



REPORT ON STUDY TOUR TO THE UNITED KINGDOM AND WESTMINSTER BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RULES COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS OVER THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT AND RELATED MATTERS

(A) Background

In terms of section 57(1)(a) of the Constitution (1996), the National Assembly may determine and control its internal arrangements, proceedings and procedures. Subsection 2(a) provides for the establishment, composition, powers, functions, procedures and duration of its committees. One of the committees of the National Assembly is the Rules Committee, whose functions include developing proposals concerning the business and procedures of the Assembly¹.

The Rules Committee has for some time been seized with the question of how best the Assembly could oversee Vote 1 – The Presidency, as part of the National Budget, mindful of the unique and overarching role of the Presidency. This question arose as some political parties in the Assembly suggested that the Constitution (1996) required the Assembly to establish or mandate a committee for this purpose.² Other parties suggested that the Office of the President had grown in recent years and now incorporated a host of office-bearers, advisors and functionaries.

This matter was raised most recently by the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State (the Commission), in its report submitted to Parliament on 23 October 2023. The Commission recommended, among others, that –

“Parliament consider whether it would be desirable for it to establish a committee whose function is, or includes, oversight over acts or omissions by the President and Presidency which are not overseen by existing committees.”³

¹ Rule 193 of the National Assembly. Parliament of South Africa.

² Section 55 of the Constitution requires the National Assembly to, *inter alia*, “provide mechanisms to ensure that all executive organs of state in the national sphere of government are accountable to it; and to maintain oversight of the exercise of national executive authority, including the implementation of legislation.”

³ *Commission of Inquiry into State Capture Report: Part VI, Vol 2, pg. 463.*

The report of the Commission served before the Rules Committee on 23 November 2022. The Rules Committee referred these proposals to its Subcommittee on Review of Assembly Rules (the Subcommittee), whose functions include making recommendations to the Rules Committee concerning the rules of the House.

The Subcommittee mandated the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) to analyse Vote 1 to determine which aspects of the Vote were currently not subjected to Parliamentary scrutiny. The PBO, in its report of November 2022, concluded that Parliament should strengthen its oversight over the Presidency, but that further research would be beneficial. In so doing, the PBO reflected on international practices including those employed in the United Kingdom (UK) to oversee the Office of the Prime Minister. In this regard, the PBO noted that the House of Commons had a Liaison Committee which was empowered to call upon, and question, the Prime Minister as the Head of Government.

On 25 April 2023, the Rules Committee agreed that it would be instructive for a delegation of Members to undertake a study tour to engage counterparts in comparative Parliaments on the matter. The study tour to the UK took place from 16 to 20 July 2023. The delegation consisted of the following Members –

- Mr CT Frolick (as the Leader of the Delegation)
- Mr QR Dyantyi
- Mr AHM Papo
- Dr A Lotriet
- Mr N Singh
- Dr CP Mulder

The delegation was supported by Mr M Xaso (Secretary to the National Assembly), Dr D Jantjies (Director of the Parliamentary Budget Office), Mr M Mothapo (Parliament's Spokesperson), Mr P Hahndiek (National Assembly Table) and Ms J Paulsen (International Relations and Protocol Division).

The delegation engaged political representatives and procedural experts from Westminster, as well as independent institutions in order to establish, among other things –

- (1) the general procedures and conventions relating to the oversight mandate of the House of Commons and the accounting responsibilities of the Prime Minister as the head of the Government;
- (2) the procedures and structures employed to oversee the Prime Minister and the administration of his office; and
- (3) details of the structure/s employed within Westminster and other institutions to scrutinise the Prime Minister and his office.

Other subjects that the delegation pursued included –

- (1) procedures and processes related to the passage of Government budgets and the support provided to committees to analyse budgets, including the Financial Scrutiny Unit (FSU) at Westminster, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) as well as the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS);
- (2) the work of the Procedures Committee and select committees in the House of Commons;
- (3) the means and offices employed to facilitate liaisons between Parliament and the Executive; and
- (4) the mandate and role of the Environmental Audit Committee and the Climate Change Committee.

(B) The Parliament of Westminster

The UK Parliament, which meets at Westminster, is the supreme legislative body in the United Kingdom (UK). Parliament is bicameral but has three parts: the Sovereign, the House of Lords and the House of Commons⁴. The UK Parliament was formed in 1707 and comprised Members from both England and Scotland. It replaced the Parliament of England, which was established in the 13th Century.

