The Role of Parliament in Managing Conflicts

*The 9th Centre for Democratic Institutions*

*Pacific Parliamentary Dialogue*

Goroka | Eastern Highlands Province
Papua New Guinea

11 - 13 December 2007
Contents

Introduction ............................................................................................................................................. 3
The Dialogue in context ......................................................................................................................... 4
The Dialogue in 2007 ............................................................................................................................. 6
Theme .................................................................................................................................................... 6
Day One: Papua New Guinea .................................................................................................................. 8
  Official Opening ................................................................................................................................ 8
  Keynote Address .............................................................................................................................. 8
  Parliamentary Politics in Papua New Guinea ................................................................................. 9
Day Two: The Role of Parliament in Managing Conflict ...................................................................... 11
  Case Studies from Conflict-affected Societies ............................................................................. 11
  Considering the role of Parliament in managing conflict ........................................................... 15
Day Three ................................................................................................................................................. 16
  Visit to Napaine Village ............................................................................................................... 16
Conclusion ............................................................................................................................................ 16
Participants .......................................................................................................................................... 19
Introduction

The Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) holds an annual Dialogue for Members of Parliament from Pacific Island Countries, Australia and New Zealand. The aim of the Dialogue is to facilitate discussions by Pacific region parliamentarians on issues of common interest whilst having the opportunity to look at aspects of parliamentary practice in other parliaments in our region.

The 9th annual CDI Pacific Parliamentary Dialogue (‘the Dialogue’) took place in Goroka, capital of the Eastern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea from 11 to 13 December 2007. As in previous years, core funding for the Dialogue came from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), with additional financial support from New Zealand’s Aid and Development Agency (NZAID) and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

The Dialogue was held at the Pacific Gardens Hotel in Goroka. The Eastern Highlands Provincial Government and the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea supported CDI by providing in kind assistance – organising cultural activities and facilitating entry into Papua New Guinea.

This was the third time CDI has held this event in a Pacific Island country. CDI invited participants from Papua New Guinea, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, New Zealand and Australia. For the first time, parliamentarians from Timor-Leste were invited. In most cases participants were nominated by the Speakers of their respective Parliaments. CDI also extended invitations to a number of key constitutional office holders in Papua New Guinea including the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Andrew Trawen, and the Registrar of Political Parties, Mr Paul Bengo, as well as to the Secretary-General of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat, Dr William F. Shija. This was Dr Shija’s first visit to Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands region.

As has occurred with previous dialogues, the vagaries of politics meant several parliamentarians were unable to attend. Although invited to do so, the National Parliament of Vanuatu did not nominate any participants. The National Parliament of Solomon Islands was also unable to send any parliamentarians because of an impending vote of no confidence during the week of the Dialogue. One other nominee, Hon. John Aquilina MP from New South Wales, also withdrew prior to departure for Goroka.

Despite this, 40 people from eight countries in the region participated in the Dialogue. 1 23 of these were parliamentarians representing nine different parliaments.2 A tenth parliament, Solomon Islands, was represented by one of its

---

1 Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, New Zealand, Australia and Timor-Leste.
2 Six national legislatures – Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, New Zealand and Timor-Leste - and three state/provincial legislatures – New South Wales, Queensland and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.
officers. Six of the parliamentarians were women. Each delegation had at least one member from the Opposition. The Dialogue was also fortunate to have the expertise of seven keynote speakers, including the Governor General of Papua New Guinea, HE Grand Chief Sir Paulias Matane, who gave the keynote address, and Dr Shija.

For the second time, Members from a provincial level assembly in the Pacific Island region, the Autonomous Bougainville Government House of Representatives, were invited and participated in the Dialogue. Two parliamentarians from Timor-Leste, which had not participated in previous meetings, also attended.

The Dialogue provided a forum for Members of Parliament from Pacific Island countries, Australia, New Zealand and Timor-Leste to discuss issues relating to the theme of the Dialogue – the role of Parliaments in managing conflicts. The Dialogue explored the ways parliaments can address contentious issues in conflict-affected societies and thereby strengthen and enhance the political governance of these countries. As with previous Dialogues, in addition to the overall theme, there was a focus on the host parliament and country. The program was therefore designed so that on the first and third days the emphasis was on Papua New Guinea. This gave parliamentarians from elsewhere in the region the opportunity to learn about Papua New Guinea. The Dialogue contributed to improving political governance in partner countries by exposing participants to new ideas and enabling them to engage with colleagues on more effective ways of managing governance challenges in the region.

**The Dialogue in context**

Originally named the Pacific Parliamentary Retreat, the Dialogue was designed to provide a forum for Pacific Island parliamentarians to discuss issues of common interest while showcasing parliamentary practice in Australia, and New Zealand in 2004. The inaugural Retreat was held in November 1999 in Canberra. The 13 participants from Fiji, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and Samoa discussed the ways in which the inherited systems of parliamentary democracy are functioning in the contemporary Pacific and the impact of local tradition and culture on the parliamentary process.

