



Research Unit
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Parliamentary Systems of the G20 countries

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“In the 75 years, the biggest achievement has been the continuously growing trust of the common citizen in their Parliament.”

- [Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#)

The first Parliamentary Speakers’ Summit (P20) being hosted by the world’s largest democracy in its capacity as the G20 President is being held during October 13 – 14, 2023, at the newly constructed India International Convention and Expo Center (IICC), Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, New Delhi. The Summit will be inaugurated by Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

Following the path-breaking declaration adopted at the New Delhi Leaders’ Summit in September 2023, the P20 Summit will bring together Speakers / Heads of legislatures of G20 member countries and guest countries to explore how Parliaments might effectively advance global governance, bringing a parliamentary perspective to governance challenges and solutions towards addressing them. More than 200 parliamentarians and leaders will participate in the P20 Summit.

Outline of Parliamentary systems of G20 Nations

Argentina

Argentina is a federal republic, composed of 23 autonomous provinces plus the autonomous (capital) City of Buenos Aires. It is an electoral democracy with universal adult suffrage, a presidential system of government and separation of powers. Executive power is vested in the President of the Republic, legislative power in the bicameral National Congress, and judicial power in the Nation's Judiciary, headed by the Supreme Court of Justice.



The legislative branch consists of a bicameral parliament, the National Congress (Congreso de la Nación), made up of:

- ❖ A Senate (upper chamber, with 72 senators) and
- ❖ A Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber, with 257 deputies)

Whereas both chambers adhere to the principle of popular representation, deputies directly represent the Argentinian people, and senators represent the provinces and the City of Buenos Aires. (Capital: Buenos Aires)

Australia



The Constitution of Australia establishes the Federal Government by providing for the Parliament, the Executive Government and the Judiciary. In addition to being a federation, Australia is also a representative democracy and a constitutional monarchy. Australia's system of government is modelled on the Westminster system deriving from the British tradition.

The Constitution gives the legislative power to the Parliament. The Parliament consists of the King, represented by the Governor-General, and two Houses —

- ❖ The House of Representatives and
- ❖ The Senate

Proposed laws have to be agreed to by both Houses of Parliament to become law. The two Houses have equal powers, except that there are restrictions on the power of the Senate to introduce or directly amend some kinds of financial legislation.

The Parliament also authorises the Executive Government (often simply called the government or the Executive) to spend public money by agreeing to government proposals for expenditure and taxation, scrutinises the administrative actions of the government and serves as a forum for the debate of public policy. (Capital: Canberra)

Brazil

Brazil is politically organised as a Federative Republic, formed by the Union, 26 states, 5 570 municipalities and the Federal District (Brasilia). The Brazilian Constitution establishes the principle of the separation of powers of the Union into legislative, executive and judiciary. The executive power is vested in the president of the Republic, who is both head of state and head of the government. The president is elected by



universal suffrage, together with the vice-president, for a four-year mandate, and can be re-elected only once. The judicial power is exerted by different organs and courts at national and state level.

The legislative power is vested in the National Congress, a bicameral Parliament with a chamber of deputies and a federal senate. (Capital: Brasilia)

Canada



Canada is a federation of 10 provinces and 3 territories that share a common federal government. Canada's 1867 constitution sets out the rules by which the country is governed and divides government responsibilities into three separate branches: parliament, executive and judiciary. In addition to being a federation, Canada is also a representative democracy and a constitutional monarchy. Canada's system of government is modelled on the UK's Westminster

system. Parliament passes laws that affect all Canadians, in areas like foreign policy and national defence. Each province makes its own laws in other domains, such as education and health care.

The Senate is Parliament's Upper Chamber. Senators are appointed by the Governor General, on the advice of the Prime Minister, to represent Canada's regions, provinces and territories. The Senate's 105 seats are distributed by region to ensure equal representation across the country.

The House of Commons is Parliament's elected Lower Chamber. Each of the 338 Members of Parliament (MPs) represents a specific geographic area in Canada, known as a constituency. MPs bring the concerns of the people who elected them to the House of Commons. They spend much of their time debating, voting and participating in committees. (Capital: Ottawa)

China

The largest legislative body in the world, the 2,980 member National People's Congress (NPC) is the Chinese Parliament which passes laws. However, the parliament is not where decisions are made. It is the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) which makes decisions for the country. The CCP has maintained a political monopoly since Mao Zedong founded the People's Republic in 1949.



