Towards Pro-Active Legislatures and Inclusive Development in PICs

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Abstract

This paper is based on the assumption that proactive legislatures in the Pacific Island countries (PICs) are central in ensuring that societal change and development are conducive to the well being of all their citizenry. It provides a contextual backdrop of the consequences for PICs of the global economic crisis and the lethargy of legislatures in responding to the crisis. Hitherto, legislatures have tended not to meet frequently and the meetings did not cover sufficient time to address serious issues and policies adequately. As a result of historical precedents and existing political structures, the executive branch of government has taken the lead in policy formulation and law making. Legislatures have generally failed to provide the scrutiny required for accountability and transparency. Pacific legislatures have also been largely unrepresentative of women and youth. This paper highlights a number of significant shortcomings of legislatures in PICs and recommends measures that will make them more representative and responsive, thereby contributing to the human development of island peoples.

Key Words
Economic crisis, legislatures, leadership, representative and responsive government, gender empowerment, human development
Introduction

The Pacific, like all other regions in the world, has its fair share of both domestic and external problems. However, geographical location, long distances, natural disasters and communications problems make the Pacific far more vulnerable than other regions. Development challenges that face the Pacific, while similar to those facing other developing countries, are also unique in many ways. In this paper, however, we focus on the role of Pacific legislatures and legislators in tackling these challenges, the underpinning rationale being that proactive legislatures in the Pacific Island countries (PICs) should be central in shaping the nature of development taking place in this region. We have used only secondary information in arriving at our conclusions.

PICs and the Global Economic Crisis

The Pacific region as a whole has to date weathered the most recent global economic crisis better than many other developing countries but the economic fallout from global recession on PICs is still significant. The main features of the fallout are as follows.

1. The aggregate growth rate in PICs was about 5 per cent in 2008. It was set to slow down to 3 per cent in 2009.

2. Some PICs are witnessing declines in revenue due to a lower demand for exports (particularly Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu), falls in remittances (particularly Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Fiji) and falls in the value of trust funds (in particular for Kiribati, Tuvalu, FSM (Federated States of Micronesia), RMI (Republic of the Marshall Islands) and Palau). They are also facing difficulties in accessing credit.

3. Tourism in some countries remains relatively strong and continues to make a positive contribution to economic growth. However, tourists from developed countries, hit by the recession, will be discouraged from taking expensive overseas holidays. This could be particularly detrimental for Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu.

4. The PICs rely heavily on imports of food and fuel from abroad and are subject to volatile exchange rates. Their rising prices in the first half of 2008 had already suppressed consumption spending and pushed up inflation in many PICs. These pressures are still being felt in the Pacific and are a longer-term challenge for the region.

5. Most PICs are highly reliant on development assistance but ODA flows are likely to be affected adversely as donor countries are themselves suffering the effects of tighter fiscal controls.

6. There is likely to be a fall in foreign currency reserves and a rise in inflation, and the demand for temporary farm workers from PICs during harvest time in New Zealand and Australia may also weaken (Lowy Institute, 2009).

How do these economic downturns affect the PICs in terms of human development and poverty reduction? First, the Pacific has fallen behind Asian countries in achieving millennium development goals (MDGs) and is not on track to achieve them by 2015 (Wood & Naidu, 2008). The global
economic crisis has put the region’s progress in achieving MDGs further at risk. In other words, the brunt will be borne by the poor and the women of this region.

Secondly, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (together accounting for 80 per cent of the population of the 14 Pacific Islands Forum countries) have experienced instability, ethnic tensions and political crises, heightening concerns about stability in the region and the mutually reinforcing effect of such social unease on human development (HD). These symptoms are likely to bear some relationship to poor growth and declining per capita income.

Thirdly, heavy reliance on resource based economic growth strategies is likely to have adverse effects on sustainable development. One of the most insistent challenges in the Pacific states relates to environmental sustainability (MDG 7), in particular the effects of climate change. The global economic crisis is likely to exacerbate pressures on the environment in several ways, including increased numbers of urban poor and squatter settlements and slums, which are already a big problem for the Pacific; and a reversion by rising numbers of islanders to unsustainable subsistence farming or livelihood practices, and an inability to make domestic and ODA resources available for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Fourthly, the impact of the crisis is going to be particularly severe for women. It will mean longer working hours and heavier work loads for women, and more household responsibilities. When it comes down to reducing meals and health care spending and withdrawing children from schools, women and girls will invariably be affected most. Similarly, the future for the elderly and single mothers with young children is going to be bleak. Other gender biased implications include involvement—whether through luring or force—of girls and women in sex work, thereby also putting them at greater risk of HIV and AIDS.

