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.

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1. THE HON MR PAUL TOVUA DELIVERES CDI ANNUAL ADDRESS

CDI’s Annual Address was delivered by The Hon. Mr. Paul Tovua, Chairman of the Peace Council in the Solomon Islands. The Address took place in the Main Committee Room at Parliament House on 8 March and was attended...
by over 100 guests including Members of the Federal Parliament. The Hon. Mrs Chris Gallus, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, welcomed and introduced Mr. Tovua who delivered a timely speech entitled 'Rescuing Democracy in the Solomon Islands'.

Mr. Tovua began his speech commending the Australian led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands for its role in the restoration of law and order in the Solomon Islands. In reviewing the prospects for restoring effective parliamentary democracy in the Solomon Islands, Mr. Tovua warned against the detrimental effects of the ‘wantok’ regime. According to Mr. Tovua, wantokism encourages government corruption where politicians tend to satisfy the needs of their supporters over society as a whole. Responding to debate in the Solomon Islands about establishing a federal-style system of government, Mr Tovua voiced his concerns that further fragmenting the nation may heighten inter-ethnic tension between the provinces.

Report page containing text of speech and video of event

2. CDI CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL DECIDES TO EXTEND FOCUS TO POLITICAL PARTIES

The CDI Consultative Council met on 8 March, Chaired by the Hon Mrs Chris Gallus, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The meeting was attended by Mr Andy Becker, Mr Gary Gray, Mr Andrew Hall, Mr Brian Loughnane, Prof. Ian McAllister, Mr Roland Rich, Mr Kevin Rudd, Mr Peter Versegi (AusAID representative in place of Ms Annmaree O’Keeffe) and Mr Geoff Walsh. Following up on initial discussions held in September, the Consultative Council decided to extend the focus of CDI's work to strengthening democratic political parties in developing countries in Southeast Asia and Melanesia. The approach would be non-partisan, gradual and responsive to needs drawing on the expertise of the major parties in Australia as necessary. A first step is to better understand the situation in our region and for that purpose a series of research papers will be prepared, the first two of which are items in this newsletter.

CDI’s Consultative Council

3. VIETNAMESE DISCUSS BROADCASTING PARLIAMENT

On Thursday 26 February, CDI, in cooperation with the Office of National Assembly of Vietnam (ONA), organised a discussion between Canberra and Hanoi conducted through the video conferencing facilities of the World Bank’s Global Distance Learning Network (GDLN). The format took the shape of an interview of journalist Graeme Dobell, presenter of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s weekly TV parliamentary reporting program 'Order in the House', conducted by Roland Rich with the audience in Hanoi adding questions and comments at various stages, facilitated by the World Bank’s Andrew Scyner and ONA Vice Chairman Nguyen Si Dung.

Participants in Hanoi comprised officials of the ONA as well as working journalists who report on the National Assembly. One feature of the session was the illustration of various points being made by showing clips of the ABC program and the Vietnamese TV program 'Thoi Su'. This led to a very lively discussion of the issues of quality, priorities and journalistic style and license.

Attached is the introductory comment and the report of the GDLN session. The entire 2 hour discussion, including clips from the television programs, can be viewed by clicking onto Real Media.

Report page
National Assembly of Vietnam
GDLN
4. INDIAN DPR STUDIES PARLIAMENTARY REFORM

Between 22-31 March, an official delegation from the Indonesian Parliament (DPR), headed by the Secretary-General of the DPR Mrs. Sitti Nurhajati Daud, undertook a parliamentary study tour to Australia. The study tour focused on reform of parliamentary processes and on Hansard practices. The program involved visits to the Parliament of South Australia in Adelaide, the Federal Parliament in Canberra and the Parliament of Victoria in Melbourne. The delegation met parliamentary officials, presiding officers and members of the parliaments. The delegation also viewed question time in each parliament and various committee meetings. Discussions focused on parliament and reform processes, Hansard practices as well as research services available to parliamentarians within the parliament. The report will be available on the CDI website soon.

DPR
Federal Parliament of Australia
Parliament of South Australia
Parliament of Victoria

5. PNG WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP

In association with the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE), CDI conducted a workshop in the Simbu Province in September 2003 training aspirant women candidates on a non-partisan basis. The workshop involved men and women and focused on issues of democracy, good governance and the role of women in PNG. Strategies for increasing women’s involvement in electoral processes were developed. The workshop was facilitated by Ms. Sarah Garap, Coordinator of local women’s group, Meri Karap, who has run for parliament in the Simbu Province and experienced first hand the intimidation tactics and vested interests of male opponents. Film was taken during the workshop which will form the basis of a documentary to serve as an educational tool for local community groups in particular women candidates running for parliament. The report is now available on the CDI website.

