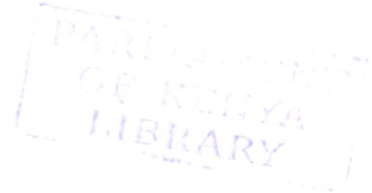




REPUBLIC OF KENYA



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**REPORT ON THE VISIT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

SEPTEMBER 16 - 23, 2001

**PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS
NAIROBI**

SEPTEMBER, 2001

328.365
KNA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.0	BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE.....	3
3.0	THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.....	4
4.0	INFORMATION SERVICES SECTION OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.....	4
5.0	RESEARCH UNIT.....	8
6.0	INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE.....	9
7.0	OBSERVATIONS MADE ABOUT THE INFORMATION SERVICES OF THE PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA.....	9
8.0	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	10
9.0	CONCLUSION.....	10

KENYA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Accession: 10014288

Call No: 328-365 KNA



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Library Sub-Committee comprising the following Members of Parliament and a Parliamentary Staff made an official visit to the Information Services Section of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa between 16th and 21st September, 2001: -

Hon. David Ethuro, M.P – Leader of the Delegation.
Hon. Wafula Wamunyinyi, M.P
Ms. Grace Mwakio – Secretary to the delegation

This was as a result of a proposal made during the Library Committee Sitzings that a Sub-Committee be established to carry out the task of reviewing its mandate and the status of the library. It was agreed that the Sub-Committee should visit other Parliamentary Libraries to learn how they have been established. The visit to the Parliament Library of the Republic of South Africa was the first of such planned visits.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

The Library Committee is one of the seven Standing Select Committees constituted by the House Business Committee at the commencement of every Session. Unlike the Departmental Committees that deal with the assigned Government Ministries/Departments and have a lifespan corresponding to that of a Parliament, the Library Committee is specialist and has a lifespan corresponding to that of a session.

The Library Committee is established and operates in accordance with provisions of Standing Order No. 149 which states that: -

- (1) There shall be a Select Committee to be designated the Library Committee comprising, the Deputy Speaker as Chairman and not more than 10 other Members.
- (2) The functions of the Library committee shall be: -
 - (a) to consider and advise on such matters concerning the Library as may be referred to it by the House time to time;
 - (b) to make proposals and consider suggestions for the improvement of the Library;
 - (c) to assist Members of the National Assembly in fully utilizing the services provided by the Library.

The Library Committee is a House-Keeping Committee, which provides a venue or opportunity for Members to play an active role in planning, procurement and the general

provision of services and facilities necessary for their effective and efficient discharge of role and functions.

3.0 THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Parliament of the Republic of South Africa is elected to represent the citizens of South Africa according to the country's constitution. The Parliament is made up of two Houses- the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP).

The National Assembly represents the people, chooses the President, provides a forum for debates, passes laws and oversees the Executive. The NCOP represents the provinces to ensure that provincial interests are taken into account in the national sphere of Government, participates in passing laws, provides a forum for debates of provincial issues and ensures that Local Government is represented at national level. Both Houses participate in debating and voting on the Budget.

The National Assembly consists of 400 Members of Parliament who are directly elected by the Voters in a national election. There are thirteen Political Parties in the current Parliament. Each political party in Parliament elects a Chief Whip to run its affairs.

4.0 INFORMATION SERVICES SECTION OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Information Services Section falls under the Legislation and Oversight Division and comprises of two units, the:-

- Library Unit, managed by Mr. Albert Ntunja and the
- Research Unit, managed by Dr. Leon Gabriel.

4.1 VISION, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF INFORMATION SERVICES SECTION

The Vision is:-

To be a center of excellence advancing Parliamentary democracy through professional research and information services

The Mission is:-

To provide research and information services to Members of Parliament, Committees and Staff of Parliament in a professional and objective manner.

In order to accomplish its Vision and Mission, the Section has the following objectives: -

1. Establish efficient, effective, consultative and well coordinated constitutional arrangements for the production and distribution of research and information;
2. Establish the section as a center of excellence with regard to Parliamentary research and information;
3. Develop and implement operational mechanisms to attain the highest level of service delivery focusing on Clients' needs;
4. Improve the use of Information technology to further extend the access to services and products of the section;
5. Conduct staff training (including management training) to improve the competence and knowledge of staff thereby improving service delivery and quality of output.

