

Local Democracy and Good Governance in the Pacific

Report of the Regional Symposium
held in Suva, Fiji Islands, December 2004



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT



Other publications in this series:

Local Democracy and Good Governance in the Caribbean

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Preface

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum attaches the utmost importance to the support of local democracy and good governance throughout the Commonwealth. We recognise that small states in the Caribbean and the Pacific, given their vulnerability, have special needs, and we have been delighted to undertake two major policy symposia in the last 12 months in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and other partners to address these needs.

The regional symposia, hosted respectively by the governments of Jamaica and Fiji in Montego Bay, April 2004 and in Suva, December 2004, were important occasions, bringing together senior decision makers, including ministers, officials and elected local representatives from each region and beyond. The key message from the two symposia was that the promotion of local democracy and good governance are high on official agendas everywhere. Closely linked are issues such as urbanisation, the role of traditional structures and effective service delivery; it is encouraging that both symposia came up with clear and precise recommendations on how to make progress.

The reports of the Jamaica and Fiji symposia will be drawn to the attention of the third Commonwealth Local Government Conference to be held in Aberdeen, Scotland in March 2005, which we expect to provide a framework for good practices for local democracy in the Commonwealth. The outcomes of the Aberdeen Conference will be formally submitted for endorsement to Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Malta in November 2005.

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum will wish to take forward the practical recommendations arising out of the symposia, working with its members in both regions and through its regional office in Fiji. It will also promote the symposia outcomes in other fora where it represents the interests of its local government members, such as the ACP/EU. We will continue to work closely with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Foundation and other key partners such as the Caribbean Community, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and UN-Habitat, and ensure that the special needs of democracy and local governance in small

states are properly addressed. It is our view that democracy and development are intimately linked: promoting local democracy will further key developmental goals and help to ensure that the millennium development goals are effectively implemented at community level.

Carl Wright

Director, Commonwealth Local Government Forum

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Foreword

Local government plays an essential role in the development process as it is the closest tier of government to ordinary citizens. Reforms to bring about decentralisation are central to the strengthening of elected local governments, thereby facilitating a transition to good governance through which public sector institutions can respond effectively to the needs and aspirations of both rural and urban people.

The Governance and Institutional Development Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat extends technical assistance to member countries in crucial development areas in pursuance of the priorities of Commonwealth governments. The Division has assisted a number of Commonwealth members in advancing their decentralisation policies; it has instituted training programmes and facilitated the short- and long-term deployment of experts to areas of critical skill shortages.

This publication builds on the symposia organised over a two-year period to assist small island Commonwealth countries to better appreciate the significance of and to devise strategies for advancing decentralisation in their particular situations. It is our hope that the analyses and recommendations it contains will contribute to an understanding of emerging regional issues relating to good governance, grassroots democracy and the role of sub-national governments in Commonwealth countries.

I should like to extend my gratitude to colleagues at the Commonwealth Secretariat and to the organisations and governments that collaborated with us on this project. We are particularly indebted to the Commonwealth Local Government Forum for its continuing collaboration in the work that we do in this very important area.

*Professor Victor O. Ayeni
Director
Governance and Institutional Development Division
Commonwealth Secretariat*

Acronyms

AC	<i>Area Council</i>
ADB	<i>Asian Development Bank</i>
ANU	<i>Australian National University</i>
AusAID	<i>Australian Agency for International Development</i>
CBO	<i>Community Based Organisation</i>
CEO	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
CHOGM	<i>Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting</i>
CLGF	<i>Commonwealth Local Government Forum</i>
ComHabitat	<i>Commonwealth Action for Human Settlements</i>
FSM	<i>Federated States of Micronesia</i>
HIV/AIDS	<i>Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</i>
MDGs	<i>Millennium Development Goals</i>
MLGHSSE	<i>Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment (Fiji)</i>
MP	<i>Member of Parliament</i>
n/a	<i>Not applicable</i>
NDS	<i>National Development Strategy</i>
NGO	<i>Non Governmental Organisation</i>
NZAID	<i>New Zealand International Aid and Development Agency</i>
PC	<i>Provincial Council</i>
PIAS-DG	<i>Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance</i>
PICs	<i>Pacific Island countries</i>
PIFS	<i>Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat</i>
PIR	<i>Pacific Islands Review</i>
PMS	<i>Performance Management System</i>
PNG	<i>Papua New Guinea</i>
PNGULLGA	<i>Papua New Guinea Urban Local Level Government Association</i>
PUA	<i>Pacific Urban Agenda</i>
PUMA	<i>Planning and Urban Management Agency</i>
RMI	<i>Republic of Marshall Islands</i>
TA	<i>Technical assistance</i>
UK	<i>United Kingdom</i>

<i>UNDP</i>	<i>United Nations Development Programme</i>
<i>UNDP/GOLD</i>	<i>UNDP Governance for Livelihoods and Development in the Pacific</i>
<i>UNDP-TUGI</i>	<i>United Nations Development Programme-The Urban Governance Initiative</i>
<i>UN-EPOC</i>	<i>United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Pacific Operations Centre</i>
<i>UN-ESCAP</i>	<i>United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</i>
<i>UN-Habitat</i>	<i>United Nations Human Settlements Programme</i>
<i>UPAP</i>	<i>Urban Policy Action Plan</i>
<i>USP</i>	<i>University of the South Pacific</i>
<i>VAT</i>	<i>Value Added Tax</i>

PART ONE

Report of the Symposium

1

Introduction

Local and central government leaders, together with officials and representatives of civil society from Pacific Island countries and beyond, attended a symposium on making local governance work in Suva, Fiji, 4–8 December 2004. Countries represented included Australia, Fiji, Jamaica, Kiribati, New Zealand, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Uganda and Vanuatu.

Representatives of regional and international organisations and development partners were also present, including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, AusAID, NZAID, ComHabitat, Transparency International, the Commonwealth Association of Planners, University of the South Pacific (USP), Massey University, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN-ESCAP and UN-Habitat.

The symposium was co-organised by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with the Government of Fiji, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the University of the South Pacific and UN-Habitat.

Participants came from a broad range of actors in the field of decentralisation and local democracy, representing Commonwealth member states and other Pacific nations, as follows:

<i>Ministers of State (including one provincial governor)</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Members of Parliament</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Central government officials</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Local government elected leaders (associations/mayors, etc.)</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Local government officials</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Traditional leaders</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Regional and international agencies/development partners</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Non-governmental organisations/civil society</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Universities/academia</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>93</i>

The symposium was opened by Hon. Mataiasi Ragigia, Minister of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlements and Environment, Fiji. The sessions were chaired by participants from the countries represented.

2 Background

The Commonwealth's concern with local democracy derives from its commitment to a set of fundamental values which are enshrined in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991. At the core of these values are adherence to democratic principles and people-centred development which respect the rights of the individual without reference to race, creed or gender.

At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Abuja, in December 2003, Heads of Government re-affirmed the value they attach to elected local government as an important foundation for democracy. They endorsed the giving of constitutional and legal recognition to this sphere of government. They also welcomed the co-operation between the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Local Government Forum in the promotion of best democratic practice. A symposium was organised in April 2004 in the Caribbean towards the fulfilment of this mandate and in furtherance of this co-operation.

This is the first symposium of its kind to address issues of local government, local democracy and good governance in the Pacific Island countries. In an effort to cascade best practices in good governance at sub-national level, the Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat built on the success of the regional symposium in the Caribbean by extending the initiative to other regions of the Commonwealth.

3

Symposium Objectives

The symposium was organised to address issues of local governance in the Pacific, with particular focus on service delivery, the challenges of urbanisation and the role of traditional leaders and structures in local governance. It also provided opportunities for participants to share and learn from each other's experiences and innovative practices in local democracy systems and local governance.

Four key thematic issues were the focus of this important symposium:

- ◆ *Promoting local democracy and good governance;*
- ◆ *The impact of urbanisation on local governance;*
- ◆ *Local government and traditional governing structures in the Pacific;*
- ◆ *Effective local governance for service delivery.*

Outcomes expected from the symposium included:

- ◆ *Needs identification, institutional strengthening and skills development requirements to deliver and implement more efficient and effective local governance;*
- ◆ *Recommendations on optimum working relationships between elected local government and traditional structures in the interests of best serving the people;*
- ◆ *Commitment to greater regional collaboration through the CLGF/ Commonwealth network and other regional mechanisms, with a focus on identification of practical co-operative initiatives that will support decentralisation and development of local government in the region.*

4

The Report

This report focuses on the topics covered in the three days of the symposium by the key presentations, plenary discussions, working group discussions and comments from participants. It is in two parts. Part one covers the presentations and plenary discussions held during the symposium, together with the working group discussions, and Part two presents the background papers which set the scene for the symposium. The final programme, keynote address, Statement of Action and a list of participants are included as annexes to the report. Individual presentations are not included in this report, because of considerations of space, but they are available on request from CLGF Pacific Project Office in Suva.

The report was written by Fakavae Toamia of the Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance, University of the South Pacific. Editorial input was also provided by Dr Munawwar Alam (Commonwealth Secretariat), Professor Ron Duncan (USP PIAS-DG), Lucy Slack (CLGF), and Litia Rabukawaqa and Terry Parker (CLGF Pacific Project).

5

Recommendations of the Symposium

The delegates endorsed the following recommendations, which should provide a way forward for making local government work effectively in Pacific Island Countries:

- 1 Solutions to the challenges facing local government in the Pacific need to be locally developed.*
- 2 A participatory and representative approach to local government should be encouraged and facilitated through community education.*
- 3 The representation and participation of women in local government should be actively developed.*
- 4 The important role of traditional governance structures should be recognised and a commitment made to develop collaboration at the local level.*
- 5 Central governments should ensure that there is an appropriate policy, legislative and financial environment in place to facilitate effective local government.*
- 6 Donor co-ordination in the areas of local governance and urban management should be enhanced.*
- 7 The important role of local government in development, particularly in dealing with the impact of urbanisation, should be recognised and included in the agenda of intergovernmental organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum.*
- 8 The formation of a regional association of local government in the Pacific should be facilitated by the CLGF.*
- 9 Sharing of information at regional level should be enhanced, for example through the Sister Cities Programme.*
- 10 Sub-regional collaboration, including symposia on specific issues, should be encouraged.*

- 11 *Formal capacity-building and training programmes that are locally focused should be developed with regional and country training institutions.*
- 12 *A commitment should be made to the Pacific Urban Agenda and the Pacific Good Local Governance Campaign.*
- 13 *Delegations should take the recommendations agreed at the symposium back to their respective governments.*
- 14 *The CLGF will monitor the recommendations and follow up and report on progress in 12 months.*

The CLGF Pacific Project was tasked with the responsibility of preparing an implementation plan for translating the recommendations into practical action and supporting participating countries in taking local action on the collective decisions of the symposium.

6

Official Opening

The official opening ceremony of the symposium was held on Saturday 4 December 2004 at the Suva City Council Chambers Reception Foyer. The Director of Ceremonies was Azmat Khan, Secretary of the Fiji Local Government Association, and the guests and delegates were formally welcomed to Suva by the Town Clerk, Ratu Ilitomasi Verenakadavu, who represented His Worship the Lord Mayor of Suva, Ratu Peni Volavola.

Robbins Chirwa of the Commonwealth Secretariat stressed that the symposium was a manifestation of the Commonwealth's commitment to democratic principles, participatory people-centred development and the ideals of partnership as the foundation for the development of local governance in the Pacific. He also expressed his appreciation of the breadth and level of representation and the Secretariat's willingness to assist with implementation of the outcomes of the symposium.

Commonwealth Local Government Forum Board Members Councillor Basil Morrison (President of Local Government New Zealand) and Hon. Chris Carter (Minister of Local Government, New Zealand) spoke on CLGF initiatives in promoting the role of elected local government, partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the importance of regional networking. Councillor Morrison explained the key activities of the CLGF and its Pacific Project, which were directed to strengthening networks among local government practitioners and building capacity, and the current scaling-up process. A similar regional event was held in the Caribbean in April 2004. Councillor Morrison emphasised how the outcomes of the symposium would guide and inform the work of the CLGF in the Pacific, and said that its recommendations would be presented at the CLGF Conference in Aberdeen, UK, in March 2005. Minister Carter highlighted the importance of regional networking and sharing of experiences as tools to improve local government performance, quoting the situation in New Zealand as an example. At the conclusion of his remarks, Councillor Morrison was joined by Councillor Tai Eru from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council in a traditional Maori song of welcome.

The Deputy Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Iosefa Maiava, remarked on the fact that at whatever level those involved in government are working at – local, national, regional or global – they are really working for the same people; he said that regional co-operation is a means to that higher goal of service. He shared the vision of the Forum leaders, which enshrines the ideals of peace, harmony, security, economic prosperity, diversity, quality of governance, sustainable management of resources, democratic values, human rights and partnership. He stressed that local governments that work are integral to achieving this vision, particularly in an environment of rapid urbanisation. He also identified the challenge of taking the best from our traditional governance structures, based on cultural values and ethos, and putting it with the best of adopted Western systems of government.

In his official opening address, Hon. Mataiasi Ragigia, Fiji's Minister for Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment, drew attention to the challenges facing local government in a changing and uncertain environment, and the fact that local government's voice is increasingly heard at a global level. In particular, the Minister referred to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Abuja, Nigeria last year where Heads of Government reaffirmed the value attached to elected local government as an important foundation of democracy. Minister Ragigia also stated that the Cotonou Agreement, which is the main instrument of co-operation between the European Union and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, is another milestone towards recognition of the growing role of local government as a state actor. The role that local government can play in helping to meet the Millennium Development Goals was also emphasised in the Minister's address. Referring to the way forward in promoting an effective local government system in Fiji, Minister Ragigia advised of amendments that have been proposed to the Local Government Act to enable local councils to be more responsive to the needs of ratepayers and the public at large. He also stated that in line with his government's strategic development plan and urban sector strategy, his Ministry had prepared an Urban Policy Action Plan (UPAP) in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank. In declaring the symposium officially open, Minister Ragigia stressed the need for action, not merely rhetoric, to result from the symposium.

A vote of thanks was then passed by Councillor Praveen Bala, President of the Fiji Local Government Association, on behalf of the symposium

organising committee and the participants. Councillor Bala thanked Minister Ragigia for attending the opening and expressed his appreciation to the official party, most of whom had travelled long distances to be present. He also thanked development partners for their support for local government and decentralisation in the region.

The official opening concluded with a welcome reception hosted by Minister Ragigia.

7

Summary of the Symposium Proceedings

The symposium proceedings started on Monday 6 December and concluded on Wednesday 8 December 2004. The programme was divided into three main parts: plenary sessions in which key presentations were made on Pacific local governance issues; discussion of the presentations by participants; and working group sessions which provided opportunities for participants to share their experiences and exchange information on topics related to local governance in Pacific Island countries and beyond.

Overview of Day One

Day One presented opportunities for participants to introduce themselves and to listen to key presentations that set the themes for the symposium.

The opening session was chaired by Councillor Basil Morrison, President of Local Government New Zealand and CLGF Board member. Mayor Robert Montague, Parish of St Mary, Jamaica (also a CLGF Board member) and Lucy Slack, Senior Policy Adviser, CLGF, presented some introductory comments which put the symposium into context.

Lucy Slack welcomed all participants and passed on greetings from CLGF Director, Mr. Carl Wright, who was unable to attend. She outlined the purpose of the symposium which was to share lessons learned from the region and further afield, exploring practical solutions to the challenges faced by local governments in the region in the areas of local democracy, decentralisation, good governance, urbanisation and service delivery, as well as looking at ways to enhance regional co-operation. She said that other key issues that will shape the agenda will be the relationship between traditional and contemporary local governance, land tenure, community participation and revenue mobilisation. The outcomes of the symposium should be meaningful, realistic and implementable.

Mayor Robert Montague shared his experiences from Jamaica, focusing on how local governments operate there, and on the importance of having a continuous dialogue between local and central government. Mayor

Montague recalled a similar symposium held in the Caribbean in April 2004, jointly organised by the CLGF and the Commonwealth Secretariat, which brought together a comparable cross-section of stakeholders, and predicted that a number of areas of common interest between the Pacific and Caribbean regions would emerge. He expressed interest in exploring ways of drawing on these commonalities and sharing experiences and good practice across regions. Mayor Montague envisaged that the recommendations from both the Caribbean and Pacific Regional Symposia will feed into the CLGF Biennial Conference to be held in Aberdeen in March 2005 and that they would contribute to CLGF's ongoing work in encouraging leaders to recognise and strengthen the important role of local government.

The first address was presented by Professor Ron Duncan of the University of the South Pacific, who established the themes for the day in an overview of local government structures in the Pacific and the status of democracy and decentralisation. He emphasised the importance of an appropriate division of powers between central and local governments and the commensurate sharing of revenues and other resources. His paper made clear the difficulties of achieving good governance in Pacific countries due to their small populations, the problems faced in delivering services by both rural and urban local government due to poor economic growth, and the difficulties experienced by local governments due to rapid rural-urban migration.

Hon. Leo Dion presented a review of Papua New Guinea's efforts to reform provincial and local government. Ratu Peni Gavidia gave an analysis of local government and its reform in Fiji. Participants discussed the presentations in the plenary session and later divided into four working groups to discuss specific questions in relation to local democracy and good governance.

Ruth Liloqula, Permanent Secretary of Home Affairs, Solomon Islands, chaired the afternoon session on Urbanisation and the Role of Local Governance in the Pacific. Representatives from UN-ESCAP, Papua New Guinea, Uganda and Jamaica were panellists for this important session. A thought-provoking session on the proposed Pacific Regional Good Governance Campaign and Pacific Urban Agenda followed, chaired by the Lord Mayor of Port Vila and presented by colleagues from UN programmes, bringing the first day to a close.

Morning Session: Setting the Scene for Pacific Islands' Experiences with Local Government

Effective Decentralisation and Local Governance in the Pacific

Presentation by *Professor Duncan, PIAS-DG, USP*

Professor Ron Duncan, Executive Director, Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance, USP, presented an overview of decentralisation and local government structures in the Pacific Region.

The first part of Professor Duncan's paper revisited the theories, arguments and evidence relating to the linkages between decentralisation and good governance. The following findings were highlighted in the paper:

- ◆ *There is very little cross-country evidence to support the idea that more decentralisation improves quality of governance;*
- ◆ *The evidence does not support the idea that decentralisation reduces corruption.*

However, these simple associations do not pay adequate attention to whether or not the forms of decentralisation adopted have been appropriate. Professor Duncan stressed that decentralisation and local government reforms have been occurring in one form or another in Pacific Island countries, but it is crucial that whatever decentralisation path a country chooses should be appropriate to its traditional authorities and power relationships. Consideration of the availability of resources, human capacities and ability to effectively carry out monitoring roles in order to generate good governance are issues that require addressing in Pacific Island countries, given their small populations and lack of scale, as well as the shortage of skills and present low capacity for revenue generation.

