



A Case-Study by the Senate of Pakistan on self-assessment exercise related to testing of all Indicators under SDG Targets 16.6 and 16.7

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Senate Secretariat
Islamabad

Senate of Pakistan: Case Study

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The Senate of Pakistan received an invitation for carrying out self-assessment exercise of testing of Indicators under seven (07) sub-targets of SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7, on 15th August, 2022. The indicators, as developed by the IPU in collaboration with the partner organisations & parliaments, are a comprehensive set of benchmarks on an array of aspects of parliamentary work that can be used by parliaments to gauge capacity and performance. This ranges from parliamentary autonomy, services of parliament (including research services), to budget processes, accountability and public participation.

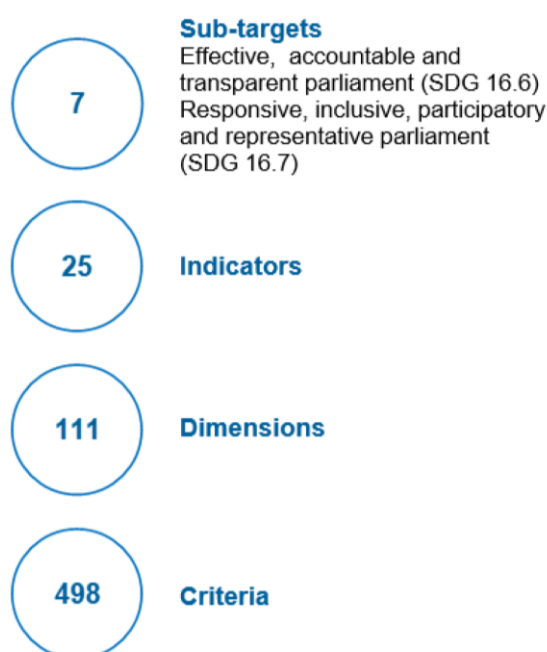
The Senate Secretariat accomplished the task with the support of the Honorable Members of the Senate as well as the branches/directorates of the Secretariat. The leadership spirit and political will for the testing of all the indicators deems to be the driving force behind the fulfilment of the whole activity.

The main goal of the indicators is to help parliaments learn and grow. Their ultimate aim is to empower and strengthen parliaments while promoting democracy. These indicators are designed to assist parliaments in evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, serving as a foundation for enhancing their performance and monitoring progress. Parliaments can utilize a self-assessment toolkit to evaluate their effectiveness in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in their own country. This includes assessing their involvement through legislation, budgetary measures, and oversight functions to hold the government accountable for progress.

The Senate of Pakistan successfully carried out the self-assessment exercise related to testing of seven (07) Sub-Targets, 25 Indicators, 111 Dimensions, with 498 Criterion under SDG Target 16.6 and 16.7, with the support of its secretariat and the IPU, by the end of November, 2022. All the indicators were tested by gauging the existing the legislative tools and practices, and duly supported by the evidences as guided by the relative criterion. The criterion contained in this toolkit were drawn from the basic assumptions and principles of democratic parliaments, and derived from what parliaments themselves see as good examples of democratic practice. In view of the same, the goal of the Senate of Pakistan is to establish a shared vision of the current situation, identify priorities for future action, and make recommendations for moving forward. This self-assessment exercise is amongst the first of such initiatives aimed at

exploring and finding most effective approach to gauge the implementation of SDG Target 16.6 and 16.7.

A bird's-eye view of the Indicators under SDG Target 16.6 and 16.7 is illustrated below:



2. BACKGROUND:

The Parliamentary Development Unit of the Senate Secretariat was entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out the testing of the Indicators under SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7. In this regard, the PDU conceptualize the whole concept of self-assessment of the Indicators, and derives that the purpose of the toolkit of self-assessment is not to rank parliaments, but to provide valuable information for enhancing key functions such as legislation, representation, and oversight.

Consent of Leadership

In order to materialize the conceptual framework for testing of all Indicators, the PDU intended to seek the approval of the Competent Authority, i.e., the Honorable Chairman Senate for undertaking such exercise. The Director General (Coordination/PDU) informed the leadership about the gravity of the toolkit and how it impacts the three key functions of the legislature, i.e., legislation, representation, and oversight. The vibrant leadership of the Senate, after taking into account the enormity of the impact of the self-assessment toolkit, assented for undertaking such exercise in August, 2022, and deemed it as a step towards strengthening democratic institution. The principal approval from the leadership is a potential challenge for any

parliament for carrying out the assessment. Self-assessment is a voluntary practice that is most effective when parliament, particularly its leadership, view it as a means of strengthening the institution. Self-assessment allows parliament to take ownership of the findings, unlike external evaluations conducted by experts. The goal is to establish a shared vision of the current situation, identify priorities for future action, and make recommendations for moving forward.

