



THIRD REPORT of 2011 and FINAL REPORT of PROJECT PHASE 2

Solomon Islands National Parliamentary Strengthening Project Phase 2: 2008 - 2012

October 2011 – March 2012



Project ID:	00053845
Duration:	<u>April 2008 – March 2012</u>
CPAP Outcome:	SI demonstrates and upholds Forum principles of good leadership and accountability; SI is aware of and protects human rights and makes available mechanisms to claim them.
Total Budget:	US\$ 1,909,434
RAMSI/AusAID:	US\$ 1,509,434
UNDP:	US\$ 400,000
Total Received:	US\$ 1,909,434

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 3
Key Points Update - Project Objectives	Page 5
Conclusions and recommendations summary	Page 35

Annexes

1. *Finance Report: 2nd Phase Parliamentary Strengthening Project at 31: December: 2011*
2. *National Parliament of Solomon Islands Corporate Work Plan 2012*
3. *National Parliament of Solomon Islands Annual Strategy Cycle*
4. *UNDP/NPO 3rd Phase Parliamentary Strengthening Project Document, 2012-2016*
5. *PSP Project Activity: October 2011 – February 2012*
6. *PSP Annual Work Plan January – March 2012*
7. *NPSI Review of Library Services: October 2011*
8. *NPSI Press Notices 09: September: 2011- 05: March: 2012*
9. *Minute of Project Oversight Committee Meeting: 05: March: 2012*
10. *NPO/Project/UNDP: Contact information*

Introduction by the Speaker of the National Parliament

THIS is the second and last of 2 supplementary *Reports* for 2011 following the *Parliamentary Strengthening Project Report for 2011* which issued in June, and the first supplementary *Report* in October. The present *Report* brings the story up to March 2012 when the 2nd Phase of the Parliamentary Strengthening Project, which began in 2008, ends.¹ It is therefore also the final record of that Phase which has seen significant progress: the continued recruitment of an exceptional cadre of Secretariat and Hansard staff; a surge in select committee activity; a 3rd *Phase Project Document* agreed with funding offered by RAMSI and UNDP; and a *Parliament Strategy* which provides us with a compass until 2016 at least, to name but three.

Happily, therefore, it is not the Project's final word as the 3rd Phase will follow on directly from 1 April and is scheduled to last until 31 March 2015. With that in mind, a small number of recommendations are made here which should be implemented.

I say 'happily' advisedly. The aim of every such project should be eventual extinction with its task of assisting the development of intrinsic institutional and human capacities complete, and with a healthy organisation left behind. But this must take place at the appropriate time. While the last 2 *Reports* and their predecessors recorded substantial progress, my judgement, and that of my colleagues on the Project Oversight Committee, was that sustaining support for a further period would increase the likelihood that progress to date would be consolidated and further strides made.

This was particularly so as 2011 has seen the beginning of the *Parliament Strategy 2012-2016* roll-out with a considerable amount of structured and phased work both underway and in prospect, not to mention new work and organisational processes which the National Parliament Office (NPO) team is already coming to terms with under the Clerk's inspired leadership.

The new Phase is designed to help ensure that the objectives set out in Parliament's first *Strategy* period to 2016 are achieved and past progress consolidated.

Having agreed to a 3rd Phase, we have been careful to agree a project modality for it which marks a real departure from the past and signals the progress in building capacity which has already been achieved. Whereas the two previous project phases relied heavily on the operational capacity of the UNDP locally for finance and procurement particularly, in the 3rd Phase the NPO will be challenged to operate in these crucial areas with progressively less day to day UNDP support. I am confident that it will be up to the task, and of course our UNDP colleagues will continue be available for advice. In addition, the project management of the phase is being

¹ The Project will issue a brief *Note* in April setting out the financial and delivery position as at 31 March 2012.

patriated and one of our many talented young Solomon Islanders will be given the responsibility to take the Project forward.

I mentioned in my introduction to the October supplementary *Report* the 3 conditions for future success in enabling the NPO to become a progressively more robust and powerful support engine for Parliament and Members, namely:

- Good management practices embedded
- Uniformity of good service across all NPO units achieved
- A tough and challenging working environment established in which talented individuals are able to flourish and learn to accept and handle progressively increased responsibility.

I believe that what the Project has helped us do over the past year has made the fulfilment of those conditions increasingly realistic. Incorporating change and driving up standards in the provision of Members' services, which is the ultimate aim of the *Strategy*, is not a simple task. With the assistance of the new management tools provided within the *Strategy Cycle* however I am confident that Parliament is on the right path.

We are grateful to those to those who have supported the Project in 2011 and have also provided support for its new phase. Their generously offered resources match our challenging vision for an increasingly functional and relevant Parliament in the Solomon Islands for the 21st century. We therefore thank the management and staff of RAMSI and the UNDP; the Solomon Islands Government; other stakeholders; members of the PSP Project Oversight Committee; and in particular the Members and staff of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands, for their highly valued continuing commitment.

Sir Allan Kemakeza KBE
Speaker of the National Parliament and National Project Director

Taeasi Sanga
Clerk to Parliament

John Patterson
Project Manager and Chief Technical Advisor

Key Points Update

Objective 1: Effective project management, monitoring, evaluation

Overview

- **Inter-project phase transition work to prepare for the 3rd Phase starting on 1 April and Strategy related activity has continued to predominate.**
- **PSP Project Oversight Committee was briefed on the January-March 2012 Project Work Plan on 5 March.**

Detail

National Parliament of Solomon Islands Strategic Plan and Implementation Road Map, 2012 – 2016

The October *Report* provided detail on the National *Parliament of Solomon Islands Strategic Plan and Implementation Road Map, 2012 – 2016* and the *UNDP/NPO 3rd Phase Parliamentary Strengthening Project, 2012-15* and there is no need to repeat that here. The documents were circulated in final form as attachments to that *Report*. For convenience, the latter is again appended to this *Report*. The section on **Objective 5** below provides an update covering the *Strategy*.

UNDP/NPO 3rd Phase Parliamentary Strengthening Project Document, 2012-2015- Strengthening the National Parliament of Solomon Islands: update

Briefly, *Phase's 3* outcome is clustered around 3 activity streams:

- **Modernising Parliament and Empowering Staff**
- **Support to Parliament's core business: legislation and oversight**
- **Presenting Parliament to the Nation and the World**

As the October *Report* set out:

‘The aims of the 3rd *Phase Project 2012-15* complement that strategic approach by envisioning gradually reducing embedded Project support over the period to 2015; a nationalisation of the management of the Project; and a renewed focus on MPs capacity

building activities, parliamentary outreach, and gender development leadership in Parliament.’

