

THURSDAY 26TH MARCH 2015

The Speaker, Mr Ajilon Nasiu took the Chair at 9:45am.

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

All were present with the exception of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs; National Planning & Aid Coordination, the Leader of Independent and the Member of Parliament for Malaita Outer Islands.

STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTIONS

Motion No.1

Motion to thank his Excellency the Governor General for his Speech to Parliament (debate continues)

Hon ISHMAEL AVUI (*Minister for Justice and Legal Affairs*): Thank you for giving me the opportunity to thank His Excellency, the Governor General for the Speech from the Throne.

If it is in the United States, it will be called the State of the Union address and will be moved or delivered by the President of the United States. In the Commonwealth, it is known as the Speech from the Throne. The throne is a reference to Her Majesty the Queen of England, so traditionally it is a speech by the Queen of England. For obvious reasons, the Queen is not able to present the speech in this Parliament and so as provided for in our organic law it is presented and delivered by our Governor General.

The Speech from the Throne is supposed to be held annually. In Solomon Islands, however, it is held less frequently. This is because it depends on the government of the day, whether to have it organised or not. This time it has been organised after several years of not doing it. And so I would like to congratulate the DCC Government and especially the Honourable Prime Minister for seeing it fit to have this important event to happen.

I listened to the speech attentively and it is well written and very comprehensive. I also noted that it is practical and ceremonial. It is practical because the Speech demonstrates the government is opening a new legislative year. Opening a new legislative year is important because the role of this Parliament is to make laws, good laws and not bad ones.

It is important that we are reminded of our legislative responsibility because certain policy intentions contained in the Speech from the Throne may need new legislation or current ones to be amended in order for the policies and programs of the government to be implemented smoothly.

I also said the Speech is ceremonial because it comes from the head of state given on her behalf by the Governor General. This signifies that the executive authority of the people of Solomon Islands lies with the head of state, her Majesty the Queen. So ceremonially her Majesty through the Governor General is saying since I have the executive authority these are the intended actions of my government, a government that is duly put into office democratically and constitutionally. I am so thankful that such an opportunity is given to her Majesty's representative to identify very vividly the directions of her Majesty's Government.

Also featured in the Speech are my Ministry's noble intentions and I am thankful for this as it recognizes the pivotal role the Judiciary plays in our governance and nation building. It is for this reason that the Governor General mentioned clearly and I quote, "the Ministry of Justice will be strengthened so that our judiciary system is effective and efficiently delivered so that we live in a peaceful, safe, and secure Solomon Islands".

I am moved by the positive gesture because the DCC Government will resource what has been a neglected ministry. It is no surprise and that is why it has never been able to effectively deliver judicial and legal responsibilities as we would have expected.

I therefore would like to thank the DCC Government on behalf of my agency Heads; the Chief Justice, the Director of Public prosecution, the Public Solicitor and the Attorney

General, for recognizing our issues and to make that commitment to resource the Ministry of Justice. Let me assure you that despite being under resourced, my Ministry will always try its best to discharge its judicial and legal functions. Though it may in comparative terms appear to be small and less resourced, we will give justice to whom is due and a cup of suffering to the one who asked for it.

It has been proven in other economies that a well-functioning judiciary system plays a crucial role in nation building, especially in maintaining law and order. Law and order therefore must be maintained as it plays a crucial role in economic growth. In fact it has been recognized that amongst the institutions that influence positive economic performance, the legal and judiciary systems play a prominent role. Whatever our intentions are, we must not lose focus on judiciary, and I thank His Excellency for stressing this important point in his speech.

To conclude I am happy with the speech and I would like to thank and congratulate His Excellency for his endurance, composure and the strength seen in him when he delivered the speech. On the same note, I would also like to thank you Mr Speaker, His Lordship the Chief Justice and also the Honourable Prime Minister for being present with His Excellency during his Speech. The presence of the three of you in this Chamber reveals the essence of the provisions of our organic law. Your good self, Sir, represents the legislature, the Chief Justice represents the judiciary and the Honourable Prime Minister represents the executive. These are the three arms of the government and I thank you all three because this is the only time when the three arms of a government are present in one place. They rarely come together because of their independence.

Finally, I would like to assure you that I and my good people of East Central Guadalcanal will continue to value the authority of the Head of State and would like to thank the Governor General for the speech that contains not only our good intentions but sets the direction for this country into the future. For that I salute you your Excellency. With those very brief remarks I support the motion.

Mr MATTHEW WALE (*Aoke/Langa Langa*): Thank you for the opportunity to contribute very briefly to the motion moved by the Prime Minister that this House thank His

Excellency the Governor General for the Speech from the Throne which he very ably delivered on Tuesday morning.

As I listen to the contribution by the Minister for Justice, he reflects back on the history of this tradition, it might be a useful exercise at some stage for us. Perhaps for the people to understand this tradition where the monarch or her representative which is the Head of State is invited to Parliament; the emphasis is on the invitee because if he is not invited he will not be attending. And in many years gone by that invitation never reach the Head of State and that is why it has taken a long time before a speech from the throne was delivered again by a Governor General in Parliament.

Also the reflection that was expressed by the Minister for Justice and it is visible to us on Tuesday morning when the Heads of the three Arms of the state-yourself presiding in Parliament, His Lordship Chief Justice which presides over the judicial services and the Prime Minister who is the head of the Executive authority. When you sit together up there, it was quite a moving sight. Moving, in the sense that although independent, all three people serve the people of this country and three of them all hold together the ideals for which our founding fathers put into the constitution to underpin our democracy.

It is also important for the people who are listening to understand that the speech from the Throne which was delivered by his Excellency the Governor General is a broad outline of the Executive government's policy intentions for its term of office. Hence this ought to shade some lights on how the government understand the present challenges that we faced as a country and how the government is going to respond to the challenges. Furthermore, the speech also ought to paint perhaps in general brush strokes, a picture of the vision that government sees for our beloved country.

And so perhaps this is my first point that the Prime Minister on behalf of the government at some stage ought to articulate to the House, the vision that the government see for the country as it look into the medium and long term future.

There are elements of a vision that spread right across the speech. I am not saying there is an absence of a vision in the speech from the throne. But I think there is a place for a more coherent articulation of the vision and I think it is useful and important for the country to hear. So that all government ministries, departments, SOEs, agencies, the private sector

and the lower level of government structures- we can paddle in the same direction and work towards the same vision.

As it was rightly said by his Excellency, we all need to paddle together and we all need to paddle in the same direction, as we are travelling in the same canoe. But if some who are in this canoe are paddling in the other direction then we might just stay at one place or move back. So a vision will help us that a coherently articulated vision will help all of us to capture a clearer glimpse of our destination in order for all of us to do our bit to contribute to the journey.

The speech from the Throne rightly emphasised the things that the government wants to do in its term and this is very important. Hence the other benefit of a coherent articulation of the vision is that it will help us all to gauge at perhaps regular intervals and judge whether government policy intentions, decisions and actions are strategic in pursuit of that stated vision. This is because sometimes the struggle with the condition of saying one thing and do something else when under pressure of short term issues and this has happened in our governments in the past. It is important that right at the outset that we try to avoid this with a new government in a new term.

Sir, how do we decide of all the good things that the Government like to do and which one is really strategic, which ones are really important and so forth? Because yes, everything outlined in the speech is very good and there is more in the policy document which is every good. There is no government in this country we hope will come and want to do bad things. We hope there is no government that will come and would like to do the things which do not have the best outcomes for country. But of all the things that we can do there must be a sense that some of these things are more important than others, and some of those more important things are more strategic than others, and so that our resource allocation in the budget goes firstly towards the most strategic things then the more important things, then if there are some leftovers, it will go towards the things that even if they wait it will not hold us down or hold us back.

But having a vision Mr Speaker, it helps us to make that kind of judgement; it helps us to see or to grasp, get a handle on the direction that the government wants to set for us as a country and as a society.

Sir, yesterday when I listened to the Minister for Environment- the Member of Parliament for Gao/Bugotu, I was touched by the first part of his contribution. I think that we have a Minister for the Environment who gets it, and it is important I think that we all get it. We get what? Well the Environment is the basis of our economy and its potential and when we are reckless with the environment or we are neglectful of our environment. Mr Speaker, we or our next generations will suffer the consequences. When I think about the economy, we must know that the economy is derived from our environment but if we think that our economy is something that just hangs in the air; but even the air is also part of the environment.

And so it is an important consideration when the government is thinking about its policy. Also it is important consideration when we think and look through the budget that our government will present because the environment belongs to all of us and it's not just for this generation but it is also for the next and future generations and therefore, there is an honourous responsibility on all of us. Especially the government that leads us, to make sure we treat it with the greatest responsibility.

Sir, I think with regards to the environment we must have a healthy robust honest debate and come to a deliberate and a decided position on where the balance is between protection and conservation on one hand, and exploitation of the environment on the other. And this one I think will inform government's policy.

As I say, no individual person owns the environment, even though he owns the customary land or he owns every land yet he does not own the environment even on that land, above that land or under that land and around it, not at all. When we start to think that way, we make ourselves out to be God and that is not right. As I have said not one generation owns the environment. This ought to give us cause. We often treat the environment with disdain and with no thought for others, especially the next generations.

This consideration is so important to sustainable development that it must underpin all our legislations and must be a determining factor in the way we exploit the environment, the way we exploit the revenue that must be paid to the common good and the manner in which such revenues and wealth are derived from exploitation of the environment can and cannot be used. It is time that clear boundaries are set also on some of these wealth and revenues which we place boundaries around on ways that we cannot use the revenues on.

This could enable us to clearly place our priorities and how we invest for the future, especially with regards to wealth and revenue generated from non renewable natural resources.

On that note, perhaps it would be an exercise for the government to do and task perhaps one or more individuals to review all our legislations or perhaps a reference to the Law Review Commission. This is to relook at all our legislations; in the first instance regulate the environment and its exploitation but perhaps more broadly to ensure that by deliberate design and not by default that these regulations advance this very important principles.

The importance of the environment ought to be the number one principle moderating all government intentions, decisions and actions. Any decision that will require the expending of funds will require the raising of the funds in the first place. Such funds are raised from the exploitation of the environment. If such exploitation is environmentally unsustainable, that fact must moderate our spending decisions.

Sir, we must not make spending decisions in the abstract as if the money will appear out of thin air. But I suppose even if money appears out of thin air there must be some atmospheric pressure too, that we ought to be a little more thoughtful of as well.

I am not advocating that we close shop and do not exploit our environment- far from it, I am saying let us be deliberate about finding the balance. If we know that our population is increasing- a large proportion of our population is in the youth group. The statistics which the Leader of Opposition has pointed out yesterday shows that this demography implies that in 15 to 20years our population will pass the 1million mark.

Population increase brings immense pressure on the environment and if we do not find the balance now and lay the legislative boundaries the inheritance that we will be handing over to the younger and the next generations will be one that will be characterised by hardship, want and perhaps even a deepening of the poverty that is now slowly appearing in our midst.

Sir, when the Minister of Finance delivers the 2015 budget it will be important for the House to bear these considerations in mind when considering the 2015 Budget.

I am encouraged by much of what was in the Speech from the Throne. The government is clearly getting its focus to rest on the people, to see what can be done to

improve living standards, reduce the cost of living and increase access to economic opportunities.