Constitution of Steering Committee:

In the process of self-assessment, various individuals come together to evaluate their eagerness and capabilities. The primary assessors and stakeholders in this exercise are the parliamentarians themselves. After seeking the approval of the competent authority, the Honorable Chairman Senate constituted a Steering Committee, composed of honorable Senators for undertaking the assessment and testing of Indicators, in collaboration with the Senate Secretariat. Following honorable Senators were nominated for the exercise:

1. Senator Farooq Hamid Naek
2. Senator Syed Shibli Faraz
3. Senator Nuzhat Sadiq

In addition to that, the Director General (Coordination/PDU) was also nominated as the focal person for the activity of the assessment and testing of Indicators.

Parliamentary self-assessments are most effective when a group led by the Chairman, or Speaker, or other senior parliamentary authority is in charge. The involvement of high-level leadership and a diverse group of parliamentarians increases the likelihood of the outcomes being embraced by the entire parliament.

Core Team of PDU:

The gigantic task of carrying out the exercise of testing of the said indicators involves the effective coordination by the following core team of the PDU:

1. Mr. Mir Shai Mazar Baloch, Director General Coordination/PDU
2. Sayyidah Maryam Shaheen, Assistant Director PDU
3. Mr. Farooq Ahmad Shah, Assistant Director PDU
4. Mr. Akif Naeem, Assistant Director PDU
5. Ms. Nosheen, Assistant Research Officer

Conceptualization of the toolkit:

Embarking on a self-assessment exercise necessitates a series of thought-provoking questions. The following questions raised during the conceptualization of the idea before initializing the

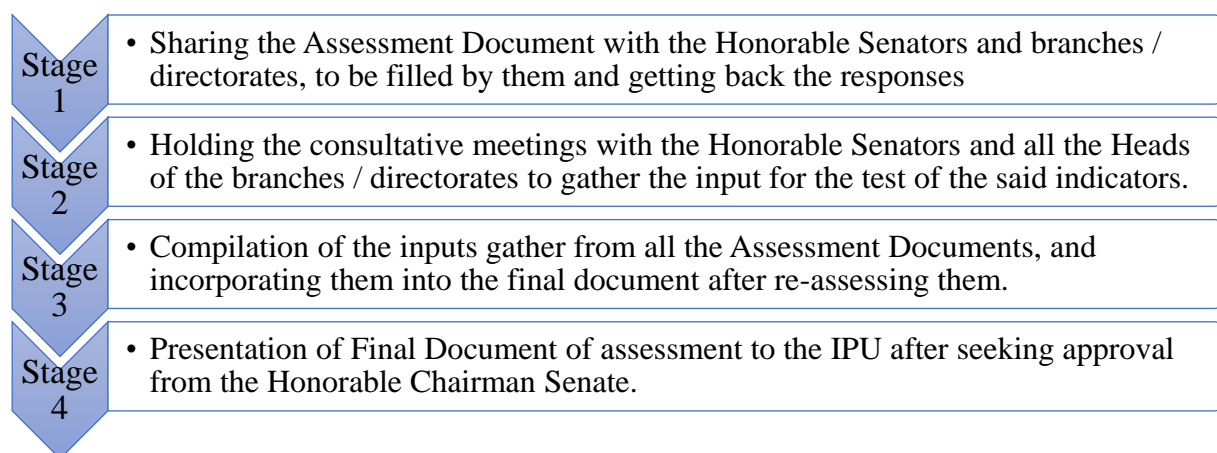
exercise which may serve as a systematic guide for parliamentarians to reflect on their preparedness and determine their future priorities.

- Has there been any evaluation done on the strengths and weaknesses of efforts made to implement the SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7 by the Parliament before? Can the parliament use these evaluations to identify good practices and lessons learned?
- To what extent has parliament successfully integrated the SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7? What changes, if any, are needed in parliament's structure and working methods to enhance its effectiveness in addressing the SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7?
- Has there been an assessment conducted to determine the changes in legislative reforms to uphold the SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7?
- Does the secretariat have a dedicated office or unit that can assist parliamentary committees in evaluating planned and actual budget expenses in relation to SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7?
- What steps can we implement, suggest, or advocate to improve the oversight of our parliament in achieving the SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7?
- How well-prepared is our parliament to exercise the core parliamentary functions of law-making, oversight, and representation, in support of the SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7?
- To what extent does parliament consider the SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7 when discussing and adopting the budget?
- Noting that parliament is an SDG 16 'custodian institution,' has parliament developed a specific plan in support of SDG 16?

These set of questions proved to be the motives for undertaking the assessment and testing of all Indicators under SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7.

3. STRATEGISING THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

After going through the document in detail, the PDU, under the leadership of Director General (Coordination/PDU), devised a strategy that was followed by certain stages for achieving the common goal, i.e., testing the Indicators via toolkit provided by the IPU. The strategy has been formulated with sequential stages that has been illustrated below:



Parliamentary Development Unit, formally began the exercise in October, 2022, after seeking the will of political leadership and translating the will through the Senate Secretariat.

