

## TUESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015

The Speaker, Hon. Adjilon Nasiu took the Chair at 10.00am.

Prayers.

### ATTENDANCE

All Members were present with the exception of the Minister for Development Planning and Aid Coordination and the Members for Maringe/Kokota and Malaita Outer Islands.

### **SPEAKER'S ANNOUNCEMENT.**

**Mr Speaker:** Honourable members will notice that the air conditioning system is not working properly. Please bear with us as we try to fix this problem.

Honourable Members, welcome to the 2nd Meeting of this Parliament. I am pretty sure that you've had a good break with your families and constituencies over the recess. I certainly had a good one. But now, our duty to this nation, our good people, requires this House to make very important decisions over the coming weeks."

Honourable Members, before I move on to other messages and announcements, at this juncture, let me introduce to you the newly appointed Clerk to the National Parliament, Mr. Clezy Rore. Congratulations Mr. Rore. Please render the Clerk your continuous support.

Also, present in the Speaker's Gallery is Mr Ralph Ewen from the New South Wales Parliament. Mr. Ewen is here on a brief attachment to assist with Parliament's security measures and procedures. Please welcome Mr. Ralph Ewen.

Allow me also to congratulate Honourable Members who have accepted the appointment to the Standing Select Committees either as the Chair or as a member. As you

would probably appreciate by now, the role of the Committees is essentially vital to the operation of this House, and is as equally important as any other business of the House.

I am aware that certain Committees have already been sitting and envisaging their plans for this year. These are the Parliamentary House Committee, the Public Accounts Committee, the Bills and Legislation Committee, the Constitutional Review Committee, and the Police, National Security & Correctional Services Committee. For those Committees that are yet to be inaugurated, may I urge you to do so accordingly. If you are yet to accept or refuse appointment to the Standing Committees, may I strongly urge you to do so as soon as possible so that the Committees can settle down and perform their functions without unnecessary delays.

“Honourable Members, allow me to bring to your attention the latest amendments to the Standing Orders. These amendments were introduced and approved by the last House on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014. Of particular significance are the amendments to Standing Order 44 and Standing Order 48.

The effect of these amendments are such that a Member who is a Minister must now give notice of his or her intention to introduce a bill at least three clear days before the First Reading of the Bill. Furthermore, when a motion that a Bill be set down for Second Reading is carried, debate on that motion is to be adjourned without any question put for three clear days. This means, debates on the Second Reading of a Bill introduced to the House will not ensue until at least three clear days have lapsed after the Member in charge of the Bill introduces it on the floor of Parliament.

I am sure that the newly revised Standing Orders will be distributed as soon as the relevant amendments are incorporated into the final revised text.

Honourable Members, you would appreciate that since 2006, the National Parliament of Solomon Islands benefits tremendously from the United Nations Development Program Parliamentary Strengthening Project. The National Parliament, and the good people of this country, acknowledges the growth and vast expansion of the support services Honourable Members of Parliament continue to enjoy today here in Parliament cannot be made possible had it not for the Strengthening Project.

Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. As you are aware, this Parliamentary Strengthening Project will lapse as of the end of this Month, March 2015. I am aware that most if not all, of the support services have been taken up by the Government of Solomon Islands. May I encourage the upkeep and furtherance of the services established by the Project.

At this juncture, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our developing partners in ensuring the Strengthening Project is a successful one; most notably the United Nations Development Program, the then Australian Aid, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, and the New Zealand Aid. Thank you very much for your continuous support to the people of this country.

Lastly, but not the least, Honourable Members, it is a tradition in the Westminster Parliamentary system that the Sovereign usually address Parliament at the beginning of its meetings regarding the Executive's policy and legislative plans for the year. We adopt this practice and embraced it by virtue of Standing Order 7, paragraph 4. As such, on the invitation of the Honourable Prime Minister, His Excellency, the Governor-General, will address Parliament later during this sitting. That is all I have for now. Thank you very much for your attention.

Honourable Members in order for us to prepare for His Excellency the Governor-General's arrival, I will now suspend Parliament.

*Sitting suspended at 10.11am*

*Sitting resumed at 10.47am*

## **SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

**Sir FRANK OFAGIORO KABUI** (*Governor General*): The Hon. Speaker of the National Parliament, Your Lordship the Chief Justice, the Hon. Prime Minister, Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Cabinet Ministers, The Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition, The Hon. Leader of Independent Members of Parliament, Hon. Deputy Speaker, Hon. Members of Parliament,

Your Excellency Head of Missions, Reverend Church Leaders, Constitutional Post holders and Permanent Secretaries, Traditional Chiefs and Leaders, Distinguished Guest; Ladies and Gentlemen - as the Constitutional Representative of Her Majesty, The Queen, The Head of State of the Independent Democratic Sovereign State of Solomon Islands, it is my humble duty and special privilege, as the Governor General, to be able to deliver this **“Traditional Speech from the Throne”**.

May I humbly convey to the National Parliament, now in sitting, following the smooth election of the Prime Minister on 9 December 2014, very warm greetings and special well wishes, on behalf of our Head of State, Her Majesty the Queen.

May I sincerely congratulate the Hon. Prime Minister and the Democratic Coalition for Change Government, for successfully securing the mandate to govern the sovereign affairs of our people and country. Our people throughout the country are eagerly awaiting being part of the change that you profess, to actually feel and experience the much needed change that is pronounced by our Government, particularly through the reform programs, that are being implemented.

To the Hon. Ministers of the Crown, may I thank you for accepting your assignment of responsibilities to become Ministers of the Government. As you spearhead the political leadership of Government ministries, much would depend on your proactive political directions and sound strategic planning as you drive the implementation of Government policies.

By the same token, may I also convey my sincerest congratulations to the Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition on your timely appointment. You have assumed the vital role of providing the pivotal mechanism which ensures checks and balances, to keep Her Majesty's Government vigilant, accountable and transparent, in its deliberations and undertakings, to govern and lead our peoples and country.

In the same way, I applaud the Hon. Leader of the Independent Group as you steer Government towards the course of national reform and change and as you backstop the Official Opposition, to give the necessary support to the Government as it implements its policies and strategies.

To all Members of the National Parliament, our people hold envious confidence in your leadership abilities and capabilities, to provide sound guidance and clear vision, not as micro-scale project managers, but as national legislators. May I respectfully draw your attention, as a reminder, to the spirit and letter of our national motto, as you commence your journey of four years – **“To Lead Is To Serve”**. May you lead our people and country forward, with due diligence, vision and wisdom, to the shores of peace, tranquility and prosperity.

In the spirit of national unity, the Government recognizes the importance of our people, in nation building. We are all one people and belong to one nation. We are graciously endowed with a wealth of diverse cultures, abundant natural resources, sound religious heritage and enumerable talents in our youths, the strength of our country. It is incumbent on us to play a positive and lasting role as custodians of our resources and natural wealth.

More importantly, we have a responsibility to impart the right virtues to our youths and the children of our motherland. They in their turn are to teach their children, who will come after them. The Government is determined to improve the economy, provide good governance at all levels and improve livelihoods of all Solomon Islanders.