It is in this light also that I was particularly encouraged to hear His Excellency during the speech speak against the cargo cult and the handout mentality. It would be- in due time of course, and ministries will start to implement policies, be useful to see how exactly the government will go about changing this mentality. Of course it is not an easy thing to change. It is not just the role of government to change either. It would be useful to see what leadership will be provided to that mentality.

I think, in terms of areas within the reach of government, one big area that we have to admit that contributes a lot to the cargo cult and handout mentality is resources that are allocated to constituencies under the responsibility of Members of Parliament. Perhaps, when government looks at how we can mitigate or perhaps eradicate the handout mentality that we could possibly start with those resources. I think the government can be very bold in this long overdue matter.

Into the medium term, there are two principles that are ought to guide government decision making. Firstly, as I have already alluded to, a determination on the part of the government to find and maintain environmental balance.

Secondly, is creating employment for our people. The short-cut to minimising and perhaps even eradicating the handout mentality is to ensure that the economy is creating the jobs that our people need. They can earn jobs and feed themselves and have a more sustainable living standard that they can either maintain or improve, and over time they would learn to live within their means. It would be, perhaps the most effective way to confront the handout mentality, is for the economy to be creating jobs.

This is a subject I could never overemphasise; that giving a job to a human being is the best gift we can give. It affirms that person's dignity and instils confidence in his participation in the economy and the society more broadly. Jobs will also play a role in mitigating crime in our midst and will contribute greatly to building the stable society, the stable Solomon Islands that we would like to see.

In listening to the Speech from the Throne, I was intent- and this goes back to the last House, because those of us in the Opposition in the last House were quite animated about the matter of jobs and employment. I was tuning my ear when I was listening intently to the

speech to hear what the government is projecting with regards to creation of employment opportunities inside the economy for our people, especially our young people.

A lot of things were in the speech and there is more in the policy document. And no doubt jobs will be created when those things will be implemented. But I think it is important that there is some functional capacity inside the government, perhaps within the Treasury or some other department within the government that is able to project and monitor the creation of jobs and employment opportunities which will rise out of government policy and timing of when we to expect such job opportunities that will come on stream in the economy.

I think such statistics are very important and will help parliament and the government especially when making decisions which will affect our economy.

Sir, we look forward to the 2015 Budget to see if job creation is a theme under guarding the government's fiscal policy over the next four years. There is of course much, much more to be said about this very important subject, and much was said in the last House. It is also very important that government see the role of the private sector as central to job creation in our economy beyond just saying it. If we grant this then it is important that there is a more robust process of consultation with the private sector to ensure that government policy is at the very least consistency with sustainably growing the economy. There are important considerations here for government's fiscal policy over the next four years. I think government's fiscal policy must not be passive with regards to seeking increased quality investments in the economy.

Mr Speaker, I will now move on to land. Reform to customary land must have at its core the legal recognition of tribes and tribal rights. If these are in some way distorted, such reforms may lead to social problems. It is true that the tribal and customary land tenure system has locked and tied up land, but at the same time it is the bottom line of the safety net in our country. So it is important that we deal with it responsibly, sensitively, but firmly and clearly and carrying our people with us and make them understand the objectives of why we make the proposed changes to the customary tenure systems in our country.

Sir, we would do well to study the experiences of our neighbours in Fiji, Vanuatu and in New Zealand where the Maori tribes are involved in dealing with tribal land and titles, to inform our own search for a just and workable system for our country. It is when tribes have

confidence in the security of their rights that land can be made available for development and investment and the rewards from it equitably distributed, otherwise it is only the trustees that enjoy the benefits from exploitation of land resources.

I must applaud the government in its stated affirmative action policy towards increasing and strengthening the participation of indigenous Solomon Islanders in business. Our constitution anticipates this need and provides for it. We live in a country where over 90percent of the population is indigenous but its business participation in the economy accounts for less than 1percent. This is a grave and serious anomaly that must be redressed but in a just manner.

Our indigenous cultures are not used to the complexities of a capitalist economy. It is therefore no surprise that we find many of our indigenous businesses failing from time to time. We must do a lot more to build their capacities to be resilient and successful in business. The policy position underpinning the Foreign Investment Act of a level playing field is quite misleading. The playing field is not level at all because of our people and culture and so forth.

Our indigenous people do not have the capital or even the skills even if they have an interest in business. The business culture, access to credit, finance and professional support services and things we need to succeed in business. Without some form of affirmative action policy, the same experience will repeat over the coming generations and various sectors or market in our economy become saturated and it will be even more difficult for indigenous people to participate meaningfully and substantially seriously in our economy and thereby prolonging surge of disceod and strive in our society. I am encouraged very much by the government's intentions as announced in the Speech from the Throne to look into this area and do something about it.

On the proposals to move to a Federal System of Government, I would like to flag with the government that the new structures contained in the Proposed Federal Constitution ought to meet two important criteria. Namely, first, the periphery must not duplicate the centre. Right now, at the national level we have parliament, cabinet and so forth. The provincial government also have their assembly and cabinet. Sometimes you might wonder what the ministers are doing and funds can be eaten up just by the machinery itself and there will be not funds for services for our people. This is a very important consideration.

Secondly, is the question of affordability. What is the use of having a governance structure that consumes most of the scarce resources of the country? And services to reach people becomes the sacrifice, it becomes the trend that we must make so that we can distribute the power across the various levels in our country. This second consideration is the pivot on which this proposal will be judged. As in other jurisdictions across the world, states will be required to have their Chief Justice, Magistrate, Commissioner of Police. And at the Federal level we will also have the similar jurisdictions and it looks like we will struggle to finance these institutions. And if we struggle to finance these institutions then which funds can we have to build the roads that we used to talk about? Which funds are we going to build good water supplies for our people to drink; good drinking water or to improve our National Referral Hospital? If someone goes to the Referral Hospital chances to die is much higher than before. Which funds are we going to pay for the basic education so that we can improve its quality? So that when a child leaves forms five, he or she can read and write. The basic things that we want for our country can be achieved. So the question of affordability of a governance structure is a very important one. And I feel that as part of this parliament and the two previous parliaments. May be I miss any workshop on this or I did not remember there's been a good robust consultation with parliament about these proposals. There's a lot of consultation that happen in grass root level and that is loadable. There's a lot of consultation that's happening at other levels as well, and it looks like we expect that when it comes to an end then we become involved at. But I it is really good that we involve right through so that the issues that we saw difficult, we can find solutions to at any proposal. And it receives a more seamless reception in this house.

Further, the proposals as announced by His Excellency for a Constituent Assembly to be enacted by a constitutional amendment. I think its bothering on a demonstration of a lack of trust in this parliament. Sir, it is a move to take the decision out of the hands of parliament or at best to dilute the power of parliament in deciding this matter.

Sir, what legitimacy will the various elements of a constituent assembly have to decide this very important matter? They seek a mandate from the people during an election on this matter. What will be the process for the constituent assembly? Its standing orders perhaps, regulating its proceeding or how to deal with any amendments that are proposed and so forth. Of what percentage of such an assembly would represent an affirmative vote

for the change. These questions obvious are questions for the future when my proposal for the constituent assembly comes. But my point is it is good for us to held a workshop for this together and on a bi- partition level as well. So that we do not get to a situation where we get to the floor of the house and then we can see the bottle neck or misunderstanding or perhaps politics. And it become involved in this process and has taken so much process, so much financial and time in resource investment over many years. And so it is important that we deal with it responsibly.

I just want to suggest it like this on this matter, that government consider amending the Constitution instead to enable a national referendum to be held on the proposal. Instead of just a constituent assembly, all the people in the country that are registered in the electoral roll can participate in a national referendum on this proposal. In that way, the people can decide directly and it would remove any taint of illegitimacy in this very, very important process. With increase funding going to the constituencies and the establishment of constituency governance structure, it is also important that some clarity be given on how this will sit within an overall Federal State structure. Right now with regards to provincial government systems, this area represent a serious policy disconnect and so it is important that some thinking is placed on this matter.

I wish to congratulate the Prime Minister and the government in taking a sector wide approach in its reform agenda. I take particular interest in the productive and resource sectors, these two sectors are like one and could be managed as one and they represent the best opportunities for increase economic and employment opportunities but also bearing in mind the need to maintain environmental balance. The jobs that our people are so desperately need are mostly in these sectors and the government must move with some heist, so I would suggest that perhaps the government consider establishing a subcommittee of cabinet to oversee the reforms under these two sectors to ensure that the reforms do not suffer neglect or fall under the inertia of Bureaucracy. Sometimes at the political level we have strong mind to do something but such thoughts are being held up somewhere at the Public Service or somewhere. Or when we need advices they say that they will find a Technical Advisor to do it like that until nothing happen as many process are there also to follow. We might already know what we want to do we are seeking advice but again it takes a long time to accomplish things.

Some of the quick gains that I think the government could pursue to have an impact on the economy in the short term is for us to get the RIPEL operate again either as RIPEL or as some other organisation. Hence, we need those plantations to produce and contribute again and provide jobs again.

Munda international airport is also another project that we need to complete and commission it so that it will start to handle the international flights and have impacts on tourism sector in the Western province and the country as a whole. It is regarded as a quick gain because little bit of budget resource can be allocated and the terminal will complete and the quality insurance can start.

The other one is "Anuha Island" which I think the government is paying some lease for it sometimes ago but we did not hear anything from. Now perhaps some initiative to get Anuha operational and contribute to the economy. At its peak it is a well known resort overseas which puts us on the tourist map and it have flow on effects in the economy Mr Speaker.

Sir, I think if the government was to focus its effort this year 2015, to try to achieve this quick gains the impact of economy and the jobs that would be created for our people will be quite substantial by the third or fourth year of the House. And so it will work very well for our economy and our people.

Sir, tourism represents perhaps the greatest potential for our economy over the next thirty or more years. From experience Mr Speaker, we know there is a market failure in this sector that require serious and coordinated government intervention and perhaps investment on a public private partnership basis.

Sir, we cannot address tourism by attempting to fix one or two aspects of it. It is a sector wide approach that is proposed in the speech from the throne is a useful one for this sector. By far Mr Speaker, the greatest catalysts for growth in the sector will come from having appropriate and good quality infrastructure on the ground, offering products that are suited to the market.

Here again Mr Speaker, I think the government ought to be bold and perhaps even be prepared to borrow substantial funds to invest to stimulate private sector participation.

I am late a little bit yesterday morning Mr Speaker, to come and I heard on the radio when the Prime Minister talked about this sector and he talked about travelling to and from

Honiara, why it is so expensive and I agree with all that the Prime Minister have said Mr Speaker.

There is the issue of economies of scale which is impacting the aspect of this sector and the comprehensive wide approach to this sector it will address a lot of issues that is identified or the questions asked by the Prime Minister when he moved this Motion Mr Speaker.

Sir, it is also very encouraging indeed to hear that the government will be increasing its funding for infrastructure. Of course Sir, it is important that the investment is made in quality infrastructure. I would also encourage the government Mr Speaker, to finally establish a robust and fair policy for shipping in the country and that in such a policy government will also make serious investment in indigenous ship building Mr Speaker. We have to protect the Indigenous shipping business Mr Speaker and their management capacity is enhance. When we are going through the tension which I have said, those indigenous ship owners were serving the country that they servicing all of us so please don't forget them. But it is part of this a punitive action initiative where government have announced I think that this shipping sector it should be one that has reserved for our people. If they can do it, encourage them and improve their capacity to become good and better and best with it and its like that. We should not open it up and those that have money step on their head and they choke that they almost drown in the sea Mr Speaker.