The House of Commons is made up of 650 Members, elected from constituencies; elections being held at least every five years. By convention, the Prime Minister and Government are Members of the Commons and are accountable to it⁵. The exercise of accountability takes place in the

⁴ "Commons" does not come from the term "commoner", but from *commune*, the old French term for a municipality or local district.

⁵ Since 1997, the convention of ministerial accountability has been set out in the Ministerial Code which states that "*Ministers have a duty to Parliament to account, and be held to account, for the policies, decisions and actions of their departments and agencies.*"

House and committees. Parliamentary questions are one of the best-known mechanisms for calling the Government to account. The Prime Minister answers questions in the Commons every Wednesday during session for half an hour. The session normally starts with a routine question from a Member about the Prime Minister's engagements. Thereafter, the Speaker will call the Leader of the Opposition who is permitted to ask up to six questions.

The House of Lords includes two types of Members: Lords appointed by the Sovereign (on the advice of the Prime Minister) and hereditary peers and, second, the senior bishops of the Church of England. The House of Lords has limited authority to veto legislation. The Lords can, however, like the House of Commons, hold the Government to account through questions to ministers and the operation of committees.

Parliamentary Procedure

Ms K Bradley, Chairperson of the Procedures Committee (the Rules Committee) in the House of Commons and Ms M McKinnon, Clerk of the Committee, briefed delegates on the Standing Orders of the House. Sir M Jack, former Clerk of the House of Commons, later shared his insights on the subject.

The UK does not have a written Constitution and much statecraft and Parliamentary procedure is derived from precedent and convention; these being captured in the publication *Erskine May*. The House of Commons does, however, have Standing Orders – the rules – which cover such things as the scheduling of business in the House, motions, members' questions, the rules of debate, and committees. The Speaker plays a pivotal role in upholding procedure and practice. He/she is required to maintain order, to call Members to address the House or ask questions and to decide when a debate should end, and a vote be taken⁶.

The rules also determine how business in the House of Commons is scheduled⁷. The Government and Leader of the House – a specially designated minister – decide the programme for each day, with some exceptions – these being days/times allocated to private members' business or to the opposition. In this capacity, the Leader of the House acts as a liaison between Parliament and the Executive and reports weekly to Cabinet on forthcoming Parliamentary business. He/she also

⁶ The Speaker of the House of Commons has considerable discretion over Members' time.

⁷ Standing Orders 14-20 etc. House of Commons. Parliament UK.

announces that business to the House every Thursday, an event which emphasises the control of the Government over Parliamentary proceedings.

The Standing Orders created the Procedures Committee to consider the practices and procedures of the House as and when necessary. The Standing Orders have evolved over time but the onset of the Covid pandemic necessitated further review. Like many workplaces, the House of Commons had to innovate to allow Members to participate virtually and vote by proxy; (so that a Member could arrange for another to vote on his/her behalf).

Oversight and the Committee System

The Standing Orders establish a number of different committees, including standing committees, which are *ad hoc* in nature, and select committees⁸ which are ordinarily permanent and continue from one Parliament to the next. A comprehensive committee system – one committee to oversee each national department – was first established in 1979 following a recommendation of the Procedures Committee.

Departmental select committees have a broad mandate and are empowered to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the respective departments and public entities. Together with “departmental-specific” committees there are “cross-cutting” committees, including the Liaison Committee, as well as “internal” committees like the Procedures Committee. Select committees decide how best to conduct oversight and can institute formal inquiries. Inquiries can range from an in-depth examination of a complex issue conducted over several months to a short inquiry over the course of a week or two. During such proceedings a committee will invite witnesses to give evidence. Most inquiries lead to a report and recommendations. By convention, the Government is expected to reply to all committee reports within two months.

(C) Oversight over the Prime Minister

The Liaison Committee

Sir B Jenkin, Chairperson of the Liaison Committee and Mr L Owen, Clerk of the Committee, introduced the delegation to the work of the Committee. The delegation also met Ms A Lilly from

⁸ In the National Assembly of South Africa these are called portfolio committees.

the Institute for Government – an independent think tank involved in monitoring Government and Parliament – to discuss oversight over the Prime Minister.

