

# PACIFIC ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

18

**“The East-West Center’s cooperative research and education programs have enabled Pacific Island nations to forge stronger linkages with Asia and the United States by promoting national development, encouraging regional unity, and fostering increased involvement among Pacific Islanders in determining their destinies.”**



n *Sitiveni Halapua is director of the EWC Pacific Islands Development Program.*

The Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders was established in 1980 as a forum for heads of government to discuss development issues and formulate solutions to common challenges facing the nations and territories of the region. As Conference secretariat, the East-West Center’s Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) is responsible for facilitating these high-level discussions. PIDP’s role has expanded over the past quarter century to provide scholarly inquiry into social, economic and cultural aspects of island development; facilitate specialized training; and promote trade and investment. Neighboring countries, donors, NGOs and the private sector have joined PIDP in contributing to the evolution of a stronger and more vibrant regional community. Today, PIDP research is focused increasingly on issues of governance, globalization, and conflict prevention in the Pacific Islands region.

## RESEARCH

With financial support from the U.S. Department of State, PIDP continues to lead the *talanoa* peace and reconciliation efforts in Fiji (see page 6). Lessons learned in Fiji have served as a paradigm for a project in the Solomon Islands called “*Tok Stori* for Peace.” This joint endeavor with the Solomon Islands’ National Peace Council exemplifies PIDP’s close working relationship with governments in the Pacific region.

## ISLANDS OF GLOBALIZATION

*Islands of Globalization* is a Ford Foundation-sponsored research and instructional project of the PIDP and the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai‘i. The project seeks to enhance understanding of the origins, nature and consequences of globalization from the perspective of small island societies, and in the context of changing notions of “islandness.” *Islands of Globalization* focuses on the Caribbean and Pacific regions, and pursues pedagogical, policy and popular research that engages

For more information on PIDP, visit: [www.eastwestcenter.org/pidp-ab.asp](http://www.eastwestcenter.org/pidp-ab.asp)

The Pacific Islands Report is at: [pireport.org](http://pireport.org)

The Pacific Island Business Network website is at:  
[www.eastwestcenter.org/pidp-bn.asp](http://www.eastwestcenter.org/pidp-bn.asp)

The U.S./Pacific Islands Joint Commercial Commission website is at:  
[www.eastwestcenter.org/pidp-jc.asp](http://www.eastwestcenter.org/pidp-jc.asp)



*Political leaders talk informally during a break in the talanoa for peace in Fiji.*

intellectuals, academics, artists, policymakers, and the general public. The project establishes collaborative relationships with educational institutions in the Pacific and Caribbean to explore historical and contemporary linkages between the regions. Other outcomes include faculty and student exchanges, scholarly publications, and multi-media products.

Significant events of 2004 include:

n The *Learning Islands: Pedagogy and Globalization in the Pacific and Caribbean Workshop* brought together faculty from Caribbean and Pacific institutions to explore collaborative approaches to teaching and learning about the islands of the Caribbean and Pacific. Topics discussed included the development of shared curriculum; interregional learning communities; resource development and sharing; popular culture; and student and faculty exchange.

n The *Fall Festival of Writers* celebrated writers from Oceania and the Caribbean in an effort to build new relationships and create synergies between island literatures.

### **INNOVATIONS IN GOVERNANCE**

In cooperation with the United Nation's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, PIDP brought more than 80 officials and scholars from across the Pacific to Samoa to explore innovative approaches to reinventing government and strengthening public sector capacity. Follow-up meetings were held at the 6th Global Forum on Reinventing Government in Seoul, Korea. The forum provided a platform for ministers, senior government officials, parliamentarians, mayors, and representatives of civil society, international organizations, and the private sector to discuss key issues and experiences in government reinvention.

### **JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION**

As secretariat for the U.S.-Pacific Island Nations Joint Commercial Commission (JCC), PIDP is charged with promoting the development of mutually beneficial commercial and economic relations among Pacific Island nations and the United States. Last year JCC took steps to engage Pacific Islanders operating private enterprises in the U.S. by identifying North American regions with significant populations of Pacific Islanders. PIDP has begun to establish a network of leaders in these communities, providing advice and assistance for the purpose of invigorating trade and investment.

### **REMEMBERING RATU MARA**

**Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, modern Fiji's founding father and one of the great statesmen of the South Pacific, passed away last year at the age of 83. Mara led his nation into independence and forged an enduring legacy for his devotion to cooperation among Pacific Island governments. Deeply committed to the educational advancement of the people of Fiji and all Pacific Islanders, he once observed that the East-West Center and the University of Hawai'i "have been of greatest value to our developing country, for you have received numbers of our young people for training and education, and provided advisers, consultants and experts of high caliber over many years."**



**Mara was the longest tenured member of the East-West Center's Board of Governors, having served two terms from 1976-86 and 1998-2001. He founded the South Pacific Forum and was instrumental in starting the Center's Pacific Islands Development Program.**