Also Mr Speaker, I apologise to the Opposition group but when we divide shipping funds, the politics surrounding it is quite divisive and it also ignore some important considerations. I am sure there were considerations that are right, but I think that this all point to the need for a robust shipping policy where all of us are aware about and then those that participate on this sector has equal access under such a policy. It is important that we are fair, just and equitable when dealing with such matters. Sir, of course 'standards' is also an important aspect in this sector and is no obstacle to government's affirmative action policy which can extend to this particular sector.

Sir, I would now like to move on to the health sector. There is much for us to do in this sector. However, I think we should improve the National Referral Hospital (NRH) and Kilu'ufi, and avoiding talking about other things. Over the recent past the NRH has been diminishing. The other night one of my friend had a stomach pain and he taught that he is

going to die. He went to the NRH at about 1am and he has to wait for a doctor. He waited until 8am before a doctor attends to him. If he is to die at that time he would have been. So, I think there are few things that need tightening at the management level. If our national NRH is offering such a service, what do you think about a clinic like that of *Talakali or Atoifi* which we could not even see from here? This could be even worse for a hospital like in Malu'u because it is located almost at the end of the road. So if we can start and make some quick gains and they are doable it would give positive confidence to our communities.

When listening to statistics on communicable diseases and other related disease I think these diseases are on the rise, perhaps climate change too. Maybe we eat too much rice and sugar is eating us at a fast rate too. So it is important that we make some of these quick gains.

Sir, these issues have often been raised in the previous House. We dealt with the inquiry which the parliament standing committee has conduct at the NRH. These issues are specifically with NRH but it is also cut cross to our other hospitals. However, it seems that these improvements have not happened. So it is important the Government seriously looks at it. I know the minister is an experienced health practitioner himself and will look into these issues.

I think the intention announced by the previous government to go of National referral Hospital to an autonomous board is an important initiative that the government must continue with and perhaps speed up so that it takes place soon and raise standards and also expectations and accountability for those standards for our professionals working in our health institutions, especially at the National Referral Hospital. Waiting times at our hospitals seem to be getting longer. On-call doctors working, especially on night shifts seem not to be at the place of work. Also, of course the infrastructure side of these issues, the quality of our health facilities are deteriorating and the availability of drugs seems to be rather sporadic. There are times we have enough supplies and other times we do not have enough.

There is a strong perception in the community that the number of preventable deaths is increasing. We do not have statistics for it but it is a perception. If it is true then it is largely because of neglect. We must bear the ultimate responsibility for our healthcare system. We must make every effort, and if we have to, reallocate funds to make sure that we

can mitigate at the very least, but perhaps go beyond that and make changes that will be irreversible in our healthcare system.

I would like to move very briefly to education sector. I think we should stop using the word 'fee free'. It was when the current Minister of Education was the Prime Minister and I was then his Minister of Education that we implemented this. This policy existed for quite a long time but it was during our time that it was implemented. We thought it was going to work out but it did not. The law was there, that only the minister can approve fee changes to increase fees. I do not think that there is any move to approve any changes. There are different kinds of fees imposed by schools on parents, for example, transfer fees, test fees, building fees, uniform fees and so forth. Sometimes those fees can even go beyond the fee given by the government. Instead of fees given by the government to remove the burden so that kids can have access to education, they cannot afford the other fees and so they are sent home. The right of the children in this country is more important to the society and the whole country than this useless uniform fee or building contributions. That right is much more important. What kind of a future are we projecting if we do not take that right to education for our children seriously? What kind of a future? I am not angry, but I am very sorry because this thing happened and has affected those on the margins of society who are least able to afford it. Those are the one who have suffered. Those are the people we must speak up for, and those are the people who are part of this government, and who the government must recognise and address these issues.

Sir, education is the great equaliser. Even children from a family who do not have any land, tree and many things, but when they have education and work hard, they will have equal access to opportunities that are available in our country. That is why education must be the greatest enterprise that we must invest. There are children who are sent home because they do not have their school fees. It is like saying that their right is not important, and building the classroom is more important than their right to education. But the education of that child is not just for that child, it is for the whole country and is for the society.

So I want to encourage the minister to stop using the fee free word, make it 100 percent free. Increase it to form seven. Then after that we look at cost sharing and other things. But basic education must include all of high school and must run for an entire generation, for 30 years, to educate a people for the kind of future that we want for this country. It is very possible,

but again we must decide – what is the vision we are projecting for this country? Again we must decide, of all the good things we want to do, what is number one. What is the most strategic of all the good things we want to do. I dare say that what I am talking about is number one. So I want to encourage the government to seriously look at the matter. I want to highlight it because it is a new term and the government must look at all the issues and consider them.

Sir, technical and vocational education, we know that the dollar spent per student turn to be much higher in technical and vocational training than it is for conventional basic education or high school. Because they learn how to fix things such as engines. So obviously they need equipment, tools and machinery, and boarding and residential facilities tend to make technical and vocational education to be more expensive. However, and I say this in general terms without the statistics to back it, but I would like to say, maybe up to 80 percent of the economy need people who come out from our technical and vocational institutions. Eighty percent of our economy needs skills and trades. And so that proportion ought to give us cause to reflect our investment in education and the outcomes we look for, and the future that we try to project – the kind of economy that we try to build, the kind of workforce that we need for that economy. It is important that we seriously look at and the other aspect of it is our qualification framework. Which is very long in the making and I am not sure if it is completed, but it is important that it has to set a standard which is comparable internationally. The notion where we always said “oh fitim Solo”, this notion is not good. Like the HTI in the past, if you acquire a certificate from HTI, you can work even in London and can be recognized anywhere in the world. So it is important that the qualifications framework seeks high standards and has the accountability relationship with the institutions to make sure they deliver in higher standards. This is because this economy and society we want to build in the future requires us to make that investment now.

Mr Speaker, In terms of women, I want to encourage the Government to consider options to induce the membership and participation of women in Parliament during the course of this current house. Given our male domination, this is not an easy Policy to undertake. However, this is an area that calls for leadership; I think that this particular matter is not a matter which we have to undertake an opinion poll on, thus it is a matter that is right and good to do. I think it is important that Government provides leadership on it.

Sir, in terms of the Police, I would like to suggest that perhaps some creative training programs are pursued to instil nationalistic pride in our police officers, enhancing their understanding of Ethics and how to apply it in practical situations. The effectiveness of the Police is pivotal on their professionalism which protect their impartiality and their mobility which should ensure efficient responses to incidents. If their training makes them feel like a special group or Elite group and do not have this ethnicity mentality, and the call value of building Solomon Islands is instilled in them and they are the primary protector of it. Any initiative or any way to compromise them, they will quickly rebate it, and we have to pay them well. But if we just merely teaching them the law and how to administer it, well I don't know what they are learning at present. However, it leaves some gaps in their professionalism and the temptation of the wantok system, this cause some foot holes and compromising their impartiality.

I think both these factors required Government investment. Sir, during a traffic check recently a friend told me that he was pulled aside and the official in charged came and checked all his documents and kicked the tyre and told him to change the tyre and told the friend if he give few bus fare he can just go. This kind of Bus fare business has spoiled us. These kinds of anecdotal stories do not borne well for our Police service. I'm sure the vast majority wanted to do the right thing and they are doing the right thing. But these kinds of anecdotal stories have eroded public confidence and trust; obviously much more needs to be done.

I will conclude; the speech from the throne contains much good that the country can look forward to. It has put the country on notice regarding government intentions. This is a good thing, it is part of the accountability relationship. It is good for the people to also join in the debate and at the appropriate time, take their place and play their part in moving the country forward.

Sir, the house will look forward to government's legislative program and expect to do a lot of work which can only be good for all of us. It would have been good if treasury have the capacity to cost policy proposals so that the people are informed on a cost of each policy proposal. To see how it will be funded and to whether the outcomes are worth the cost and how it will impact the government budget.

Recently we heard the debate of Australia, so called inter generational report which is a project to look into the next fifty years. It would be a useful exercise that perhaps we could do something similar contextually tailored to our situation here. To identify the projected changes in our demography to our population, the challenges, constrains and opportunities that we have and how these would shape policy into the long term.

Mr Speaker the government policies and the changes we do with our economy and in our society generally. And the preserve of few that are in Parliament, cabinet or the preserve of those who are formulating and proposing that policy. We all are in one canoe and we all have an equal and important stake in it. In its progress, in its preservation, in its conservation and in moving forward together. Mr Speaker, it is on that note that I support the Honourable Prime Ministers motion.

Mr. DAVID TOME (*Baegul Asifola*): Mr Speaker, I stand here on behalf of the people of Baegu Asifola Constituency to take this opportunity to say thank you. And to make a short and brief contribution to this debate on the speech from the throne; delivered by His Excellency the Governor General, of Solomon Islands to this Honourable chamber. Also to thank, the Prime Minister for moving this motion on the floor of this Parliament yesterday.

Mr Speaker sir, the speech from the throne is of course a historic one since our nation adopted the Westminster system of government. Our parliament continues to follow this tradition, where the Queen's representative delivers the speech that encompasses the government's policy and direction to its intention in managing the affairs of our people and country in the next four years.

It was a forty page speech, a long speech indeed and that reminds me of the forty years the children of Israel's journey in the Arabian Desert, looking for the promise land. I pray and hope that we reach hours earlier in four years not in forty years.

Let me begin by making a brief contribution on few issues and the first one is the cargo cult handout mentality. In which His Excellency alluded to in his speech as a warning to the people of this country, especially calling on our populace and us the leaders to totally miscarriage this attitude in the Solomon Islands. In case we forget our short history; I just want to remind us that Solomon Islands was once a British protectorate and a former colony of Great Britain until we gain our Independence on 7th of July, 1978.

Research has shown that cargo cults appeared mostly in the nations that were colonized by other nations, especially those that were once governed by Great Britain. This hand-out mentality is manifested because of the way that the former colonial powers profound every needs of their colony thus the subjects lend the attitude of receiving free services rather than working for them. In Solomon Islands, this was even made worse due to the free rations and cargoes provided to our people during the labour corps period of World War II. So who are we going to blame here, our former colonial powers or the United States of America for dishing out free cargo during the Guadalcanal campaign of World War II?

The only way to eradicate this attitude is a mass awareness throughout all levels of people in our country that is from the household level to the secondary school level. Through such awareness I believe that we can eradicate such hand out mentality.

Let me turn to the government policy direction which will progress the destiny of our people for the next four years. The intention of the DCC government is a good one and my people welcome the government's plan in rolling out its development strategy to our rural people. As a former Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock, in the last government it is pleasing to note that the DCC government is building on some of the initiatives that we started during our time in the government. That is to priorities agriculture at the forefront of development is the right approach and I am in full support of this policy direction. There is only one cautionary point that I would like to make on Agriculture & Livestock development. Research and development is a vital component of any successful agriculture policy to date. Solomon Islands lacks the facility and manpower to undertake such work within this sector. Even the donor's contribution to agriculture in this country is also providing ad hoc support by moving from one project to another year in and year out.

