The Preparatory Meeting took place at the Mocambo Hotel, Nadi on 15-16 August 2002, at the invitation of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, to discuss aspects of democracy in the Pacific and to prepare a Report for the consideration of Commonwealth Pacific Island countries Heads of Government at their Roundtable on 19-20 August. The focus of the Preparatory meeting was on the particular challenges facing democratic governance in the Pacific taking into account different national circumstances, cultures and values and how the Commonwealth and Forum might respond.

Attached is a list of the participants at the Preparatory Meeting.

The Meeting noted that the Pacific region, while relatively stable is nevertheless experiencing a number of difficulties in reconciling inherited forms of democratic government and the nation-state with the realities of Pacific societies and traditions. Recent examples of the tensions arising from such conflicts are to be seen in the military coups that occurred in Fiji, the Bougainville crisis in Papua New Guinea and the ethnic upheaval in Solomon Islands.

The Meeting considered whether there are measures that might be adopted by Pacific countries to shape democratic governance in ways more suitable to Pacific circumstances, and in particular to reduce conflict and potential conflict in the region. The Meeting decided to draw to the attention of the Roundtable the following points :-

1. **Constitutional**

   - Written constitutions based largely on the Westminster model of Parliamentary Democracy often fail to take account of the particular circumstances and values of Pacific societies.

   - Processes of constitutional review ought to be simplified.

   - There is no one model to fit all Pacific Island countries, and no reason to seek such a model.

   - Attention should be given to federal and decentralized systems where these are suited to particular Pacific nations.
2. Parliament

- Existing electoral systems do not adequately provide for the equitable representation of women in Parliament.

- The accountability and transparency of executive and parliamentary processes need to be strengthened.

- Provisions should be enacted to enhance the stability of governments e.g. to discourage “party hopping”.

3. Election Issues

- There is a need for limits over, and disclosure of, campaign expenditure. Accountability should extend to all aspects of public expenditures.

- The respective merits of FPP, preferential voting and proportional representation need to be evaluated for different Pacific societies.

4. Issues of Culture, Tradition and Churches

- Democratic systems in the Pacific must reflect the importance of land ownership and usage in Pacific societies.

- There needs to be recognition of communal values as well as individual rights.

5. Governance

- Good governance is an accepted objective. However, conditionalities linking economic or other external support to good governance may be questioned.

- Corruption undermines democracy; there must be an emphasis on ethical governance in keeping with best democratic practice and Pacific values.

- The rule of law and internal security are prerequisites for stable democracy.

6. Commonwealth and Forum Response

- Support for Pacific Parliamentary Association.

- Leadership training for Parliamentarians and senior officials.
• Training in public administration, especially in areas of finance, law and accountability.

• Election observation.

• Assistance to electoral processes and institutions.

• Assist governments on request in the maintenance of national security.

The Preparatory Meeting conveyed to the Roundtable of Commonwealth Pacific Island countries leaders its best wishes for a productive meeting, with the hope that its foregoing conclusions might assist the Leaders in their deliberations. Meeting participants also expressed their appreciation to the Commonwealth Secretary-General for providing them with the opportunity to meet and discuss these important issues for the governance of the Pacific region.
PREPARATORY MEETING

Thursday, 15 August 2002

Opening Session 0900 hours
Welcoming Speech by the Commonwealth Secretary-General (Chairman)
Opening Speech by a Representative of the Fiji Government

Refreshments 0935-1000 hours

First Session

Topic 1 - The Quality of Democracy in the Pacific Islands. (Mr Roland Rich) 1000-1130 hours

Topic 2 - Pacific Island Democracy: Regional and International Dimensions (Professor John Henderson) 1130-1300 hours
Lunch 1300-1400 hours

Second Session:
Topic 3 - Custom and Democracy in the Pacific Islands (Peter Larmour) 1400-1530 hours
Afternoon Tea 1530-1545 hours

Second Session: (continued)
Topic 4 - Political Leadership, Land Ownership, Indigenous Population and Ethnic Minority (Rt Hon Sir Douglas Graham) 1545-1730 hours

Close

Friday, 16 August 2002
Third Session:
- Plenary Discussions
  Introduced by Resource Persons 0900-1100 hours

Morning Tea 1100-1115 hours

Third Session: (continued) 1115-1300 hours

Lunch 1300-1400 hours

Fourth Session
- Preparation of Report to Roundtable 1400-1530 hours

Afternoon Tea 1530-1545 hours

Final Session -
  Adoption of the draft Report 1545 hours
  Preparatory Meeting ends 1700 hours
Meeting of Commonwealth Pacific Democracy Roundtable Retreat

Nadi, Fiji Islands, 15-16 August 2002

COOK ISLANDS

Honourable Dr Robert Woonton
Prime Minister of the Cook Islands

Fiji

Honourable Laisenia Qarase
Prime Minister of the Fiji Islands

KIRIBATI

His Excellency Mr Teburoro Tito
Beretitenti, Office of the Beretitenti

NAURU

His Excellency Mr Rene Harris, OJ, MP
President of the Republic of Nauru

NIUE

Honourable Young Vivien
Premier of Niue

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Honourable Sir Michael Somare
Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea

Honourable John Muinrnepe
Member of Parliament

SAMOA
Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, M.P.
Prime Minister of Samoa

**SOLOMON ISLANDS**

Honourable Sir Allan Kemakeza
Prime Minister of Solomon Islands

**TONGA**

HRH Prince ‘Ulukalala Lavaka-Ata
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga

**TUVALU**

Honourable Saufatu Sopoaga
Prime Minister of Tuvalu

**VANUATU**

Honourable Edward Natapal, M.P.
Prime Minister of Vanuatu

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Secretary-General

Mr Jon Sheppard  
Director, Political Affairs Division

Mr Amitav Banerji  
Director, Office of the Secretary-General

Mr Anthony Griffith

Mr Albert Mariner

Mr Daniel Woolford

Mr Jeff Bost