4.1.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PARLIAMENT LIBRARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The library of Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (PLSA) is housed in the Parliament Buildings at Cape Town, the legislative capital of the Republic and former seat of the Old Cape Parliament.

Its early beginnings can be traced back to the year 1854 when representative Government was granted to the Cape. It is the Library of Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope which in 1910, on the unification of the four self-governing British Colonies, (the Cape of Good Hope, the Transvaal, Natal and the Orange River Colony), was destined to become the first Library of the Union Parliament and later in 1961, the Library of Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

4.1.2 LIBRARY OBJECTIVES

The Library's main objectives are: -

- (i) To implement state of the art information technology in provision of an information service.
- (ii) To provide resource materials that support the information needs of Members, staff and researchers.
- (iii) To provide effective current information services to our users.
- (iv) To facilitate access to information resources outside our own collection.
- (v) To recognize that our human resources are critical to attaining Parliament's vision.
- (vi) To develop staff skills through training and performance management.
- (vii) To adapt the physical space of the library in appropriate ways to improve service delivery.
- (viii) To establish regional, national and international relations with the broader Library community.

4.1.3 CLIENTELE

PLSA is reserved for the use of Members of Parliament, the President and Staff of the Office of President, appointed Political Party Researchers, Parliamentary Researchers, Judges of the High Court, State Law Advisers and Staff of Parliament.

Members and their Researchers, as primary clientele, need relevant and accurate information to support various responsibilities of Parliament, such as:

- Making laws pursuant to its constitutional responsibilities. Hence a critical role of the PLSA and therefore the collection is to ensure the highest standard of support for the legislature in framing and making of legislation;
- Evaluating the views and interests of pressure groups;
- Visits to the Southern Africa Developing Communities (SADC), rest of Africa and Overseas, which require background information and awareness of current issues and events in those countries; and
- Current awareness of events both nationally and internationally.

4.1.4 LIBRARY OPERATION

The Parliament Library of South Africa (PLSA) is a unit of its own and it is divided into five sub-units. The Chief Librarian, Mr. Albert Ntunja, manages the Library and each sub-unit has a Control librarian:

1. Reference Sub-Unit - Ms. Barbara Swartz

To meet the needs of its clientele, Parliament Library of South Africa (PLSA) is committed to the provision of a quality service, independent, non-partisan, unbiased and timely services.

The range of services provided by the Reference sub-unit include:

- **Reference Service:**

This is the "frontline" service rendered to Members and their researchers through dissemination of information and research services on request or in anticipation, e.g. information on issues of current debate by the National Assembly and/or topical issues of the various Portfolio Committees.

PLSA staff does not provide a research service. They offer impartial and unbiased service to all its users. All queries are treated in a most confidential manner. Their role is to identify and obtain resources but do not interpret or prepare papers or reports. The political party researchers within Parliament do this work for Members.

- **Lending Service:**

Resources are made available for direct access by Clientele, e.g. collections (books, newspapers, journals, information files) and external databases e.g. (SABINET online, Uncover, First Search, Ebsco, United Nations and South Africa media).

- **Inter-Library Loans (ILL) Service:**

Any item requested by Members can be requested through this service if not available at PLSA. This fosters resource sharing among libraries in the neighbouring environs, nationally and internationally.

- **Legal Deposit**

As set in the Government Gazette No. 54 of 1997: Legal Deposit Act, 1997, the PLSA is designated as one of the six places of Legal deposit in South Africa. The Act stipulates that a place of Legal Deposit shall:

- Provide for the preservation of the National Documentary heritage through the legal deposit of published documents
- Ensure the preservation and cataloguing of, and access to, published documents emanating from, or adapted for South Africa
- Provide access to government information
- Provide a Legal Deposit Committee and
- Provide matters connected therewith.

The Reference sub-unit hence houses the Legal Deposit Collection and makes it accessible to all their clientele.

In addition to services identified above, professional Librarians are grouped into three subject clusters with an aim of responding to client's subject queries at the shortest possible time. Following this approach, seven professional Librarians are streamlined into providing subject-related information service along predefined subject specialisation.

2. Processing and Indexing Sub-Unit – Ms. Lutefya Samsodien

This sub-unit processes all material that is accessioned by the Library, that is, cataloguing, classification and indexing.

