UNITED NATIONS
TANZANIA

IPU BRIEF

UN and the Parliament of Tanzania: Partners in Development

OVERVIEW

As external funding for health, population and social programmes continues to decline, Members of Parliament across Tanzania and Zanzibar are taking on a sharper role: holding government to account for the domestic resources that must now fill the gap. Over the past two years, UN agencies have worked side by side with Parliament, its committees and its caucuses to make that role easier to perform. This publication brings together five of those partnerships, and a common lesson that runs through all of them.

1 Sustaining the HIV Response as Donor Funding Falls

Tanzania has cut HIV prevalence among 15-49 year-olds from 7% in 2003 to 4.4% today, but it remains one of five African countries with the largest number of people living with HIV: 1.7 million, with 60,000 new infections and 18,000 AIDS-related deaths every year. More than a third of new infections are among young people, and within that group, nearly three-quarters are young women.

1.7m
People living with HIV in Tanzania

90%+
Share of the USD 810 million annual response historically funded from outside the country

20.3%
Of the TZS 193 billion levy target collected, as of May 2026

The response costs roughly USD 810 million a year, and over 90% of it has historically come from outside the country. On early 2025, that dependency was tested directly: Tanzania received a diplomatic note announcing a 90-day suspension of US funding. Parliament's answer has been the HIV Response Levy, a domestic tax on gaming, alcohol, fuel, mining, transport and vehicle registration that feeds the AIDS Trust Fund (ATF). UNFPA supported the Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS), the government body coordinating the national response, in bringing this directly to Parliament: In June 2026 TACAIDS briefed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and HIV/AIDS Issues on how the levy is performing, with UNFPA's backing ensuring the session reached the Committee with the right technical grounding.

As of May 2026, only 20.3% of the year's TZS 193 billion target had been collected. MPs pushed back on three fronts: they wanted to know why collection was lagging across all six revenue sources, they wanted regular public reporting on both collection and spending so they could exercise real oversight, and they wanted clarity on how the 30% of the levy directed to the new Universal Health Insurance Fund would actually translate into HIV services being covered without financial barriers for patients. The Committee's questions have fed directly into a revised ATF operating manual which took effect in July 2026.

2 UN's Support to Parliament in Tanzania

UN has supported parliamentary strengthening in Tanzania for over 15 years through three successive phases of the Legislative Support Programme (LSP I-III), with a cumulative investment of approximately US$23 million, which was made possible thanks to generous support from our development partners. The programme has strengthened the institutional capacity of the National Assembly and the Zanzibar House of Representatives to perform their legislative, oversight, representation, and accountability functions while promoting citizen participation, transparency, and gender-responsive governance.

15+ years	**3 phases**	**US$23m**
Of UN support to parliamentary strengthening	Of the Legislative Support Programme (LSP I-III)	Approximate cumulative investment

Key Results Demonstrating the Value of UNCT Support

A. STRONGER OVERSIGHT AND LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS

UN support helped parliamentary committees improve bill scrutiny, evidence-based review of legislation, and oversight of government action. Parliamentary committees increasingly engaged academia, CSOs, and research institutions during legislative reviews.

This institutional support has been complemented by specialized technical engagement on key development priorities, including parliamentary consideration of the National HIV Response Sustainability Roadmap, the HIV response levy and domestic resource mobilization, as well as progress against national and international population and family-planning commitments.

B. MORE EFFECTIVE BUDGET OVERSIGHT

The programme strengthened the Budget Committee and watchdog committees (PAC and LAAC), increasing their ability to scrutinize budgets, audit reports, public expenditure, and government performance. Parliamentary committees generated substantial evidence-based recommendations during budget reviews and strengthened their understanding of gender-responsive budgeting.

This has been reinforced by UN technical expertise on sectoral financing and resource allocation, including parliamentary engagement on domestic financing for HIV and health (UNAIDS); financing gaps and domestic resource mobilization for family planning (UNFPA); and inclusive, gender-responsive budget analysis covering areas such as girls' education and children with disabilities (UNICEF).

C. ENHANCED CITIZEN AND CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

UN support expanded public hearings, engagement with civil society organizations, research institutions, youth groups and professional associations. The project supported the Parliament's vision of "taking Parliament to the people" through outreach activities and digital engagement platforms.

The UN has also supported stronger connections between national evidence and parliamentary deliberation. This includes engagement with parliamentarians on the findings of the 2022 Population and Housing Census and their implications for the demographic dividend and longer-term development priorities. (UNFPA)

D. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND RESILIENCE

Investment in the E-Parliament platform proved critical during COVID-19, enabling continued parliamentary business, stakeholder engagement, document management, and virtual participation despite movement restrictions.

E. ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

A significant achievement was the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming through:

- Development of a Parliamentary Gender Strategy and Action Plan.
- Gender audits and capacity assessments.
- Establishment and strengthening of the Tanzania Women Parliamentary Group (TWPG).
- Training MPs on gender-responsive legislation and budgeting.
- Creation of male gender champions within Parliament.

These institutional measures have been complemented by substantive engagement on gender and inclusion in development decision-making, including the use of inclusive and gender-responsive budget analysis and parliamentary consideration of evidence relating to girls' education, children with disabilities, population dynamics and the demographic dividend. (UNICEF, UNFPA)

Taken together, these examples demonstrate what the UNCT model can offer Parliament: long-term institutional partnership combined with access to specialized expertise from across the UN system. The opportunity under the reformed UN development system is to bring these capacities together even more deliberately, so that Parliament can access an integrated UN offer organized around national development priorities rather than a series of separate agency engagements.

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3 Gender-Responsive Budgets and Legislation

Parliament reviews the National Budget, the Finance Bill and the Appropriation Bill every year. UN Women's contribution has been to make sure that review can be done through a gender lens, and to make sure that capacity survives an election.

In June 2024, 214 parliamentary staff and MPs, including Permanent Secretaries and ministry officials, worked through the newly launched Parliamentary Gender Mainstreaming Handbook, Tanzania's National Gender and Women Development Policy, and practical Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) techniques for reading the Finance Bill. When the 13th Parliament was seated after the 2025 elections, UN Women returned in April 2026 to orient the incoming Social Welfare Committee (20 members) from a standing start, so that the institutional memory built up over the previous term was not simply lost with the outgoing MPs.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has taken a complementary, longer route into the same committee: since October 2024 it has been building awareness of the global Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWGE) in food security, an agreement negotiated over three years and adopted by 137 countries, connecting gender budgeting to agriculture, land and water rights, and rural livelihoods rather than to social policy alone.

4 Children's Rights and Social Sector Financing

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s engagement with Parliament has run since 2022 on two closed tracks: a multi-stakeholder health-financing advocacy effort with government and civil society, and gender-responsive Annual Budget Briefs, funded jointly by UNICEF and Global Affairs Canada, that MPs used to press for stronger financing of girls' education and services for children with disabilities. Both concluded by mid-2025.

What replaces them, from August 2026, is a shift in method rather than just a new topic. Instead of another round of briefings delivered to MPs, UNICEF is building a standing network of parliamentary champions for child rights and social financing, one intended to outlast any single budget cycle. Its distinguishing feature is direct engagement: MPs will sit across from children and young people themselves, so that the priorities written into Tanzania's Vision 2050 are shaped by what young people are actually asking for, not only by what adults assume they need.

5 Parliaments as Drivers of Climate Finance

Of the USD 1.9 trillion mobilised for climate finance worldwide in 2023, Africa received USD 43.68 billion, and Tanzania's share of that was just 3%. The UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and partners argue the constraint was never the availability of finance: it was the supply of well-argued, bankable proposals, and building that pipeline turned out to be legislative work.

Tanzania's Parliament built four governance structures before the intervention began. This included a Parliamentary Steering Committee; a Technical Advisory Group meeting every two weeks; a Climate Finance Technical Committee chaired by the National Designated Authority; and the Tanzania Parliamentary Front on Environment (TAPAFE), Parliament's own environment caucus. Only then did training begin, reaching 116 people, roughly 90 of them legislators, of whom 56 were women, alongside

17 technical experts. The result is a pipeline of seven investable projects worth USD 126 million, from water hyacinth converted to biochar (USD 12.5m) to an East Africa e-mobility scheme (USD 62.5m), together projected to cut 15,000 tonnes of CO2 a year and support over 5,000 green jobs.

USD 126m	15,000 t	5,000+
Pipeline of seven investable projects	CO2 a year projected to be cut	Green jobs supported

Reviewers of climate funds typically assess proposals not only on merit but against a capped national allocation cycle, and Tanzania's Parliament is now in dialogue with them to better understand how that cycle works, gaining insight that will sharpen the timing and sequencing of its next pipeline of projects. The lesson for other parliaments: a strong proposal is necessary but not sufficient, understanding the funding cycle itself is part of the legislative work. The Tanzanian delegation will be at the Arusha Assembly to share the full governance model with other parliaments.

6 Population and the Demographic Dividend

Tanzania’s population is young and growing fast: 43% of citizens are under 15, and the country’s 61.7 million people are projected to double by 2044, six years ahead of the African average. The working-age share of the population has already risen from 49.9% in the 1988 census to 53.4% in 2022. Whether that shift becomes an economic asset or a strain on services depends on decisions Parliament takes now on education, health and jobs.