So far as the 3rd Phase is concerned, the ‘Cost Sharing Agreement’ between UNDP and RAMSI for the new Phase has been signed. On 5 March, the PSP **Project Oversight Committee** met and agreed formally to the new arrangements as set out in the project document (*attached*).

Work is underway by UNDP on the audit (Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers - HACT) which is a prerequisite to determining the precise level of National Implementation Modality (NIM) which will be applied in the new Phase. Also underway is work to recruit a national Project Manager, the first; and an international Senior Parliamentary Advisor on a contract basis for 150 days in 2012. These tasks need to be completed swiftly in order to meet the deadline of 1 April.

The PM/CTA facilitated a workshop for senior staff on the 3rd Phase on 19 March.

Advice to the Speaker and NPO

Over the past year the Project, in collaboration with the Office of the Clerk, has offered the Speaker and the NPO significant advice on a range of topics, including:

- **Creation of a NPSI Development Centre**
Set up from March 2012
- **Operational and management improvements in Hansard**
Hansard Review recommendations rolled out from May 2011
- **Parliament Strategy, related Annual Strategy Cycle and establishing a ‘Strategy Support Group’**
Drafted May 2011, agreed by Parliament August 2011, operational January 2012
- **Departmental Annual Work Plans**
Drafted from October 2011; complete
- **ICT Policy**
Drafted February 2012
- **NPSI Communications Strategy (Media Policy)**
Draft November 2011; currently under revision

- **Reshaping and modernising the Parliament Library**
In progress March 2012; relocate to new MPs Building August 2012
- **Constitutional reform referral**
*Referred by Hon Speaker to **Constitution Review Committee** late February 2012*
- **‘Administrative autonomy’ for Parliament, and related meetings with the Prime Minister’s Office**
Monthly meetings held from February 2012
- **3rd Phase project documentation and funding**
Documentation and funding in place 5 March 2012
- **Transfer of UNDP staff to SIG**
Agreed, Appropriation Act 2012
- **Creation of a ‘Young Women’s Parliamentary Group’ as a spearhead for NPSI gender activity**
Group set up August 2011
- **Establishing a ‘Speakers’ Press Conference’**
2 held to date
- **Restructuring of the NPO Management Structure (MG and EG)²**
Restructuring complete from March 2011
- **5 NPO support committees established to promote key areas of institutional strengthening growth (ICT, Hansard, Security, Library, and New Buildings)**
From February 2011
- **IPU membership**
Foreign Relations Committee agreed in principle late 2011
- **Increased collaboration with the Regional partners: NSW Parliament Twinning program, New Zealand Parliament, CDI, Canberra, CPA (Australia) and CPA (UK)**
Hansard, Library, Procedures, Civic Education, ICT staff capacity enhanced from February 2011

² See **Objective 5** below

➤ **Modern management of business processes (business cases) and creation of management information**

BC templates circulated late 2011; currently a number of BC cases in development or completed

Further output comment

- All key documents for the new Project Phase have been shared with the NSW Parliament Twinning program in order to lay a sound basis for future discussion on complementary working.
- The current PM/CTA will depart on 22 March at the end of his contract extension period. David Kusilifu, Director – Committees, will be responsible for project continuity until the appointment of a national PM.
- Monthly project ‘sitreps’ have continued over the reporting period informing all key stakeholders of the current project status.³ A number of *ad hoc* reports have been produced as requested by RAMSI and UNDP. This *Report* completes the suit of documents required under the 2nd *Phase Project Document*.

Staff

Any project is defined by its staff. The following have been with the PSP over the course of the last year and each has contributed significantly to the success of the Project and the NPO:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ➤ Lloyd Bera | Graduate Accountant |
| ➤ Sunjay Dhari | ICT Officer |
| ➤ Jefferson Hallu | Committee Secretary and Legal Officer |
| ➤ Albert Kabui | Constitutional, Parliamentary Law, Practice Legal Specialist |
| ➤ Joycelyn Kilua | Corporate Support Officer |
| ➤ Patteson Lusi | Public Outreach and Civic Education Officer |
| ➤ John Niuman | Administrative and Procurement Officer |
| ➤ Wilson Orisi | Committee Secretary and Legal Officer |
| ➤ Marisa Pepa | Public Outreach and Civic Education Officer |
| ➤ Joy Rikimae | Hansard Reporter (2011); NPSI Media Officer (2012) |
| ➤ Lisi Chelsea Vave | Human Resources and Strategy Support Manager |
| ➤ Jasmine Waleafea | Hansard Reporter |

³ Since January 2012 produced by the NPO Committee Secretariat

The Project team was fully integrated into the NPO and worked alongside their SIG/NPO colleagues interchangeably.

Finally, two project posts are unfilled (one Hansard Reporter and the Human Resource and Strategy Support Manager post filled by Ian Rakafia from NPO/ SIG in February).

UNDP to SIG transfer

SIG has agreed that all 14 UNDP project staff posts should transfer from UNDP to government service from 1 April, an enormous achievement. The process of transfer is being managed by the NPO HR function in conjunction with the UNDP PM/CTA. Inevitably, the process of transferring staff from one establishments system to another is detailed but it is anticipated that satisfactory arrangements will be made in all cases. From 1 April, the only staff member scheduled to be donor funded will be the national Project Manager (to be recruited by UNDP).

Conclusion

In circumstances in which staff morale could have been at risk, it has overall been high. This is in part as a result of the successful transfer of staff to SIG. But the sharpening of focus provided to the work not only of the UNDP team and NPO as a whole by the *Parliament Strategy* along with the impact of the rolling out of *the Corporate Work Plan* and departmental plans giving it practical effect have been positive.

Objective 2: Strengthened procedural support services

Overview

- A ‘National Parliament of Solomon Islands Development Centre’ was approved by the Speaker in late February.
- Procedural services were fully deployed in the period of the 3rd Meeting of the 9th Parliament (House rose 14 February after 43 sitting days).
- 5 Bills passed into law.