Finally, many PICs do not have the same ability to cushion the impacts of the current crisis, unlike large parts of Asia, where many countries experienced at least a decade of strong progress in poverty reduction. Thus, the relative human development advantage that most Pacific islanders of a generation ago enjoyed when compared with Asians has largely vanished (for example, India compared to Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea; Vietnam compared to Solomon Islands and Fiji). Most PICs have little scope for initiating conventional counter-crisis economic policies, such as creation of additional domestic liquidity to finance a fiscal stimulus, since one-third of PICs use third-country currency and their capital markets are small and under-developed. There is little opportunity for them to mobilise additional domestic resources for investment. Running larger deficits and/or printing currency to finance stimulus packages are no options (see Chibber, 2009 for further details).

What is to be done?

In the light of these findings, the following recommendations are in order in respect of overcoming the negative impacts of the global economic crisis.

1. Regional countries should make greater efforts to utilise individual country and region-based promotion of tourist demand in Australia, New Zealand and other source countries, to boost community-based businesses including linkages with agriculture.

2. The region needs better targeted aid, investment in infrastructure in rural areas and more effort to support and enable the private sector, based on production and value adding services.
3. Although the necessity of importing vital goods can hardly be overemphasised, infrastructure projects taken up in the rural areas need to be labour intensive and not just heavily dependent on imported materials. In other words, projects of the school, office, clinic or road maintenance type with the greatest employment and multiplier benefits should receive priority over new large construction projects with high import content. At the same time, the emphasis on improving the quality of health and education services, with a focus on the poor and the women, would be of vital importance.

4. While the public sector utilities and enterprises need to be reformed in order to increase efficiency and utilise budget expenditure effectively, private sector development through Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) should be directed towards genuine entrepreneurs and not rent seekers.

5. Traditional economies are a vital source of resilience in times of crisis. More attention should be paid to supporting and strengthening the traditional economy and indigenous systems of social protection by incorporating them into government and donor planning.

6. The important role of women in business, particularly in the informal sector, should be recognised and supported as women increasingly bear the responsibility of earning income for their families.

7. The combination of food and energy insecurity, the global economic crisis and climate change are very significant policy challenges and require creative responses.

8. The impact of global economic crisis on the region has highlighted the importance of shoring up financing for investment into people, basic services and infrastructure. Also underlined is the need to invest resources wisely to make countries resistant and resilient to future crises.

9. As the centre of the global economy moves to the Asia-Pacific region, Asia assumes greater significance for the Pacific region: since economic recovery in Asia will be helpful to the Pacific, building stronger economic links with Asia would help recovery in the Pacific.

10. The global economic crisis offers an opportunity to change the way things are done in the region. Good governance and honest leadership remain important. These require improved auditing of public accounts and monitoring of the impacts of public policies as well as renewed regional cooperation. PICs have to renew efforts to pool resources and reform regional institutions to create more efficiency and strengthen capacities of each country.

11. It is time to build better economic models, develop new partnerships, particularly among government, private sector and civil society organisations, and build new trading relationships (Lowy Institute, 2009; Chibber, 2009).

Clearly, these recommendations are aimed at restoring economic growth in PICs, with particular emphasis on poverty reduction and human resource development. However, while these are a good starting point, PICs will need to go beyond these and accord the highest priority to the specific needs of the poor, the women and other disadvantaged groups in the society, in order to attain sustainable human development and poverty reduction. This also implies addressing governance issues impinging on such a perspective.
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We therefore devote the rest of the paper to what legislators, the elected representatives of the ‘ordinary’ men and women, can and should do in taking the Pacific to that vision of development. However, before we attempt that, it would be in order to understand the basic weaknesses of the Pacific state and why we place this emphasis on the legislators for both overcoming the weaknesses of the Pacific state and in ensuring governance reforms, poverty alleviation and human development.

