Induction Program

Co-ordinated by:

UNDP Fiji Parliamentary Strengthening Project

26th – 30th June 2006

Warwick Fiji Resort and Spa

Coral Coast, Fiji
The Fiji Parliament has just embarked on a capacity strengthening programme under the UNDP Fiji Good Governance Project.

The process through which the Support to Parliament Strengthening project was formulated involved undertaking of a Legislative Needs Assessment, consultation with Stake holders, Appraisal by UNDP Parliament Representatives, donor representatives, and other stakeholders, and finally approval and signing of the project by the Government.

As part of the workplan for the project, an Induction programme for Members of both Houses was held at the Warwick Resort and Spa Hotel, Korolevu from 26th – 29th June, 2006. The same programme was also held in the Solomon Islands for their members following their general election. As a result, the Programme Manager of the Solomon Parliament Strengthening project and four of his graduate trainees were in Fiji to assist coordinate the programme.

This program was designed and funded by the UNDP Fiji Parliamentary Strengthening Project in conjunction with the Parliament of Fiji Islands with support funding from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) at the Australian National University. The workshop engaged both local and regional expertise with key speakers and resource personnel from Solomon Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.

The event was opened by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Pita Nacuva whilst the Prime Minister, Hon. Laisenia Qarase and the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Mick Beddoes also addressed members. The Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP, Mr Hans de Graaf also addressed members outlining the main purpose of the project. It was stressed that the Induction programme is the first item on the project workplan and the next plan is to recruit 7 graduate trainees to assist in the Secretariat’s capacity strengthening programme.

Out of the 95 members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate, 81 members attended the week long programme. A total of 11 women members made up this number. Apart from continuing members, there was a high level of participation and enthusiasm from new members.
One of the objectives of the programme was to encourage greater understanding of public leadership, constitutional frameworks, accountability, transparency and parliamentary oversight among sitting and newly elected members. It aimed to raise awareness among participating parliamentarians of key government departments, offices, committees and their responsibilities and obligations in relation to accountability and leadership.

A highlight of the program was the one day workshop on Population and Development issues that was facilitated by the UNFPA, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Pacific Parliamentary Assembly on Population and Development (PPAPD). The aim of this workshop was to mobilize parliamentary support to drive political commitments for population and development issues, including reproductive health. There was a strong emphasis on the role parliamentarians in advocating for population and development issues and in facilitating national commitments on policies and resource allocations.

Parliamentarians are seen as leaders and this event was an attempt to reinforce the integrity and transparency in the political system.

The feedback received through an evaluation from the participants was generally positive. Their responses indicated that participants benefited well from the workshop and they felt it would help and guide them in their course of leadership. The induction program was seen as educational, professionally organized, well presented, and practical. It was also considered to have been conducted at the right time straight after the general election before members engage themselves in their core function – that of lawmaking. Generally, the comments were encouraging, and therefore it could well be concluded that the workshop was a success.