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U.S. Ambassador Teddy B. Taylor addresses the Support to Political Party Development Workshop



Photo Caption: U.S. Ambassador to PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu H.E. Teddy Taylor in the middle with the NDI workshop participants for a group photo.

On Tuesday, March 27, the U.S. Ambassador, Teddy B. Taylor, delivered opening remarks at the first Support to Political Party Development Workshop Series, organized by the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission (IPCCC) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). The workshop is supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The 2012 Parliamentary elections are critical as they mark a turning point in Papua New Guinea's evolution as a democratic nation. The elections this June mark a generational shift from those who ably led the country to independence and the first generation of post-independence leadership. The credibility and legitimacy of this upcoming election will likely determine whether PNG's democracy continues on the generally positive trajectory of the independence generation or dissolve into tribal and regional conflicts over resource allocation.

"Like in any election, a lot is at stake. And it is important that political parties understand their roles and responsibilities in order to ensure free and fair elections. The success of these elections in June will strengthen the foundations of democracy in Papua New Guinea," said Ambassador Taylor.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, is providing assistance for the elections in PNG and is focusing on party strengthening and candidate debates in order to help in the maturation process of political parties in Papua New Guinea.

“It is hoped that this workshop today, and others that are planned in the near future will help the voters in Papua New Guinea discern issues and vote on the basis of a party’s ability to articulate their interest rather than vote for individuals who are often perceived to have inherited the right to hold office,” said Ambassador Taylor.

“ I am pleased that the National Democratic Institute is here in Papua New Guinea to assist you. They have experience throughout the world helping many nations strengthen their democratic processes,” remarked Ambassador Taylor.

The National Democratic Institute, working with the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission (IPPCC) will be assisting political parties to create structures to study issues and develop policy, sponsor public forums where voters, party leaders, and candidates can exchange views, and conduct focus groups to allow parties to consider public opinion in party platform development. The workshop held on March 27-29 was the first of a number of planned workshops.

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