



EAST-WEST CENTER

August 18, 2009

Representative Christina-Marie Sablan
House of Representatives
Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas
Saipan, CNMI
Via email: tinasantablan@gmail.com

Dear Rep. Sablan:

The Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP), in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature's regional office (IUCN), is pleased to invite you to participate in a high-level international workshop scheduled for September 21-24, 2009 here in Honolulu. Our theme is at once timely and provocative: "Pacific Responses to the Economic Crisis: 'Business As Usual' or 'Getting Growth Right?'" Our forum is intended to provide cross regional perspectives on pressing economic, governance, and resource management issues. In particular, we are interested in critically assessing issues and perspectives related to the crisis that are not presently being illuminated, or may be completely unaddressed by other regional institutions.

We envision that the workshop will serve as a lively forum among island scholars, policymakers, and young leaders. The outcomes of the workshop will include focused research questions that PIDP/IUCN will explore in-house or through jointly commissioned papers. Ultimately, the issues and new perspectives that emerge from the gathering will be brought to the floor when the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders convenes in 2010.

The overarching idea of the workshop is that the global economic crisis has brought to the fore systemic weaknesses, prompting governments to question the status quo and seriously consider alternative approaches to 'Business as Usual.' The workshop and follow-up activities are geared towards taking advantage of this limited window of opportunity by reconsidering the conventional thinking about island societies for the purpose of finding new and creative ways of galvanizing innovative policy actions.

We are not asking for you to arrive with a prepared paper or formal statement. Rather, we request that you be willing to frankly share your experience and expertise, and join us in an intensive discussion about gaps in the current regional governance and economic structures, success stories, as well as alternative strategies that should be considered

As someone who has dedicated a significant portion of your career working on related issues and thinking deeply about what may or may not work to the benefit of island states, we would very much welcome your contributions to this conversation. If you accept, an award letter will follow shortly with details about travel arrangements, logistics, per diem, honoraria, etc.

Thank you for kindly considering our invitation.

Sincerely,

Sitiveni Halapua, PhD
Director

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