

## **PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: *BUILDING BETTER PACIFIC ECONOMIES***

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### **BACKGROUND**

The second Oceania Development Network's conference was held at the University of Papua New Guinea from 12-14th October, 2005. The theme of the conference was "Building Better Pacific Economies".

The conference brought together researchers around the Oceania region who are part of the Oceania Development Network to exchange views, present papers etc on issues affecting the region. Participants in the conference came from various institutions in the Oceania region and abroad.

The official welcome was made by the Acting Vice Chancellor, University of Papua New Guinea. The key note address was given by the Hon. Patrick Pruaitch, Minister for Forests on behalf of Hon Arthur Somare, Minister for National Planning and Rural Development who was unavailable. In his key note address the Minister emphasised the interrelationship between natural resources and development.

### **CONFERENCE SET UP**

The conference was held at the University of Papua New Guinea. It was an appropriate venue for engaging in scholarly discussion and networking. The conference was for three days. The Main Lecture and Arts Lecture Theatre were the two places where the sessions were held.

#### **Plenary Session**

The speaker for the plenary session on the 12th October 2005 was Prof. Tony Angelo, Victoria University of Wellington. One of his main criticisms of the conference was the focus on the link between law and development. On the 13th October 2005, Dr. Billy Manoka, University of Papua New Guinea was the plenary speaker. Dr. Manu Barchan, Massey University was the plenary speaker on the last day of the conference, 14th October 2005. He spoke on new public management and the alternative service delivery in less developed countries.

#### **Other Sessions**

On the morning of the 12th October 2005, there were two sessions. These two sessions focused on issues relating to: (a) Security and Nation Building; and (b) Elections and Security. The author of this report presented a paper entitled "Democracy through Solomon Islands Electoral System". The afternoon sessions looked at: (a) Education and Health; and (b) Impact of Rich Country Policies. This was followed by a policy session on Peace and Development.

On the 13th October 2005, the respondent to the plenary speaker was Prof. John Overton, Massey University. This was followed by four sessions that focused on: (a) Public Expenditure Participation; (b) Economic Growth and Development; c) Regionalism and Integration and d) Regional Development. The presenters were from the University of Papua New Guinea National Research Institute (PNG); University of the South Pacific and the Samoan National University.

The sessions in the afternoon focused on Agriculture/Resources and the Corporate Sector. Donald Marahare who is the Project Assistant for the University of the South Pacific School of Law - Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute, presented a paper entitled: "Provincial Governments and Management of Forest Resources in Solomon Islands." A policy session concerning Economy and Natural Resources was held after the two afternoon sessions.

On the 14th October 2005, the respondent to the plenary speaker was Prof. Graham Hassall, University of the South Pacific. Later in the morning there were two sessions focusing on: (a) Institutions and Service Delivery; and (b) Informal Sector. The two sessions in the afternoon were on (a) Rural/Regional Development and (b) Tourism/Institutions. Finally, there was a policy session on Governance and Institutions.

### **Closing**

The conference ended by a Vote of Thanks from Dr. Mahendra Reddy and Dr. David Kavanamur. At this same session the position of the Chair of the Oceania Development Network was handed over to Dr. David Kavanamur, University of Papua New Guinea. The position of the Chair was initially held by Dr. Mahendra Reddy, University of the South Pacific.

### **REMARKS**

This was an important three day conference that focused on development issues affecting Oceania island states. It allowed for researchers in the region and abroad to engage in dialogue as well as sharing their knowledge and skills. The conference demonstrated the value of networking and the sharing of views as a means to influence policy initiatives in the Oceania region.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

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