The Solomon Islands Government firmly believes that the way forward, would be achieved, by implementing good policies and empowering our people to be engaged in productive activities and absorbed in gainful employment. Our people should not expect aid donors and politicians to provide cash and cargo-cult handout mentality. Such an attitude must be totally discouraged from making further in-road into Solomon Islands society. It must be disowned by everyone because it is a liability and disincentive to balanced economic growth. It is inversely connected to the true nature of our richness; contrariwise we are endowed with an abundance of natural resources. Our people have always lived a simple but acceptable standard of living, which reflects their true dignity.

The Government’s Policy Statement, Translation and Strategy, launched in 27 January 2015, set out the policy direction which the Government will progress the destiny of our peoples and country in the next 4 years. It focuses on the following 2 major strategic areas of change, to recreate and multiply: a peaceful, progressive and prosperous Solomon Islands. These strategic areas of change are Fundamental Reform Programs and Sectoral Reform Programs

**On Fundamental Reform Programs**, the Honourable Speaker, the Government's focus today is on rebuilding the foundation of this nation. For far too long we have been shambolic, careless or downright irresponsible in governing our beloved country. So much so that from the time we gained political independence in 1978 to the beginning of the ethnic tension in 1998, it took us only 20 years to degrade the country. Then we became widely labelled by some commentators and mainstream media as a 'failed state'. Our nation was, indeed, badly battered but not broken up; was overcome by chaos and despair but not without the will to survive. And for this fight of good fight, we are thankful to the international community and RAMSI for helping us get back on our feet. You will no doubt be aware, that the much-needed 'HELPEM FREN' mission is phasing out its core responsibilities in the country, having spent a good part of 11 years on the task of rebuilding. We should remember that RAMSI came into the country mainly to re-establish law and order, restrengthen the whole-of-government-machinery, reorganize Government's financial management system and rebuilt social order and cohesiveness in the country.

In all facets of RAMSI work, we can safely say that RAMSI has achieved its objectives. Through RAMSI support, we have moved on and we have become responsible, once more, for managing our own affairs. The mammoth task of nation-building is an ongoing challenge, even as the Government is embarking on a series of reform agenda. No one should think that our tasks will be easy or require less resources, time and effort. Having learnt lessons from our recent past, the Government is determined to bring about constructive 'changes' that will make a positive difference in the lives of our peoples. It will not be business as usual. We must be smart in our thinking and must work hard together, if we want change and a better future for our children and grandchildren.

I would now like to turn to some of the fundamental reforms that the Government is embarking on. In the pursuance and promotion of good governance, the Government will fight entrenched negative attitudes towards decency, respect for law and authority, human values and ethical leadership; it will pull down the strongholds of vested interests that have so far spawned a network of systemic corruption, rampant in our society today. The Government, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, will establish a *National Anti-Corruption Steering*

*Committee*, frontrunner to the setting up of the proposed *Solomon Islands Independent Commission Against Corruption*.

Moreover, the Leadership Code Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman Acts will be reviewed with the intention of strengthening their constitutional functions. It is on our interest that transparency, accountability and ethical leadership are fully inculcated in the psyche of the nation, as a result of its anti-corruption strategy. Foundation is laid for stakeholders to submit their positions on how best to tackle corruption in all its ugly forms. This Government will listen to the deep concerns of the populace and is prepared to be informed by the wise counsel of our own people.

The Government is very much aware of the importance of the fundamental tenets of our democratic society where the cardinal doctrine of the 'separation of powers' between the Legislature, Judiciary and Executive is sacrosanct. It will, therefore, continue to co-operate with development partners to build up the capacity and effectiveness of the Legislature and the Judiciary so as to make them effective in the management and execution of their constitutional responsibilities. Just as important is the work to be done in ensuring that there is parity and equity in the Terms and Conditions of Service of all professionals working in the Government.

In the Government's reform agenda, both the Legislature and Judiciary branches will be consulted going forward. Work on this matter has started. While the institutions that uphold and support the nation's democratic values and practices must be strengthened, successive Governments have found it extremely difficult, over the years, to forge political stability and sustain the integrity of leadership at the national level. This is usually demonstrated after every National General Elections and often leads to disruptive changes in Government or gives birth to an unstable Parliament, resulting in incoherent and inconsistent policy direction and implementation. In the recent past, with the enactment of the Political Party Integrity Act we have been able to improve the conduct of our national general election.

Another fundamental reform that the Government will pursue relates to the country's land tenure system, particularly to its customary component. Two pieces of legislation, the *Land and Titles Act* and the *Customary Land Records Act* have in the last decade, tried to answer just one fundamental question, and that is: how could one turn the 87 percent of customary land in

the country into titled and secure clan or tribal assets from which the communities and investors alike could generate mutual benefits? These legislations have yet to provide adequate answers to this question. The Government will drastically review these legislations and come up with a possible complementary bill that would institutionalise customary land usage and ownership so that clans or tribes could enter into agreement with potential investors.

Successive Governments have spent valuable resources in trying to make customary land usable for development. However, with the exception of a few cases, landowners have understandably been reluctant to open up locked lands for national projects. In this way, successive Governments have often been placed in a very difficult situation: on the one hand, it is willing and able to move projects into different Provinces; on another, it cannot compel the good people of this country to simply free up locked-lands. Thus, it is heartening to witness the proactive gesture that more than thirty landowners from the Suava Bay area of North Malaita have shown recently when they confirmed their willingness to avail land for a major national development project. This is exemplary, and the Government is of the firm view that the gesture should be emulated by other customary landowners as well. In this context, the Government is declaring to resource owners that it is ready to work with you.

In regard to our economic and financial systems, we need to adopt a big, holistic push. While our economy is performing satisfactorily with an expected growth rate of 3 per cent in 2015<sup>1</sup>, and the interest of foreign direct investments in our natural resources is increasing, especially in the mining sector, while at the same time the existing players in the domestic economy seem satisfied with their progress, we must take a new look at the structure and content of our national economy.

For small and medium enterprises, access to financial capital is a huge challenge. The Government will put in place schemes, tax concessions, capacity building grant, mentoring programs and other incentives for indigenous business peoples of all gender to become business entrepreneurs. Be that as it may, the Government will re-introduce the *Reserved Business Areas* policy whereby certain business activities will be carried out only by indigenous business peoples.

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This enlarging of business opportunities and employment creation schemes will be supplemented with the rehabilitation of the Development Bank of Solomon Islands, redirection of the Commodities Export Marketing Authority and reinvigoration of the Investment Corporation of Solomon Islands. The Government will pursue these bygone opportunities.

