Training Workshop for Members of the National Parliament of Vanuatu

At the request of the Speaker of the National Parliament of Vanuatu, CDI recently delivered a training workshop for Members of the National Parliament which was held at Parliament House in Port Vila on 16-17 March 2009. This was the first time that a workshop of this kind had been conducted for the Vanuatu Parliament. The workshop was part of CDI’s ongoing commitment to support the Vanuatu Parliament and builds on the successful induction program for MPs in Vanuatu organised by CDI in October 2008.

The level of engagement in the program was impressive with 42 of the 52 MPs in the Vanuatu Parliament, including several ministers and the Deputy Prime Minister, attending the entire workshop.

CDI Deputy Director Quinton Clements, together with the Clerk of the National Parliament, Lino Bulekuli dit Sacsac, convened the workshop. They were joined by:

- Hon. Moses Maladina MP – Parliamentary Select Committee on the Ombudsman Commission, National Parliament of Papua New Guinea (PNG);
- Hon. Grant McBride MP – Deputy Chair, Public Accounts Committee, Parliament of NSW;
- Mr David Blunt, Deputy Clerk, Legislative Council, Parliament of NSW; and
- Mr Robert Hansen, Research Director, Parliament of Queensland.

In a first for these types of CDI workshops, and following...
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Can Afghanistan be a Democracy? The Problem of Political Parties

CDI Associate Dr Norm Kelly travelled to Afghanistan in February to conduct an assessment of Afghan political parties, ahead of the forthcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in 2009 and 2010. Dr Kelly’s assessment focussed on identifying the core needs of political parties in Afghanistan in terms of international assistance. This work was supported by the Washington-based National Democratic Institute (NDI), one of CDI’s key international partner organisations.

Dr Kelly presented a public lecture on his findings and the current state of political parties in the lead-up to elections in Afghanistan at ANU on 1 April. Dr Kelly provided an overview of the country’s electoral system, the ethnic makeup of Afghanistan that has such an influence on Afghan politics, and the current party system. He discussed the prospects for achieving a strong party system in the country, and the implications for this year’s presidential election and the national assembly elections due to be held in 2010.

Click on this link for more detail and links on our website:

Click on this link for more on our website:

Committees Workshop | Pt Vila

Dr Norm Kelly presenting his findings on political parties in Afghanistan at the ANU on 1 April.

Prof William Maley - Director of the ANU’s Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, and expert in Afghan politics was a discussant at the seminar.

Political Parties in Afghanistan
As the first step in an ongoing program of assistance, CDI recently hosted a visit from the Executive Director of the new Institute for Peace and Democracy (IPD) in Bali, Dr Ketut Putra Erawan.

IPD is a non-profit organization attached to the Bali Democracy Forum which aims to develop ideas, initiatives, and programs which flow from the work of the Bali Forum. At the Institute’s request, CDI has agreed to provide a range of direct assistance to IPD. This includes hosting IPD staff at CDI to familiarise them with CDI and help them develop appropriate internal administrative and oversight arrangements for IPD; helping develop the IPD’s professional library; launching forthcoming CDI policy papers on the 2009 Indonesian elections at IPD headquarters in Bali; and assisting with the program of a planned IPD international workshop on “Political Engineering and Policymaking in Asia”.

Further assistance including the development of joint training programs and other collaborative projects is being developed on an ongoing basis as IPD’s future work priorities are clarified in preparation for the 2009 Bali Democracy Forum.

Click on this link for more information on our website about CDI’s growing engagement with IPD:

CDI & IPD

Women in Politics: CDI Visit to Fiji, Solomon Islands & Vanuatu

As a follow-up to the CDI Women in Politics (WiP) course in November 2008, Special Adviser on Gender Issues, Sun-Hee Lee, visited Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu on 21 January – 3 February. The main purpose of the visit was to take stock of relevant activities which will help to form a position on ways of assisting national efforts to get more women elected in the next cycle of elections.