Detail

Development Centre

The thrust of the current 5 year *Parliament Strategy* is to enable Parliament to stand on its own feet with as little external assistance as possible. The design of the *PSP 3rd Phase (2012-15)* takes account of this: as on-site international assistance tapers down, Regional distance assistance is maintained, or (hopefully) increased.

In that context, it will be important to maximize arrangements for the self-generation of internal capacity within the NPO across all departments with external support selected carefully to stimulate yet further internal capacity and taking care not to repress it. The Centre will provide a focus for the deepening of governance knowledge and capacity within the Parliament. The Centre will:

- Provide the staff of the NPO and the Members with the opportunity to increase their knowledge of governance, particularly in relation to Solomon Islands,
- Bring together different parts of the SI governance structure to discuss matters of mutual interest, and
- Hear from a range of national and international experts as required.

The Centre will run a programme of seminars and workshops for staff of the NPO and Members and other governance partners such as SIG, SI Central Bank, Auditor General, Attorney General exploring topics in governance for the information of participants. It will be run under the auspices of the **NPO Management Group** chaired by the Speaker. Its first Director is Celsus Talifilu with Alice Willy in support and backed by an informal staff steering group. Meetings will be held from later in the year in Parliament House or the new MPs Building conference suite.

Autonomy

‘Administrative autonomy’ i.e. parliamentary self-government in terms of human resources, budget, and procurement, free of the SI government, is at the heart of the *Parliament Strategy* and this is required by 2016.

Autonomy over Parliament’s ‘core business’, as understood at Westminster was passed to the National Parliament of Solomon Islands by means of the instrument of Independence in 1978, later reaffirmed by the *Prescription of Parliamentary Privileges, Immunities and Powers Act 2007*, and is therefore currently already a feature of the *Solomon Islands Constitution*. The intention is that work to make those provisions fully transparent should be taken forward in the 2017 period onwards.

This leaves the way clear in the present *Strategy* period to pursue administrative autonomy, taking account of the limited resources available to the NPO. In pursuing this it will be vitally important to co-operate fully with the government. To that end a simple structure of groups has been proposed, based in Parliament, to ensure full participation of key stakeholders at both political and official level. This process will in practice be run from the Procedures Office of the NPO, and led by Albert Kabui, in close coordination with the Prime Minister’s Office and the HR office here.

The *Strategy* mandates a report by the Clerk and NPO to the Speaker on autonomy later in 2012. The report should cover *inter alia* whether primary legislation will be required to effect these administrative provisions.

Legislation

During the 3rd Meeting of the 9th Parliament the following Bills were passed into law:

- **Income Tax Amendment Act 2011**
- **Appropriation Act 2011**
- **Supplementary Appropriation Act 2011**
- **Passports Act 2012**
- **Immigration Act 2012**

Further output comment

- The *Speaker's Program* (the Speaker's script for sittings of Parliament) was produced successfully on all 43 sitting days.
- Significant procedural advice has been provided to the Speaker covering 12 issues over the reporting period including: vacations of seats, motions of no confidence, and parliamentary entitlement matters.
- *Speaker's Rulings* have been codified electronically for ease of access and reference.
- 1 Procedural Officer, Jean Resana, is taking a 3 month secondment from 5th March to the Procedures Office of the Legislative Council of the New South Wales Parliament. 2 Secretariat officers, Alice Willy and Jefferson Hallu, will attend a month long course in London from April on legislative drafting in the University of London.
- NPO Secretariat representatives were invited to the Central Province Assembly meeting held on 16th and 17th March to provide procedural assistance.
- Relatively little progress was made on the changes to *Standing Orders* in the reporting period and a proposal has been made for this work stream to be dealt in future by a **Special Standing Committee** and not the **House Committee**.
- Prorogation was considered briefly to close proceedings of the 3rd Meeting but the government did not proceed with it. Prorogation is mandated in the *SI Constitution* but has never occurred, adjournment *sine die* being preferred, presumably to avoid a firm date of recall. This however is poor practice and we recommend that the certainty of Parliament reassembling through the use of prorogation should be fought for as part of the work on developing the *NPO Parliamentary Calendar* which is proceeding well in talks with the Prime Minister's Office senior staff.

Conclusions

Success in nurturing the procedural work stream is vital if the NPSI is to develop as a mature legislature and instrument of government oversight. Success in administering the plenary sittings is a sound indication of the expertise of the staff. By that measure the 3rd Meeting was a success for the NPO procedures team.

The procedures team is scheduled to expand in the coming year, and the next phase of the Project and the *Strategy* both make procedural development one of the top priorities. Meanwhile the training planned for the immediate future will surely deepen and consolidate staff skills and ensure the acquisition of new expertise.

Objective 3: Strengthened committee services

Overview

- The meetings held in this reporting period have contributed to 2011/first Quarter of 2012 presenting the highest level of committee activity in Parliament since at least 2004.
- This good result masks persistent structural motivation and resource challenges which should be resolved if committee work is to develop exponentially.

Detail – meetings October 2011 – February 2012

Committee	Number of meetings ¹
Public Accounts	28
Foreign Relations	3
Parliamentary House	10
Bills and Legislation	8
Constitution Review	0
Police and National Security	0
Health and Medical Services	0
Education and Human Resources Training	0
Public Expenditure	0
Environment and Conservation	0
Total	49

Source: Emily Kupenga, NPO Secretariat: 02:03:2012

Analysis

Committee meetings were 59% down on the June – September total when there was 83 meetings; but were 11 % up on the January – June figure of 44.

Over the entire 2011 – first Quarter 2012 period, committees met 176 times, an increase of 83% over 2010 and a 27% increase over 2009 - until now the year with the highest number of committee meetings for 9 years.⁴ This positive statistical position covers a number of issues.

¹ 'Meetings' refers to all single meetings of a committee whether deliberative or public hearings

⁴ Draft 3rd Phase PSP Project Document 2012-15, excludes Special Standing Committees; First and Second PSP Project Triennial Reports, pp. 14 and 12 respectively. The present reporting period has been extended by 2 months so the comparison is not fully exact.

First, the good result over the year can be attributed substantially to the action of the **Public Accounts Committee**, not however in its essential work reviewing the *2012 Estimates* (which would happen normally) but in its ground breaking work following up actual expenditure on the *2011 Appropriations*. This increased the total of committee meetings substantially. The lesson is clear. A single active committee has the power to increase the total activity of this work stream significantly in addition to performing a purpose which is vital to parliamentary oversight of the government. We hope PAC will continue these inquiries.

