marchers wanted Parliament to direct the minister to have those funds paid directly to small businesses through the Development Bank. The marchers held placards and signs saying to the minister, “Give us our money, $400,000. Do not speak about God for you are a liar” (my translation). As a result of this protest, the minister reluctantly released A$100,000 to the Development Bank to provide businesses with loans. It was a gesture intended to ensure silence. The Chamber of Commerce members were far from happy, as they saw no reason why the minister should withhold any portion of the funds.

For some, the future of Tuvalu looks bleak. Many hearken back to the days when Tuvalu was able to secure its independence, repeal its first constitution drafted by the colonial office in London, produce a new constitution more relevant to its needs and changing conditions, and establish a trust fund that became a model for other small nations.

TAUAASA TAAFAKI

This review covers a two-year period from mid-2004 to mid-2006. It benefited enormously from the comments of an external reviewer who remains anonymous. However, the views expressed here are my own and any errors or omissions are entirely my responsibility.

WALLIS AND FUTUNA

The “non-event” of the year was the follow-up to the customary law crisis, as reformers have decided to abandon efforts to crown a new Lavelua (paramount chief, or king, of Wallis), thereby allowing Lavelua Tomasi Kulimoetoke to regain his throne. Procedures for dismissing a Lavelua do exist, but they have always involved, to a greater or lesser extent, both discussion among the families with titles and the use of violence. This is the first time in the history of Wallis that a Lavelua has held the title continuously for 46 years. The average length of reign from 1869–1959 was 5.6 years.

This exceptional longevity is primarily due to the political adroitness of the current Lavelua, who has been able to keep his throne despite the existence of other candidates from various royal families, and has also been able to maintain the important role of customary law while administrative and political power increased. His longevity has also been favored by higher-level administrators, who would like to see a strong power emerge. Members of the Lavelua’s close family, the people actually running the Grande Chefferie (the customary government), have also encouraged his continuation in office, as the eighty-six-year-old Lavelua has not expressed himself in public for several years. It would seem that the Kulimoetoke family cannot imagine the idea of abandoning all the material advantages associated with ruling, even though the position has never been hereditary (Angleviel 2005, 2006).

During a television news broadcast on rfo-Wallis on 14 June 2005, the Lavelua’s prime minister called for a demonstration of support for the former Grande Chefferie in front of the royal palace. One hundred fifty peo-
ple showed up the next day and went to the fale fono (meeting house) at Mata Utu, Wallis’s main center, to prevent the swearing in of three members of the new customary government advisory board (fau). A former customary law minister, Sanele Tavale (of the Reform Party) was seriously injured during the incidents that followed. The ceremony was postponed until the afternoon, and Clovis Logologofalau was crowned as the new Kivalu (prime minister) in the presence of the bishop and Senator Robert Laufaoua. On 17 June, the reformers crowned a new Kulitea (minister of justice and culture) while the king’s supporters (in Sagato Soane) installed another Kulitea. The same day, during the television news, Gaston Lutui, one of the leaders of the Wallisian department, criticized the prefect (Wallis and Futuna High Commissioner Christian Job) for diverting the pay from the Lavelua’s customary government to the reformers’ ministers, and demanded Job’s resignation. On 20 June the prefect announced a one-month suspension for Lutui. Lutui then told the prefect, “You are going to tremble.” Tension grew over the following weeks between the supporters of the former Chefferie and those supporting change.

The reformers, feeling that RFO-Wallis was clearly leaning in favor of the former Grande Chefferie and that the large Wallisian community in New Caledonia had been misinformed, went to Nouméa for a press conference on 9 September 2005. The delegation included, among others, Clovis Logologofalau (the new Kivalu), the Kulitea Nivaleto Pooï Taputai, and two Faipule (head district chiefs), Mikaele Halagahu and Pelenato Sione. At the press conference they announced that a new Lavelua recognized by the prefecture would be crowned on 25 September. The new ruler they designated was Ahu Hiasinoto, former Faipule of the district of Hihifo.

On 25 September, despite the presence of nearly one hundred twenty policemen, the old king’s loyal supporters put roadblocks in place, and some of the demonstrators had long-distance weapons and sticks of dynamite. The former Lavelua’s supporters also occupied Hihifo International Airport. The ceremony was postponed again and the government sent a mediator over from Nouméa. On 26 September, New Caledonia Secretary-General Louis Le Franc agreed to the main demands made by the former Chefferie, which regained its legitimacy, authority, and allocations. The local newspaper *Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes* observed that “the show of strength that has been going on since last Thursday obviously worked for the conservatives, while the reformers, armed only with pens, seemed isolated and weaker yesterday” (*LNC*, 27 Sept 2005). The second phase of the crisis was therefore an unexpected return to the initial situation following a political decision made by the government.

At the same time, most of the customary law delegates representing Wallisian customary law in New Caledonia took the side of the former Lavelua. They went to Wallis as a delegation around mid-September to confirm their loyalty to Tomasi Kulimoetoke. The head of this delegation,
Aloisio Sako, designated Faipule for Hihifo and president of the independent political party called Rassemblement Démocratique Océanien, declared that the rumors circulating about the Lavelua having pro-independence ideas were false and that the real problem was that the office of the Lavelua was the depository for property taxes.

On 22 September, there was a demonstration in Nouméa on the request of the designated leaders, gathering six hundred Wallisians in support of the former Lavelua, as they believed that the government wanted to change the 1961 statute by putting the reformers in power. The conservatives consider this statute to be the “most advantageous out of all the French overseas territories guaranteeing free health care, free medicine, no taxes, etc” (LNC, 22 Sept 2005). The prefect immediately published a declaration indicating that no project was currently under consideration to reform the statute.