Dr Lee met with government officials, Parliament staff, Electoral Commission, regional UN organisations, research organisations, National Councils of Women, various NGOs, and CDI WiP participants.

In addition to individual meetings with partners working in this area, Dr Lee also held a workshop in Port Vila with key women’s groups. The discussions of the workshop were reported in the Vanuatu Daily Post.

Click on this link for more details and links on our website:

Women in Politics

CDI & the 10th Biennial ACPAC Conference

CDI recently sponsored the participation of Public Accounts and Finance committees from the National Parliaments of Vanuatu and Timor-Leste to the tenth biennial conference of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees (ACPAC) held in Wellington, New Zealand.

Hosted by the New Zealand Parliament’s Finance and Expenditure Committee, the conference was attended by ACPAC members from Australia, New Zealand, PNG and Solomon Islands, along with guests from countries including the UK, Kiribati, Namibia and Indonesia. Auditors-General from different jurisdictions and academics also attended. The theme of the conference was sharing lessons—seeking improved accountability—facing new challenges.

This was the first time both Vanuatu and Timor-Leste had participated in an ACPAC conference.

The members of the Vanuatu delegation were:
- Hon. George Andre Wells MP, Speaker of Parliament
- Hon. Dunstan Hilton MP, member of the PAC;
- Mr Lino Bulekuli dit Sacsac, Clerk of Parliament; and
- Ms Hamilton Moli, Senior Auditor & Officer-In-Charge of the National Audit Office.

The members of the Timor-Leste delegation were:
- Mr Rui Meneses MP;
- Mr Aderito Hugo Fernandes MP;
- Ms Cirpiana Pereira MP; and
- Ms Maria Exposto MP.

CDI Deputy Director Quinton Clements accompanied the delegations and presented a paper on issues facing smaller nations with regards to holding executive government to account and what groups such as ACPAC can do to assist

continued over
As a result of their participation both the Vanuatu and Timor-Leste delegations sought further assistance from CDI and ACPAC in strengthening their systems of financial accountability. In the case of Vanuatu, it was agreed that CDI would organise and deliver a specialised training workshop for the PAC and Audit Office in Port Vila in 2009.

Click on this link for more detail on our website about this activity:

| ACPAC 2009 |

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Recent visitors to CDI:

- **National Endowment for Democracy**  
  CDI was delighted to host a visit from Carl Gershman, President of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the key US grant-making institution with the mission to strengthen democratic institutions around the world through nongovernmental efforts. CDI has contributed to a number of NED initiatives, including the quarterly Journal of Democracy, the International Forum for Democratic Studies, and the World Movement for Democracy, a global network of democracy practitioners and scholars.

- **International IDEA**  
  Lena Hjelm-Wallen, Chair of the Board of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), and Andrew Ellis, Director of IDEA’s Asia-Pacific program, visited CDI in February to discuss ongoing areas of cooperation. CDI and IDEA have worked together on a number of projects, most recently the joint project on Political Parties in Conflict-Prone Societies.

- **Cambodian Senate**  
  A delegation of senior officials from the Cambodian Senate led by Secretary General, Mr Oum Sarith, met with CDI at Parliament House on 3 February 2009. They discussed CDI’s parliamentary strengthening work, the participation of Cambodian parliamentarians and parliamentary officials in CDI programs, and possible future CDI support for both the Cambodian National Assembly and Senate.

Click on this link for more detail on our website:

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**CDI Links with Queensland & West Australian Universities**

CDI has further developed its regional linkages within Australia with two leading research centres on Asia. The Griffith Asia Institute in Brisbane and the Asia Research Centre at Murdoch University in Perth are important CDI partners for our work in Southeast Asia in particular. CDI Director Ben Reilly has recently visited both institutions as part of our efforts to build on this partnership.

At Griffith University, he gave a talk at the Centre for Governance and Public Policy late last year and has recently followed this up with a further visit to discuss the Griffith Asia Institute’s planned contributions to future CDI research projects. At Murdoch University’s Asia Research Centre, he recently presented an invited lecture on political reform in Asia to the “New Modes of Governance in Asia” seminar series.