In 2004 the Retreat was held outside of Australia for the first time. The Sixth Pacific Parliamentary Retreat, with the theme of Tradition and Modern Parliamentary Democracy, was held at Parliament House in Wellington, New Zealand with the full support of the New Zealand Parliament and NZAID. In 2005, the Retreat was held in a Pacific Island country, Fiji, for the first time and renamed the Pacific Parliamentary Forum, to reflect the need for ongoing dialogue among elected leaders in the Pacific on issues of common concern. Further reflecting these changes, the 2005 Forum was supported by and planned in collaboration with NZAID, the New Zealand Parliament and parliamentary parties, and the Parliament of the Fiji Islands. The University of the South Pacific’s Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance (PIAS-DG) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) also made contributions.
In 2006, at the invitation of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Samoa, Hon. TOLOFUAI VALELEI Falemoe Leiataua MP, the Forum was held in Samoa and renamed the Pacific Parliamentary Dialogue. In addition to ongoing funding support from AusAID and NZAID, the CPA also provided financial support in 2006.

Since the first Retreat in Canberra in 1999, 143 parliamentarians, including 26 women, from 15 countries, representing 20 parliaments, in the region have taken part in these meetings. For further information on each Retreat, including detailed reports, consult the CDI website at: http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>11-13 Dec 2006</td>
<td>National interest, local concerns: finding the right balance (focus on Parliament of Samoa)</td>
<td>Legislative Assembly of Samoa, NZAID, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>5-9 Dec 2005</td>
<td>Foundations of Public Leadership (focus on Parliament of Fiji)</td>
<td>Parliament of Fiji, NZAID; Parliament of NZ; USP Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development &amp; Governance; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>15-19 Nov 2004</td>
<td>Tradition and modern parliamentary democracy (focus on NZ Parliament)</td>
<td>Parliament of New Zealand; NZAID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>24-28 Nov 2003</td>
<td>Parliamentary issues, land management, Australian indigenous society &amp; Pacific society (focus on NT Legislative Assembly)</td>
<td>Legislative Assembly of Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>25-29 Nov 2002</td>
<td>Accountability &amp; Integrity (focus on the Queensland Parliament)</td>
<td>Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice &amp; Governance, Griffith University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>3-7 Dec 2001</td>
<td>Accountability &amp; Integrity (focus on the Queensland Parliament)</td>
<td>Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice &amp; Governance, Griffith University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>4-8 Dec 2000</td>
<td>Fragility of Westminster Democracy in the Pacific (focus on Federal Parliament &amp; ACT Legislative Assembly)</td>
<td>Centre for the Contemporary Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>22-26</td>
<td>Ways in which systems of parliamentary</td>
<td>Centre for the Contemporary Pacific</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Dialogue in 2007

Theme

In 2007 the Dialogue had both an overarching theme - to examine the role played by parliaments in managing conflicts – and a specific country focus - political developments in Papua New Guinea.

Intra-state conflicts, whether in the form of civil wars, armed insurrections, violent secessionist attempts, coups and domestic focused warfare, have increasingly emerged in the region over the past two decades - the Bougainville conflict, the Solomon Islands crisis, the coups in Fiji, the pro-democracy riots in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, and the resort to political violence in Timor-Leste in 2006. In each case, the Parliament had an important role to play in managing the conflict but in some cases either failed to do so or was incapable of doing so. In some cases, such as in Solomon Islands, Parliament became irrelevant to efforts to resolve the conflict engulfing the country. In relation to the Solomon Islands, the question many asked was:

how and why did the democratic and civil institutions of Solomon Islands fail to detect and resolve the complaints of various groups of the community before they resorted to the use of violence to further their concerns?3

The answer lies with the absence of good governance.

Without the participation of all Solomon Islanders in the government’s decision making process, without open processes of decision-making, without the government being held accountable for its policies and actions, without the efficient and effective implementation of those policies, the government is not a government for all the people of Solomon Islands.4

The National Parliament of Solomon Islands had clearly failed to fulfil its constitutional responsibilities in ensuring good governance. The road to recovery for Solomon Islands, and for some other countries in the region, lies very much with the rebuilding of the vehicle for ensuring good governance, Parliament.

Parliaments are uniquely placed as purposely designed forums for addressing contentious issues and relationships in societies. Parliament is more representative and more accessible to the general public than the other branches of government. Moreover, parliaments “institutionalize conflict and are designed, by their very nature, to include disparate sectors of society, and to reflect and express the divergent views of those diverse groups”. However, not all conflict is violent. For the purposes of the Dialogue, a much broader definition – the “pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups” - was used. This enabled participants to examine the ways parliaments can manage conflicts at different stages and to prevent the resort to violent conflict within society.

Drawing on this theme, the presentations and discussions during the Dialogue examined a range of conflict related issues, either as drivers of conflict or tools to manage conflict, including:

- political issues including constitutional reform, autonomy and federalism;
- challenges of nation building including ethnic, cultural and linguistic issues;
- land issues such as land reform, ownership and use;
- resource issues, particularly in relation to mining, logging and fishing; and
- the role of women, especially female parliamentarians, in peacemaking efforts.