Nature of the Pacific State

The contemporary ‘Pacific state’ is a relative newcomer put together from the remnants of precolonial societies and colonial administrations. This postcolonial construct privileged the colonists’ Westphalian model of statehood and the Westminster form of government. Furthermore, this was the latest model of a ‘modern state’, an end-product that had had the chance to adapt over several hundred years to historical changes in Europe. As such, it is argued, it has proved very difficult to mesh this model with the aspects of the precolonial social orders that survived colonialism in the Pacific (Wanek, 1996).

Thus, critics hold that comparing the Western model with the Pacific experience is disingenuous and in some ways ahistorical. Jerry Singirok (2005) noted in the context of Papua New Guinea that ‘the weak state and its impotent institutions are indicative of a nation struggling to cope with formal structures that lack strong links between state and society and confront the informal fabric of traditional values’. Insights of this sort led Finnin and Wesley-Smith (2001) to observe that ‘the problem with many Pacific Island states is not so much that they are prone to falling apart, but rather that they were never fully put together’. So it may be that the nature of the Pacific state has more to do with the various processes of colonisation and decolonisation than with conditions specific to the Pacific.

According to Chazan (1999), weak states are characterised by scarcity of resources, politicised patterns of social differentiation, over-expanded state structures, insufficient state legitimacy, inadequate state power, and of poor or no adaptation of alien institutions to local conditions. On the other hand, Reilly (2002), in the context of the Pacific, delineates four characteristics of state weaknesses: growing tensions in the relationship between civil regimes and military forces (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu); the intermixture between ethnic identity and the competition for control of natural resources as factors driving conflicts (in Melanesia alone there are some 1200 languages spoken by a mere seven million people, and this diversity is open to manipulation of ethnicity); the weakness of basic institutions of governance such as prime ministers and parliaments; and the increasing centrality of the state as a means of gaining wealth and of accessing and exploiting resources. These characteristics arise from the inadequate political structures inherited from colonial powers, the steady decline in political parties (or their failure to develop along ‘orthodox’ western lines), which makes the Westminster model of government ineffective; failure of local politicians and bureaucrats to become worthy democrats and improve the lot of their citizens; and individuals and groups using the state for self-aggrandisement, leading to excessive candidature for elections and grossly unrepresentative parliaments. So, Reilly concludes: ‘Fragile, multi-ethnic, post-colonial states encompassing different languages, ethnic groups, islands, and torn between rival claims of tradition and modernity, raise serious questions about the viability of current state structures and their ability to manage internal conflicts’.
While some of these criticisms of the Pacific states are valid, others appear to be over-generalised and not consistent with facts. First, ethno-linguistic diversity in states such as Papua New Guinea may actually prevent one group from dominating government and force the development of coalitions, even if they are self-centred and short-lived. Secondly, democratic forms of governance have largely persisted in the South Pacific when they collapsed in other parts of the world, so there is plenty of scope to build on what exists in the Pacific. Thirdly, it is not true that all Pacific states lack resources. The problem lies, in fact, with the sustainable use of the resources, which is sometimes impeded by forces located outside the PICs (Firth, 2005). Fourthly, when making comparisons with Europe in the progress of statehood, the achievements of the Pacific states have to be seen in the relevant time frame. Fifthly, it would be unfair and unhelpful not to recognise the weaknesses Nature has imposed on PICs in the form of size and scatter of islands, distances, natural disasters and difficult communications. Finally, in a world of rapid globalisation, it is possible for the Pacific states to telescope the acquisition and adaptation of the best of democratic practices from elsewhere.

In strengthening the democratic state in the Pacific, the starting point has necessarily to be the legislatures and legislators, because they are the ostensible fountains not only of democracy but also of state legitimacy. It is also here that major weaknesses lie in the Pacific, since under colonialism, the major emphasis was on the executive and the least of all on the legislature. Unfortunately, in the postcolonial stage, the elite established and entrenched by tradition and the colonial masters ensured the continuation as much as possible of the pre-independence order, so as to maintain their hegemony.

Role of Pacific legislators in reducing poverty and promoting human development

As elected representatives, PIC legislators have a significant role to play in (a) prioritising the goals of human development and poverty reduction, pushing for the recommendations as spelled out in the MDGs but grounded in the specific realities of their respective countries, (b) translating the accepted recommendations into cogent policies and legislation and (c) ensuring the oversight of their implementation.