3. Acquisitions Sub-Unit - Ms Sarah Jonas

This sub-unit proactively acquires information sources relevant to the needs of Parliament with the guidance of the Library's Collection Development Policy. The acquisition and selection of information resources is decentralized process, which is coordinated by a Selection Committee Chairperson. Parliamentary Members and Staff in

both the PLSA and the Research Unit of the Information Services Section have equal responsibility for recommending acquisitions. The selection committee comprises of Control Librarians of the five sub-units and representatives from Members and Parliamentary Research Unit.

4. Projects Sub-Unit - Mr. Marius Burgers

This sub-unit retrospectively catalogues, barcodes, integrates and stock takes the library collection. It also handles user education, which includes looking after delegations and attachments to the library. It produces an in-house library newsletter "Shelf life" to inform both staff and members of new developments and happenings in the library.

The Library is in the process of developing its own web page.

5. Special Services Sub-Unit - Ms. Renata Shilubana

This sub-unit provides users with current international news from TV channels and current international information from international journals. It captures and makes current international news that is of relevance to Members and researchers available. Users can view copies of the videos on Parliamentary debates and special occasions. Current news from radio stations is made available on tapes.

There is also a core of 25 library support staff, consisting of Library Assistants that support the various functions in the library or supports a specific sub-unit.

5.0 RESEARCH UNIT

The Research Unit of the Information Services Section was established in 1997 to provide research for Members of Parliament. Members need relevant and accurate information to support various activities of Parliament such as:

- In Parliamentary duties, the contribution of Members both at National Assembly and National Council of Provinces to chamber debates and Portfolio Committee work needs to be supported with information and analysis usually conducted by researchers.
- Constituency duties may require investigation on a particular issue, the law, or policy development and formulation may need input which includes alternatives and benchmarking from other experiences.

The Research Unit is managed by Dr. Gabriel Leon with the help of 12 researchers. Each researcher is attached to a Portfolio Committee. The National Assembly has a Portfolio Committee for each Government department.

The Parliamentary researchers provide research services to individual Members, Portfolio Committees and the Management of Parliament. They carry out proactive research on

Bills, Motions, Budget, Topical issues and also provide background information to assist Members in Speech writing.

Parliamentary Researchers do not prepare papers or reports for Members. This is usually the work of Political Party researchers. All Political Parties in Parliament appoint researchers to provide research services for their parties.

