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 strengthening parliamentary process and political parties) with a geographic focus on Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific.

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

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

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1. Stable and Effective Parliamentary Governance Forum - Vanuatu, 19-20 May 2005

The Stable and Effective Parliamentary Governance Forum was convened in the Parliamentary Chamber in Vanuatu on the 19-20 May 2005. Initiated by the Speaker of Parliament, Sam Dan Avock, and the Clerk of Parliament, Lyno Bulekuli dit Saksak, and supported by the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) at the Australian National University. The workshop brought together some 60 participants for two days of training and discussion on the major issues related to parliamentary governance in Vanuatu. Of this number, 30 were members of parliament, the remaining were constituted from the ranks of political staff, the public service, civil society and the Malvatumauri (National Council of Chiefs). This is the first time that CDI's training in parliamentary procedures has been offered to other stakeholders in good governance, and uniformly the response was positive.

Designed primarily to provide training for new members of parliament, the program was designed around a set of technical briefings on the roles and functions of the parliament and its officers. Presentations included:

- The roles, responsibilities and duties of the Clerk presented by Lyno Bulekuli dit Saksak
- The principles of the Westminster system presented by Resource Team Leader and Acting Director of CDI Dr Michael Morgan
- The Committee System presented by Dr Simon Pentanu former Clerk of the PNG Parliament
- The Role of the Presiding Officer (Speaker) presented by the Speaker, The Hon, Sam Dan Avock
- The Legislative Cycle, Legal Drafting, Plain English Drafting, Translation, Questions and Evaluation presented by Angelyne Saul, Vanuatu State Law Office

During discussion, members outlined the challenges they faced in the prosecution of their duties as elected members of parliament. Participants agreed that the cost of government changes, floor-crossings and party splits has become too expensive to sustain for the country. It has undermined parliamentary functioning and the people of Vanuatu are suffering as a result. The issue of political reform, either through statutory or constitutional amendment was raised. Although there was no agreement as to exactly what kind of reform is needed, participants gave unanimous support to initiating the process of investigating the principles, options and precedents available in the Pacific, and more widely. At the conclusion of the workshop, members issued a joint communiqué on the challenges faced by members of parliament, particularly relating to political instability, and on avenues for encouraging stable and effective parliamentary governance. This communiqué and further detail about the Vanuatu forum can be viewed on the CDI website by clicking on the 'Report Page’ link:

CDI Acting Director Michael Morgan took part in the “Regional Workshop on Strengthening Parliaments in the Pacific”, convened in Apia, Samoa, in preparation for the Pacific Islands Forum Presiding Officers Conference (FPOC). Organised by UNDP Suva with financial support from AusAID and institutional support from the Parliament of Samoa, the workshop brought together representatives from the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and representatives from each Forum Island Country legislature.

Thematically, the workshop focused on the existing strengths of regional parliaments and secretariats, and participants developed strategies on how best to improve parliamentary functioning in the Pacific Islands. “What we have in the Pacific are a number of parliaments and parliamentary systems which outwardly share many of the same challenges. But what we also have are a number of parliaments which do particular things very well. Fiji and Tonga have both benefited recently from institutional strengthening projects in their libraries and research units. Future programmes should draw on these regionally based skill sets”, said Dr Morgan.

Guest presenters from the New Zealand parliament (Head Librarian Moira Fraser) and the AusAID funded Pacific Media and Communications Facility (Judi Cooper, Bruce Donald and Johnson Honimae) made presentations to workshop participants on crucial aspects of information flows relating to research capacities and media policies. Workshop participants issued a resolution to serve as a platform for future parliamentary support work, which can be viewed on the CDI website along with further details on the regional governance workshop by clicking on the ‘Report Page’ link:

Report page

3. UPDATE: Solomon Islands ‘Leadership & Accountability’ Workshop

In late May, CDI Executive Officer Luke Hambly travelled to Honiara, Solomon Islands, to continue consultation and planning for the ‘Political Governance: Leadership and Accountability Workshop’ which will be held in Honiara 1-3 June 2005. The workshop is being designed by CDI and the Solomon Islands Ombudsman’s Office in conjunction with the UNDP Parliamentary Strengthening Project in Solomon Islands. All Solomon Islands’ MPs and Provincial Premiers have been invited to attend, and the workshop will deal with issues and processes of leadership, accountability, transparency, and parliamentary oversight within the context of constructive national and provincial government relations, and aims to complement the wider ‘Machinery of Government’ efforts being implemented in Solomon Islands through AusAID, RAMSI and UNDP. The workshop will draw on local and regional expertise with key speakers and resource personnel from Solomon Islands, PNG, Australia, and Fiji.
This workshop is designed to contribute to the improvement of political governance and practice in Solomon Islands by focusing on the challenges, opportunities, and benefits of quality leadership and accountability in government at both the conceptual and practical level. It aims to raise awareness among participating parliamentarians and premiers of the parliamentary oversight roles of key government departments, commissions, offices and committees by explaining their structures, functions, services and obligations in relation to leadership and accountability. With improved, comparative knowledge of the goals and benefits of such structures and processes in both the Solomon Islands and key regional neighbours, it is envisioned that the capacity and enthusiasm of workshop participants to engage more fully in and strengthen these leadership and accountability processes will be further developed, which in turn will inform participant’s approaches to their own leadership and accountability practices in public office as they represent their constituencies at both the provincial and national levels, whether in government or opposition.