Participants provided examples of how these challenges are answered in the Pacific Island countries, Timor-Leste, Australia, and New Zealand.

As the Dialogue was held in Papua New Guinea, a considerable part of the program was devoted to political developments in Papua New Guinea. In June-July 2007, Papua New Guinea held its seventh national elections since independence. This election was the first time since independence that a different voting system – Limited Preferential Voting – was used. The election also provided a timely opportunity to measure the impact of the other major political reform PNG has instituted, the Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates, designed to strengthen the political party system and foster political stability. Dialogue participants were therefore able to learn about the conduct of the 2007 national elections and the effect the Organic Law has had on the PNG political system.

The first day of the Dialogue focused on political developments in Papua New Guinea with presentations from key constitutional office holders and political leaders. The second day focussed on the overall theme of the Dialogue for 2007, the role of parliament in managing conflict. The final day involved a visit to Napaine Village, two hours drive outside Goroka where a range of cultural activities were held to illustrate traditional life in Papua New Guinea.

The participants arrived in Goroka on Monday 10 December 2007. They were

---

welcomed at the airport by the Eastern Highlands Governor, Hon. Mal Kela Smith MP, the Provincial Administrator, Mr Munare Uyassi, senior provincial public servants and Members of the Provincial Executive Council. The famous Asaro Mudmen, a traditional singsing group from Upegu near Goroka and performers from the National Performing Arts Troupe were also on hand to welcome the participants.

What follows is an overview of the presentations and major points of the discussions on the first and second days and a brief description of the visit to the village on the third day.

**Day One: Papua New Guinea**

**Official Opening**

The Dialogue was formally opened by the Deputy Speaker of the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea, Hon. Francis Marus MP, standing in for the Speaker, Hon. Jeffrey Nape MP, who was unable to attend. The Deputy Speaker welcomed the participants to Papua New Guinea and noted that this was the first time Members of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste were joining their Pacific Island colleagues in attending the Dialogue. He pointed out that CDI is “a great friend and supporter of many of the parliaments in our region and especially to our parliament here in Papua New Guinea”. The Deputy Speaker outlined some of the activities CDI has undertaken with the National Parliament in 2007, including the highly successful induction program for Members of the newly elected Parliament in August.

The Eastern Highlands Provincial Governor, Hon. Mal Kela Smith MP, also welcomed the participants to Goroka and the Eastern Highlands. In a provocative and widely reported speech, Mr Smith accused the national bureaucracy of aiding the misappropriation of public money. He also argued that the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy adopted by Papua New Guinea contributes towards conflict because only a small number of the many distinct cultural and linguistic groups in the country are represented in Parliament.

CDI Director Ben Reilly welcomed participants on behalf of CDI and explained the role of CDI and the purpose of the Dialogue. He noted that this was the first time CDI has held the Dialogue in Papua New Guinea and acknowledged the invaluable contribution made by both the National Parliament and the Eastern Highlands Provincial Government in hosting the event.

**Keynote Address**

His Excellency Grand Chief Sir Paulias Matane, Governor General of Papua New Guinea, gave the keynote address on the role of parliaments in managing conflict. In a thoughtful speech, Sir Paulias welcomed the participants to Papua New Guinea,
remarking that he hoped that all would be able to see a “brighter side of PNG”. He also noted that this was the first time a Head of State had addressed the Dialogue and that in doing so he recognised the importance of bringing parliamentarians from the region together and providing a forum to address issues in ways that are relevant to them. Sir Paulias chose to define conflict as the “pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups”. This definition enables participants to consider ways parliaments can manage conflicts at all stages of the conflict cycle, not just at the crisis stage. He posed the question: “how does parliament stop emerging conflicts developing into political violence?” Sir Paulias suggested that one of the best tools available to manage conflict is parliament. He cited examples in the region where parliament has not been properly utilised to manage conflict or has been unable to do so such as Fiji in 2006 and the crisis in Solomon Islands that emerged in the late 1990s.

Sir Paulias noted the development of what he described as a “vigorous partisan rhetoric within politics” in many countries. Whilst there are clearly many benefits to political partisanship, it can also “go too far”. Sir Paulias argued that “conflicting interests, the dangers of faction”, if not properly managed, can lead to serious conflict within a society.

Sir Paulias then described the role Parliament plays in Papua New Guinea. He pointed out the three key roles given to the Parliament by the constitutional founding fathers – representing the people, safeguarding the constitution, and supervising the Executive. Sir Paulias noted that despite many problems, the Parliament remains the key political institution and the focus of political life in Papua New Guinea. He highlighted some of the Parliament’s strengths including its financial autonomy, separate and independent staffing arrangements, the ingrained nature of parliamentary democracy in PNG society and a culture of free speech and a vibrant, unfettered local media. The most important aspect, Sir Paulias noted, was the existence of a “roadmap for good governance” in the form of the constitution and other laws. He suggested that these strengths provide the basis for building the representative and supervisory roles of Parliament. The best way to do this, argued Sir Paulias, is through a process of education for Members of Parliament and the public.