I also want to touch on the infrastructure development that the government is committed to address during this term in office. Again an excellent one indeed. Agriculture without infrastructure means no commerce and no trade. This is going to be an expensive undertaking. So it would be wise that the government looks at the different options especially the use of pay road fees, this includes fee on the roads as part of the strategy. The road users such as vehicle users must pay road toll fees this is because the cost of maintaining road infrastructure is very costly. For instance, on the Northern side of Malaita,

the road users pay fee to those that maintain the road and it is a good idea. So I encourage the government to do likewise..

On the Government's Fundamental Reform programs, the economic and financial systems I must applaud the government for taking a bold step in redirecting the commodities export marketing authority [CEMA] and other statutory authorities in the country. CEMA historically has played an important role in the economy of Solomon Islands especially in our society to continue exporting our primary commodities such as copra and coconut. CEMA's capacity must be supported to allow this authority to effectively undertake its role in contributing to the economy of our country.

On the rehabilitation of the development bank (DBSI) Mr Speaker, this again a policy direction in the right way and what I think is it is the right one especially this time in our country. Development Bank of Solomon Islands once again was once the strong driver of the agriculture. The coconut and cocoa that our country is now enjoying, is something in the past was supported very strongly by DBSI. And a good Board Management would be the key to move DBSI forward if we are going that direction. That is we look for good and strong Directors and Managers in moving this policy strategy.

Finally Mr Speaker, I will very brief so allow me to say few remarks on our Foreign Affairs and External Trade.

While we support the Look North Policy on External Trade and South/South Relationship and its strategy to protect trade, economic foreign relations it is important that the Government relook on how we are going to achieve this policy. But if we only have one or two diplomats posted in our Embassy or High Commission overseas and its good for us to resource them well both the manpower and financially. For example when I went in one of our overseas trip and I would like to talk with some of the agriculture experts there and our Embassy says no, we will go there instead but if our Embassies and our office overseas are well resourced because they are the place that we will make use of them and so I would like to urge the government to look into it properly. And it is my hope that if we resource these Embassies properly both with human resource and finance we will push this government forward.

Finally and in conclusion Mr Speaker, I would like to stand up and to say thank you to His Excellency the Governor General for the Speech from the Throne and the good Prime

Minister for moving this motion. Very soon or I think next week we will be celebrating the Easter that as we all know Easter is a significant event in the history of us Christians and even it will mark the salvation of people through the death and resurrection of Saviour Jesus Christ.

On this same note the people of this beloved nation Solomon Islands also look forward with high expectation to the DCC Government to rise and deliver its intended policy in making a true change for the betterment of their livelihood and serve our beloved Solomon Islands.

Happy Easter celebration – next week and thank you very much Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

Hon. TAUTAI KAITU'U (*Minister for Health and Medical Services*): Thank you Mr Speaker, before I give my short contribution, I would like us to remind Honourable Members of this House that we Doctors don't write full sentences, we are writing short forms and abbreviation so I will take advice from the Honourable Speaker that my contribution will be very brief. I will not go through each ministry that will come in the budget debate next week.

Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the change to give my contribution on the speech from the throne that was delivered by the Governor General on the 24th of March 2015. The speech from the throne is a tradition we had for many years since independence.

I on behalf of my people of Rennell and Bellona accept this speech delivered by the Governor General with a gracious gratitude and humility. As we all know the speech from the throne is an outline of what the DCC Government aspires to achieve in the next four years and beyond.

The DCC's strength as a government does not come from the challenges Solomon Islands has faced in the previous years. But most importantly the DCC's strength comes from knowing the tasks and challenges that are ahead of us. That is to govern our nation with transparency and accountability and providing the much needed services to our people whom we represent in this Honourable House.

Mr Speaker, may I remind Honourable Members of this House of a statement from the speech of the throne, “our people should not expect aid donors and politicians to provide cash and cargo cult handout mentality.” As we know our people are industrious and hardworking to earn their living. Our role as leaders is to empower them and provide conducive environments for them to participate fully in economic activities, hence, providing for themselves and their children.

Mr Speaker, a saying goes, “when someone ask for a fish do not give them fish but teach him how to fish.” I for one believe this philosophy and I am sure all us do as well. This is called self reliance. As elected leaders we must continue to assist our people to look after themselves like what our forefathers had done for centuries in that they live and survive in this land for many years without any outside assistance.

The DCC Government has put in place a rural development policy putting more emphasis on rural development. The establishment of the rural economic development centres in 50 constituencies will enhance and stimulate our economy in a rural setting where 80 to 85 percent of our population reside and live.

Mr Speaker, good health is vitally important for the survival of an individual, a community and a country as a whole. We must change the perception we have on health. The health of our nation depends entirely on each of us. If each of us keeps healthy our country will be a healthy nation as well.

There are many challenges we are facing when providing health services to our people like the ongoing care and controlling of infectious diseases like tuberculosis, pneumonia and leprosy. Now we are faced with more challenges – the emerging of high incidences of other non-communicable diseases like Diabetes, hypertension and heart attacks. We must do our part as individuals to avoid developing these non-communicable diseases because it poses high risk to our population these days.

My ministry will continue striving to improve the overall health status of our people by 2 percent in the next five years. About 70 percent of social determinants of health is outside my ministry’s control. Education, environment, agriculture, economic development and poverty, all affect health outcomes. It is therefore imperative that the whole government approach is required to improve the health status of all Solomon Islanders. All these

ministries sectors must also have health strategic plans so that 70percent of social determinants can be realistically addressed.

Water, sanitation and health are not only development attendees but are key health outcomes. It is critical that my ministry will work with the rural development to implement the WASH program. The Ministry of Health and Medical Services is currently developing its National Health Strategic Plan to capture the DCC priorities and strategies to do better in the next five years.

Solomon Islands is faced with emerging new diseases and major disease outbreaks, like the recent dengue and measles outbreaks last year. These outbreaks result in high morbidity and also death. The recent Ebola virus outbreak in Africa poses potential global threat to our health, which my ministry participated in international preparedness, training and how to contain it. To address this issue, we need to have the right equipments and appropriate facilities.

Disaster and risk management is the potential health threat. All of us experience this in the 2014 April flash flooding. The Ministry of Health and Medical Services was stretched to its capacity in responding to the health impact of this disaster. We would like to thank other ministries and development in supporting us during the disaster.

The provisional quality healthcare will not be possible without a good and well maintained infrastructure like clinics, hospitals and staff houses. My ministry also need appropriate equipments to provide world standard services, which the people of this country so well deserved for a long time. I would like to thank the DCC government for recognising these needs and capturing it in its policy priorities for the next four years.

Let me draw your attention that our premium hospital- the National Referral Hospital, is at its verge of taken by the sea. It is critically important that we relocate this hospital to a safer and secure sight. The work has started. I thank the DCC government for recognising this need and putting it as a priority in the next four years. DCC government has also put priority on upgrading other major hospitals, like Kilu'ufi Hospital and KiraKira Hospital to become referral hospitals.

In conclusion, I would like to say thank you to His Excellency the Governor General. I would like to thank the honourable Prime Minister for moving this important motion, the ministers of the crown, the Leader of Opposition, the Leader of the Independent Group, the

Deputy Prime Minister, the Deputy Speaker and all the chairmen and honourable Members of the House for lively debating this very important motion the Speech from the Throne. I also thank the DCC Government prioritising key areas in my ministry. I look forward for a rich and fruitful budget debate in coming days. With these few remarks and comments, I fully support the motion and resume my seat.

Hon. STANLEY SOFU (*Minister for Infrastructure Development*): I also want to join my colleague Members of Parliament who have already spoken on this very important motion. I want to thank the Prime Minister for seeing it fit in moving this motion for us Members of Parliament to thank His Excellency for presenting the Speech from the Throne.

Mr Speaker, allow me to acknowledge the Governor General of Solomon Islands for delivering the traditional Speech from the Throne on this floor of Parliament. The Speech spells out what the government of the day wants to deliver to the people of this beloved country in the next four years. The speech was prepared and presented and has meant a lot to us Members of Parliament as it reminds us of our responsibilities to serve our people and country. It also reminds us ministers of the crown of our duties to spearhead political leadership in our various ministries. The Speech from the Throne emphasizes a united effort in the delivery of much needed services for our people, and I quote: "I believe that together we can deliver. I trust that together we can foster change and together we can develop our beloved country".

Togetherness brings an environment that is conducive for socioeconomic development. By doing that we will see our people; all 50 members of Parliament which are present here, our people have put their trust in us and they beg us for the change that they anticipate. The prosperity of our people in this country will depend very much on the decision we make here. May I remind this honourable House that we do not want to repeat what has happened in the past 37 years.

The Government's Policy Statement Translation and Strategy sets out the policy direction which the Government is undertaking to progress in the destination which our people and our country desire in the next four years. On that note, I appeal to all Members of Parliament to render our support towards the implementation of this Government policy regardless of which side you are on.

The Government's rural development programs require effective engagement of all 50 members of Parliament in order for us to achieve our objectives. Some national projects such as the Bina Harbour national port and the Suava cannery will require involvement of honourable colleagues within their constituencies, because they are the ones who have very close link to resource owners. Your participation in facilitating the necessary process for the implementation of the national projects is very vital. We must take a holistic approach towards development aspirations of our country. It is high time that we consolidate to bring about changes which our people aspire.

Let me touch on the Ministry of Infrastructure Development. The ministry is strongly committed in addressing the transport and social infrastructure needs of our country. The Ministry has stated implementing its national transport plan policy targeting land, air and marine infrastructures. This is to encourage our people to participate in economic activities. Increase participation in economic activities means there must be increased connectivity and accessibility. The Ministry of Infrastructure Development increased participation in economic activities means there must be increased connectivity and accessibility. The Ministry of Infrastructure Development supports the National Development Strategy (NDS) and the DCC Government policies through the National Transport Plan.

The National Transport Plan sets the strategy policies and immediately prioritizes the development of the Solomon Islands Transport Services. The National Transport Plan, the National Transport Fund also provide for consistent long term funding for maintenance of our roads and rehabilitation, construction of transport infrastructures and financial support for essential shipping under the policy known as the franchise shipping. The policy is very clear as it puts emphasis on more robust and resilient infrastructures to improve access and connectivity to unlock potentials and boost economic activities.

The Ministry of Infrastructure Development will review and amend appropriate legislations to ensure there is safety and important standards for building structures and to enable regular maintenance of our transport infrastructures. The Ministry of Infrastructure Development determines to move the infrastructure of this country to new heights to boost economic development, and to help the economy to realize a reasonable economic growth level in the next four years.

Mr Speaker, to show the commitment of my Ministry, you can see in the development budget the Ministry of Infrastructure Development is the second highest. This is a clear indication that the Ministry of Infrastructure Development is serious in building our important infrastructures.

To give opportunity to others who would also like to participate in this very important motion, I support this motion that the National Parliament of Solomon Islands here assembled beg leave to offer thanks for the Speech which has been delivered by you to Parliament.

Sitting suspended at 11.44 am for lunch break

Sitting resumed at 1.38pm

Mr NESTER GIRO (Central Makira): Thank you for allowing me to contribute as the representative of Central Makira Constituency. I want to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion and on behalf of my people I would like to share my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Sir Frank Kabui, the Governor General of Solomon Islands for delivering the Speech from the Throne.

His Excellency's speech was comprehensive and contains absolute message to our nation. It also covers and outlines the intentions of the DCC Government. The message about moving this country forward in terms of development is a mutual cooperation between the people of Solomon Island and the DCC Government while it is going to take time to complete and implement the reform programs, I urge the people of this nation, in particular my good people of Makira/Ulawa province that when the DCC needs their resources to implement its policies, the people must allow their resources.

