“Why Strengthen Parliaments in Fragile States?”

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**Rockefeller College “Policy Conversations”**
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Effective legislatures are critical for inclusive, representational government. However, donor agencies have traditionally preferred to provide support to government executives that are seen to be more authoritative than sometimes fractious parliaments. Working with parliaments requires greater patience in order to help build coalitions for change in creating a culture in support of effective governance rather than the quick results generally favored by international donors. Peter Vanhoutte will address the importance of working with legislatures and propose an effective strategy for building the capacity of legislative bodies.

Peter Vanhoutte is a parliamentary empowerment expert and SUNY/CID senior consultant, technical leader and advisor for the legislative capacity building component of the Serbia Separation of Powers Program (SPP), managed by the East-West Management Institute (EWMI). SPP is designed to help Serbia move closer to European Union accession by strengthening the division of power and authority more equably among Serbia's three branches of government.

Mr. Vanhoutte is a former Member of the Belgian Parliament with more than 10 years experience in the Balkans. He has served as a Parliamentary Empowerment Expert in Kosovo, Georgia, Nepal, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. Through his extensive experience with the OSCE, he has been seconded numerous times to the following positions: Special Envoy to the Head of the Kosovo OSCE Mission in northern Kosovo; Special Political Adviser to the Kosovo-Serb political parties and community; Special Adviser to the President of the Assembly of Kosovo; Adviser EAR project Support to the Assembly of Kosovo; and Senior Adviser external/parliamentary oversight on police and security/intelligence services. Mr. Vanhoutte completed his studies in Philosophy at the Centre for Philosophy and Religious Studies in Leuven, Belgium.

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