Can PIC legislators rise to the occasion and do the needful? It is true that PIC legislators have not been known for any proactive and specific role with regard to human development and poverty reduction since the beginning of the global recession. It was the executives or legislators as executives (i.e. Minister, PM, cabinet, etc.) who took the necessary initiatives, however inadequate.

Since, in these circumstances, much will depend on solving the problems Pacific legislatures and legislators face in discharging their duties, an attempt is made below to flesh out some of the more significant of these characteristics and challenges.

Salient characteristics of legislatures and legislators in the Pacific

The nature of the legislature was shaped by colonial powers (particularly the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the US). However, neither FSM nor Marshall Islands followed the US model. Some of the PICs (for example, Guam and American Samoa) decided to remain with the ‘mother’ country, sending elected representatives to both outside (i.e. US and French legislative bodies) as well as the local legislatures (Ghai, 1990). France does not regard French Polynesia and New Caledonia as colonies but as French territories. However, in both French possessions there are active anti-colonial movements seeking self determination and independence.
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There has been a brake on the constitutional process in Fiji in recent times. As such, there is at present no legislature operating there. In sharp contrast, significant changes have taken place in the neighbouring country of Tonga, the only Pacific Kingdom. Until the general election of 2010, the Tongan Legislative Assembly comprised nine representatives of nobles elected in a separate electorate of the landed aristocracy, and another nine members of parliament elected by ‘commoners’, together with 12–16 members of cabinet appointed by the King. The king and cabinet comprised the Privy Council, the kingdom’s executive government. Although in 2005, the Pro-Democracy Movement won seven of the nine people’s representative seats and for the first time in Tonga’s history a ‘commoner’ was appointed as Prime Minister, it was not until November 2010 that the representatives of the 100,000 citizens became the majority in the legislature, under slightly adjusted electoral provisions. The new parliament comprises 26 members with seventeen people’s representatives and nine nobles. While the king continues to have symbolic importance and residual powers, the legislature as well as the cabinet are accountable to all Tongan citizens, and not to the king.

Ethnicity is an important factor in deciding the results of elections (in, for example, Fiji, New Caledonia and Guam). Although hereditary chiefs, where they exist, are succeeding less and less in legislative elections (even their children are not doing well in such elections despite the advantages they enjoy), their influence on the outcome of election results is still strong. In the name of tradition and culture, there is a tendency to impose consensus instead of competition and dissent, i.e. legitimate criticism of the government in power, although in real life, there are numerous conflicts and disagreements (Lawson, 2006). Adversarial politics centre on personalities rather than issues or ideology.

In the initial phase, Christianity played an important role in electoral politics; later on liberation theology in a diluted form, Marxism, market ideology, and other ‘exotic’ ideologies made their appearance in various degrees. In any case, there has always been a wide gap between rhetoric and practice, in Pacific as any other politics. The political party system, the lynch pin of competitive democratic politics, is rather weak in the Pacific (Crocombe, 2001).

There is variety of electoral systems in existence. Most legislators are urbanised (urban elites representing rural constituencies), foreign educated and foreign oriented (that is with good foreign connections and frequent travel abroad) (Hau’ofa, 1987). Former civil servants are also elected in considerable numbers. This is mostly because most sources of big power are external. Thus, there is generally ‘big man’ or ‘high achiever’ electoral politics in PICs, resulting in prestige-oriented self-serving legislators (Crocombe, 2001; Arms, 2006; Lawson, 2006).

Purchase of votes, clan voting, block voting and other deviations from the ideal are still quite apparent in PICs, in line with persisting precolonial ‘styles’ of rising to prominence. As a result, the influence of those who provide the election campaign funds is on the rise.

Internal political rivalries and squabbles and settling constituency-based dissensions consume much of the energy of the legislators (May, 2006; Roughan, 2004; Scales & Teakeni, 2006).

Parliaments do not sit for a long time (in terms of both length of sessions and frequency); the standing and select committees are inactive even if formed; the staffing supports to both legislatures and legislators are inadequate (for example, there are few research inputs into and little expert assistance for parliamentary deliberation); and many parliamentarians have simply no understanding— theoretical or practical—of the rules, responsibilities and procedures governing the
lawmaking process. MP funds are mis-utilised (as in Papua New Guinea) partly because the ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’ have not been clearly spelled out.