While the DCC embarks on changes to improve the economy of Solomon Islands, it is equally important that our people's mentality and attitude towards development must also change. The DCC will face challenges during the implementation of its policies with the people's resources. From there, the DCC Government will see whether the resources owners are ready or not?

I speak highly of the DCC's policy as outlined by the Ministry of Infrastructure, the hardship of development embedded on aspirations of our people, shall be enlightened through this policy by creating roads, wharves and bridges. Many of our people in our islands and in the rural areas live in places that are hard but these are the very places that agriculture activities are also very high. But they cannot perform to the standard and cannot contribute to this nation as expected because there are no infrastructures. I am therefore confident that the DCC policy to implement these infrastructure developments will help a lot to improve our people's livelihoods and improve the economy of Solomon Islands.

Solomon Islands need infrastructure development to fulfil the statement made by his Excellency in his Speech from the Throne that agriculture is the backbone of this country's economy. At this time, I also wish to comment on the Parliamentary Education and Human Resources Committee, as it is one of the active committees and I appreciate the contributions made by the Members so far. I shall now retire to my seat and I support the motion.

Hon PETER SHANEL AGOAVAKA (*Minister for Police, National Security and Correctional Services*): Thank you for the privilege of having the floor to also add my voice to the choir of voices that have supported the motion moved by the Prime Minister yesterday. As you know, the motion and I quote, "We, the National Parliament of Solomon Islands here assembled beg leave to offer thanks for the Speech which has been addressed by you to Parliament", referring to the Governor General's speech on Tuesday.

As you know, our beloved country is preparing to look beyond the drawdown of RAMSI in 2017 and the start of the DCC Government's Program of Action, and so the government is embarking on a series of statements and policies. The implementation document spells out how we are going to perform, which ministry is to do what and we are also preparing the budget and that the budget has been tabled in its first reading which we will debate on the 7th April. The statement policies outline some of our drives and visions, our missions to reform and also to grow the economy of our country.

Much have been said and as you know one of the most important components in any country is maintaining law and order. It is of paramount importance that we have peace in our country. Otherwise no investor will want to come to a country they know is not

peaceful. Hence the work of the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Service is important in this concept.

But before I go on to some of the things that the ministry would like to see done, may I briefly touch on some of the lessons learned that we need to look at. As you know we were in the Opposition in the last House and we were talking about land reform because one of the most important components of any development is land. I am pleased that the DCC Government will bring to this House a land reform legislation but also bearing in mind the rights of traditional landowners must not be overwhelmed by our ambition to grow the economy of our country.

I come from Central Guadalcanal, my constituency and we had to be conscious of what landowners want in terms of alienated land, the return of alienated land. And one of the MPs for Guadalcanal as you know during the ethnic tension we were plagued by the fact that land was one of the issues that brought this country to its knees. It is a lesson learnt and we must not in any shape and form ignore the fact that land is an issue that we have to address. I am pleased that the DCC Government will be looking into this issue of land reform.

The other reform that we would like to see done, and I think much has been said about it is economic reform. I am pleased to hear the Member of Parliament for West Makira saying that the bulk of our population is in the rural areas, of course 80percent of it are there about are in the rural area.

If you look at the budget we have tasked the ministry of Rural Development, with a very large development budget. And we hope that we can utilise this budget for the purpose of growing the economy and involve 80percent of the rural populace to actively participate in economic development of our country.

Sir, I agree with the Leader of Independent when listening to him talking about corruption. The independent commission against corruption is an important institution. I am pleased that the DCC Government see it fit, that we will bring legislations to the floor of Parliament so that we can pass the independent commission against corruption legislation.

Corruption is not only targeted to the hierarchies of the country like parliamentarians and constitutional post holders but should also be targeted to public servants and the private sector. So, corruption must not be seen as something only targeting

Members of Parliament or leaders of our country. It should also be seen as something to help leaders of our country to perhaps be more responsive and diligent in their duties to our people in this country.

Sir, we people of Guadalcanal went through the ethnic tension era and come out of it and one of the things that we would like to see done is the Federal system of Government. I believe the report will be tabled to the Prime Minister's Office and hopefully we will be able to see some daylight out of this Federal government system.

Somebody has mentioned the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report and I support his statement that we should really look at the recommendations of the report. However, I know the government is going to work on this report and some of the factors that brought our knees to the ground in year 2000 will perhaps be addressed and averted when they rise again in the future. So these are some of the lessons that we have learned and it is important that we take note of this. Because if we do not, then the lessons that we have gone through will just be another issue in history.

The national security policy of Solomon Islands, people and its resources from both internal and external security, threats must be a paramount importance to the Government. Today our country is facing serious internal security threats especially when it comes to land and resource issues. We have seen a number of cases that came up and the police are working on these issues.

Sir, we are trying to coordinate and manage the national security properly so that information that is received and gathered by our officers will be channelled through the Prime Minister's Office. This would prepare us to address some of these securities threats.

In so far as external security threats are concerned, at the moment it is minimal but as a sovereign nation we need to be security minded and be prepared collectively as a nation to address is, national and external threats happening in our country.

At the moment Solomon Islands do not have a national security policy. My ministry is working to develop a national security policy to establish the national security council and to provide guidance to formally establish our law enforcement agency and set out operating guidelines to enable our law enforcement agency to conduct operations to address national security threats.

We are not immune from international or internal or external threats, such as civil unrests, terrorism, transnational crimes and so forth. Human trafficking, illicit drug trafficking and arms trafficking are some of the things that we have to be weary of, that our country, perhaps may not be doing it but there are others that will be using our country as a stepping stone for this kind of illicit trade. My ministry is pursuing the development of a national security policy. We will be engaging relevant stakeholders, including experts to assist us in this particular work.

Just touching on border agreements; as you know, we have a couple of borders. We are an island nation in the middle of an ocean. We have the western border with Papua New Guinea. We have history that links people from Shortlands with Bougainville. Traditions must be maintained and respected but not forgetting that Papua New Guinea is a sovereign nation and Solomon Islands is also a sovereign nation and our border must be looked after, so that we can eliminate the possibility of transnational crime.

One of the things that I would like to do when I took over office is to review all our border agreements. We also have the Papua New Guinea-Solomon Islands border, the Vanuatu-Solomon Islands border, the Fiji-Solomon Islands border and the south and north border.

As a sovereign nation, we are required to properly manage and protect our borders. To the west, we have a maritime border with Papua New Guinea. To the south we have Australia and New Caledonia. To the east, we have the Republic of Vanuatu and Fiji and Nauru to The North.

Our border agreement with Papua New Guinea has expired and requires reviewing. The Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services will be working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade and other stakeholders to review this agreement to ensure that our border is properly managed and protected.

The other issues that I would also like to see done is that in the past we have been member of institutions like Interpol. I would like to see that we strengthen this relation with international security and the intelligence agency; hence the policy on national security is very important. We will be trying to revive our membership with Interpol so that information on transnational crimes can be passed to our country and from our country to members of Interpol.

The Commissioner, the Permanent Secretary and I are invited to a conference on Interpol as part of the policy of this government to strengthen our relationship with international security. I have agreed to allow the Commissioner and the Permanent Secretary to travel to this conference to ensure that we can apply for membership and become a member once more of Interpol.

In my discussion with the Ambassador of United States of America based in Port Moresby, they are willing to train our people on how to gather information

The other thing that we would like to see happen is review the liquor act; one of the problem in our community now, is not only marijuana, but the use of Kwaso. It has destroyed our communities in many ways such as making lots of unnecessary noises, fights, family breakdown, lack of respect within the societies. So it is important that we review the Liquor act, there is no doubt that the use and abuse of Alcohol is a concern in our communities. So under the DCC policy statement the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Service will review the Liquor act and we will get the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General chambers to relook at the act and to advise us accordingly. This review will aim in improving the problem of Alcohol related offences and how the national and Liquor board performs their roles. We are also intending to look into how law enforcement agencies can be more proactive in dealing with alcohol related issues; this is very important. I think you reside in the red house you won't be disturbed, but some of us in some communities we can hardly sleep.

In concluding Sir, may I thank the Men and Women who have served in the royal Solomon Islands royal Police force in the past and present for their service to this country? This one of the most challenging work, policing is not an easy task, you know, concerning this Bougainville issue, our men came back looking after our borders, some of them were traumatized and we do not have a proper mechanism or institutions to rehabilitate this people when they come back from the so called war zone. Our police are ordinary officers and they do not train for combat, so this is what I want to see happen. When situation such as the Border incident which involved killing, gun shots and deaths, they are traumatized, so when they return they need to be counselled, giving them three to six month counselling before they can return to their communities. At present some of them are still traumatized and I felt sorry for these officers who have served this nation at the border. They are

traumatized and also the community. We need to find and device a way or system that will assist us to do counselling to these certain people.

I would like to thank this police officers both past and present for their work in ensuring that our community is safe and secured, though we may criticize them but I would to thank them. Furthermore, it is also important for the investors in ensuring peace for our people in our homes and communities.

Also I want to thank the men and women who have served in the Correctional Services in the past and present, and those who served the national security. I do thank you also to all the officers of police correctional services and national security. I thank you all and I look forward to working with you in the next four years in my reign and in my time as the Minister of police. With these few remarks I support the motion that the Prime Minister tables.

Hon. BRADLEY TOVOSIA (*East Guadalcanal*): I stand here to thank His Excellency Sir Frank Ofagioro Kabui for his excellent speech. And I think this book contains the program of the National Government or the current government, the DCC. It's one of the books that is well written and we have talked about this when it comes before us to see. The content of this book has a lot of good stories, the English is good and the content is good and the intention is also good.

I also want to thank the DCC for this idea, it is a new thing that Parliament is doing things here and I appreciated this idea. I also want to thank the Chief Justice who is also here with his Excellency. I just want to quote from his opening remarks on page 4 in the last paragraph, it say 'most importantly we have responsibility to impact the righteous 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 determine to improve the economy and provide good governance at all levels to improve the livelihood of all Solomon Islanders''. After hearing much of the debates, I think it all bog down to one thing- It is the people that will actually implement the content of this book. We have to have good people otherwise this book will mean nothing to the Solomon Islands people. We have to have good people to implement this book.

I agree with the Prime Minister, implementation part of this book and I stand here to say that is the bottom line of what I want to talk about this afternoon. With that I quote a commentary from Ellen. G, White, she says "society is composed of families and this is what the heads of families maketh, out of the heart are the issues of life'. And the heart of the community is the church and of the nation is the household. The wellbeing of a society, the success of a church, and the prosperity of a nation depends upon home influences. I think this is important; we talked about a lot of good things. Who will do this? It's the people that we breed; people that we claim to take care of during our election campaigns. How do we breed these people? They have to have better homes and this is the bottom line of what I want to talk about. From this I bring this down to my constituency. A bigger part of our planning is on housing projects. And as of last year I purchase about 12,000 sheets of colour bond roofing. And we are working on it and I think I will harvest the fruit of my good people after I finished from being a member of parliament. I think we are harvesting what the previous members have done. Seriously we have look into this. And I have a list of things which we need to talk about regarding families. Family is a building block of society. Families incorporate and pass on important values that children can learn and live by. All families need security and stability, the minister of police already mentioned it earlier. That is the number one priority in my constituency's plans. We will continue with this, people have been deprived from this kind of project since independence.