The standing rules of the House determine that the Liaison Committee can, *inter alia* –

- (1) *consider general matters relating to the work of select committees -
 - (a) give such evidence relating to the work of select committees as may be sought by the House of Commons and Commission; and
 - (b) report to the House its choice of select committee reports to be debated on such days as may be appointed by the Speaker....*
- (2) *hear evidence from the Prime Minister on matters of public policy⁹...*
- (3) *appoint two sub-committees, one of which shall be a National Policy Statements subcommittee¹⁰.*

The Committee is comprised of the chairpersons of all the permanent, select committees, plus two further Members, one of whom must be the Chairperson. The Committee has over 30 Members at present. Significantly, the chairpersons of select committees reflect political party representation in the House of Commons, which means that the Liaison Committee has always been a multi-party structure¹¹.

Whereas Prime Ministers answer Parliamentary questions in the House, they have in the past, not appeared before committees. Initially, the Liaison Committee was mainly occupied with the administration of other committees. Among other tasks, it decided on budget allocations to other committees and chose which committee reports should be debated in the plenary on particular days. The Committee also produced reports on the efficacy of the committee system¹². One of the last such reports, published in September 2019, made proposals about how Parliament could

⁹ Standing Order 145. House of Commons. Parliament UK.

¹⁰ This Committee has not yet reported.

¹¹ Presently, the Committee has 21 members from the Conservative Party, 12 from the Labour Party and two others.

¹² Parliament's Oversight and Accountability Model put forward the idea of an Oversight and Government Assurance Committee, whose function could include considering transversal and cross-cutting issues and which could serve to coordinate or guide the work of other committees.

improve oversight¹³ and included a proposition that Government departments should produce an annual memorandum to the relevant select committee to set out progress on implementing committee recommendations.

In 2000, however, the Committee attempted to reposition itself and sought to rebalance the relationship between Parliament and Government. This new approach was set out in a series of reports issued at the time. The Prime Minister was subsequently invited to give evidence to the Committee to explain the Government's policy outlook. The first such session occurred in 2002. Upon reflection, the Committee remarked that –

The appearance of the Prime Minister in public before a committee containing all the Chairs of select committees complements the investigative work of individual committees.... It will at last bring the Prime Minister himself within select committee scrutiny¹⁴.

Since then, the Committee has held two or three meetings with the Prime Minister per annum, each lasting up to two hours. Because of the relatively large membership and limited time, a working group was established to advise the Chairperson on which Members' questions should be selected – since 2010 approximately 15 Members have been allowed to ask a question in any one meeting. This determination is based on various considerations, including party representation in the House. The Committee also considers subjects of interest in current affairs and matters in which the Prime Minister has a special interest. Recent questions, for example, have concentrated on the economy, the cost of living and the war in Ukraine. Notwithstanding the above, an attempt has been made to ensure that, over the course of a Parliament, every Member on the Committee had an opportunity to put a question. The Prime Minister is typically forewarned about the subjects selected, in part to ensure that he/she can respond on an informed basis. Members have also been permitted to submit written follow-up questions.

The Liaison Committee complements select committees because, while the respective committees can engage ministers on the details of policy, the Prime Minister is ultimately answerable for the Government and should therefore account to a committee. In addition, sessions have reportedly provided a more productive and informative exchange compared to the

¹³ *4th Report - The Effectiveness and Influence of the Select Committee System*. 2019. Liaison Committee. The House of Commons. Parliament UK. The Government responded to this report in May 2020, after which the Committee produced a supplementary report.

¹⁴ *Evidence from the Prime Minister*, para. 2. 2002. Liaison Committee. The House of Commons. Parliament UK.

confrontational and partisan nature of Prime Minister's question-time in the House. But the Committee has received some criticisms. One criticism is that the composition of the Committee can mean that meetings are characterised by individual exchanges, rather than a collective effort at evidence-gathering. Moreover, despite attempts to focus questions, there is a sense that sessions lack coherence and direction. Such observations point to the fact that there remains somewhat of a divergence about the purpose and benefit of the Committee's engagements with the Prime Minister – whether they should remain politically high-level or be more frequent and provide additional opportunities for thorough questioning.

The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC)

While the Liaison Committee meets with the Prime Minister, it does not scrutinise the administration of the Cabinet Office, or the Office of the Prime Minister located therein. This task is instead carried out by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC). PACAC has a more conventional membership and means of operation compared to the Liaison Committee, although it is not an ordinary select committee either. It is mandated to, among other things, examine constitutional issues as well as the standards of administration provided by the State¹⁵. PACAC typically studies the annual estimates and accounts of the Cabinet Office and usually calls on the Permanent Secretary¹⁶ and, on occasion, the Minister in the Cabinet Office. As with some select committees, the emphasis during budget proceedings is generally on prominent activities and not the detail of figures.