Last but not the least, another very important reform that successive Governments since 2000 have been supporting and which this Government will also actively pursue is the replacing of the current unitary Constitution with a federal Constitution. The proposed Federal Constitution will be an altogether different type of supreme law. Under federalism, it will be the Constitution that specifies the sharing of federal taxes and other revenues, or provide each sphere of Government the power to raise its own revenues. It will be the Constitution that specifies the sharing of political and legal powers between the core and the periphery. The Constitution will specify the time period within which each Province can accede to Statehood. The Federal Constitution will provide for States to have their own State Constitutions, which will be made consistent with the Federal Constitution. The way the country is governed will undergo major changes; yet, for Solomon Islands to have a Federal Constitution will not be new or strange in the contemporary world.

Successive Governments have expended huge amounts of resources and funds since the year 2000 to formulate a Federal Constitution, and, in the last 7 years, since the Kemakeza Government of 2001-2006 and the second Sogavare Government of 2006-2007 established the Constitutional Congress and the Eminent Persons Advisory Council, thorough work and consultation with our peoples will continue to be carried out. The Constitutional Reform Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister is at the moment writing the Federal Constitution.

The Constitutional Reform Unit has consulted the citizens of this nation thoroughly and comprehensively, and has produced no less than 5 Drafts of the Federal Constitution in the last 14 years. Most people in this country have spoken and are now looking forward to having a co-operative Federal System of Government, because it would mean that Chiefs and Elders in the communities, for example, will rule in their own jurisdictions through the third sphere in the federal structure called Community Government.

Work on the Federal Constitution would be completed during the lifetime of this Parliament. The Final Draft, which will have been vetted by constitutional experts from overseas, will be ready for hand-over to Government by the Constitutional Congress and Eminent Persons Advisory Council. The next step would be to prepare the way to ratify the Federal Constitution after properly carrying out bipartisan consultations with the Members of Parliament. The expert advice, the Government has on the subject of Constitution ratification, will comprise of the following:

1. The formation of a body called the Constituent Assembly comprising all Members of Parliament (50), representatives from the 9 Provinces and the Honiara City Council (50); 80 other members will come from different stakeholders and civil society groups and 20 will come from members of Constitutional Congress and Eminent Persons Advisory Council. The Government will establish this body;
2. Simultaneously, Sec. 61 of the National Constitution will be amended to allow for the Federal Constitution to replace the existing one; A *draft Bill* to effectuate the amendment has already been prepared and, in due time, it will be brought to Parliament;
3. After the Constituent Assembly has deliberated on the Draft Federal Constitution, the Government will not tender it to Parliament since deliberations on it will have included all MPs and a wide cross-section of society. Honourable Members will have participated and contributed constructively to the finalization and approval of the Constitution. Then come, declaration of the Federation Day.

#### **1. Sectoral Reform Programs.**

The Honourable Speaker, learning from the Provincial Government System, the sustainability of federalism is on everybody's interest. To make federalism work better for us, the Government is pursuing Sectoral Reform Programs as a means to enhance broad based economic development in the country. These Sectoral Reform Programs come in the form of (1). Productive Sector Reforms, (2). Resource Sector Reforms, and (3). Social Sector Reforms.

### **3.1 Productive Sector Reforms**

The Productive Sector Reform comprises of the following 7 development areas; (i) Agriculture and Livestock Development, (ii) Tourism and Cultural Development; (iii) Trade, Commerce, Industries and Immigration; (iv) Lands, Housing and Survey; (v) Civil Aviation and Telecommunication; (vi) Infrastructure Development and (vii) Aquaculture, Fisheries and Marine Resources.

As the nation and our good development partners will appreciate, The Government is determined to develop the productive sector as a conduit to balanced economic development to attain improved wellbeing of our peoples.

#### **1.1.1 Agriculture and Livestock Development**

It is common knowledge that Agriculture is the backbone of the country's economy. Because agriculture touches almost everybody in our society, the Government will continue to strengthen and support agriculture and livestock development as a means to promote: our livelihood; our national revenue; our food security; our foreign exchange; our marketable surplus; our raw material supply; our employment opportunities; our economic development and our source of savings and investments.

Despite this common understanding, successive Governments often viewed Agriculture as a passive partner in the development of our nation, in the last 37 years. After 37 years, the Government would act differently through the implementation of its productive sector reform programs in Agriculture and Livestock Development. The Government will promote sustainable agriculture and rural development for economic stability, food sovereignty and rural livelihood improvements.

#### **1.1.2 Tourism and Cultural Development**

Tourism is the world's oldest but growing industries. It will have a positive economic impact on the balance of payments, on employment generation, on gross domestic production, but it may also have negative effects, particularly on the environment, as well. Unplanned and uncontrolled tourism growth can lead to environmental degradation. That said, environment, being a major consideration of tourism product development, should be protected in order to

have further growth of tourism and economic development in the future. This is especially true for eco-tourism, especially, which is based on the natural environment, as well as, on rich historical and cultural heritage.

The Government will develop a National Tourism Legislation and review the National Tourism policy to ensure that tourism development in the country is environmentally, socio-culturally, and economically viable. The Government has taken on-board the genuine concerns of our peoples on the negative impacts of tourism development and would like to assure our peoples that negativities on tourism development will be mitigated through the implementation of the National Tourism Legislation and subsidiary Regulations. The Government strongly supports sustainable tourism development to enhance optimum use of resources, including protection of biological diversity; minimization of ecological, cultural and social costs; and maximization of benefits for environmental conservation and management.

The Government believes that encouraging tourism development holistically will ensure the protection and maintenance of our natural and cultural resources of our country to bring about positive change on the economic and socio cultural wellbeing of our peoples. The Government would like to see urban and rural communities to gain better education on global economic trends, by better understanding international tourism in a local scenery.

### **1.1.3 Trade, Commerce, Industries and Immigration**

The Government supports the development of Economic Growth Centres (EGCs) throughout the country and will endeavour to resourcefully invest on these initiatives. These are conduits for rural constituency development.

The Government supports rural investments. These are impetus for broad based economic development in the country. The Government will ensure that investment links the present with the future and puts people at the center of development.

The Government fully believes that investment in our productive sector is necessary for rapid growth and poverty reduction. The Government is encouraging investors at national and international level to invest in the country. It will provide the right enabling environment for investment to grow, by reviewing immigration and labour laws, and providing better

incentives to give confidence to investors in the country. The Government is encouraging investors to tap Public Private Partnerships, by engaging with the Government to invest in the productive sector.

Promoting and sustaining economic growth is on the interest of Solomon Islands and the Government fully agrees that Small and Medium Enterprises will be the backbone of Solomon Islands economic growth, contributing to job creation and sharing of income generation. The Government will enact Small and Medium Enterprise legislation to enable participation of Solomon Islanders in domestic investments.

#### **1.1.4 Lands, Housing and Survey**

Land remains an important asset to our peoples and institutions in the country. In their small ways, our ancestors lived on land for thousands of years and we are still surviving on land today. Solomon Islands is one of the few countries in the world, in which our traditional economy still outweighs the cash economy, in terms of providing livelihoods for the majority of our rural population. The reason is obvious, about 87% of land is owned by tribal land owners, while only 13 percent is crown land.