A committee was set up in Nouméa on 6 September under the leadership of Sosefo Polelei to discuss and provide information on traditional customs. The people under him refused to get involved in the debate, feeling that they needed to clarify the situation in terms of customary law regulations as well as define the relationship between customary law and republican law. Then there is the Fa’u Fenua Association (“Build Our Country”), which believes that this is a domestic issue for Wallis. This group of young intellectuals further believes that the customary law leaders who organized the demonstration before going to Wallis to support the former Lavelua’s party “sparked the rivalries in the community and sowed discord between the families” (LNC, 23 Sept 2005).

On 6 October, the reform Kivalu sent a letter to the president of France saying that a “small number of the current Lavelua’s supporters, thirsting for power and over-armed, had been terrorizing the Wallisian population of which a majority of the expatriate families were subject to xenophobic attitudes on a daily basis.”

On 10 October, reformer Sosefo Tagatamagoni was speaking with other young people in the village of Vaitupu when Casimilio, a supporter of the Lavelua on his way home from a party, took him aside. The young reformer had his back to Casimilio when he received the first saber blow and was lying on the ground when a second blow struck his head. The young man died the next day and his family refused the customary law pardon, demanding that this criminal matter be judged by Western law. Because of the unstable situation in Wallis, the accused was then transferred to New Caledonia where he will appear before the court in Nouméa.

Following this death, several reformers chose to exile themselves voluntarily to New Caledonia. Reform Kivalu Clovis Logologofolau stated on 17 October that “the prefect of Wallis just told me again that he wasn’t able to ensure my safety in my own country . . . the Government took a step back to avoid carnage, ok. However this continuing attitude is the same as not providing assistance to people in danger.” This marked the beginning of the third phase of the crisis, and no one knows whether the situation will
continue to deteriorate, or if those supporting dismissal of the current Lavelua are just going to wait for his death. Whatever happens, this customary law crisis has had a clearly negative effect on how Wallisians (and Futunians) perceive the customary government and the government of France.

On the political front, the French government appointed former Territorial Assembly President Patalione Kanimoa (of the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire [UMP]) to the position of economic and social adviser. In February 2005 the Territorial Assembly presidency had changed from UMP to an alliance between the Union Pour la Democratie Francaise (UDF) and local leftists. The new assembly president, Albert (Apeleto) Likuvalu, is a history professor.

On the cultural front, Saatula, the customary law minister from Malae (Alo, Futuna) has been designated president of the International Board of Folklore Festivals and Traditional Art Organizations for the South Pacific. On 14 July, the French warship Jacques Cartier was present in Wallis to participate in Bastille Day events. Five sailors, including two Wallisians, received medals for national defense after a mass celebrated by the bishop of the archipelago.

Relations between Futuna and the rest of the world are still difficult, as usual. In mid-February the Jacques Cartier went to Futuna to cover the absence of the twin otter air service for three weeks due to bad weather. The beginning of the school term was postponed for a week. Both kings of Futuna went to Paris between 13 and 19 March, accompanied by Deputy Victor Brial. They met with the minister of foreign affairs and French President Jacques Chirac. The kings requested more autonomy in their relationship with Wallis, which was granted because each kingdom will soon have its own sub-prefect and general administration. Both kings were given a royal kava ceremony when they stopped in Nouméa—the king of Sigave (Visesio Moeliku) on 11 March, and the king of Alo (Soane Patita Maituku) on 12 March. In terms of gifts (katoaga), they received more than fifty pigs.

In other news, a teacher from France was attacked on 22 June 2006 by a hitchhiker, who first punched her and then hit her with a hammer. She managed to escape and run to a police station. The person guilty of this sinister sexual attack was transferred to the New Caledonian Penitentiary.

There is still a very large Wallisian and Futunian community in New Caledonia, making up 10 percent of the population there. Each year a traditional dance competition is organized on 14 July, which is both French independence day and the anniversary of the 1961 establishment of overseas territory status for Wallis and Futuna. The Wallisian and Futunian youth organization gathers over forty dance groups and more than six thousand visitors attend the event.

The victims of Ave Maria continue to demand compensation for their expulsion from Saint-Louis between 2001 and 2003. Out of the 171 families expelled, 49 are still waiting for the possibility of buying a home. On 17 December 2005, the Southern Province of New Caledonia gave five million Pacific francs to each of the
families concerned. The president of the association for Saint-Louis and Ave Maria victims expressed the view that “we absolutely have to avoid regrouping everyone by community. We live in a multi-ethnic country and we mustn’t recreate a new Ave Maria” (LNC, 13 July 2006).

On 14 September 2005, eighty-five-year-old Pere Sagato Iau, chaplain for the Wallisian and Futunian community, was made a knight in the Legion of Honor. On 10 December, Cyprien Setiano, a Futunian born in Koné, was ordained a priest by the archbishop of New Caledonia in the Cathedral of Nouméa. He has been assigned to the Bon-Pasteur parish in Vallee-du-Tir (Nouméa).

In science, a research group from the University of New Caledonia studied the “Dynamics of sea cucumber (Holothuria) populations” in July 2005.

In sports, the new Wallis Hihifo Golf Association course, currently offering nine holes, received the sponsorship of the Dumbea City Golf Association on 19 July 2005. Wallisian Laurent Simutoga, who plays post for the team Stade Calédonien (rugby) and is former captain of the territorial cadet team, began studying at Lindisfarne College in Hasting (New Zealand) in February 2005. Two other Caledonians joined him in February 2006, Wallisian Claude Ikauno and European Florian Attenoux.

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