



# The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Seminar for Parliamentary Research Services in Asia

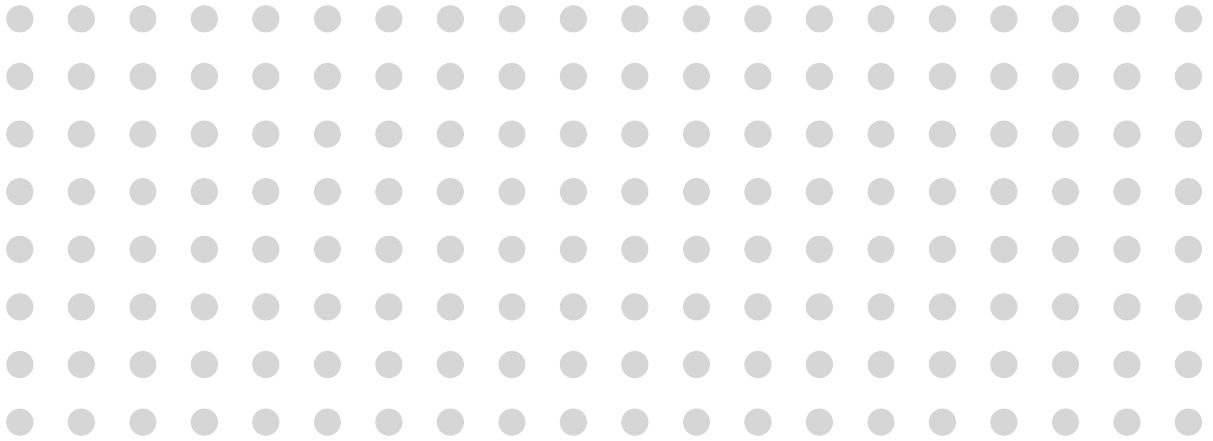
제2차 아시아 의회조사기구 국제세미나

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**Venue** National Assembly Research Service



국회입법조사처  
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RESEARCH SERVICE



# 제 1 부 Session I

**기조발제**  
**Keynote Speech**

아시아 국가의 의회기능 향상을 위한 정보와 전문 지식의 지원  
Information and Knowledge Support Services for Building  
the Capacity of Parliaments in Asian Countries

윤정석 한국의회발전연구회 이사장  
Jung-Suk, Youn, President of the Korean Institute of Legislative Studies, Inc.

**발표**  
**Presentation**

국회입법조사처의 연혁과 현황  
History and Current State of NARS

이정진 국회입법조사처 입법조사관  
Jeong-Jin, Lee, NARS Legislative Researcher



# **Information and Knowledge Support Services for Building the Capacity of Parliaments in Asian Countries**

By Jung-Suk Youn, Ph. D.

President of the Korean Institute of Legislative Studies, Inc.

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen

I sincerely welcome those participants in this seminar today from four countries of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

First of all, I want to thank Dr. Shim, Ji Yeon, the Chief of the National Assembly Research Service for sponsoring this important event today. I would also like to extend a special thanks to foreign participants in an attempt to build a meaningful network among the parliamentary research services in Asia. Last year this time, we had the first meeting of this sort with the delegates from India, Laos, Mongolia and Vietnam to discuss possibilities to establish cooperative networks among the parliamentary research services.

I am extremely fortunate to have assumed leadership of Korean Institute of Legislative Studies at this ideal time to bring our joint efforts to provide a knowledge product for parliaments and parliamentary support partners to learn from and to develop, if possible, additional capacity building programs in support of further capacitating parliaments in this area. I have been responsible to run the Institute since the year 2008, when Korean National Assembly Research Services (NARS) has just started its services in supporting Members of the National Assembly. My institute has

grown since 1981 when Korea needed to promote further capacity building in legislative development in Korea.

During the last four years, I had received several delegates from Laos, Mongolia, Thailand and Vietnam to find out a way to improve the functions of legislative institutions and law-making supports in their respective countries. I began to realize the needs of consultation and sharing of the experience of Korea with the scholars and experts, and the members of legislative bodies of neighboring countries in these regards.

I believe that one of the key fundamental elements of the capacity of the parliament is the provision of substantive and informed information and knowledge support services for MPs and parliamentary committees. Information and knowledge services that are timely, accurate, responsive and objective (non-partisan or free of other bias) are critical for the productive functioning of parliaments and their members.

Although these kinds of services are highly desirable, not many countries in Asia have established specific knowledge or research institutions supporting the parliament with such services. Less than one-third of the countries in Asia, have dedicated and well-funded information resources or research services supporting the law-making and oversight functions of the parliament.