The Government will encourage land and resource-owners to participate in economic development and become equal partners in the growing of our country. The Government is aware that in-order for any development to become inclusive in nature, we will ensure that consultative and participatory planning leads to empowerment of land and resource owners. The Government will consult and encourage participation of resource owners.

Due to the geographical scattered nature of our islands and dispersed rural population of our peoples, the Government is strongly supporting the establishment of rural economic development centres in all fifty constituencies. The Government will re-establish the customary land recording and registration process to make tribal lands available for economic growth centres.

The Government will control and manage the 13 percent of crown land in the country. A good fraction of crown land is where administrative, physical, social and economic services are located in the provincial stations and sub-stations. Since the early days, these peri-urban

centres have grown at a rate that outpaces the ability of the state and institutions to efficiently control and manage.

The Government will develop, the first ever National Urbanization Policy, the main objective of this policy is to manage and control the rate of urbanization in our urban centres. It is the intention of this policy that outright purchase of land from tribal landowners will expand town boundaries, create more economic opportunities for our local peoples, and resettle our people, who are affected by climate change.

The Government will strive to improve the lives of our peoples and encourage access to a more decent form of livelihood. Shelter is an important contributor, to a more decent family life, hence the Government will support urban and rural dwellers to build affordable housing to satisfy family needs. This will be done through the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey; Ministry of Infrastructure Development; Solomon Islands National Provident Fund and other relevant stakeholders.

The Government supports the work of the Land Board, representing key stakeholders, which is responsible for allocating crown land in urban centres. For many years, citizens, particularly in Honiara, have complained about the unfair allocation of land to a small number of wealthy and influential business people. The Land Board has been meeting several times and is dealing with the issue of unfair and biased allocation of crown lands. More positive changes are expected through the Land Board and the Government will further review the Land and Titles Act.

In order to encourage socio-economic development and foster high standards of living of our peoples, we need to change our attitude towards land and adopt a true Melanesian fighting spirit with a changed mindset to convert our idle land into productive assets, to gain better livelihoods for all our peoples in the country.

#### **1.1.5 Civil Aviation and Telecommunication**

The Government accepts the fact that air transportation plays a critical role in economic development of our country. It facilitates our nation's integration into the global economy, provides direct benefits for users and widens economic benefits through positive impact on productivity and growth.

Our aviation sector is an important component of the Travel Industry and will continue to play a significant role in the economic development of our country.

On telecommunication front, the Government puts great emphasis on the importance of telecommunication infrastructures on economic growth. The Government will facilitate the undersea cable infrastructure facility. The Government believes that the products of telecommunication will lead to increased demand for goods and services in the country.

The Government recognizes that it will still need considerable lengths of time to fully realize the benefits of telecommunications in the country. Also, the Government fully recognizes the need for better and proper use of telecommunications facilities and to ensure its accessibility and affordability in remote areas of our country.

#### **1.1.6 Infrastructure Development**

Infrastructure development will continue to be a challenge to our development endeavours, given the scattered geography of our country. The Government is firmly committed to addressing the transport and social infrastructure needs of our nation. The Government will build infrastructure that are robust and resilient to adverse effects of natural disasters and climate change.

The Government will provide additional resources for the National Transport Fund. Priority land transport infrastructures, including road and bridges, shall be maintained, rehabilitated and improved with resilient structures and tarsealing; and new roads constructed, where it is economically feasible and viable. Priority air transport sector infrastructures, including busy airport will be improved to all weather standard with runway tarsealing works programme. Priority marine infrastructure, is crucial for the movement of goods and services. The Government will continue to build and maintain wharves and assist build facilities that promote safety of tourists and visitors to our shores.

The Government will introduce, review and amend appropriate legislations to enable the Ministry of Infrastructure Development fulfil its objectives in ensuring safety and standards for building structures and our transport infrastructures are regularly maintained. Equally important is the need for Road Development Strategies under the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey to ensure land is available and secured to facilitate maintenance and expansion of

social and transport infrastructures; and promote fair land dealings, transparent, impartial allocation of land for infrastructure development, in accordance with the appropriate laws.

The Government is committed to put in place appropriate infrastructure developments to jump-start economic growth in the country. Because as we all know, infrastructure creates and increases opportunities for people to discover their true economic potentials hence allow them to be better involved, better equipped and better empowered to undertake economic activities.

### **1.1.7 Aquaculture, Fisheries and Marine Resources**

The fishery sector of Solomon Islands consists of capture fisheries and aquaculture. The sector generates a variety of benefits, including nutrition and food security, livelihoods, employment, exports and foreign currency and conservation and biodiversity values that are of global significance. While The Government knows that these substantial benefits could be sustained ad infinitum, they are currently under threat. The primary threat is from ineffective governance combined with successive Governments policies that are both ill-conceived and poorly implemented, and which are rarely coordinated between national and provincial governments and communities. These factors have contributed to current levels of biological and economic overexploitation in many fisheries, from small-scale ('artisanal') through to industrial investments. This has had a declining effect on the fish stocks and a negative impact on Solomon Islands economy, as well as on reduced levels of vital food supplies and job deficits. Factors such as inadequate or weak governance at national and provincial levels and for management of resources and ecosystems, institutional weaknesses and insufficient financial investments opportunities, have led to an increase in fishing pressure intensity, overfished stocks, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, inadequate benefits from trade in fish and fish products, a poorly developed aquaculture sub-sector and weaknesses in fisheries and aquaculture management and development. The potential of the sector to contribute to poverty reduction and improved socio-economic benefits to populations have not been optimally exploited.



Although policies aimed at regulating fishing capacity are critical for maintaining production and supply of fish products, successive Governments have put little focus on the role of fisheries and aquaculture in the national economic development, food and nutrition security and the need to place the optimization of these benefits to the center of national development planning. The obstacle to unleashing the potential of Solomon Islands fisheries and aquaculture sector has been the inherent complexity of the fisheries sector which has led to simplification of management options. The Government believes that policies formulated for simple biological assemblage of species structure should differ from those prepared to suit the management of multispecies fisheries serving resource-poor producers as well as specialized regional and international markets.

The reform strategy in aquaculture and fisheries is a culmination of many years of research of the fisheries sector in the country pertaining to successive Governments policies on management and development of the country's fisheries and aquaculture sectors for the last 37 years post-independence. The Government believes that these reform strategies will enable us to develop appropriate fisheries-exploitation arrangements and aquaculture, with accompanied fiscal reforms that should result in the sustainable generation of benefits at the community level as well as creating wealth throughout the value chain.

The Government will establish onshore fisheries facilities and table in this sitting of the National Parliament the Fisheries Management Bill, as a bailout of this threat of ineffective governance on fisheries investment and development.

### **3.2 Resource Sector Reforms**

The Resource Sector Reforms deals with cluster groupings of; (i) Ministry of Forestry and Reforestation, (ii) Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification, (iii) Ministry of Environment, Conservation, National Disaster and Meteorology and (iv) Ministry of Rural Development.