In the rural villages, some of you will agree that you have done a lot but for my constituency it is not. And when I first came in I do not know where to start off with my constituency, so that is how housing is important. Housing is a stepping stone for the success of generations which is very, very true. When I did in my campaign that is what I actually talked about to my people. If is our basics is not properly done people will just roam around. How will they discuss when the environment is not conducive due to the fact that they do not have a good house? So I want to stand here to say that if you want a prosperous nation then we must start with a good home.

On the agriculture side, it is the source for our lives and according to a proverb; it says "what we put in, is who you are". By saying that, the food that we eat during the caucus and cabinet meetings, are they good or not? I think it is not, so I think we need to look seriously into the agriculture sector. I know we are working on that already and at this

stage I think it is with the Ministry of Rural Development. I want say this because it is determined by human beings. And when we do not eat good food and live happily and it shows on how we decide on things. And this book will only be properly looked after by good people.

The last point I want to talk about is tourism as a source of income. I think my constituency wants to develop that and I think it is one of the big projects of the DCC Government. I hope after much talking on this 40 page speech, it will become real as the DCC Government wants change. In addition, as far as I know through the caucus this policy will be fully funded, which is good.

Last time I mentioned that when the Prime Minister of Fiji came, he said that Honiara is still the same, hence the question is who will change it? So is this government going to change Honiara? Anyway I want to thank his Excellency for delivering the speech and I support the motion.

HON JOHN MANENIARU (*Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources*): I rise to speak on behalf of my constituents to also contribute to the debate of the motion moved by the Honourable Prime Minister to offer thanks to the Speech delivered by the Governor General.

At the outset, allow me to sincerely thank the Speaker for allowing me the floor to also join other colleagues in the beautiful chant sang yesterday and this morning, in praising the traditional speech from the Throne. I want to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion which he gives us the members of the 10th parliament the chance to reflect on the DCC government policies and translations for the next coming four years. I also want to thank his Excellency the Governor General of Solomon Islands for elegantly delivering the traditional speech from the Throne to us and the people of Solomon Islands. Besides, I also want to commend his Excellency the Governor General for the unity that he represents to this country as the representative of the Queen. We enjoyed listening to the speech as it is well delivered and a lot of very important food for thought is inside this speech and it also call for action there on Mr Speaker.

Sir, His Excellency the Governor General has drawn my attention to our national motto, 'to Lead is to Serve' and I am very glad to be reminded as I commence the journey of this four years of the tenth parliament. Sir, this is a perfect time where every leaders of this

beloved Solomon Islands men and women, boys and girls, for us to allow the real spirit of our national motto to sink deep within us, as our country urgently needs change from us for the better. It is for you and I and this is a timely call for the 50 Members of Parliament in this tenth parliament.

Let me urge all citizens or our friends in this country Mr Speaker, to challenge ourselves to focus with strong determination on 'to lead is to serve', there were lots version on that Motto- to lead is to serve oneself. And so the message of our National motto where His Excellency the Governor General delivered is timely, so that you and I reflect on it as we begin in this term for us to lead as national leaders.

And as DCC government attains to lead us in this coming four years Mr Speaker, it determines to make the changes happen and visible in our country. May all of us in this Chamber and leaders of our country be the instruments of this change and it's you and I to be the instruments so that the changes where the DCC government stand for will come to reality.

Mr Speaker Sir, with regards to the fundamental reforms program of our government, I am supporting the initiative where the government would like to take, first to establish the national anti-corruption steering committee that it will setup the proposed Solomon Islands Independent Commission against corruption. Sir, corruption becomes a household name in our country. A perception of it to us leaders is also present in our workforce the public servants, private sectors even our village people in our constituents. And this word corruption has its connotation Mr Speaker which is really good.

And so the establishment of this committee, its timely and its welcomed. Even our elderly people know this word corruption, when they heard us national members of parliament there were a lot of question that comes out of their mind and one of them is corrupt leaders. Sir, this is a challenge which is challenging us Mr Speaker. And for us to actually look upon ourselves again.

Sir, in our country we start to blame ourselves of corruption, which people says that we members are corrupt, the leaders are corrupt, and the public servants are also corrupt. The Minister of Police has encouraged us to look positive in the workforce at the Ministry of Police and Correctional Services. So, the finger pointing continues. Therefore, it is timely and appropriate that we should not do that because three other figures might be pointing at us

for corruption. So, the appropriate question that our country has to ask is, who is corrupt and who is not? This is a question where we the 50 Honourable Members of the 10th Parliament should think about.

Sir, it is also an opportune time for us to remind ourselves on what the Bible has stated in relation to accusing or pointing fingers on other people. The Scripture has talked about the accusation of a sinful woman but then Jesus said if there is one here that does not have any sin let him throw the first stone. The lesson we need to learn from here is for us to engage rigorously in addressing corruption in our country. This is a huge task but it has to begin with ourselves before going into our systems and then our structures. It will be a long journey for us, at all levels of work, but with a journey of 1000 steps let us begin with the first step now.

Sir, let me join His Excellency, the Governor General in thanking our international community and Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) to help us to stand again when we were on our knees during the ethnic tension. The "*Helpem Fren*" mission has achieved many objectives and allows us to restore again the mentality and spirit to help each other as friends, brothers and sisters destined to live in unity in our islands.

Mr Speaker, a way forward for our beautiful happy isles is to fully engage in sectoral reform programs which the DCC Government has come up with – the speech from the throne has covered this subject very well. This will enable us to identify which area we should reform like where we should focus our resources (although it is limited) and prioritise it. So the need for our productive and resource sectors to be reformed is already in place. The DCC Government is fully committed to see this happen and hence needs definite support from all stakeholders.

Allow me to talk on the subject of Federalism which His Excellency has also mentioned in his speech. Sir, our country can be prosperous. Our children can be guaranteed that their prosperous future in our country will stay as they deserve and we are the ones making the decisions.

Sir, colleague Members of Parliament, I have again highlighted the fact that our country is blessed with abundant resources and has great opportunities in agriculture, tourism, mining, trade and commerce, lands, fisheries and the list goes on. The way forward here is to make appropriate policies that will realise these numerous opportunities

for us and our children. Land and sea are equally important for development. I want to call on our customary landowners throughout the country that it is time for you to open to development. Open up our lands so that development can take place, so that we can benefit from the spin-offs. It is important. Enough of land dispute; let us take this country forward. And it is all of us working together so that we can achieve this goal.

Mr Speaker, in agriculture, we should think and focus on planting, farming our land and harvest the fruits from our sweat. With the land problem that we have, maybe we harvest the sweat of another man. Just rethink. In tourism, we know the potentials and opportunities. Let us keep our environment clean, and I join my colleague Minister for Environment, Conservation, Disaster and Meteorology, on his calling on all citizens of this country to stop littering, and keep our environment and country clean. Let us keep our land, sea, rivers and air clean. Let us keep our houses, villages, towns and city clean. We have to seriously commence teaching ourselves. We, adults must teach ourselves, and then we can teach our children about cleanliness and keeping our environment clean.

Mr Speaker, yesterday when my colleague Minister for Environment finished talking, my colleague Ministers for Peace and Tourism went for lunch, they saw an animal picked up a plastic and ran across the road. Maybe he heard the call made by the Minister for Environment, and started it. That is a lesson for us. We must start now. That is the timely call that the Minister for Environment has made and I join him in the call.

Sir, I want to speak very briefly on the fisheries sector, where I am responsible for. The DCC Government is committed to reform the fisheries sector. Potentials are awesome in offshore fisheries, as well as our coastal fisheries. The focus here is for us to achieve more tangible onshore facilities to allow us to maximise our potentials, and ensure our rural populous have access and secure their Livelihood sustainably from the coastal fisheries. More about fisheries I will still have time to elaborate later in this current session.

Sir, His Excellency the Governor General highlighted in his speech that 80percent of our population have lived in the rural villages. They need to be served, that is the call. By whom? It is for us to think about it. Minimum and basic life services must be delivered to them without failure. Thank you DCC government for prioritizing Rural development in your program this year, in your program of action. As we know implementation is the key and the Government is committed through its budget, this is the challenge for us, but it is

good that the government will continue to support the rural people through our constituencies, we are the Managers of the constituencies and also of our people's resources. Let us be accountable and serve our people as we are mandated for and to fulfil their expectations.

Last but not the least, let me again echo what the Governor General has said in his closing remarks and I quote, "strategy and plans are only as good as their implementation". Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important motion and I support the motion and I resume my seat.

Mr. ALFRED GHIRO (*East Makira*): Thank you Mr Speaker for finally recognizing the Member of Parliament for East Makira to add my voice in contributing to the motion that has moved by the Honourable Prime Minister, in thanking His Excellency the Governor General for delivering the speech from the throne to open the second sitting of the 10th Parliament. I would like to also take this chance to thank the Honourable Prime Minister in seeing it fit to table this motion on the floor of parliament. So that members of Parliament can share their opinions and views on the speech, and to look at things which are reflected in the speech from the throne.

Mr Speaker, I will say that this speech is a very extensive reflection of the DCC government's Policy and also it is a good beginning for any Government to declare their Policy intentions and the visions that they have for the people of this nation to alleviate some of their problems; problems which are encountered in past years and hardship they faced with their Livelihood. So it is very good for any Government to start off by telling what their policy intentions are; as to what they will do for their people. So that is why I stand here to thank the Governor General in relaying to our people the ideas of the government.

I am not intending to speak at length on this motion because most of my colleagues have already touched on some important issues that need to be taken into account. Whilst we try to address these policy intentions, I will only talk on certain areas and I think I can offer some of the views for the government and also members of parliament to look at.

Mr Speaker, sometimes I sit down and look back on how we travel since independence until today. It's now 37 years and sometimes I ended up thinking that this

country is trapped in a vicious circle. There are leaders in the past that we cannot compare with some of us now. They are elected not because of the cargo cult mentality; they are elected because their capacity. The seven policy intentions also appear in their governments but it says that we did not achieve fully what our people wants. And that makes me to think that there are other super natural forces blocking this country to move forward. I say this because 37 years we have travel along but yet our people did not receive what they should receive from the government. I think we need to do something to break the walls of that vicious cycle before we can lead the people of this country into the land of milk and honey.

This is my observation that we must break this wall and I want to thank the DCC government that they have realized that also and come out with two specific areas for reform. My belief is we need to come up with very strong reform programs. We need to come up with rigid legislations before we can break the walls of this vicious cycle. As I have said it seems that there are some super natural forces that block our advancement, that is why we cannot move. As I have said, the two areas that relate from the speech from the throne is if we implement the policy intention in a way that is expected.

Even members expressed that implementation is one of the heartfelt journey for any government regime. And governments should consider making some reforms on government policy implementation programs. Otherwise we keep on blaming ourselves but the fault lies there. Those are some ideas and I want to urge the ministers from the DCC Government that you have good policy intentions, please stand tall over it. Please command it and ensure we implement these good intentions, because if we have good policies but do not implement them then there are no effects on those policies because we will still remain under the status quo. All of us want to see our people to elevate from subsistence economy to cash economy; we also want to see our people to become self-reliant and want to see our people to demonstrate resilience against all aspects of life. However we will stay the same if we fail to implement those good policies and do make that happen. As I said, it is alright but we also need to reform some of our implementation processes. There are some important reforms stated in the government policies and I think they are very important to make them happen.

