

Day 2: Legislative Oversight & Accountability

Dr Daisy

3-Hour Interactive Workshop

Session Objectives

- Understand legislative oversight mechanisms
- Role of legislative committees
- Budget transparency
- Anti-corruption
- Federal balance

What is Good Governance?

- ❖ Good governance is not just “good government”
- ❖ It’s a system of
 - ✓ how power is exercised,
 - ✓ decisions are made (implement policies), and
 - ✓ public resources are managed
- ❖ in a way that is **accountable, transparent, inclusive, effective, and lawful**
- ❖ outcomes are fair, effective, and trusted

***“Good governance is not built by law alone—it requires institutions, oversight, accountability, and real results to build trust, with continuous adaptation.

Oversight + Accountability = the mechanism that produces Good Governance

- ❖ Legislative Oversight → monitors the executive
- ❖ Accountability → ensures consequences & responsibility
- ❖ Result → Good Governance

Good Governance = Outcome

- Fair
- Effective
- Transparent
- Trusted

What is Legislative Oversight?

legislative oversight

- ❖ is not only about monitoring executive action; in a narrower constitutional sense, it mainly targets the executive branch,
- ❖ but legislatures can also scrutinize judicial administration, budgets, ethics, and appointments depending on the constitution

***Legislative oversight က Judiciary (တရားရေးအာဏာ) အပေါ်မှာ “direct control” မရှိဘူးဒါပေမယ့် - indirect oversight / accountability mechanisms ရှိပါတယ် (Judicial independence က အရေးကြီး)

Why Legislative Oversight Matters?

- Prevent abuse of power
- Improve governance
- Strengthen democracy

👉 Oversight ကောင်းလေလေ

➔ Corruption လျော့လေလေ

➔ စီးပွားရေးတိုးတက်မှု ပိုကောင်းလေလေ

Parliamentary (legislature) Oversight Tools

Internal Tools (အတွင်းပိုင်း)

 Oral & Written Questions

 Interpellations
(အကြောင်းပြချက်တောင်းခြင်း)

 Committees (ကော်မတီများ)

 Hearings (ကြားနာပွဲ)

 Motions (အရေးယူဖို့အဆို)

External Tools (ပြင်ပအဖွဲ့)

 Supreme Audit Institution
(ငွေစာရင်းစစ်အဖွဲ့)

 Anti-corruption agencies

 Ombudsman
(ပြည်သူ့တိုင်ကြားမှုစစ်ဆေးသူ)

Tools တွေရှိ ပြီး နိုင်ငံရေး အသိစိတ် (political will) နဲ့ ထိထိရောက်ရောက် သုံးနိုင် လေလေ corruption နည်းလေလေ ဖြစ်ပြီး Governance system က stability ဖြစ်လာလေလေ ဖြစ်မယ်

Examples: Legislative Oversight in Practice

- ❖ Questioning ministers (examine how government power is used, not just how laws are written)
- ❖ Investigating misuse of funds (Budget review)
- ❖ Policy review
- ❖ Federal-state accountability - review how a regional government implements education, infrastructure, or welfare programs
- ❖ Anti-corruption action

Types of Legislative Committees

- ❖ Standing Committees - investigate a public issue such as police conduct, procurement fraud, or delayed public services (focus on specific sectors- e.g. Health, Education, Security/Policy & Finance sectors)
- ❖ Public Accounts Committee -The most important committee for **financial accountability**
- ❖ Special Committees (Temporary / Issue-Based Committees)

“In transitional federal systems, strong committees = strong accountability.”

Budgetary Oversight

Budgetary oversight means the legislature checks how public money is planned, approved, spent, and audited so that government funds are used lawfully and effectively

- ✓ Budget approval
- ✓ Monitoring spending
- ✓ Audit reports

This oversight helps prevent waste, fraud, and misuse of public funds

Transparency in Governance

- ❖ Open data - Government data made accessible to the public
- ❖ Public reporting - Government regularly informs the public about actions and results
- ❖ Citizen participation - People actively involved in decision-making and monitoring

Anti-Corruption Measures

- Legal frameworks
- Oversight bodies
- Asset declarations

Example tools:

- Audit reports.
- Asset disclosure.
- Public hearings.
- Reporting requirements.
- Sanctions for misconduct.

Example: Oversight committees can investigate conflict of interest, unexplained procurement, or hidden spending.