Local autonomy is an important factor which enhances progress towards local democracy and the achievement of good governance. Constitutional arrangements and legislation should be developed to recognise and enforce this local autonomy. The presenter noted that these arrangements are in place in all Pacific Island countries; local governments are recognised in national constitutions and in legislation. Representation at local government level is usually through elections, although some countries use both elections and appointment of officials. Professor Duncan expressed the view that local governments in the region are democratic to the extent that people vote for their representatives. However, the problem of elite capture

looms, and is preventing changes in power structures as exemplified by the insignificant participation of women in local politics. He argued that capacity building of voters to enhance public sector performance is essential.

Professor Duncan explained that legislation defines the distribution of authority/power and functions (division of powers) between local and central government. With respect to the distribution of powers, Pacific Islands' local governments can be placed into three categories: (i) minimal; (ii) weakly developed; and (iii) decentralised. For example, Niue and Tonga fall into category (i); Fiji provincial councils, Tuvalu and Vanuatu fall into category (ii); and category (iii) includes Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

The sources of local government revenue are fundamental to its ability to deliver services to the people. The presenter made clear that local governments in Pacific Island countries have limited opportunities to generate revenues and are largely dependent on central governments for revenue and other forms of assistance. In effect, central governments are not transferring sufficient funds and other support for local governments to undertake their new responsibilities. This presents a huge obstacle to their ability to deliver the expected services. So far as it is within their capacity to do so, national governments should provide the revenue and other resource transfers consistent with the responsibilities given to local governments. Further, there is need to develop economic opportunities that will provide local governments with the capacity to generate revenue individually.

Given the recent poor economic performance of many Pacific Island countries, both national and local governments are finding it difficult to maintain the expected level of public services. The rapidly increasing rural-urban drift is making it more difficult for urban councils to deliver services, especially in the peri-urban areas. The problems faced by urban local governments are greater in the Micronesian and Polynesian countries, which generally now have more than one-half of their populations in urban centres. Problems in the delivery of services to rural populations are greater in the Melanesian countries, where the large majority of the population lives in the rural areas.

In his final assessment, Professor Duncan stressed the importance of regional co-operation in addressing the complex issues emerging from decentralisation and of strengthening partnerships between governments and communities in achieving good governance.

Implementation of the Provincial and Local Government System in Papua New Guinea – the East New Britain Experience

Presentation by *Hon. Leo Dion*

Hon. Leo Dion, Governor of East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea, presented a keynote address on the Implementation of the Provincial and Local Government System in Papua New Guinea.

The presentation concentrated mainly on Papua New Guinea's Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Government, enacted by the national Parliament on 19 July 1995, and the historical background to how this became the main driver of local government reforms in Papua New Guinea.

Hon. Dion stressed that the Organic Law increases the opportunities for people to participate in decision-making processes; this involves a major shift in powers, functions and responsibilities from national and provincial levels to local and district levels. The specification of the division of powers under the Organic Law ensures that there are links between national, provincial and local governments, villages, and all the way to the grassroots level.

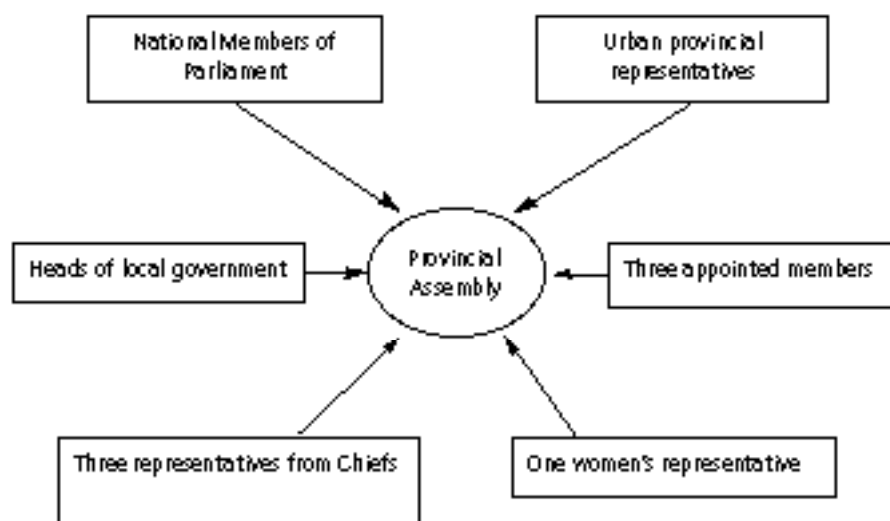
The structure of government in Papua New Guinea consists of the national government at the head, followed by provincial governments, district and local governments, and wards. The Organic Law allows for the setting up of provincial administrators (chief administrator in the province), which links the provinces to the national government and district administrators (chief administrator in the district), which links the district to the provinces. These two levels of administrators work alongside the provincial assemblies and district governments, respectively.

The provincial assemblies are made up of representatives of stakeholders in the community (Figure 1).

The regional members of the national Parliament are usually appointed, as is the provincial governor. All members of the provincial assemblies have full voting powers regardless of whether they are elected or appointed members. A provincial executive is the primary executive arm of the assembly. Committees are formed to work with the executive arm, and each committee is assigned a specific portfolio (education, health, etc.). Committees are made up of representatives of local government and this form of representation provides a crucial two-way link between provincial, district and local government.

The presenter explained the importance of good planning at all levels of local government (provincial, district and local) and said that such planning has proved to be a major contributor to the success of the implementation of the Organic Law in Papua New Guinea. For reforms to succeed there needs to be a good plan for implementing the reform; it is very important for people to understand their roles in the reform, which must be a partnership between all stakeholders.

Figure 1 Provincial Assembly Representation in Papua New Guinea



Local Government and Decentralisation in the Host Country, Fiji Islands – Opportunities and Challenges

Presentation by *Ratu Peni Gavid*

Ratu Peni Gavid, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlements and Environment, Government of Fiji, presented a paper on local governance and decentralisation in Fiji.

The paper reflected on the historical aspects of local governance in Fiji and legal and administrative arrangements. Local government jurisdictions, powers, and areas of responsibilities are determined by the Local Government Act of 1972 (revised in 1985). The Minister of Local Government plays a major role in the functioning of municipal councils.

Local government in Fiji is democratic in all aspects. The local government institutions take the form of municipal councils, local governments and provincial councils. Municipal councils have statutory status under the Local Government Act. The other local government bodies are the rural local authorities (15) and the provincial councils (14), which fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs. The 15 rural authorities are responsible for the welfare of the rural Indo-Fijian population. The 14 provincial councils were instituted to cater for the well-being of indigenous Fijians. The presenter highlighted that co-ordination between these three local government institutions presents problems. However, relations between the municipal councils and national government are predominantly legal and formal.

The presenter focused mainly on the activities of the municipal councils. An important point that emerged was the self-financing activities of the municipal councils, where the main sources of revenue were property rates, property rentals, business licences and other forms of revenue such as parking fines. This arrangement is very different from the funding of local governments in other Pacific Island countries, which are mainly dependent on transfers from central government.

Fiji has an Association of Local Government, which has been in existence for 31 years. Its primary roles are to promote the efficient functioning of local governments and to look after the welfare of local governments in terms of education, provide a mechanism for legal opinions and advise members on their roles under the Local Government Act.

Ratu Gavidi gave a detailed explanation of the Ministry's efforts to implement reforms at local government level, especially the formulation and implementation of an Urban Policy Action Plan. This plan will pave the way for reform in local government, focusing on the legal and regulatory framework and the institutional framework and governance, and address the squatter settlement issue and other problems faced in municipalities.

Highlights of the Plenary Discussion

Following these presentations, participants raised various issues for discussion, which can be summarised as follows:

Decentralisation, local democracy and good governance

- ◆ *Participants noted that Pacific countries are undergoing various forms of governmental reform. Some countries have made considerable*

progress in their reforms of local government and have managed to move beyond the three categories of decentralisation described in Professor Duncan's paper.

- ◆ *It is important that traditional governance structures are taken into account when plans for improving governance and reforming local government in Pacific Island countries are considered.*

Relationship between central and local government

- ◆ *Participants noted that the dialogue between national and local governments is an important factor in addressing good governance issues and reforms at the local government level.*
- ◆ *National governments should give their full support to the transfer of the necessary resources and technical support to local governments in order to achieve successful reforms.*

Papua New Guinea and Fiji experiences in reforms at the local government level

- ◆ *Participants stressed the importance of sharing good practices such as the Organic Law in Papua New Guinea.*
- ◆ *They also agreed that good planning is the key to success in formulating, developing and implementing reforms.*

Working Group Sessions and Discussion

The participants were divided into four working groups to discuss the following issues and report back to plenary.

Working Group 1 Promoting Local Democracy and Good Governance

Group 1 focused its discussion on appropriate systems of local democracy and good governance and on the challenges facing small states in the region in promoting democracy and good governance.

The group felt that local governance should be highly participatory in nature, promote community dialogue and consultation, and operate within laws and policies which reinforce commitment to the dialogue process and include accountability processes, for example audit, rights of appeal, etc.

The group identified the following key challenges:

- ◆ *Disillusionment with government, leading to scepticism and disinterest in the whole process of government;*

- ◆ *Voter apathy (uninterested/disengaged);*
- ◆ *Lack of awareness and understanding of the processes involved, especially at the grass roots;*
- ◆ *Conflicts between Western best practice and traditional systems of consultation, for example formal vs. informal structures of consultation;*
- ◆ *Lack of funding and capacity to carry out the wishes of the communities they serve.*

Recommendations

- ◆ *Public awareness campaigns to educate and raise general awareness and hence acknowledgement and appreciation of the processes and issues, and empowerment through awareness of their rights.*
- ◆ *Sharing of information on innovative ideas of ways for local government to raise revenue.*

Working Group 2 *Autonomy and Fiscal Decentralisation*

In discussing autonomy and fiscal decentralisation, this group concentrated on principles and mechanisms for effective financial decentralisation and local management of resources.

The group agreed that the government body providing the service should receive the funds for it. Grants from national government will remain an important source of revenue for local governments, particularly rural councils, and these grants should be a fixed share of national government revenue, based on a formula that allows for disadvantages suffered by certain areas.

Recommendations

- ◆ *Access by local government to a 'wheel tax', a growing sector; vehicle owners are easily identified and taxes are easy to collect. A share should be returned to local government according to road mileage.*
- ◆ *Identify better collection of taxes from within the informal sector. These could include household rubbish collection taxes or taxes based on household area.*
- ◆ *Ensure greater access by local governments to taxes levied by central government on natural resources, for example from fishing and logging.*

Legislative changes are needed to provide greater autonomy for local government.

Working Group 3 The Role of Civil Society in Local Governance

This group concentrated on the issues of understanding and engaging in local governance; the role of civil society and civic education in understanding local structures; and being actively involved in local decision making and holding local government to account.

Local government is perceived differently in every country. However, its role is often not well understood and expectations about what it can deliver can be very high.

Recommendations:

- ◆ *Local government should have a clear mandate and should plan and evaluate performance.*
- ◆ *Councillors should be expected to declare any interests; this could be achieved by introducing codes of conduct.*
- ◆ *Councillors should represent all sectors of society.*
- ◆ *Councillors should receive induction training in ethics, leadership (for the public good), budget review and community feedback systems – perhaps through the local government association.*
- ◆ *Participation should involve all community groups and take place before by-laws or projects are approved or commenced,*
- ◆ *The community should be empowered with access to more information through awareness campaigns (culturally appropriate and in multiple languages), structured workshops (focusing on residents' priorities) and transparency of actions and outcomes*
- ◆ *Civics should be introduced in the school curriculum.*
- ◆ *Indigenisation of democracy.*
- ◆ *Greater regional networking and sharing of skills, for example through the Good Practice Scheme to strengthen accountability.*

Working Group 4 Innovations for Decentralisation and Local Governance

The group considered the challenges affecting decentralisation in the region and innovative solutions to them.

Recommendations

- ◆ *There must be acts, laws and enabling legislation to clearly define decentralisation and local government.*
- ◆ *Reserved seats should be used to facilitate representation of all sectors of society and provinces where appropriate.*
- ◆ *A national urban policy should be put in place.*
- ◆ *Plans should be appropriate to local circumstances and take account of the need for sustainable development.*
- ◆ *Full participation by all stakeholders in local government is essential and there must be regular dialogue.*
- ◆ *There should be an officially recognised dialogue between central and local government.*
- ◆ *Consideration should be given to combining functions such as training between local level government authorities.*
- ◆ *The assets of councillors should be audited.*
- ◆ *Local government should have a role in emergency planning.*
- ◆ *Inter-city relationships should be developed to build capacity.*
- ◆ *Councillors and officers must receive training.*
- ◆ *There should be greater regional networking of all local level government stakeholders in the region – to be facilitated by CLGF.*

Afternoon Session: Panel on Urbanisation and the Role of Local Government in the Pacific

This session was chaired by Ruth Liloqula, Permanent Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, Solomon Islands, assisted by the following panelists: Alastair Wilkinson of UN-ESCAP; Mayor Robert Montague, Jamaica; Capt John Otekat, President of the Uganda Local Government Association and Vice Chair of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum Board; and Iva Kola, Director, Regulatory Services, National Capital District Commission, Papua New Guinea.

Urbanisation in the Pacific: A Role for Local Government?

Alastair Wilkinson, Regional Adviser Social Development and Planning,

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Pacific Operations Centre (UN-EPOC), presented a summary of urbanisation issues in the Pacific region.

Urbanisation issues that require urgent attention were found to be common to all Pacific Island countries. These include:

- ◆ *The increasing number of squatter settlements, especially in Fiji, due to the non-renewal of land leases, and in the Solomon Islands due to the return of peri-urban dwellers to Honiara;*
- ◆ *The increase in urban drift, especially to the capital cities (confirmed by recent censuses) – urban population growth is two to three times higher than the natural population growth;*
- ◆ *Most Pacific Island countries do not have regulations, policies, planning capabilities and institutions to effectively address urbanisation and its myriad of problems;*
- ◆ *Most importantly, urbanisation is not a regional priority and countries lack the political will to address this issue;*
- ◆ *There are insufficient resources and limited capacities at government level to tackle urbanisation management problems.*

These issues were also highlighted by Iva Kola of Papua New Guinea, who stressed the need for local governments to have more resources to create an environment conducive to the provision of opportunities for people at the grassroots to achieve economic development, and the need for effective planning capacities.

The Uganda Experience: The Role of Local Government in Addressing Urbanisation Issues

Capt John Otekat, President of the Uganda Local Government Association, presented an overview of innovative practices that Ugandan local governments are using to address problems caused by urbanisation.

He said that the Uganda Local Government Association and its members were the key players in tackling problems caused by the rapid and increasing rural-urban drift. Most of these problems were similar to those in the Pacific Island countries, including the rapid growth of slums, land shortages, environmental degradation, spread of HIV/AIDS, and poor planning.

Capt Otekat stressed that it is crucial for central governments to use local governments to tackle these problems. In the presentation, four main ideas were shared:

- ◆ *Top quality physical planning: All local governments should have plans to cater in advance for the onslaught of urbanisation, and thereby minimise the problems associated with congestion and the provision of clean water and sanitation.*
- ◆ *Low-cost housing: Uganda has developed a project called Community City Challenge, through which the Uganda Local Governments Association provides a revolving fund to finance low-cost housing for peri-urban populations and micro-finance for businesses.*
- ◆ *Formation of conflict resolution committees: These should be set up at all levels of sub-national government from regional, district, municipality, sub-country, parish and village levels.*
- ◆ *Formation of HIV committees at all levels of local government: There should be a decentralised approach to dealing with the challenges of HIV/AIDS. Their function would be to create HIV/AIDS awareness in their communities (spreading the A-B-C-D message), making sure that condoms are readily available and, most importantly, ensuring that people living with HIV/AIDS have access to anti-retroviral drugs.*

The Experience of Jamaica

Mayor Robert Montague, presented the experience from Jamaica regarding initiatives implemented to tackle urbanisation. These include:

- ◆ *Provision of key basic services for rural people – communications, water, provision of TV cable licences;*
- ◆ *Provision of vocational and skills development education/training for rural communities;*
- ◆ *Provision of low-cost housing loans to rural communities and the creation of a housing trust fund operated by employers and employees;*
- ◆ *Lower taxes in rural areas;*
- ◆ *The promotion of investment in rural areas, making rural areas a preferred destination for investors;*
- ◆ *Registration of squatters as voters in both local and general elections.*

Highlights of Plenary Discussion

After a thorough discussion of the role of local government and urban issues in particular, the participants agreed on the following points:

- ◆ *There is a need for civic education at all levels about local governance;*
- ◆ *Programmes should be developed to create a conducive economic environment to enable people to move freely to rural areas;*
- ◆ *There is a need to strengthen local governments to enable them to deliver quality services. This requires financial assistance from government, private sector and the community;*
- ◆ *Innovative ideas should be made available to be shared by countries;*
- ◆ *Urbanisation and the Pacific Urban Agenda should be discussed at regional level. Delegates were encouraged to take this up with their governments;*
- ◆ *To tackle urbanisation, all stakeholders should work together in partnership.*

Presentation by UN-Habitat and UN-ESCAP – Pacific Regional Good Urban Governance Campaign and Pacific Urban Agenda

Sue Le Mesurier, UN-Habitat Programme Manager (Pacific Region), presented the UN-Habitat's work in the Pacific, especially on the Pacific Regional Good Urban Governance Campaign. The UN-Habitat office was established in Fiji in 2004.

She said that the rationale for the Pacific Regional Good Urban Governance Campaign was the increase in poverty in the Pacific Island countries, the continuing security problems in some countries, the inability of governments to provide public services to their peoples, and the increasing urban drift.

She argued that urban governance was the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action can be taken. It includes formal institutions as well as informal arrangements and the social capital of citizens.

The principles of good urban governance are based on the following:

- ◆ *Sustainability – balancing the social, economic and environmental needs of present and future generations;*
- ◆ *Subsidiarity – assigning responsibilities and resources to the most appropriate level;*
- ◆ *Equity of access to decision-making processes and the basic necessities of urban life;*
- ◆ *Efficiency in delivery of public services and in promoting local economic development;*
- ◆ *Transparency and accountability of decision-makers and all stakeholders;*
- ◆ *Civic engagement and citizenship – recognising that people are the principal wealth of cities, and both the object and the means of sustainable human development;*
- ◆ *Security of individuals and their living environment.*

Sue Le Mesurier explained that the purpose of the Pacific Regional Good Urban Governance Campaign is to raise awareness of the importance of and advocate for good urban governance, and to build the capacities of stakeholders to practise it. The overall goal is to improve quality of life in urban centres, particularly for the poor and marginalised. It was proposed that the campaign would initially focus on Fiji and then move on to other Pacific Island countries. However, active inputs from stakeholders were being sought on how to best plan and implement the campaign.

Alastair Wilkinson, Regional Adviser with UN-ESCAP closed the day's proceedings with a related presentation on the Pacific Urban Agenda (PUA). The PUA was conceived as far back as 1996 from a regional paper as part of the Habitat II Conference and was further developed through several initiatives culminating in a Pacific Urban Workshop held in December 2003.

