The Role of Parliamentary Committees:
Training Workshop for Members of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands

16 - 17 April 2008 | Parliament House, Honiara

At the request of the Speaker of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands, Rt Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea KBE, PC, the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI), in conjunction with the UNDP Solomon Islands Parliamentary Strengthening Project and the National Parliament of Solomon Islands, is organising this training workshop for Members of the National Parliament. The focus of the training is on the role of parliamentary committees with an emphasis on engaging the community through committee work.

The aim of the workshop is to assist the National Parliament with ensuring that its parliamentary committees can perform their proper roles. Members of Parliament will gain a greater appreciation of the value of parliamentary committees as a means of ‘taking Parliament to the people’, thus enabling Members to be better informed about community views; of providing a bridge between Members’ constituents’ concerns and the broader community interest; of promoting public debate; and of scrutinising the Executive and contributing towards better government through a more informed administration and policy making process.

Mr Quinton Clements – Deputy Director, CDI, will convene the workshop, together with:

- Senator The Hon. Kay Patterson – Senator for Victoria, Parliament of Australia;
- Hon. Moses Maladina – Member for Esa’ala Open & Chair, Parliamentary Select Committee on the Ombudsman Commission, National Parliament of Papua New Guinea; and
- Mr Steven Reynolds - Clerk Assistant of Committees and the Usher of the Black Rod, Legislative Council, Parliament of New South Wales.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter/session leader</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.00</td>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Rt Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea, Speaker of the National Parliament</td>
<td>Welcome:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statement by the Prime Minister, Hon Dr Derek Sikua MP.</td>
<td>• Outline why the workshop is being held,</td>
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<td>Statement by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Manasseh Sogavare, MP</td>
<td>• Indicate what the benefits to individual MPs will be,</td>
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<td>• Outline possible benefits for the National Parliament, Ministries, Solomon Islands</td>
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<td>communities and businesses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.15</td>
<td>Outline workshop</td>
<td>Mr Quinton Clements</td>
<td>Outlines context, purpose and structure of workshop &amp; introduces presenters</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.30</td>
<td>Westminster Parliamentary Model</td>
<td>Senator Patterson</td>
<td>Background to the Westminster Parliamentary Model</td>
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<td>10.00</td>
<td>Case Study: The Papua New Guinea Experience</td>
<td>Hon. Moses Maladina MP</td>
<td>The role of Committees in the Papua New Guinea Parliament.</td>
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## Working with Parliamentary Committees I: Effective Committee Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
<th>Discussion Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>10.45</td>
<td>Being an Effective Committee Member</td>
<td>Senator Patterson, Mr Maladina, Mr Clements &amp; Members</td>
<td>What are the elements that underlie effective committee membership?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Working with your Secretariat</td>
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<td>How can you get the most out of being a member of a committee?</td>
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<td>• Working with stakeholders</td>
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<td>What is the role of the Chair?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Working with constituents</td>
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<td>How can you best work with the secretariat, stakeholders, and constituents?</td>
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<td>Video “Committees in the Community”</td>
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| 12.00  | Things you need to know                      | Mr Steven Reynolds & Committee Secretariat staff member.                     | The powers and responsibilities of Committees.                                        |

### 12.30 | Lunch

## Working with Parliamentary Committees II: Adopting Good Practice

Break into smaller groups to consider and discuss allocated theme. Groups to choose spokesperson (Chair) & note-taker (Secretary). Groups to take notes & report back to plenary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Committee Membership:</th>
<th>Operational Processes:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Good chairing - the role of the Chair</td>
<td>1. Role of the Secretariat</td>
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<td>2. The role of Members Attendance at meetings</td>
<td>5. Broadcasting of proceedings</td>
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<td>3. Raising issues before the committee</td>
<td>6. Recording evidence - hearing transcripts</td>
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<td>7. Travel</td>
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<td>8. The Committee budget</td>
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<td>9. Report preparation &amp; presentation</td>
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What is required of a Chair and a Member of a Committee? Issues to consider include:
- Developing a structure/system to follow
- Ensuring manageable workloads & keeping focus
- Completing the work

Are the current operational processes best serving the needs of the committees? Issues to consider include:
- Existing procedures - how suitable are these?
- Existing support & resources - how adequate are these?
- How to improve operational processes?
Procedural Issues:
1. Sources of Committee Authority
2. Establishment Procedures
3. Appointment of Committee
4. Membership
5. Election of Chair, Deputy Chair
6. Appointment & use of sub-committees
7. Meetings procedure
8. Initiation of inquiries
9. Witness protection & confidentiality
10. Written submissions
11. Public Hearings
12. Compelling a person/ organisation to give evidence

Consider procedural questions including:
- Meeting procedure
- The power of the committee
- Protecting witnesses

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.00</td>
<td>Establishing an inquiry</td>
<td>Mr Clements, Mr Reynolds &amp;</td>
<td>What are good Terms of Reference? How to plan an inquiry effectively?</td>
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<td>10.15</td>
<td>Conducting an inquiry: Collecting information</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>1. Holding public hearings 2. Asking the right questions 3. Witness protection - David Kelly case study 4. Procedural issues - unauthorised disclosure, adverse mention, privilege Groups to plan a public hearing program. Groups to determine procedure for a public hearing, develop a short list of witnesses they would like to appear before their inquiry, &amp; the list of questions they intend to ask. Groups to report back on their planning of a public hearing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<td>Presenter(s)</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>13.30</td>
<td>Exercise: Holding a public hearing</td>
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<td>Members to role play a public hearing.</td>
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<td>15.00</td>
<td>Reporting back: Reaching a consensus</td>
<td>Sen. Patterson &amp; Mr Maladina</td>
<td>Wrap-up of the mock hearing exercise and discussion on reaching a consensus view in the final report.</td>
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<td>15.30</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>Review session</td>
<td>Mr Clements</td>
<td>Feedback on all sessions, issues raised, questions and what Members now expect their committees will do.</td>
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<td>16.30</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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<td>17.00</td>
<td>Cocktail Reception</td>
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**About the Presenters**

