
Forum

Open letter to Laisa Taga

I WOULD like to raise some issues in response to your editorial in the May 2002 issue of *Pacific/Islands Business*, in particular with reference to your comment about UNICEF's "choice" of media to attend the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children in New York.

First, and most importantly, UNICEF did not invite a particular individual to cover the New York event, as you imply. UNICEF invited the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association (PIBA) to cover the event, because we have been working closely with UNICEF over many months in its campaigns for children.

Secondly, the journalist sent by PIBA to New York is not Australian. He is a volunteer of UK nationality employed by PIBA for the Pacific News Service PACNEWS on the same wages and under the same conditions as local employees.

Your arguments, as well as being factually incorrect, are disturbing. PIBA does not conduct its operations on racial terms. Our three full-time journalists are selected for assignments according to availability, not ethnic background, and your repetitive pre-

occupation with race is unbecoming for a senior representative of the Pacific media.

It is also unsettling that, in this instance, you already knew the facts, as frequent visitor to and friend of PIBA, but chose to discard those that were inconvenient for your argument.

Might I also add that you and the organisations you represent have been the beneficiaries of Australian development funds, such as the AusAID Pacific Media Initiative (PMI) on many occasions and your attack on the investments the Australian Broadcasting Corporation has made in Pacific media are outlandish and hypocritical.

Radio Australia employs many Pacific Islander journalists to cover the region and is currently attempting to hire a Fijian national (that's Fijian national, not racial) to cover Fijian affairs.

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