"
    - "How can I influence my leaders?"
    - "What can I reasonably expect from my elected representatives?"
    - "What are my constitutional rights?"

    World e-Parliament Conference 2012, Rome, 15 September

    Declaration to be formally released

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশের সংবিধান

প্রজাতন্ত্রের সকল ক্ষমতার মালিক জনগণ;
এবং জনগণের পক্ষে সেই ক্ষমতার প্রয়োগ কেবল এই সংবিধানের অধীন ও কর্তৃত্বে কার্যকর হইবে।

অনুচ্ছেদ : ৭(১)

TIB Initiatives on Parliamentary Effectiveness

- **Parliament Watch series**
- **Diagnostic Study on Election Commission**
- **Policy advocacy on Election Commission & Election Reforms**
- **CRC – Choose the Right Candidate**
- **Face the Public (for MPs)**
- **Electoral Process Tracking**
- **Political Party Financing**
- **Local Participation in Nomination for National Elections**
- **Citizens Charter on the Role of Parliament and MPs**
- **Draft Code of Conduct of MPs**
- **Electoral Pledge – Mid-term Review (incl role of Parliament)**
- **Assessment of MPs delivery against Commitment (forthcoming)**

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Why Parliamentary Openness?

- **Indispensable for democratic institutionalization and accountable governance**
- **Enables citizens to be informed about the work of parliament**
- **Empowers citizens to engage in the legislative process**
- **Allows citizens to hold parliamentarians to account**
- **Allows citizens to assess if Parliament is meeting their expectations, esp holding the Government accountable**
- **Ensures that citizens' interests are represented**
- **Complements the need for broader governmental openness**
- **Facilitates parliament and government collaboration with citizens and civil society**

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Scope of the Declaration

- **Promoting a Culture of Openness**

- **Making Parliamentary Information Transparent**

- **Easing Access to Parliamentary Information**

- **Enabling Electronic Communication of Parliamentary Information**

85 supporting national & international organizations from 60 countries

Parliament should promote a Culture of Openness

1. Recognize that people are the owners of Parliamentary Information
2. Advance a Culture of Openness through Legislation
3. Protect a Culture of Openness through Oversight
4. Promote Civic Education
5. Engage Citizens and Civil Society
6. Protect an Independent Civil Society
7. Enable Effective Parliamentary Monitoring
8. Sharing Good Practice
9. Ensuring Legal Recourse
10. Disseminating Complete Information
11. Providing Timely Information
12. Ensuring Accurate Information

Making Parliamentary Information Transparent

- Adopting Policies on Parliamentary Transparency
- Providing Information on Parliament's Roles and Functions
- Providing Information on Members of Parliament
- Providing Information on Parliamentary Staff and Administration
- Informing Citizens regarding the Parliamentary Agenda
- Engaging Citizens on Draft Legislation
- Publishing Records of Committee Proceedings
- Recording Parliamentary Votes
- Publishing Records of Plenary Proceedings
- Publishing Reports Created by or Provided to Parliament
- Providing Information on the Budget and Expenditures
- Disclosing Assets and Ensuring the Integrity of Members
- Disclosing Information on Unethical Conduct and Conflicts of Interest
- Providing Access to Historical Information

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Easing Access to Parliamentary Information

- **Providing Multiple Channels for Accessing Information**
- **Ensuring Physical Access**
- **Guaranteeing Access by the Media**
- **Providing Live and On-Demand Broadcasts and Streaming**
- **Facilitating Access throughout the Country**
- **Using Plain Language**
- **Using Multiple National or Working Languages**
- **Granting Free Access**

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Enabling Electronic Communication of Parliamentary Information

- **Providing Information in Open and Structured Formats**
- **Ensuring Technological Usability**
- **Protecting Citizen Privacy**
- **Using Non-Proprietary Formats and Open-Source Software**
- **Allowing Downloadability for Reuse**
- **Maintaining Parliamentary Websites**
- **Using Easy and Stable Search Mechanisms**
- **Linking Related Information**
- **Enabling Use of Alert Services**
- **Facilitating Two-Way Communication**

Parliamentary Openness: Bangladesh

#	Subject/indicator	Consistent	Inconsistent
1	People's ownership of Parliamentary Information	Limited – Parliamentary Website exists	Shortage of information, not updated
2	Advance culture of openness	RTI Act 2009 adopted	No active initiative to implement
3	Protection of culture of openness	-	Practically non-existent Draft Code of Conduct
4	Promotion of Civic Education	-	Practically non-existent
5	Engage Citizens & Civil Society	Occasionally, indirectly, in a limited way	No direct public engagement except in selected law making/amendments such as RTI, ACC Act, WB Protection Act
6	Enable Parliamentary monitoring	Indirectly, reluctantly	Not welcomed, rather negatively responded

Parliamentary Openness: Bangladesh

#	Subject/indicator	Consistent	Inconsistent
7	Good Practice Sharing	Regional & International sharing	Limited result, little or now disclosure of results
8	Disseminating complete, timely and accurate information	Very limited, delayed (bulletins)	Not proactive
9	Disclosure of information on MPs	Nothing more than what is submitted to EC	No disclosure even on attendance by name
10	Disclosure of information on officials	Contact number disclosed	Not enough
11	Committee proceedings	-	Not disclosed
12	Parliamentary proceedings	Prepared	Not open to all
13	Roll call /electronic voting		Mostly voice vote
14	Budget & expenditure	National budget & public income-expenditures disclosed	Limited disclosure on defence budget Parliamentary budget & expenses not disclosed

Parliamentary Openness: Bangladesh

#	Subject/indicator	Consistent	Inconsistent
15	Disclosure of Wealth Statement	Submitted to EC during election	Not submitted to nor disclosed by Parliament; Data to EC Not updated
16	Conduct and Integrity of MPs	Indecent statement often expunged	Misconduct hardly controlled Draft Code of Conduct pending
17	Scope of observance of proceedings by public and media	Subject to speaker's consent Media allowed entry	Standing Committee work are not open to public
18	Broadcast of proceedings	By State TV and Radio	Not online Committee proceedings not disclosed live
19	Enabling Electronic Communication	Extremely limited	Technologically very low
20	Two-way communication	Nil	No visible effort
21	Overall	Close to moderately consistent	-

TIB Demands and aims at:

- An effective and pro-people Parliament
- Laws and practices to be gradually consistent with the Declaration to ensure that Parliamentary ownership belongs to the people, especially:
  – Full disclosure and access to proceedings and records to ensure monitoring of the Parliament by the people
  – Full disclosure and periodic updating of income and wealth statement of MPs
  – Digitization of parliamentary information to ensure real-time, updated and interactive flow and disclosure
  – Greater engagement of people in the parliamentary procedure including law making
- Stop Parliament boycott by law, and restrict collective absence to maximum 30 days with no more than 7 successive working days
- Adopt Code of Conduct of MPs
- Law to prevent Conflict of Interest
- Reform of provision on floor crossing (Article 70)

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Thank you
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