



For Immediate Release

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News Release

Cook Islands Parliamentarians Boost Anti-Corruption Efforts

Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption

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GOPAC is a worldwide alliance of parliamentarians working together to combat corruption, strengthen good government, and uphold the rule of law.

Rarotonga, Cook Islands – In a meeting held in the Legislative Assembly chamber of the Parliament of the Cook Islands, GOPAC Cook Islands members committed to boosting their oversight of anti-corruption and engage more strongly with the [United Nations Convention Against Corruption \(UNCAC\)](#).

"After celebrating our 50th year of independence last year, Cook Islands needs to focus on implementing our commitments vis-a-vis the UNCAC in 2016," said Cook Islands GOPAC Chair and Minister for Justice, the Honourable Nandi Glassie.

Two thirds of the Cooks' parliamentarians attended a two-day GOPAC-UN Development Programme (UNDP)-UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) workshop on strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms. The two UN agencies have joined forces to implement the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)-funded Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption (UN-PRAC) project workshop.

Cook Islands Speaker Mrs Niki Rattle, in opening the workshop, said that increased transparency must be accompanied by heightened accountability.

"We also need to ensure that we couch our anti-corruption prevention in ways that are easily understood by our diverse and isolated population," said Mrs Rattle.

"The more we are open and transparent as a government, the more we can contribute to creating a remedy to address corruption," said Minister Glassie.

Among the parliamentarians who attended were Deputy Prime Minister Teariki Heather, Leader of the Opposition William Heather, as well as several ministers. All of the Cooks' female parliamentarians, who are active GOPAC members, were also in attendance.

GOPAC Oceania Chair John Hyde praised the commitment of the Government of Australia who is supporting the UN-PRAC project, a four- year USD\$ 4.3 million endeavour involving the 15 Pacific nations being implemented by UNDP-UNODC, with GOPAC as a key partner in parliamentary engagement and generating political will for corruption reforms.

GOPAC is a worldwide alliance of parliamentarians working together to combat corruption, strengthen good government, and uphold the rule of law. Based in Ottawa, Canada, GOPAC has 57 national chapters on 5 continents. GOPAC supports its members' efforts through original research, global anti-corruption capacity building, and international peer support. Visit GOPAC on the web at gopacnetwork.org, on Twitter at twitter.com/GOPAC_Eng, and on Facebook at facebook.com/gopacnetwork.

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