MPs are overshadowed by and subservient to executive authority (Morgan, 2005). Meaningful or effective oversight of the executive by the legislative branch is lacking, either due to lack of understanding of the process, lack of education on the part of the parliamentarians, or simply lack of interest (Mellor & Jabes, 2004). MPs and civil society representatives are often at loggerheads, instead of engaging in meaningful alliances and healthy disagreements (Morgan, 2005).

As can be seen from this catalogue of weaknesses, some of these problems require long-term actions, while others can be resolved in the short and medium terms, provided political will is exerted.

Representation of women in Pacific Legislatures

Empirical evidence around the world shows less corruption in countries where more women are elected to the parliaments. Also, women have direct interests in human development and poverty reduction, and these are likely to be better addressed with more women in the parliament. However, the situation of women in representative politics leaves much to be desired in PICs. This claim is illustrated with the following facts and trends, based on Crocombe (2001); Scales & Teakeni (2006); Fraenkel (2006); UNDP and PIFS (2009); PIFS (2006); and Morgan (2005).

1. Women now have the same voting rights as men but this was not so for a long time. Samoa was the last country to allow female suffrage, in 1990.

2. In PICs, just 4.1 per cent of the Parliament or Congress seats were held by women. A number of the smaller PICs have no women parliamentary representatives. In the 1998 elections, no woman legislator was elected in Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu or Nauru. Likewise, in Solomon Islands, none of the 50 seats could be won by women. In fact, in that country, only one woman has ever, thus far, held a parliamentary seat. In the Parliament of Fiji elected in 1987, only 3 per cent of members were women. Resistance to electing women to the Papua New Guinea parliament has always been strong, though there has been a small number of cases. (The world average for women’s representation in Parliaments is 16 per cent. In fact, the Pacific representation is the lowest in the world, behind even the Arab countries, where it is 7 per cent.)

3. Factors that have helped the electoral success of women candidates include: having politically powerful fathers/brothers (i.e. identity at birth) and/or husbands, no husbands, fewer children, higher education abroad, extensive international connections and/or being well travelled abroad. Most women parliamentarians had backgrounds as nurses, teachers or social workers, i.e. had come through the first professions opened to women.

4. Institutional factors, such as unequal access to land and titles and outdated laws continue to discriminate against women in the region. In addition, national government machinery, supposedly and somewhat condescendingly designed to promote women in all spheres of public life, continues in fact to be weak in PICs.

5. Contemporary culture in the Pacific tends to be conservative and patriarchal, reflecting a colonial, missionary heritage as well as a reluctance to change a status quo that strongly favours men politically and administratively.
6. Women are not fully integrated socio-economically. In the Melanesian countries, access to education is still limited for girls. Women’s roles in and contribution to the formal and informal economy are still considered secondary and their access to wealth is limited, which directly affects their ability to participate in politics. In addition, many women throughout the region continue to be affected by domestic violence.

7. Women find it difficult to enter the world of politics due to its closed, male dominated and frequently hostile nature. There are both supply and demand side factors limiting their candidacies and chances for political representation, including the lack of political party support for women candidates and (in the context, an understandable) reluctance of women to run.

Thus, there are both institutional and attitudinal factors at play.

To sum up this section, the three major specific issues in the legislative governance in the Pacific are (a) the various weaknesses in the legislative process, (b) the poor representation of women and other disadvantaged groups in the legislature and (c) lack of a proactive role of legislators and legislatures in tackling the problems of poverty and human development in the Pacific.

Recommendations

Before we move to specific recommendations, it needs to be pointed out that UNDP Pacific Centre, along with other international and regional organisations, has not only been supporting Pacific Parliamentary Support Projects for more than a decade but it has also come up with a number of recommendations in this regard (see for example, UNDP et al., 2000). We have taken a minimalist position, emphasising only those that we feel are crucial in the immediate future.

Accordingly, we suggest two sets of recommendations, one relating to strengthening the legislatures and legislators in general and one relating to the specific role of the legislatures and legislators in promoting human development and poverty reduction in the Pacific.

