



The University
of the South Pacific

Conference on
Conflict and Conflict
Resolution in Asia
and the Pacific,
October 25-27 2004
- University of the
South Pacific

Conference on Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Asia and the Pacific, October 25-27 2004

University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Conference theme: Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Asia and the Pacific: Lessons Learnt

Jointly organized by

- Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance, University of the South Pacific (Host institute);
- Center for Conflict and Post-Conflict Studies, Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University;
- State Society and Governance in Melanesia Project, Australian National University.

Date

October 25-27, 2004.

Venue

Senate Meeting Room. Located at the PIMD Building, near the School of Social and Economic Development Building, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

About the conference

Over recent years the Asia-Pacific region has suffered a number of internal conflicts, some of which have persisted over quite long periods, and many of which have followed well-established lines of ethnic, socio-economic or regional cleavage. In most instances there have also been substantial attempts to resolve ongoing conflicts, which in some cases have achieved at least a measure of success.

This is the second conference in a series. The first will be largely Asia focused and will be held at the Australian National University in Canberra from 21 to 22 October. The conference at the University of the South Pacific will be largely Pacific-focused.

The conference aims to examine the root causes, dynamics, levels and manifestations of conflict in Pacific states and experts on various countries have been invited to provide country assessments. The aim of the conference is to identify and assess specific and common factors which create or contribute to conflict and identify indicators of potential conflicts. The material assembled will be used in the preparation of a conflict assessment manual for Pacific countries as a basis for understanding past and current conflicts as well as predicting likely conflict areas. The draft manual will be the basis for further consultation by relevant stakeholders. The conflict assessment manual should be a useful handbook for governments, civil society groups, regional organizations and international institutions interested in carrying out their own independent conflict assessment programs as part of their respective policy formulation.

Conflict resolution only becomes purposeful if the root causes, dynamics, manifestations and

Most of the focus on conflict in the Pacific has been on places where high profile conflict have taken place (such as Bougainville, Solomon Islands and Fiji) and not so much on relatively "stable" countries in other parts of the Pacific. This conference will focus on both. This is to identify lessons which both groups of countries can learn from each other. What lessons can the "non-conflict" countries learn from those which have gone through overt violent conflict? What lessons can those who have experienced overt conflict learn from those which "have not" in terms of methods of preventing or resolving conflict? Are the "stable" countries "success" stories or are they simply on their way towards potential future conflict? If they are truly "success" stories, then what political or socio-cultural mechanisms have they deployed to maintain relative stability? If they are still on their way to the stage of overt violent conflict, what indicators can reliably tell us this? These are some important questions that the conference hopes to answer.

Participation in the conference is open to representatives of government departments, civil society organizations and the public at large. The presenters will provide the framework for focused dialogue and discussions on conflict-related issues.

Thematic focus of conference

Presentations, discussions and debates will revolve around the following themes:

- Causes (primary, secondary and collateral) of conflict: What are the historical conditions responsible for creating tension and conflict? What are the socio-economic, political, cultural, ethnic, historical and ideological factors which shape and drive conflict in the Asia-Pacific region?
- Manifestations, dynamics and configuration of conflict: How is conflict manifested? What are the dynamics of conflict? What are the levels and configurations of conflict? How violent or "non-violent" is it? Which groups or communities are involved and what are the dynamics of their relationships?
- Impact of conflict: What are the impacts and consequences of conflict in terms of socio-economic development; social coherence; national, regional and global security? What are the implications for the future?
- Conflict resolution strategies: What conflict resolution strategies have been used? What are the successes and failures? Which are the post-conflict reconstruction methods have been used and what preventative measure have been deployed?
- Lessons learned: What can we learn from those countries which have gone through violent conflict? What can we learn from their conflict resolution successes and failures? What can we learn from those societies which have not gone through "violent" conflict? What can be done to make sure that they do not reach the same level of violent conflict? What preventive mechanisms do "peaceful" societies have and what lessons can others learn from them?
- Conflict assessment framework and manual: Identifying indicators for conflict assessment for Pacific countries.