The PUA came about primarily because of the identified need for attention to be given to local planning and management in the Pacific region, the need to link local plans to national plans and priorities, and the increasing threats to community cohesion in urban areas. Local authorities, as the governance institutions closest to the people, were seen as ideal vehicles to pursue the programme.

The December 2003 Workshop, following consideration of current urban

management issues and experiences throughout the region, including Fiji's squatter policy, Papua New Guinea's Urban Social Charter and Safer Port Moresby initiative, and Samoa's Planning and Urban Management Authority, together with UN-EPOC community studies, agreed on a Plan of Action.

This plan, the Pacific Urban Agenda, proposes actions on a range of issues in three broad areas, based on the recognition that Pacific Island countries have much in common, particularly rapid urban population growth, constraints to effective urban land management and planning, and inadequate service and infrastructure development:

- ◆ *Serviced Shelter for the Poor (including housing policy, land tenure for the poor and housing markets);*
- ◆ *Urban Environment (including infrastructure, environment and disaster management, public health, institutional and legislative framework);*
- ◆ *Urban Security (including good governance, urban poverty, employment, vulnerable groups and personal security).*

Alastair Wilkinson confirmed that UN-ESCAP is committed to drawing on expertise and experience within the region, to partnerships with NGOs and CBOs and co-operation with regional urban development partners to develop a regional project which will include documenting best urban planning practices and policies, technical assistance and training, national initiatives, sharing information and developing regional partnerships. He also mentioned that the PUA and associated actions had been endorsed by the UN-ESCAP Commission as a guiding framework for co-operation in urban management and sustainable development.

Overview of Day Two

The morning session of Day Two was chaired by Ratu Ilitomasi Verenakadavu, Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer, Suva City Council, Fiji. Day Two started with an overview of the first day's activities by the Chief Rapporteur, Mr. Fakavae Taomia.

The first plenary session was opened with a keynote presentation from Dr. Donovan Storey of Massey University in New Zealand on Urbanisation, Local Government and Traditional Governing Structures in the Pacific. The presentation was followed by a plenary discussion on Local

Government and Traditional Leadership – Making Partnership Work. Jeff Jones, Chief Executive Officer, and Councillor Tai Eru of the Environment Bay of Plenty Regional Council, New Zealand, presented a paper on the Council's experience in creating a partnership between local government and traditional leadership and, in particular, reserving seats on the Council for members to be elected from the Maori constituency.

The mid-morning session, chaired by Capt John Otekat of Uganda, focused on transparency and accountability. Lionel Gibson of Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International presented a paper on the role of civil society in holding local government to account. Mark Dacombe of Kapiti Coast District Council, New Zealand, presented a paper on codes of conduct for local government members. Apenisa Naigulevu of Transparency International presented a paper on financial accountability and performance management. The final speaker in the session, Professor Graham Hassall, PIAS-DG, USP, spoke on the resolution of conflicts at local level. Panel discussions followed all the presentations.

In the final session of the day, participants broke up into four groups to discuss issues on traditional governance and community development; working in a multi-stakeholder environment; accountability and transparency in local government; and urbanisation issues in Pacific Island countries. A bus tour to the new solid waste disposal facility at Naboro and urban upgrading projects around Suva followed. The day concluded with a dinner hosted by the Fiji Local Government Association which provided an opportunity for delegates to interact in an informal environment.

Morning Session: Local Government and Traditional Structures – Making the Partnership Work

The first session of Day Two was chaired by Ratu Ilitomasi Verenakadavu. Fakavae Taomia opened the proceedings by presenting an overview of Day One.

Urbanisation, Local Government and Traditional Governing Structures in the Pacific

Presentation by Dr Donovan Storey

Dr Donovan Storey of Massey University, New Zealand, presented a keynote paper on Urbanisation, Local Government and Traditional Governing Structures in the Pacific.

The paper threw further light on the increasing problems facing Pacific Island countries from urbanisation. It also forecast imminent changes as the result of the rapid growth of urban areas, which if not seriously addressed will plague national and local governments, civil society and communities. Therefore, it is crucially important that all stakeholders (government, local government, civil society, private sector and communities) work together to find the best solution to address these problems.

The paper outlined the difficulties facing both national and local governments in resolving urbanisation problems, especially given the fact that their resources are already stretched to the limit. The difficulties emanated from poor planning, exclusivity of policies, lack of attention to participatory consultative approaches with stakeholders in formulating ways of solving problems, and a failure to consider the presence, needs and rights of peri-urban dwellers and land issues.

The paper stressed the importance of taking heed of the needs of peri-urban areas and their dwellers, given their potential volatility, as has been seen in the ethnic strife in Solomon Islands and the tensions in some other Pacific Island countries. Urban areas are growing in size and in terms of population; it is crucial for all stakeholders to take notice of this phenomenon and to develop inclusive governance approaches and policies that address the needs of these people. Each island country has its own way of addressing this problem; however, it is important that stakeholders work in partnership, in more participatory and consultative approaches.

*Dr Storey added that through land, customary authorities exercise their authority and maintain customs. This is both a source of moral and spiritual authority with increasing political significance. Land disputes often reflect power struggles over leadership and development between the state and traditional authorities. He highlighted the term *Vanua* which means 'land' in the Pacific. The concept of *Vanua* has spiritual, ecological, social and economic dimensions and can be seen as an obstacle threatening to change. However, at the same time it offers possibilities of participatory development in the Pacific context including urban areas if it is properly harnessed. Dr Storey quoted the example of Urban Village Courts in Papua New Guinea which serve as a dispute resolution system at the local level using customary procedures.*

Dr Storey concluded that authority over people and land is fragmented

between modern and traditional institutions and norms. Effective management requires innovative relationships between key actors as neither traditional nor modern institutions can manage urbanisation in isolation; co-dependency is required.

Therefore, an exchange of experiences, innovative ideas and information are key factors in finding ways to solve the urbanisation problems facing governments, civil society and the private sector. Dr. Storey stressed that, above all, there is an urgent need for greater partnership, negotiation, collaboration and participation between states, customary authorities and civil society. Modern systems and traditional systems should be equally considered in efforts to address urbanisation issues in the Pacific.

The Experience in New Zealand

Presentation by Environment Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Jeff Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Environment Bay of Plenty Regional Council, New Zealand, presented a paper on the establishment of Maori seats on the Environment Bay of Plenty Regional Council. The presentation explained the importance of having representation of indigenous people in a decision-making body such as the Council – in this case Maori council members representing their people on the Environment Bay of Plenty Regional Council, the first Council in New Zealand to have direct Maori representation.

The paper pointed to the value of processing imminent changes through the use of legislation after a condensed participatory consultative approach to bring about the change. Involvement of people affected by the change is crucial to the success of the intended changes. The process and its in-built checks and balances are important innovative practices, which others could use for implementing changes, especially in achieving representation of stakeholders in local government. Making use of the service of an eminent person, whom stakeholders all have confidence in, is another innovative approach to address representation issues.

Councillor Taiwhanake (Tai) Eru supported this summary by providing his personal views of this innovative process in the governance of the Council. Councillor Eru affirmed that being one of the first Maori constituency councillors in New Zealand had brought special responsibilities, to ensure the voice of Maori is heard at the Council table and in particular to ensure that the special cultural and spiritual relationship that Maori

have with the natural resources of the Bay of Plenty region is given due weight in the management of those resources. This is something that only a Maori can do, as it has to be lived, not learned.

Recommendations

- ◆ *There is an urgent need to educate people involved in national and local government, civil society and customary authorities on how to address urbanisation problems, taking into consideration local governance and peri-urban dwellers.*
- ◆ *There is a need to address land issues in strengthening local governance.*
- ◆ *Traditional and modern systems of governance exist as separate structures and it is not always feasible to 'integrate' the two. This fact needs to be recognised and planning and operations need to take into account both structures and their associated values, shared ideas and practices, and the importance of working collaboratively.*
- ◆ *Where there are ethnic tensions it is very important that people's culture and values are maintained since they provide safety nets and effective mediation tools.*
- ◆ *There is a need to exchange information and innovative experiences.*

Transparency and Accountability in Local Governance

Capt John Otekat chaired the second session, a panel session on transparency and accountability in local governance.

Codes of Conduct

Presentation by Mark Dacombe, Kapiti Coast District Council

Mark Dacombe, Chief Executive Officer, Kapiti Coast District Council, New Zealand, presented a paper on codes of conduct for members of local government.

The presentation explained the purpose of a code of conduct and its key role in promoting good governance. A code of conduct sets standards for behaviour expected from elected members in the exercise of their duties, and establishes working relationships based on trust and respect. Codes of conduct are mandatory for local authorities in New Zealand.

The presentation outlined the important principles to be taken into account in the development and formulation of a good code of conduct.

These include clear explanations of all legislation, clarity of roles and responsibilities, confidentiality of information, ethical conduct, impact of criminal convictions and bankruptcy, and procedures for investigation if there is a breach of the code of conduct. Mark Dacombe also emphasised that members should own the code of conduct which should be as explicit as possible with clarity on the consequences of breaches. It should also contain procedures for investigating and resolving alleged breaches and punitive actions. At the same time, the community should monitor compliance by members and should serve as an oversight mechanism.

The paper stressed the importance for local authorities of a code of conduct because of its relevance for the transparency and integrity of the institution. An issue in the Pacific is the capacity to monitor adherence to codes of conduct. Most Pacific Island countries have yet to develop codes of conduct for any level of government.

Financial Accountability and Performance Management

Presentation by Apenisa Naigulevu, Transparency International

Apenisa Naigulevu, Executive Officer, Transparency International Fiji, presented a paper on financial accountability and performance management in local government.

The presentation made clear the importance of fighting corruption and stressed that an organisation must have the resources and the technical capability and tools to identify, detect and remove corruption. These include understanding the definition of corrupt practices (those who fight corruption should undergo a self-assessment), having the power to access information, since information is one of the key factors in fighting corruption, and the ability to design and implement codes of conduct and other necessary actions that strengthen and promote good governance.

The presenter noted that according to research conducted by Transparency International, appropriate Integrity Systems are in place in the Pacific Island countries; however, it was also established that there is a lack of compliance with the systems, and that there is an extensive range of corrupt practices.

Both local authorities and central government should provide all possible forms of information to their workers and the public at large. These types of actions promote transparency and accountability, which lead to good

governance practices. Transparency International is available to assist in these endeavours as required.

Dispute Settlement at Grassroots Level

Presentation by *Professor Graham Hassall*, University of the South Pacific

Professor Graham Hassall, Director, Governance Programme, Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance, USP, presented a paper on conflict resolution.

The paper began by differentiating between disputes and conflicts. Different types of conflicts need different approaches to conflict resolution and each society will have its own way of resolving or managing conflict. Conflict is not always negative; it can be a transformative experience. However, it was pointed out that societies are changing, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly, and these changes have brought new forms of conflict. It is still an open question whether societies have the capability to manage and/or resolve the new conflicts. Therefore it is important that societies are kept abreast of ways of managing and remedying conflicts. One way of achieving this is through training and building capacity to understand and resolve the new conflicts. Learning and sharing of information on contemporary conflict resolution practices is also very important in maintaining societies' ability to resolve conflicts.

Holding Local Government to Account – The Role of Civil Society

Presentation by *Lionel Gibson*, Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International

Lionel Gibson of the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International presented a paper on the role of civil society in holding local government to account.

Lionel Gibson presented a definition of civil society as including everything between the household and the government, including organisations, institutions, sectors and individuals; he explained the interrelationships between civil society and local government that are intrinsic to the position of both structures. He stressed the importance of good governance in the conduct of the affairs of local government authorities, arguing that local governments need to be transparent, follow the rule of law, be participatory, responsive to their stakeholders and need to deliver the required services to their people to the extent their resources allow.

To achieve this objective, civil society must work in partnership with local authorities, community, government and donors. Advocacy of and educating people about their rights and responsibilities are some of the actions that civil society can undertake to assist communities. The key issue is the involvement of all stakeholders in the process. This can be achieved through the Stages of Partnership – Enquiry, Empowerment, Empathy, Engagement and Encouragement (the five ‘E’s).

Highlights of Plenary Discussion

The participants made the following observations during discussion of the presentations:

- ◆ *Code of conduct must be properly understood, especially the steps required to formulate and implement them. It is vital that local authorities are educated on how to monitor actions under a code of conduct following implementation;*
- ◆ *Traditional and modern approaches to conflict resolution should be researched and appropriate means of integrating them, where desirable, should be made available to countries.*

Afternoon Session: Working Groups

The participants were divided into working groups to discuss the following four topics: partnerships in local governance; working in multi-stakeholder environments; accountability and transparency issues; and managing urbanisation.

Overview of Day Three

Seiuli T. Eneliko, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Samoa, chaired the first session, which focused on service delivery in local authorities.

The morning session began with reports from the four working groups. These were followed by presentations on effective local governance delivery by Hon. Chris Carter, Minister of Local Government, New Zealand and member of the CLGF Board; Karibaiti Taoaba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kiribati; Nacanieli Kotoiwasawasa, Director Health Services, Suva City Council; and Epeli Nasome, Director, Department of Environment, Fiji. These were followed by plenary discussion on

perspectives and innovative practices in local government service delivery in Pacific Island countries.

Hon. Mathew Batsiua, MP and Chairman, Public Accounts Select Committee, Nauru, chaired the mid-morning plenary session which informed the development of the symposium recommendations.

Hon. Leti Pelesala chaired the panel session with regional organisations and development partners on setting the regional perspectives. Hon. Mataiasi Ragigia chaired the final session where the recommendations from the symposium were formulated and agreed. He then closed the symposium.

Morning Session: Working Groups Feedback

Working Group Reports to the Plenary Session

Working Group 1 The Interface Between the Political and Administrative Sides of Local Government

It was agreed that a good working relationship between the administrative and political sides of local government is needed to steer a local authority on the path of progress and development. Any irritants between the two can adversely affect performance of the local government and the development process.

Recommendations

- ◆ *It is essential to have a clear legislative system to define the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives and officials.*
- ◆ *The local government should be responsible for employing all staff in the organisation.*
- ◆ *The Performance Management System (PMS) is being implemented in Fiji Islands, whereby the chief executive officers and department heads of municipalities will be employed on three to five year contracts. This will encourage good performance by incumbents in order to retain their positions for longer periods. This system could be replicated in other countries in the region.*
- ◆ *While recognising the importance of good partnerships between elected representatives and officials of local authorities, effective partnerships between both of these stakeholders and NGOs, civil society and other stakeholders are essential for sustainable community development.*

Working Group 2 Working in a Multi-stakeholder Environment

A number of barriers to effective partnerships for service delivery were considered. They include political conflict, lack of financial support from central/national government, non-compliance with legislation, and lack of dialogue, participation and awareness at different levels, for example Papua New Guinea with its 800 languages. In addition, there are often competing agendas. It was felt that donor organisations do not always recognise the role of local government in the community and that donor funding is often not accessible to local governments.

Recommendations

- ◆ *National governments should comply with existing legislation on loans to local government in order to facilitate the financial needs of local government.*
- ◆ *Awareness raising and training of national and local government officials is needed, particularly in accessing resources and influencing donor consultations and programmes.*
- ◆ *Local governments should explore alternative resourcing options, for example private sector loans.*

Working Group 3 Accountability and Transparency

The group felt that accountability and transparency in local government should include consultation, provision of public information, communication (including with national government), checks and balances (in finance and procurement), clear rules and legislation, and performance measurement.

Recommendations

- ◆ *Training of local government members on their roles and responsibilities – central governments can assist with performance measurement.*
- ◆ *Training of civil society, particularly voter education.*
- ◆ *Consultation with people to find out what they want.*
- ◆ *Adopt bottom-up processes.*
- ◆ *Provide access to information and news.*
- ◆ *Adoption of proactive thinking by local government.*
- ◆ *Micro-enterprise development.*

Working Group 4 Responding to Rapid Urbanisation

The group felt that provinces have a stake in urban management, together with city councils, in creating opportunities in the provinces and in encouraging dialogue between provinces and cities. The Papua New Guinea experience of the interaction of the National Urbanisation Committee with its stakeholder representatives was shared with the group; this process brings together squatters, civil society organisations, employers and employees.

Recommendations

- ◆ *Legislative mandates for local/provincial governments to consult.*
- ◆ *Improvement of infrastructure and services (education) to villages and improvement in the movement in/out of the city for access to markets.*
- ◆ *Production of a masterplan for the whole country, taking into account the urban/rural balance.*
- ◆ *Preparation of an urban development policy reflecting needs and priorities.*
- ◆ *Policies should take account of the importance of traditional, provincial and central government officials co-operating and planning together in the interests of local communities.*

Effective Local Governance for Better Service Delivery

Innovative Approaches to Service Delivery

Presentation by *Hon. Chris Carter*

Hon. Chris Carter presented an inspirational paper on innovative approaches to service delivery in New Zealand.

The paper focused on the notion of shared services that had done wonders for local government in New Zealand. Appropriate legislation that provides flexible and empowering environments to allow local government to prosper is a must. Without this, local authorities cannot effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities. This can require a philosophical change to the way in which affairs are currently conducted.

The presentation detailed the success of the new model, which is based on the idea of a society working together to solve problems and make a difference to people's everyday lives. Co-operation and collaboration is the

key – between local authorities and their communities, between different local authorities and between local authorities and central government.

The Community Outcome Process, a mechanism for local authorities to work with a wide range of agencies to identify and achieve desired outcomes, relies on good planning and qualified persons to make it work, and requires consultation and collaboration between all stakeholders. The paper cited many examples of the provision of shared services, including integrated regional planning, triennial agreements, dog control, shared services in the areas of water supply, computing, planning, waste management, paint recovery and recycling, and disposal of agricultural chemicals. Some of these are applicable only in New Zealand's situation. However, given the objectives of the symposium, it is important for Pacific Island countries to take note of the principles behind these innovative practices and there is no harm in trying them out.

The main message to be drawn from Minister Carter's presentation is that there is scope for efficiencies and improved outcomes by working in partnership. To succeed, good planning is required, which involves consulting with stakeholders on their needs as the first step in developing a workable and sustainable plan that addresses the needs of all stakeholders. All stakeholders should work together under legislation that allows working in partnership.

Local Governance in Kiribati

Presentation by *Karibaiti Taoaba*, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kiribati

Karibaiti Taoaba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kiribati, presented a paper on local government set up in Kiribati with a focus on quality in service delivery and monitoring of performance.

The paper provided a detailed explanation of local government in Kiribati. The 23 island councils and three urban councils in Kiribati operate under the Kiribati Local Government Act. The presenter stressed that the current problems faced by local government in Kiribati are mainly due to the islands' geographical isolation and dual systems. A review conducted in 2000 clearly identified administrative and political relationship problems between local government, communities and central government; continuing problems of limited capacity; and the problem of local elites dominating policies in outer islands. Despite these challenges, the Government of Kiribati is determined to put in place an appropriate

island development plan, reform of local government, capacity building and training of councils, and all other aspects of addressing good local governance. These objectives are included in the National Development Strategy (NDS) for 2004–2007.