I also want to touch on law and order; I know that under this fundamental reform it is a priority and I must say here that law and order is a prerequisite to any socio-economic development prosperity in any nation. We need laws that are conducive for any development in our country and more so law and order is also the base for national unity in this country. People need to enjoy the law and order in order to change their mind set and attitude. So I believe that in order for us to achieve joy, peace and prosperity, we need to have some strong reforms in our law and order. We need to get our citizens to enjoy the law and order in this country like the people of other countries are enjoying. For instance, when I went for overseas trips I enjoy the night shopping but for Honiara you cannot do that because it is very dangerous. Thus, under this reform I want us to come up with a very strong law and order reform program as a transitional strategy in preparation for the departure of RAMSI from our country.

On that note, I want to join the Governor General and the other colleagues to thank RAMSI for restoring our law and order in our country. As the Governor General has stated "*Helpem Fren*" is a mission that has achieve its objectives and I support that. So I want us to prepare for the departure of RAMSI otherwise all the good intentions will just run down by lawlessness in our country.

I also want to touch on the education sector as it is one of the key areas for the prosperity of a country. We need to educate our communities.

Mr Speaker, an educated community can be able reason out things, an educated community can choose between what is right and wrong. Also an educated society can be disciplined and an educated community knows how to initiate developments. I want to thank the government to manifest this policy in education reform by increasing our school fee allocation, and our scholarship allocation of 200 scholarship allocations. So thank you very much minister.

This is very vital for any society development; we need some knowledge in order to develop. And this did not mean it is enough we must continue to invest more in our education services in the country. We need to build at least a trade skilled school in our country. Mr Speaker currently we send those common cadres overseas but the trades people were never sent overseas. So we need to look at that again because those trades' people will boost the economy- I mean the trades' people that have the skill and not the common cadres;

whereby hundreds and hundreds every year are sent. We should reform our NTU so that we send our people for specific areas of training which they will return and provide skills that we need to build our economy Mr Speaker.

So Mr Speaker, I would also like us to take education and to educate our societies in Solomon to become vigilant and be able to diversify and initiate the developments which we need to push this country forward Mr Speaker.

On that same note I would also like to emphasize that health is an area that all of us believe that without health there will be nothing- nothing will happen. So we must build a healthy society because if a member of our society is sick it will hard for him to participate in whatever development we try to do in our society.

Not only that, the relocation of our National Referral Hospital is what we have to do. But the Minister said, they maybe looking at improving and building a new hospital throughout our provinces. We need to have our people accessing health facilities. And that is what I have seen and at least I have some hope with this policy intention but as I have said, that I am a bit doubtful of the implementation.

The previous governments have some good policy intentions as well but when it comes to implementation, it's hard for us to achieve them.

I would also like to subscribe to my colleague Member of Parliament for West Makira about the marginalised disable people. We seem to overlook them Mr Speaker, we also have to provide for them as well. Every time we talked about non communicable disease and infections and so on yet we never talk about the disable people.

In other countries that I have been to, for example in the terminal overseas there is a special lane for disable people. They always take into account disability in their development. So we should start with that mindset Mr Speaker because they are our citizens. They are not careless and being disable rather they are born disable.

Allow me to talk briefly on productive sector reform. I agree that in order to grow the economy we have to invest in areas where we can get revenue to meet the social services our people want. It is good news that people of this country hear that more investment will go into tourism, agriculture and fisheries.

What I find out since I am a minister of one of the productive sector in the previous government; we often pass the buck on our investors. For example, when we make policies

we tell investors to find land, no! This is something that should have been readily available and provided for by the government. Sometimes, we or the government act as strangers in our own land. Where are the lands owned by the Government? This is what we should provide to enable investors to come and easily do their part by providing employment for our people.

Now we are passing the buck of what we should be responsible for to investors. This is not something that I think of but something I have identified. The mindset of people also need to be changed. I would like to appeal to the people of Solomon Islands to participate in order to implement policies of our government.

I think it would be wise not to talk about ground breaking or goodwill payments because money spent on these could have start off an investment. There are areas where ground breakings happened on four occasions but nothing happened. Notably, there is one case which I came across where landowners in Fiji allow their land and the investor did not pay for land in that particular area because landowners are more concern of their employment and their future generation. That is the mindset our people should have thought of. So people need to be cooperate in order fulfil the policy intentions.

Mr Speaker, what I am trying to reach at is infrastructure. Infrastructure like roads is important for agriculture. Tourism infrastructures like airports, wharfs, water and sanitation are all important. So we need to look at the root of the problem and that is infrastructure. Our country is known for malaria so we should build additional clinics in some areas so that tourists can have the confidence to go around in our islands. Without the basic infrastructures in place, I do not think the reforming of the productive sector can take place in the next four years.

As I have said, I will not talk too much. I will give time for other colleagues to contribute. I would like to once again thank the His Excellency the Governor General for the Speech. It is a traditional speech and as alluded by the Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, it should be held every year. I want to thank the Prime Minister for initiating this program. I am happy to hear the Speech from the Throne. It is a very extensive reflection of the government's vision and policy intention relayed to us for the benefit of this parliament and the people of this country.

With these few remarks, I support the motion and I resume my seat.

Hon WILLIAM MARAU (*Minister of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration*): Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this very important motion. I wish to stand on behalf of my people of Ugi/Ulawa to join other colleagues to congratulate and thank His Excellency the Governor for the comprehensive speech, which was delivered on Tuesday this week. The speech covers the policy directions and the roadmap this government will be undertaking to ensure that the socioeconomic changes that this country need can be achieved.

On this note, I would also like to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion to allow Members of Parliament to comment and share ideas pertaining to the good intentions of the contents of the speech.

From the throne, His Excellency the Governor General draws my attention, which I believe you would agree with me, not only to remind us but also calls us to respectfully observe our national motto, 'To Lead is to Serve'. As alluded to by my colleague Minister of Fisheries, the motto, 'To Lead is to Serve' has many interpretations by the public. I do hope and believe that we all understand the true meaning of 'To Lead is to Serve', which is to serve our people and not to serve ourselves or to lead, is to serve the leader. That is not what we intend to do here.

Through his speech, His Excellency the Governor General's advice and wisdom pave the direction that a leader must behave, think and lead our people and nation to the source of peace, tranquillity and prosperity. The message that many of us took home from the speech is to achieve our dreams and aspirations by implementing good policies and empowering our people to be engaged in productive activities. As leaders, we are to teach and support our good people to be hard working so as not to expect too much on aid and to move away from the cargo cult hand-out and mentality.

His Excellency the Governor General also further urged the 10th Parliament to be more focussed and more interactive in developing this country. we have to interact and consult more in an open and constructive way, and we have to be ready to explore scenarios.

Sir, listening to colleague ministers and member of parliament who spoke before me, I gathered that there is urgency for us to take an unpopular decision that will change the business as usual, which prove to be counterproductive in the implementation of our good policies. I cannot agree more of things we spoke about in the last two day, for it is time we look beyond the way we conduct ourselves and embrace changes that will make us progress.

Mr Speaker, I salute and thank His Excellency, the Governor General for clearly outlining the DCC Government Policy Statement, Translation and Strategies launched on the 27th January, 2015. With your concurrence I wish to briefly mention few of the policies His Excellency outlined in his speech and in particular on economic growth centres, investment and SMEs and private sector growth which all come under purview of my ministry's implementation programs.

Sir, in the sectoral reform, the DCC Government believe economic growth centres (EGC), industrial parks and rural growth centres are stimulus to the increase of local and foreign direct investment into the untapped natural resources we claim to have abundantly. Developing these centres brings with it the creation of employment opportunities for semi-skill and skilled Solomon Islanders, decentralisation of major developments to provinces and rural areas. Hence, the reduction of urban drift in search for jobs and better social and economic services.

Mr Speaker, under this policy objective, the government of the day is fully committed to see eventuality of the economic growth centres throughout the country, starting from economic growth centres and the commercial industrial infrastructure development projects that successive governments have already started in the past, including Bina Harbour Infrastructure, Noro Commercial and Industrial Development Project, Suava Bay Economic Growth Centre and other potential centres that will be identified suitable for EGC and endeavour to resourcefully develop them.

Sir, for decades, successive governments saw the importance to bring development closer to where more than 80percent of our population lives. Thus, we will continue to uphold the decentralisation policy to bring the development right down to rural areas. This

is no easy task to achieve, however, with your support and cooperation from all stakeholders, and importantly the resource owners, this can be done.

To harness this vision, the DCC Government will strengthen the coordination of the major developments in rural areas including the economic growth centres, industrial parks and rural growth centres throughout the country. We will encourage and promote public and private partnership arrangements in major development projects such as industrial and commercial estates.

Mr Speaker, encouraging local and foreign direct investment to invest in sizeable commercial farming, forestry and reforestations, fisheries, energy, manufacturing and downstream processing to name a few, is necessary for our development and economic growth. The ministry will endeavour to ensure strong private sector growth by providing incentive packages to encourage local and foreign investments. We will immediately embark on capacity building programs for Foreign Direct Investment Division to improve and strengthen coordination of local and foreign direct investment into government's major development projects. The government through my ministry will ensure that technical and financial support is put in place to support the expansion of the current list of reserve businesses for indigenous Solomon Islanders as part of the Investment Act 2009. Such will allow our indigenous Solomon Islanders ready to venture into reserve business activities and deliver services that the reserve business activities hold for our people.

Sir, it is this government's strong intention to diversify the country's export trade and investment into countries with emerging economies. On this my ministry will begin with the needs assessment programs for local businesses to identify areas of improvement such as skills capacity, innovation and development of products that are of exportable quality.

The ministry has and will continue to improve and strengthen its representation on trade and investment through the Ministry of Foreign and External Trade at Regional programs such as the MSG trades arrangements is as past negotiations and other regional and international reciprocal and non-reciprocal arrangement on trade on goods and services,

investments, labour mobility and new private sector strategic program introduced by the Melanesian Spear head group Secretariat.

The ministry also noted the concern raised by the investors and the General public on Visas, Residence and Work Permits. This is expected as the Immigration division is implementing a new immigration law that came into force in August 2004. Taking this into account, the ministry is reviewing its instructional arrangements in order to build a better, flexible, visas resident Permit and Labour markets that favour private sector growth. Ensuring real growth is achieved through the creation of increase business opportunities, creation of employment opportunities, approved and increased skilled work force, improve productivity, creation of a level playing field for foreign and local investors, improved and efficient legal and administrative processes under acceleration of technology and industry facilitation.

It is common knowledge that the demand for qualified skilled labour force by our private sector and local industry is limited. The DCC government in reviewing other legislations will review its national trade test and training acts with a view to enhance and improve the capacity of the national trade testing and training unit in the labour division to up skill our trades men, women and youths . The ministry enrolls an average of 200 trades' men, women and youths in trade courses such as Mechanic, Plumbing, building constructions, electrician and others annually.

In 2014 my Ministry joined the Ministry of youth, women and children and the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation with technical and financial assistance from the SPC Secretariat jointly support the youths at work programs, which youth themselves lead and managed. The country needs more youths, boys and girls to engage in this worthy course. On this note I encourage MPs to visit the overcrowded office at the Art Gallery to see first-hand of what our youths can achieved.