At the same time, PACAC has a wide remit and is not focused solely on the Cabinet Office or that of the Prime Minister. Consequently, the Cabinet Office is unlike other departments in that there is no corresponding select committee dedicated to its supervision. This is, in part, owing to the relatively small budget of the Cabinet Office compared to other departments. While PACAC has a range of responsibilities, it has made observations about the Office of the Prime Minister. In 2021, for example, the Committee published a report titled "*The Role and Status of the Prime Minister's Office*", which stated, *inter alia*, that the –

Office of the Prime Minister is nominally a business unit of the Cabinet Office. However, it currently appears to operate with even less transparency than other Cabinet Office

¹⁵ Standing Rule 146. House of Commons. Parliament UK.

¹⁶ The equivalent of a Director-General in South Africa.

business units. The Cabinet Office Annual Report and Accounts do not include a narrative report on the Office of the Prime Minister as they do for its other business units¹⁷.

It was reported that the Prime Minister's Office has not acted on the Committee's concerns and that the budget, staffing and work of the Prime Minister's Office remain relatively opaque. The delegation also heard that both the Cabinet Office and that of the Prime Minister have expanded in recent times – from a few civil servants and advisors to over a hundred – and that, consequently, there is a need for heightened oversight. In the same report of 2021, PACAC commented that –

The number and prominence of Spads (special advisors) increased, particularly in Number 10 (the Office of the Prime Minister), who took on responsibility for key policy areas which might have been regarded as the preserve of the relevant departments. In addition to the Policy Unit, a number of Spad-led, specialist units were established in Number 10 and the Cabinet Office to drive change across government¹⁸.

(D) Parliament and the Budget

Mr A Knight and Mr S Morffew from the Financial Scrutiny Unit (FSU) at Westminster briefed the delegation on the procedures and research support available to Members concerning financial and budget instruments. The delegation later met with Mr A King, Ms L Gardiner and Mr J Ebdon from the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR), and Mr T Waters from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS).

All legislation must be passed by the House of Commons, and it controls taxation and the supply of money to the Government¹⁹. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Minister of Finance) normally delivers the budget – which sets out future spending and taxation proposals – in the House of Commons in March each year. The budget comprises of a Chancellor's statement on economic and fiscal policy, setting out major tax and spending decisions, accompanied by the Budget Report. Following the budget, the Government introduces the Finance Bill to implement the tax

¹⁷ *The Role and Status of the Prime Minister's Office*, pg. 16. 2021. Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee. The House of Commons. Parliament UK.

¹⁸ *The Role and Status of the Prime Minister's Office*, pg. 9. 2021. Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee. The House of Commons. Parliament UK.

¹⁹ This notion dates back to 1215 when King John signed the Greater Charter of Liberties (Magna Carta). Among other restrictions placed on the King was the idea that the Sovereign could not impose taxes without the approval of the "common counsel" of the Kingdom.

measures set out in the Chancellor's statement. The budget includes forecasts for the economy by the OBR.

Once introduced, the House debates the budget over a number of days, after which the Houses will decide on the budget proposals (called the Budget resolutions).²⁰ Some tax measures come into effect immediately if the House of Commons agrees to them, but they require the Finance Bill, considered thereafter, to give them permanent legal effect. Once the House of Commons has agreed to the Budget Resolutions, the Finance Bill starts its passage through Parliament. The Treasury Committee²¹ first conducts an inquiry into the proposals and publishes a report with its conclusions and recommendations. The Government then responds to the Committee's findings.

Shortly after the start of the new financial year, the Government publishes its "main estimates", detailing planned spending by each department for the year. These form the basis of the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill, which typically becomes law by mid-July. Estimates are scrutinised by the select committees. Members submit proposals for which estimates they want to see debated, four of which are selected. Half a day is usually devoted to each debate. Amendments can be proposed by backbench Members to reduce spending in any of the four estimates although they are not able to propose increases in expenditure²². The House of Lords reserves the right to consider these Bills. Ultimately, any amendment to a budget would be understood as a lack of confidence in the Government, a fact which does not itself lead to far-reaching scrutiny.