Initializing the self-assessment exercise with the support of IPU:

After holding few meetings with the team of IPU, and seeking an insight of the whole activity, the Senate of Pakistan received an invitation from IPU to attend 145th IPU Assembly and its related meetings in Kigali, Rwanda from 11-15 October, 2022. The worthy Secretary General, Senate of Pakistan, alongwith the Assistant Director took part in this session and shared the experience of Senate of Pakistan in testing the indicators. PDU also attended the session virtually as an observer.

Dissemination of Assessment Documents:

There are various methods to conduct an assessment of indicators, and it should be done in the way that suits a particular parliament the best. After exploring and finding the most effective approach, the two relevance documents were prepared by the PDU, i.e.,

1. Dimension-wise Relevance of the Indicators, for SDGs Target 16.6 & 16.7; having all the Indicators along with the dimensions, were aligned with the relevance of the concerned Branch that will be undertaking the assessment.
2. Branch-wise Relevance of the Indicators, for SDGs Target 16.6 & 16.7; having all the concerned branches were allocated with certain dimensions, along with the criteria they may be dealing with for assessment.

It is pertinent to mention that alongwith the concerned Honorable Members of the Senate, a total of 18 branches/directorates took part in the whole exercise. The bifurcation of all criterion was based upon the relevance of diverse subjects that each office undertakes.

Key Challenges and Addressal:

The following key challenges were faced by the PDU, which were addressed with collective wisdom:

1. **Consent from the leadership of the Senate:** A toolkit for self-assessment helps parliaments determine how well they incorporate democratic considerations. It allows them to evaluate their current practices and policies, identify areas that may need improvement, plan for change, and establish ways to monitor progress. In this context, the consent of leadership for undertaking such task is the determining element for all the Parliaments. The PDU of the Senate addressed such challenge by understanding and apprising the impact of such self-assessment to the leadership in the most-effective manner.
2. **Availability of the Honorable Members of Senate:** Parliamentarians play a crucial role in Goal 16 of SDG. While all targets have relevance to their work, Targets 16.6 and 16.7 directly address their responsibilities. Target 16.6 focuses on developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions, while Target 16.7 aims for inclusive and participatory decision-making. Keeping in view the gravity of said subject, and the

on-going sessions of the House Business, alongwith the political responsibilities, the availability of the Members of the Steering Committee was among the challenges that was tackled with scheduling and re-scheduling the meeting with them from time-to-time.

3. **Acquiring the time of the Branches/Directorates to carry out the self-assessment:** The concerned Branches/Directorates of the secretariat, that were tasked for testing of relevant Indicators, were occupied with their routine jobs enormously, and sparing their time for undergoing such assessment with integrity, where they have to support the argument via evidence, and also proposing any recommendation in this regard, was a phenomenal duty for them. The PDU, held consultative session with such offices, and assures them that they will be providing them any technical assistance if they requires at anytime while deliberating on the assignment.
4. **Timeframe & Organizational Challenges:** The timeframe in which the exercise is to be conducted should be decided at the beginning of the process. The amount of time required to complete the self- assessment will vary, depending on the political constraints and the context of the parliament, i.e., the Proceedings of House in session, Committee meetings. Thus, the timeframe provided by the IPU were not sufficient as number of political considerations and administrative priorities were going parallel. However, the PDU overcame the challenge with dedication, and perseverance by devoting the time to the exercise, since Goal 16 of the SDGs, also known as the “governance goal”, makes it clear that democracy and sustainable development go hand in hand.
5. **Collection of Assessment Documents & Evidence from Branches/Directorates:** The Collection of the Assessment Documents that were disbursed among the concerned offices were duly collected after apprising them as to how the exercise will be carried out and how the supporting evidence may be given with relevant legislation and legal instruments that serves the purpose of argument in question. However, the evidence provided by the offices were re-verified by the PDU, so as to endorse the criterion that has been given by any branch. The challenge of re-verifying of all the evidences provided under 498 criterion was time-consuming and laborious job and was addressed by the PDU team in strategizing the document with collaboration and time-management.
6. **Subjectivity and Interpretation:** The indicators mentioned in the targets 16.6 & 16.7, often involve qualitative aspects that are subject to interpretation. For example, terms like "effective," "accountable," "transparent," and "inclusive" can have different meanings in different contexts and cultures. In the testing toolkit meant for assessment, the absence of glossary defied the interpretation of several subjects, which were addressed by means of interpreting the same with subjectivity, i.e., the word, “Minority”, as mentioned in the document several times, needs to be defined as either it is in terms of ethnic groups or political party.

4. ROLE OF THE SENATORS & THE SECRETARY GENERAL:

Role of the Senators:

Senators, as members of a country's Upper House of Parliament, play a significant role in testing indicators under SDG Target 16.6 ("Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels") and SDG Target 16.7 ("Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels"). With the support of honorable Members of Steering Committee, that comprised of three (03) Senators, the testing of all Indicators under the above-mentioned targets. The Senators contributed to the testing of these indicators with various aspects, i.e., ;

Legislation and Oversight: Since Senators have the power to propose, amend, and pass legislation, they contemplated actively to strive for introducing and supporting laws that promote effective, accountable, and transparent institutions. They also overseen the implementation of existing laws to ensure that they align with the principles of SDG Target 16.6 and 16.7.

