

# Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders: Charting a Way Forward



*Former Marshall Islands President and PICL Chair Kessai Note addresses the assembly of leaders, with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill at right.*

*“It was agreed that this precedent-setting gathering in Washington, D.C., establishes a way forward for strengthening U.S.-Pacific islands relations.”*

COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE  
EIGHTH PACIFIC ISLANDS  
CONFERENCE OF LEADERS

For the first time in their organization’s history, the leaders of 20 Pacific island governments met in Washington, D.C., in May to discuss their challenges with climate change, globalization and isolation directly with top U.S. policymakers. The occasion was the latest triennial meeting of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders, made up of top officials whose islands represent an area that spans nearly a third of the globe.

During the three-day gathering organized by the East-West Center’s Pacific Islands Development Program,

they met with top congressional leaders, private sector executives and State Department officials, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Rice told the leaders that the meeting was a key event in the “Year of the Pacific,” a phrase she said “encapsulates our efforts to expand our engagement with your countries and to reaffirm America’s historic role in the Pacific.”

She acknowledged that the Pacific region faces growing political, environmental and economic challenges. “In response to these challenges,” she said, “we are working together to chart



*Hawai’i Governor Linda Lingle with (left to right) Federated States of Micronesia Vice President Redley Killion, then-Foreign Minister of the Marshall Islands Gerald Zackios and Guam Governor Felix Camacho.*



*Members of Fiji’s delegation speak with Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Glyn Davies.*



*U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and East-West Center President Charles E. Morrison (center) with members of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders.*



*Congressman Eni Falaeomavaega of American Samoa talks to delegates about some of the fine points of the federal legislative process.*



*Karen Hughes (lower right), then-Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, meets with delegates about the United States' diplomatic initiatives in the Pacific.*

a comprehensive approach, promoting opportunity and prosperity, good governance and the rule of law, and greater peace and security.”

Discussions during the meeting covered a wide range of topics, including economic development, security, trade, aid, environmental protection, global warming, fisheries and emergency responses to natural disasters. The leaders also spoke of the desire to expand U.S. public diplomacy programs, especially of an educational and exchange nature, and they discussed the upcoming relocation of

some 8,000 U.S. troops from Okinawa to Guam and its potential economic benefits to the region.

One topic of particular concern was the environment, especially climate change. Kessai Note, then-president of the Marshall Islands and chair of the leaders' group, noted that the environment and rising sea levels are a “major security issue” for many of the low-lying island nations.

Tommy Remengesau Jr., president of the Republic of Palau, encouraged broad participation in “the Micronesian Challenge, which promotes the

establishment of marine protected areas throughout the Pacific islands region.”

At the close of the conference, the group issued a communiqué in which members agreed that “this precedent-setting gathering in Washington, D.C., establishes a way forward for strengthening U.S.-Pacific islands relations,” and stated that “The East-West Center’s Pacific Islands Development Program and other regional processes were identified as being well suited to ensuring that there is practical and appropriate follow-up to the issues raised.”



## Expanding Student Enrollment and Involvement

*“We’ve been pleased to see not only growth in overall student numbers, but also an increase in diversity, with students from places like Russia, Tanzania, Croatia and Germany in addition to the Asia Pacific region.”*

EDUCATION PROGRAM DEAN  
MARY HAMMOND



*Asia Pacific Leadership Program participants Cristina Verán (Peru/U.S.A.), Aggarat Bansong (Thailand) and Andrew De Costa (Philippines) pose for a photo op in front of Beijing’s main Olympic stadium, commonly known as the “Bird’s Nest.”*

In 2007, student participation in East-West Center educational programs grew to its highest level in several decades, to nearly 500 students from 53 countries. “This year, through continued diversification of funding streams, we’ve been able to welcome a number of students from beyond our normal footprint — places like Russia, Tanzania, Croatia and Germany — who share the Center’s goals, vision and mission,” says Education Program Dean Mary Hammond. “And we’ve also been especially happy to see an increase in student fellows from the Pacific island nations.”