In the first set of representations, we would like to include the following:

a. Higher representation, in the legislatures and local government bodies, of the poor, the women and other disadvantaged groups, through devices such as quota, reservation and delimitation of constituencies, and relevant changes in the constitutions and other legislation.

b. Voter education of particularly the poor, the women and other disadvantaged groups so that during the elections they can exercise their vote in favour of the legislative or local government candidates (who will better protect their rights) without fear, intimidation and inducements.

c. Legal and political literacy programs for grassroots women, with an eye to facilitating them to advance in all walks of life, including parliamentary politics. Long=term measures including things like better education, better exposure and mobility, promotion of the small family norm, access to domestic labour saving devices, promotion of women’s electoral support networks and ensuring women’s rights to land would be required to improve women’s representation in the legislatures.
d. Improvements are needed in laws, rules and practices regarding electoral systems and elections so the electoral system may be simplified and made suitable for the poor, women and the disadvantaged. Further, steps should be taken to minimise election-related malpractices like intimidation, block votes, clan votes and vote purchase, and to facilitate speedy and judicious resolution of election-related disputes.

e. The work of legislators in the legislature should also be facilitated by providing them with access to relevant information, travel to constituencies, secretarial staff and research assistants.

The second set of recommendations would be focused on human development and poverty reduction and are as follows.

1) Preparation of a set of Pacific Development Goals (PDGs). This task should be entrusted to a highly representative and independent Pacific Commission of experts set up by the Pacific leaders. The goal would be to prepare in a time-bound manner a set of development and governance goals, along with an implementation matrix, in order specifically to increase the sense of ownership of MDGs in the Pacific region. The proposed PDGs would be placed before the Pacific leaders for their consideration and approval. This document would not only contextualise MDGs in the actual conditions of the Pacific but would be MDG + in order to address issues specific to the Pacific (for example, the impact of climate change on PICs). It would also be in conformity with the Pacific Plan. These recommendations would be prepared in a participatory manner after wide-ranging consultation with all sectors of the community: the poor, women, the private sector, civil society including NGOs, churches and other religious groups, legislators, government and local government functionaries, traditional leaders, researchers, members of the judiciary, development partners and so on. The report would also spell out the role of the legislators in realising these goals (for example, in preparing policies and passing legislation), prioritising and implementing them (for example, through strong oversight of the executive) in the country context.

2) Sensitising the MPs to the significance and implications of human development and poverty reduction in the Pacific through civil society organisations. Elected representatives come from vastly different backgrounds and their knowledge across a range of problems should not be assumed.

3) Strengthening civil society (i.e. the whole non-official community) in the Pacific so that the demand for effective human development, poverty reduction and legislative strengthening is created and maintained.

4) Ensuring intensive dialogues between the legislators and the poor, the women and other disadvantaged groups on legislation that vitally affects their lives.

5) Where necessary, changing the Constitutions so that they incorporate full recognition of rights to meet the basic human needs (food, education, health, shelter, clean water, a sustainable environment).

6) Review of the legislative process with a view to making it more responsive to poverty reduction and human development requirements. Possible provision would include such measures as creation of a special parliamentary committee and strengthening of legislative oversight.
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7) Enacting new and amending old legislation so that policies, institutions and implementation regarding poverty reduction and human development spending are further strengthened.

8) Building closer cooperation and understanding among the legislative, the executive and the judiciary around poverty reduction and human development (for example, through common sensitisation workshops, identification and resolution of interface problems and suchlike).

9) Ensuring better cooperation between government, local government, the private sector, civil society and the legislators around poverty reduction and human development.

10) Regional networking of the legislators to highlight actions required to reduce poverty and improve human development in the PICs.

Indeed, if implemented, these recommendations are likely to change radically the existing character of the Pacific legislatures. However, only a long-drawn and appropriate advocacy strategy, leading to massive mobilisation of the poor, women and other disadvantaged sections of the society can ensure their implementation. Civil society organisations and progressive forces in politics, trade unions, religious organisations and academia must put their shoulders to the wheel.

Note
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(Endnotes)

1 New Caledonia and French Polynesia, regarded as French overseas territories rather than colonies, have representatives in the French and local legislatures.

2 The Friendly Islands Democracy Party led by the Pro-Democracy Movement leader, Akilisi Pohiva, won twelve out of seventeen people’s representative seats in the general election of November 2010. However, the House did not elect Pohiva as Prime Minister, as the five independent MPs sided with the nine noble representatives to give noble Lord Tu’ivakanō a slight majority for the prime-ministership.

References