Policy Advocacy: Senators assessed those areas where they may use their good offices to advocate for policies and initiatives that enhance accountability, transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness within various institutions. They can champion reforms that lead to better governance practices and decision-making processes, in near future.

Public Awareness: While carrying out the assessment, the Senators also pointed out various dimensions where they may raise public awareness about the importance of SDG targets and indicators. One of such example could be the introduction of lobbying in the existing system, as mentioned in the Dimension 2.1.5, where by using their platforms to educate and inform the public, they can foster a greater understanding of the subject.

Monitoring and Reporting: The Senators actively participated in the monitoring and reporting mechanisms established to track progress toward SDG Target 16.6 and 16.7. They contributed to the collection and analysis of relevant data.

Promoting Transparency within Parliament: The Senators worked towards increasing transparency within the parliamentary processes themselves, which included advocating for open debates, accessible records, and clear communication about legislative actions.

Overall, Senators played a vital role in advancing the principles outlined in SDG Target 16.6 and 16.7 within their legislative work, oversight responsibilities, and engagement with various stakeholders. Their efforts can contribute significantly to the realization of these goals.

Role of the Secretary General:

The Secretary General of the Senate of Pakistan plays a pivotal role in carrying out the assessment exercise of the Indicators under SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7. Their role is essential in ensuring the efficient and effective implementation of these SDG targets within the context of the Senate, and its Secretariat.

- From understanding and acknowledging the impact of self-assessment of indicators under the above-mentioned targets, to supporting the stance before the leadership for carrying out such exercise, the Secretary General endorsed the influence that the Indicators may cause in the democratic nature of the parliament.
- After attending the 145th IPU Assembly and its related meetings in Kigali, Rwanda from 11-15 October, 2022, the worthy Secretary General, Senate of Pakistan, took part in the session and shared the experience of Senate of Pakistan in testing the indicators.
- The Secretary General overseen the establishment of monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track the Senate Secretariat's progress towards testing of Indicators under SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7. This involves collecting relevant data, analyzing performance, to demonstrate the Senate's contributions to these targets.
- The Secretary General advocated for internal reforms within the Senate Secretariat that enhance its transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity, that involved reviewing administrative processes, communication practices, and engagement with stakeholders, and creating a strategic plan to align the Secretariat's functions.

The Secretary General's role is essential in driving the Senate's commitment to achieving SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7, transforming these global aspirations into tangible actions and outcomes within the context of the Senate's functions and responsibilities. By overseeing assessment exercises, fostering collaboration, and driving positive change, the Secretary General plays a key part in transforming these global goals into tangible actions within the Secretariat's operations.

5. ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES:

The outcomes of testing indicators under SDG Targets 16.6 and 16.7 can vary depending on the specific context, country, or institution being assessed. The Senate of Pakistan, after assessing the existing system with respect to SDG Targets 16.6 and 16.7, identified areas where institutions or decision-making processes are strong and effective, as well as areas where improvements are needed. Following are the outcomes that has been inferred out while assessing the indicators of all sub-targets of SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7.

No.	Sub-Targets	Indicators	Outcome
1.	Effective Parliament	Parliamentary autonomy	The Senate of Pakistan has a tremendous Institutional autonomy, Procedural autonomy, Budgetary autonomy, and Administrative autonomy, derived from the Constitution of Pakistan, Rules of Procedure, and Standing Orders.
		Members of Parliament	The Senate of Pakistan has already been an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of status of MPs, inviolability and immunity (including natural justice), in-compatibility of office, access to resources, and professional development of MPs, as there are clearly defined provisions under Constitution of Pakistan, Rules of Procedure, and Standing Orders, provided in this regard.
		Parliamentary procedures	The Senate of Pakistan has an exemplary aspiration for parliamentary institutions within the sphere of parliamentary procedures, i.e., institutional framework, Rules of procedure, Procedures in times of crisis, Calendar/timetable/planning, convening sessions and agenda-setting, Quorum, Debate, Voting and Records, as all such processes have been duly codified in legislative instruments. However, as far as the Dimension 1.3.10, i.e., Dissolution is concerned, Article 59 (3) of the Constitution of Pakistan provides that the Senate shall not be subject to dissolution.
		Parliamentary Organization	The Senate of Pakistan has always stood as an ambitious benchmark for parliamentary bodies in the arena of plenary, Speaker/presiding officer, committees (powers, composition, governing bodies, and procedures), parliamentary (party) groups and cross-party groups. Though, the Dimension 1.4.3, Bureau/presidium, is not applicable, as the Senate has House Business Advisory Committee that functions as Bureau/presidium, having representation from members belonging to various parliamentary parties, and groups. However, there should be legal provision for a Bureau as a collective governing body of parliament that shall have the representation of both the Houses and discharge their functions jointly.