The Communist Party of China's most important body is the Politburo, which comprises the most senior Communist Party leaders. The General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, is also the President of China. In 2018, a law was passed to remove the two term limit on the Chinese President, clearing the way for the incumbent to hold office for life. (Capital: Beijing)

France

The French Parliament is made up of two chambers:

- ❖ The Senate is elected through indirect universal suffrage and renewable by half every three years. There are 348 senators.



The National Assembly comprises 577 deputies elected by direct universal suffrage for five years through two-round system.

The two houses, in addition to their role of monitoring the Government, draw up and vote on laws. In this respect, and in the event of disagreement, the National Assembly has the last word.

The Speaker of the Senate ensures the stability of France's institutions as he is

called upon to replace the President of the Republic in the event of his death or resignation. (Capital: Paris)

Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany has a parliamentary system consisting of the Bundestag and the Bundesrat, established in 1949. The Bundestag is the main legislative body, which determines all laws at federal level. It does so with the participation of a 'second chamber', the Bundesrat, which represents the 16 constituent states



Competencies are shared between the Federation and the Länder. Areas of exclusive federal legislation, such as foreign policy, defence and trade, are governed at federal level. In areas of concurrent legislation, the Länder can adopt legislation as long as there is no existing federal legislation. Federal law takes precedence over Länder law.

The most important tasks performed by the Bundestag are the legislative process and the parliamentary scrutiny of the government and its work. The Members of the German Bundestag also decide on the federal budget and deployments of the Bundeswehr (Federal Armed Forces) outside Germany. (Capital: Berlin)

India

Parliament is the supreme legislative body of India. The Indian Parliament comprises the President and the two Houses –

- ❖ Rajya Sabha (Council of States) and
- ❖ Lok Sabha (House of the People)

The Constitution of India came into force on January 26, 1950. The first general elections under the new Constitution were held during the year 1951-52 and the first elected Parliament came into existence in April, 1952.



The Rajya Sabha, the Council of States, is an indirectly elected house consisting of not more than 250 members, out of which 238 members represent the States and the Union territories while the remaining 12 are nominated by the President for their special knowledge or practical experience in literature, science, art and social service.

The Rajya Sabha is a permanent body not subject to dissolution but one-third of its members retire rotationally after every two years and are replaced by newly-elected members. The term of an individual member of the Rajya Sabha is six years.

The Lok Sabha, the house of the People, as the name signifies, is the body of the representatives of the people. Its members are directly elected, once in five years, on the basis of universal adult suffrage. The maximum strength of the Lok Sabha, as envisaged by the Constitution, is 552. Out of this, 530 members represent the States and 20 members represent the Union territories and 2 members are nominated by the President from the anglo-Indian community.

In India, the Executive powers are vested in the President, who is the Head of the State. The Constitution envisages that the President shall exercise the Executive powers with the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, with the Prime Minister as its head. (Capital: Delhi)

Indonesia

Indonesia has a presidential system in which a directly elected president serves as both head of state and of government. It has a bicameral parliament, named the People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, MPR). The lower and more important house is the House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR). The upper house is the Council of Representatives of the Regions (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, DPD).



The House of Representatives (DPR) adopts legislation and the budget, and ratifies international agreements. In 2019, it was enlarged from 560 to 575 seats. Members are elected by proportional representation on a party-list system from 80 constituencies, with the number of seats per constituency ranging from three to ten. To have seats in the DPR, a party must have at least 4 % of the national vote.

The Council of Representatives of the Regions (DPD) debates regional matters, and can also present bills on regional matters to the DPR, but does not adopt legislation itself. It is elected directly by the Indonesian people, at the same time as the DPR. Voters elect four members on a non-partisan basis for each of Indonesia's 34 provinces, giving a total of 136 seats. (Capital: Jakarta)

Italy



The Italian Parliament consists of two houses:

- ❖ The Chamber of Deputies and
- ❖ The Senate of the Republic

According to the principle of full bicameralism, the two houses perform identical functions. Their main function is to make the laws of the country.

By virtue of the vote of confidence, which brings a new Government to life, they establish the political guidelines that the Executive has to follow. The Government is accountable to Parliament, which takes the Government to account through interrogations and questions.

Both Houses are elected every five years. The only differences between them lie in the membership and the rules for the election of their members. The 400 deputies, who must be at least 25 years of age, and the 200 elected senators, who must be at least 40 years of age, are elected by all Italian citizens over 18 years of age. In addition to elected members, the Senate also includes life senators - who are appointed by the President of the Republic "for outstanding merits in the social, scientific, artistic or literary field" - and the former Presidents of the Republic, who are ex officio life senators. (Capital: Rome)

Japan

Japan is a constitutional monarchy, with a parliamentary system of government based on the separation of powers. The Emperor is the symbol of the state and does not hold political functions, only performing ceremonial duties.

