

The 2024 IDU Forum Asia-Pacific was held from 3 to 5 April in Wellington.

The Forum brought together policy makers, senior party officials, and thought leaders from its global membership and beyond. Speakers and participants included:

- The Rt Hon Stephen Harper – IDU Chairman and former Prime Minister of Canada
- The Rt Hon Christopher Luxon MP - Prime Minister of New Zealand
- The Hon Nicola Willis MP – Minister for Finance and Public Service, New Zealand
- The Hon Judith Collins KC MP – Minister for Defence and Attorney General, New Zealand
- The Hon John Howard OM AC SSI - Former Prime Minister of Australia
- The Hon Scott Morrison - Former Prime Minister of Australia
- The Hon Enda Kenny – Former Taoiseach of Ireland and Patron of the Worldwide Support for Development (WSD)
- The Hon Peter Dutton MP - Leader of the Opposition (Liberal Party) in the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Australia
- Senator the Hon Marise Payne – Former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence, Australia
- The Hon Aseri Radrodro MP – Former Minister for Education, Fiji

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) took the opportunity to jointly organise a panel discussion on “Emerging Democracies in Africa and the Pacific – Challenges in A World of Turmoil”. Moderated by its Director, Bertil Wenger, the panel discussion featured Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham - Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Australia, and The Hon Alitia Bainivalu MP, Assistant Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Fiji. The Hon Freeman Mbowe – CHADEMA Party Leader, Co-Chairperson of the Democratic Union of Africa and IDU Vice Chairman, was unable to secure his visa in time for the event. In his place Tilmann Feltes - Director, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Tanzania) participated in the panel.

The discussion revealed a number of joint challenges including the implications of the war in Ukraine, the ongoing conflict in Gaza, and economic dependence on China. The Assistant Minister for Aviation of Fiji gave an account of her country’s general elections held in December 2023. She emphasized that Fiji’s new government after the general election was not tasked to change everything but rather to tackle the most important issues first, including media freedom, the re-establishment of the Great Council of Chiefs and the resolution of the dispute between the government and the University of the South Pacific. In terms of foreign policy, she re-affirmed that Fiji remained a “friend to all and enemy to no one”, including China. The Head of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Tanzania) outlined Tanzania and the African continent’s huge potential when it comes to resources in general and rare earths in particular. He also addressed China’s visible dominance in terms of development assistance, and the country’s domestic issues including corruption. Germany and the European Union, he concluded, had a lot to catch up with, and would need to do so without supporting authoritarian governments. Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham highlighted similar challenges, noting that - unlike China – his country’s (and like-minded countries’) approach to development assistance would ensure sovereignty and independence.

The panel discussion was followed by a networking luncheon sponsored by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) where the participants could continue their lively debates in a more informal environment.