		Administrative Capacity & Independence	The Senate of Pakistan has set a high standard for parliamentary objectives in the field of administration, human resources management, policy analysis, research and library services, Infrastructure, Innovation and digital technologies, and, information management through its secretariat, by providing adequate services to the Members of the Parliament.
		Law-making	With its enduring commitment to excellence, the Senate of Pakistan has become an esteemed model for parliaments concerning legislation. There are clearly defined constitutional or rule of procedure provisions that establish the rights of Members of Parliament via powers in law-making, constitution-making and amendment, and legislative procedure, The Rules of Procedure of the Senate Secretariat also provides for legislative drafting, enactment, publication, and post-legislative scrutiny (PLS)
		Oversight	The Senate of Pakistan stands as a prominent inspiration for parliamentary endeavors within the realm of oversight. With various dimensions, i.e., Election, confidence, no-confidence, censure or impeachment of the head of state or government and/or ministries, parliamentary access to information from government, summoning ministers and other government representatives in committees, summoning officials in chamber (interpellations), Questions, Hearings, Committees of inquiry, the Senate of Pakistan provides for legal and constitutional provisions to carry-out the obligation of oversight effectively. However, there are certain exceptions, i.e., Dimension, 1.7.1, Criterion 2 that provides for role of Parliament in approval of Ministers, which the constitution of Pakistan has not guaranteed so far. Similarly, Dimension, 1.7.4, Criterion 1 that calls for summoning government representatives in chamber (interpellations) on matters of concern, which is non-existent in legislative instruments of the Senate of Pakistan. Executive officials of the government can be summoned in the Committee to exercise the role of oversight effectively.
		Budget	Renowned for its accomplishments, the Senate of Pakistan has been an influential guide for parliamentary goals related to budget, with respect to its formulation, examination, amendment and approval, Ex-post control, Expert support, and Supreme audit institution. Although, the Senate of Pakistan, have limited role with respect to the money bill, and it has the ample responsibility of making recommendations to the money bill, the Upper House fulfills the same diligently. Similarly, the Dimension 1.8.3, that provides for Public Accounts Committee (PAC), it is pertinent to

			<p>mention that the Parliament of Pakistan has PAC, under the supremacy of the Lower House, and the Upper House has its representation in PAC, as six (06) Members of the Senate of Pakistan are part of the total composition of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). Moreover, the Senate of Pakistan does not hold any parliamentary budget office (or its equivalent form of expert support) having an expertise to provide parliament with independent commentary and information on the budget, as provided under Criterion, 2, of Dimension 1.8.4.</p>
		Representational function	<p>Recognized for its achievements, the Senate of Pakistan has become a commendable benchmark for parliamentary objectives within the sphere of representation. Members of the Senate of Pakistan represents the Provinces and the House of Federation of Pakistan unlike their counterparts in the Lower House who are represented by the territorial delimitation of the Constituencies. Hence, the members of the Senate of the Pakistan do not represent the constituencies. There are clearly defined legal framework of the legislature (constitution, rules of procedure of parliament, laws) which recognizes that Senators have the responsibility and right to engage with and represent the interests of their provinces.</p>
		Relations of parliament	<p>The Senate of Pakistan upholds its function of oversight with respect to the parliamentary jurisdictional powers and upholds the independence of all institutions, i.e., Executive & Judiciary. However, the criterion 3 of Dimension 1.10.2, that provides for financial allocation for judiciary, is not applicable to the Senate of Pakistan, since the Preamble of the Constitution of Pakistan declared the Judicial system of Pakistan as an independent body, thus, the Parliament does not have any role in allocation of sufficient budget resources for the judiciary.</p>
		Specific state policies	<p>The Senate of Pakistan has an aspiration for parliamentary institutions within the sphere of specific state policies concerning SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, human rights, security sector, defence policy, foreign affairs, parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary cooperation. However, while assessing the criterion 1 & 2 of Dimension 1.11.2, related to Human Rights, it was revealed that there exists neither such national legal framework that ensures that it is consistent with international human rights obligations, nor national consultation processes preceding the preparation of reports to treaty bodies. Similarly, it was also assessed under criterion 2 of Dimension 1.11.3, that the Senate of Pakistan does not have any ombudsperson or similar body responsible for</p>

