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PARLIAMENT  
OF KENYA  
LIBRARY

The Kenya National Assembly  
Ninth Parliament

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VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICAN &  
SPANISH PARLIAMENT

25TH - 31ST AUGUST 2004



**THE KENYA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**NINTH PARLIAMENT**

**VISIT OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND SPANISH PARLIAMENTS**  
**25<sup>TH</sup> JULY -31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2004**

**DELEGATION:**

Hon.David Musila, M.P.	-	Deputy Speaker
Hon. G.G. Kariuki, M.P.	-	Commissioner
Hon. J.J. Kamotho, M.P.	-	Commissioner
Hon. John Sambu, M.P.	-	Commissioner
Hon. Eng. Eric Nyamunga, M.P.		
Arch. Patrick Wasike	-	Ministry of Roads & Public Works
Eng. Herman W. Githaiga	-	Sound Engineer, KBC
Mr. Joseph Machanje	-	Hansard Editor
Mrs. Mary G. Kanyiha	-	Chief Supplies Officer
Arch. James Kimathi	-	Lead Consultant
Eng. Nicholas Gumbo RSA Parliament visit	-	Electrical Engineers
Eng. Dominic Ojendo RSA parliament visit	-	''

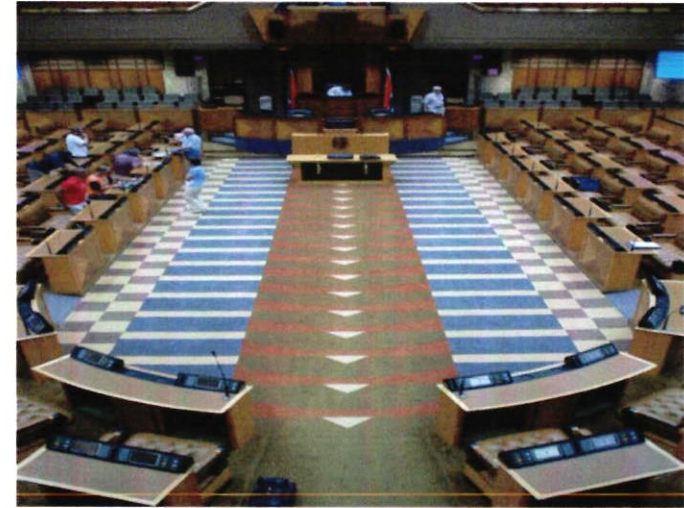
**PURPOSE**

**The Debating Chamber of Kenyan Parliament is set to undergo modification and refurbishment to accommodate 300 Members of Parliament. To be able to understand the modern demands in electronic technology, the Parliamentary Service Commission decided to visit three Parliaments to see how these systems are operated and managed. The destinations chosen were the South African Parliament in Cape Town, the Spanish Parliament in Madrid and the Scottish Parliament.**

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## **THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT- CAPE TOWN**

The Republic of South Africa (RSA) Parliament in Cape Town has just completed set up of its electronic facilities. These include sound and vision recording equipment, electronic voting, telephone cabling, computer networking, language interpretation and provision of laptop computers to its members. A full systems management department has been set up to maintain and oversee the growth of this fast-moving technology both in the short term and long term. The Parliament has recognized the strategic significance of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and a budget has been set aside to cater for this department.



*The South African Parliament  
Design made carpet*

## **Electronic Screens**

Each sitting station of a Member is equipped with electronic screen through which he is able to receive Bills, order papers, Acts of Parliament, Constitution etc. and can review his or her speech. It also has control buttons to vote and communicate with the Speaker. The electronic voting is also recorded on two big screens on the chamber showing the arrangement of Members present and those voting. These screens allow the Parliamentary staff to monitor Members present and those voting. Electronic cameras located at strategic points of the Chamber assist to confirm the actual position of the house.