Report page
ASPBAE

6. JUDICIAL EDUCATION FOR ASIA-PACIFIC NATIONS

As reported in CDI’s January 2004 newsletter, CDI in association with the Judicial Commission of New South Wales conducted a workshop entitled ‘Designing Effective Judicial Education Programs’ for participants from the Asia Pacific Judicial Educators Forum (APJEF). The workshop took place at the Judicial Commission of NSW in Sydney from 28 January to 3 February and aimed to strengthen the skills of judicial educators from eight countries in delivering high quality education programs. Keynote addresses were delivered by The Hon. JJ Spigelman AC, Chief Justice of NSW, Sir Ninian Stephen, a member of the CDI Consultative Council and Professor Neil Gold from the University of Windsor in Ontario. The report is now available on the CDI website.

Report page
Judicial Commission of NSW
Establishment of APJEF
7. **GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY IN VIETNAMESE COMMUNES**

Mr Minh Nhut Duong was a Research School of Social Sciences Summer Scholar attached to CDI over the past three months. He recently completed his law degree and was interested in undertaking research on Vietnam's initiatives in furthering local level democracy. He undertook field work in Vietnam and has written a paper examining the legal and political bases for Vietnam's grass roots democracy process as well as assessing its implementation. The paper reviews the many underlying problems in trying to bring a greater degree of democracy to Vietnam and notes that these problems persist in relation to the grass roots democracy initiative. Minh Nhut Duong nevertheless points to some constructive outcomes of the initiative as an additional accountability mechanism and as training for possible future more substantive democracy initiatives.

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**Forthcoming Events**

8. **CAMBODIAN ANTI-CORRUPTION WORKSHOP**

In April CDI will jointly hold a workshop with the Cambodian NGO, Centre for Social Development (CSD) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) of the United States. The management of the workshop is in the hands of the IDP affiliated Australian College of Education in Phnom Penh and will bring together government officials and civil society leaders to examine behavioural changes required in fighting corruption. The workshop will also review progress made in Cambodia since the Cambodian National Workshop to draft a National Anti-Corruption Action Plan in September 1999.

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9. **LAOS HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINING**

At the request of the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CDI will conduct a training course for Lao officials dealing with the international community on human rights issues. The workshop will draw on the UNITAR Manual on Human Rights Reporting. The workshop will run for two days in April. Professor Ivan Shearer, currently a member of the UN Human Rights Committee and Professor Hilary Charlesworth will join Roland Rich in delivering this workshop.

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**Research**


Indonesia faces a series of elections in 2004 to be fought out at the national level between the major political parties. To better understand the dynamics of the elections CDI commissioned Dr Stephen Sherlock to research the issues. His paper entitled "The 2004 Elections: How the System Works and What the Parties Stand For" is attached. The paper looks at the changes in the electoral system for the 2004 elections and how they might impact on the performance of the major political parties. It examines the major political parties in terms of their support base and their posture (platform being too concrete a word in this context). The paper hazards some predictions about which parties and which personalities will benefit most from the various ways in which the electoral rules have been amended. Dr Sherlock's paper should be read as a companion to his previous research paper examining the workings of the People's Representative Assembly (DPR).
11. SYDNEY MORNING HERALD FEATURES CDI REPORT

Saturday 27 March edition of the Sydney Morning Herald contains an article by Louise Williams featuring the report by Stephen Sherlock on the forthcoming Indonesian elections on the CDI website. The report concentrates on the analysis foreshadowing the likelihood of the victory of secular political parties in the elections at the expense of Islamic parties.

12. POLITICAL ENGINEERING OF PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEMS

Political parties tend to form around ethnic allegiances in multi-ethnic and divided societies. It is recognised that political parties can however play an important role in managing ethnic conflict depending on the nature of the party system and the structure of individual parties. Dr Ben Reilly of the Australian National University was commissioned by CDI and the UN University to research the issue of parties and party systems in ethnically divided societies. Dr Reilly’s paper, entitled ‘Political Engineering of Parties and Party Systems’ looks at the relationship between parties, ethnicity and democracy and presents a survey of four different institutional and political strategies that have been used around the world to encourage the development of cross-regional or multi-ethnic parties and party systems. Dr Reilly notes that recent initiatives for political engineering have occurred in the developing world and have favoured a centripetal rather than consociational approach. As many of these countries are new democracies with ethnically plural societies, they face the difficult task of consolidating democracy at the same time as managing the politicisation of ethnicity.

13. ELECTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES - 10 MAY - A PRIMER

With elections coming up in the Philippines in a couple of months, the attached article from the Centre for Legislative Development entitled ‘What Every Voter Should Know’ provides basic facts about the system of government in the Philippines, the offices to be decided by the ballot, the powers of the major office holders and the attributes voters should be looking for in their candidates. Also attached is a paper from SPAN (the Solidarity Philippines Australia Network) explaining how the party-list system operates in the Philippines as well as a paper on the system of voting, for the first time, by Philippine citizens living abroad. The final attachment presents results from a survey conducted by Pulse Asia on the level of public awareness of the party-list system and party-list group preferences.

‘What Every Voter Should Know’
The party-list system in the Philippines
Filipino overseas absentee vote
Party-list system and voter preference results
All suggestions and comments are welcome cdi@anu.edu.au

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