Conflict assessment manual

The presentations and discussions will provide the basis for identifying specific country characteristics and broad patterns of conflict which could be used to design a framework for conflict assessment in the Pacific. The conference will be a starting point in a process which would include further consultation and research to produce a comprehensive manual. Some related guiding questions include:

- What are the commonly shared and country specific causes of conflict?
- Are some countries more conflict-prone than others? Why?
- What are the different configurations, characteristics and manifestations of conflict in the Pacific?
- What socio-cultural, political or religious factors help aggravate conflicts and how do these same forces restrain them?
- What are possible short term and long term indicators which could be used as early warning signals of possible conflict?
- Is it possible to assess and categorize conflict in the Pacific using a common assessment schema?
- What socio-cultural, political, socio-economic, socio-psychological and legal identifiers can be developed and deployed reliably in a monitoring and assessment schema given the cultural and geopolitical diversity in the Pacific?
- How can the assessment schema be subject to periodic reviews as well as making it flexible and adaptive in response to changes in conflict dynamics and patterns?

Presentation program

Broadly, the program is divided into three parts. The first day will focus on developing an understanding of the causes, dynamics, configurations and manifestations of conflict in the Pacific, focusing on a number of countries where "overt" conflict in the form of violence has occurred. The second day will focus on Pacific countries where overt violence has not occurred and some of the reasons for their relative "stability". There will also be discussion on a variety of conflict resolution approaches and their potential effectiveness. The third day will be for the working committee to pull together strands from the presentations and discussions for the purpose of designing a framework for conflict analysis in the Pacific.

Day 1: October 25

8.30: Registration

8.50: Welcome and introduction

9.00: Opening address: Professor Rajesh Chandra (Acting Vice Chancellor, USP).

9.15: Setting the conference agenda: Prof. Graham Hassall (Director of governance program and conflict resolution specialist, University of the South Pacific) **Conflict and conflict resolution: Some relevant themes**

9.30: Father Eliseo Mercado (Director, Justice and Peace, OMI, Rome; Philippines conflict assessment expert), **Conflict assessment: An overview of the Asia-Pacific region**

9.45: Morning tea

The day's discussions will be focused on developing an understanding of the causes, manifestation and dynamics of conflict in the selected case studies. The focus will be on Melanesia states which have gone through various degrees of overt violent conflict.

Session 1

Facilitator: Mr David Hegarty (Convenor, State Society and Governance in Melanesia program and Center for Contemporary Pacific, Australian National University, also former Australian government diplomat)

10.00: Bougainville: Mr Anthony Reagan (Constitutional lawyer, academic researcher and Bougainville expert, Australian National University) and two Bougainville policy makers. **The dynamics of conflict in Bougainville and update on the peace and constitutional process**

10.15: Vanuatu: Ms Jeannette Bolenga (Electoral governance researcher and Vanuatu specialist, University of the South Pacific). **Political conflict and implications for the democratic process in Vanuatu.**

10.30: Solomon Islands: Dr Tarcicius Kabutaulaka (Research fellow and Solomon Islands specialist, Pacific Islands Development Program, Hawaii). **Causes and manifestations of conflict in the Solomon Islands: Some long term solutions?**

10.45: Solomon Islands (continued): Dr Nancy Baron (International Training Director, International Trauma Studies, New York State University; Director, Global Psycho-social Initiatives for Monrovia, Liberia and Morocco; Consultant for UNICEF). **Psychological consequences of conflict on the people of the Solomon Islands: Implications for effective intervention**

11.00: Kanaky (New Caledonia): Nic Maclellan and Jacques Boengkih (New Caledonia experts). **Changing patterns of conflict and emerging trends in Kanaky**

11.15: Discussions

12.50: Wrap up by rapporteur (Dr Sinclair Dinnen, ANU)

1.00: Lunch

Session 2

Facilitator: Professor Ron May (Convenor, Center for Conflict and Post-Conflict in Asia and Pacific, Australian National University and Pacific-Asia specialist).

2.00: West Papua: Mr Rex Rumakiek (Assistant Director Decolonization, Pacific Concerns Resource Center and West Papua specialist). **The Dynamics of conflict in West Papua: Prospects for the future**

2.15: Sri Lanka: Jehan Perera (National Peace Council of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka specialist). **Ethnic conflict and consequences in Sri Lanka: Lessons for the Pacific**

2.30: Fiji: Dr Steven Ratuva (Political sociologist and Fiji specialist, Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance, University of the South Pacific). ***The configuration and dynamics of conflict in Fiji: Towards identifying conflict indicators***

2.45: Group discussions. Themes for the discussions will be provided for each group. Facilitators to be announced later.

3.30: Afternoon tea

4.00: Group discussions continued

4.30: Plenary session: Presentation by group facilitators and sum up by rapporteur (Mr Stephen Sharp, Head of Journalism Program, University of the South Pacific).