**Parliamentary Politics in Papua New Guinea**

Following the keynote address, the next session focussed on Papua New Guinea. Mr Ogis Sanida, Acting Head, Economics Division, National Research Institute (NRI), set the scene by outlining the socio-economic indicators for Papua New Guinea and the development challenges the country faces and that the new parliament must grapple with. Mr Sanida compared the basic indicators for PNG in a range of areas such as health, education and income levels with other countries in the region. He then outlined a range of proposals from NRI on what needs to be done. These included:

- improving governance with an emphasis on the strengthening the role of Parliament;
- grow the economy;
• improve administration; and
• focus on key development objectives – education, health and increasing incomes.

The next presenter was Mr Andrew Trawen, Electoral Commissioner. Mr Trawen spoke on the conduct and outcomes of the 2007 national election in Papua New Guinea. The three main issues in the election were the accuracy of the Electoral Roll, the introduction of a new voting system, and the effect of logistical difficulties on a tight election timeframe.

Mr Trawen noted that the Electoral Roll is a major talking point in elections in PNG. Rather than update the existing “inflated” electoral roll, the Electoral Commission chose to create a new roll. Despite being a major undertaking involving visiting every village and enrolling all eligible citizens, Mr Trawen stated that he was confident the Commission had managed to create an electoral roll which better reflected the number of eligible voters – effectively reducing the roll total by more than 1 million voters.

The Electoral Commission devoted considerable resources to educating voters about the new Limited Preferential Voting System. As one measure of the effectiveness of the voter awareness program, the rate of informal votes in 2007 was very low at just over 2%. Nonetheless Mr Trawen noted that voter education is an ongoing process.

Mr Trawen pointed out that the Electoral Commission had difficulty meeting the deadline relating to the two week period between the close of the poll and the return of the Writs, in which the Commission’s entirely manual counting procedures were put to the test. An extension of time was granted for polling in several areas affected by bad weather, which meant the return of the Writs for those areas was also delayed. Other logistical difficulties included moving large volumes of material around the country within tight timeframes, problems with suppliers and staff and the slow release of funding from the Treasury. However, in contrast to previous elections which had been marred by major security problems, the 2007 elections were relatively peaceful. Despite the conduct of the election being regarded by political parties, the media, the public and observers as satisfactory, Mr Trawen noted that significant challenges still remained.

Mr Paul Bengo, Registrar of Political Parties, spoke next. In his presentation, Mr Bengo outlined the provisions of the Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIP PAC) which came into effect in 2003. He described the legal basis for the Organic Law, the reasons for choosing to regulate political parties in this way and provided a brief history of political parties in Papua New Guinea since independence. In the 2007 national elections 34 registered parties endorsed candidates with 21 parties represented in the 8th Parliament. Mr Bengo noted that the implementation of the Organic Law had resulted in a marked improvement in political stability in Papua New Guinea.

The Hon. Moses Maladina MP, a former Deputy Prime Minister, and the Hon Bart
Philemon MP, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, followed with presentations on development issues, policies and trends in PNG. Drawing on the overview provided Mr Sanida, Mr Maladina described the re-elected Somare Government’s approach in dealing with development issues. Mr Philemon spoke on the role of Parliament in managing conflict within the PNG context. He described the first Bougainville crisis in 1975 and the solution applied at the time, the implementation nationwide of a provincial government system. In 1995, following mixed success and growing competition between national and provincial level parliamentarians, the system of provincial governments was replaced, giving greater power to the national parliamentarians. Mr Philemon noted that this approach reflects the prevalence of “big man culture” in PNG in which parliamentarians play the dominant leadership role within their electorates. He suggested that there is an inherent conflict between the role of the State and that of parliamentarians as providers of resources. The granting of special autonomy to Bougainville in 2002 has the potential to alter this imbalance even further. Mr Philemen pointed out that “although the resolution of the Bougainville conflict clearly illustrates the PNG Parliament’s role in managing the conflict, this Act could also be a future liability to keeping PNG as one people, one country, one nation”. More positively, Mr Philemon noted the success of OLIPPAC in establishing political stability. He stated that the “conflict the PNG Parliament has to manage within the overall task of nation building is to establish a ‘workable political structure’ both for the national and the lower level governments”. In doing so, this will enable the creation of the most efficient and effective administrative structure for the delivery of services.

The last presenter of the day was retired General Jerry Singirok. General Singirok described his own role in the Bougainville conflict and his decision “as the only departmental head to say no to a government” during the Sandline Affair in 1997. He then went on to provide an assessment of the security challenges facing both PNG and the region.

**Day Two: The Role of Parliament in Managing Conflict**

**Case Studies from Conflict-affected Societies**

Professor Reilly introduced the morning session of the second day. Each country delegation was invited to provide a short presentation on the different types of conflicts that their respective parliaments have dealt with. Each presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session.