			addressing public concerns or complaints about the security sector, which is legally accountable and reports to parliament. However, the said objective is carried out via the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior. Likewise, the criterion 2 of Dimension 1.11.5, related to Foreign Affairs, is not applicable to the Senate of Pakistan, as Parliament is not responsible for ratifying international agreements.
2.	Accountable Parliament	Parliamentary ethics	The members of the Senate of Pakistan, plays a crucial role in upholding parliamentary ethics, through a regulatory framework and implementation in practice, in anti-corruption, code of conduct, conflict of interest, disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure, and lobbying. However, the criterion 8, 9 and 10 of Dimension 2.1.3, that provides for conflict of interest, is not applicable to the Senate of Pakistan, as there are neither such constitutional or legal provisions that require the lawmakers to declare sponsored travel and accommodation, nor conflict of interest rules provided that were regularized by anybody tasked with compliance of such rules by the Members. Similarly, the criterion 2, 3 and 5 of Dimension 2.1.4, that provides for disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure, is not applicable to the Senate of Pakistan, as there are no such rules and requirements regarding the reporting and public availability of information on expenditure from the parliamentary budget for MPs, parliamentary parties and political staff. Likewise, the Dimension 2.1.5, that provides for lobbying, is not applicable to the Senate of Pakistan, as there are no clear-cut legislation or legal provision provided with respect to lobbying in Pakistan.
		Institutional integrity	Renowned for its steadfast commitment to institutional integrity, the Senate of Pakistan is an esteemed benchmark in the domain of parliamentary expenditure, public procurement, access to information, reporting on parliamentary work, staff recruitment, and professionalism of parliamentary administration. There are clear-cut constitutional and legal provisions provided in all such dimensions, and is implemented in its true letter and spirit.
3.	Transparent Parliament	Transparency of parliamentary processes	The Senate of Pakistan is a source of emulation for institutions operating in the domain of transparency of parliamentary processes, i.e., transparency of parliamentary work, transparency of the legislative process, and budgetary transparency, as there are clear-cut constitutional and legal provisions, for all these areas, and they are followed as they are written and meant to be.

		Parliamentary communication	The Senate of Pakistan's unwavering dedication has firmly established it as a respected reference point for parliamentary entities functioning within the purview of parliamentary communication. The indicator is assessed within the dimensions of parliamentary website, and other channels for informing the public, and it was revealed that the Senate of Pakistan use various other channels to inform and communicate with people, and make sure that information is accessible to rural areas, groups without access to the internet and vulnerable groups.
		Access to parliament	With a track record of excellence, the Senate of Pakistan stands as a source of motivation for parliamentary organizations engaged in the sphere of access to parliament. The Indicator is assessed within the dimensions of openness of parliamentary venues and events to citizens, accessibility standards, and media access to parliament. However, it is pertinent to mention that as alluded in criterion 2 of Dimension 3.3.2, there is no legislative procedure provided in any legislative instrument that ensures equal physical and online access to the parliament building, but the accessibility to the Parliament House is ensured through following various practices, i.e., through Senate Virtual Tour on its official website, PTV Parliament channel, and the Protocol Directorate of the Senate that receives and facilitates online requests for making visit to the Parliament House from a number of academic and literary institutions, and several think tanks, including the provincial assemblies and other functionaries.
4.	Responsive parliament	Valuing public concerns	Acknowledged for its outstanding commitment, the Senate of Pakistan is a distinguished model for parliamentary establishments working within the domain of valuing public concerns. The assessment of the indicator on valuing public concerns resonates with three (03) dimensions, i.e., responding to public concerns, responding to emerging policy issues, and responding to individual members of the public, including constituents. The Senate of Pakistan takes into consideration public concerns using different legislative tools, and responsive platforms, like Public Petitions Table, Public Hearing, and Parliamentary Development Unit of the Senate Secretariat.
5.	Inclusive Parliament	Inclusive legislation and oversight	With a legacy of excellence, the Senate of Pakistan is synonymous with the highest ideals for parliamentary organizations engaged in the sphere of inclusive legislation and oversight. The assessment of the indicator were carried out by scrutinizing dimensions related to human rights-based legislation and policies, impact assessments, gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive budgeting, and youth engagement, and it

			<p>was revealed that there are following certain areas where the improvement is indispensable, i.e.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dimension 5.1.2, related to impact assessments, is non-existent in existing concerns of the Parliament of Pakistan, as the Parliament did not have developed an impact assessment manual, guidance or similar tool exclusively that establishes procedures and criteria for assessing the different impacts that a piece of draft legislation, programme or policy might have on different groups. • Regarding the criterion 2, 4 and 5 of the Dimension 5.1.3, related to gender mainstreaming, it was revealed that neither the Rules of Procedure of the Senate of Pakistan provides for promoting well-defined mechanisms to engage national women’s machinery and other stakeholders representing gender issues in the work of parliament and its committees, nor the strategic plan of the Parliament centralize gender mainstreaming in its existing plan. Moreover, there are presently no such practices in place for gender-sensitive analysis of legislation in the Senate of Pakistan. • Regarding the Dimension 5.1.4, related to gender-responsive budgeting, the Senate of Pakistan has not adopted any procedures and mechanism, and has not formulated any legislative provisions with respect to the gender-responsive budgeting in Pakistan.
		<p>Inclusive institutional practices</p>	<p>Recognized for its exceptional dedication, the Senate of Pakistan stands as an esteemed exemplar for parliamentary institutions operating within the sphere of inclusive institutional practices that focuses on workforce diversity, gender balance in the composition of the parliamentary secretariat, multilingual service delivery, and workplace environment. However, there are following certain areas where the improvement is indispensable, i.e.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the criterion 3 of Dimension 5.2.2, related to gender balance in the composition of the parliamentary secretariat, it was assessed that a periodical system to assess the gender balance in the secretariat has not been in place formally so far. • The criterion 3, 4 & 5 of Dimension 5.2.4, related to workplace environment, is non-existent in existing concerns of the Parliament of Pakistan, as neither such provision exists in the Rules of procedure, nor any practice has been adapted that allows Senators with family responsibilities, to be able to fulfill their parliamentary duties, such as voting. Similarly, the legislature does not provide facilities and services to support a family-friendly workplace, which includes