Following the adoption of the Resource Sector Reform Programme, cluster Ministries are supported on developing Ministry strategic plans that will streamline priorities, institutional mechanisms and arrangements, financing of the identified priorities and the monitoring and

evaluation frameworks that will guide the implementation of the Government Policies over the stated period.

The Resource Sector seeks to articulate the main priorities and strategies that will be undertaken by the cluster Ministries in the next 4-years, in order to contribute to the realization of the Government's primary goals and objectives. The Resource Sector therefore should map the political bearing by linking cluster Ministries' contribution to the overall national economic growth. Successful implementation of the Resource Sector will ensure that sustainable use of environmental supplies and services and rational utilization of natural, human and financial resources should guarantee benefits to present and future generations.

The effective implementation of the Resource Sector will require participation and support of Ministries that extend beyond the obligations of cluster Ministries stated: Land, Agriculture and Fisheries. Sectors such as that include, Industry and Health will be crucial, particularly in consideration of the role they play in national environmental management. This is in line with the national goals clearly elaborated in the Government Policies that highlight the cross cutting status of Resource Sector in national planning. Thus, the Resource Sector will contribute to the successful implementation of the Government Policies by engaging multiple institutions towards improved resource extraction and utilization and advance rural development management and rational use of available resources.

To facilitate for a proper functioning of the cluster Ministries, congregated under the Resource Sector will require a Sector Wide Approach which should be pursued through meetings, constituted of broad stakeholder partnerships of public institutions on the one hand, and private sector, non-governmental Organizations and development partners; on the other hand.

The broad stakeholder participation should be coordinated by the Resource Sector office and will feature prominently in key Ministry support activities including, institutional coordination and capacity enhancement and Monitoring and Evaluation. The cluster ministries' performance will be tracked and reported through established agency for monitoring progress on the Government Priority Policies.

### **3.2.1 Forestry and Research**

Our forest covers about 80% of the country's landmass and contributes significantly to the economy of this country. The forest sector provides income to the government through export duty, royalty to landowners and business opportunities for investors and wages and salary for the people that are employed and engaged in this sector.

The populace has depended on the forest for their livelihood for generations and will continue to rely on it for their future. However at this stage the main concern is the rapid rate of deforestation and forest degradation through unsustainable logging practices, commercial agriculture and poor management of infrastructure development initiatives. Therefore it is important at this point to adopt relevant policies and frameworks that promote sustainable forest management amongst others to ensure that the benefits of forests and trees continue in perpetuity. The Government places high priority on forest sector not only because it seeks to grow the economy but also it aims to prime pump a broad based, environmentally sustainable economy.

### **3.2.2 Mines, Energy & Rural Electrification**

In recent months, we have witnessed the impact of our only Gold Mining operations in the country. Whilst it has proven to also boost the country's economy by providing revenue to the Government and royalty to landowners, it also created business opportunities for other investors and the local communities. Mining operations at present remains simple with nothing more than excavations of simple pits.

Of recent, we have also witnessed a booming interest on mining sector. The Government has placed the importance of legislative reviews to ensure that our legislations are amended to remain relevant. The current concern remains the huge interest to conduct mining related activities with no serious commitment to deal with the environment and the associated risks it poses in the long term. Therefore it is necessary to adopt relevant policies and legislative frameworks that promote best practises to safe guard our non- renewable resources and the environmental impact.

The Government will identify and pursue alternative energy development in the country. Tina Hydro Power Development Project is a priority undertaking that will reduce our consumption of fossil fuel and improve our carbon footprint.

### **3.2.3 Environment, Conservation, Disaster & Meteorology**

The Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology is one of the technical and very important ministerial portfolios of the Government. It is a development safeguards ministry. The Ministry aims to have a safe, sustainable and resilient environment for Solomon Islands. It will provide an enabling environment for the socio-economic development of the country through the application of necessary safeguards.

The Government believes that the strategic goals of environment, conservation and management, climate change, disaster risk and management and meteorology will improve the livelihood and benefit of all Solomon Islanders.

### **3.2.4 Rural Development**

The Government in recognition of the fact that the majority of our population resides in rural areas has its policy on *Rural Economic Development Policy* with its objectives focusing on two key areas 1) to provide an enabling environment to stimulate economic growth, especially in the rural areas and 2) address and meet the basic needs of people in the rural areas.

In the implementation of the *Rural Economic Development Policy*, the Government through the Ministry of Rural Development and in partnership with the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination will bring about a comprehensive, well-structured and coordinated rural economic development program throughout all fifty constituencies.

The rural economic development program in each constituency will focus on establishing Rural Economic Development Centres as a way to provide an enabling environment to stimulate economic growth especially in rural areas. This requires land and so these efforts must be a collective one that involves the active participation of resource owners,

communities, constituency committees and the Member of Parliament and Ministry officials to engage proactively to ensure land is dispute free and open for development.

The Government recognizes, under Productive Sector Reform, that infrastructure development is a key component of the Rural Economic Development Policy and so the Ministry of Infrastructure Development will play a key role to develop the much needed infrastructures in each centre.

In order for these development centres to be active, the promotion of socio-economic associations or livelihood associations must be supported so as to stimulate economic activities within and surrounding the Centres.

An integral part of the Rural Economic Development Policy requires the formulation of Constituency Profiles and the development of Constituency Development Plans for each Constituency. The two documents are very important documents for planning and development for each constituency especially the Constituency Development Plan which should contain the development aspirations of individual constituency and their people and so becomes the basis of which Government development assistance through the Constituency Development Funds can address and meet the basic needs of people in the rural areas

Whilst it is acknowledged that livelihood options differ in Constituencies and might dictate some limitations to this development initiative we believe it is the way forward for the more than 85% of our rural population to meaningfully contribute direct to national development and lay the foundation for a broad based Solomon Islands economy now and into the future.

The centre of this policy is decentralization of goods and services to our people of which the majority of our population resides in the rural areas. The rural economy needs to actively involved in economic development and resources utilized to enhance economic growth. This way we can reduce issues of urban drift and bring development right to where our people are through creation of job opportunities and opening up of commercial activities and investment opportunities.

It is projected that considerable increase in the deployment of staffing to the Ministry of Rural Development's Central Ministry and its Constituency Offices will happen so as to couple the resources allocated to implement its Rural Economic Development Policy through the 50 Constituencies.

### **3.3 Social Sector Reforms**

The Social Sector may be described as the largest sector in the Government the Government Policy Statement, Translation and Strategy - both in terms of scope as well as funding. In all, there are 10 line ministries altogether in the social sector and they are as follows:

#### **3.3.1 Health and Medical Services**

Health is a critical social sector for Solomon Islands as in many countries. Overall health outcomes of the people are considered to be improving according to a number of basic indicators although with successful interventions and service provision of diseases, the burden is now moving from the control of infectious diseases to addressing the increased incidence of non-communicable diseases.

Over the years, the major goal of successive governments is to improve the overall health status of the population to between 1 and 2% over a number of years. Initial reports suggest that this target is attainable. However, despite this notable achievement and other health successes a number of challenges remain in building a responsive health system within the restricted budget of the Government.