Dr William Shija set the scene by outlining a number of observations on the role parliaments and their Members can play in conflict and post-conflict situations. He drew on the work of the CPA and World Bank Institute Study Group on the Role of Parliament in Conflict-affected Countries that met in Sri Lanka in 2004. The Study Group outlined eight thematic areas through which parliaments and parliamentarians can contribute to conflict management and resolution:

- Participation, representation and reconciliation;
- Legislation and oversight;
- Dialoguing with Civil Society and a free Media;
- The role of political parties and the Opposition;
- Promoting socio-economic equality;
- The Rule of Law;
- Decentralization;
- Regional Parliamentary Peace-building.

Among other things Dr Shija noted that the “Parliament has a vital oversight and accountability function and this applies in policies dealing with conflicts too”. Dr Shija described the importance of post-election induction programs and noted CDI’s role in organising induction programs for several Pacific region parliaments. He proposed that he would return to Papua New Guinea to help run a broader post-election “seminar” in order to follow-up on the lessons learnt by parliamentarians in the August 2007 induction.

The Hon. Francesca Semoso, Deputy Speaker of the Bougainville House of Representatives, argued that the role of women in society is generally not recognised when it comes to preparing government budgets. She called for gender balanced national budgets throughout the region. Her colleague from Bougainville, Hon. Dominic Itta, outlined the development of the House of Representatives in Bougainville since its inception in 2005.

Mr Celsus Talifilu, representing the National Parliament of Solomon Islands, spoke on the conflict in Solomon Islands and the role played by the Parliament in this. Conflict in Solomon Islands is principally between the State and cultural/provincial groups over rights and dissatisfaction with government performance. The underlying issues include the failure of government to act, the marginalization of traditional authority structures, disputes over land ownership, the uneven distribution of resources and the incompatibility between modern and traditional dispute resolution means. Mr Talifilu then outlined the background to the civil unrest of 1998-2003 that crippled the country. The primary role of the Parliament in this conflict was to oversee the restoration of the rule of law through the passage of several key pieces of enabling legislation such as the International Facilitation Act that permitted the establishment of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

Mr Pita Nacuva, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Fiji, introduced Ms Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Kepa, former Minister in the deposed Fijian Government and one of the three Paramount Chiefs of Fiji. Ms Kepa noted the open and frank nature of the presentations so far. She spoke on recent political developments in Fiji. She noted that deposed Prime Minister, Laisenia Qarase, had been invited to attend the Dialogue but was unable to leave Fiji. Ms Kepa echoed Mr Qarase’s description of the situation in Fiji as a “time of shadows, but a time of hope”, pointing out the negative effects of the 2006 coup on the economy. However, she expressed cautious optimism in the Interim Government’s announcement that general elections will be held in March 2009 and the steps it is taking to prepare for
the elections.

Mr ‘Isileli Pulu, a People’s Representative in the Tongan Parliament, outlined the challenges for political reform in Tonga. Mr Pulu pointed out that the Constitution of Tonga has remained substantially unchanged since its introduction in 1875. The Constitution permits the existence of an unrepresentative government which is not accountable to the people. Accordingly, the Government introduces measures such as a consumption tax in 2003 without reference to popular opinion. People affected by such measures have limited recourse through the Parliament and therefore tend to take their grievances to the streets as occurred in 2006.

Mrs Lepolo Mahe Taunisila, the other member of the Tongan delegation and also a People’s Representative in Parliament, spoke on the recent political developments in Tonga. She made special mention of Mr ‘Akilisi Pohiva, People’s Representative and long standing campaigner for political reform in Tonga – Mr Pohiva gave the 2007 CDI Annual Address in Canberra. Mrs Taunisila noted that in its response to the riots and social unrest of November 2006 the Tongan Parliament passed a resolution preventing any debate on the events of 2006 whilst various judicial processes are underway and established a Tripartite Committee to consider political reform.

Hon. FIAME Naomi Mata’afa, Minister for Women, Community and Social Development in the Government of Samoa, spoke on women in leadership in Parliament. She drew attention to the poor representation of women in Pacific Island parliaments – with the region having the lowest percentage of women parliamentarians in the world. The profile of women parliamentarians in the Pacific region tends to reflect an older age group, with a professional and affluent background, and often with political family connections. Hon FIAME pointed out that the “exclusion of women from parliaments is an under-utilization of available human resources” and undermines the credibility of these democratic institutions. She noted some of the challenges to increasing the representation of women in the political process – cultural constraints that promote gender bias, the socio-economic status of women and the lack of solidarity between women candidates and women voters. She concluded by outlining “what is needed” including:

- A commitment by current political leaders to be proactive in getting more women into parliaments through such mechanisms as party selection processes, quotas and/or reserved seats for women, direct appointments and adoption of “women friendly” electoral systems;
- leadership training and mentoring;
- civic education; and
- targeted social policies to improve conditions for women and girls.