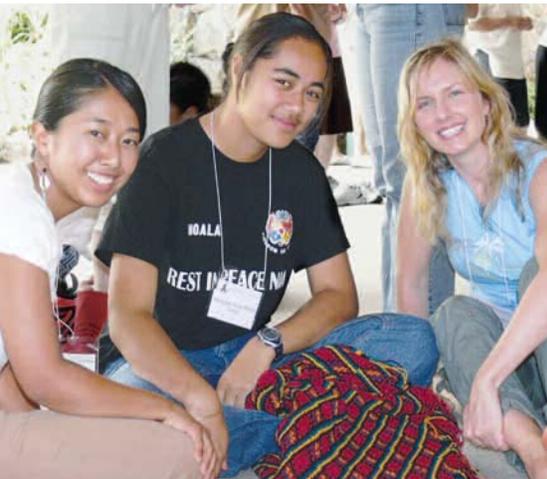
The year also saw continued growth of new supplementary scholarships that augment the Center’s ability to attract degree fellows who may have additional financial needs. New scholarships awarded in 2007 include the Jean E. Rolles Fellowship, the Eleanor and Hermann Haus Fellowship, the Omni-Trak Loui Schmicker Scholar Awards, and the Ashok Kumar Malhotra SEVA (Compassionate Service) Award.

In addition, the East-West Center Alumni Scholarship fund has supported ten new fellows, the highest number in a single year to date.

### DISCOVERING CHINA’S DIVERSITY

“This year’s Asia Pacific Leadership Program field study trip to China was the greatest experience for me,” wrote one participant. “I learned a lot of different perspectives during the trip compared to the usual formal courses and classes.”

The group of 35 participants was based in Beijing, where they were hosted by EWC alumnus Hao Ping, president of Beijing Foreign Studies University. Highlights of the field study included trips by small teams of participants to locations across China to discover and report back on the country’s diversity; a tour of the Olympic facilities and extended lunch with Dr. Wang Wei, General Secretary of the Beijing Olympics organizing committee; and meetings with top-level guest speakers, including President Wu Jianmin of China Foreign Affairs University.



*Junko Nishida (Japan), Margaret Moala (Tonga) and Shelly Rowell (Australia) meet up at an orientation for new students.*



*Incoming EWC participants at an orientation for new students.*

## **EWC STUDENTS IN THE FIELD**

The heart of the East-West Center is its students, who come to Hawai'i to learn in a true cross-cultural learning community. And the knowledge and experience they gain in Honolulu travels with them, from the top think tanks and development institutions in global capitals to the most remote villages across the Asia Pacific region. Here are a few selected examples of work EWC students have been doing in the field:

### **Gao Song, China**

After receiving his master's degree in Asian Studies, Gao returned to China to serve as managing editor for *Mingpai* — an elite magazine founded in Guangzhou

by the well-known newspaper *Nanfang Zhoumo* (The Southern Weekly). Most recently, he became editor of FTChinese.com, a news website founded by the UK newspaper *The Financial Times*.



### **Filifotu Franisha Va'ai, Samoa**

A master's degree student in communications, Fotu did a summer internship at the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C., where she researched market indicators for the satellite industry. She also did a community service project/internship at SamoaTel, Ltd., focused on the company's relationship with partner carriers.



### **Allison Pan, USA**

A master's degree student in political science and a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, Allison (pictured on the left below) studied Chinese at Shanghai China East Normal University. She also spent time in Bali, Indonesia, doing preliminary field work for her research in international security, non-state actors and terrorism.



### **Sugato Dutt, India**

A doctoral student in geography, Sugato spent several months doing research at the Buxa Tiger Reserve in West Bengal for his dissertation on resource use and participatory forest management. He examined the attitudes of the local community in a location where, in the interest of tiger preservation, people have lost substantial employment opportunities from the withdrawal of long-established logging operations.



### **Sarabibi Thuzarwin Mayet, Burma**

A master's degree student in public health, Sara completed two summer internships in Los Angeles. One was doing community-based research with the AIDS Project Los Angeles and the other was with a program funded by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to implement capacity-building assistance services for AIDS organizations in the western U.S.