In order to address that, the health system itself is currently being reorganised to introduce efficiencies in both management and service efficiencies. The development of the next National Health Strategic Plan will identify how the effectiveness of interventions can be improved.

On the whole, it can be reported that as a major sector within the Social Sector the health service has made significant progress in strengthening service systems and service delivery over the past few years. It still has significant challenges to face but is aware of those challenges and is restructuring and re-strategizing priorities and interventions including those priorities the

Government has identified and is prepared to meet those challenges with a new sense of purpose and commitment.

Re-strategizing of development priorities will mean relocation of the National Referral Hospital to a safer and higher ground. It will also mean upgrading of Kilu'ufi and other Provincial Hospitals including the National Psychiatric Division in Auki, Malaita Province.

### **3.3.2 Education and Human Resources Development**

Our country has come a long way in terms of our aspirations to educate ourselves and fellow citizens of Solomon Islands. As a nation and people we recognise the fact that the present and future of our country depends largely on the educated and trained population who must possess essential skills and attitudes for jobs that make the economy, increased quality of life and for all of us to live in peaceful coexistence in the community.

The current initiative to review the 1978 Education Act symbolises our country's conviction to pave new directions for education reform that would strengthen the education sector and strive to achieve both quality opportunity and excellence in education for our citizens.

Successive Governments, including the current Government fully recognises the valuable role education plays in the country. The Government is aware of the success of primary education that on an annual basis only 11 out of total Standard 6 enrolments fail to make it up to Form 1. On lower secondary education, the Government intends to introduce fee free education policy within the next 4-years. On tertiary education, the Government will pursue establishment of the fourth University of the South Pacific Campus in the country. The Ministry of Education, as part of whole of Government approach, is committed in implementing these policies and strategies in the next four years.

The Ministry of Education envisions that through increased collaboration and participation of all stakeholders, a progressive sustainable education system that is responsive to the needs of her citizens can be achieved.

### **3.3.3 Public Service**

The Ministry of Public Service is committed to the Government's Reform Agenda on the Public Service, especially in the area of improved Public Sector Management to ensure improved service delivery. The Ministry of Public Service and the Public Service Commission will strive to implement the following the Government reform agendas on the Public Service.

Firstly, is to develop a new Public Service Legislation that will provide for an independent and high performing Public Service that delivers services to the Government and the public in a manner that is responsive and effective.

Accompanying this important legislation will be relevant subsidiary rules and regulations that make up the Public Service Human Resources Management Governance Framework, such as the Public Service Commission Regulations, the General Orders and the Public Service Rules and Policies. This ultimately will result in a new governance framework that will support a strong and accountable public service capable of delivering services and outcomes of government efficiently and effectively.

Secondly, the Ministry will introduce performance based management and rewarding systems for the Solomon Islands Public Service, through the introduction of the Performance Management Policy. This will ultimately help Government Ministries achieve their corporate plans and goals by linking individual and team performance to Ministry's work plans and embrace the principles of open and transparent performance appraisal and discussion between supervisors and staff.

Related to this issue of performance, the Ministry of Public Service is also serious about taking action on the chronic issue of workplace absenteeism across the Public Service, and will therefore implement the recently developed Attendance and Absence Management Policy.

Together, these new systems and processes will ensure that the human resources of the Solomon Islands Government are managed in a professional and accountable manner, and that it remains relevant and competitive to perform its duties as we progress further as a nation into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In that regard, the Ministry of Public Service is also very conscious of the rising living costs in the country, and has also commenced work on the review of the Public Service Salary Structure and Remuneration Policy. It is something we all agree must be completed soon.



The Public Service Commission, which is an independent body established under the Constitution. It will also be strengthened to enable it to fulfil its constitutional functions. This strengthening programme will involve the provision of an efficient administration to manage the day-to-day affairs of the Commission, as well a defined budget and other resources needed for it to function effectively and independently.

### **3.3.4 Home Affairs**

The Ministry of Home Affairs plays a critically vital role in the stability of our country. Obviously, this is recognised by the Government. Therefore, the Government will implement the following policy objectives:

- a) Review the Citizenship Act;
- b) Review the Censorship Act;
- c) Review the HCC Act 1999;
- d) Encourage and facilitate annual consultations between Government & Non-Government Organizations, Non-State Actors and Civil Society Groups; and
- e) Review the Gaming & Lotteries Act.

Additional to implementation of these policy objectives, the Government will encourage sports development, introduce a bio data registration system and enact a Keep Honiara Legislation.

### **3.3.5 Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening**

#### **3.3.5.1 Provincial Government Strengthening Program**

In Collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Capital Development Fund and potential donors, the SIG through the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening embarked into Phase 2 of the Provincial Government Strengthening Programme 2015-2019. The general over-arching objective of the PGSP is poverty reduction and improvement in the general wellbeing and livelihood of Solomon Islanders. This is also the very same vision of the Government.

Since the inception of PGSP Phase 1, the Program engaged in financial reforms and effective public expenditure management programs for Provincial Governments. In carrying out these reforms, along with capacity building of provincial Assemblies, Provincial executives and administration, the PGSP-Phase 1 also assisted Provincial Governments to showcase their ability to control and properly manage aspects of their finances. In particular, they were given the opportunity to perform (*with investment funds under the Provincial Capacity Development Fund/PCDF*) and demonstrate refined skills in sound public financial/Public Expenditure management practices.

The introduction of small-scale infrastructural projects, through the PCDF, provided Provincial Governments the opportunity also to improve their capacity to adequately plan and implement development and infrastructure projects.

The aim of PSGP Phase 2 is to consolidate the achievements made so far, and to further build the capacity of provinces and Provincial Governments; to provide quality public service delivery through an efficient organisation of the provincial administration, and increase accountability of Provincial Governments towards their people.

This obviously is a major concern and one that was mentioned by the Honourable Prime Minister during his recent visits to Pangoe, Choiseul Province during the Second Appointed Day and Auki, Malaita Province during the launch of the Malaita Alliance for Reform and Transformation Provincial Government Policy Statement, Translation and Strategy.

That is to say, a fundamental issue confronting Provincial Governments, which the Ministry is trying to address in collaboration with other line ministries, is the ability to come together through joint planning and alignment of work programs and sharing resources for the sake of effective service delivery to our communities.

The biggest challenge is whether Provincial Assembly Members and National Members of Parliament, Chiefs, Churches, Women and youths and other groups are able to work together. At the provincial level, it is also important for resources, work plans and community programs to be aligned, so that they do not duplicate each other in terms of service delivery. It is pleasing to note that the Ministry of Provincial Government's ambition is to address this important issue with the relevant stakeholders in 2015.

### **3.3.6 Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs**

One of our key strengths in Solomon Islands is the centrality and resilience of family, kinship and community. Solomon Islands women, youth and children have always been recognized as valuable members of our families and communities, and recognized for their essential roles in family and community life. The caring and nurturing of children for instance is of immense value to Solomon Islanders. This is evident in our social safety net which ensures that children grow up in a loving and supportive environment.