Hon. TOLOFUAI VALELEI Falemoe Leitaua, Speaker of the Samoan Parliament, discussed the role of the Parliament in managing conflict within Samoan society. He described the important role played by Samoan traditions and culture in providing Samoan society “with unique ways of addressing grievances and tensions starting from the family level through village and district levels”. Despite the existence of
these mechanisms in managing conflicts, Hon. TOLOFUAIVALELEI noted that the Parliament has the ultimate responsibility “in arresting the escalation of conflicts into possible violent confrontations”. He cited the example of the use of petitions to Parliament as one way in which Parliament can address and manage conflict. Since 1989, there have been four such petitions to Parliament. The other role played by Parliament is as a forum for consensus building. In Samoa, the parliament’s practice and procedures provides transparency which promotes participation by all Members. Parliamentary committees also enable the involvement of all Members and provide another means for mediation and consensus building.

The three Australian state parliamentarians – Mrs Judy Hopwood of New South Wales, Mr John English and Mr John-Paul Langbroek of Queensland – spoke next. Mrs Hopwood, noting the example of the Cronulla Beach riots as the most recent conflict the NSW Parliament has had to deal with, discussed some of the ethical considerations of conflict resolution. She suggested that conflict is always present in our societies “although usually unpleasant and destructive, can produce positive outcomes” by focusing attention on specific problems in society.

Mr John English, Deputy Speaker of the Queensland Parliament, addressed the difficulty of finding a balance between public safety and individual rights when considering laws relating to the security and safety of the community. He noted the importance of parliamentary committees in this process and used the example of parliamentary oversight of security agencies.

Mr John-Paul Langbroek spoke on the challenges of development. He noted the need for stability in providing a conducive environment for development using his electorate of the Gold Coast by way of example. Mr Langbroek also described the importance of strong links between parliaments in the region.

Mr Pita Paraone, a List Member for the New Zealand First Party in the New Zealand Parliament, gave a presentation on managing indigenous and settler relations in New Zealand. He commenced his presentation by providing a cultural greeting in Maori to the other participants and hosts. Mr Paraone talked about the Treaty of Waitangi, its two competing versions – one in English, the other in Maori, and the importance of land in Maori culture.

Ms Jill Pettis, a New Zealand Member of Parliament, noted that New Zealand sees itself as part of the Pacific region. She described the introduction and effect of the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system in 1996. The main benefits of the electoral reforms were changes in electoral behaviour and a reduction in conflicts and tribal violence at the local level. She noted that there is considerably more consultation and cooperation between parties in Parliament under MMP. Ms Pettis concluded by suggesting that “preventing and resolving conflict in the Pacific requires a multi-pronged approach” and long-term commitment and engagement by all stakeholders.

The final country presentations were from the two parliamentarians from Timor-
Leste, Mr Lucas Da Costa and Mr Domingos Sarmento. Both spoke of recent political developments in Timor-Leste including the 2007 parliamentary and presidential elections. They also noted that this was their first visit to Papua New Guinea and the Pacific region and they welcomed the opportunity to meet with and share experiences with their counterparts from the region.

The next presenter was the Hon. Jamie Maxtone-Graham MP from Papua New Guinea who spoke on rural development solutions to conflict.

**Considering the role of Parliament in managing conflict**

The afternoon session, chaired by CDI Deputy Director, Quinton Clements, focused on the question of the roles parliaments can play in managing conflict. Participants divided into four groups, each considering a particular thematic area:

- Participation, representation and reconciliation;
- Parliamentary functions and oversight;
- Working with civil society and the media; and
- The role of the Opposition.

Each group then reported back to the plenary session.

Group A addressed the question of how to ensure the institutional design of parliament and the electoral system facilitates broad participation in the political process and the respective merits of traditional adversarial politics and consensus based decision-making. Much of their discussion centred on promoting greater representation by women in the political process in the Pacific and the mechanisms – reserved seats, parties nominating women candidates in ‘winnable’ seats - by which this can be achieved.

Group B examined the issue of how Parliament can best hold the Executive accountable? With reference to the each of the countries represented in the group, their discussion focused on several ways parliaments can hold executive government accountable. These were the role of parliamentary committees, especially oversight committees such as Public Accounts Committees and their relationship with other government oversight bodies such as Auditors General, the capacity of parliamentary support services available, the quality of parliamentary debate, and the process of developing legislation.

Group C addressed the question of the role of parliament in encouraging a robust civil society and improving the flow of information between parliament and the public. They came up with a number of suggestions including holding parliamentary sittings in different locations, encouraging umbrella civil society bodies to directly work with parliamentary committees and educating parliamentarians in dealing with the media.

Group D looked at how best to promote constructive political competition, the development of parties and a responsive Opposition. They discussed the importance of the independence of Parliament as an institution, the importance of discipline by both parties and individual Members, and the provision of appropriate resources for
all parties in Parliament. Group D noted that their basic premise was that the general principles of Westminster parliamentary democracy should be adopted and adhered to.

Participants then engaged in a robust and wide ranging discussion on the lessons learnt during the Dialogue, the ideas shared, and the challenges facing parliaments in the region. The session concluded with a vigorous debate on the support provided to parliamentarians in different countries with special reference to the generous allowances and support services given to PNG parliamentarians.