**Mr Steven Reynolds** (B Ec, LLB, MPS) is currently the Clerk Assistant of Committees and the Usher of the Black Rod in the NSW Legislative Council. He has had 10 years experience working in parliamentary committees, as a research officer, committee manager then as Clerk Assistant. Prior to working for the NSW Parliament Steven worked in a number of public sector and non-government positions.

**Mr. Quinton Clements** (BA Hons, 1st Class, ANU) is Deputy Director of the Centre for Democratic Institutions at the Australian National University. Prior to taking up this position, Mr Clements held a number of positions in the Australian Public Service and in the Department of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Australia. He served as Inquiry Secretary to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories; and acting Committee Secretary for the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works. Mr Clements has also
worked in the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea as Committee Secretary to the Parliamentary Select Committee on a Pacific Economic Community. Mr Clements has consulted on issues of parliamentary strengthening and good governance in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Island Countries for agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme.

Senor the Hon Kay Patterson (BA (Hons) (Syd), PhD, Dip Ed (Monash), MAPsS). Prior to entering Parliament in 1987, Senator Patterson ran a small business before returning to school to matriculate and then complete an arts degree at the University of Sydney, where she taught before undertaking a PhD and Dip Ed at Monash University where she also taught. Senator Patterson also taught at Lincoln Institute (now La Trobe University) and was Chairman of the School of Behavioural Sciences – training health science students. Senator Patterson has held a number of positions on Senate Committees including Chairing the Environment, Communications and Arts Committee. In 1998 she was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and, in addition, was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2000. In 2001 she was appointed to Cabinet as Minister for Health and Ageing and in 2003 as Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women’s Issues. She resigned from the Ministry in 2006 and will retire from the Senate in June 2008.

She is a Director and Board Member of Interplast Australia and New Zealand and has held executive and council positions in Girl Guides (Victoria) of which she was made an Honorary Life Member in 2002. She was a member of Monash University Council for 20 years.

Hon Moses Maladina (Member for Esa’ala Open, Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea) is currently Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Ombudsman Commission, having served previously as deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for National Planning. Mr. Maladina is a qualified agriculturalist and has practised as a Barrister & Solicitor.

Before joining parliament, Mr. Maladina also served as managing director of Air Niugini, and was PNG’s High Commissioner to New Zealand. He has business interests in various parts of the Pacific including Australia and New Zealand and enjoys sports and writing, and has had one fiction novel published in New Zealand.

About the Solomon Islands National Parliament Office

The National Parliament of Solomon Islands represents the focal point of democracy in Solomon Islands. It is where elected representatives gather to debate, enact legislation, represent constituents’ interest and scrutinize the Government actions and policies. The National Parliament Office provides the procedural and administrative support necessary to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the Parliament so that it fulfills its constitutional mandate.
The National Parliament Office is committed to maintain and improve the following key services:

- Procedural support services including the preparation and administration of House papers such as Minutes, Order Papers, Notice Papers, Question papers, Motions and all tabled documents including legislation;
- Committee Secretariat Services to the Standing and Special Select Committees of the National Parliament;
- Finance and Administrative services including the administration of Members Salaries and Entitlements, the provision of human resources service, security service and building and facilities management;
- IT support, Library and Information services to Members;
- Hansard, recording and transcription services;
- Civic and Parliamentary Education and Outreach Services.

About the UNDP Solomon Islands Parliamentary Strengthening Project

The UNDP Solomon Islands Parliamentary Strengthening Project was established following the recommendations of the Legislative Needs Assessment conducted in 2001, the resolutions of the Consultative Forum of Solomon Islands Parliamentarians in 2002 and the deliberations and recommendations of the House Committee in 2003. It is jointly funded by UNDP and RAMSI/AusAID and the first phase was implemented from 2004 - 2007. Due to its success, a Phase Two will commence in April 2008 and run until 2012.

The following were the outcomes under Phase One of the project:

- Effective and efficient parliamentary services, management and administration;
- Representative role of the Solomon Islands Parliamentarians strengthened;
- Law making procedures of Solomon Islands Parliament strengthened;
- Capacity of the Solomon Islands Parliament to exercise its oversight role strengthened; and
- Increased representation of women and gender perspective in governance.

About the Centre for Democratic Institutions

The Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) was established by the Australian government in 1998 to support the efforts of new democracies in the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen their political systems. Our core budget is provided by AusAID, Australia’s Agency for International Development, and we are located at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra.

All of CDI’s projects are aimed at improving political governance and political practice in partner countries via intensive training programs on issues of parliamentary practice and leadership, the operation of political parties, democratic institutional design, constituency representation, and other themes and issues relating directly to improving the effectiveness and quality of the work of national parliaments, parties, and of parliamentarians themselves.
In order to do this, we conduct training courses, provide direct technical assistance and undertake applied research on our core areas of parliamentary and political party development. All of this is aimed squarely at emerging leaders in our focus countries – Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

For more information on all aspects of CDI’s work, visit our website at www.cdi.anu.edu.au or contact us by post, email, phone, or fax:

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