Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I also commend

our distinguished Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa,

Global Human Rights and International Operations, the gentleman

from New Jersey, Mr. Smith. Thank you both, gentlemen, for your

initiative and leadership in calling this hearing this afternoon. I

am also happy to have our Ranking Member, my good friend from

New Jersey, Mr. Payne, here with us.

Mr. Chairman, not taking in any way from the spirit of our hearing

this afternoon, it is not very often that we have leaders from

the Pacific all the way to Washington, DC, and I am very honored

to recognize a gentleman and certainly a brother to me, the newlyelected

President of French Polynesia who is in New York City, but

is traveling here to meet with some of our officials here in Washington,

DC, the Honorable Oscar Manutahi Temaru.

So if there is any Member of the Committee

that wishes to go to Bora Bora or to Tahiti, please see me, and we

will be more than happy to make the accommodations.

I certainly want to commend my good friend from New Jersey

and Mr. Smith without question. The years that I have served on

this Committee, Mr. Chairman, not only as a true champion of

human rights, but I am thinking that not only should we call this

the North Korean Human Rights Act, I would like to propose that

we have a West Papua, New Guinea Human Rights Act also under

the same vein because of problems that we are faced with in that

part of the world.

I am pleased, Mr. Chairman, that we are holding this joint hearing

to discuss the implementation of the North Korean Human

Rights Act of 2004. Human rights and humanitarian conditions

faced by North Koreans are among the most dire in the world.

Since the collapse of the centralized agricultural system in the

1990s, it is estimated that more than 2 million North Koreans have

died of starvation. In 2002, a United Nations nutritional survey estimated

that 40 percent of North Korean children are chronically

malnourished.

Since 1995, the United States has provided more than 2 million

metric tons of food assistance inside North Korea, primarily

through the World Food Program. However, according to USAID,

the North Korean Government’s refusal to meet international

standards for monitoring makes it difficult to determine how much

food aid is reaching intended beneficiaries.

We are also concerned, Mr. Chairman, about North Koreans living

outside of North Korea. Some are hiding in China, and contrary

to its obligations under the U.N. Refugee Convention, China forcibly

returns North Koreans to North Korea where they face impris-

onment and torture. Inside China, North Korean women and girls

are vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation.

South Korea has accepted more than 4,000 North Koreans for resettlement,

but North Koreans are complaining of social discrimination,

and it may be that South Korea’s welcoming mat is wearing

thin. In response to these conditions, the 108th Congress passed

the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, and that has been

the subject of intense press interest, at least from the media.

The act directs the Secretary of State to facilitate the submission

of United States refugee applications by North Koreans and this

has been problematic.

The act also requires the State Department to report to Congress

regarding certain aspects of the act. While State Department reporting

has been helpful, it has also been incomplete or tardy, and

I am also hopeful that in our discussions today we will be able to

determine how we can better implement this historical important

act; in other words, Mr. Chairman, how we could put more teeth

in the act and make it really produce some good results?

I welcome our witnesses this afternoon and look forward to their

testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.