# Advancing Human Rights

*“Through our legal trainings and informational films, we hope to provide the Khmer Rouge tribunal with a broad grounding in the central issues of international humanitarian law, and the Cambodian public with a clear understanding of the workings and importance of this long-awaited process.”*

DAVID COHEN,  
DIRECTOR,  
ASIAN INTERNATIONAL  
JUSTICE INITIATIVE



*A screening of Time for Justice, a film produced for Cambodian TV by the Asian International Justice Initiative and its partners to explain the process of the tribunal.*

## **ASIAN INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE: SERVING JUSTICE IN CAMBODIA**

In 2003, the East-West Center joined with Professor David Cohen of the U.C. Berkeley War Crimes Studies Center to form the Asian International Justice Initiative, a collaborative effort aimed at providing on-the-ground support for rule-of-law and human-rights initiatives in Asia, in both the domestic and international legal context. Since then, the AIJI has worked on a variety of projects, including conducting legal training workshops for judges, prosecutors and investigators of Indonesia’s National Human Rights Commission and producing analytical reports on the Special Panel for Serious Crimes in Dili, Timor Leste.

This year, the program focused primarily on the long-awaited international tribunal on crimes against humanity committed by leaders of the brutal 1970s Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. With support from the British government, the AIJI conducted several trainings in international law for the officers of tribunal.

The AIJI also produced gripping video materials used to teach the people of Cambodia about international legal processes. Two video productions have been completed for broadcast on Cambodian television and screenings in remote villages. “There was a lot of emotion in the room,” said Center staff member Phil Estermann after the videos were shown for the first time in the town of Kampong Thom.

Speaking at the East-West Center in October, AIJI Coordinator Michelle Staggs spoke of the challenges facing the U.N.-backed tribunal, especially that of educating the Cambodian people, who have little knowledge of the rules of international justice.

“We need to ensure that expectations are realistic,” said Staggs, an attorney from Australia. “Prosecuting senior leaders responsible for atrocities will not bring about economic and social reform, will not mean that widespread corruption that exists in Cambodia ceases to exist overnight . . . . Even though we see how difficult the processes are in these U.N. courts, I still think it’s worth confronting these challenges and moving through them, rather than not facing them at all.”



*AIJI Coordinator Michelle Staggs*



*Officials of the international tribunal on Khmer Rouge atrocities speak at a public forum explaining the court’s proceedings.*



*(Left): Matthew Salant, a junior at Scarsdale High School in New York, with a young member of his home-stay family. (Above): Amy Tsang, a senior at Scarsdale High, and Rachel Belanger, a senior at Hudson High School in Massachusetts, help teach at a village school outside Siem Riep.*

## **PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH: HANDS-ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

In July, the AsiaPacificEd Program took 21 high school students from across the U.S. to Cambodia for a four-week program that combined scholarship with on-site learning and project work focusing on the Khmer Rouge tribunal as a lens through which to examine an issue of global and local concern. The students also created film and radio projects that documented their varied experiences in Cambodia.

The trip was part of AsiaPacificEd's Partnership for Youth program, which engages high school-aged youths in building Asia Pacific and cross-cultural knowledge, while also developing media literacy and analytical as well as communication skills.

With the goal of gaining a broad perspective on the Khmer Rouge history and the ongoing trials against the backdrop of the hopes, dreams, and challenges facing ordinary Cambodians

today, participants interacted with a broad range of specialists and everyday Cambodians. They also lived with Cambodian families, worked alongside their Cambodian peers on community projects, and teamed up with disadvantaged youth to help improve Cambodian youngsters' English language skills while developing their own knowledge and understanding of Cambodian culture and deepening their cross-cultural skills.

"Working and learning with, as well as from, Cambodians of different backgrounds pushed me to consider everything — from daily home-stay routines to cultural practices to international justice issues — from another's perspective," wrote participant Amy Tsang, a senior at Scarsdale High School in New York. "I believe that every student and every American would benefit from this program."



## EWC Alumni: Making a Difference

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS ARE AN IMPORTANT PRIORITY FOR EWC ALUMNI CHAPTERS UNDER THE RECENTLY UPDATED EAST-WEST CENTER ASSOCIATES STRATEGIC PLAN. THE IDEA, SAYS ALUMNI OFFICER GORDON RING, IS TO

*“further the Center’s global mission of prosperity and peace by acting at a very concrete and specific local level. It may seem small at the beginning, but our hope is that each service project will take on a life of its own and evolve into an important contribution.”*



*Members of the Hyderabad, Pakistan, alumni chapter with students they helped coach to take the Graduate Record Exam in the hope of studying abroad.*



*Earthquake orphans in the “Hug a Child” program were all smiles for a visit from the Islamabad, Pakistan, EWCA chapter.*

For many of the East-West Center’s more than 50,000 alumni, the Center provided a defining chapter in their lives, affecting their outlooks and aspirations and building lifelong personal and professional networks. While participating in education, research and collaborative programs at the Center, they enriched the institution with their talents, cultural perspectives and ideas. Today, in countries around the globe, they continue to further the mission of the Center — contributing to global understanding, building an Asia Pacific community, and making a world of difference.