To conclude the budget cycle, departments submit annual spending reviews and performance reports which are scrutinised by the respective select committees. The Public Accounts Committee also conducts an *ex-post* assessment of departmental audit statements.

There has been an ongoing argument that the House of Commons should fortify its role in the budget process. In 2019, for instance, the Procedures Committee produced a report which found that the House lacked the means to conduct effective, systematic, *ex ante* financial scrutiny and

²⁰ After the Chancellor finishes the speech, but before the Leader of the Opposition responds, the Chairman of Ways and Means puts a single motion to the Commons asking for agreement to these changes.

²¹ The Treasury Committee examines the expenditure, administration and policy of Treasury itself, as well as the Revenue & Customs Department and associated public bodies, including the Bank of England and the Financial Conduct Authority.

²² The majority of departmental estimates are not debated and are covered by "roll-up supply motions", which cannot be amended. In those cases, Members only have the option of voting down the motions in their entirety.

that this deficiency could be remedied, in some measure, by the establishment of a new committee specialising in the consideration of the Government's spending plans – a budget committee. Additionally, the House should consider the establishment of a Common's Budget Office²³. To date, these recommendations have not been acted upon.

Support for Members in Budget Matters

The Financial Scrutiny Unit (FSU) was created in 2002 as a unit of the Committee Office in Westminster to serve as the chief resource for Members to draw on when conducting oversight over budget matters. While the FSU provides a range of services, it routinely reviews the budget estimates and statements and the departmental annual reports and accounts. These reviews inform the work of select committees and can guide inquiries and Members' questions. Again, there have been calls by the Procedures Committee and other stakeholders to increase the capacity of the unit and even to transform it into a Parliamentary budget office.

The Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) is a statutory body located in the Executive but obligated to provide objective analysis to the UK Government and Parliament on the economy and fiscal sustainability. The Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act (2011) sets out the specific functions of the OBR, which include –

- (1) *The Office must, on at least two occasions for each financial year, prepare —*
 - (a) *fiscal and economic forecasts, and*
 - (b) *an assessment of the extent to which the fiscal mandate has been, or is likely to be, achieved.*

- (2) *It must also, on at least one occasion for each financial year, prepare —*
 - (a) *an assessment of the accuracy of fiscal and economic forecasts previously prepared by it, and*
 - (b) *an analysis of the sustainability of the public finances²⁴.*

²³ *Should there be a Commons Budget Committee?* 2019. Procedures Committee. The House of Commons. Parliament UK.

²⁴ Section 4: The Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act (2011).

This Act gives the OBR discretion in terms of how it can exercise its duties, as long as these are performed objectively and independently. In so doing, the OBR produces detailed financial forecasts and assesses the likely impact of policy decisions and expected developments in the economy. The Office then uses these forecasts to assess Government's performance against fiscal targets. As mentioned, the budget tabled in Parliament must contain forecasts by the OBR so that Members need not depend on Treasury information alone.

Another resource available to Members is the work undertaken by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). The IFS is a non-government institute, which attempts to -

...analyse and inform economic and social policy decisions and to help policymakers – and those who hold them accountable – understand the impact that their choices will have on individuals, households and businesses²⁵.

Mr T Waters from the Institute explained that the IFS specialised in UK taxation and public policy and produced both academic and policy-related research. Recent studies have dealt with living standards and education finance in the UK. It was able to contribute to public debate and remain relevant because it attempted to assess the empirical impacts of policy rather than pronouncing on party-political policy preferences. The Institute was reportedly mentioned 216 times in Parliamentary debates and 227 times in Government documents in 2022.

(E) Parliament and Climate Change

Mr H Yardley, Clerk of the Programming and Grand Committee and Mr M Atkins, Clerk of the Environmental Audit Committee, informed the delegation how the House of Commons has responded to the challenge of climate change. At a subsequent meeting, Ms S Vipond and Ms S Abrahams from the Climate Change Committee (CCC) similarly described the work of the CCC and its relationship with Parliament.

The UK Parliament assumed a proactive approach to oversight over climate matters and established the Environmental Audit Committee in 1997. This Committee considers the extent to which the policies and programmes of Government as a whole contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development and considers audit reports to this end. In carrying out its environmental "audit" role, the Committee is assisted by the National Audit Office.

²⁵ Institute for Fiscal Studies website.

