

## Media Release

# African diplomats take home 'invaluable' skills from Australian leadership experts

(Sydney – 15 November 2011) – Mauritian diplomat Parasram Gopaul said he learnt invaluable leadership skills as well as new perspectives on climate change, food security and development affecting Africa and the world after attending the Diplomatic Training for African Diplomats program in Australia.

Mr Gopaul is one of 12 diplomats from nine different African nations taking part in the seven-week diplomacy course in Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney as part of the Federal Government's Australia Awards for Africa program. The course is a collaboration between the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy of the Australian National University, GRM international development management company and AusAID. LIW Global Leadership consulting is implementing the Sydney stage of the program.

The program was an opportunity to learn first hand about the Australian foreign policy and how Australia views the African continent, according to Mr Gopaul, and included a 'take home' project where he was able to identify key aspects from the course that he could implement in his workplace.

"Each day we had to fill in work diaries that addressed the issues for my country, the lessons I learnt to help address those issues, the challenges and opportunities for my country, and my preliminary thoughts on how to deal with this issue when I return home," Mr Gopaul said.

"At the end of the week, I had to assess how the topics of the course related to my country, what I thought my role would be in addressing a particular topic, and finally, where and how I could promote change in my department back home to better meet the issues and concerns raised, including leadership and change."

According to the program coordinator, ANU's Dr Mathew Davies, at the heart of the course lies a commitment to enhancing not only the knowledge and skills of the participants, but also their ability to more effectively work for their national governments.

Dr Davies said the course fulfils three education purposes:

- The provision of general information about international politics including aspects such as international law, the history of international relations, and the history of diplomacy;
- The discussion of specific African needs and situations to include issues such as old and new security threats, human rights, resource diplomacy; and
- The direct learning of skills to enhance the ability of participants to serve their national governments, including working abroad, engaging in diplomatic activities, writing reports and issues such as e-diplomacy and diplomatic security.

“Each diplomat plans their ‘take home’ project through identifying the particular issues in their own career/work that relate to the course they are undertaking. The skills and thinking they develop, particularly with the leadership program through LIW, will help them to identify networks, opportunities and obstacles to help the diplomats form an ‘action plan’ on how to develop their projects in their particular workplace,” Dr Davies said.

The seven-week short course is split into three parts: the use of English in a diplomatic setting; exercises dedicated to a specific theme (led by ANU, representatives from the University of Pretoria (South Africa), the African diplomatic community and relevant business and government agencies such as AusAID, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as well as the Australian African Business Council); and workshops in Melbourne, Perth and Sydney including the LIW leadership program.

Each year diplomats from various regions including the Asia Pacific, South America, the Caribbean and Africa study issues relating to diplomacy, in either the short course or as postgraduate degree students. Through Australia Awards for Africa, the Australian government is currently supporting 400 African awardees to participate in both long term and short term awards focussed on supporting African nations make positive steps to meeting their commitments to the Millennium Development Goals.

**For interviews with African diplomats Parasram Gopaul (Mauritius) or Phoebe Alozie (Nigeria), ANU’s Dr Mathew Davies or LIW’s CEO Pia Lee, or for more information about the program contact Karin Krueger, KDK Media (02) 9979 3718 or 0419 991 267 or [karin@kdkmedia.com.au](mailto:karin@kdkmedia.com.au)**

### **The Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy**

The Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy was established by the Australian National University in conjunction with the Federal Government to foster high-level education, research and dialogue. The short course “Diplomatic Training for African Diplomats” is managed by Dr Mathew Davies, the Project Coordinator of the African Diplomatic Training Program organised by the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy.

### **AusAID**

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is the Australian Government agency responsible for implementing the overseas aid program. Under Australia Awards, AusAID provides both long-term Development Awards (Australian Development Scholarships and Australian Regional Development Scholarships) and short-term Development Awards (Australian Leadership Awards Fellowships and Short Course Awards) to more than 100 developing countries. Australia Awards were established by the Federal Government to promote knowledge, education links and enduring ties between Australia, our neighbours and the global community.

### **GRM**

GRM is an international development management company providing services including project planning, design, feasibility studies and project management. GRM manages in excess of 700 projects in more than 120 countries for private, government, bilateral and multilateral clients.

### **LIW**

LIW is a global leadership consultancy which supports companies, countries and communities to achieve success by building leadership at all levels. The consultancy’s Organisational Leadership Architecture™ (OLA) approach has been developed and refined from research and 15 years’ experience of working with leading industry and government clients. LIW provides leadership programs for a number of African countries and recently addressed the Parliamentary Inquiry into business relations with Africa.