**Political Governance: Leadership and Accountability Workshop**

**Core Resource Team:**
- Mr John Smith Pitabelama – Ombudsman, Solomon Islands
- Dr Michael G. Morgan – (Acting) Director, Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI)
- The Hon. John Hickey – Chairman, Public Accounts Committee PNG
- Mr. Repe Rambe – Secretary, Public Accounts Committee PNG

**Regional Guest Speakers/Facilitators:**
- Mr Mose Saitala - Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
- Mr. Ila Geno – Ombudsman, PNG
- Mr. Walter Rigamoto – Ombudsman, Fiji & Chairman, Fiji Human Rights Commission

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**4. IDEA and CDI meeting**

CDI Acting Director Michael Morgan met with Andrew Ellis, Head of Elections Team from the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), during his visit to Australia in May. The two discussed CDI’s reviewed priority areas of political party strengthening and parliamentary support, and outlined areas for future cooperation. In particular, IDEA and CDI will continue their cooperation and communication on opportunities for collaborative research, networking and programming on political party strengthening in Indonesia and Melanesia. For its part, CDI will continue to contribute to global discourses on democratic functioning through relationships with partner organisations like IDEA.

**5. Political Parties in the Pacific Islands**

Over the last year, CDI has commissioned a number of research papers analysing Pacific political parties, and has now brought these works together in an edited volume with the working title of *Political Parties in the Pacific*. A draft manuscript has been compiled, and publication of this volume is expected in the 1st half of 2006. A diverse group of local and regional scholars have been involved in this work, with contributing authors drawn from The University of the South Pacific (USP), The East-West Center in Hawaii (EWC), The Timor
Institute of Development Studies (TIDS), The National University of Samoa (NUS), the University of Canberra (UC), and the ANU.

All indications from the publisher and external readers are that this volume is addressing a critical and largely ignored area of scholarship, and hence may serve as a crucial base text underpinning future study in this area.

**FORTHCOMING**

6. Indonesia: DPR/AUSTRALIA Dialogue on treaties

As the first of 3 related projects, CDI will conduct a joint Australian-Indonesian dialogue dealing with the topic ‘Parliamentary Consideration of International Treaties’. Parliamentarians and officials from DPR’s (house of reps explain) Commission 1 and Australia’s Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade (JSCFADT), and Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) will participate. Planning is well underway for this course with an Indonesian scholar preparing a centre-piece research paper commissioned by CDI on ‘Indonesian Treaty Practice’. Confirmation of Australian and Indonesia participation has been received from the Chairs of JSCFADT, JSCOT, Commission 1, and the Speaker of the DPR.

Outcomes towards improving political governance and political practice will include establishment and enhancement of deeper Indonesia/Australia parliamentary links, and information and learning exchange on high-level committee work best process and practice, for both the members and the secretariat of the DPR and its Commissions.

7. Responsible Parliamentary Government Course

The fourth CDI Responsible Parliamentary Government Course is to be conducted by the ANU’s Asia Pacific School of Economics and Government (APSEG) in Canberra in September 2005. The course is designed primarily for mid-level parliamentary officials and examines the fundamental principles and doctrines underlying the practice of responsible parliamentary government. Using the Australian Commonwealth Parliament as the principal example, the course covers issues including constitutional foundations, the main activities of parliament, and related structures for accountability and scrutiny of administration. Officials from the parliaments of Indonesia, East Timor, Thailand and Vietnam will participate.

Outcomes towards improving political governance and political practice in partner country legislatures will include improved skills and knowledge base for the participating parliamentary officials on the structures, processes and practices which underpin and enable parliamentary accountability in Australia. Accordingly, this course responds directly to the Australian Government’s focus on strengthening political parliamentary processes and practice in partner countries.

**FEATURE ARTICLES**


The handbook 'A Framework for Democratic Party Building' is the result of an international workshop on the institutional development of political parties that the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (IMD) organized in June 2003. The workshop, attended by academics and practitioners from Africa, Latin America and Asia, investigated the main criteria for improving the performance of political parties. This evolved into tentative
guidelines for putting these criteria into practice. The results of the workshop were compiled and revised by Prof. Yaw Saffu (Ghana), Dr. Fernando García (Bolivia), and Dr. Daniel Zovatto (International IDEA).

This publication appears courtesy of IMD - http://www.nimd.org/

Full Article

9. Political parties, electoral systems and democracy: A cross-national analysis

This feature article is entitled ‘Political parties, electoral systems and democracy: A cross-national analysis’, it was written by Amanda L. Hoffman and published in the European Journal of Political Research 44: 231–242, 2005. Abstract: The number of political parties and the type of electoral system may impact the level of democratic functioning within a government. Models are used to explore whether the number of political parties increases a country’s democracy score on the POLITY IV measure of democracy, and whether countries with proportional representation electoral systems have higher democracy scores than those without. Multiple regression analysis reveals that countries with proportional electoral systems have higher democracy scores. Countries involved in the Third Wave of democracy may find the choice of an electoral system among the most important issues in structuring a democratic government.

Full Article

All suggestions and comments are welcome

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