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Press release

Workshop on Legislative Drafting at the Lebanese Parliament

On 16 February 2012, the Lebanese Parliament Administration and Justice Committee within the framework of its joint programme with the Westminster Foundation funded by the European Union, organised a workshop entitled: "**Drafting Legislation: Challenges and prospects for improvement**". The workshop took place at the Lebanese Parliament and was attended by Lebanese parliamentarians, parliamentary delegations from Tunisia and Egypt, representatives from the Lebanese executive and judicial branches, Lebanese university experts, media and regional and international experts in legislative drafting.

The EU programme aims to strengthen the Lebanese Parliament to further enhance its legislative and budgetary oversight functions, required to sustain a deep democracy. It focuses on working with Members of Parliament and developing an Advisory Unit to provide technical support and expertise for two key parliamentary committees, the Finance and Budget Committee, and the Administrative and Justice Committee.

Chair of Administration and Justice Committee, MP Robert Ghanem, welcomed the participants and stressed on the importance of drafting legislation. He stated that legislation set the link between the individual and the State, among individuals in a State and among populations. He added that democracy is not an ordinary regime because it requires an efficient popular participation through their representatives in the Parliament noting that the role of parliaments is crucial in legislations and oversight.

Mrs Elsa Fenet, Chargé d'Affaires at the Delegation of the European Union, said that "The European Union has a longstanding commitment to encourage and support political and economic reforms in Lebanon, based on mutual accountability and shared universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. National Parliaments are considered pivotal institutions in democratic systems, as they play a central role in law-making, oversight of the Executive and representation of the population. The EU will continue to put more emphasis on parliamentary strengthening within its cooperation".

Head of MENA Programmes at the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Dr Dina Melhem, thanked the participants for their presence, namely the Arab parliamentary delegations, which reinforces exchange of experiences and expertise. Dr Melhem highlighted the importance of the topic, noting that this workshop is one in a series of activities with the Administration and Justice Committee within an EU funded programme. She concluded by referring to a guide that was elaborated with international and local Lebanese University experts entitled: 'Guide for Legislative Analysis'.

The workshop sessions discussed the main problems and challenges faced by different stakeholders in reviewing and adopting legislations and the complementary role of the parliamentary and governmental authorities in the process of drafting legislation. The workshop also presented the French and British

experience and the technical support available for MPs. International best practices were also discussed in the last session, and participants adopted a number of recommendations based on these.