### ALUMNI SERVICE PROJECTS: GIVING BACK

When Center alumni approved an updated East-West Center Associates strategic plan at their conference in Hanoi in December 2006, one important new component was a priority for EWCA chapters around the U.S. and Asia Pacific to “encourage community service projects and other volunteer activities that raise the profile of the Center in local communities” and meet the needs of the local populace.

The idea, says Alumni Officer Gordon Ring, is to “to further the Center’s global mission of prosperity and peace by acting at a very concrete and specific local level. It may seem like a small thing at the beginning, but our hope is that each service project will take on a life of its own and evolve into an important contribution.”

Already a number of alumni chapters have taken up the challenge. A few examples include:

- In Islamabad, Pakistan, the chapter has initiated “Hug a Child,” an innovative and heartwarming project that shows what can be done with limited resources and a generous measure of humanity. Chapter members periodically spend an evening hugging and playing with orphans at a facility for children who lost their parents in the earthquake that struck northern Pakistan in 2005.

- In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, alumni are preparing two separate projects — one that offers entrepreneurship training, and another that provides environmental education in schools.

- Chapter members in Dhaka, Bangladesh have helped provide cash, supplies and technical advice to flood and cyclone-affected people, primarily resource-poor and vulnerable farmers who lost their crops due to two consecutive floods in the second half of 2007.

■ For some time now, the Chennai, India, chapter has participated in fundraising for the National Initiative for the Blind, which trains visually handicapped people to use special software developed at the Indian Institute of Technology, including a talking web browser and a program to publish documents in Bharati Braille.

■ The Kathmandu, Nepal, chapter has been helping to provide food and education to underprivileged street children through the “Bal Bhojan” (“Feed the Children”) organization, which provides daily meals to several hundred homeless children, along with classes in value-based education, art, music skills training and more.

■ In collaboration with Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam, members of the Hyderabad, Pakistan, chapter have been providing Graduate Record Exam coaching to students hoping to study abroad.

## **'70s ALUMNI: REKINDLING THE SPIRIT**

In August, more than 150 alumni from the 1970s gathered at the Center for four days of renewing old friendships and attending sessions around the theme of “continuity and change.” “Faint memories of the tantalizing smells of cooking from around the world were rekindled as alums wandered the halls of Hale Manoa and Hale Kuahine,” reported EWCA President Larry Foster.

Perhaps most significantly, the '70s alumni made an import contribution for generations of East-West Center participants to come. By the time the reunion was over, they had raised nearly \$30,000 for EWC scholarships, and for the first time held a special event celebrating the generosity of individual EWC donors in providing named scholarships.



*The '70s alumni gathered in the EWC Japanese Garden during their reunion in Honolulu in August.*



*Photo: Herman Ferre*

## **EWC ALUMNUS SHARES NOBEL PEACE PRIZE**

When the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize was announced last fall, EWC alumni from the 1980s may have recognized Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a United Nations project that involves review of climate study data by hundreds of scientists around the world. This year's Peace Prize was awarded jointly to the IPCC and former U.S. Vice President Al Gore “for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change.”

Pachauri, originally from Nainital, India, served as a Visiting Senior Fellow and participant with the EWC Resource Systems Institute during the 1980s. In an interview with a Nobel organization representative, Pachauri commented that the result of the award has been “an enormous amount of awareness and understanding of everything related to climate change.”



*Photo courtesy of IISD*

*(Top): EWC alumnus Rajendra Pachauri and former U.S. Vice President Al Gore greet the crowd during a torchlight ceremony following the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize. (Above): Pachauri with fellow IPCC officials Ogunlade Davidson (left) and Bert Metz.*