The National Diet (Kokkai or National Assembly) is the Parliament of Japan comprising



- ❖ The House of Representatives (Shūgiin) – the Lower House – and
- ❖ The House of Councillors (Sangiin) – the Upper House

Plenary sessions of both houses are open to the public. The House of Representatives has 465 members (minimum age 25) elected for a four-year term – 289 of them chosen from single-seat constituencies and 176 by proportional representation.

Although the two chambers share legislative powers, the Lower House prevails in the legislative process, as it can turn draft legislation rejected by the Upper House into law with a two-thirds majority. It also has the power to adopt the final decision on the budget and on the approval of international treaties.

The House of Councillors is composed of 245 members (minimum age 30) elected for a six-year term – 147 of them elected first past the post in 47 plural-seat prefectural constituencies and 98 by proportional representation. Every three years, half of the Upper House is renewed in a mid-term election. In contrast to the House of Representatives, the Upper House cannot be dissolved by any other power. (Capital: Tokyo)

Mexico



Mexico is a federal republic, composed of 31 states plus Mexico City. The country is an electoral democracy with universal suffrage and a presidential system of government

Both the federal government and the state governments follow the principle of separation of powers, and have executive, legislative and judicial branches. In the case of the federal government, the executive power is vested in the President

of the Republic, the legislative power in the bicameral Congress of the Union and the judicial power in the Federal Courts of Justice.

Each state has its own constitution and the right to legislate and levy taxes other than interstate customs duties. The state executive is headed by a governor, who is directly elected by a simple majority vote for a six-year term and cannot be re-elected. State legislatures are unicameral, with deputies elected for a three-year term (Capital: Mexico City)

Republic of Korea

Korea has a parliamentary democracy based on a National Assembly since May 19, 1948. The National Assembly is responsible for reflecting the views of the Korean people, pursuing their interests, as well as watching, criticizing, and restricting government administration. Furthermore, under the Constitution, the National Assembly is the legislative branch of the government which has the sole authority for enacting and revising the nation's laws.

A national assembly is a legislature and a representative organization whose members are elected by the people. Korea has a presidential government and it encompasses some of the characteristic of a parliamentary government. Presently, Korea has a single-chamber system although it had a brief history of a two-chamber system in the 1960's with a parliamentary system of government with cabinet ministers selected from members of the National Assembly. (Capital: Seoul)



Russia



The Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation is a legislative and representative body of state power (parliament) of the Russian Federation. It is a permanent body. The Federal Assembly consists of two chambers:

The State Duma and
The Federation Council

The State Duma consists of 450 members (deputies). A citizen of the Russian Federation who has reached the age of 21 and is eligible to participate in elections may be elected as a member of the State Duma. The term of office of the State Duma is 5 years.

The 166 member Federation Council consists of two representatives from each region of the Russian Federation: from the executive and legislative bodies of the region. (Capital: Moscow)

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a monarchy based on Islam. The government is headed by the King, who is also the commander in chief of the military. The King appoints a Crown Prince who is second in line to the throne.

The King governs with the help of the Council of Ministers, also called the Cabinet. There are 22 government ministries that are part of the Cabinet.



Each ministry specializes in a different part of the government, such as foreign affairs, education and finance.

The King is also advised by a legislative body called the Consultative Council (Majlis Al-Shura). The Council proposes new laws and amends existing ones. It consists of 150 members who are appointed by the King for four-year terms that can be renewed.

The country is divided into 13 provinces, with a governor and deputy governor in each one. Each province has its own council that advises the governor and deals with the development of the province.