This brings us to the remaining committees which may be divided into those which met and those which did not:

- **House, Foreign Relations, and Bills and Legislation** met. The **House Committee** performance was insufficient to make a dent on the *Standing Orders* reform (as noted in the previous section); the work of **Bills and Legislation** is essential to process the legislation and there is no option for it but to meet if the House is to proceed; and **Foreign Relations** met on 3 occasions, once to approve in principle recommending to the House that the NPSI becomes a member of the Inter Parliamentary Union. But it has yet to hold the 2 day workshop on international treaties reported first as being in the planning stage in June 2011. These 3 committees are well established and more might reasonably have been expected from **House** and **FRC**.
- The remaining committees failed to meet. **Police and National Security, Health and Medical Services Education, and Human Resources Training** were formed in the previous reporting period in 2011 (when **Police** met once). **Public Expenditure** and **Environment and Conservation** formed in the period covered by this *Report*. The remits of those committees require to be refined so that they can meet on their own initiative and not only at the government's behest.

Comment

Several negative factors combine to repress committee activity in the NPSI. A solution is to be found only in reversing all those negative factors together because no single improvement will be fully conclusive.

First, there is a lack of commitment on the part of some Members. In some cases, staff repeatedly arrange meetings, Chairs and Members then commit, only to cancel at short notice. This issue of commitment appears to reflect the activity and political priorities of some Members. The committees struggle to have a life apart from political rivalries, and even when a committee may meet more often than usual it is sometimes as a result of spasmodic political initiative rather than steady focus on the committee remit. **Until and unless the committee Chairs accept the need**

for firm committee programs and take steps to ensure these are in place and adhered to, then most NPSI committees will not reach their potential.

Second, the 5 new committees were set up on the initiative of the government. This represents a 100% increase in committees since June 2011. The Clerk and NPO stressed to the government the necessity of being granted resources to staff and operate the new committees. The government agreed but the full measure of resources have not yet been made available. **Until the government releases resources to staff the committees adequately then they will not function properly, or in some cases at all. This does not necessarily mean 1 Secretary for every committee. But the ratio of senior Secretaries to committees should be not less than 1.5:2. Given that the new committees were formed at the government's behest they should be properly staffed and resourced.**

Third, there is a structural factor at work in the NPO. Secretariat staff multi-task: they are legal advisors, proceduralists, as well as Committee secretaries. They often are asked to lead on parliamentary work outside their formal remit. This structure, while admirably flexible, is vulnerable to attention switching from a single focus e.g. committees, particularly when the Office is not adequately staffed. In a fully developed parliament committee work is onerous and full time. **If NPSI wishes to develop its committee system fully some Committee Secretaries at least will eventually need to be working on inquiries full time throughout the year.**

Fourth, even within the present constraints however it is probable that the Secretariat could succeed in pressing Chairs for some additional meetings, or in one or two cases any meetings at all. But our assessment is that this will be marginal until the resource issues above are tackled.

Committee Chairs Group

The CCG met on 3 occasions. The performance of the CCG has been modest though the meetings have worked well when held and the Group is a new one founded only in late 2011. Of course the CCG is itself an additional administrative burden on the overall quantum of Secretariat work, but this has not so far been offset by the potential advantages it can bring to supporting and organising committee work. More effort is required to ensure that this trade-off is achieved.

We have asked the CDI, Canberra to hold a 2 day workshop on committee work including program setting in order to encourage the CCG and through it the committees more widely. This event is now scheduled for May. That intervention, taken with the recent influx of new Chairs

and the stimulation of the recent visit some made to Canberra and Sydney, may assist this process of embedding the CCG.

Reports laid

- **Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Report into 2011 Budget Estimates**
- **PAC Report into 2010 Supplementary Appropriation 2011**
- **Bills and Legislation Committee Report on the Motion to amend the Standing Orders of the National Parliament to establish 3 Standing Committees**
- **PAC Report on the Mid-term performance review of the 2011 Appropriation Act**
- **Bills and Legislation Committee Report on the Customs valuation (Amendment) Bill 2011**
- **PAC Report into 2011 Supplementary Appropriation 2011**
- **Bills and Legislation Committee Report on the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2011**

Committee Guidebook

The NPO's first *Committee Guidebook*, which comprehensively covers the work of NPO committees and is designed as an aid to Chairs of committees, Members, and Secretaries equally, has been produced under Ian Rakafia's editorship. We recommend the *Committee Guidebook* is circulated to all Members and staff.

Constitution Review Committee inquiry

The **Constitution Review Committee** received a referral from the Speaker in February to hold an inquiry into the timing of a major review of the *SI Constitution*. This holds the potential to provide space for reflection on what adjustments could be made to enhance overall governance in SI for the 21st century and we hope it will be acted upon.

Conclusion

Select Committees in NPSI have the potential to make a highly significant positive impact on the overall governance of the country, particularly now there are sectoral committees. Whether the committees fully realise their potential depends on the challenges identified above being overcome.

Objective 4: Strengthened information services

Overview

- NPSI ‘Information Services’ covers 4 NPO Units: Hansard, Library, ICT, and Media. As noted in previous 2011 *Reports*, these Units have been relatively underdeveloped and progress has started from a lower base than in the Secretariat’s case.
- Given priority by the Project in 2011/12, all 4 Units have made significant progress in addressing the challenges faced. This has continued in the present reporting period as outlined below.

Detail

Hansard

In June and October, we reported on the progress made by the Hansard Unit, buttressed by the **Hansard Support Committee**, to implement the recommendations of the *Hansard Review* which reported in May 2011.

