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"I warmly support the Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative. The existence of the programme is strong evidence of the international community's recognition of the importance to democratic structures of a strong and effective parliament. We have had extensive engagement with PPEI through its start up phase that has had beneficial results for Parliament."

THE HON NIKI RATTLE
Speaker of the Parliament of the Cook Islands



"As Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, I am striving constantly to improve our services to the

Assembly Members and enable the Assembly to fulfil its constitutional role. The PPEI programme recognizes the key role played by parliamentary secretariats in meeting these objectives through a range of imaginative and well founded activities and outputs. I greatly appreciate the support offered by it to our team in Tonga and look forward to using its resources in the coming years in order to continue our drive to develop our support for Members."

MS GLORIA POLEO
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga

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Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative (PPEI)



PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY EFFECTIVENESS INITIATIVE (PPEI)

The Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative (PPEI) is a three-year programme (2016-2018) designed to provide support to the Parliaments of Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu and to support the increase of women's political participation in these countries. The programme is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funded by the Government of New Zealand.



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IMPROVING MPS' ABILITY TO OVERSEE NATIONAL BUDGETS AND PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC) OPERATIONS

The oversight of the budget process is a crucial responsibility of parliaments. PPEI is working with Parliaments to enhance their capacity to scrutinise national budgets and to increase the capacity of Public Accounts Committees to effectively scrutinise public expenditure.

UNDP has been facilitating the strengthening of the collaboration between parliaments in the Pacific during their national budget processes. Through PPEI, the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands and the Legislative Assembly of Tonga have undertaken parliamentary budget analyses with the contribution of parliamentary researchers from sister parliaments. PPEI has also facilitated training for MPs in Tonga, the Cook Islands, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu on the budget process to increase their understanding of the process before the budget is tabled in Parliament.

PPEI facilitated regional trainings for the leadership of Public Accounts Committees (PACs), and supported their attendance at the Pacific Network of PACs co-organised by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), World Bank and UNDP to discuss financial oversight practices in the region. The meeting permitted delegates to review the results of a survey commissioned by the World Bank from a wide range of Pacific parliaments about their PAC operations; PPEI also facilitated technical assistance to the Solomon Islands PAC in 2016 as it scrutinized the national budget and to the PACs of Cook Islands and Vanuatu with strategic planning.



INCREASING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Currently, Pacific Island countries have the lowest number of women parliamentarians in the world. PPEI is undertaking activities in the Cook Islands, PNG, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu to encourage women's political participation with the aim of increasing the number of women standing for elections.

PPEI is rolling out a programme of practice or 'mock' parliaments for women. These high profile national events allow women to experience the work of an MP through debating in the chamber and better understand parliamentary procedures. Such events have already been held in the Cook Islands and the Solomon Islands through the PPEI project.

PPEI is also working with the registry of political parties in PNG and the Political Parties Commission in Solomon Islands to encourage political parties to mainstream gender in their work. With a view to cementing on-going south/south exchanges, and in preparation for further activities, PPEI has been facilitating exchanges between national officials from the respective Commissions.



STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF PARLIAMENT SECRETARIATS

Parliamentarians depend on key staff from the parliamentary secretariat to provide support to undertake their work effectively. PPEI engages with parliament secretariats in all five countries to develop skills and capacities, especially with regards to the functioning of Parliament Committees.

A workshop was organized in PNG for committees' chairs and clerks, in order to strengthen and harmonize the work of the committees and share practices from other parliaments. Responding to a request from the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands, and in preparation for the start of the new parliamentary session, a three-day intensive seminar was held for staff focussing on oversight and committee support skills. In 2016, PPEI also provided assistance to the secretariat of the Legislative Assembly in Tonga in their comprehensive review of the Rules of Procedure that resulted in several changes designed to enhance parliamentary operations. PPEI has been supporting a similar review in the parliament of the Cook Islands.

STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The project's overall outcome is to meet citizens' expectations for voice, development and the rule of law and accountability, and through support to the partner parliaments to strengthen systems of democratic governance.

In particular, the programme aims to strengthen the capacity of the parliament secretariats to provide support to MPs; enhance the capacity of parliaments in all five countries to debate budgets and provide for effective public accounts committee operations; mainstream development issues in the work of parliament; support the running of practice parliaments for women; promote the selection of



ENGAGING WITH KEY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Parliaments are central to efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Pacific. To ensure there is an enabling legislative environment to provide effective oversight of Government policy and scrutinise public expenditure on key development issues, parliament must be fully engaged with the SDGs and key development issues.

PPEI is rolling out a programme of general and specialised briefings and activities on the SDGs and key national development issues for the five parliaments. In conjunction with the Government of the Solomon Islands and the National Parliament, PPEI co-facilitated an introductory workshop for the senior management and secretariat of Parliament on the SDGs and the Solomon Islands National Development Strategy 2011-2020. A similar activity was held in Vanuatu on the National Sustainable Development Plan (2016-2030). PPEI also facilitated training for MPs in the Cook Islands on the National Strategic Development Plan and the SDGs.

an increased number of women candidates by political parties; and improve information exchange and south-south cooperation between Pacific parliaments.

PPEI has two outputs:

- **OUTPUT 1:** Parliaments, constitution making bodies and electoral institutions enabled to perform core functions for improved accountability, participation and representation, including for peaceful transitions;
- **OUTPUT 2:** Measures in place to increase women's participation in decision-making.