Service delivery quality, accountability and performance is monitored in several ways, including audit of books of account by the ministry, the establishment of island development committees comprising representatives of various social groups to ensure that local government engages the community and to ensure that support grants are used properly, a participatory budget preparation and by-laws introduction cycle. As part of the NDS, several initiatives are in train for improving the performance of local government including:

- ◆ *Political commitment to devolution;*
- ◆ *Participatory development planning, monitoring and evaluation;*
- ◆ *Production of national and island development goals and profiles;*
- ◆ *Vertical linkages to ensure local/national co-ordination;*
- ◆ *Citizen involvement in oversight for transparency, accountability and participation;*
- ◆ *Reform of local governance to support new systems with capacity building at all levels;*
- ◆ *Partnership building with NGOs and other stakeholders;*
- ◆ *Civic and human rights awareness, advocacy and social mobilisation;*
- ◆ *Improved communications to the outer islands.*

Getting the Balance Right

Presentation by Nacanieli Kotoiwasawasa, Suva City Council

Nacanieli Kotoiwasawasa, Director of Health Services, Suva City Council, Fiji, presented a paper on getting the balance right between direct delivery of services and contracting out.

The paper detailed the services that are being contracted out by the Suva City Council and the rationale behind this. These services include cleaning services, maintenance of council buildings, road works, collection of rubbish bins, auditing, building construction and road cleaning. The

primary reasons for the contracting out of these services was cost-cutting in view of the limited Council funds, lack of expertise/capacities and unavailability of necessary equipment. The Council does, however, retain some services for in house delivery, primarily regulatory and support services.

The processes involved in contracting out are vital to the success of this practice. The contract itself must be a legal document and it is very important that all matters necessary for the contract, such as conditions of works, penalty clauses, resource availability, termination clauses, bond issues, insurance cover, workers compensation and payment frequency are included in the document. The contract document must be legally binding, and proper contract management and monitoring is critical. Tendering processes need to be in accordance with legislation and policy. The presenter outlined the benefits of contracting out services such as being outside employee unions' mandate, safeguards against price escalation during the contract period, etc. However, he also pointed out that in some cases contractors had failed to deliver quality services.

Suva City Council is considering sharing of services with key stakeholders in the public and private sectors. This is an important innovative practice for other countries to consider.

Environmental Management with a Focus on Solid Waste Management in Fiji Islands

Presentation by *Epeli Nasome*, Ministry of Local Government, Fiji Islands

Epeli Nasome, Director of the Department of Environment, Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment, Fiji Islands, presented a paper on environmental management with a focus on solid waste management.

The presentation discussed issues relating to solid waste management in Fiji, starting with the definition of waste, its classification and the problems faced by Fiji in managing solid waste. The problems in solid waste management stem from the ignorance of the people, ineffective legislation to address waste management, lack of partnership with the private sector to share in solid waste management and lack of resources. A new approach is needed, where waste is considered as a challenge and an opportunity to recover valuable resources, create jobs, save money and reduce pollution.

The approaches adopted by Fiji to problems have lessons for other Pacific Island countries. The idea of an integrated approach to solid waste man-

agement is useful in other aspects of local governance. Fiji's whole approach, with its focus on the importance of effective legislation and the adoption of strategies and action plans, shows how well-organised and efficient this environment institution is in managing solid waste. These are the kinds of mechanisms and capacities under which local government should operate. The consultative participatory approach is also used in the strategy.

Plenary Session on Key Issues Discussed at the Symposium

Hon. Matthew Batsiua, MP and Chairman, Public Accounts Select Committee, Nauru, chaired this special plenary session, which dealt with the following questions:

- ◆ *What is needed to enhance stakeholders' capacity to implement?*
- ◆ *How can capacity building strengthen local governance?*
- ◆ *How should local government co-operate at a regional level?*
- ◆ *How can existing networks be strengthened?*
- ◆ *Are new networks needed?*
- ◆ *How can these link in and support the Pacific Governance Agenda?*

The participants freely discussed issues that need to be addressed at regional level with respect to local governance, particularly urbanisation and the traditional governance/local democracy relationship. The discussions informed the preparation of the draft recommendations presented at the closing session.

Afternoon Session: Setting the Regional Perspective

Hon. Leti Pelesala, Minister of Home Affairs and Rural Development, Tuvalu, chaired another session on setting the regional agenda, this time involving regional organisations and development partners including AusAID, CLGF, Commonwealth Secretariat, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, UNDP, UN-ESCAP and UN-Habitat.

All regional organisations and international partners expressed their appreciation of the value of the symposium and supported the strengthening of local governance in Pacific Island countries, as well as addressing the urbanisation issue through the UN-ESCAP Pacific Urban Agenda and the Pacific Regional Urban Governance Campaign and other programmes.

Regional and International Partners Round Table

Representatives from regional and international partners gave brief presentations on their respective roles and complementary partnerships through which they were working to achieve the goals and outcomes of the symposium.

Pacific Islands Island Forum Secretariat

Emma Ferguson, PIFS Economic Adviser, explained PIFS' vision for the wellbeing and development of the people of the Pacific Islands with a focus on four main working areas: sustainable development, good governance, security and economic growth.

PIFS pledged to strengthen the commitment of partnerships between local and national governments and regional and international organisations in managing urbanisation, especially the transition from rural to urban societies which is fundamental in addressing poverty issues and achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Pacific Island countries. The Pacific Urban Management Agenda was cited as a concrete example that had resulted from collaboration between regional and international partners and national and local governments.

The presenter stressed the importance of sharing experiences and ideas relating to recently implemented regional collaboration to address similar issues highlighted in the symposium. These include:

- ◆ *Development at the regional level of principles of good leadership and guidelines for good land policy;*
- ◆ *Efforts to develop partnerships with the private sector for infrastructure and service provision;*
- ◆ *Promotion of consultative processes involving all stakeholders, and recognition that local government is a key stakeholder in national decisions, policies and planning.*

The presenter briefed the symposium on the Pacific Plan, which is one the significant tasks currently undertaken by PIFS. The plan is intended to be the main instrument for promoting a new Pacific vision and delivering real benefits for the Pacific peoples by proposing concrete plans for the enhancement of economic growth and sustainable development.

Australia Agency for Internal Development (AusAID)

The AusAID representative, Rebecca Lannin (Policy Analyst), presented a brief summary of AusAID's 2004–2008 Pacific Regional Strategy. The strategy showed the Government of Australia's commitment to assist the Pacific Island countries in critical areas such as good governance, urbanisation, employment, law and order and capacity building, all of which were important themes of the symposium. The concept of good, effective and efficient co-ordination among international partners was highlighted as one of the key determining factors in assessing the success of internal aid in recipient countries.

Commonwealth Secretariat

The presenter, Robbins Chirwa (Senior Programme Manager, Pacific Region) initially focused on the Commonwealth Secretariat's role and programmes which link directly to the goals of the symposium in strengthening and promoting good governance at both national and local level.

The Commonwealth Secretariat also provides technical assistance based on official requests from member countries. Examples were given in the areas of conflict resolution, good governance and democracy, transparency and accountability, and capacity building. Partnership between national governments and the Commonwealth Secretariat is crucial to allow the Secretariat to be used to its fullest capacity.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

The Pacific Urban Agenda was the main focus of this presentation by Alastair Wilkinson (Regional Adviser, UN-ESCAP). The challenge now is to grasp the support and commitment of national governments and regional and international partnerships to move the Pacific Urban Agenda beyond just being a paper programme.

Member countries were encouraged to work with UN-ESCAP, through the provision of official requests to its headquarters in Bangkok and Vanuatu.

United Nations Development Programme

UNDP representative Mr. Hendrik Lindroth (Programme Manager, UNDP/GOLD) talked about the establishment of a UNDP Pacific Centre in the second quarter of 2006. Good governance, conflict resolution, realisation of the Millennium Development Goals, Parliament and human rights issues are some of the multifaceted subjects to be covered by the UNDP Pacific Centre. Input is sought from Pacific Island countries about

how the Centre can best serve their needs in the focal areas. The UNDP's general roles, the standard procedures in securing assistance, the availability of both technical and financial assistance and the role of national governments were discussed in the latter half of the presentation.

UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat Pacific Programme Manager, Sue Le Mesurier, reiterated the importance of the Pacific Urban Good Governance Campaign and the complementary roles that national governments and UN-Habitat should play to make the programme successful and achievable. She said that political support from national governments was vital for this work to gain momentum

Commonwealth Local Government Forum

CLGF representative Lucy Slack stressed the importance of sharing ideas and networking in the CLGF's efforts to promote good governance at local government level and to address problems at both national and local government levels.

Highlights of Plenary Discussion: Regional Co-operation

Participants recommended closer regional and sub-regional co-operation, including:

- ◆ *Ongoing exchange of good practices within the region, particularly examples of local governance arrangements that have been locally developed;*
- ◆ *Encouragement of greater representation of women in local government in the region;*
- ◆ *Sub-regional meetings for the exchange of experiences;*
- ◆ *Training and capacity building for members of local government through regional training organisations such as USP;*
- ◆ *Greater co-ordination of the activities of international partners and donor organisations in the region through encouraging co-operation;*
- ◆ *Endorsement of and development of synergies between regional programmes currently under way, for example UN-ESCAP's Pacific Urban Agenda, CLGF's regional capacity building programme, and programmes still in the planning phase such as UN-Habitat's Pacific Regional Urban Governance Campaign.*

- ◆ *CLGF to facilitate the establishment of a regional local government association;*
- ◆ *Raising local government issues of concern with the PIFS and other regional organisations.*

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Presentation and Agreement of the Symposium Recommendations

Symposium host, Hon. Mataiasi Ragigia, Minister for Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlements and Environment, Fiji Islands, chaired the closing session.

The draft recommendations that came from the discussions held during the symposium, particularly the previous two sessions, were presented and debated at length. The final recommendations (see Chapter 5 of this report) were agreed and adopted by the symposium participants.

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Closing Remarks

Brief closing remarks were made by leading participants at the symposium.

Commonwealth Secretariat Senior Programme Officer, Pacific, Robbins Chirwa, expressed the view that the symposium had been fruitful, particularly in the way delegates interacted and shared experiences. The outcomes of the symposium would assist the Commonwealth Secretariat to focus support programmes to ensure that they responded to the needs of countries, particularly as governance at sub-national level is of special interest to the Commonwealth Secretariat. He confirmed that the Commonwealth Secretariat would support the implementation of the symposium's recommendations. He concluded by thanking the various partners for their work in making the symposium a success and for the hospitality shown to all visitors.

CLGF Vice-Chair, Capt John Otekat, told the gathering that the recommendations made by the symposium would be shared with CLGF board members and would go forward to the conference to be held in Aberdeen, UK in 2005 as part of an ongoing effort to raise awareness of the issues and needs of local government among Commonwealth Heads of Government. He thanked the Fiji Ministries of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment, Foreign Affairs and Finance; regional partners PIFS, USP and UN-Habitat; Suva City Council and the Fiji Local Government Association; the Commonwealth Secretariat and CLGF staff for their support and assistance in making the event a success, and expressed appreciation to all delegates for their active participation.

Fiji Local Government Association Vice President, Councillor Chandra Singh, expressed appreciation to all those involved in arranging the symposium; he said that it had been of significant benefit to local government practitioners at all levels. Councillor Singh also thanked visitors for coming to Fiji and hoped that they had enjoyed their stay. He said that he looked forward to further events of this nature being held to promote the quality of local governance in the region.

In formally closing the symposium, Minister Mataiasi Ragigia reiterated the messages of previous speakers and expressed appreciation to all those who had been involved in arranging the symposium, singling out the officials of his Ministry for their good work. Minister Ragigia thanked participants for coming in such numbers and expressed the hope that the outcomes of the symposium would lead to meaningful improvements to the way governments worked to improve the quality of life of the people they served.

A vote of thanks on behalf of all participants was delivered by Warkia Kaminiel, Executive Director of the Papua New Guinea Urgan Local Level Government Association, who expressed appreciation to the symposium hosts for a well organised and useful event.

10

Conclusions

The symposium was useful in identifying ways in which Pacific approaches to local government issues, including the distribution of powers between central and local government, identification of revenue sources, improvements in service delivery, urbanisation problems and the incorporation of traditional governing structures into effective local governance, could be developed. The principles of equality of treatment and working in partnership with all stakeholders are a good basis from which to strengthen local governance and develop approaches to addressing these issues.

The symposium provided an opportunity for national governments, local governments and civil society participants to identify the roles of the various players in working to achieve good governance in local government. It was agreed that there is a need for co-ordination of all stakeholders' activities in addressing this issue.

Useful examples were shared of Pacific countries' experiences in local government reform, responses to urbanisation problems, raising revenues by local governments, provision of services and traditional forms of governance. Participants hope to see improvements in research on local governance systems, sharing of information about innovative practices in local government, training to build capacity at local government level, including on conflict resolution, and development of mechanisms such as codes of conduct to improve governance.

It was recognised that a critical issue emerging in all Pacific Island countries is the rapid urbanisation arising from increasing rural-urban drift. The rapid growth of urban areas is placing great stress on local governments in the generation of revenues and provision of services. The needs of peri-urban dwellers have to be better recognised and mechanisms for providing them with more effective representation and improved delivery of services must be developed.

The challenges facing Pacific Island countries in ensuring that integrity systems are maintained need to be met. Decentralisation of government

functions has not necessarily brought about a reduction in corruption. In order to do this, decentralisation must be accompanied by improved participation by all members of society, together with enhanced transparency and accountability. More demands have to be made on all stakeholders to act to strengthen good governance at all levels of society.

The symposium highlighted the importance of partnerships between national government, local government, civil society and communities in improving the effectiveness of strategies towards local government in the Pacific region. Better co-ordination of donor activities and exchange and sharing of ideas and information on local governance practices should be encouraged. The UN-Habitat's Pacific Regional Urban Governance Campaign and the UN-ESCAP's Pacific Urban Agenda were seen as projects that will help to address key concerns by raising awareness of the problems and by providing much needed technical assistance, resources and training. The CLGF Pacific Project was also seen as a key initiative in the implementation of the recommendations made by the symposium.

Other lessons learned from the symposium include the importance of holding similar forums to analyse problems, assess strategies and share information, and the importance of research and data collection to inform policy and planning, and assign priority areas for action.

Overall, the event affirmed the seriousness of the need for improved governance at local level and for continued liaison within and between countries to strengthen the effectiveness of strategies and their implementation. Above all, the issue of local governance was recognised as a community issue, one in which all members of society should be involved.

PART TWO
Background Papers

1

An Overview of Decentralisation and Local Governance Structures in the Pacific Region¹

Professor Ron Duncan

*Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development
and Governance, University of the South Pacific*

Introduction

The purpose of this symposium is to deliberate on ways in which local government in the Pacific can be strengthened and to set out ways in which regional co-operation can support the process of achieving stronger local governance.

My task is to provide an overview of local government structures and the status of local democracy and decentralisation in the region. I have been asked to outline; (i) the extent to which decentralisation has taken place; (ii) the opportunities and challenges to effective decentralisation – particularly with respect to fiscal decentralisation and the impact of urbanisation; (iii) the nature and effectiveness of intergovernmental relations in the countries of the region; (iv) the extent to which local government is participatory; (v) the effectiveness of service delivery at the local level; (vi) capacity needs and capacity building initiatives in the local government sector; and (vii) regional co-operation initiatives. I was also asked to make recommendations on how regional co-operation and related activities can help to strengthen local government. As you can see, it is an ambitious agenda, and one that I have no doubt failed to satisfy. However, I hope that I have made a useful start and can provide you with some ideas that will be useful to mull over.

*To do justice to the terms of reference would require a comprehensive update of *Decentralisation in the South Pacific* (1985). This book details local government structures and administration in 20 of the Pacific Island*

countries, in chapters written by modern luminaries such as its editors, Peter Larmour and Ropate Qalo, and Yash Ghai, Tony Regan, Pam Thomas and Ted Wolfers. There is also discussion of the reasons underlying decentralisation in these countries, revenue and expenditure arrangements, services provided and their effectiveness, and the capacity of local government staff.

*Because of its comprehensiveness, I draw heavily on this book. However, in *Central-Local Relations in Asia-Pacific* (1999), Ron May provided an update on local government in Papua New Guinea and Peter Larmour surveyed changes in local government arrangements for the rest of the Pacific Island countries. I have also been able to draw on information provided by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. The above writers could all be described as political scientists. As an economist, I may provide a somewhat different slant on the issues involved.*

What is Decentralisation?

Because of the different actions that are sometimes placed under the heading of decentralisation, it is useful to begin with a definition. Here, decentralisation or devolution is seen as a political process involving the transfer of government functions and/or powers to sub-national governments. In contrast, ‘deconcentration’ refers to the administrative shifting of functions undertaken by the central government to an appointed official or group of officials outside national government headquarters.

Decentralisation includes a number of aspects:

- ◆ *Political decentralisation – the devolution of political decision-making powers;*
- ◆ *Democratic decentralisation – locally elected representatives controlling the local authorities;*
- ◆ *Decentralisation of the national fiscus – predictable formulaic transfer payments;*
- ◆ *Decentralisation of fiscal powers – the devolution of tax-raising and spending powers*
- ◆ *Administrative decentralisation – the devolution of governmental functions.*

However, it is seldom that all of these are included.

Decentralisation has become even more topical over the past decade, together with the prominence given to governance and increased community participation in government. The reason for the link with governance is that it is believed that if government is brought closer to the people through decentralisation, the local community will have greater input into government decisions and greater oversight over the government services delivered. It is also argued that corruption in the public sector will be reduced because of the closer oversight. From the fiscal federalism literature of economics it is also argued that if voters and capital are able to move freely within the country, decentralisation should see competition between sub-national governments for voters and capital, and thus there will be pressure on the local governments to provide value for money.

Underlying the push for decentralisation has also been concern over the persistence, and even increase, in regional income inequality within countries. This concern has been heightened by the prevalence of terrorism and the relationship to depressed regions (for example in the Philippines). It was hoped that decentralisation would help to ameliorate income inequality. What has been decentralisation's record so far? There is very little cross-country evidence to support the idea that more decentralisation improves the quality of governance in developing countries. Neither does the evidence support the idea that decentralisation reduces corruption. More assertive local governments may in fact result in more, not less, barriers to mobility of capital and labour. Local governments may borrow extravagantly, relying on the central government to bail them out (the problem of moral hazard). Local elites may capture power in their jurisdictions and be less subject to the usual checks and balances than central governments. Moreover, their tenure may be insecure and short-lived, maximising the temptation to engage in corruption.

It should not be surprising, therefore, that little relationship can be found between the level of decentralisation and economic growth and between decentralisation and regional inequality. However, these simple correlations are not very informative and may even be misleading. The appropriateness of the specific design of decentralisation to a particular country's cultural and socio-economic situation is important. Decentralisation along lines that are not consistent with cultural identity and local power relationships may well have disastrous results. It seems to me that it is

extremely important to consider the appropriateness of any decentralisation to cultural identity and local power relationships before making any move in that direction.

