

**Opening Statement by
Tadao Chino, President
Asian Development Bank**

**at the
Pacific Day Seminars**

**7 May 2001
Honolulu, Hawaii**

Distinguished delegates, guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be with you on the Pacific Day held on the occasion of ADB's 34th Annual Meeting.

The Pacific Day is special for us. We are fortunate to have this gathering in this very beautiful city of Honolulu in the Pacific. We are honored to have representatives from governments, NGOs, and the private sector throughout the Pacific. We are grateful to receive valuable support from various development partners, such as the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Canada Fund, and the Japan Program of the Inter-American Development Bank. On this occasion, I would like to extend my sincere welcome to all of you, and would also like to express my special thanks for all the support and cooperation we received for the Pacific Day events.

ADB has had a long and productive working relationship with the Pacific developing member countries (DMCs). We well recognize that these countries face the very specific challenges common to island economies.

In recent years, a number of Pacific DMC governments have made significant progress in implementing comprehensive public sector reform programs. I am pleased to note that many of these reform programs were designed, agreed upon, and implemented with stakeholders.

However, I know that recent economic performance, despite the best intentions of most Pacific DMCs, has been lagging behind expectations. Nevertheless we are confident that economic performance can be improved with the implementation of policies and programs focused on promoting greater private sector development.

Poverty reduction, as you all know, is ADB's overarching goal. I am aware that people in the Pacific face increasing poverty, a phenomenon previously alien to this region which was known for its "subsistence affluence". Poverty has various dimensions and must be addressed in a multifaceted manner.

Therefore, ADB's current focus is on conducting a poverty analysis in developing member countries to understand who the poor are, what makes and keeps them poor, and how to help them escape poverty. Based on these analyses and in consultation with key stakeholders, we will help countries develop and refine their own strategies for fighting poverty.

As part of this progress ADB is also preparing Partnership Agreements for Poverty Reduction with each developing member country, identifying the priority policy, and projects and programs we will support. We expect to sign Partnership Agreements with all the Pacific DMCs soon.

It is in this spirit that the two seminars today will focus on two important issues. The first seminar will examine the role NGOs can play in the Pacific as advocates for the poor and the vulnerable, and as providers of social services to the people. The second seminar will address the challenges for the private sector in the Pacific. Proclaimed frequently as the "engine of growth", a vibrant private sector is indispensable for sustainable economic growth. Today, we will frankly identify and discuss the difficulties entrepreneurs face in the pursuit of further development of private sector in the Pacific.

Both these topics address issues that are fundamental to ADB's new Pacific strategy, which focus on helping Pacific developing countries streamline their public sectors and boost private sector investment to create more jobs, and raise incomes and the quality of life.

Ladies, and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Pacific Day events of the ADB's Annual Meeting, and to wish you most fruitful discussions.