Both of these visits were sponsored and paid by the host institutions, external support which CDI gratefully acknowledges.

Click on this link for more detail and links on our website:

**University Links**

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**CDI Forges Links with Korean Democracy Foundation**

CDI has forged new connections with the Korea Democracy Foundation, which was set up to contribute to the development of democracy in Korea and produce research on democracy and development in Asia. The Foundation also intends “to actively contribute to the work of developing democracy around the globe using the historic example of Korea as a foundation”. An initial exchange of publications produced by the KDF and CDI on the key themes of our work has been completed, and CDI looks forward to closer links with the Foundation in the future.

Click on this link for more on our website:

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**Korea Democracy Foundation**
CDI’s 2009 Political Party Development Course on in May

CDI’s annual Political Party Development (PPD) course will take place once again in Canberra from 18-29 May 2009. This flagship training course aims to give party officials and their equivalents in CDI’s partner countries the skills to build stronger and more responsible party organisations. Working closely with the major Australian parties, the PPD course covers issues of party functioning such as candidate selection, membership, campaigning, finance, media relations, approaches to gender issues, the role of parliamentary parties, and ensuring party discipline.

The course will consist of a mixture of lectures, discussions, external site visits, and participatory forums. Networking is another major aspect of the course, both to enhance future relationships between Australia and regional countries at the party and governmental levels, and to establish new links between individuals. Participants will also gain an understanding of the administration and workings of the Australian political system, with visits to the party headquarters of the major Australian parties. As in previous years, the course will be convened by Dr Norm Kelly, a CDI Associate and former member of the West Australian Legislative Council.

Click on this link for more detail on our website:

FORTHCOMING

FIRST AMONG EQUALS -
A Professional Development Course for Parliamentary Speakers

In June 2009 CDI will inaugurate a new residential training course aimed specifically at Presiding Officers of Pacific Island Parliaments. The course is designed to help them improve the conditions, quality and public standing of their parliaments.

The pivotal person in any effective parliamentary chamber and parliamentary administration is a strong, fair and effective Speaker. Many parliaments, of course, exist without this but when this element is missing it is the democratic strength of the parliament that is diminished. An effective Speaker places the representational rights of members in balance with the power of the executive.

Accordingly, this new CDI training course will target...
Melanesian parliamentarians occupying key positions in their respective legislatures – i.e. current Speakers, Deputy Speakers and other members who may be called upon to preside over parliamentary proceedings and those who may aspire to these roles.

The course will be convened by Hon Kevin Rozzoli, former Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, with the assistance of CDI Deputy Director Mr Quinton Clements. The course will be conducted, in conjunction with the Queensland Parliament, at Parliament House in Brisbane from 22-26 June 2009.

Click on this link for more detail on our website:

**Pacific Presiding Officers Course**

**Publications, News & Events**

**New LNP Leader a CDI Alumnus**

The new leader of the Queensland Liberal National Party is a CDI alumnus. Mr John-Paul Langbroek, the Member for Surfers Paradise in the Queensland Legislative Assembly, was elected leader of the merged party on 2 April. Along with Labor MLA John English, he participated in CDI’s 2007 Pacific Parliamentary Dialogue in Goroka, Papua New Guinea, which focussed on the role of parliament in managing conflicts, and gave parliamentarians from around the Pacific region, Timor-Leste, Australia and New Zealand the opportunity to exchange views and engage with fellow political practitioners.

CDI has a number of ongoing projects involving the Queensland parliament, including our Parliamentary Presiding Officers course which will be held in Brisbane in June, and we look forward to working with both sides of Queensland politics in the future.

Click on this link for more detail on our website:

**2007 Pacific Parliamentary Dialogue**

**The Democracy Promotion Debate**

There is a vigorous global debate taking place about the future of democracy promotion, particularly in the United States. This article, from the Democracy Digest website of the National Endowment for Democracy, provides a useful summary of some of the key positions and protagonists:

**Democracy Digest**

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

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