Through the Ministry's work with women, youth and children, there have been noticeable changes of life styles and attitudes over the years due to breakdown in traditional family and community structures under the stress of social and economic change. Family structures have been changing, particularly in Honiara, and the traditional family safety net has weakened bringing with it a lot of challenges and difficulties.

Urbanisation has resulted in youth and children moving away from their families in search of better schools and educational opportunities. These factors increase their vulnerability to abuse, neglect, exploitation, idleness and hopelessness.

Despite the above challenges, the Government should pride itself in some of the progress it has made to address gender inequality, youth delinquency and in the way it addresses child abuse, exploitation and neglect. The Ministry is proud of the positive steps Government has taken so far and what has been evident as increased political will for support to the areas of women, youth and children. The establishment of a full-fledged ministry for women, youth and children is evident of increased political will.

Policy formulation and strengthening the ministry's policy, planning and coordination role have been areas where the ministry has made significant improvements both at the national and provincial levels. As well national development policies, strategies and planning frameworks have been strengthened around the areas of gender equality and women's empowerment, eliminating violence against women and girls, youth development and protection of the rights of the child. With these positive developments, there are improvements in the country's national laws, policy coordination and a strengthened partnership network.

There is also increased budgetary support to the ministry and for expanding the responsibility for women, youth and children across the machinery of government. For example, from 2007 to 2015, resources given to the Ministry have increased tenfold.

There have also been significant improvements in the area of legislative change. In 2014, the Family Protection Act was passed by Parliament. The Act is a response to the reality faced by victims of family violence in the Solomon Islands. This violence may be in the form of physical violence, sexual violence, or economic abuse. Victims of family violence do not have easy access to justice and adequate protection by the law when they experience violence. The Family Protection Act therefore provides protection for any member of the family who is a victim of violence in the home.

Other areas of legal reform to increase protection for women and children have been done particularly with the reform of the Police Act and the Penal Code and the Criminal procedure Code.

A Child and Family Welfare Bill has also been developed and will soon be presented before Cabinet. Unlike most other common law countries, Solomon Islands does not have a child welfare or child protection law. As a result, welfare officers have difficulty taking action because there is no law clearly stating their powers and duties.

With awareness and advocacy being stepped up over the years, there now seems to be more awareness and support to the role of the Ministry. Increased partnerships and strengthened networks among stakeholders have resulted in increased buy-in for support to women, youth and children's issues.

In spite of the progress made so far, there remain a lot of challenges and areas which the government will need to continue to address.

One major area of concern is gender disparities, in which women are disadvantaged in relation to men. This continues to exist in almost all areas of Solomon Islands life including the highly gendered division of labour in which women do the bulk of unpaid domestic work, care-giving and food production work. Furthermore, there are attitudinal and structural barriers to equal participation in education, paid work, and public decision-making at all levels; and limited rights to own or inherit land, housing, property and other resources.

In this regard, value systems which link a man with power and control over women have contributed to the very high rates of physical, emotional and sexual violence against women and girls in Solomon Islands. Sadly, Solomon Islands ranks amongst the highest in terms of a high prevalence rate in physical and sexual violence among countries which have undertaken the Family Health and Safety Study on gender based violence. The Study recommends that there be law reform to provide legislation that effectively deals with the issue of violence in the family. Furthermore, access by rural women to basic services continues to be an area of concern. Greater focus needs to be done in this area.

Solomon Islands is a youthful nation. Young people, ages between 14-29yrs, comprise 29% of this country's population with young women making up 48% and young men 52% respectively. It is most important to note that these figures will continue to rise at least for another 10 years. Inevitably, there is an expanding demand for more education, health, employment and other social services. Around 80% of the nation's population resides in rural areas. However, there continues to be an increase in population movement from rural areas to Honiara and other rural centres. One example of the rural to urban drift shows that young people make up nearly one-third of the total population of Honiara city and are faced with a lot of problems associated with urbanisation.

The high competition for limited education places, training and employment opportunities will continue to challenge the public and private sectors—and our youths for many more years to come if there is little investment in the development of and for young people. Despite a strong government focus at the provincial level in youth development, communities are dissatisfied that the amount of funding that is allocated to support young people has less visible benefits at the community level.

A baseline study which the Ministry helped to conduct in 2008 revealed that many children experience abuse in their daily lives, including physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Often, this abuse is at the hands of those who should be providing the child with love and care – their parents or other family members. With the breakdown of our traditional family and community structures, children will be more subject to abuse, neglect and exploitation.

To respond effectively and efficiently to the increasing demands to improve the situation of women, youth and children, the Government's policy objectives are being pursued to achieve gender equality, youth empowerment, and increased protection of children from abuse, exploitation and neglect through: improved focus on women's economic empowerment and eliminating violence against women and children; empowerment of women, youth and children to reach their full potential through socio-economic development programs, increased funding support to women and youth livelihood empowerment programs; improved infrastructure and employment opportunities and increased community engagement.

Four (4) national policies for women, youth and children, namely: (1). Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy, (2). National Policy on Eliminating Violence Against Women, (3). National Youth Policy, and (4). National Children's Policy are in place and will be used to guide and implement governments policy strategies.

The Ministry leads implementation of the Conventions on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Implementation of both Conventions is integral to the implementation of Government policy.

Emerging issues such as climate change and sea level rise, and natural disasters will be seriously considered as Government policy is advanced. While in disaster situations, women and children are more vulnerable, there is also the need to build, harness and unleash their potential to do more for community resilience and to contribute to sustainable developments through disaster risk reduction, particularly in the area of environmental and natural resource management; governance; and urban and land use planning and social and economic planning- the key drivers of disaster risk.

### **3.3.7 Police and Correctional Services**

The Ministry for Police, National Security and Correctional Services is the leading government Ministry in the overall provision of national security, policing and correctional services in Solomon Islands. Its primary functions are to provide policy guidance, Administration and budget implementation and monitoring and coordination of activities and

programs for the Ministry Headquarters, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and the Correctional Services of Solomon Islands.

In the Policy Statement, the Government will put special attention to combat lawlessness and end to all shapes and forms of crimes committed in the country. This is intended to be achieved through various strategies including working in partnership with stakeholders to support the development of a National Security Policy and the review of all border agreements and the strengthening of border surveillance, reconnaissance and monitoring of operations at all borders.

The Government will also put special attention to strengthening relations with International security and intelligence agencies to enable Solomon Islands have up-to-date information on international security threats. Special attention will also be given to establishing and supporting cooperation between law enforcement agencies in Solomon Islands to ensure that the laws of this country are properly enforced.

The Government is concerned with proliferation of World War 2 explosive ordnance throughout Solomon Islands and will establish and support the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Facility in Hell's Point to ensure that all explosive ordnance and remnant of war are collected and demolished properly to ensure that the lives of our people are safe from these dangerous items.