The UK also passed the Climate Change Act in 2008. This Act committed the UK to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100 per cent of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. In this manner, the Act provides predictability and transparency on the part of the Government. The Act also established the Climate Change Committee (CCC)²⁶ as an independent entity with a duty, *inter alia*, to –

- (1) advise the Government on progress with net zero;
- (2) advise in connection with carbon budgets;
- (3) advise on emissions from international aviation and international shipping; and
- (4) report to Parliament each year setting out its work and advice²⁷.

The recent establishment of the new Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has also led to the creation of an Energy Security and Net Zero Select Committee with a focus on the energy sector and the climate. The CCC stressed the importance of ongoing consultation and co-ordination between stakeholders. The CCC nevertheless confirmed that, notwithstanding some developments in Government, progress with climate action in the UK had slowed and that renewed leadership was essential, both within the country and beyond²⁸.

(F) Other Engagements

As a courtesy, the delegation was received by the South African High Commissioner to the UK of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, his Excellency Mr JN Mamabolo. South Africa has long-standing and progressive relations with the UK. Members later attended a diplomatic function at Africa House whose purpose was to advocate for South Africa to be elected in the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Deputy Minister for Transport, Mr LN Mangcu, spoke at the function.

Delegates also met with Mr J Loose and Ms H Haywood from the Parliamentary Commonwealth Association (CPA) UK. The CPA seeks to foster co-operation between parliaments, promote good Parliamentary practice and advance Parliamentary democracy. The 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference will take place in Ghana in early October under the theme “*The*

²⁶ Such a structure would likely be called a commission in South Africa.

²⁷ Sections 32-38. Climate Change Act (2008).

²⁸ *Progress in Reducing Emissions 2023. Report to Parliament*. UK Climate Change Committee (CCC). This report is available on the CCC website.

Commonwealth Charter 10 years on: values and principles for parliaments to uphold.” The CPA UK also intends to facilitate meetings with African Parliaments on gender-based violence and modern slavery. Lastly, it was reported that the CPA remains committed to review and elevate the status of the CPA in line with its past resolutions.

(G) Observations

- (1) Whereas the UK Parliament has extensive precedents and long-standing mutual understanding between Members (and Government), the South African Parliament already had, in many respects, more comprehensive procedures and standards concerning oversight and Executive accountability.
- (2) The Office of the Prime Minister in the UK had, over time, taken on more policy-making and monitoring functions, which supported the need for further oversight. While the composition of the Liaison Committee may not, in a different context, be ideal – with each Chairperson inclined to focus on their own agenda – its existence appeared a useful mechanism to engage on matters of policy with the Office of the Prime Minister.
- (3) In terms of budget matters, the rules and practices of the House of Commons did not appear to support comprehensive scrutiny. Debates on budgets tended to be high-level rather than on the detail of actual estimates or spending. Moreover, the support provided to Members and committees to scrutinise and propose amendments was constrained. This was evident in the limitations experienced by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) in its oversight over the finances of the Cabinet Office and the Office of the Prime Minister. The budget process also provided for limited public participation, and the focus was often on academics and fiscal entities rather than the broader public.
- (4) The Financial Scrutiny Unit, despite limited capacity, seemed to provide useful support to committees.
- (5) Concerning climate change and the role of the House of Commons, the Climate Change Act had facilitated transparency and Parliamentary oversight. Despite this, the UK Government had recently lagged behind other jurisdictions on climate reforms.

(H) Recommendations

The delegation recommends, that -

- (1) While the South African Parliament already has comprehensive procedures to facilitate oversight and accountability, there remain features of the rules and practices that could be enriched, the National Assembly should remain proactive and open to reforms to support its systems and practices; and
- (2) In the case of oversight over the Presidency, the Portfolio Committee on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (or its equivalent in the Seventh Parliament) be mandated to scrutinise the budget and spending of the vote on the Presidency.

(I) Acknowledgements

The collaboration and partnership of the Parliament of Westminster proved invaluable. Special gratitude is extended to Sir B Jenkin, Chair of the Liaison Committee, and Ms K Bradley, Chairperson of the Procedures Committee, in the House of Commons. In addition, the delegation acknowledges the contributions of the Office for Budget Responsibility, the Climate Change Committee, the Institute for Government and the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Sir M Jack. Special thanks go to the officials, under the direction of the Secretary to Parliament, for providing excellent support to the delegation. Finally, the delegation conveys its appreciation to the Rules Committee, led by the Speaker, for entrusting it with this important responsibility and trusts that this exercise will contribute towards the enhancement of Parliament's oversight mechanisms.
