



## New County Assemblies Bolster Lawmaking

**Improved communication between county governments and the national Senate enrich the legislative process in Kenya.**



Photo: County Assemblies Forum

County assembly members study and discuss legislation with the guidance of a technical expert supported by USAID.

*“We have now established a clear process for the county assemblies to make contributions to the bills before the Senate.”*

*— The Hon. Kipkirui Chepkwony  
County Assembly Forum Member*

The 2010 Kenya Constitution paved the way for devolution by establishing 47 county governments. An integral component of these governments is the county assembly, which exercises county legislative authority.

At the national level, the Kenyan Senate represents the interests of the 47 counties and their governments. Formulating relevant policies and legislation for the counties requires good interaction between the two bodies.

The county assemblies lacked a clear mechanism for making contributions to pending Senate bills. The USAID Agile and Harmonized Assistance for Devolved Institutions (AHADI) project provided technical assistance to the umbrella body of county assemblies, the County Assemblies Forum (CAF), to establish a system for reviewing and contributing to bills before they reach the Senate. The process involved identifying select bills and reviewing them, clause by clause, to ensure the legislation responds to the counties’ operating context.

As a result of this support, from January to June 2015, CAF was able to review 11 bills addressing allocation of revenue to counties, early childhood education, natural resources and benefit sharing and community land, among others. The outputs of the review meetings are memoranda containing proposals for revision of the bills. The memoranda were shared with the Senate, through the Office of The Clerk and the relevant Senate Committee on Devolved Government.

Members of CAF are now aware of bills being discussed before the Senate and are contributing to the content of the law on behalf of their counties. The legislators have a better grasp of the process of legislative drafting and the conceptualization.

“Through this process, we are now able to develop laws that address the issues and needs at the county level, and our relationship with the Senate has been strengthened,” said the The Hon. Kipkirui Chepkwony, a county assembly member.

The State University of New York Center for International Development (SUNY/CID) implements AHADI to help Kenya achieve the promise of devolution through a governance system that is more transparent, accountable, effective in service delivery, and responsive to empowered citizens.

### Telling Our Story

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