In combating lawlessness and crimes committed in our country, the Government will develop and establish a community policing and crime prevention model relevant to Solomon Islands and recognizing tradition values and systems and will work in partnership with all levels of the community. This model will aim at involving all citizens to participate in ensuring that our communities are safe and secure.

The Government will also develop the operational capabilities of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force to ensure that it has the ability to respond to and manage the security or serious criminal threats to the Solomon Islands, including transnational crime and terrorism.

The use of alcohol and drugs is increasingly becoming a concern in our communities and the Government will put special attention to this concern by reviewing the Liquor Act to ensure that improved support is provided to both National and Provincial Liquor Licensing

Boards and to enable law enforcement agencies effectively enforce alcohol related offences and prevent the illicit manufacturing, distribution and consumption of illegal drugs and beverages.

In support of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, the Government will work together with RAMSI to ensure that the activities outlined in the Drawdown Strategy are achieved including support to the limited rearmament of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. As we approach 2017, the government will work closely with RAMSI to ensure that the transition of the RAMSI mission to bilateral or multilateral is seamless.

The Government will also pay special attention to the Correctional Services of Solomon Islands. The operational and corporate functions will be strengthened and supported to ensure the Correctional services are effectively and efficiently provided. Specialized facilities will be developed to provide safe and secure accommodation for juvenile offenders, female offenders, mentally ill prisoners and immigration detainees. All National Correctional services development programs will be reviewed including the Parole Regulations to ensure that stakeholders concerns are recognized and Ministerial guidelines are developed.

The Government will continue to maintain all Correctional Centre facilities throughout the country. This is to ensure that Correctional Services of Solomon Islands meet the United Nations minimum standard rules and the United Nations minimum rules for the administration of juvenile justice. Partnership with stakeholders especially our communities will be enhanced to enable the proper rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into our communities.

The Government will continue to review, expand and implement a range of development and training programs for Correctional Services Staff. This is to ensure that officers maintain current essential qualification including performance assessment, leadership development, succession planning and professional development.

To ensure that National Security, Policing and Correctional Services have an impact across the country, the Government has allocated a budget of \$344.2 million for the next four years to support the security sector.

### **3.3.8 Justice and Legal Affairs**



The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs has constitutional and statutory obligations with National Judiciary as a semi-autonomous entity. However, these entities are connected to some degree on common administrative purposes. This is vitally important to note because providing resources to this ministry ought to be considered on the different functional set up and budgetary costs of these entities.

In summary, our justice system holds a fundamental aspect to the stability and progressive development of Solomon Islands. We must not misjudge it against its numerical manpower as a small jurisdiction. Rather, we must recognise our judicial system as a fundamental entity for peace building, economic advancement and political stability in the country. Hence, we must resource the justice system accordingly for it to effectively and efficiently deliver services the country requires from her respective justice agencies for a peaceful, safe and secure, ethnically diverse and coexisting Solomon Islands society.

### **3.3.9 National Unity and Peace**

With the launch of the Government Policy Statement, Translation and Strategy came additional functions of the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace, are:

- a) Recognise, Strengthen and empower Traditional Governance Systems and Structures;  
and
- b) Protect and preserve the Diversity of our organic tradition and culture in Solomon Islands.

The Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace will continue with the process of Reconciliation and related programs in both Guadalcanal and Malaita, and will also continue to pursue the Bougainville spill over effect with Choiseul and Western Provinces.

In this regard, trauma counselling, healing and other social transformation programs will continue in targeted communities and groups of peoples in partnership with Churches, chiefs, community leaders, women, other Faith based organisations, Non-Government Organisations and Civil Society Organisations.

Furthermore, major Reconciliation Programs such as between Guadalcanal and Malaita Provinces followed by carefully planned, co-ordinated and implemented rehabilitation

programs will be seriously addressed with the view of accomplishment within the next four years. This will then pave the way for a National Reconciliation. However, a major task also for 2015 will be to commence the implementation of Recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report in conjunction with the Office of the Prime minister. This will commence immediately after a body is set up in the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to oversee the process of implementation.

As alluded to earlier, the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace has been assigned additional functions of; Recognising, strengthening and empowering Traditional Governance Systems and structures. And also, protect and preserve the diversity of our organic traditions and cultures in Solomon Islands.

In its 2015 work plan, the Ministry plans to commence consultative programs for the establishment of relevant legislations to implement these two policy objectives. In addition, the Ministry's initiatives will include re-designing of the Solomon Islands Coat of Arms to reflect our cultural identity and sensitivity. \

### **3.3.10 Foreign Affairs and External Trade**

Finally, on the social sector, allow me to close with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade. On Foreign Affairs, the Government will maintain the Look North Policy. On External Trade, the Government will uphold the South-South Relationship. The Government will bring to new heights this development strategy of Look North Policy and South-South Relationship.

The Government recognises the value of peaceful coexistence with our regional and international neighbours and partners to promote trade, economics and foreign relations. The Government will pursue people-to-people democracy.

## **4. Closing Remarks**

The Honourable Speaker: In concluding, may I respectfully remind us of what the Prime Minister, Hon Manasseh Damukana Sogavare, said during the launch of the Democratic Coalition for Change Government Policy Statement, Translation and Strategy: I have not

forgotten that strategy and plans are only as good as their implementation. I am fully conscious of the fact that no matter how good our intention as reflected in our strategy and programs is, if we cannot effectively implement them then our strategic plan is as poor or bad as our implementation outcome.

Prime Minister Manasseh D. Sogavare, 27 January 2015. Today, I have laid the noble and good intentions of the Government's Policy Statement, Translation and Strategy to the floor of the National Parliament. I look forward with enormous confidence and hope to the future, that these policy intentions will be implemented with much vigor and energy. I believe that together we can deliver. I trust that together, we can foster change. I have faith that together, we can develop our country, Solomon Islands. Prime Minister Sogavare said, "strategy and plans are only as good as their implementation", let us not disappoint our people, let us work together – Government Caucus, Independent Group and Opposition Bench – to do a difference on the lives of our peoples.

At this juncture, I would like to thank our development and donor partners, most profoundly, for their continuous assistance to us, in particular to RAMSI, for its formidable good work. To all our leaders in our communities, our people wish to applaud you, and to thank you for your unfailing support and encouragement.

Thank you, Hon. Speaker and May God richly bless you, as you chair the Tenth Parliament of Solomon Islands. Thank you, Hon. Prime Minister and May God abundantly guide you, as you lead the Government of Solomon Islands to implement its policies and strategies. Thank you, Ministers of the Crown and may God grant you His wisdom, as you spearhead the political leadership of your ministries to assist the Government implement its policies and strategies. Thank you, honourable Members of Parliament and may God give you a humble heart, as you put people first in the next four-years. God Save Our Gracious Queen. God Bless Our Beloved Solomon Islands.

**Mr Speaker:** Before I adjourn Parliament I would like to remind invited guests to join us in the Paul Tovua Complex for light refreshments after the adjournment.

Honourable Members, Pursuant to *Standing Order* 7(5), this sitting is now adjourned.

*The House adjourned at 12.36pm*