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) has spent the past two years putting this evidence directly in front of MPs. In 2024, data from the 2022 Census anchored a workshop for the Tanzania Women Parliamentary Group, where members pressed for wider distribution of the findings and for future sessions to include male MPs as well, so that family planning is not treated as a women-only subject. Six months later, Tanzania hosted African and Asian parliamentarians in Dar es Salaam under the theme of harnessing population data, with the Speaker of Tanzania’s Parliament, Hon. Tulia Ackson, opening the meeting in her capacity as IPU President, and UNFPA noting that only Seychelles, Mauritius, Rwanda and Tanzania are currently on track to bring maternal mortality below 70 per 100,000 births by 2030.

Then came the 2025 elections, which reset both chambers. In June 2026, UNFPA and partners ran back-to-back orientations for the newly reconstituted Tanzania Parliamentary Association on Population and Development (44 MPs, Dodoma) and the Zanzibar House of Representatives (39 members,

including two sitting ministers). Both sessions surfaced the same tension: MPs are being asked to defend domestic financing for family planning at a time when many admit, candidly, that they know little about the methods themselves. One MP asked the facilitators directly which method he personally should use. Rather than treat this as a setback, UNFPA used it to design an advocacy model with three explicit stages: make MPs aware, make them knowledgeable, then make them active champions. Both chambers came away with signed workplans committing them to specific follow-up.

> **WHAT MPS ARE ALREADY DOING**
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> Pushing for a dedicated family planning budget line (Zanzibar's Budget Committee has refused to pass a Ministry of Health budget lacking one), questioning recurring commodity stock-outs at facilities, and raising the possibility of financing Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) through emerging climate and environmental funds.

7 Protecting Democratic Participation in the Digital Age

UNESCO provided technical and financial support to Parliamentarians to address online and technology-facilitated gender-based violence against women journalists and parliamentarians, strengthening the legal, institutional and protective frameworks needed to safeguard freedom of expression and women's full participation in public life. The work brought together Parliamentarians, media stakeholders and other actors to examine how technology-facilitated violence can undermine democratic participation, with attention to prevention, protection and accountability.

The engagement also connected Parliament's role to broader international commitments on democracy and human rights, including International Day of Democracy, and complemented work undertaken by UNESCO and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to address technology-facilitated gender-based violence against women in political and public life. The emphasis was not only on responding to individual incidents, but on strengthening the enabling environment in which women can participate safely and meaningfully in democratic processes.

WHAT MPS ARE ALREADY DOING

Engaging in dialogue on online and technology-facilitated gender-based violence against women journalists and parliamentarians, examining the legal and institutional measures needed to prevent and respond to such abuse, and advocating for stronger protections for freedom of expression and women's participation in public life. Through engagement linked to the International Day of Democracy and UNESCO–IPU efforts, Parliamentarians are helping bring technology-facilitated violence into broader discussions on democratic inclusion, accountability and the protection of human rights.

8 Parliamentary Engagement to End Statelessness

In 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) facilitated a workshop on durable solutions for senior government officials, including five Members of the Zanzibar House of Representatives. The workshop highlighted the situation of populations at risk of statelessness, including long-term migrants residing in Zanzibar, and provided a platform to discuss pathways towards durable solutions.

Building on continued advocacy and engagement with relevant ministries, immigration authorities, and parliamentarians, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania waived naturalization fees for eligible applicants. In September 2023, a total of 3,319 individuals (676 men, 768 women, 1,675 children) in Zanzibar were granted Tanzanian citizenship, significantly reducing their risk of statelessness.

3,319	**1,675**	**768**	**676**
Granted Tanzanian citizenship, September 2023	Children	Women	Men

The citizenship certificates were formally handed over during a ceremony led by His Excellency Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, together with the Minister of Home Affairs and the Commissioner General of Immigration.

9 Parliament and an Enabling Environment for Independent Media

UNESCO supported parliamentary dialogues on the legal and policy environment for press freedom, bringing together Parliamentarians and relevant stakeholders to examine media legislation, access to information and emerging questions around artificial intelligence regulation. The engagement strengthened Parliament's understanding of the implications of legal and regulatory choices for freedom of expression, access to information and the sustainability of independent media.

The work also created space for Parliamentarians to engage with evolving issues at the intersection of media, technology and democracy, including the need for appropriate legal and institutional responses to AI and digital transformation. This includes engagement around World Press Freedom Day, reinforcing Parliament's role in advancing legal reform, democratic oversight and an enabling environment in which journalists and media organisations can operate independently and contribute to informed public debate.

WHAT MPS ARE ALREADY DOING

Engaging in discussions on media legislation, access to information and the implications of artificial intelligence for freedom of expression; examining the role of Parliament in advancing legal and policy reforms; and contributing to dialogue on the conditions needed for independent media to operate. Through parliamentary engagement around strategic dialogue platforms including World Press Freedom Day, MPs are strengthening their role in democratic oversight and in promoting an enabling legal environment for press freedom, access to information and informed public debate.