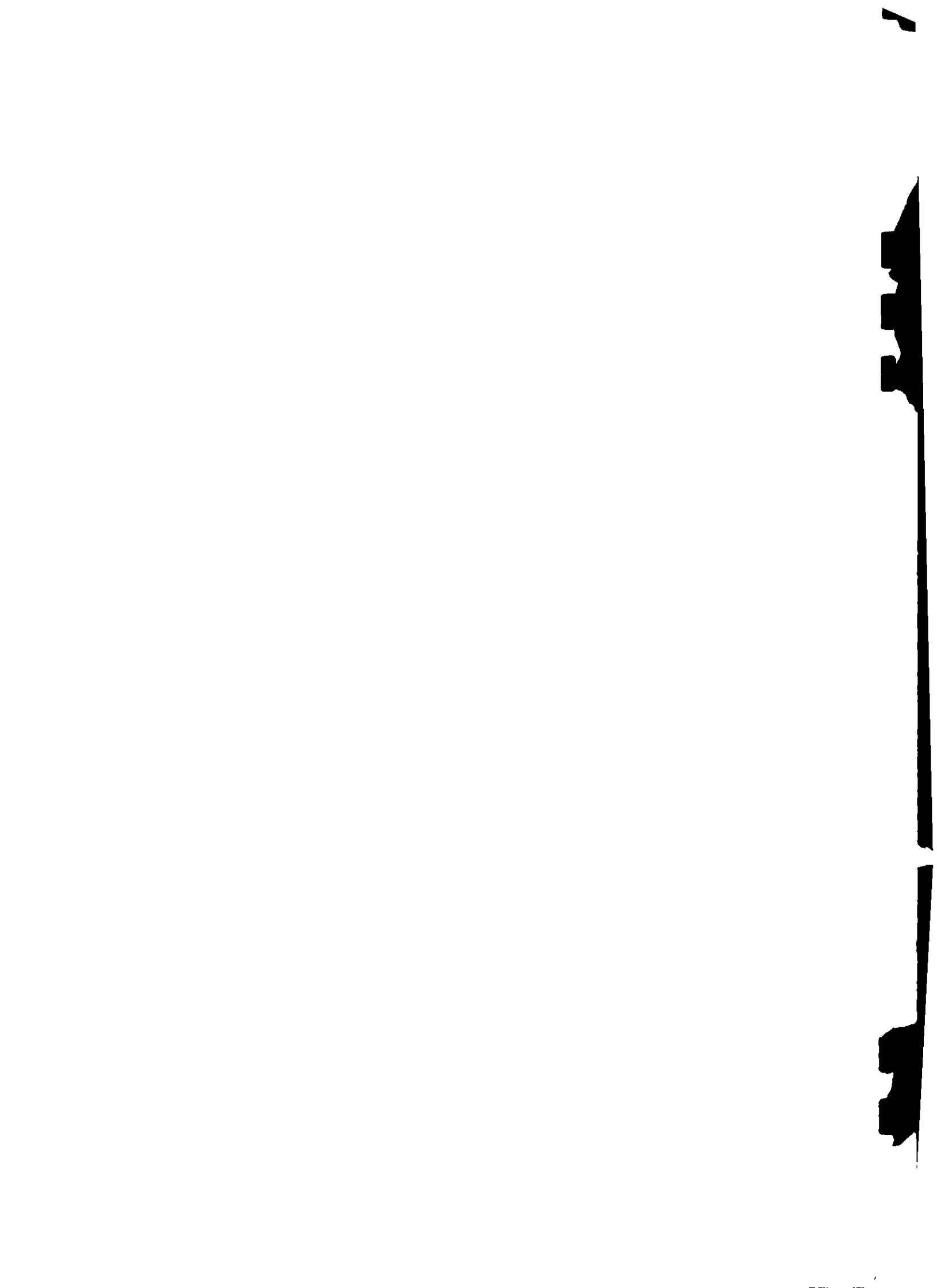
The Parliament allocates money in its budget for this purpose. Hence Party Researchers identify and obtain resources, interpret the information and prepare papers or reports for their party Members.

6.0 INTERNAL ARRANGEMENT COMMITTEE

This committee comprises of Members, Chief Librarian and Researcher whose main task is to come up with strategies to make the Information Services Section important. It also lobbies Members for serious commitment to invest more in Library and Research Services. Currently, the committee is advocating for Information Technology in order to stimulate reading. All Members and staff of Parliament have undergone in-house tailor-made computer-related courses and have computer lap tops in their offices where they can access Parliamentary information such as Bills, Order Paper, Votes and Proceedings, Committee reports etc.

7.0 OBSERVATIONS MADE ABOUT THE INFORMATION SERVICES SECTION OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

- It has a qualified and very dedicated Chief Librarian who has championed successfully for the library;
- It has a Collection Development Policy which is a guiding tool in the acquisition of materials for the library in order to meet the information needs of Members;
- It has a policy for the training and development of its staff;
- It has Legal Deposit Status that goes a long way in supplementing the library budget;
- The division of the library into sub-units ensures the smooth running of the library and the provision of an efficient and effective information service;
- The library has adequate professional staff that ensures quality service to their clientele.



8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Following their visit to the Information Services of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, the Library Sub-Committee would like to make the following recommendations:-

1. Formulation of a Collection Develop Policy to serve as a guiding tool for the selection and acquisition of relevant and up-to-date information sources to meet the needs of its clientele and also for weeding the library materials;
2. Establishment of a Research Unit to provide research for Members of Parliament and Parliamentary Committees;
3. Amendment of the Books and Newspapers Act – CAP 111 of the Laws of Kenya – to give the Parliament library a Legal Deposit Status;
4. Development of a policy for the training and development of library staff; and
5. Computerisation and networking of the library in order to facilitate resource sharing with other Parliamentary libraries especially those within the Eastern and Southern Africa region.

9.0 CONCLUSION

Parliament libraries on the national level usually exist in every jurisdiction to serve the complex legislative and administrative needs of government. The Kenya National Assembly library hence needs to be upgraded in terms of its collection, physical space, information technology and staff training, in order to enable it provide research and information services to Members of Parliament, Committees and Staff of Parliament in a professional and objective manner and also to establish regional, national and international relations with the broader library community.

