

The Office of Research is pleased to announce the 4th 2018 SINU talk

Contested Grounds: Customary land & economic development in Solomon Islands

SPEAKERS



Dr. Tarcisius
Kabutaulaka



Joseph Foukona

COMMENTATOR



Dr. Gordon Nanau

MODERATOR

Dr. David Gegeo

Date:

Wednesday, 28th March

Venue:

Kukum Campus Lecture Theatre

Time:

5-7PM

FREE ADMISSION

ABSTRACT

Customary Land is vital to economic development. But attempts to access customary land through state sanctioned processes for economic development have often caused disputes. In discussions about how to address this, there are usually two schools of thought. One argument is that the formal registration and titling of customary land as a perpetual estate is necessary to ensure security of tenure, which is fundamental to long-term investments. The other argument is customary systems of tenure has served Solomon Islanders well for thousands of years and act as a social safety net that prevents large-scale landlessness and poverty. Furthermore, land under customary tenure can be mobilized for economic development without the need for registration. In Solomon Islands, successive governments have favored land registration as the prerequisite for development. Consequently, nearly every large-scale land-based development starts with land adjudication either through customary land recording or land acquisition processes. But, this has not resolved the challenges associated with customary land and development. This presentation examines the relationship between land and development in Solomon Islands, focusing on the nature and dynamics of state-initiated land adjudications and the outcomes it produces. It also discusses the potential for alternative ways of mobilising customary land through hybrid systems of tenure.

BIO-DATA

Dr. Tarcisius Kabutaulaka is an associate professor at the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai'i and an adjunct fellow at the East-West Center. He is a political scientist with research interests in natural resources and development, China in natural resource developments in Oceania, conflicts and post-conflict development and governance issues. He previously worked as a lecturer at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and a fellow at the East-West Center in Honolulu. Kabutaulaka was educated in Solomon Islands, Fiji and Australia with a PhD in political science and international relations from the Australian National University.

Joseph D. Foukona is a lecturer at the University of the South Pacific's Law School at the Emalus Campus in Vanuatu. He is a lawyer with research interests on law and development, land reform and legislation in the Pacific Islands in general, and Solomon Islands in particular. He has worked with NGOs, local communities and consulted for international and regional organizations. Foukona was educated in Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia. His PhD dissertation, which focuses on land law reforms in Solomon Islands, has been submitted for examination at the Australian National University and is waiting for the result.

Dr. Gordon Nanau (Commentator) is a senior lecturer at the School of Government, Development and International Affairs at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji. He teaches politics and international affairs and has research interests in nation building and national unity, political leadership, rural development, land tenure, sub-regional cooperation, constitutional reforms, elections, and the impacts of globalization on Pacific societies. He previously worked with the then Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE) and Guadalcanal provincial government. Nanau was educated in Solomon Islands, Fiji, USA and UK. His PhD was awarded by the School of International Development at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, United Kingdom.