			providing breast-feeding spaces, spaces for family members and childcare facilities.
6.	Participatory parliament	Parliamentary environment for public participation	The Senate of Pakistan represents a prestigious role model for parliamentary institutions operating within the purview of parliamentary environment for public participation. Assessment of indicator hinged on two dimensions, i.e., regulatory framework for public participation, and mechanisms and tools for public participation. However, there are certain exceptions, i.e., criterion 4 of Dimension, 6.1.1 that provides for regulatory framework for public participation, wherein it was revealed that no such strategy or plan is in place in the Senate of Pakistan for monitoring and evaluating the involvement of civil society actors, and the reflection of their role in enacted laws or policies.
		Participation in parliamentary process	The Senate of Pakistan is emblematic of a revered source of inspiration for entities within the sphere of participation in parliamentary process through various dimensions, i.e., citizens' legislative initiative, participation in parliamentary bodies, public consultation on draft legislation, public participation in the budget cycle, public participation in parliamentary oversight, and expert consultation. There are constitutional or other legal provisions that allows for participation of civil society and other stakeholders in parliamentary processes, such as Public Hearing, and Public Petitions Table, yet there are certain exceptions. Regarding criterion 1 & 2 of Dimension 6.2.4, related to Public participation in the budget cycle, the existing system of business in the Senate manifests that there are neither any constitutional or legal provisions nor any system in place for the participation of citizens in the budget cycle. Similarly, there is no mechanism in place requesting feedback from and providing feedback to the public on the parliamentary oversight function, as cherished in criterion 4 of Dimension 6.2.5.
		Other forms of public engagement	The Senate of Pakistan embodies the highest standards for parliamentary organizations functioning in the realm of partnerships for participation – consultation with civil society organizations, and civic education. The Senate of Pakistan prioritize the accessibility to civil society and civic education, through various legislative tools, and frameworks, to enhance policy legitimacy and improve decision-making outcomes.
7.	Representative parliament	Electoral integrity	The Senate of Pakistan is synonymous with the finest ideals for parliamentary institutions operating within the domain of electoral integrity that centers upon voting and election rights, candidature, party and campaign rights and responsibilities, and public authorities' roles in elections. There are clear-cut

			constitutional and legal provisions encompassing the laws related to universal suffrage, periodicity of elections, access to voting, protection of fundamental human rights related to participation in elections, freedom of expression, and neutrality of public authorities in the electoral process.
		Composition of legislature	The Senate of Pakistan remains an esteemed milestone for parliamentary institutions operating within the domain of representing diversity of political opinion, gender, youth, and other under-represented groups. However, the criterion 3 of Dimension 7.2.3, related to enabling environment for young MPs, is non-existent in on-going concerns of the Parliament of Pakistan, as the parliament has not developed so far a support package for young MPs to enable them to work considering work-life balance.
		Composition of parliamentary bodies	The Senate of Pakistan stands as an illustrious model for parliamentary institutions operating within the ambit of composition of parliamentary leadership and committees, and gender and age balance in the composition of parliamentary bodies. However, there are certain exceptions, i.e., criterion 1, & 2 of Dimension, 7.3.1 that provides for composition of parliamentary leadership, it was assessed that neither such constitutional or legal provisions have been provided for by which MPs from minority parliamentary (party) groups are represented in the governing structures of the parliament; nor such provision exists that guarantees at least one seat of a deputy speaker of the parliament for an MP from a minority parliamentary (party) group. Similarly, the criterion 6 of the same dimension is not applicable to the Senate of Pakistan, since the Senate of Pakistan is also the House of Federation, giving equal representation to all the federating units in the House, the practice of establishing balanced political representation is not the primary concern in the governing structures of the legislative structures of the Parliament. Likewise, the criterion 3 of Dimension 7.3.3 is non-existent in the existing realm of affairs in the Senate of Pakistan, as there are no such stringent measures that include quotas, rotation of positions, or dual positions, which are ensured to keep a balance in the composition of parliamentary bodies.

6. REALIZING OUTCOME: ACHIEVEMENTS IN ACTION

After embarking upon the self-assessment exercise, and carrying out successfully the testing of all indicators, under SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7, the first and foremost step towards the well-being of the legislature that the Senate of Pakistan undertook was the initiative of establishment of Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), under the guidance and leadership of honorable Chairman Senate.