Migration appears to play an important role in ameliorating regional inequality. In other words, migration reduces excess labour supply in poorer areas. However, there is an irony here in that poorer regional areas often demand better infrastructure, including improved transport. But improved transport facilities makes it easier for people to migrate, even as it makes it easier for inputs to move in and goods to move to market. Still, it appears that one of the major roles of government is to provide fairly equal access to infrastructure (horizontal equity).

In deciding on the appropriate design of decentralisation, another important factor is the economies of scale of various activities. For some government services, such as defence, foreign policy, national law and competition policy, provision at the national level would appear to be best, although under the Pacific Plan it is envisaged that some government services now supplied by national governments could be more effectively supplied by supra-national regional organisations. Again, the arguments for regional provision of services rest on economies of scale. In addition, the shortage of skills in small countries and the difficulties of providing the necessary independent checks and balances to ensure good governance can be convincing arguments.

According to Larmour and Qalo (1985), assertion of sovereign rights at independence (including the need to pacify separatist tendencies) can be seen to be behind some of the decentralisation measures adopted at independence. But some of the concerns behind the recent global emphasis on decentralisation have currency in the Pacific today – such as regional inequalities (reflected in outer island migration and rural-urban migration more generally, resulting in urban congestion, including rapidly growing squatter settlements) and corruption. Governments are also confronted with the dilemma of what to do about the poor, who more often than not live in the more remote, infertile and inaccessible areas.

Autonomy of Local Governments

*In the concluding chapter of *Decentralisation in the South Pacific* (1985), Larmour put together three tables that summarise three important aspects*

of local government arrangements: formal autonomy, functions and sources of revenue. I have adapted and updated these tables and use them here. These are still incomplete and probably out of date, and assistance in updating them would be appreciated.

Table 1 provides four indicators of what is called the formal autonomy of local government: whether local governments are provided for in the national constitution; whether revenues from the national government are guaranteed; whether local government legislation can override national legislation; and whether local government elections are mandated. Local government is seen as being provided for within a national constitution if the constitution: (i) gives the right to a system of local government (as, for example, in the constitution of Marshall Islands); (ii) protects existing local governments, for example through legislation dealing with them (as with the Fijian Provincial Councils);² (iii) is established by legislation (for example Honiara City Council, Solomon Islands);³ or (iv) sets out the conditions under which local governments may be suspended or abolished (as does, for example, the constitution of Papua New Guinea).

Provision for the sharing of revenue streams between national and local governments (Federated States of Micronesia) or the guarantee of a minimum level of national grants (Papua New Guinea) may also imply formal autonomy of local governments. However, as Papua New Guinea provinces have found, this legal guarantee does not ensure that they actually receive the funds. Some independence of local government is also implied when there is provision for local government legislation to override national legislation (for example liquor licensing in Papua New Guinea).

Local democracy is also an important indicator of local autonomy and this is highlighted in Table 1. Giving people the right to elect councils is likely to make them more protective of these institutions than if the members were appointed by national governments. For all countries for which information was available, elections of some form are held. In the case of the two forms of councils in Fiji, elections for the councils are held; however, unlike national government elections, they are not compulsory.

In Papua New Guinea, urban and rural council members are elected, but each council may have up to three additional members appointed to represent the following interest groups: the Trade Union Congress, the Employers' Federation and women's organisations (two women may be nominated to rural councils). The nomination of one or more representa-

tives of women's organisations has helped to raise the level of representation of women to 10 per cent of all councillors. Vanuatu councils also have appointed members besides the elected members, but they do not have voting rights. Some of the appointed members of the councils are women but no women have been elected to councils (as of 2002). Prior to its replacement in January 2004 by an appointed body, Honiara City Council had elected members representing each of the 12 wards. Another four members of the Council were appointed by the national government, while the three national parliament members representing the three constituencies in Honiara plus the Premier of Guadalcanal Province were ex officio members. Only the 12 elected members had voting rights.

Division of Powers and Functions

The division of powers and functions between national and sub-national governments is usually defined by legislation that prescribes lists of powers and functions. The list may give specific powers and functions to the local government and all other powers and functions are the prerogative of the national government (as in Palau). Or the list may give specific powers and functions to the national government and all other powers and functions are the prerogative of the local government (for example in the Federated States of Micronesia the constitution assigns certain powers and functions to the national government and all other powers and functions are under the discretion of the states). The lists may also assign certain powers and functions to the national and local governments, with other powers and functions held concurrently.

Table 2 presents the table from Larmour and Qalo (1985) summarising the functions undertaken by local governments in the Pacific states. However, as Larmour points out, the division of powers is often very complex and in practice local governments may do more or less than they are legally supposed to. Moreover, with the emphasis on decentralisation in recent years, the assignment of functions to local governments has seen frequent changes. There is also usually a big difference between the functions that urban and rural councils undertake, in part because of the nature of the services demanded and because of the greater independent revenue streams available to urban councils.

From this specification of functions, Larmour concluded that three broad types of local government could be distinguished in the Pacific: (i) 'minimal'

– where the local government does little beyond minor works but has a role in law and order (Niue, Tonga); (ii) ‘weak developmental’ – the functions of the local government are broad and developmental but it lacks the resources to carry them out (Fijian provincial councils, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu); and (iii) ‘decentralised’ – certain national functions have been transferred to local government, which it receives grants to carry out, but these may be insufficient. Local government employs its own staff but relies on the national government to second senior and technical staff (provinces in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea).

Larmour (1999), in reviewing the earlier categorisation, concluded that the categories remained valid and the grouping of countries into these categories was stable. However, he argued that there had been efforts to strengthen the ‘weak developmental’ examples: for example, following the 1987 coup the Fijian constitution was changed to favour the rights of indigenous Fijians and the Fijian administration had received more attention and funding from the national government; Tuvalu introduced a new act covering local government in 1997 that made local government more participatory and gave local authorities the power to manage their own affairs; and Vanuatu passed a new Decentralisation Act in 1994. As far as the ‘decentralised’ countries (Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) were concerned, Larmour suggested that the central governments had reduced the political autonomy of the provincial governments while retaining the transfer of functions. Overall, he concluded that: ‘there has been a legislative and rhetorical swing back to the central government as an agent of local development, a reduction in the autonomy of any intermediate “provincial” layer, and efforts to reconcile introduced and traditional forms’.

Sources of Local Government Revenue

As can be seen from Table 3, central government grants are the most common revenue source. Particularly for rural councils, central government grants are also the main source of revenue. Unlike urban councils, rural councils have very limited sources of revenues. Central government grants are commonly used by national governments to dictate policy in sub-national governments. Therefore, rural councils are much more subject to central government dictates. A global problem with the implementation of decentralisation has been that national governments have not trans-

ferred sufficient funds for local governments to undertake the new responsibilities. This has also been a problem in the Pacific, made more difficult by the fiscal indiscipline of national governments and the poor economic growth of national economies.

Central governments have pre-empted the most buoyant revenue sources (such as taxes on imports and exports, income tax, VAT and excise tax). They also control most foreign aid. Central government collection of most taxes makes sense because of the efficiencies in central collection. However, formal arrangements can be made for the sharing of revenues, such as the sharing of VAT between national and provincial governments in Papua New Guinea.

The most common form of taxation for urban councils is property tax on alienated land. Because of the extent of customary land, rural councils have had little access to land tax, although some governments have taxed customary land. According to Larmour (1985), only Kiribati and Tuvalu have taxation on rural land held under customary tenure. Taxing customary land has been proposed as a means of forcing up the productivity of such land; however, the idea has faced much resistance. The predominance of subsistence livelihoods and rural households' lack of cash incomes also means that rural councils' access to revenue streams is very limited.

Rapidly rising land values in urban centres have meant that property tax has given urban councils a good deal of independence from national governments. Ironically, the increases in land values have come in part from the rural-urban drift that has increased the rate of population growth of urban centres in the Pacific to around 6 per cent in some cases. However, urban council incomes are not rising fast enough to cope with the population increase, resulting in an inability of works and services to keep pace with demands. This is because the urban areas are not experiencing sufficient economic growth to employ the people migrating from the rural areas.

Rural-urban migration is not being stimulated by the availability of jobs in urban areas, as employment growth is very slow in most of these countries and is well below the numbers of new entrants joining the labour force each year. Rural-urban migration appears to be due mainly to the shortage of land in rural areas in the face of the rapid growth of rural populations, the low productivity of communal agriculture, the opportu-

nities for higher education in the urban areas and the 'bright lights' attractions of urban life for young people. Unless employment-generating economic growth is stimulated in the urban areas, it is hard to see the situation improving. At the same time it is not a good idea to put in place obstacles to the movement of people from rural areas, as productivity growth in the rural sector inevitably leads to the movement of labour out of these activities.

The rapid urban population growth is placing great stress on the urban areas and the pressures can only increase. For example, if South Tarawa's (Kiribati) population continues to increase at its current rate of 5.2 per cent, it will reach a population of 73,400 by 2013, about double its present level. The atoll island is already experiencing severe pollution of the fresh water lense and the lagoon as the result of population growth and poor management of water and sanitation services. Given the continuation of existing urban growth rates, the populations of the capitals Honiara (Solomon Islands) and Port Vila (Vanuatu) could double within 16 years.

The urban drift is leading to the growth of squatter settlements, particularly in cities such as Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea), Suva (Fiji), Honiara and Port Vila. It is estimated that Fiji has 82,000 squatters living in the peri-urban areas of its larger cities and towns. In Fiji's case the rural-urban migration has been increased by the non-renewal of cane farm leases for Indo-Fijian farmers. The predominance of communal land ownership in the Pacific means that it is very difficult for someone coming from a rural area to find a place to live and therefore squatting largely takes place on alienated land. These people have no legal residential rights, no government representation, and very limited essential services. As other countries have found, moving them is not a viable option. Hence, thought has to be given to how these communities can become viable communities with local government representation, secure access to housing and decent access to essential services.

While demands for decentralisation in the Pacific have derived from the strength of traditional, lower-level government and the weakness of support for national governments, part of the recent thrust towards decentralisation has come from pressures to slow the rural-urban drift, particularly from the outer islands of the scattered island states. For example, the new local government Falekaupule Act of 1997 in Tuvalu was driven to a large extent by the desire to slow the urban drift from the outer

islands. The draft Solomon Islands constitution also appears to have undertones of attempts to restrict people's movements.

Service Delivery

With economic growth very low – to the point in several Pacific countries that per capita incomes are no higher than they were 20 years ago – national and local governments are generally finding it difficult to maintain public services. The Pacific's geography, involving many scattered islands spread over large distances or rugged terrain, adds to the problems of service provision because the unit costs of services are so high. In some countries, services such as education and health have declined, especially in rural areas, leading to worsening human development indicators.

The problems of service delivery in the urban centres and in the rural areas appear to be quite distinct. In rural areas there is heavy reliance on national government grants and national government personnel to provide services. With national government grants experiencing difficulties due to budget deficits, and with the high unit costs of service provision, rural councils are finding it difficult to maintain the limited services they are supposed to provide. In terms of numbers of people, the seriousness of the problems of rural councils is greatest in the larger Melanesian countries. In Micronesian and Polynesian countries more than one-half of the population lives in urban areas. By comparison, in Melanesian countries the vast majority live in rural areas (87 per cent in Papua New Guinea, 84 per cent in Solomon Islands and 79 per cent in Vanuatu).

For their part, urban councils have more buoyant revenue streams due to their much greater ability to levy property taxes in an environment of rising land values. However, even with these enhanced revenues, due to the rapid urban population growth rates they are overwhelmed by the demands for the much wider range of services they are expected to provide. As the Senior Town Planner of Port Vila has said: 'The explosive population growth in Port Vila has far exceeded the willingness or the ability of the government to mobilise and service appropriate land to resulting needs'. More consideration should be given to whether outsourcing of services, as has happened in Fiji with street cleaning and waste removal, can lead to more cost-effective provision.

The formation of unitary national governments and their control over most resources and taxation revenue streams has meant that national

governments have become a magnet for skilled people. This has meant that sub-national governments have difficulty in finding people with the necessary skills. For example, people with good project design and project management skills are in short supply in sub-national governments. When efforts are made to increase the responsibilities and strengthen the capacity of sub-national governments – such as with the 1995 Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-Level Governments in Papua New Guinea – it is found to be very difficult to attract public servants from the capital city to provincial or local governments.

While Pacific populations will not age as rapidly as those of developed countries and many developing countries – basically because their fertility and mortality rates are not declining as rapidly – the proportion of elderly people will increase. For both national and local governments, an aging population raises questions about the access of the elderly to incomes and services, particularly medical services. Because of the migration of young people from rural areas, and because they have had little or no access to cash-generating employment throughout their lifetimes, elderly women in rural areas are likely to be most at risk.

As Larmour (1999) notes, local government reforms have increasingly sought to restore the role of tradition in local government and to bring together elected officials and traditional elders or ‘simply replace the former with the latter’. However, he suggests that while they may play an important role in the maintenance of identity, these traditional forms of local government are not necessarily good at delivering services. Moreover, they are usually too small to deliver services that are ‘lumpy’, like hospitals, or services like road maintenance that are subject to economies of scale or services that have significant externalities, like immunisation.

Discussion

Local government in Pacific countries is democratic in the sense that people vote for their representatives. However, for true democracy, it is not sufficient that people vote. Elite interests may hold political and economic power in a society. Unless these elite interests become ineffective, voting is unlikely to make much difference to the way in which people can participate in the economy. If the same elite interests dominate at the local government level as at the national level, then decentralisation of the powers and functions of government will not lead to greater democracy. The lack

of participation of women in local government in the Pacific suggests that power structures have not changed very much.

In the push for decentralisation, it has been argued that bringing government closer to the people will lead to greater transparency and accountability, better governance and less corruption. These outcomes have not always been realised, however. For democracy to be effective, people must also fully understand their rights and responsibilities as voters. In efforts to improve public sector performance, most of the emphasis by donors has been on improving 'capacity' or 'institution building'. This is a focus on what can be called the 'supply side' of governance. In order to have the public sector perform well, there must be a heightened expectation by voters about the amount and quality of services delivered. Little has been done in the form of 'capacity building' to raise the expectations of voters. For this to occur they have to understand what they can expect from government and whether they have in fact received it. Hence, the necessary information about budget provisions and budget outcomes has to be made available in a form and language they can understand.

As far as achieving good governance is concerned, the Pacific states face severe difficulties because of their small populations. Basically, the checks and balances that operate in larger countries in a non-relational, independent manner are almost impossible to put in place in these countries. The capacity to implement independent supervision, monitoring and auditing in urban and rural councils in these small countries, especially when they are geographically isolated, is even more constrained than it is at national level.

The problems faced by local governments are similar across the Pacific countries. To varying degrees, they all face urban congestion problems arising, on the one hand, from rapid rural-urban migration and, on the other, from slow economic growth. They all have great difficulties in providing basic services to rural areas: a problem compounded by geographical isolation. Comparatively, urban congestion problems are greater in the Micronesian and Polynesian countries, where the majority of the population resides in the urban centres. Problems in the delivery of services to rural populations are greater in the Melanesian countries where most people live in the rural areas. But because the problems are similar, all countries can learn from each other's successes and failures. Therefore, regional co-operation should be of much benefit.

Notes

- 1 *I am grateful to my colleagues Morris Namoga for information on local government in Solomon Islands and Fakavae Taomia for information on local government in Tuvalu.*
- 2 *Fiji has 14 provincial councils responsible for protecting the rights of the indigenous population. There are also 17 rural advisory councils that represent the interests of Indo-Fijian and minority communities.*
- 3 *The draft Solomon Islands' constitution now under discussion explicitly mentions provinces but does not explicitly mention lower-level government. However, the draft constitution gives force to the principle of 'subsidiarity', which respects the principle that government activities can to be carried out at the lowest level of government at which they can be efficiently undertaken. This is a concept that has received a great deal of attention in the formation of the European Union.*

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Table 1: Indicators of Formal Autonomy of Local Governments

	National Constitutional Provision	Revenue Guarantees	Override National Legislation	Local Government Elections
Cook Islands				
Fiji (Provincial Councils)	Yes			Yes
Fiji (Area Councils)				Yes
Kiribati				Yes
Niue				n/a
Palau	Yes			n/a
Papua New Guinea	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Republic of Marshall Islands	Yes			n/a
Federated States of Micronesia	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a
Samoa				n/a
Solomon Islands ¹	Yes			Yes
Tonga				Yes
Tuvalu				Yes
Vanuatu	Yes			Yes

Source: Adapted from Larmour and Qalo (1985), Table 20.1, p. 357.

¹Solomon Islands no longer has area councils, only provinces. However, Honiara has a city council and the information in the table refers to the Honiara City Council.

Table 2: Functions of Local Government

	Law and Order	Works	Education	Health	Business Tenure	Land	Agriculture Forestry Fishery
Cook Islands	Yes	Yes					
Fiji (Provincial Councils)	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiji (Area Councils)							
Kiribati	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Niue	Yes	Yes					
Palau							
Papua New Guinea		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Republic of Marshall Islands	Yes						
Federated States of Micronesia			Yes	Yes			
Samoa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Solomon Islands ¹		Yes					
Tonga	Yes						
Tuvalu		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vanuatu		Yes					Yes

Source: Adapted from Table 20.2, Larmour and Qalo (1985), p. 360.

¹Solomon Islands no longer has area councils, only provinces. However, Honiara has a city council and the information in the table refers to the Honiara City Council.

Table 3: Sources of Local Government Revenue

	Grants	Revenue Sharing	Fees and Charges	Head Tax	Sales Tax	Land Tax, Royalties	Business Taxes
Cook Islands	Yes						
Fiji (Provincial Councils)	Yes		Yes	Yes			Yes
Fiji (Area Councils)	Yes						
Kiribati	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	
Niue	Yes		Yes	Yes			
Palau		Yes			n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
PNG	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
RMI	Yes				Yes		
FSM		Yes	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
Samoa	Yes						
Solomon Islands (H.C.) ¹	Yes					Yes	
Tonga							
Tuvalu	Yes		Yes			Yes	Yes
Vanuatu	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes

Source: Adapted from Larmour and Qalo (1985), Table 20.3, p.364.

¹Solomon Islands no longer has area councils, only provinces. However, Honiara has a city council and the information in the table refers to the Honiara City Council.

2

Urbanisation in the Pacific Engaging Local Government for a Sustainable Future

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Introduction and Overview

Over the past decade there has been a shift in the attitudes of Pacific peoples, governments and donors to the continued urbanisation of the region and the serious challenges that have emerged as a result. While not denying the obvious needs of rural development, and the connection rural poverty has with the pace and character of urban development, the region's cities are clearly on the policy map.