Because Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state, its judicial system is based on Islamic law (Shari'ah). The King is at the top of the legal system. He acts as the final court of appeal and can issue pardons. (Capital: Riyadh)

South Africa

The national legislature or Parliament of South Africa consists of two Houses:

- ❖ The National Assembly and
- ❖ National Council of Provinces

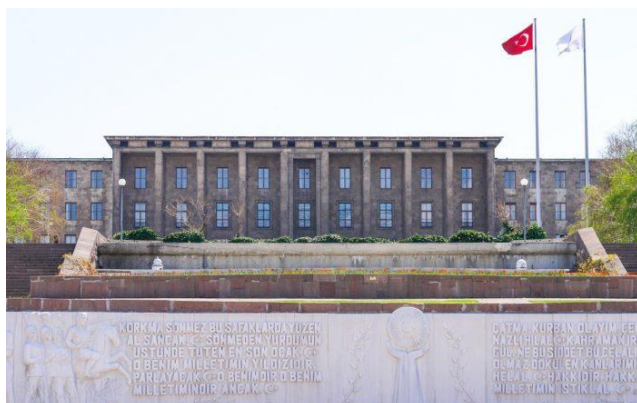
Each House has its own distinct role and functions, as set out in the Constitution. However, there are many instances when the two Houses act together to conduct what is called "joint business".



Parliament is responsible for making and passing laws. The National Assembly also chooses the President and is a national forum where issues are debated publicly.

The National Council of Provinces, on the other hand, must ensure that provincial interests are taken into account in the national sphere of government. It does that by taking part in the law-making process and by being the forum where issues affecting the provinces are debated publicly. (Capitals: Legislative – Cape Town; Executive – Pretoria; Judicial – Bloemfontein)

Türkiye



Türkiye (formerly Turkey) is a constitutional republic with a Presidential system. Executive power is exercised by the Council of Ministers, which is appointed and headed by the President, who serves as country's head of state and head of government.

Legislative power is invested in the 600-seat Grand National Assembly of

Turkey (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*), representing 81 provinces. The members are elected for a five-year term by mitigated proportional representation. To be represented in Parliament, a party must win at least 7% of the national vote in a national parliamentary election. (Capital: Ankara)

The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy. The Parliament is made up of three parts - the Crown, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Parliament's main functions are to conduct debates, to make and change legislation (laws) and to check the work of Government.

The 700 member House of Lords or the Upper House shares the task of making and shaping laws and checking and challenging the work of the government. It has no power to block bills proposed by the Government in the House of Commons.



The House of Commons is the main House of the British Parliament in terms of *legislative power*. It is a chamber composed of 650 *members* elected by *universal suffrage for a period of five years*. The House of Commons is responsible for granting money to the government through approving Bills that raise taxes.

The monarch has all authority, but no power. The Sovereign appoints the Prime Minister, and every year opens the sessions of parliament, in a historical and ritual ceremony called the *State Opening of Parliament*. (Capital: London)

USA



The United States is a constitutional federal republic with a Presidential System with three distinct branches that share powers i.e. the US Congress, the Executive headed by the President of the United States and the Judiciary

The Legislative Branch consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate, which together form the United States Congress. The Constitution grants Congress the sole authority to enact legislation and declare war, the right to confirm or reject many Presidential appointments, and substantial investigative powers.

The House of Representatives is made up of 435 elected members, divided among the 50 states in proportion to their total population. In addition, there are 6 non-voting members. The House has several powers assigned exclusively to it, including the power to initiate revenue bills, impeach federal officials, and elect the President in the case of an Electoral College tie.

The Senate is composed of 100 Senators, 2 for each state. The Vice President of the United States serves as President of the Senate and may cast the decisive vote in the event of a tie in the Senate.

In order to pass legislation and send it to the President for his or her signature, both the House and the Senate must pass the same bill by majority vote. If the President vetoes a bill, they may override his veto by passing the bill again in each chamber with at least two-thirds majority. (Capital: Washington D.C)



The European Union

The European Parliament is the EU's law-making body. It is directly elected by EU voters every 5 years. The last elections were in May 2019.

The Parliament has 3 main roles: Passing EU laws, together with the Council of the EU, based on European Commission proposals, deciding on international agreements, and deciding on enlargements.

The European Parliament is made up of 705 Members elected in the 27 Member States of the enlarged European Union. Since 1979 Members of the European Parliament have been elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year period. (Capital: Brussels)

The African Union

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP), also known as the African Parliament, was established in 2004. It is the legislative body of the African Union.

The PAP is at present composed of 229 Members of Parliament representing 52 African countries. It is a platform for people from all African states to be involved in discussions and decision making on the problems and challenges facing the continent.



Rather than being elected directly by the people, PAP members are designated by the legislatures of their Member State and members of their domestic legislatures. The ultimate aim is for the Parliament to be an institution with full legislative powers, whose members are elected by universal suffrage. Until such time, the PAP has consultative, advisory and budgetary oversight powers within the AU

Initially, the seat of the Pan-African Parliament was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia but it was later moved to Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

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