Draft Resolution on Parliamentary Strengthening

The Forum Presiding Officers and Clerks Workshop on Parliamentary Strengthening that preceded the 5th FPOCC held in Apia from 23-26 April 2005 welcomed the timely discussion on the role of parliamentary institutions and procedures, and the relationship between the media and the parliament. The Workshop participants agree to promote meaningful parliamentary independence and integrity, the strengthening of the capacity of parliaments to exercise their oversight roles, and the improvement of public understanding of the functions of parliament and the roles of Parliamentarians. Additionally, The Workshop considers public service broadcasting and information disclosure policies as central elements to partnerships between parliaments and people.

To this end, The Workshop:

- advocates improved knowledge and professional networks between Forum Islands Country (FIC) legislatures, regional development partners and multilateral organisations to contribute to greater understanding of parliamentary functioning
- promotes strategies to improve the capacity of secretariat staff in their support of the lawmaking, oversight and representation functions of Members of Parliament

In particular, The Workshop:

- calls for FIC legislatures to support the ongoing process of initiating, analysing and updating the Legislative Needs Assessments
- stresses the necessity to enhance and strengthen regional democracy through improved parliamentary legislative skills, oversight of public institutions and assets and strengthened parliamentary secretariats in terms of resources and skills
- calls for the promotion of effective and participatory parliamentary systems, able to gauge public concerns and convey them to lawmakers
- supports the continued capacity building and institutional strengthening of Public Accounts Committees to ensure their effective oversight and scrutiny of public funds and assets
- expresses support for the launch of regional awareness raising and capacity building training seminars targeting specialist roles such as Librarians and Researchers, Committee Clerks and Hansard staff

Further, The Workshop:

- calls on development partners and other stakeholders to develop, in partnership with Forum legislatures, principles of best practices that will enhance the understanding of the roles and relationship between media and Parliament
- agrees to promote the role and functions of public service broadcasting as a valuable asset in strengthening the relationships between the Parliament and the people
- calls on development partners and other stakeholders to assist in the advancement of the role and functions of public service broadcasting and information disclosure policies as a means of strengthening the relationship between the Parliament, the executive and the people