Pacific urban regions are both typical and unique. Like many cities of the developing world, housing, services, infrastructure, poverty and the environment are all significant issues. Marginalisation, conflict and growing inequalities also threaten to undermine social cohesion and the building of urban societies in complex cultural environments. A 1996 UNDP summary of the key issues facing urban areas is still relevant:

- ◆ *Land shortages and conflicts, where traditional systems come into contact with modern ones;*
- ◆ *Rapidly increasing informal settlements and a lack of affordable and relevant private housing;*
- ◆ *Incomplete, inadequate and failing infrastructure and services;*
- ◆ *Inadequate institutional capacity and human resources to deal with issues.*

In addition to these almost overwhelming challenges, Pacific urban regions present further exceptional aspects. These include an acute shortage of available and affordable land; limited material and human resources;

fragile environmental contexts; often ethnically diverse populations; and ominous crime statistics. There are obvious and significant variations in the urban issues facing the region. However, if we were to track recent changes and future projections the following observations hold:

- ◆ *Populations are set to grow, with limited out-migration opportunities;*
- ◆ *The vast majority of population growth will be in the form of peri-urban settlements; they will constitute the future Pacific city and must be considered permanent;*
- ◆ *Housing will be primarily self-help, and squatter settlements will become a more significant part of the urban landscape;*
- ◆ *Inequality and poverty will grow: employment will be predominantly in the informal sector;*
- ◆ *Environmental conditions will worsen, and both organic and toxic waste will present significant threats to health;*
- ◆ *Infrastructure and services will only reach the minority of the urban population;*
- ◆ *Crime and violence will increase and undermine attempts to create urban unity.*

These problems will not surprise those who deal with urban issues in the Pacific. But it is important to take stock of the scale and breadth of the challenges facing towns and cities in the region. The urgency of problems and pressure on policy vary, but the costs of inaction everywhere are dangerous.

Appropriate, affordable and relevant forms of governance are yet to be found, but they must be found if the above needs and tensions are to be effectively managed in a context of rapid demographic growth and change coupled with globalising economies which are vulnerable to external shocks. The capacity to deal with such demands is limited, and this has led many to claim that the Pacific faces an urban nightmare. But some states and cities have succeeded in arresting decline and others are successfully negotiating innovative paths forward, from which much can be learned. In the island states of the Pacific are to be found a unique set of circumstances. In some ways, these exacerbate the problems; in other ways they may point the way forward to their amelioration.

There is also, despite the uniqueness of the region's urban regions, much that can be learned from international experience. In recent years there has been a proliferation of information-sharing on best practices and policy innovations. There is also now much greater attention being paid to the positive role of cities in national development and the increasing dependence of national development on urban wellbeing. Increasingly both material (infrastructure, housing, services, etc.) and non-material (state-society relations and governance) needs are seen as complementary to sustainable urban development.

Who drives this future direction of cities is also important. Central government, a significant part of Pacific urban development, municipal councils and local government, NGOs, community or clan-based associations and donors all vie for dominance. Without a degree of balance, mismanagement and confusion prevails. Finding the best form of governance for the region's cities is thus critical.

From this paper three main themes emerge: the importance of peri-urban areas; the emergence of conflict as a result of weak government and stressed traditional systems; and the need for new and more inclusive systems of governance. This discussion paper will focus primarily on what can be achieved in terms of creating more inclusive and effective forms of governance, building on international and Pacific perspectives and experiences.

New Forms of Urbanism – the Peri-urban Interface

For over a decade almost all donor and academic literature on the Pacific has been stating that in less than two generations the majority of Pacific Islanders will live in or near cities. In the largest state, Papua New Guinea, the total urban population is set to reach four million in the year 2030, nearly half of whom will live in informal settlements (Pacific Islands Review, 8 September 2003). It is estimated that in Fiji there are now 82,000 people living in 182 informal settlements. By 2006 the Suva-Nausori corridor alone will be home to an estimated 90,000 squatters (Pacific Islands Review, 19 August and 18 October 2004). A World Bank (1995) study estimated that the peri-urban population of Honiara, Port Vila and South Tarawa would soon amount to 30 per cent of total population. Even in one of the smallest states, Kiribati, population growth in South Tarawa is causing problems of overcrowding and conflict over land. Similar urban problems of overcrowding and associated health and environmental

threats are faced by other microstates such as the Marshall Islands (Connell and Lea, 2002: 119–21). All Pacific Island states are undergoing an urban transformation.

However, these facts mask a much more complex reality which will require a fundamental shift in the way we see and plan for cities. To some extent in the Pacific, it is problematic to define what, or where, a city lies. Nowhere are the limitations of the urban boundary more symbolic, in terms of residence, livelihood or 'belonging'. Subsequently, the region is witnessing 'new forms of urbanisation', for which new and innovative responses and structures are urgently needed.

If we look briefly outside the region, there is also a significant re-evaluation of peri-urban areas and the 'boundaries' between urban and rural areas. Recently there has been much debate about the relationships between urban and rural areas and this is highly relevant to Pacific Island states. In almost every significant city in the region there are synergies between the urban and rural, to the extent that it is no exaggeration to claim that much of the current (and future) shape and development of the region's cities is taking place in peri-urban environments. 'Rural' residents depend upon the city for paid employment, schools, access to healthcare, credit, services and infrastructure. Likewise, the urban economy depends on 'rural' or peri-urban populations for food supply, labour, and land-based livelihoods. This co-dependence is likely to continue and even grow in importance.

It is also apparent that peri-urban areas have emerged as critical sites of conflict in the urban Pacific. They are in practice 'grey areas' of 'negotiated territory', overtly urban in terms of their economic function and, often, in their physical form. Yet they are still rural, for municipal councils are kept at arms length, the state frequently has limited legitimacy and village-based structures of leadership and social organisation often continue. This mix of urban lifestyles and aspirations with rural social structures and customary leadership is often volatile, for while forms of customary social control operate, not all members of a settlement will have a kin or even ethnic connection to the society at the centre. Where the affiliation is purely economic (through the paying of rent), social cohesion and adherence to customary law may be highly problematic and forms of direct action (either to force compliance or to rebel) will not be uncommon. Similarly, these economic relationships, often involving the leasing of land

and the building of dwellings, frequently occur outside the jurisdiction of state law, thus providing a high degree of insecurity and continual re-negotiation. In such circumstances, tenants' rights receive little prominence. In addition, urban areas in the Pacific reflect a meeting point between traditional and modern law, with regard to tenure, resource management, planning and ownership (Chung and Hill, 2002).

Peri-urban growth is likely to continue well into the future. There are few signs of the pace of urbanisation slowing and, given the inflexibility of urban municipal boundaries, the vast proportion of future growth will be in these peri-urban margins (unless there are measures to increase significantly the density of the core of urban centres). They will continue to be both 'borderless places' – places where expansion continues and the bounds of authority are unclear – and sites of conflict, where the urban poor, recent arrivals, existing landowners, new entrepreneurs and politicians battle for land, jobs and housing.

Land tenure is a further major theme. The maintenance of customary land ownership is a political reality in most Pacific island states. There is little, if any, prospect of conversion of customary title to freehold – even if this was thought to be desirable – and, if anything, there is political pressure to reverse land alienation and return land (such as Crown leases in Fiji) to communal title. This is a barrier to the advance of conventional forms of urban governance, for strong customary title means that both state and local governments are severely limited in extending their influence beyond their present limitations. Even in countries where there are legal powers to expand urban boundaries, such as Vanuatu, it has been politically impossible to do so. Urban planning and urban services will remain restricted. Yet the continuation of customary tenure, in itself, should not pose a barrier to further urban expansion. While not without major problems, the leasing of customary land for agricultural and tourist development – often with secure and long-term leases – has proved that communal tenure can adapt to handle commercial land uses. What is critical here, in learning from the experience of agricultural leases, is that there are mechanisms which ensure that the actual landowners (rather than their supposed agents) maintain a stake in their land, as well as a fair economic return, while tenants are assured of security and a degree of certainty (Ward and Kingdon, 1995).

Table 1: The Relationship between Local Governance and Rural-Urban (Peri-urban) Development

Negative

- Where local government/governance is unaccountable;
- Resources and capacity are inadequate;
- There is a lack of legislative and financial autonomy and;
- Insufficient integration with national planning.

Positive:

- Accountable and responsive;
 - Adequate resources and capacity;
 - Clear identification of local needs and priorities and how these can best be met;
 - Facilitates economic and social linkages;
 - Regulates local natural resource management;
 - Decisions and resources are integrated with national government;
 - Partnerships with local representative and community-based groups.
-

Adapted from Tacoli (2003:9)

It is apparent that existing forms of governance are inappropriate for peri-urban areas and their future. The models that are available – managerial, neoliberal/entrepreneurial and customary – all have something to contribute but none gives a complete answer. Peri-urban growth creates a key problem of governance: who is responsible for management of growth (housing, services, land use, environment, etc.)? The central state may have putative power, but this is often weak and contested at the local level, for example by customary landowners or local power brokers (Huffer and Molisa, 1999). City councils are usually poor and urban expansion now extends well beyond their limits, and local rural systems of governance are proving incapable of handling major urban issues. In the Pacific, the World Bank (2000:15) outlines the problems as follows:

... national government planning and control that does not involve local authorities in a co-ordinated manner; poor communication among municipal government, rural local authorities, and urban villages in the same metropolitan area; a tax burden to support urban development that falls unevenly on beneficiaries in the urban region; and a lack of capacity to address the needs of the population, which vary greatly across jurisdictions.

Equally, traditional forms of governance are also unlikely to respond adequately to these pressures. In the Melanesian states tenure is fluid and contested. Such a situation, combined with steady rates of urban migration, has encouraged many chiefs and/or self-appointed 'landowners' to seek rent in terms of demanding cash for housing and land. At times, this has met the immediate needs of both parties – recognition of landowner rights as well the material needs of migrants. Such a situation is potentially explosive, as the case of Honiara demonstrated in 1999 and parts of greater Noumea in recent years. There is little hope of a return to the singular managerial model when the very extent of the city has spread well beyond the spatial limits of any one management system.

The Need for Effective and Inclusive Local Governance

Migration to cities is in great part a reflection of the lack of opportunities elsewhere. Cities are the engines of economic growth and employment in the region. To enhance their opportunities, and minimise their threats, they have to be managed effectively for future economic growth and social stability.

We have seen in the Solomon Islands the most dramatic consequences of urban mismanagement and peri-urban conflict leading to national conflict and collapse. The municipality's inability to control peri-urban growth, provide services and manage the emerging conflict between landowners and migrants directly led to conflict which spread well beyond the city. Likewise, conflicts in peri-urban Noumea between Wallisian migrants and kanaks led to a civil emergency in 2002 and there have been similar crises in Port Vila and Port Moresby. These experiences should act as a warning throughout the region. They resulted from rapid population movements, scarce resources (especially land), poverty and weak governance, with 'responsibility' for informal peri-urban settlements often falling between financially-strapped and disempowered municipal authorities (or unco-ordinated government departments) and provincial (rural) authorities with little capacity or interest to act. In each case this created a vacuum within which tensions escalated.

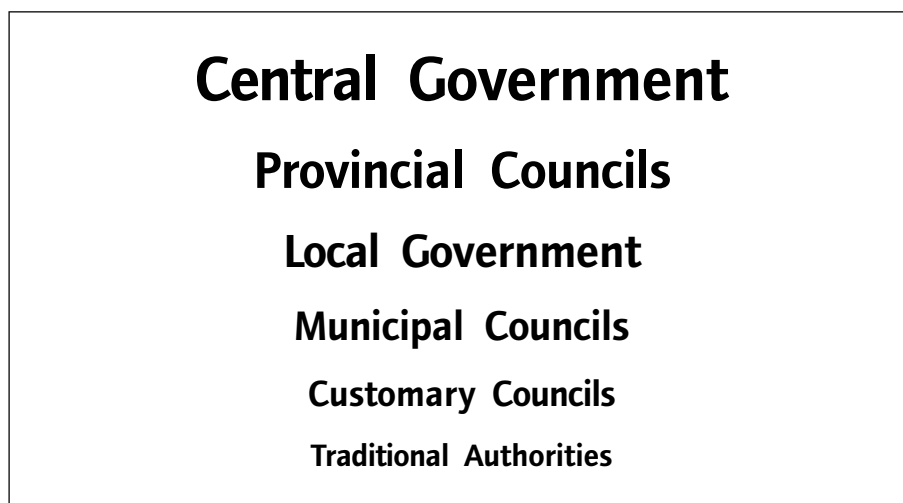
Empowering local authorities and communities will be an important part of ensuring a more sustainable urban future for the region. Recently UN-Habitat (2002:7) stated:

Without the participation of those at the local level – local authorities and the urban poor – sustainable city-wide strategies cannot be achieved.

It has been argued that a key challenge for development in the twenty-first century is the building of a new relationship between citizens and government, and that the core of this should be at the local level, particularly local governance (Gaventa, 2001). This calls for a wider engagement of the state with a range of other stakeholders affected by urban development. It also calls for greater local ownership of the decision-making process, and increased institutional and technical capacity (UN-Habitat, 2002: 7). These relationships with a broad array of organisations and individuals are increasingly seen as the key to effective urban governance and the realisation of important development targets, such as the Millennium Development Goals.

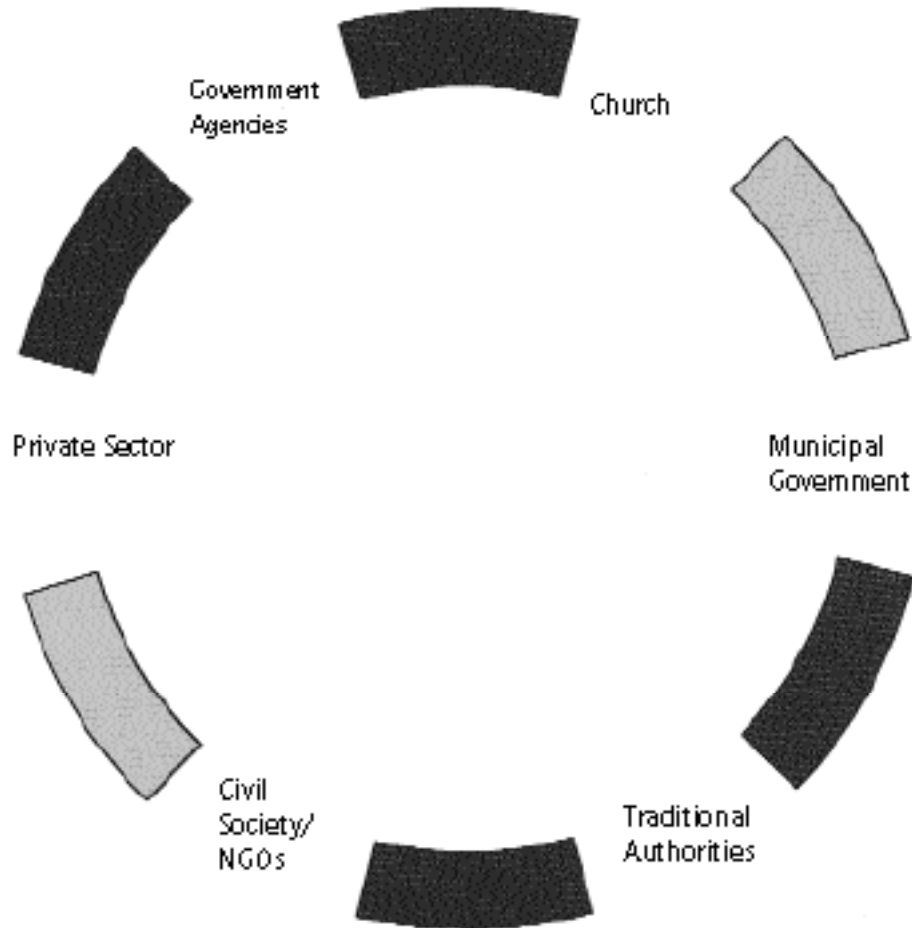
This is also reflected in the shift from thinking about urban or local government to urban/local governance. The latter reflects a more fluid and diverse set of relationships, less about hierarchy and regulations and more about alliances and partnerships with non-State actors (Stren, 2003:17). Successful local governance needs to be cross-sectoral, collaborative, non-hierarchical and local, and to reflect its context (Stren, 2003:26) (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1 A Traditional State-centred Model



Derived from Dayaratne and Samarawickrama, 2003:104

Figure 2 Interacting Stakeholders in Peri-urban Governance



Derived from World Bank (2000)

We should therefore be talking more about local governance in the urban context than local government – but local government can play a key role. Cities are becoming more complex in terms of their social and cultural diversity and development needs. We need to connect the space that lies between formal state structures and civil society (McCarney, 2003: 33). Local government and forms of local governance occupy the pivotal space between global demands, states and increasingly poor, marginalised urban spaces and are in a position to reconcile the tensions between them (McCarney, 2003:39).

Potential Limitations of Decentralisation

In many cases municipal authorities must tackle these significant and growing challenges with stagnant or declining per capita income sources which undermine their ability to respond to needs (Devas, 2003; Connell and Lea, 2002:108). Local governments are often ill-equipped and under-resourced to deal with increasing demand for basic services, shelter, land and greater representation (UN-Habitat, 2002: 6). This is especially difficult as the poor now make up a greater proportion of urban populations. Local urban governments throughout the developing world are finding themselves facing demands which outstrip their material and nonmaterial capacities.

In the past, local government has been a neglected tier of governance (McCarney, 1996:3). Recently though, the Forum Secretariat has reaffirmed its role, stating that 'local governments are the key change agents in urban management' (PIFS, 2004:29). However, decentralisation in itself is not answer; it does not offer a panacea for underperforming central government and its departments. In bringing local government into the picture we should act to ensure that efforts are made to sustain the 'legitimacy and the capacity of local institutions to carry out their new functions' (Tacoli, 2003:6). This may mean a combination of legal, financial and administrative reform.

We should also be aware of the dangers of fragmentation as a result of some things being devolved, privatised, or abandoned. It is the relationships between institutions, and between these institutions and other authorities and communities (particularly the most marginalised) that are important. Communication, facilitation, partnership and an ability to respond, rather than lead, are all building blocks of effective local governance. In almost all cases throughout the Pacific, it is not possible for one actor to determine the urban agenda and drive through the policy objective. Local governments have neither the resources, capacity nor sometimes the legitimacy to implement policy. Partnerships then become critical, as does facilitation. There needs to be much more work done in the region in terms of building effective partnerships between local government, and other key actors such as traditional councils and NGOs. In short, we need to move from exclusive governance to inclusive governance (McCarney, 2003: 40). Cities may have been planted in the region as European structures, but they can no longer survive in this form.

While this poses great challenges for local government, there is now much greater support and interest in innovations to improve on past strategies, of which the Commonwealth is now part. This paper describes some examples from a regional and national perspective.

Regional and National Initiatives

At the regional level, there is now far greater interest in urban issues and a greater willingness to engage with the region on urban issues. The number of recent reports on the region's cities and peri-urban areas attest to this. It is an opportunity which should be capitalised upon.

Reports on the region's cities have evolved from an early concern with services and infrastructure delivery towards a focus on creating sustainable cities through consensus rather than conflict. Most recently donors have been concerned about conflict resulting from rapid urban growth and weak management and there has been more of a focus on relationships. One of the current goals of UN-ESCAP is to find ways to mainstream the roles of local community leaders in municipal and provincial governance processes (UN-ESCAP, 2004). The World Bank has lamented a 'lack of voice' in terms of the lack of appropriate policies, poor urban management and weak service delivery (World Bank, 2000). Instead the World Bank sees the idea of national and regional 'urban summits' as benefiting from a collective approach to urban issues. At these summits policy-makers should share initiatives which are working, especially in regard to inclusive and cross-cutting programmes which successfully draw upon and benefit a range of government and non-government stakeholders (World Bank, 2000:21). These programmes should be tracked, modified and shared both within and outside the region through a website.

