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**Eni F. H. Faleomavaega**  
**Chairman**

**The Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Washington, D.C.

**FALEOMAVAEGA CALLS ON ADMINISTRATION TO  
IMPLEMENT "SMART POWER" IN PACIFIC ISLANDS**

The Chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, Rep. Eni Faleomavaega, followed up on his April 22, 2009 dialogue with Secretary of State Clinton by urging her to implement the Obama Administration's concept of "smart power" with the Pacific Island nations of Oceania.

"We are long overdue: the United States needs to step up – independent of Australia and New Zealand – and construct the sort of 'smart power' policies toward the Pacific Island nations that Hillary Clinton's team is implementing around the globe," said Faleomavaega.

"Unfortunately, the State Department seems to be neglecting Oceania. Just last week, for example, we learned that Administration's proposed budget for FY2010 does not provide any funding for USAID programs in the region. And we continue to make the mistake of deferring

to the Australian and New Zealanders on the Pacific Islands even though their inept policies and heavy-handed actions have put American interests at risk. We all remember how George W. Bush liked to talk about Australia's former Prime Minister as his 'deputy sheriff' in the region."

"We must begin with more active, direct and sustained engagement. We need to make it absolutely clear that the United States considers these nations important enough that we will chart our own course instead of outsourcing our policymaking to Canberra and Wellington. It's just common sense, for instance, to have a USAID presence in the region. If we committed even a tiny fraction more of our budget to the Pacific Islands, we could make a real difference in generating sustainable economic growth, strengthening democratic institutions and addressing the challenges of climate change," Faleomavaega said.

"Exchanges are especially important. At a person-to-person level we should increase the numbers of Peace Corps volunteers, Fulbright Scholars and U.S.-South Pacific Scholars. And I strongly believe that we need to hold a Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders – hopefully this year, right here in Washington – so that the President and senior-level officials can meet with the Pacific Islands' heads of state and government. Currently, Japan, France and the People's Republic of China all accord Pacific Island nation leaders that sort of opportunity to meet with top government officials."

"I note with interest that at a recent press conference with foreign journalists, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton responded to a question of whether Canberra will now have to carry the burden to deal more with China since there seems to be a decline of U.S. influence in the Pacific region. As she said, 'The fact that a country like China is becoming more successful or Indonesia is now a very successful democracy, we see that as to the good for the entire Pacific region. But we also are sending a clear message that the United States will be engaged. We are a trans-Pacific power as well as a trans-Atlantic power.' With that clear statement, it is my sincere hope that the United States will pay more attention not only to the current crisis in Fiji, but to the needs of all the Pacific Island nations," Faleomavaega concluded.

-- End --