Workshop tackles corruption

COOK ISLANDS Justice Minister Nandi Glassie took part in a United Nations Development Programme and workshop in Tonga this week.

Glassie was also there in his role as the Cook Islands chair of the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC).

There was a general consensus among participating parliamentarians that corruption in the Pacific needs to be tackled, particularly in Tonga where that country’s new GOPAC chapter was launched.

“Tonga is one of the five remaining Pacific nations yet to sign onto the UN Convention Against Corruption, and GOPAC, along with United Nations project staff, were working with Tonga’s parliamentarians in the two-day workshop.”

Glassie said MPs in the Pacific wanted to enhance anti-corruption policies, laws and institutions.

“MPs understand that corruption robs our people of clean water and affordable health programmes. Corruption keeps developing nations in poverty,” said Glassie.

“We want to build up the capacity of our MPs in best-practice anti-corruption so we can advocate throughout all our isolated and diverse island communities.”

GOPAC Oceania chair John Hyde said Minister Glassie's contributions at the Tonga workshop had directly contributed to Tonga's parliamentarians establishing their own GOPAC Tonga committee.

“Minister Glassie’s advice on the need for transparency and openness also encouraged the Tonga MPs to begin the ratification process of the UN Convention Against Corruption, which Cook Islands acceded to in 2013,” said Hyde.

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

Sarah Wilson