These concerns have been picked up by regional organisations which have expressed a concern over social tensions brought about by failing urban governance. In 2003 the Pacific Regional Workshop on urban management held in Nadi stated that the rural-urban interface 'should be recognised as a critical and mutually reinforcing element in national economic development, and considered in the formulation of development strategies'. Significantly, governments also endorsed the important role of both national and regional strategies in developing better urban management and the critical role that partnerships – involving community, the private sector and government – have to play in urban development (PIFS,

2004:25–6). A recent UNDP-TUGI initiative in Suva, part of a wider effort of the UNDP to support creative urban governance efforts globally, brought about two stakeholder workshops, training sessions for key staff and councillors and initiated structural reform of the city council in order to improve its effectiveness, quality of service delivery and accountability in infrastructural development (UNDP-TUGI, 2003).

At the national level, in response to these pressing issues, as well as to shifts in donor priorities, there have also been innovations which are worthy of discussion.

The Fiji Local Government Association recently produced a ‘White Paper’ on the relationship between government and civil society, together with a Squatter Settlement Assessment produced in conjunction with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The goal is to create more inclusive governance structures and relationships at the municipal and local government level which will strengthen local governance. The programme’s aims are to:

- ◆ Improve service delivery and planning;
- ◆ Enhance community participation through community-planning consultations;
- ◆ Create a strategic vision of community-development priorities; and
- ◆ Strengthen partnerships with civil society (UN-ESCAP, 2004: 6).

In addition, it is working to build consensus with traditional landowners on the crucial issue of land tenure, to involve urban landowners in the provision of services and to encourage land registration, including the titling of land.

In 2003 Papua New Guinea created a ministerial committee and national consultative committee on urbanisation to formulate urban policy and which will also consider an Urban Social Charter. The Charter discusses both the responsibilities and rights of urban citizens (PIFS, 2004:28–9). However, Papua New Guinea demonstrates the dangers of incomplete decentralisation. Even when opportunities have arisen to generate stronger and more locally-responsive local authorities (such as the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments, 1995) these have not been taken up. Part of the problem is that while the ability to make laws was increased, the capacity and financial independence of such authorities was not (Filer, 2004:2).

Efforts to develop inclusive planning models for Apia (Samoa) provide some evidence of approaches which should also be recognised. The Urban Planning and Management Project (2001/2) reflected a desire to move away from individual components of urban development and towards effective institutional arrangements which addressed urban management holistically. Apia faces issues of peri-urban development taking place on land beyond town boundaries (Storey, 2000). The acceptance by the Samoan government, after many years of procrastination, of the establishment of a Planning and Urban Management Agency to deal with urban and peri-urban issues (including urban land use and environmental planning) marked a significant step forward.

The success of the project has been put down to an extensive consultation programme undertaken by government which involved all urban stakeholders over a six-month period and which focused on their acceptance of responsibility for core functions and institutional arrangements. These were:

- ◆ *Developing plans and policies;*
- ◆ *Regulating development;*
- ◆ *Co-ordinating urban services;*
- ◆ *Disaster management.*

Progress was achieved by working at multiple levels, in terms of creating more effective and relevant institutions that were inclusive of both urban management needs and fa'a Samoa (Jones et al., 2002). It also builds on a two-way consultative model between village council representatives and the Ministry of Home Affairs where government policies are discussed and village concerns are also expressed (Schoeffel and Turner, 2003:7).

Bottom-up, or participatory, planning models, where communities themselves are invited to define their own priorities through consultation with government, the private sector, donors and NGOs, also have a role to play. This has been successfully pursued in Tafea Province, Vanuatu, where a technical assistance group made up of various government departments and community members jointly plans for provincial development (World Bank, 2000:30). Palau and Kiribati have also developed more inclusive models of urban planning in recent years (UN-ESCAP, 2003:19). These examples need greater scrutiny as alternative experiences from which to

draw. Clearly a number of initiatives are underway in the region. More information needs to be shared on policy and the experiences (both positive and negative) that result from these policy innovations.

Linking Paths: Building More Effective Partnerships for the Pacific City

Lessons from the Pacific and beyond suggest that we should be cautious in terms of adopting ‘quick-fix’ solutions to governance through new political systems, structures or even partnerships. Better urban governance will depend as much on a shift in the cultures of governance and partnership, especially between the institutions of government and marginalised populations.

Local government has a crucial role to play in several respects: in creating a bridge between citizens and the state; in the effective delivering of key services to marginalised populations; and in acting as a conduit of citizen concerns and needs. Local government can, and needs to, play a role in supporting positive links between rural-urban interactions. However, while local government is better placed to identify local needs and priorities and provide an adequate response to them, there is still an important role to be played by central government in terms of resourcing meaningful links between national planning and local administration.

Partnerships range from an ad hoc or one-off arrangement between a small number of actors to deal with a particular issue or may represent a long-term strategy which is inclusive, enduring and oriented toward significant change over time (Elander, 2002:192). It is often argued that partnership will bring many benefits to urban administration. Elander (2002:193, 198) has summarised these as including:

- ◆ *Greater synergy among key actors, including government departments, local government, NGOs, chiefs, donors, etc.*
- ◆ *Helping to change perceptions and the behaviour of one or more actors. (For example, involving chiefs in planning for infrastructure development on customary land may lesson resistance and increase understanding of wider needs outside of one’s wantok or aiga system.)*
- ◆ *Interests may be shared through greater communication and partnership. This may lesson potential conflict between groups.*

- ◆ *Partnerships also pool resources – these may be financial resources or physical ones. Risks can be shared.*

The benefits of partnership are of potentially great relevance in terms of Pacific urban governance, particularly given the dispersed nature of power among government, traditional authorities and donors.

But the nature of partnerships and the relationships that are built are of critical importance. Partnerships are rarely equal (Overton and Storey, 2004). Partnerships should not be pursued on the basis of dissolving responsibility or making some other person or community ‘pick up the tab’. Accountability must also not be forsaken through partnership and it should not be used as a crutch for financially-strapped governments seeking to divest their responsibilities. Real partnership will come only through a shared desire for change and through building the capacity of each of the actors individually and in concert with one another. They will also be of greater value if the needs, priorities and responsibilities of the partners are clearly spelled out at the start.

We need to know more about what urban partnerships (both positive and difficult) are taking place in the region, and what can be learnt from these for other cities and states. Some of the initiatives which have been taken towards these goals are outlined below. Some have been put into practice in the region and deserve greater debate and discussion, both on their worth and their possible application in other cities.

Participatory Governance and Community-based Planning

Creating governance which is inclusive of groups that have been marginalised or discriminated against by urban development (women, the poor, migrants living on customary land) is perhaps the most important challenge facing governments in the region today.

Participatory governance goes further than a commitment to governance, in that it places particular emphasis on relationships with the most marginalised and the poorest.

It emphasises the need to introduce mechanisms to encourage the involvement of those who do not find it easy to participate in state structures and processes because they are generally far removed from their own cultures and practices (Mitlin, 2004: 4).

Recently the World Bank has encouraged a community-based urban planning approach in the Pacific (World Bank, 2000:16). This is based on a philosophy that management should reflect the culture and values of people rather than institutions. Where institutions are divorced from the people, they struggle to develop relevant policies and become strangers to the people. Community-based approaches include public forums on significant issues, access to resources for communities to encourage mobilisation and organisation, and recognition of decision-making processes and representatives, such as Matai in Samoa

This year's Forum Secretariat meeting also encouraged the adoption of community action plans, through which residents of informal settlements can be organised and supported to identify the needs of their communities and how they can best be addressed (PIFS, 2004:26). This included an emphasis on integrating sometimes competing governance systems:

The challenge is to effectively articulate and integrate traditional governance systems, and traditional social capital, into the modern governance context. This empowerment can be promoted through constructively building partnerships between communities and other stakeholders. (PIFS, 2004:29)

There is a strong base from which to develop such a philosophy. Achieving an inclusive process between policy-makers, public sector institutions, customary landowners and citizens, with an emphasis on building dialogue with the poorest and most marginalised, can be achieved both through new innovations and by making the most of communal decision-making and consensus traditions. More communication and participation would also strengthen both planning and traditional authorities. It can provide a win-win situation that moves peri-urban development away from conflict (World Bank, 2000:20; Storey, 2003).

Summary

Throughout the Pacific people want to see a stronger government role in development; they want both participatory democracy and responsive government (Commonwealth Foundation, 1999). Weak governance structures open the door to rent-seeking, corruption and, ultimately, frustration and conflict. Above all, there is an urgent need for greater partnership, negotiation, collaboration and participation between states, customary

authorities and civil society. The peri-urban interface is characterised by a contest for space, changing social structures and fragmented institutions. In terms of the state's own agencies, local and municipal governments need to develop a means to engage with and respond to collectively expressed needs, and the alternative structures of governance they might imply (Prior et al., cited in Jones and Gaventa, 2002:21). The mechanisms through which citizen engagement can be achieved are context-specific; they include, for example, integrating traditional decision-making structures and community groups in the wider decision-making processes of Pacific towns through ongoing consultation and participation (World Bank, 2000:21). For many years an attitude of 'plan what you can – forget the rest' has prevailed in terms of urban, and especially peri-urban, governance. But, as the examples show, this is a clearly unsustainable position with consequences for stability and, ultimately, conflict. To do nothing in a period of rapid change is to invite chaos.

Local and municipal government is in a pivotal position to meet needs and in so doing build sustainable and inclusive urban environments. It is not simply a matter of decentralisation being the answer – decentralisation can open doors to elite capture and will, in itself, not reduce marginalisation (Gaventa, 2001:5). What is critical is the creation of new relationships and synergies which are innovative and relevant to specific places. The recourse to the local should not be seen as a negative reaction to the failures of central governance and the limitations of traditional society, which cannot cope with the rapid change which is transforming peri-urban areas (UN-ESCAP, 2003:12). To become a meaningful shift to a more positive urban future, local authorities need to be sufficiently resourced and to have central government support in developing more effective policies and partnerships as 'there is no point decentralising functions for which there is inadequate capacity either in terms of human resources or physical assets' (Schoeffel and Turner, 2003:13).

The growth of many Pacific Island towns is proceeding faster than the ability of planners to formulate plans to deal with it; it is beyond the capacity of traditional authorities and structures to react effectively. Even when plans are produced they often completely ignore peri-urban populations and their needs, as well as the co-dependence between urban and rural areas. This is causing both a loss of faith in government agencies and sowing the seeds of conflict among those competing for space and employment in and around the city, as well as opening the door for con-

flict with the state, as has been seen in the Solomon Islands and in African cities (Gough, 1999). Urban management needs to shift from a static planning model towards governance which is a dynamic and interactive process (Leaf, 1999).

In moving forward there is a need to share what works around the region. The following questions and needs are a start:

- ◆ *What is the nature of peri-urban growth and development? We have very little data and understanding of these critical places.*
- ◆ *What are the links between peri-urban areas and urban centres? How can policy best respond to these?*
- ◆ *In what ways do marginalised urban populations interact with local government and other organisations? What is their perception of them and their role?*
- ◆ *What do people expect from traditional authorities, local government and central government?*
- ◆ *What are the most productive forms of dialogue and action between central government, local government, traditional authorities and communities?*
- ◆ *How should marginalised communities be organised to facilitate participation in urban decision making?*

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Annexes

Annex A

Symposium Statement of Action

Preamble

Local and central government leaders together with officials and representatives of civil society from Fiji, Australia, Jamaica, Kiribati, New Zealand, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands Tonga, Uganda and Vanuatu met in Suva, Fiji Islands on 4–8 December 2004.

The Symposium was co-organised by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and the Commonwealth Secretariat, in partnership with the Government of Fiji, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the University of the South Pacific and UN-Habitat.

Representatives from the following international organisations and development partners were also present: PIFS, AusAID, NZAID, UNDP, UN-ESCAP and UN-Habitat.

The Symposium was opened by Hon. Mataiasi Ragigia, Minister of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment, Fiji and the various sessions were chaired by participants from the different countries represented.

Introduction

In the South Pacific many countries are looking at ways of decentralising their structures to ensure that decision making takes place at a level which is closest to the people affected by those decisions. These moves aim to ensure that communities have ownership over the direction in which their communities are moving and that services are delivered in a locally acceptable way.

At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Abuja, December 2003, Heads of Government reaffirmed the value they attach to elected local government as an important foundation for democracy. They endorsed the giving of constitutional and legal recognition to the sphere of local government. They also welcomed the co-operation between the Commonwealth Secretariat and CLGF in the promotion of best democratic practice. The symposium was organised in fulfilment of this mandate and in furtherance of this co-operation.

The Symposium addressed issues of local governance in the Pacific, with a particular focus on the challenges of urbanisation and the role of traditional leaders in local governance in the region.

Discussions in plenary and in smaller working groups were grouped around four key themes:

- ◆ *Promoting local democracy and good governance*
- ◆ *The impact of urbanisation on local governance*
- ◆ *Local government and traditional governing structures in the Pacific*
- ◆ *Effective local governance for service delivery*

A number of conclusions and recommendations for action at local, national and regional level emerged from this dialogue in each area:

Promoting Local Democracy and Good Governance

The group felt that local governance should be highly participatory in nature, promote community dialogue and consultation, and operate within laws and policies which reinforce commitment to the dialogue process and include an accountability process, e.g. audit, rights of appeal, etc.

The group identified the following key challenges to be addressed:

- ◆ *Disillusionment leading to scepticism and disinterest in the whole process of government.*
- ◆ *Voter apathy (disinterested/disengaged).*
- ◆ *Lack of awareness and understanding of the processes involved, especially from grass roots.*
- ◆ *Conflicts between western best practices and traditional systems of consultations, e.g. formal structures of consultation vs informal.*
- ◆ *Lack of funding and capacity to carry out the wishes of the communities they serve.*

Recommendation:

- ◆ *Public awareness campaigns to educate and raise general awareness and hence acknowledgement and appreciation of the process and issues, and empowerment through awareness of their rights.*

Autonomy and Fiscal Decentralisation

The group agreed that the government body providing the service should receive the funds for it. Grants from national government will remain an important source of revenue for local governments, particularly rural Councils and should be a fixed share of national government revenue – based on a formula that allows for disadvantages suffered by certain areas.

Recommendations:

- ◆ *Access by local government to a ‘wheel tax’, a growing sector – vehicle owners are easily identified and taxes collected. Shares should be returned to local government according to the mileage of roads.*
- ◆ *Identify better collection of taxes from within the informal sector, this could include per household rubbish collection tax or household area tax.*
- ◆ *Ensure greater access to taxes levied on resource owners by central government, e.g. from fishing, logging.*
- ◆ *Legislative changes are needed to provide greater autonomy to local government.*

The Role of Civil Society in Local Governance

Local government is perceived differently in every country. However, its role is often not well understood and expectations about what it can deliver can be very high.

Recommendations:

- ◆ *Local government should have a clear mandate and should plan and evaluate performance.*
- ◆ *Councillors should be expected to declare any interests, which could be achieved by introducing codes of conduct.*
- ◆ *Councillors should represent all sectors of society.*
- ◆ *Councillors should receive induction training in ethics, leadership (for the public good), budget review and community feedback systems – perhaps through the local government association.*
- ◆ *Participation should involve all community groups and take place before by-laws or projects are approved/commenced.*

- ◆ *The community should be empowered with access to more information through awareness campaigns (culturally appropriate and in multiple languages), structured workshops (focusing on residents' priorities), transparency of actions and outcomes.*
- ◆ *Civics should be introduced in the school curriculum.*
- ◆ *Indigenisation of democracy.*
- ◆ *Greater regional networking and sharing of skills, e.g. through the Good Practice Scheme to strengthen accountability.*

Innovations for Decentralisation and Local Governance

The group considered the challenges affecting decentralisation in the region and innovative solutions to them.

Recommendations:

- ◆ *There must be acts, laws and enabling legislation to clearly define decentralisation and local government.*
- ◆ *Reserved seats should be used to facilitate representation of all sectors of society and provinces where appropriate.*
- ◆ *There should be a national urban policy in place.*
- ◆ *Plans should be appropriate to local circumstances and take account of the need for sustainable development.*
- ◆ *Full participation of all stakeholders in local government is essential and there must be a regular dialogue.*
- ◆ *There should be officially recognised dialogue between central and local government.*
- ◆ *Should consider combining functions between local level government authorities, such as training.*
- ◆ *Assets of Councillors should be audited.*
- ◆ *Local government should have a role in emergency planning.*
- ◆ *Development of inter-city relationships to build capacity.*
- ◆ *Councillors and officers must receive training.*

- ◆ *There should be greater regional networking of all local level government stakeholders in the region facilitated by CLGF.*

The Interface between the Political and Administrative Sides of Local Government

It was agreed that a good working relationship between the administrative and political sides of local government is needed to steer the local authority on the path of progress and development. Any irritants between the two can adversely affect performance of the Council and the development process.

Recommendations:

- ◆ *It is essential to have a clear legislative system which should define roles and responsibilities of elected representatives and officials.*
- ◆ *The Council should be responsible for employing all staff in the Council organisation.*
- ◆ *The Performance Management System (PMS) is slowly being implemented in Fiji Islands whereby the CEOs and Department Heads of municipalities will be employed on three to five year contracts. This encourages performance so they can retain their position for longer periods. This system could be replicated in other countries in this region.*
- ◆ *While recognising the importance of good partnership between elected representatives and officials of the local authorities, partnership of both of these stakeholders with N.G.O.'s, civil society and other actors is essential for sustainable community development.*

Working in a Multi-stakeholder Environment

A number of barriers to partnerships for service delivery were considered. They include political conflict, lack or no financial support from central/national government, non-compliance with legislation, lack of dialogue, participation, and awareness at different levels and communication, e.g. Papua New Guinea with 600 languages. There are also often competing agendas. It was felt that donor organisations often do not recognise the role of local government in the community and funding is often not accessible to local governments.

Recommendations:

- ◆ *National government lenders to comply with existing legislation in order to facilitate the financial needs of the local government.*
- ◆ *Awareness raising and training of national and local government, particularly in accessing resources and influencing donor consultations and programmes.*
- ◆ *Local government should explore alternative resourcing options, e.g. private sector loans.*

Accountability and Transparency

The group felt that accountability and transparency in local government should include: consultation, provision of public information, communication (including with national government), checks and balances (finances and procurement), clear rules and legislation, and performance measurement.

Recommendations:

- ◆ *Training of local government members (on roles and responsibility) – central government can assist performance measurement.*
- ◆ *Voter education, training of civil society.*
- ◆ *Consult people to find out what they want.*
- ◆ *Bottom-up processes.*
- ◆ *Access to information and news.*
- ◆ *Proactive thinking by local government.*
- ◆ *Micro-enterprise development.*

Responding to Rapid Urbanisation

The group felt that provinces have a stake in urban management together with city councils in creating opportunities in the provinces, encouraging dialogue between provinces and cities, and including civil society. The Papua New Guinea experience of the National Urbanisation Committee with stakeholder representatives was shared, it brings together squatters, CSOs, employers, employees, etc.