There is a rigorous monitoring system tracking Hansard’s progress in meeting the *Review* recommendations:

- Tough, regular (approximately 6/8 weekly) reviews by the PM/CTA and Director-Committees which involve 90 minutes formal investigation sessions of the Hansard management (Clara Pita and Liam Sau)
- the Hansard management meet the Clerk and Deputy monthly; and
- the department is also queried twice yearly by the **Strategy Support Unit** in formal sessions, as mandated in the *NPSI Strategy Support Cycle*, on its progress towards achieving the outputs set in the *NPSI Corporate Work Plan 2012*

The report of the last PM/CTA/Director monitoring session in January painted a mixed picture (*edited*):

‘Overall good or very good progress:

Staff/Structure/Management

- Editor/Deputy professional development (in place)

- Editor/Deputy acting as an integrated team
- Weekly staff meetings (actually happen daily when Parliament is sitting and once or twice a week when not)
- Monthly meetings of Editor/Deputy and Clerk and D/Clerk
- Hansard JDs and PDPs (all in place)
- Transcription and Editing Manuals (in place)

Production

- Benchmark/formula for segment production (5 minute segments taking an average of 50 minutes)
- Worksheet (we are assured that this is completed daily and on a shared drive for NPO management to see)
- Daily Part (produced)
- Overtime (now rare for this to be requested beyond 9 30/10 00 – but see ‘Resources’ below)
- Translation from pidgin
- Staff suggestions

Training and development

- In-house training and style coaching
- Computer/Administrative skills enhancements
- Training needs assessment (completed with HR)
- External mentor and Hansard are still firmly in touch

Areas requiring additional work:

- Resources 1: the number of parliamentary select committees has doubled in a year. If the new committees are active (and we are taking separate action to ensure this) and Hansard is to manage the consequent workload, then NPO and Hansard managements must discuss resource implications as a matter of priority at their next meeting.
- Resources 2: It is important that sensible and cost effective software enhancements should be identified and scoped in order to maintain as much resource resilience against what may be a work intensive period in the near future. Hansard and NPO managements need to focus on this as a priority.
- Backlog: Since September, 2 sets of deadlines have been missed for each of the 6 items of backlogged transcriptions, and it is clear that Hansard are struggling to reduce this. Having said that, the backlog work is of 2 sorts – printing and proofreading. The printing is hindered by the fact that Hansard is finding difficulty in applying the software printing solutions suggested to them (via NSW Parliament Twinning) and it should revisit these. Were the printing to be done the backlog would be reduced by 50%. Hansard and the PM should be in touch with NSW.’

The considerable operational improvements evident in the period since May 2011 should be highlighted, and these showed up in Hansard's work during the last Parliament Meeting where 'Hansard Daily Parts' were produced each day with relatively little, or no overtime required as a result of more efficient and effective working. This is a direct result of:

- Hansard's management's dedication and determination to implement sustainable improvements
- Sustained follow up by the *Review* team
- Structured internal support from the NPO and the Project,
- Successful on-going external mentoring arranged recommended by the *Review* and arranged through the Project by the Hansard Department of the New Zealand Parliament.

Progress to date will be sustained only if consolidated and extended. Action to meet the outcome of the last PM/CTA/Director review noted above is in hand. In particular, the backlog in producing bound volumes needs a sound technical solution to automate indexing processes. Hansard and the **Hansard Support Committee (chair: David Kusilifu)** are in touch with a NSW based company specialising in IT Hansard solutions to check if a suitable solution can be sourced. The department is exploring this using a business case formula in order to promote rigour in decision making,⁵ minimise business risk and build decision making capacity.

A successful business case was approved by the **Executive Group** in March for a photocopier to replace the redundant 10 year old copier currently used by Hansard. This will also assist in speeding operations.

Library

Of the Units contributing to Output 4, the Library has made the most noticeable progress in the reporting period.

- In June, the **Executive Group** called for a *Review* of the Library and this was completed in late October with the welcome and generous assistance of Deborah Brown, a senior member of the NSW Parliament Library staff who spent a week in Honiara. The *Review Report (attached)* produced a range of recommendations which were helpfully prioritized.

⁵ See **Objective 5**

- One of the main priorities of the *Report* was the production of a *Collections Development Policy*. This has now been drafted and was approved at the meeting of the **Library Support Committee** on 29 February. This will now go to the **Parliamentary House Committee**.
- The Library is actively pursuing another priority recommendation of the *Review*, namely, the creation of an electronic repository (or ‘DSpace’) for its future e-library operations. This involves an active collaboration with the ICT Unit and chair of the **ICT Support Committee (chair: Ian Rakafia)** to seek out a commercial solution successfully within the frame of Parliament’s IT network and the KOHA catalogue currently in place. Again, this is being pursued using a business case formula in order to promote rigour in decision making, minimise risk and to promote the business decision making capacity of NPO staff. Library staff are in touch with a commercial concern on this matter.
- Equally significantly, a decision was taken in late 2011 by the **Executive Group** to move the Library into the new MPs Office Building with a deadline of August 2012 to complete the move.
- A 2 level Library space in the atrium of the new building will be constructed by agreement with ROC which is sponsoring the building and which will address the problems of space and light posed by the current location of the Library in Parliament House. It will also co-locate the Library and research facilities with the offices of Members and should therefore assist the Library staff to increase the provision of such facilities to Members. The move is being overseen and coordinated by the **New Buildings Support Committee (chair: Florence Naesol)**, **ICT Support Committee**, and **Library Support Committee (chair: Natalina Hong)**, meeting jointly.
- From 2012, the Library is a separate department of the NPO, and not a subsidiary of the Secretariat. It will be given its own budget line in the *NPO Estimate 2012*, the first time this will have happened. It already has a *Departmental annual work plan* in place incorporating the recommendations of the *Library Review*. In due course, it will seek to expand its staff in order to support Members better.
- Both Senior Librarian (Boniface Supa) and Library Assistant (Ray Sibisopere) are undertaking professional library studies training at diploma and certificate level respectively in the local campus of the USP sponsored by the Project and the NPO.

ICT Unit

The Technical Officers of the ICT Unit (Gavin Bare and Sunjay Dhari) have continued to provide very good support to NPO operations.⁶

- The ICT Unit remains without a Manger for the present. The chair of the **ICT Support Committee** acts effectively as Manager ensuring that the strategic issues are dealt with in a way that leaves the ICT Unit to conduct its daily operations as planned. It is the case however that in due course a professional ICT Manager may be considered; alternatively the present satisfactory management arrangement could continue but with the addition of an ICT Technical Officer.
- The *NPSI ICT Policy* reported in development in June and October is now complete, published, and implemented.
- The UNDP via the ICT Unit has facilitated SIG/NPO's purchase of almost 60 desktop computers for installation in the new MPs Office Building which are scheduled to be in Honiara on 24 March.
- The procurement of the IPPBX telephone system is currently taking account of the need to service the new MPs Building and has been slightly delayed for that reason. The **ICT Support Committee** is pursuing the matter as a top priority.
- The tactics for seeking out and implementing a Parliamentary intranet has altered and there will be a local implementation solution applied. This approach will also be designed to train the ICT Unit staff in this operational area.
- Discussions are underway with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Australia) for advanced training for the ICT Unit Officers, possibly in Fiji.
- The Independent Office and MPs Office Building networking has been completed and work is underway to investigate linking the building to Parliament House.
- A computer laboratory to coach Members and NPO staff will be established.