Challenges in Oversight

- Political interference
- Weak institutions
- Limited capacity

Challenges of Interim Governance Systems

- ✓ Legitimacy Crisis (တရားဝင်မှု ပြဿနာ)
- ✓ Weak Institutional Capacity (အဖွဲ့အစည်း အားနည်းမှု)
- ✓ Security Constraints (လုံခြုံရေး ကန့်သတ်ချက်)
- ✓ Limited Financial Resources (ဘဏ္ဍာရေး အားနည်းမှု)
- ✓ Weak Accountability Systems (တာဝန်ခံမှု အားနည်းမှု)
- ✓ Fragmentation & Coordination Problems (အဖွဲ့အစည်း ကွဲပြားမှု)
- ✓ Legal & Constitutional Gaps (ဥပဒေ အားနည်းမှု)

Federal System & Power Balance

- ❖ Federal vs State roles - State autonomy vs Federal control
- ❖ Checks and balances
- ❖ Shared authority

Oversight in Federal States

- ❖ Multi-level accountability
 - ✓ Each level of government is accountable:
To its legislature
To higher/lower levels
To citizens
- ❖ Coordination issues
- ❖ Legal frameworks
 - ✓ Oversight must be defined by law:
 - Constitution
 - Administrative laws
 - Institutional rules

Accountability (တာဝန်ယူမှု) ဆိုတာဘာလဲ?

Accountability ဆိုတာက—

- ❖ လူတစ်ယောက် (သို့) အဖွဲ့အစည်းတစ်ခုက သူလုပ်တဲ့အရာတွေကို
 - ➔ ရှင်းပြနိုင်ရမယ် (answerability)
 - ➔ မှားရင် အပြစ်ပေးနိုင်ရမယ် (enforcement)
- ❖ အမျိုးအစား ၄ မျိုး
 - Horizontal – အစိုးရအဖွဲ့အချင်းချင်းထိန်းချုပ်မှု (ဥပမာ – လွှတ်တော် vs အစိုးရ)
 - Vertical – ပြည်သူတွေက မဲပေးပြီးထိန်းချုပ်တာ
 - Diagonal – ပြည်သူတွေ တိုက်ရိုက်ပါဝင်ပြီးထိန်းချုပ်တာ
 - Social – လူမှုအသိုင်းအဝိုင်း၊ NGO စတဲ့အဖွဲ့တွေက စောင့်ကြည့်တာ

→ အစိုးရကောင်းဖြစ်ဖို့ အရေးကြီးတာ ၂ ခု—

1. Oversight tools ရှိရမယ်

2. အသုံးပြုချင်တဲ့ စိတ်ရှိရမယ်

→ အထူးသဖြင့်

✓ ပြည်သူတွေက တာဝန်ယူမှုတောင်းဆိုမှု

✓ စနစ်တကျကောင်းလာမယ်

Interim federal systems မှာ oversight effectiveness က—

Oversight = Tools + Political will + Public demand + Context

- Rules မပြည့်စုံ → adaptive/informal mechanisms
- Political will မရှိ → public pressure & incentives
- Federal intervention → only when system failure

Key Takeaways

- Oversight ensures accountability
- Committees are critical
- Transparency builds trust
- Balance of power is essential

Group Discussion Task

In order to implement good governance in interim federal units:

1. What are the key weaknesses in legislative oversight in your context?
2. Why do these weaknesses exist, and what challenges make effective oversight difficult?
3. What practical and realistic steps can be taken to strengthen oversight and accountability under current constraints?

Key Points

- ❑ Good governance in interim systems is not about full openness—it is about structured accountability under constraints.”
- ❑ Good governance doesn’t emerge from law alone—it requires institutions, incentives, and practice.
- ❑ “Even limited systems can deliver strong oversight if institutions, processes, and participation are designed properly.”

- ❖ “Law is the foundation—but institutions and practice make governance work.”
- ❖ “Trust is not created by law—it is earned through performance and accountability.”
- ❖ Principles → Law → Power Structure → Institutions → Oversight → Accountability → Transparency & Participation → Results → Trust → Adaptation



Thank
You

A stylized graphic of the words "Thank You" in a white, cursive, 3D font with a black outline and a drop shadow. The text is set against a circular orange gradient background. The entire graphic is centered on a white rectangular background, which is itself set against a dark brown background. A solid orange square is located in the top right corner of the dark brown background.