**Day Three**

**Visit to Napaine Village**

The purpose of the third and final day of the Dialogue was to introduce participants to traditional cultural life in one part of Papua New Guinea – the Eastern Highlands. All participants were driven to Napaine Village in the Unggai Bena District of the Eastern Highlands Province, roughly 90 minutes drive outside Goroka. At the village they were welcomed by traditional *singsing* groups. Participants then witnessed a range of traditional cultural activities specific to the area including the cane swallowing initiation ceremony for men. Following lunch and a number of speeches by village leaders and participants, the group returned to Goroka. The visit was jointly organised by CDI and the Eastern Highlands Provincial Government.

**Conclusion**

The 9th Dialogue proved to be one of the most successful. This success can be attributed to a number of factors including:

- the background, experience and seniority of the participants;
- the countries invited;
- the high quality of the presentations;
- the level of engagement by participants;
- the substantive nature of the discussions;
- the theme of the Dialogue and the design of the program;
- the location chosen;
- the logistical arrangements; and
- the cooperation from the Papua New Guinean agencies and international partners.

All the participants were experienced and senior parliamentarians in their respective countries. Among the group were a Speaker of Parliament (Samoa), three Deputy Speakers (Bougainville, Papua New Guinea and Queensland), a former Speaker (Fiji), a Cabinet Minister (Samoa), three former Cabinet Ministers (Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste) and a former Deputy Prime Minister (Papua New Guinea). In addition, the Dialogue benefited from the participation of the CPA Secretary-General and a range of key constitutional office-holders in PNG including the Electoral Commissioner and the Registrar of Parties. The high profile nature of the Dialogue...
was exemplified by the attendance of His Excellency the Governor General of Papua New Guinea and the widespread media coverage in PNG that the event received.

The theme chosen – Parliament and conflict management – proved prescient. Participants were clearly interested in sharing the experiences of their parliaments and countries and learning of developments in other countries. The presentations from the Fijian and Tongan delegations in particular generated much discussion.

The sub-theme of the Dialogue – introducing Papua New Guinea to the overseas participants – also proved to be well chosen. CDI not only provided a conference but also a country specific educational and cultural experience. Participants were introduced to a different PNG from the one that often appears in the international media. They heard about and saw a country of tremendous potential with a rich cultural diversity but facing significant development challenges. There was considerable interest in and some vigorous discussions on Papua New Guinea among the participants.

The level of engagement by all participants was impressive. All participants attended every session and all took the opportunity to speak, ask questions and share experiences and observations. This level of interest was most evident on the second day which began on time at 8:30am and, with some short breaks for lunch and other refreshments, went well over time, concluding after 6pm. One participant commented on this:

from discussions with other participants we find the dialogue very relevant to issues confronting us in our countries. There was 100% attendance at all sessions. Most meetings people go missing … they don’t find the meeting interesting … so why? How were you able to have and keep everyone on board the whole time?

CDI sought feedback on the Dialogue from participants through an evaluation process. All respondents were satisfied with the organisation of the Dialogue, with one noting that “the event was well planned and implemented carefully”. Participants were also satisfied with the content and structure of the Dialogue, noting that the right amount of information was provided and the program content was extremely relevant and useful to their work. Many participants noted that they found the opportunities to learn about other Pacific parliamentary experiences and practices and for “open discussions and networking” to be among the most useful aspects of the Dialogue. Two participants suggested that HIV-Aids and violence and the role of the CPA in assisting non-CPA member parliaments were two topics they would have liked to have seen covered in the Dialogue.

Some participants pointed out that there were “too many presenters on Day 2” and that “second day was too short”. This point is also borne out in the feedback relating to whether there was enough opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion immediately following presentations with 42% of the respondents saying no. In making suggestions for improvement, participants recommended more time for
presentations and follow-up questions and discussion. The conference part of the Dialogue was reduced from three days to two so as to include the visit to Napaine Village and consequently the presentation and discussion periods were somewhat curtailed. However, this is a point that CDI is also conscious of and will incorporate into future Dialogue planning.

In terms of the Dialogue outcomes and future initiatives, all participants rated the Dialogue as excellent and all would recommend attendance at future Dialogues to their parliamentary colleagues. When asked how their participation in the Dialogue will assist them in their work, participants provided a range of responses including:

- “meeting up with other relevant stakeholders in the region has given us a better understanding of the way their policies impact on target countries - e.g. travel restrictions on Fiji by New Zealand and Australia”;
- “I will better myself as a person and as a leader of my island learning from the challenges I have heard here in Goroka”;
- “I have learned a great deal despite being from a country with few issues, the networking has been invaluable”;
- “very much helpful at the level of international collaboration with other regions such as Africa”;
- “learning about conflicts, political issues and government involvement in terms of conflict management was very good”; and
- “broadening my knowledge base and contacts”.

All agreed that there is an ongoing need for Pacific parliamentarians to share experiences and ideas on best parliamentary practice and on the role of an organisation such as CDI in facilitating this. The Dialogue provides an important means for this to occur. In his comments, the CPA Secretary-General noted that:

CDI is doing extremely useful work in parliamentary democratic strengthening in the Pacific. This work should continue and be shared with other regions in the commonwealth and the world where similar circumstances apply and would be useful. Your work and contribution is highly commendable.

