

## **Regaining Paradise Lost**

Dr. Caleb Tyn. O. Otto

### **Abstract**

The Pacific Islands have gained notoriety, collectively as Paradise, by authors such as James Michener, Jared Diamond and others. This is due to the captivating natural beauty of the islands as well as their inhabitants, once exotic in their healthy characteristics. However, not all is well in Paradise anymore, especially since many of the free-spirited inhabitants of these Paradise islands have become slaves to the addictive power of tobacco - a new form of tyranny that is extremely devastating to individuals, families and communities. The ill health and economic ruins by this useless, deadly trade commodity has been catastrophic to national budgets and overall development of every single one of these Paradise nations – from large Australia and Papua New Guinea to small Tuvalu and Palau, and all others in between. This presentation will give data that indicate the extent of problems posed by tobacco use in this region, particularly among the Pacific island nations. But, Paradise can still be regained because a vision now exists for a tobacco-free Pacific region. Our conference is evidence of this vision. More evidence is also becoming available which indicates that these nations are rising to the challenge to regain their freedom and beauty. The evidence that gives hope to achieving the reality of a tobacco-free Pacific island region includes the activities involving the FCTC, from development to implementation. In addition, encouraging examples can be seen from activities in Australia, New Zealand and many of the smaller island nations, including Palau, that indicate progress towards a healthier region. The presentation will pay tribute to some of the success stories as well as underscore some of the ongoing challenges that stand in the way of “regaining our Paradise lost”.