CDI.News

CDI Newsletter

Centre for Democratic Institutions
Research School of Social Sciences
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200 AUSTRALIA

Phone: 61 2 6125 0605 Fax: 61 2 6125 9726
Email: cdi@anu.edu.au
Website: www.cdi.anu.edu.au

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 parliamentary process, political parties, civil society and media) 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. 2005 CDI ANNUAL ADDRESS – HON. DONALD KALPOKAS

The CDI Annual Address was held in The Great Hall at Parliament House on the 16 March 2005. CDI’s Annual Address was attended by 100 people from institutions and organisations around Canberra. The Address was delivered by The Hon. Donald Kalpokas, former Prime Minister of Vanuatu. The Hon Bruce Billson MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade welcomed and introduced The Hon Donald Kalpokas who delivered a thought provoking address entitled “The Vanua’aku Party and Vanuatu Democracy”.

In his speech, Donald Kalpokas spoke about the early days of political
struggle in the 1970s in Vanuatu, particularly the formation of the Vanua'aku Party within the context of the move toward eventual independence for the nation which occurred in 1980, and the spirit of unification which was strong during this period. He went on to contrast this period with the relative instability of coalition governments in Vanuatu in the 1990s, where he feels politicians acting in self-interest rather than for the common good lost sight of their duty as elected members to govern with vision and coherence for the present and future of the whole nation, thus threatening effective and stable governance at the national level in Vanuatu.

2. VIETNAMESE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROVINCIAL STUDY TOUR: INDIGENOUS ISSUES

On behalf of AusAID, CDI designed and organised a study tour to Darwin, Sydney and Canberra for a senior delegation from the Vietnamese National Assembly. CDI consultant Robert Goodrick accompanied the delegation and their study of indigenous issues in Australia, which focussed on three main areas, namely:

1. Land - including treatment of claims on ancestral land and related issues of "co-habitation" - i.e. relationships between majority/minority and indigenous/immigrant groups in the same territory, dispute settlement etc;
2. Poverty reduction - including job creation, economic empowerment; and
3. Education – maintaining ethnic identity and language versus 'mainstreaming'.

The program was conducted between 16-26 February 2005, and the delegation met with representatives of multiple stakeholders in indigenous affairs on each leg of the tour, including senior policy advisers to the Northern Territory Government; senior staff from the Northern land Council and the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education; senior staff from the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs; the chairman and senior staff of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies; and the Director and senior staff of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy research at the ANU.

In all the discussions held during the tour, members of the delegation energetically questioned their Australian counterparts about the situation of Indigenous people in Australia and about the policies being followed by government in the areas of interest the delegation had nominated. Regarding education for example, the delegation found points of interest to compare and were able to come to their own firm conclusions about the relative strengths and weaknesses of government policy and practice in Australia and Vietnam. They were also very interested in the technical facilities used in organisations such as AIATSIS to preserve and promote language. By the end of the tour, the members of the delegation had gained a better understanding of the difficulties faced by Aboriginal communities and government in promoting economic activity in remote areas.

3. SSGM/CCP PROJECT SEMINAR – “RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN VANUATU”

On 17 February 2005, Donald Kalpokas, former Prime Minister of Vanuatu and founder member of the nationalist Vanua’aku Pati, presented a seminar in the joint State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project (SSGM)/Centre of the Contemporary Pacific (CCP) series, addressing recent developments in Vanuatu politics. He charted the fading fortunes of the Vanua’aku Pati which governed from independence in 1980 until 1991, when a succession of leadership challenges and factional squabbles resulted in its
fragmentation. And he offered a salutary reminder of the damaging effects the political appointees have had on ‘good governance’, and how this has led to the marginalisation of young, university educated ni-Vanuatu from taking up positions in government.

4. APPLYING CONDITIONALITY TO DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The announcement on 6 May 2004 by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) of the 16 countries eligible to receive funding under the Bush Administration’s Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) is a key step in the process of determining the direction of development assistance by applying quantitative international comparators to the governance performance of developing countries. It is the latest in a series of conditionality strategies aimed at making aid ‘effective’. It is also the most sophisticated in terms of quantification of the eligibility conditions, giving the impression that the direction of aid flows has moved into a scientific direction of applying solid statistical information in a formulaic manner, thus making the system both transparent and reliable. The MCA process has the advantage of learning from previous experience, but whether it will be able to ‘solve’ the problem remains in doubt.

This paper by Roland Rich looks at the context for this initiative by tracing some of the key historical episodes shaping development assistance in an attempt to understand the increasing reliance on conditionality. A broad taxonomy of conditionality is proposed. The paper also examines the MCA process to date, looking at the growth of, and reliance on, statistical comparators as the critical decision-making tool. It concludes with some thoughts on the place of conditionality in development assistance and the place of statistics in conditionality.

5. CULTURES OF DOMINANCE: INSTITUTIONAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS IN MELANESIA

In the latest State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project (SSGM) discussion paper, CDI Deputy Director Dr Michael Morgan outlines the institutional and cultural aspects of parliamentary politics in Melanesia with the intention of charting areas apt for institutional strengthening and capacity building projects, and those that are not. The paper represents part of a wider survey of attitudes to parliaments and parliamentarians across Melanesia.

6. ROLAND RICH AWARDED NED FELLOWSHIP

CDI Director Roland Rich has been awarded a Reagan-Fascell Fellowship by the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington. The Fellowship will enable Roland to pursue his research interest in the consolidation of Democracy in Asia. After almost seven years as the inaugural Director of CDI, Roland will be relinquishing his position to focus on research interests in the immediate future. He will maintain a close association with CDI and the Australian National University. CDI staff join with all Roland’s many friends to wish him all the best in his future endeavours.
**Forthcoming Events**

7. VANUATU

CDI is conducting a Stable and Effective Parliamentary Governance Forum in Port Vila, Vanuatu, in April of this year. This forum for Parliamentarians will deal with the roles and responsibilities of elected members within the national parliament. Planning is well underway for this course with presenters and facilitators confirmed, and a draft program compiled. Topics for seminars and discussions include ‘Parliament and Institutions of Accountability’ and ‘Parliament and Public Finance’. Outcomes towards improving political governance and political practice in Vanuatu will include improved skills and knowledge base for the participants on the structures, processes and practices that underpin Stable and Effective Parliamentary Governance.

8. SOLOMON ISLANDS

In June of this year, CDI will conduct a training project in Honiara, Solomon Islands, on the theme of Parliament and Society. This training for Parliamentarians will deal with issues and processes of general accountability and budget oversight, outcomes toward improving political governance and political practice in the Solomon Islands will include improved skills and knowledge base for the participants on the structures, processes and practices that underpin Stable and Effective Parliamentary Governance.

**Featured Article**

9. ‘ASIAN DRAMA’: THE PURSUIT OF MODERNIZATION IN INDIA AND INDONESIA

The feature article for this issue of CDI.News is entitled “‘Asian Drama’: The Pursuit of Modernization in India and Indonesia”, it was written by Tim Lankester and published in Asian Affairs, vol. XXXV, no. III, November 2004. This piece compares and contrasts the economic development and growth of Indonesia and India from 1966 to 1996, focussing on the divergent national strategies each nation employed during this period, and the differing outcomes regarding the tension and balance between economic growth and democratic systems that were apparent for each nation at the end of this 30 year period of development.

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

To subscribe or unsubscribe from CDI.NEWS go to the CDI website http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/cdinews/cdinews.htm