Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to CDI.NEWS from the Centre for Democratic Institutions, Australia.

CDI is Australia’s foremost democracy promotion and training institution, working in the area of good governance (particularly parliaments, judiciaries, civil society, media and political parties) with a geographic focus on Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific.

CDI’s mission:
- To harness Australian and international best practice in support of developing countries' needs for democratic governance

CDI aims to provide:
- high quality training programs in key democratic institutions and processes
- in-country technical assistance
- applied research

CDI’s core budget is provided by AusAID, Australia’s Agency for International Development.

CDI.NEWS will keep you informed periodically of activities and upcoming events at CDI.

1. VISIT OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF VIETNAM

The Chief Justice of Vietnam, Dr Nguyen Van Hien, together with four delegation members visited Australia from 1-8 September at the invitation of CDI and endorsed by the High Court of Australia. The program focused on
maritime law and intellectual property as these were areas the Vietnamese side had identified as requiring strengthening. The delegation was hosted by a number of senior courts in Australia including the Federal Court, the Supreme Court of NSW and the Supreme Court of Queensland. At the conclusion of the visit the delegation had a deeper understanding of the complexities of maritime law and were also advised of recent developments in intellectual property law.

2. WORKSHOP FOR VIETNAMESE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

On the 6-10 August 2004 CDI conducted a ‘train the trainers’ course for the Vietnamese National Assembly on behalf of the Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) Legal Reform Project. The CDI team consisted of Mr Roland Rich, Hon. Margaret Reid, Ms Vicki Bourne & Mr Minh Doung. Margaret Reid, as former Senate President and Vicki Bourne, a long serving Senator from NSW drew on their considerable parliamentary experience. Minh Duong, a former CDI summer scholar, was language specialist for the documentation. The objective of the course was to highlight best practice in adult education techniques insofar as they relate to training of parliamentarians. This was a challenging assignment as Vietnamese training ideas are locked into traditional didactic methods of education.

3. STUDY TOUR OF DELEGATION FROM VIETNAMESE PROCURACY

On behalf of the Danish Aid Agency, Danida, CDI designed and organised a study tour of Australia and New Zealand for a senior delegation from the Supreme People’s Procuracy (SPP) of Vietnam, led by the Deputy General Procurator Dr Khuat Van Nga. CDI Director Roland Rich accompanied the delegation. The main theme of the visit was to learn how the adversarial system of criminal justice worked in a common law jurisdiction. The Australian program was conducted from 19-25 September in Melbourne and Sydney and concentrated on the work of prosecutors and defence lawyers. The delegation identified a number of interesting ideas which they will be following up. The report of the New Zealand leg of the visit will appear in the next newsletter.

4. CAMBODIAN JUDICIAL INTERNS AT THE MAGISTRATES COURT

CDI and the Cambodian Royal School for Judges and Prosecutors (RSJP) agreed to work together to provide two judicial internships at the ACT Magistrates Court for two recent graduates of the Royal School. After undergoing a rigorous selection process, Ms Khiev Sokha and Mr Meas Chanyseth arrived in Canberra on the 29 August to start their internship, which will take place from the 30 August - 31 October. The interns will have an Introduction to the Magistrates Court, review Court proceedings, undertake the duties of an associate for various magistrates, attend Tribunal conferences, visit other courts in Canberra including the Supreme Court of the ACT, visit the Belconnen Remand Centre and call on the Australian Federal Police. Ms Sokha and Mr Chanyseth will then undertake the Anti-Corruption Course held at the ANU in November. On return to Cambodia they will be appointed to the bench where they will have the opportunity to work with AusAID’s Criminal Justice Project in Kandal Province.
5. **BANGKOK REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON PARTICIPATORY PUBLIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

For a number of years, King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI) of Thailand has been one of CDI's major partners in the region. While KPI has an extensive program in consolidating Thailand's democracy, it also has the ambition of reaching out to neighbouring countries striving to establish systems of democratic governance. In this regard, KPI, with support from CDI, organised a regional workshop on participatory public policy formulation and invited 18 regional participants to attend. The President of the Senate of Thailand, H. E. Mr. Suchon Chaleekure, gave the opening address, KPI President Noranit Setabutr welcomed participants and CDI Director Roland Rich delivered the first substantive presentation analysing public service systems in the region.

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6. **RESPONSIBLE PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT COURSE**

The third CDI Responsible Parliamentary Government Course was held from 26 July – 13 August and conducted by the ANU’s Asia Pacific School of Economics and Government (APSEG). The course was designed primarily for mid-level parliamentary officials and examined the fundamental principles and doctrines underlying the practice of responsible parliamentary government. Using the Australian Commonwealth Parliament as the principal example, the course covered issues including constitutional foundations, the main activities of parliament, and related structures for accountability and scrutiny of administration. Participants have the option of undertaking the course as part of a Masters degree. Officials from the parliaments of Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam attended the course and for the first time two participants from the National Assembly of Timor Leste.

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7. **SOLOMON ISLANDS NGO LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

Solomon Islands NGO Leadership Training Program was undertaken from 2002 to 2004 in collaboration between the CDI, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and the Solomon Islands Development Services Exchange (DSE). Additional collaboration was undertaken with the regional NGO body, Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO), the umbrella organization of which the Solomon Islands DSE is a national liaison unit. The training program focused on practical, long-term and systematic strengthening of civil society, consistent with ACFID’s Pacific regional focus and its commitment to promoting vibrant civil society leadership. The training comprised two interlinked projects on NGO Leadership Training 2002-2003 and NGO Leadership Training: Strategic Planning and Provincial Outreach 2003-2004. The report is available on the CDI website and details the interlinked projects designed to strengthen the Solomon Islands NGO leader's management and policy development skills. The report includes participants' outputs, findings of training needs and NGO considerations and issues specific to the provinces and Honiara.