⁶ Sunjay Dhari has also provided support to the UNDP Sub office which has been without IT assistance in the reporting period

- Departmental ‘Drives’ (electronic repositories) for each NPO Unit have been created on Parliament’s ICT network and a uniform file management system is contemplated as a priority.
- The policy of retaining ICT staff and other resources capacities independent of, but in close collaboration with, the SIG Central ICT services remains. The rationale is the policy which has been agreed of establishing an ‘administratively autonomous’ parliament from 2016. As noted in the October *Report*, consideration will be given in due course to the final ICT resource configuration required for this.

Media Unit

The Media Unit has progressed well since starting up with Joy Rikimae’s arrival as the first Parliament Media Officer in late 2011. Joy has made an impact in a number of ways. In particular, Parliament’s communications with the media and public are now structured through her office.

It is important to keep in mind that this is the first such Unit ever in the NPSI and that Joy, while having excellent journalistic credentials, is learning her craft of presenting Parliament ‘on the job’. To assist her, the Project and the Public Information Office of the New Zealand Parliament arranged for a 2 week attachment for her in the Wellington Parliament from 13th to 24th February which was successful and she will be reporting on that to the **Executive Group**. Joy’s immediate priorities include:

- Refining the draft *NPSI Communications Strategy*
- Ensuring that her office is fully equipped
- Sustaining the links already made with the SI media and developing these, especially radio coverage of Parliament; and
- Considering a Press Gallery for the members of the SI media in Parliament which is appropriate to the local context.

Further output comment

- **2 Speaker’s Press Conferences** have been held.
- The Media Unit Cameraman (Stephen Hachie) has joined.

- Camera switching equipment donated by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Australia) to complement the cameras donated in 2010 arrived in February which will enable the Media Unit to manage the televising of Parliament in-house in due course.
- The weekly ‘Parliament Corner’ column detailing news about Parliament in the main Solomon Islands newspapers is on-going and successful.
- Discussions with **Solomon Islands Broadcasting** for a regular Parliament ‘spot’ are proceeding.
- Forty eight (48) *NPSI Press notices* - most of which were published by the local press - were issued from 9 September to 5 March (list *attached*) and this high level of activity demonstrates the intensification of Parliament’s media and public profile which has taken place as a result of the Unit’s creation.

Recommendation

At present, unlike the other Units, the Media Unit is not supported by a NPO committee. We recommend that the **Executive Group** consider setting up a Media Support Committee at an early opportunity.

Conclusion

The 4 Units covered by this report are in varying stages of development. All staff are to be congratulated on their enthusiasm and hard work which is demonstrably paying off. In order to realise this promise they will all require nurturing by the NPO Management and their related Support Committees over the next 36 months.

Objective 5: Strengthened corporate services

Overview

- **The *Parliament Strategy* and related corporate arrangements noted as having been put in place in the last *Report* are being implemented currently.**
- **New HR policies have been drafted and will be ready to be rolled out in 2012.**

Detail

National Parliament of Solomon Islands Strategic Plan and Implementation Road Map, 2012 – 2016: Strategy Cycle Activities

The October *Report* detailed the *Strategy* arrangements which have been put in place for action in 2012 and there is no need to repeat those.

One main effort in the reporting period was in drafting a *NPSI Corporate Strategy Cycle (attached)* based on the *Implementation Road Map* and timetabling actions to be implemented throughout the year under the direction of the **Strategy Support Unit**; *NPSI Corporate Work Plan (attached)*; and a *Departmental Work Plan (DAWP) template* for all departments to fill in close conjunction with the PM/CTA and **Strategy Support Unit (SSU)**. A template for a *National Parliament Annual Report* was also drafted for completion and presentation at the end of each year by the **SSU**. All documents were drafted in as complementary fashion as possible for maximum clarity and ease of handling.

Once these documents were created in template form, 2 workshops were held on the purpose of such plans facilitated by the PM/CTA, and the Departmental Heads then completed the first draft of their DAWPS and customised Risk Logs (some helpfully assisted by their support committee Chairs and staff) which were then critiqued and stable ‘version 0s’ drafts agreed. All NPO departments now have a detailed annual work plan.

One main function of the *Strategy Cycle* is to ensure that departments are making good progress on the objectives set out in the *Corporate Work Plan*, to make any adjustments required to the CWP and the DAWPS as required, and also to enable the **SSU** to progressively gather raw information in preparation for drafting the final *Annual Report*.

This is achieved mainly by means of 2 formal review meetings annually held in February/March and in June by the **SSU** for all Department Heads. The output is a ‘*version 1*’ *Corporate Plan*

incorporating any adjustments required as a result of the interviews; and ‘version 1’ DAWPS with some changes/improvements marked.

Normally those documents would be amended only as a result of the 2 sets of *Cycle* meetings. 2 rounds of rehearsals for these *Cycle* interviews were held in late 2011. 2 sets of informal workshops were held for the SSU on the process, *Cycle* documentation and management issues. Currently all Departments have passed through the first, February/March, *Cycle* series of interviews.

The *Cycle* process, though new to the NPO, is designed to be as light and realistic as possible consistent with reasonable rigour and to take into account the need to embed it as a sustainable process within the Office. In particular, the 2 part form of the *Parliamentary Annual Report* template is designed to be easy to compose so long as the *Cycle* process is followed through. To date, there have been remarkably few problems, though we are only one third of the way through the 2012 *Cycle*. Feedback from staff has been positive.

The *Cycle* activities are not ends in themselves but means to perform the job of supporting Parliament’s ‘core’ duties of legislation, oversight and representation better. The *Cycle* aims to help staff achieve that by mainstreaming and disciplining the *Strategy* objectives in the day to day work of the NPO. The long term sustainability of the *Cycle* process rests directly on the SSU, in particular the Deputy Clerk and the HR and SSM. Also important will be the role of the ‘Senior Parliamentary Advisor’ scheduled for 2012 who should have the skill set to advance the bedding-in of this process and we recommend this.