The Senate of Pakistan is in process of establishing a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), with the support of European Union, and collaboration with GIZ, that would have a mandate of:

- To provide an analysis of the economic impact of proposed legislation and cost estimates, which estimate the budgetary impact of the legislation over a specified period;
- To Analyze and assess the economic and budgetary implications of government policies, proposals, and legislation. Evaluating the effectiveness of government policies and programs, and identifying areas where improvements could be made on a wide range of issues, including health care, taxes, and social programs;
- To provide independent analysis to Parliament and parliamentarians on the state of the nation's finances, the government's estimates, economic and fiscal forecasting, and trends in the economy of Pakistan; and upon request from a committee from either House or the Member, to estimate the financial cost of any proposal for matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction.
- To respond to requests by the Members of the Parliament for costings of policy proposals or analysis of matters relating to the budget;
- To provide technical assistance to the committees on budgetary and economic matters;
- Conducting research and analysis on fiscal and economic trends, and providing regular reports and briefings to the Parliament, especially on the Annual Budget.
- To prepare brief information and short studies upon request of Members.
- To analyze the impact of public policies keeping in view the SDGs goals, welfare programs, poverty eradication, gender development, and other social development programs.
- To analyze the gendered impacts of government policies and spending, to promote greater gender equality and social inclusion.

For this purpose, the Senate of Pakistan held few meetings with the team of GIZ, to conceive the notion of PBO into the reality. The need for establishing a PBO is urgent and essential in enhancing the fiscal oversight role of the Parliament of Pakistan in terms of providing services for analyzing and researching the economic impact of any piece of legislation introduced in the Parliament of Pakistan, exploring financial matters, macroeconomic management, fiscal policy, and budgetary proposals but also in equipping parliamentarians and the staff members of the secretariats with the skills in the aforementioned areas.

A parliamentary delegation for the study visit, with the support of EU, to the countries, where the PBO has been established, for example, Ireland/Austria, is also under-consideration. Internal Meetings & Donor Coordination Meetings is also undergoing to streamline the objectives and scope of the PBO and evaluate the resources needed for the establishment, along with any potential challenges that may need to be addressed.

7. SHAPING THE FUTURE: FORWARD-LOOKING ACTIONS

Following the initiation of the self-assessment process and the successful testing of all indicators related to SDG Target 16.6 & 16.7, the Senate of Pakistan has identified its forthcoming actions and necessary steps to be taken in the near future, which are:

- i. Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) may be established within the Parliament House, to provide independent and objective analysis and services to the members of both Houses of the Parliament of Pakistan on the macroeconomic and fiscal implications of proposed legislation, government policies and programs, and any other matters related to the budgetary process.
- ii. A Bureau/Presidium may be established, as a collective governing body of parliament, that shall have the representation of both the Houses and discharge their functions jointly, by making decisions on political issues, organizing the work of the parliament, coordinating the work of committees, drafting the agenda for a plenary, and deciding other issues of importance relevant to the operation of the parliament.
- iii. Enhancement of the role of Parliament in nomination of Ministers or Cabinet members may be considered, and legislated upon.
- iv. Enhancement of the role of the Upper House with respect to Money Bill may be considered, and legislated upon, with special reference to the role of Members in proposing amendments to the Money Bill, and approval of the budget.
- v. Formulation of National Legal Framework by the Parliament of Pakistan, that ensures that international human rights obligations are consistent with the national framework.
- vi. Introduction of legal provision that require the lawmakers to declare sponsored travel and accommodation.
- vii. The practice of lobbying may be introduced in the Parliament of Pakistan that will be performed by individuals or groups, each with varying and specific interests, which attempt to influence decisions taken at the legislative level.

- viii. A legal framework may be developed that ensures equal physical and online access to the parliament building, its processes and proceedings for all citizens regardless of disability or other special needs.
- ix. Parliament may develop an impact assessment manual, guidance or similar tool exclusively that establishes procedures and criteria for assessing the different impacts that a piece of draft legislation, programme or policy might have on different groups; and potentially entrusting a dedicated body for carrying out such assessments.
- x. The Senate of Pakistan may devise certain policies / plans regarding gender mainstreaming and should be considering the gender lens while formulating its policies in all the areas where necessary.
- xi. Holding various workshops / Dialogues for the Members as well as for the secretariat by the Senate of Pakistan for bringing gender-responsive budgeting into the mainstream.
- xii. A periodical system to assess the gender balance in the secretariat may be formulated formally to ensure that the policies are effective in meeting the expectations of gender balance, at all levels.
- xiii. A legal provision in Rules of procedures of the Senate, should be introduced for Senators, as well as the Secretariat, to facilitate them in taking care of their young ones during legislative business. Furthermore online voting and video conferencing facilities could also be incorporated to ensure presence of such members in parliamentary business.
- xiv. Introducing childcare facilities for Senators and secretarial staff would provide them with essential support in caring for their young children while they engage in legislative duties.