The 9th Dialogue would not have been successful without the wonderful cooperation of the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea and the Eastern Highlands Provincial Government. CDI expresses its sincerest appreciation to the Governor of the Eastern Highlands Province, Hon. Mal Kela Smith MP, and his staff; the Speaker of the National Parliament, Hon. Jeffery Nape MP; and the Clerk of the National Parliament, Mr Don Pandan, and his staff for their generous assistance, advice and excellent preparations. CDI also acknowledges the invaluable assistance and support of AusAID, NZAID, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and the Pacific Gardens Hotel in Goroka. CDI hopes that the Dialogue has better equipped participants and further encouraged them in the long process of building better and stronger systems of democratic government across the region.
## Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His Excellency Grand Chief Sir Paulias Matane</td>
<td>Governor-General, Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Moses MALADINA MP</td>
<td>Member for Esa’ala Open (Milne Bay Province, PNG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Francis MARUS MP</td>
<td>Member for Talasea Open (West New Britain Province, PNG) &amp; Deputy Speaker, National Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Jamie MAXTONE-GRAHAM MP</td>
<td>Member for Angalimp-South Wahgi Open (Western Highlands Province, PNG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Bart PHILEMON MP</td>
<td>Member for Lae Open (Morobe Province, PNG) &amp; Deputy Leader of the Opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Malcolm Kela SMITH MP</td>
<td>Governor, Eastern Highlands Province, PNG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Sai BESEO MP</td>
<td>Member for Kainantu Open (Eastern Highlands Province, PNG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon John BOITO MP</td>
<td>Member for Obura-Wonera Open (Eastern Highlands Province, PNG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Thompson HAROKAQVEH MP</td>
<td>Member for Goroka Open (Eastern Highlands Province, PNG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Paul BENGO</td>
<td>Registrar of Political Parties, PNG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major General Jerry SINGIROK (PNGDF Retired)</td>
<td>Chairman, Guns Control Committee &amp; former Commander, PNG Defence Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Andrew S. TRAWEN</td>
<td>Electoral Commissioner, PNG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ogis SANIDA</td>
<td>National Research Institute, PNG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr John ENGLISH MP</td>
<td>Member for Redlands, Queensland Legislative Assembly, Australia; Deputy Speaker &amp; Chairman of Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr John-Paul LANGBROEK MP</td>
<td>Member for Surfers Paradise, Queensland Legislative Assembly, Australia; Shadow Minister for Health, Secretary of the Parliamentary Liberal Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Judith HOPWOOD MP</td>
<td>Member for Hornsby, New South Wales Legislative Assembly, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Dominic ITTA MP</td>
<td>Member for Kongara, Central Bougainville, Autonomous Bougainville Government House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Francesca SEMOSO MP OBE</td>
<td>Deputy Speaker &amp; Regional Women’s Representative, North Bougainville Region, Autonomous Bougainville Government House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Ro Teiumumu V. KEPA</td>
<td>Former Member of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Fiji, for Rewa Fijian Communal Constituency &amp; former Minister for Education, Youth &amp; Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Pita K. NACUVA</td>
<td>Former Member of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Fiji for Nadroga/Navosa Fijian Communal Constituency &amp; former Speaker, House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Jill PETTIS MP</td>
<td>List Member, Labour Party, New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Pita PARAONE MP</td>
<td>List Member, NZ First Party, New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon FIAME Naomi Mata’afa MP</td>
<td>Member for Lotofaga, Legislative Assembly of Samoa &amp; Minister for Women, Community &amp; Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon TOLOFUAIVALELEI Falemoe Leiataua MP</td>
<td>Member for A’ana Alofi No. 2 &amp; Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Samoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Celsus TALIFILU</td>
<td>Committee Secretary, National Parliament of Solomon Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Lucas DA COSTA MP</td>
<td>Democratic Party, Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Domingos SARMENTO MP</td>
<td>Fretilin Party, Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr ‘Isileli PULU MP</td>
<td>People’s Representative, Tongatapu No. 2, Tonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Lepolo Mahe TAUNISILA MP</td>
<td>People’s Representative, ‘Niutoputapu &amp; Niufo’ou, Tonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr William F. Shija</td>
<td>Secretary-General - Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Parliament of Papua New Guinea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Simon ILA</td>
<td>Acting Deputy Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Lawrence DAVEONA</td>
<td>Director - Committees Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Lalai VALI</td>
<td>Sergeant-at-Arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Podi KOHU</td>
<td>First Clerk Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr John BALAGETUNA</td>
<td>Director - Inter-Parliamentary Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Team</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Benjamin REILLY</td>
<td>Director, CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Quinton CLEMENTS</td>
<td>Deputy Director, CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Luke HAMBLY</td>
<td>Executive Officer, CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Vicki VENESS</td>
<td>Project/Finance Officer, CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Luseane ‘Ofa CHESHAM</td>
<td>Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>