New HR Policies

Objective 1.5 of the *Strategy* requires that new NPO HR policies are established and rolled out in 2012. The first tranche have been drafted and will be shared with the government for agreement under the aegis of the ‘administrative autonomy’ exchanges managed from the Secretariat (see *Objective 2* above). The following policies have been drafted:

- **Employment**
- **Induction**
- **Working Hours**
- **Performance review**
- **Staff Development**
- **Management of discipline and conduct**

A number of policies remain to be drafted, including:

- **Health and Safety**
- **Leave management**
- **Disputes**
- **Retirement**

These policies are complex and are designed to ‘bridge’ between a Parliament which is currently administratively a department of the government, and the fully ‘autonomous’ institution it aims to be by 2016. Managing this process of continuous change will be a challenge both for the NPO and the Ministry of Public Service to manage, but there is little doubt that with high level consensus much can be achieved over the *Strategy* period to 2016.

The policies were commissioned by Lisi Vave, previous HR and Strategy Support Manager, and drafted by former NPO staffer John Taupongi; the challenge for her successor, Ian Rakafia, will be to manage the roll out process, and then look to completing the policy suite by the *Strategy* deadline.

NPO Administration, support and related bodies established

The following management and cross departmental NPO bodies, established progressively from February 2011 on, met regularly:

- **NPSI Management Group (monthly 2 hour meeting, chaired by the Speaker)**
All Unit Heads reporting progress, issues, challenges to the Speaker.
Chair: Speaker
Secretary: Alice Willy (*Secretariat*)
- **NPSI Executive Group (every Friday at 2 30 PM)**
‘Board’ of the NPO chaired in rotation monthly: Clerk, Deputy, Accountants, HR and SSM, Media Officer, Director-Committees.
Chair: *Rotates*
Secretary: Lloyd Bera (*Finance*)
- **Strategy Support Unit (meeting as set out in the *Strategy Cycle*)**
Manages the *Strategy Cycle*: Deputy Clerk with HR and SS Manager and Corporate Support Officer.
Head: Deputy Clerk

- **ICT Support Committee (at least monthly)**
Chair: Ian Rakafia (*HR and SSM*)
- **Hansard Support Committee (at least monthly)**
Chair: David Kusilifu (*Secretariat*)
- **New Buildings Committee (at least monthly)**
Chair: Deputy Clerk
- **Security Committee (at least monthly)**
Chair: Celsus Talifilu (*Secretariat*)
- **Library Support Committee (at least monthly)**
Chair: Natalina Hong (*Secretariat*)
- **Autonomous Parliament Group (as required)**
Chair: Albert Kabui (*Secretariat*)
- **NPSI Parliamentary Development Centre (monthly/6 weekly)**
➤ Director: Celsus Talifilu (*Secretariat*)
- **Young Women's Parliamentary Group (Group/Executive bi-monthly)**
➤ Chair of the Group Executive: Natalina Hong (*Secretariat*)
➤ PSP Project Advisor; Marisa Pepa (*Civic Education*)

Recommendation

The 'support' bodies listed not only provide what has quickly come to be considered as a flexible network for structured cross-Office support and communication, but provide the people who run them with valuable experience in managing cross-cutting issues and chairing meetings. The committees frequently meet more often than monthly. The PM/CTA is advisor to these bodies; and we recommend that his successors, the national PM and Senior Parliamentary Advisor, continue that role.

Business cases, management information, statistics

In order to evaluate a range of business decisions with increasing rigour, the NPO is mainstreaming a 'business case approach' (BCA). The Project has encouraged this during the

reporting period by offering a straightforward business case process to senior staff. The **Executive Group** will expect this process to be the norm from now on where significant capital and/or complex projects are promoted by departments.

The BCA has been used successfully to purchase a new copier for Hansard in the region of 150,000 SBD, and is currently being used by the Library and Hansard in sourcing 'DSpace' and an automated Hansard indexing solution, respectively.

Management information, statistics

Managements cannot operate effectively where relevant resource information is not available. In the wake of establishing a revised NPO Management structure, the time is right to begin the process of establishing statistical series of key management data which will assist the management in forward resource planning.

The **Executive Group**, with support from the Project, agreed an initial series of management information drawn from Finance, HR, and Development Projects, and from the first meeting of 2012 has focussed the meetings on reviewing this core material. This initiative is at an early stage and we recommend that the scope of the information collected should periodically be reviewed in order to extend and deepen Management's ability to run the business and plan well for the future.

Conclusions and recommendations

A vital objective for the Deputy Clerk, HR and SSM and the SSU will be to achieve success in completing the first *Strategy Cycle* by tabling Parliament's first *Annual Report* in November/December 2012. The subsequent task for 2013/14 will be to integrate NPO Estimates Budget planning into the Corporate Planning Cycle using the existing templates. The Graduate accountant will lead on this. The remaining HR policies will need to be drafted and put in place over the same period.

The core of NPO management is the Management and Executive Groups. These have operated very well since being founded in 2011. The NPO support committee system has also worked and is sufficiently agile to respond to anticipated and unanticipated needs. The EG should improve the management of risk by steadily embedding a business planning culture to improve NPO decision making

Objective 6: Strengthened parliamentary education and community engagement services

Overview

- Superb progress has been made in developing the ‘Young Women’s Parliamentary Group’ since its foundation late last year with the public support of the Speaker of the National Parliament and the Prime Minister.
- The Group will host a debate on ‘Temporary Special Measures’ for Women’s representation in the National Parliament on 16 March which is a notable achievement for a recently formed body.
- The Unit has maintained a high level of good quality activity across a broad range throughout the reporting period

Detail

2011

Activity	Participants	Date
IPAM workshop for Public Servants	21 Participants Men 14 , Women 7	11 October
Conducted two Constituency Visit West Areare : PCEU conducted Workshop in 5 schools and 9 Communities East Kwaio: PCEU conducted Workshop in 5 villages,1 school	900 Participants Men,600 Women 300 600 people Men 380 and Women 220	14-21 October
YWPG Executive Meeting	4 members	20 October
YWPG Group Meeting with Hon. Sulukonina of Guadalcanal Provincial Assembly	18 members attended	26 October
Two PCEU Officers attended and presented to the Australasian Parliamentary Educators Conference at Brisbane, Australia	20 Participants Men 6 Women 13	27-30 November
IPAM Workshop for Public Servants	21 Participants Men 13, Women 8	10 November
Parliament Open Day, Parliament jointly hosted it with the Ministry of Women, Children and Family Affairs.	3,000 participants Men, 2,300 Women, 700 (estimated)	1 December