5.30: End of plenary session.

Day 2: 26 October

Session 1

Session 1 will look at cases of "non" violent conflict and the potential for violent conflict and will mostly focus on some so far relatively "peaceful" Pacific islands states. Some of the questions to be asked are: What are some historical forces and socio-cultural mechanisms which have successfully absorbed tension and kept these states relatively stable? Have they succeeded in eradicating the conditions for conflict or are they moving towards possible violent conflict in the future? What are the symptomatic conditions for future violence? Session 2 will focus on possible approaches to addressing conflict in the region. The discussion will be wide-ranging and draw on diverse expertise, schools of thought and approaches at the macro and micro level.

Facilitator: Professor Ian Campbell (Head of Department of History and Politics and Pacific History specialist, University of the South Pacific)

9.00: Samoa: Dr Morgan Tuimalealiifano (Pacific historian and Samoa specialist, University of the South Pacific). ***The changing pattern of political conflict in Samoa***

9.15: Tonga: Mr Lopeti Senituli (Director, Tonga Community Trust, Tonga specialist). ***Political conflict and potential consequences in Tonga***

9.30: Kiribati: Dr Kambati Urium (Theologian and Kiribati specialist). ***The politics of religion: A recipe for conflict in Kiribati***

9.45: Tuvalu: His Excellency Mr Tau Finekaso (High Commissioner for Tuvalu in Fiji) ***Potential for conflict in Tuvalu***

10.00: Morning tea

10.30: Nauru Mr Greg Fry (Political scientist and Pacific regionalism specialist, Australian National University). ***Conflict and consequences in Nauru***

11.00: Ms Amelia Siamomua (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women for the Pacific-UNIFEM-Pacific). ***Gender, conflict assessment and early warning systems***

11.15: Discussions

1.00: Lunch

Session 2

Panel discussion: Formal and informal approaches to conflict resolution

Facilitator: Professor Robbie Robertson (Director of Development Studies, USP and Fiji specialist)

2.00: Mr Greg Urwin (Secretary General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat). ***The Forum's policies and responses to regional conflict***

2:15: Professor Ron May (Convenor, Center for Conflict and Post-Conflict in Asia and Pacific, Australian National University and Pacific-Asia specialist). **Federalism and conflict resolution: Lessons for the Pacific**

2:30: Mr David Hegarty (Convenor, State Society and Governance in Melanesia program and

Center for Contemporary Pacific, Australian National University, former Australian government diplomat). **Regional intervention in conflict situations**

2:45: Commodore Frank Bainimarama (Commander, Fiji Military Forces). **The role of the military in security and peace-keeping in the Pacific**

3:00: Afternoon tea

3:30: Mr Kieren McGovern (UNDP conflict resolution specialist). **The UNDP Pacific conflict assessment projects: A Pacific framework.**

3:45: Dr Sinclair Dinnen (Political scientist, lawyer and restorative justice specialist, Australian National University). **Informal justice and conflict resolution in the Pacific**

4:00: Dr Akanisi Kedrayate (Chairperson, National Reconciliation Council of Fiji and Head of School of Humanities, University of the South Pacific). **National reconciliation approaches in Fiji**

4:15: Mr Walter Ringamoto (Chairperson, Fiji Human Rights Commission and Ombudsman). **Conflict and human rights**

4:30: Discussions

5:30: Sum up by rapporteur (Dr Steven Ratuva)

6:30: Cocktails and entertainment by the Center for Oceania Arts and Culture dancers (USP). A display of original contemporary Pacific dances. Venue: Center for Oceania Arts and Culture.

Day 3: October 27

Working group session

A working group consisting of conflict researchers, specialists, practitioners, policy makers and interested people will be set up to put together a draft assessment framework. Those interested to join the working group will be asked to contact either Dr Steven Ratuva or Dr Ron May after the two day sessions.

Venue: Tradewinds Hotel floating restaurant. 9.00am to 4.30 pm.

Discussions on:

Lessons learnt or not learnt;

What have we learnt from those states which have undergone or have not undergone conflict?;

Developing a Pacific conflict assessment framework;

Producing a draft Pacific conflict assessment manual;

Building a Pacific network for conflict assessment and conflict resolution researchers.



[Disclaimer & Copyright](#) | [Contact Us](#)

© Copyright 2004 [University of the South Pacific](#). All rights reserved.