The KILA has commissioned a comparative research on parliamentary institutions and their functions by looking at existing structures in Asia (including Korea) and beyond, with the aim of providing a knowledge product for parliaments and parliamentary support partners to learn from and to develop. These studies have been promoted with some research grants to the experts and scholars of the selected countries of Laos, Mongolia, the Philippines and Vietnam on the standing committees, staff legislative supporting systems, the legislative oversights of the executive and the procedural basics of parliament's plenary sessions. These research results were circulated to the

staffs of the UNDP parliamentary strengthening programs in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam so far. It is, of course, also to the research staffs of Vietnam Office of National Assembly and the Vietnamese Institute of Legislative Studies. When Lao delegates of study tour to Korea visited KILS a couple of months ago, we also provided our publications.

Personally, I had joined to the effort to build more democratic and balanced developments of government institutions since 1980, when the major transformation of regimes of Korea took place after the most authoritarian government had ceased to be performing due to an assassination of the late President Park Chung-Hee in 1979. I had helped to build democratic governance in Korea since then, in institutional reforms of the National Assembly. The range of reform measures were around in building multi-party systems and in practicing a clean and fair election through the transformation of election management systems. Therefore, I have been enjoying sharing my personal experiences with those who need to have for their perspective changes of systems and formats of the governance in their countries.

I have met many deputies, scholars, partisan scholars of the communist party, and researchers in various institutions in those respective countries I visited. In my calling card files, I counted over eighty some cards so far. I have participated in the conferences and workshops on various subjects with regard to the constitution and parliamentary reforms in those countries. I have always accompanied with other young Korean scholars in the fields on the topic.

Since Korea was graduated from the foreign assistance receiving status sometime ago, I have not realized until recent time that there are many international organizations, which are multilateral groups or individual donors, to help parliamentary strengthening programs and to promote good governance in Asian countries.

UNDP programs are most complex and diverse in their country projects; USAID, World Bank Institute, Parliamentary Center of Canada, National Democratic Institute

of US, Foundations of Germany, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands are some of those individual donors. Australian, British and French involvements in this regard are visible also; you search for the information on their activities in this region in the websites. Project activities of these donors cover various areas of interests in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America toward the efforts to improve the parliamentary capacity.

I noticed that under the banner of United Nations, UNDP had put their efforts to help these Asian countries in the good governance programs together with socio-economic development projects. KILS has granted for two project researches on the study of UNDP parliamentary strengthening programs in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. These research projects aim to find out what can be done for the further promotion of Korea's contribution in this regard to the capacity building of parliamentary research services in Asia.

Development of staffs, improvement of IT facilities, some office equipments and spaces, are to certain extent, the most needed for further improvement now. These donors attempt to make networking among the countries in the region in exchanging information and experiences by holding forums and seminars at the various level with the deputies, experts and scholars.

Four years of my experience in running the KILS dictates my tentative conclusions on how to assist to and cooperate with the staffs of other national assemblies. We need to improve the research capabilities of the parliaments by training staffs and associated scholars to the legislature.

For the reference, I give you an example of the statistics of the parliamentary capacity in constructing research services and staffs supporting in law-making processes in Korea. It took more than twenty

### Staffs, Experts and Assistants in the National Assembly of Korea

	Full-time members of NA	Assistants to NA members	Researchers in Negotiation Groups	Secretariat Staffs	Library Staffs
Persons	299	1,794	67	1,229	267

NA Budget Office Staffs	NA Research Service Staffs	Total Number of Staffs
105	92	3,853

years to improve the research and staff supporting capacities since the democratic transformation of Korean politics that took place in 1987. We are proud of achieving this level of magnitude in staffing and organizing the supporting works in the legislature.

In the meantime, I would like to suggest some cooperative measures we can pursue at this initial stage of building cooperative network among us in Asia.

First of all, I would like to say that the Korean National Assembly should continue to bring about an initiative to consolidate the network infra so far we had accomplished among the participant legislatures in Asia. Under the leadership of Dr. Shim, Ji Yeon, the head of Korean National Assembly Research Service, annual seminar like this today must be called for regularly in November every year until we can establish a Secretariat Office in near future.

Until such time as we have regular consultation meeting among the participant legislatures of Asia, I call for the Korean National Assembly should set aside some fund for the development of this seminar into a practical training ground for the research staffs of the other participants in the parliamentary capacity building. We need to set up a new training institute of staffs supporting deputies and to invite



some brilliant graduate level students to Korea by granting fellowships in order to acquire knowledge relevant to legislative supports.

Throughout the last four years of experience in running the KILS, I realize that Korean experience should provide for those parliaments in sharing our research results of any potential use of materials for the deputies in other countries. This dissemination of research information is possible by Korea's expanding use of English, Chinese and Russian, when KNARS wants put out its research reports to its official website.

I am again sincerely hope that our efforts to promote mutual growing in the field of research and analysis of issues in law-making processes of the national assemblies will lead us to give a birth of regional organization in the near future. I also hope that the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea should be aware of the existing needs of regional cooperation in this regard.

Thank you very much for your attention. I wish you all have pleasant stay in Korea while you are visiting Seoul in this time.

Thank you again.

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RESEARCH SERVICE

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