

Introduction

Chapter 4 of the Constitution (Sections 59 and 72) puts an obligation and a responsibility on Parliament to facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of Parliament.

Background

As part of a programme to build an effective People's Parliament that is responsive to the needs of the people and that is driven by the ideal of realising a better quality of life for all the people of South Africa, Parliament of the Republic of South Africa made a decision to embark on a process of establishing Parliamentary Democracy Offices (known as PDOs) in all nine provinces.

To date, three offices have been established in the following provinces, Limpopo, Northern Cape and North West, and there is a central PDO based in Parliament.

Mandate of the PDOs

Parliamentary Democracy Offices are being established with the aim of creating an immediate and sustained parliamentary presence, particularly in the deep rural, under-resourced and under-served local communities in all nine provinces, which for various reasons have remained outside national debates in society and the mainstream of public involvement and participation.

Objectives of the PDOs

- Expand Parliament's access, opportunity and space to be directly in touch and continuously engage with the people who are ordinarily outside national debates in society.
- Coordinate public participation and involvement in the legislative processes and other activities of both the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces and their Committees in all the provinces, in accordance with the parliamentary strategic plan and annual calendar.
- Ensure a greater level of efficiency, economy and effectiveness in accessing communities and providing support for parliamentary programmes.

Functions of the PDOs

Our role is to:

- Provide information about Parliament and its work
- Conduct public education and empowerment programmes about Parliament
- Provide a platform for the public to access, be involved and participate in the processes of Parliament
- Provide support to parliamentary programmes
- Coordinate and cooperate with other spheres of government

PDOs Programmes

Our programmes include the following:

- Environmental scanning
- Stakeholder empowerment workshops
- Public awareness
- Support to parliamentary programmes
- Annual reviews with stakeholders

Environmental Scanning

This is a process whereby the offices identify and gather information on community issues, needs and concerns in order to inform Parliament and ensure that their programmes' envisaged objectives are achieved.

Stakeholder Empowerment Workshops

The purpose of these workshops is to empower stakeholders and community structures with the understanding and knowledge of Parliament and its legislative processes, in order to enable them to effectively facilitate community matters pertaining to Parliament and participate meaningfully in parliamentary processes and activities.



Public Awareness

This programme provides members of the public an opportunity to engage with the Members of Parliament and other spheres of government in connection with their issues. This platform is further used to inform the public, facilitate inputs and feedback on matters before Parliament.

Support to Parliamentary Programmes

PDOs provide support to all parliamentary programmes in the provinces, particularly to both Houses, namely, the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces and their Committees.

Annual Reviews with Stakeholders

The purpose of the reviews is to provide a space for the stakeholders and communities that we have worked with to provide feedback and input which is used to inform and improve our programmes. Stakeholders from the intended target areas are also invited.

HOW TO CONTACT US

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PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY OFFICES