Recommendations:

- ◆ *Legislative mandates for local/provincial councils to consult.*

- ◆ *Improvement of infrastructure and services (education) to nearby villages and improve movement in/out of the city and access for market produce.*
- ◆ *Production of a master plan for the whole country taking into account urban/rural balance.*
- ◆ *Preparation of an urban development policy reflecting needs and priorities.*
- ◆ *Policies should take account of the importance of traditional, provincial and central government officials co-operating and planning together in the interests of local communities.*

Regional Co-operation

Participants recommended closer regional and sub-regional co-operation including:

- ◆ *Ongoing exchange of good practices within the region, particularly examples of local governance arrangements which have been locally developed.*
- ◆ *Encouragement of greater representation of women in local government in the region.*
- ◆ *Sub-regional meetings and exchange of experience.*
- ◆ *Training and capacity building for councillors through regional training organisations such as USP.*
- ◆ *Greater co-ordination of the activities of international partners and donor organisations in the region through encouraging co-operation.*
- ◆ *Endorsement of and synergies between regional programmes currently underway, for example UN-ESCAP Pacific Urban Agenda, CLGF regional capacity building programme, and programmes in the planning phase such as UN-Habitat Pacific Good Urban Governance Campaign.*
- ◆ *CLGF to facilitate the establishment of a regional local government association.*
- ◆ *To raise local government issues of concern with the PIFS and other regional organisations.*

ANNEX B

Keynote Address by Hon. Mataiasi Ragigia, Minister for Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment, Fiji Islands

*Mr Iosefa Maiava, Deputy Secretary-General Pacific Islands Forum
Honourable Ministers responsible for Local Government from across the Pacific Region*

Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Councillor Basil Morrison, President of Local Government New Zealand and Commonwealth Local Government Forum Board Member

Honourable Mayors and Local Government Leaders from the Region

Honoured colleagues from the Caribbean, Africa, Australia and New Zealand

Commonwealth Secretariat and CLGF Officials

Development Partners

Members of the Media

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good afternoon to you all. It is a great honour and privilege for me to be with you today, to be part of this ground-breaking event. It is also a great honour that you have chosen Fiji as the host country of the first gathering of regional local government leaders, practitioners and partners to deliberate on issues of common concern and to explore common solutions for local governance.

It is wonderful to see so many of our colleagues and associates from the Pacific region and beyond joining us for this event. I especially welcome our friends from the United Kingdom, the Caribbean and Africa – thank you for travelling all this way to be with us; I trust your stay in Fiji will be enjoyable and memorable.

I am most encouraged by the ambitious agenda we have set ourselves for the next few days. Decentralised structures, particularly formal local government institutions, are closest to the people. They are the level of government that is best placed to provide the enabling environment for social and economic development and the best possible quality of life for the people they serve.

However, as you all know very well, we operate in a changing and uncertain environment. Challenges such as rapid urbanisation with its inherent increased management responsibilities, high expectations from the citizens, resource constraints, service delivery and implementation gaps, citizen participation and community mobilisation, effective working relationship with traditional structures all add to the strategic management and decision-making responsibilities of local leaders.

It is pleasing to note that this symposium will be addressing these challenges, which I am sure are common throughout the region. Such issues are fundamental to the sustainability of strong local government – local government that will support the empowerment of people at grassroots level and also empower the state from the local level. In other words, operationalising the fundamental ‘government of the people, by the people for the people’.

Local government’s voice is being heard increasingly at global level as strong local government is accepted as a critical component of the promotion of democratic values and deepening the democratic process.

Recent advances in the international recognition of the importance of elected local government include the recommendation endorsed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria, in December last year where Heads of Government reaffirmed the value they attach to elected local government as an important foundation for democracy. At the same meeting a report was received from the Commonwealth Expert Group on Democracy and Development which recommended that ‘local democracy, particularly the strengthening of elected local government and wide citizens’ participation, including women and youth, is an important way to promote democratic values and deepen the democratic process. This can be achieved through careful and well-planned decentralisation that devolves power to local government institutions that are accountable, transparent and representative’.

Another important milestone in the acknowledgment of the growing role of local government came with the signing by the European Union of the Cotonou Agreement, which is the main instrument of co-operation between the EU and Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries. For the first time, local government is being recognised as a state actor in its own right. The implication of this is that there is potential for local government to be a role player in the achieving the EU’s objective of reducing and eventually

eradicating poverty, consistent with the objectives of sustainable development. It will open up opportunities for local government to influence policy and potential access to resources.

By 2015, all 191 United Nations Member States have pledged to meet the Millennium Development Goals. Clearly local government is well placed to support the delivery of these foundations of global sustainable development. Local government's pivotal role in promoting and providing an enabling environment for local economic development, particularly work opportunities for youth, mainstreaming gender and human rights into policy and local laws, ensuring environmental sustainability through planning policies and protection of environmental resources and informal settlement upgrading projects.

The importance therefore of strong local government institutions cannot be overemphasised, as there is undoubtedly considerable expectation on local government to deliver and to play its role in the many dimensions of the national and global development agenda.

I would like to give some few examples of what we are doing here in Fiji to promote strong and effective local government.

We are in the process of amending the Local Government Act to enable the municipal councils to be more responsive to the needs of ratepayers, the general public and visitors. The Amendments have been proposed after wide consultations with Municipal Councils and other stakeholders, and after following the relevant procedures in the Local Government Act.

In line with the Government's Strategic Development Plan 2003–2005 and its Urban Sector Strategy, and in association with the Asia Development Bank, the Ministry has completed a Study involving the preparation of an Urban Policy Action Plan (UPAP). The final draft UPAP document is envisaged to be formally submitted to Government for adoption in January 2005, but negotiations are also being undertaken for a follow up ADB TA to prepare an implementation work plan for key action steps recommended in the Plan.

The next 12 months will see the implementation of the Urban Policy Action Plan to provide an enabling environment to facilitate and improve economic growth and reduce poverty through improved management and governance.

The Plan outlines the changes that are needed and singles out four strategic components which are: 1. Development of a Strategic Urban Land Development Programme; 2. Devolution and realignment of the Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment; 3. Challenge Fund for Municipal Development; and 4. Capacity Building of Local Government.

Also, a part of this Plan is the reviewing and preparation of the Greater Suva Urban Structure Plan and this should be completed before the end of this year. I believe there is going to be a session in this symposium where this Urban Policy Action Plan is going to be presented and discussed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, events such as this symposium provide a mix of learning opportunities and dialogue between participants, exploring practical solutions to the challenges faced by local government in the region in the areas of local democracy, good governance, urbanisation and service delivery, as well as mapping a way forward for enhanced regional co-operation. I sincerely trust the outcomes will strengthen local governance and the institutions upon which such principles are founded.

I would also like to briefly recognise the institutions and organisations that support the enhancement of the ability of local governments to deliver on their mandated roles and responsibilities.

In particular I acknowledge the work of one of the lead co-ordinating organisations for this event, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, and the fact that the Forum has established a project, with a dedicated office here in Suva, to promote democratic values and good local governance through capacity building of local governments, and encouraging regional networks and co-operation between local government practitioners.

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum has the status of an associated Commonwealth Organisation and has been recognised by the Commonwealth Heads of Government firstly at the 2002 CHOGM in Australia when particularly the value of the CLGF Good Practice Scheme was acknowledged and a call made for supporting the CLGF Regional Information Centre in the Pacific – a summons I am proud that the Government of Fiji has responded to in the affirmative.

Commonwealth Heads of Government again welcomed the collaboration with CLGF in the promotion of democratic best practice at CHOGM in December 2003 in Nigeria.

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum through its various networks is able to link what is happening in the Pacific with the work of UN-Habitat, European Union Africa Caribbean Pacific Local Government Platform and the Commonwealth Secretariat. It is pleasing to learn that the project is about to be scaled up and the outcomes of this Symposium will inform the future work programme of the CLGF Pacific Project.

I would also recognise the other key partners in this important endeavour and express the appreciation of the Government of Fiji for the support, expertise and encouragement provided. These include the Commonwealth Secretariat, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the University of the South Pacific, Suva City Council and Fiji Local Government Association.

The theme and topics chosen to deliberate upon during the symposium are topical, relevant and constructive. The importance of traditional and modern systems of governance working together cannot be overemphasised; rapid urbanisation and its associated management challenges is a critical issue that demands significant focus; decentralisation and effective inter-governmental relations are topical and it needs to be debated as to how these concepts apply to the Pacific context; community participation, accountability and transparency, service delivery and resource mobilisation are essential components of a well functioning system of local government; regional networking can support all our efforts. These subjects provide for a balanced and productive symposium. However, it is vital that behind all our deliberations the welfare and improvement of the quality of life of the people we serve is fundamental.

I trust that our deliberations will result in tangible actions that will support people, translating good governance values into services that will provide a local enabling environment for social, economic and institutional development across the region. We need action, not rhetoric.

I wish you successful deliberations and have pleasure in declaring the Pacific Regional Symposium 'Making Local Governance Work' officially open.

Vinaka vakalevu!

ANNEX C

Symposium Programme

Opening: Saturday 4 December

12.00 **Registration**

Venue: Suva City Council Chambers

14.30 **Official Opening**

Welcome: *Ratu Ilitomasi Verenakadavu*, Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer, City of Suva

Remarks by *Robbins Chirwa*, Senior Programme Officer – Pacific, Commonwealth Secretariat

Remarks by *Cllr Basil Morrison*, President of Local Government New Zealand and Member of the CLGF Board

Remarks by *Hon. Chris Carter*, Minister for Local Government, New Zealand; Member of the CLGF Board

Remarks by *Iosefa Maiava*, Deputy Secretary-General, PIF

Official Opening Address: *Hon. Mataiasi Ragigia*, Minister for Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlements and Environment, Fiji Islands

Vote of Thanks: *Cllr Praveen Bala*, President Fiji Local Government Association

Following the opening ceremony there will be a welcome reception hosted by *Hon. Mataiasi Ragigia*

Day One: Monday 6 December

Session Chair: *Cllr Basil Morrison*, President Local Government New Zealand and CLGF Board Member

8.30 **Introduction and Welcome**

Lucy Slack, Senior Policy Adviser, Commonwealth Local Government Forum

Mayor Robert Montague, Parish of St Mary, Jamaica

9.00 **Setting the Scene – Effective Decentralisation and Local Government Reform in the Pacific**

Professor Ron Duncan, Executive Director, Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance, University of the South Pacific

- 09.30 **Implementation of the Provincial and Local Government System in Papua New Guinea – the East New Britain Provincial Government Experience**
Address by *Hon. Leo Dion*, Governor of East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea
- 10.00 **Local Government and Decentralisation in the Host Country, Fiji – Opportunities and Challenges**
Ratu Peri Cavidu, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment, Fiji Islands
- 10.30 **Tea break**
- 11.00 **Working group sessions**
1. Appropriate systems of local democracy and good governance in the Pacific. What are the challenges facing small states in the region in promoting democracy and good governance (Facilitator: *Fakavae Taomia*, USP)
 2. Autonomy and fiscal decentralisation – principles and mechanisms for effective financial decentralisation and local management of resources in the region (Facilitator: *Professor Ron Duncan*, USP)
 3. Understanding and engaging in local governance – the role for civil society and civic education in understanding local structures, being actively involved in local decision making and holding local government to account (Facilitator: *Jeanette Bolenga*, USP)
 4. Innovations for decentralisation and local governance in the Pacific (Facilitator: *Professor Graham Hassall*, USP)
- 12.30 **Lunch Break**
- Session Chair: *Ruth Liloqula*, Permanent Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, Solomon Islands
- 13.15 **Feedback from working group sessions**
- 14.00 **Panel session: Urbanisation in the Pacific, the Role for Local Government**
Panellists:
Alastair Wilkinson, Regional Adviser, UN-ESCAP
Iva Kola, Director Regulatory Services, National Capital Development Commission, Papua New Guinea

Mayor Robert Montague, Parish of St Mary, Jamaica
Capt John Otekat, President of the Uganda Local Government Association

15.30 **Tea break**

Session Chair: *His Worship Patrick Crowby*, Lord Mayor of Port Vila, Vanuatu

16.00 **The Pacific Regional Good Urban Governance Campaign and Pacific Urban Agenda**

UN-Habitat – *Sue Le Mesurier*, Programme Manager (Pacific Region)

UN-ESCAP – *Alastair Wilkinson*, Regional Adviser, UN ESCAP/EPOC

Followed by plenary discussion

17.00 **Close of Day One**

Day Two: Tuesday 7 December

Session Chair: *Ratu Ilitomasi Verenaka d'au* Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer, Suva, Fiji Islands

08.30 Short welcome and review of Day One: *Fakavae Taomia*, Chief Rapporteur

Local Government and Traditional Leadership – Making the Partnership Work

Urbanisation, Local Government and Traditional Governing Structures in the Pacific

Dr Donovan Storey, Massey University, New Zealand.

The Experience in New Zealand

Jeff Jones, Chief Executive Officer and Cllr Taiwhanake Eru, Environment Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Facilitated plenary discussion

10.45 **Tea break**

Session Chair: *Capt John Otekat*, President Uganda Local Authorities Association

11.15 **Panel session: Transparency and Accountability in Local Governance**

Holding Local Government to Account, the Role of Civil Society

Lionel Gibson, Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International

Codes of Conduct

Mark Dacombe, Chief Executive, Kapiti Coast District Council, New Zealand

Financial Accountability and Performance Management

Apenisa Naigulevu, Executive Officer, Transparency International Fiji

Dispute Settlement at the Grassroots Level

Professor Graham Hassell, Professor of Governance, PIAS-DG, USP

Facilitated panel/plenary discussion

12.45

Lunch break

13.30

Working group sessions

1. The interface between the political and administrative sides of local government – how to ensure co-operation and partnership working in the interests of community development
(Facilitator: *Dr. Munawwar Alam*, Commonwealth Secretariat)

2. Working in a multi-stakeholder environment – co-ordinating managing and monitoring relationships with the local MP, central government ministries, community development organisations, traditional leaders, national NGOs and other stakeholders – the role for local government (Facilitator: *Sue Le Mesurier*, UN-Habitat)

3. How to ensure that local government is accountable and transparent – mechanisms for ensuring open and accountable local governance in the Pacific (Facilitator: *Emma Ferguson*, PIFS)

4. Strategies for addressing rapid urbanisation in the region, managing the process (Facilitator: *Fakavae Taomia*, USP)

15.00

Tea break and depart on tour of Suva

19.00

Symposium dinner and entertainment – hosted by Fiji Local Government Association

Day Three: Wednesday 8 December

Session Chair: *Seiuli Eneliko*, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Samoa

- 8.30 Short welcome and review of Day Two: *Fakavae Taomia*, Chief Rapporteur
- Working groups feedback and plenary discussion from the previous day**
- 9.30 **Effective Local Governance for Better Service Delivery: Innovative Approaches to Service Delivery**
Hon. Chris Carter, Minister for Local Government, New Zealand
- What Quality is Expected of Local Government and How Can Monitoring be Used to Ensure Effective Service Delivery? The Example of Kiribati**
Karabaiti Taoaba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, Kiribati
- Getting the Balance Right between Direct Delivery of Services by the Local Authority and Promoting Other Approaches to Service Delivery such as Partnership Working and Contracting Out**
Nacanieli Kotoiwasawasa, Director Health Services, Suva City Council
- Environmental Management with Focus on Solid Waste Management and Environmental Impact Assessments – The Challenges and Opportunities**
Epeni Nasome, Director of Environment, Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment, Fiji Islands
- Plenary session on ways of improving municipal service delivery, focusing on identifying capacity needs and development options**
- 11.00 **Tea break**
- Session Chair: *Hon. Matthew Batsiua MP*, Chairman Public Accounts Select Committee, Nauru
- 11.30 **Plenary discussion**
- What is needed to enhance stakeholders' ability to implement?
 How can capacity building, including at the regional level strengthen local governance?
 How should local government be co-operating at the regional level?
 How can existing networks be strengthened?
 Are new networks needed?
 How can these link in and support the Pacific Governance Agenda?
- 12.45 **Lunch break**

Session Chair: *Hon. Leti Pelesala*, Minister of Home Affairs and Rural Development, Tuvalu

13.30 *Panel session: Setting the regional perspective*

Panel comprising regional and international agencies, development partners:

AusAID: *Rebecca Lannin*, Policy Analyst

CLGF: *Lucy Slack*, Senior Policy Adviser

Commonwealth Secretariat: *Robbins Chirwa*, Senior Programme Officer, Pacific

PIFS: *Emma Ferguson*, Economic Adviser

UNDP: *Hendrik Lindroth*, GOLD Programme Manager

UN-ESCAP: *Alastair Wilkinson*, Regional Adviser

UN-Habitat: *Sue Le Mesurier*, Programme Manager (Pacific)

Session Chair: *Hon. Mataiasi Ragigia*, Minister for Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlements and Environment, Fiji Islands

14.30 **Presentation and agreement of symposium recommendations**

16.00 **Closing remarks**

Commonwealth Local Government Forum: *Capt John Otekat*, Vice Chair

Commonwealth Secretariat: *Robbins Chirwa*, Senior Programme Officer, Pacific

Fiji Local Government Association: *Clr Chandra Singh*, Vice President

Symposium Host: *Hon. Mataiasi Ragigia*, Minister for Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlements and Environment, Fiji Islands

Vote of Thanks *Warkia Kaminie*, Executive Director, Papua New Guinea Local Level Government Association

16.30 **Close of symposium**

Annex D

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Annex E

Notes on the Organisers

The Commonwealth Secretariat

A voluntary association of sovereign states spread over every continent and ocean, the Commonwealth's 1.7 billion people make up 30 per cent of the world's population. Emphasising equality, trust and understanding, the Commonwealth facilitates the advancement of democracy, human rights and sustainable economic and social development within its member countries and beyond. The Commonwealth is committed to a set of fundamental values spelt out in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991, at the core of which is belief in and adherence to democratic principles.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, established by Heads of Government in 1965, is the principal organisation of the Commonwealth implementing the decisions taken by the 53 member governments. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation is the means by which the Commonwealth promotes economic and social development and the alleviation of poverty in member countries. It operates on the principle of mutual assistance, with member governments contributing finance on a voluntary basis and obtaining technical assistance as needed.

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Commonwealth Local Government Forum

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum is a membership organisation bringing together associations of local government, individual councils and ministries of local government from across the Commonwealth. It also welcomes associate members from academic, research and professional organisations with an interest in local government.

The CLGF works to promote and strengthen democratic local government, and to encourage the exchange of best practice through conferences and events, its Good Practice Scheme, research and information on innovation, and by working with Commonwealth countries to support the development of democratic values and good governance.

As the local government arm of the Commonwealth, the CLGF ensures that local government's voice is heard, and that it gets full recognition within the Commonwealth.

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