*Electronic screens*





## Communication

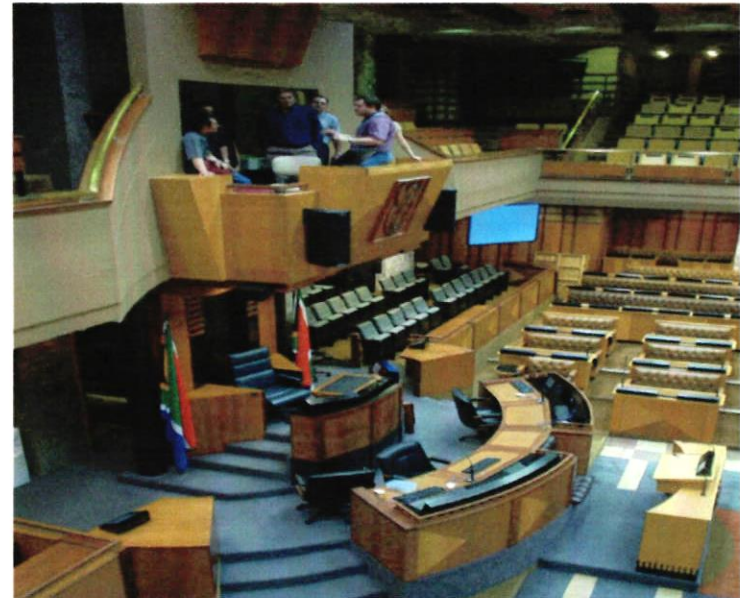
In Republic of South Africa (RSA) Parliament, all the Ministers have speaker microphones. The other members access microphones at selected locations along the aisle. The reason given was that if all Members had microphones, the whole house would be cluttered with protruding microphones creating aesthetic problem. These speaking positions cater for points-of order during debates. The Ministers sit on the first two front rows

However, a central position in front of the Speaker and the Clerks has been built to assist the house during addresses. The speakers are determined and queue on a chair awaiting their turn. The Member addresses the house directly facing other Members and the Speaker at the back.

Kenya Parliamentary Service Commissioners were not satisfied both with the limitations of microphones and the position of apparently addressing the house and not the Speaker. They were also very anxious about possibility of voting by absent Members

## Speaker's podium

The design of the Speaker's podium was of major interest to the Commissioners. There was a major discussion by the Commissioners regarding the disturbance caused by members to the Speaker while the debate is going on. Some members felt that the doors leading to the rear of the Chamber should be moved. However, in all Parliaments the aspect of security especially in evacuating the Head of State and the Speaker through the nearest rear opening during commotions is overriding in any design.



*Speaker's Podium*

*The security escape entrance is immediately at the rear.*

## **Security systems**

The RSA Parliament has an elaborate security system. Every person who enters Parliament goes through an "airport type security system." The Permanent staff or any person likely to move between offices is issued with an electronic tag which facilitates movements between offices and sheds light on his whereabouts within the precincts of Parliament. It is therefore easy to know where that person is at any given time.

## **Broadcast/recording**

The Republic of South Africa (RSA) Parliament has three channels and they are able to broadcast and televise to the public and interpret in eleven languages. There is also a provision for broadcasting from all committee rooms. All audio materials are directed and recorded on the computer server and editing is done. There are also essential back-ups in case of any problem.

Each Member of Parliament is assigned a computer. The computer and cell phones are never allowed in Parliament. Interestingly, the Spanish Parliament allows members to communicate with phones at their desks to avoid irritating usage of mobile phones in the House. They indicated that members require a lot of essential information from outside the house during business hours. This is a sign that it is working well. The broadcasting and recording has been analogue but it is soon going to be digital.



## THE SPANISH PARLIAMENT

The National Assembly and the Senate have a unique sitting arrangement.

The congress of Deputies is a circular neo-classic architecture and the Senate is a semi-circle. Both houses have embraced the electronic technology.

The National Assembly has adjustable microphones which are tilted parallel to the bench when not in use. This reduces microphone cluster look in the house.

The Senate is a more recent building and is clad in Canadian wood both on its walls and ceiling. The seats are movable and are upholstered in leather. The entire house looks neat and elegant the Speaker's podium is dismountable for regular maintenance and running of the cables.

### The seats

It was in Spain that the team got to address the issue of seats. The team felt strongly that Members of Parliament should sit on seats that are anchored to the floor. The most critical part of the seat was observed as the gear which enables some horizontal turn and rear movement.

The rest will be leather upholstery with head and arm rests



*Spanish Parliament - Congress of Deputies*



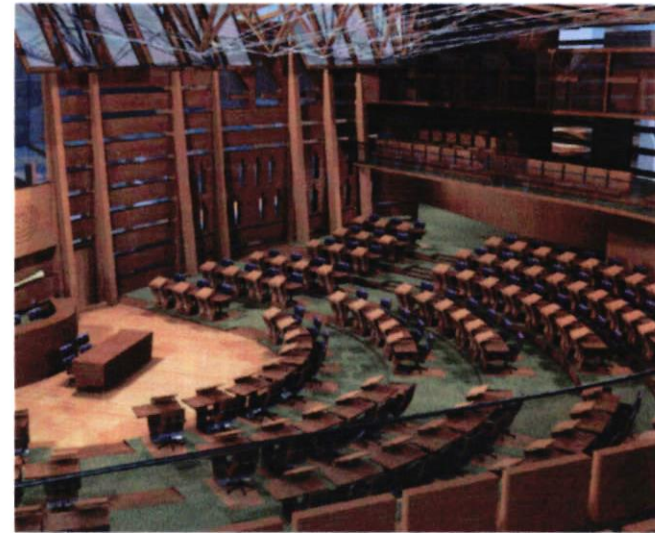
*Spanish Parliament – Speaker's Podium  
The curtain screen offers rear entry and escape route*

## THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

The site was initially strongly recommended for a visit. This is the most recently completed Parliament with very modern systems. Unfortunately during the intended visit, preparations were going on for the opening of the Parliament by the Queen.

The visit was therefore postponed to a later date.

Latest design and completed chamber following Commonwealth tradition (to be visited in November 2004)



*The Scottish Parliament*

## OBSERVATION

The Debating Chamber in the present day and age has heavy demands in technology in order to provide adequate audio and visual communication between the Members of Parliament and the general public. The architecture and interior design must be such that they will be a testimony of functional and quality work.

1. The preservation of history was evident on all the Parliaments visited. In fact, without this element the buildings will lose their monumental value and the pride of the Nation.
2. The interior décor projects an image of countries' prosperity and innovation. Inside, there is a feeling of place and importance of technology.
3. The chamber is constantly active and maintenance of the equipment is prime and things cannot be allowed to go wrong. The challenge to adequately maintain the electronic equipment is enormous.



4. To manage the entire Parliamentary system (security, mechanical systems, audio visual systems etc) calls for a strong department. This calls for a well co-ordinated and integrated management system.
5. The volume of cabling that takes place in Parliament is extensive. Every year there are changes that require the use of cables in and around Parliament buildings.
6. The method of procurement of equipment is rigorous and if not dealt with early could cause delays in implementation of an urgently needed project. Most of the materials and equipment are not manufactured locally. In fact, except for normal items like building sand, cement and ballast, all other materials and equipment are imported. In case of Kenya Parliament, the equipment forms a big part of the cost.
7. The client at the moment required all the interior work including the ceiling, the galleries and VIP areas to be attended along with other work. This will help in giving the Chamber a complete uniform and up-to date appearance.
8. It was also felt that there are several projects that are being implemented in Parliament. That is security and Information Technology (IT). These projects require to be integrated into one management.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a real danger of delay due to the prequalification method which does not seem to favour a fast tract project like this one. The Project Manager (Ministry of Roads & Public Works) to recommend and seek approval for a short listing (restricted tendering) method which will identify contractors and suppliers to undertake this work early.
2. The electronic system to be installed in the Kenyan Chamber to use the latest technologies available. The system to be fully digital with recording on computer servers. The transcription for harnsard to be facilitated through computer workstations.
3. There is need for Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC) to make rules regarding what goes out for broadcasting from the house. Who will own the transmitting equipments or do the client give a signal to the broadcasting houses? Parliament in the long run will also require to produce its own programmes to cover periods when it is not in session.
4. There is also need for facilities regarding physically challenged persons particularly deaf and dumb. Kenya also uses two languages – English and Kiswahili. It will be necessary to have translation facilities for the two languages for the gallaries.
5. Electronic voting system to incorporate security features to avoid a member voting for an absent colleague. A time frame will be required for a member to confirm his voting. Technology should not be used to stipple democracy
6. Parliament needs a website. The website incorporates audio and video streaming of parliamentary proceedings, Hansard, the Constitution and Law of Kenya etc. should also be availed on the website.
- 7 The National Assembly should create an emblem and its signature colours. The colours will assist during the choice of materials and interior design. This is an important exercise which should involve all stake holders.

- 8 A project steering committee of Parliamentary Service Commissioners should be set. This committee will from time to time meet with the Ministry of Road and Public Works and the Consultants.
9. An early visit to the Scottish Parliament which was not done to be made. This will give the team an all round experience in dealing with technological and interior design issues. The rapport created during the visits helps the stake holders to speak with one voice.
10. Discussions between the Committee, the Minister and consultants to be held on the site to look at the practical aspects of the project.
11. A position on the podium to be created which enables a member to address the floor from a position which faces the house and the Speaker as well.

In order to produce a quality and well resolved project the above requests to be addressed early so that the project can start in time and avoid pressure on such a wanted space.

**Compiled by the Technical Team**  
**On behalf of the delegation.**

**August 2004**