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8. **SEMINAR WITH IRAQI DIPLOMATS**

At the request of the Asia Pacific College of Diplomacy (ANU), which is delivering a five week course for ten Iraqi diplomats, CDI Director Roland Rich conducted a half day seminar on 16 September looking at issues associated with the transition of Iraq to democracy. The seminar drew on the (1999) textbook by Larry Diamond, Developing Democracy - Towards Consolidation. After a discussion of the place of democracy in the history of ideas and the current Third Wave of democratisation, the seminar looked at positive and negative aspects of the situation in Iraq insofar as democratic transition is concerned. The discussion concluded by posing the question of what democracy could deliver for Iraq. Democracy was the best way for a multi-communal country like Iraq to organise its governance, to protect...
human rights and to allow the market economy to prosper. Participants noted
that a great effort was required to change the political culture of Iraq.
Democratic practices would need to be taught to the people of Iraq by
political parties, civil society and through civic education.

**Research**

9. **SOUTHEAST ASIA – A HISTORICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA, FROM ANGKOR WAT TO EAST TIMOR**

An in-depth, historical encyclopedia of Southeast Asia, with coverage from
prehistoric times to the end of the 20th century for each country in the region
will be available in early October. The Encyclopedia covers a broad range of
topics - colonial playground, hotbed of communism, exotic tourist destination,
nexus of terrorism and the drug trade. CDI Director Roland Rich contributed
an essay on the history of newspapers in Southeast Asia for this publication.
Published by ABC_CLIO of Santa Barbara, California and edited by Dr Ooi
Keat Gin, associate professor of history and coordinator of the Asia-Pacific
Research Unit (APRU) of the School of Humanities at University Sains
Malaysia in Penang, Malaysia. The encyclopedia can now be ordered from
the publishers.

**Forthcoming Events**

10. **PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY RETREAT – WELLINGTON 15-19 NOVEMBER 2004**

From 15-19 November, CDI will hold its sixth Pacific Parliamentary Retreat.
The aim of the CDI Retreats is to facilitate a discussion among Pacific
parliamentarians on issues of common interest while having the opportunity
to look at aspects of a host parliament’s procedures and practice. This year
the Retreat will be held in Wellington in association with the New Zealand
Parliament. CDI has once again invited parliamentarians from Fiji, PNG
Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to attend the Retreat and for the first
time with the assistance of NZAID, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tonga will be
joining the other Pacific Nations. The theme of the Wellington Retreat will be
'Tradition and Modern Parliamentary Democracy'.

**Book Overview**

11. **SOLOMON ISLANDS: REBUILDING AN ISLAND ECONOMY, DFAT, 2004**

As a response to the economic decline in the Solomon Islands, the Australian
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the publication ‘Solomon Islands -
Rebuilding an Island Economy’ proposes an economic approach to rebuilding
the Solomon Islands. This follows the Australian-led Regional Assistance
Mission that successfully restored law and order in the Solomon Islands. The
book spells out an approach to economic recovery by strengthening
governance and the public sector, addressing access to finance through
credit unions, clarifying land tenure and freeing up the labour market. It
supports the maintenance of plantation agriculture, the development of
aquaculture and the need to improve tourist infrastructure. The book warns
against maintaining the unsustainable current rate of logging and casts doubt
on the possibility of a minerals led recovery in view of the unresolved issues
with landowners.

DFAT – Executive Summary of book
**Featured Web Article**

12. DEVELOPING DEMOCRACY UNDER A NEW CONSTITUTION IN THAILAND: A PLURALIST SOLUTION

This article by Robert B. Albritton and Thawilwadee Bureekul for King Prajadhipok's Institute provides a timely analysis of the implementation of Thailand's innovative 1997 Constitution after elections for both chambers of parliament and in the light of the recent practice of some of the key institutions established under the Constitution. The authors focus in particular on the Constitutional Court, the Electoral Commission and the National Counter Corruption Commission. The article then examines the level of public satisfaction with Thailand's new democratic political landscape. The study found a 72.6 percent satisfaction rate and asked whether this is an appropriate level. The study also found a significant urban/rural distinction with Bangkok respondents significantly more likely to use criteria such as 'ability' and 'integrity' as the basis for evaluating candidates, while those outside Bangkok are more oriented toward local interests.

**Featured Website**

13. THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE - GOOD GOVERNANCE: THE SCIENCE OF DECISION-MAKING

The Global Development Research Centre (GDRC) is a virtual organisation that focuses on knowledge transfer and information dissemination. It works in the fields of education, environment, urban and community issues. The GDRC is an attempt to consolidate disparate issues, themes and topics into one umbrella to highlight their interconnectedness and interdisciplinary nature. With the focus being more on knowledge transfer and information dissemination, GDRC focuses on the micro scale - at the level of the person-on-the-street, where most of the everyday decisions are taken. It functions as an information repository (in terms of gathering, collating, packaging and disseminating information); as a research and training centre (in terms of organizing training sessions, seminars and conferences) and as an educational centre. The website uses a definition of the concept of governance as 'the complex set of values, norms, processes, and institutions by which society manages its development and resolves conflict, formally and informally. It involves the state, but also the civil society at the local, national, regional and global levels.'

The Global Development Research Centre

All suggestions and comments are welcome cdi@anu.edu.au

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