Inaugural debate on domestic violence for the Young Women's Parliamentary Group	18 Participants 18 Women (not counting the Parliament Public Gallery - full)	1 December
Constituency Visit to Munda, Western Province	2000 participants Men 1800, Women Female	5-8 December
YWPG Executive Meeting	4 members	12 December
YWPG Inaugural Dinner	25 YWPG Members, Hon Speaker; Prime Minister: Hon. Darcy Lilo; Deputy Prime Minister; Members of the House Committee attended.	15 December

2012

Activity	Participants	Date
YWPG Executive Meeting	3 members	13 January
Women Advocating for Voices in Government workshop	26 Participants Men 10, Women 16	23-25 January
IPAM Workshop for Public Servants mostly Police Officers	27 Participants Men 20, Women 7	14 February
YWPG Executive Meeting	4 members	2 March

Future activities

These include:

- A Retreat to plan activities and objectives for the remainder of 2012 (March)
- Hosting the culmination of the week long 'SI International Women's Day' events on 16 March – a debate in the Chamber of Parliament on 'Temporary Special Measures' for Women's representation in Parliament in the presence of the Hon Speaker. The Prime Minister and Members have been invited to attend.
- A round table with Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Conclusions

The Outreach Unit comprises 2 Officers, Patteson Luis and Marisa Pepa, and the work output of both - supported by colleagues as required – is of high quality despite limited resources.

There is evidence that the work of the Young Women’s Parliamentary Group to strengthen the voice of women throughout governance, itself the desire of many Solomon Islanders, is assisting in raising the issue of Women’s role in government up the political agenda.

The new Phase of the Project will require a fresh emphasis on the outreach aspect of Parliament’s work if the fresh objectives there – creation of a ‘Speaker’s Reflection Group’, ‘Week of Parliament’, additional outreach visits to the Provinces - are realistically to be met and this may very well require additional Unit personnel.

Conclusions and recommendations summary

Objective 1: Effective project management, monitoring, evaluation

- **In circumstances in which staff morale could have been at risk, it has overall been high. This is in part as a result of the successful transfer of staff to SIG. But the sharpening of focus provided to the work not only of the UNDP team and NPO as a whole by the *Parliament Strategy* along with the impact of the rolling out of *the Corporate Work Plan* and departmental plans giving it practical effect have been positive.**

Objective 2: Strengthened procedural support services

- **Prorogation was considered briefly to close proceedings of the 3rd Meeting but the government did not proceed with it. Prorogation is mandated in the *SI Constitution* but has never occurred, adjournment *sine die* being preferred, presumably to avoid a firm date of recall. This however is poor practice and we recommend that the certainty of Parliament reassembling through the use of prorogation should be fought for as part of the work on developing the *NPO Parliamentary Calendar* which is proceeding well in talks with the Prime Minister's Office senior staff.**
- **Success in nurturing the procedural work stream is vital if the NPSI is to develop as a mature legislature and instrument of government oversight. Success in administering the plenary sittings is a sound indication of the expertise of the staff. By that measure the 3rd Meeting was a success for the NPO procedures team.**
- **The procedures team is scheduled to expand in the coming year, and the next phase of the Project and the *Strategy* both make procedural development one of the top priorities. Meanwhile the training planned for the immediate future will surely deepen and consolidate staff skills and ensure the acquisition of new expertise.**

Objective 3: Strengthened committee services

- **Until and unless the committee Chairs accept the need for firm committee programs and take steps to ensure these are in place and adhered to, then most NPSI committees will not reach their potential.**
- **Until the government releases resources to staff the committees adequately then they will not function properly, or in some cases at all. This does not necessarily mean 1 Secretary for every committee. But the ratio of senior Secretaries to committees should be not less than 1.5:2. Given that the new committees were formed at the government's behest they should be properly staffed and resourced.**

- **If NPSI wishes to develop its committee system fully some Committee Secretaries at least will eventually need to be working on inquiries full time throughout the year.**
- **We have asked the CDI, Canberra to hold a 2 day workshop on committee work including program setting in order to encourage the CCG and through it the committees more widely. This event is now scheduled for May. That intervention, taken with the recent influx of new Chairs and the stimulation of the recent visit some made to Canberra and Sydney, may assist this process of embedding the CCG.**
- **The NPO's first *Committee Guidebook*, which comprehensively covers the work of NPO committees and is designed as an aid to Chairs of committees, Members, and Secretaries equally, has been produced under Ian Rakafia's editorship. We recommend the *Committee Guidebook* is circulated to all Members and staff.**
- **Select Committees in NPSI have the potential to make a highly significant positive impact on the overall governance of the country, particularly now there are sectoral committees.**
- **Whether the committees fully realise their potential depends on the challenges identified above being overcome.**

Objective 4: Strengthened information services (Hansard, Library, ICT, Media)

- **At present, unlike the other Units, the Media Unit is not supported by a NPO committee. We recommend that the Executive Group consider setting up a Media Support Committee at an early opportunity.**
- **The 4 Units covered by this report are in varying stages of development. All staff are to be congratulated on their enthusiasm and hard work which is demonstrably paying off. In order to realise this promise they will all require nurturing by the NPO Management and their related Support Committees over the next 36 months.**

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- **A vital objective for the Deputy Clerk, HR and SSM and the SSU will be to achieve success in completing the first *Strategy Cycle* by tabling Parliament’s first *Annual Report* in November/December 2012. The subsequent task for 2013/14 will be to integrate NPO Estimates Budget planning into the Corporate Planning Cycle using the existing templates. The Graduate accountant will lead on this. The remaining HR policies will need to be drafted and put in place over the same period.**
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- **The Outreach Unit comprises 2 Officers, Patteson Luis and Marisa Pepa, and the work output of both - supported by colleagues as required – is of high quality despite limited resources.**
- **There is evidence that the work of the Young Women’s Parliamentary Group to strengthen the voice of women throughout governance, itself the desire of many Solomon Islanders, is assisting in raising the issue of Women’s role in government up the political agenda.**
- **The new Phase of the Project will require a fresh emphasis on the outreach aspect of Parliament’s work if the fresh objectives there – creation of a ‘Speaker’s Reflection Group’, ‘Week of Parliament’, additional outreach visits to the Provinces - are realistically to be met and this may very well require additional Unit personnel.**