The Government through my Ministry under this program provided a grant of \$60,000.00 this month to assist in building a consultation and training facility in addressing the current problem of office space that the youth program is facing.

Mr Speaker, the presence of a strong and vibrant SME and the private sector will refer to as agents of growth, brings with it numerous benefits including the generation and increase of employment opportunities, the diversification and increase of Revenue sources, increase and strong Government revenue base, reduction of Aid dependency and the list goes on. For this the Ministry will immediately work on the enactment of the Small and medium enterprise legislation that will give great opportunity to Solomon Islanders to participate more in domestic investments in the businesses reserved for them. The Ministry will embark on restructuring our current institutional arrangement for the establishment of small and medium enterprise advisory and support centre, to provide much needed advisory support services to SMEs. We all know too well or recognized the challenges indigenous Solomon Islander are facing, thus, restricting them to participate fully in economic and commercial activities. This government is committed to support and assist and assist our indigenous nationals to participate in income generating activities including sustainable harvesting and utilization of their national resources for maximum benefits. This will include revisiting the idea to establish the Solomon Development bank or introduction of SME banks or both.

Mr Speaker, perhaps we also need to encourage our traditional knowledge and skills and bring them forward to support the new commercial activities especially in micro enterprises level. There is a numerous traditional knowledge and skill out there in every community in all of our provinces that keeps our people to survive throughout the ages. We must not ignore the invaluable traditional knowledge and skills, but build upon them to the level that brings benefits to our people, both in monetary, terms and in a peaceful coexistence with the environment, this what I believe my colleague ministers for environment and culture and tourism wanted to see. Through SME's the government will aggressively pursue the development of a very infant manufacturing sector, to engage in downstream process of our natural resources for value addition. To ensure compliance with regional and internal trade arrangement with Solomon Islands as signatory and a member. And to gain the many benefits emerges under those trade and investment arrangements. The government of the day further believes that trade and investment promotion is a key to growth and success of SMEs. Therefore it is committed to ensure promotion or foreign

direct investment and promotion of our local products and services at regional and international trade exhibits.

The DCC government noted the ever increasing importation of goods that can be easily produce and manufactured here in Solomon Islands. In 2014 alone the total imports of goods that can be produced easily in the country. If adequate level of these resources are made available to our local manufacturers amounted to more than SBD\$590 million dollars. Excluding rice which is estimated at the vicinity of more than SBD\$200 million dollars per year since 2009. This calls for technical and financial support for an appropriate private sector development assistance program as stimulus package, focusing on downstream processing of our local commodities such as rice, tropical fruits, fish, timber, cocoa, coconuts, coffee etc.

My ministry will work closely with the commodities export marketing authority as a vehicle to revitalize our coconut and cocoa industries and perhaps other commodities with potential heritage. Coconut and cocoa, two projects are products where majority of our rural people engage in their production. Therefore it is only appropriate that we give them the level of support they require to improve and strengthen the two industries.

Mr Speaker with these in mind the ministry under our cluster grouping with the ministry of livestock, we will ensure that the coconut and other commodities. We have comparative advantage over are given the level of support required in terms of technical and budgetary allocations. The future of our country is in our hands now, while we now have the opportunity and will to do better and bring blessings to our people and nation. What else do we have to lose after all we are all craving to be in this honourable for a reason? And that reason should be to serve our people and nation with sacrifice and determination. If this is not the reason why we are here then perhaps we are at the wrong place at the wrong time and surely our days will be numbered.

Now that we have a road map a head of us, let's work together as a team, having the same vision and mission. To address problems that affect all of us, there is no other better way forward than us working together for our common good.

Finally before I resume my seat, once again on behalf of my good people of Ulawa/Ugi and my hardworking staff of my ministry, would once again want to

congratulate and thank his Excellency the governor general for the speech that paves the way. We are to lead the development of this country. I support the motion.

Hon BATHOLOMEW PARAPOLO (*Minister for Tourism*): Thank you Mr Speaker, first of all I would like to thank you Mr Speaker for giving the opportunity to contribute to this motion. It is also with the honour to make some remarks and support of the speech from the throne, delivered by His Excellency the governor general in the opening of this parliament sitting.

Today we all appreciate that the tourism sector is one of the world foreign exchange earning in any country. Tourism is also a dynamic sector that could trigger growth in other sectors. For Solomon Islands, tourism is still in an infant stage but the potential that it poses to our economic development cannot be overlooked. As the Minister responsible for the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the member for Ngella constituency, I would like to inform the House that we have some good news for tourism development. One is the Spring Water Resort at Mamara which is a big one for this country. First they will build 200 rooms and the shipment for their building materials will leave Malaysia on the 29th of this month, so I think tourism will be boosted.

On that note I also want to thank the NPF for allowing their properties especially the one at Tulagi which is the Sasape base 1 and the old G-club for the building of four star hotels. The arrangements are on the way and we will look for an investor to develop those two sites. Having said that, I want to ask my good people of Ngella province to unlock their lands and open them up for tourism development and the growth of our economy.

As stated from the speech from the Throne, tourism is one of the key economic sectors of this nation. So to me, His Excellency has seen the importance of this sector and this sector will help other sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, aviation and environment in pursuit after it.

Moreover, the Ministry has done with the inclusive Solomon Islands national tourism development strategy plan 2015 to 2019. This plan is designed to identify and address key issues of tourism development, providing options to challenge and impose reflection for sustainability tourism development. The plan is also intended to focus on the resource product development, human resources, capacity building and cruise ship

development. It is also a strategic plan that tries to suit the initial stage of development for other sectors. Tourism is important as we collectively work towards creating employment for our people, support them to earn their livelihood through tourism operation and contribute to the national GDP. Besides, tourism will increase the arrival of cruise ships to our shores and also it will make Solomon Islands a destination for overseas visitors.

Furthermore, as we see in many countries around the world tourism can contribute to poverty alleviation and reduce the risk to urban drift. As alluded to earlier, Solomon Islands tourism is still in its infant stages but that is the beauty of it Mr Speaker Sir, we have very pristine environment, diverse culture, beautiful people and unspoiled environment. We have unique ways of doing things. And these are catch and attractions that tourists are looking for now a days. We must capitalise on this strategy and impose the development of this industry. As we plan this is not an overnight gain Mr Speaker but the process that takes time to harness and grow.

Mr Speaker Sir, the unique culture of Solomon Islands is a huge product for our tourism industries. For your information on the survey undertaken by the ministry on tourism, it found that tourist come to Solomon Islands to see the unique culture and the friendly people of this nation. The uniqueness of the culture and the people is something tourists don't see anywhere else. So let us build on this strength, let us not use ourselves with issues that would destroy the beauty of our people and culture. Let us be tolerant and welcome people to our shores because we are the Happy Isles of the Pacific.

Mr Speaker Sir, traditional knowledge and expression of culture bill will be tabled to ensure the culture of our people are protected and promoted. I hope this bill will be finalised and soon be tabled for deliberation.

Mr Speaker Sir, let me also state that tourism in our country cannot exist if we do not have the political will to push it forward.

On this juncture I must applaud the commitment made by the Honourable Prime Minister in the development of this industry, his vision and relentless commitment to develop the tourism industry, as well as provided a support to sustain industry for our future generation. I also call on of us in this Honourable House to provide the same support to the tourism industry.

Mr Speaker Sir, let me also applaud the work that has been done so far; our tourism operators and stakeholders they have been engines for growth and have been working so hard over the years and that without them we will not be able to reach this far. It is important that we will continue to work together in the spirit of public, private partnership to attain our desired goals.

Mr Speaker Sir, in promoting tourism development there are challenges, I say this because tourism is a risky business as well. We will be forced with the challenge of environment degradation, security, distance, natural disaster, land conflict and others. But I am very optimistic with our collective efforts we can overcome this challenges with great determination.

Finally, let me sincerely thank His Excellency, the Governor General for the speech from the throne in which he has highlighted important issues for us to do as leaders of this nation. His Excellency has reminded us of our leadership roles and the service we must provide for our people - remember, to lead is to serve.

Hence, our service to our people means we are servicing our God almighty. To God be the great glory and great things he has done. So let us embrace ourselves as leaders of this nation to work together for the development of our tourism industry. That is why we are called "So Solomon so different and we live in the happy isles". I support the motion.

Hon MOFFAT FUGUI (Deputy Speaker): Thank you Mr Speaker. One attends to the motion by the Prime Minister to pay deference and offer gratitude to the Regal representative to His Excellency, the Governor General - after his speech in this august Chamber the day before yesterday. I therefore wish to speak now on the motion that

"we the National Parliament of Solomon Islands here assembled beg leave to offer thanks for the speech which has been addressed by you to Parliament."

In this regard one does not need to belabour points and policy initiatives prior addressed by other Honourable Members. But one is- equally mindful of the virtue of repetition for the purpose of garnering wider audience.

Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate the DCC Government for the successful launch of the policy statement document and the policy translation and strategy document. Contents of both documents are the subject of His Excellency's speech from the throne.

At the MP level the DCC team has a good batch of progressive leaders. They are a real 'tour de force.' At the official level the DCC Government has an excellent team of officers who are well qualified with deep experience in Government administration and state craft and ever willing to work beyond their call of duty. It would be to DCC Government's advantage these officers are armed with the necessary equipment and resources so that they can connect and deliver on these policies to the diverse provinces, islands and communities in the country.

Mr Speaker, my intention today -is not to speak to what His Excellency had eloquently expounded on in his speech from the throne. Rather my intentions merely to skirt around those issues and policy intentions with the purpose of amplifying them so as to raise what the Regal speech had not cover or was silent tone. Honourable Speaker, I intend to be brief.

Whatever government rules the country in any given time maintaining national unity is a serious imperative. In the Regal speech His Excellency alluded to this when he emphasised that "we are all one people and belong to one nation".

Short of national unity Solomon Islands will truly be patchwork of a nation, imagined, disparate and miserable. We must maintain our national unity at whatever cost.

One of the ways to achieve this is to, "do what comes naturally to us as Solomon Islands." For example, intermarriages. Throughout our islands are such that presently we have thick connections in this regard. Therefore the government should encourage and strengthen these lines of connections through family policies that encourage celebration of family genealogies, family traditions, family histories and funding of family activities and family projects. You would have to watch and take care of these points and I say this with intention. This needs to be clearly spelt out in the DCC government policies.

I applaud the DCCG for its eagerness to address corruption, but that is one side of a complex problem. On the other hand, the government should also see the systemic corruption that it is tackled head on. It is not only individuals who are susceptible to corruption but the system itself often thrives on corruption. The system is also corrupt. Members of Parliament will understand what I mention. For example, the system creates inequality and alienation in such a way that people just have to make-do with whatever they have to survive. This is in a system that rewards some people and punishes the rest of the population.

His Excellency mentioned the need to forge political stability and sustaining integrity of leadership at the national level as important imperatives for good governance. Most of the time, this is an issue that impinges directly on the quality of leaders in control of the government and the mode of operation these leaders used to run the country at any given time. The most recent example is instructive. Good policies were in place, officers were ready to work but the leaders in the government saw all these differently. They allow their members to do whatever they want to do as long as the number game is maintained. Inevitably, most of government's time and recourses was devoted to maintaining a semblance of unity- not true unity but a semblance or an appearance of unity. We have to be careful of that. In the meantime, service deliveries deteriorated, government funds were diverted and even the general election at the end of the parliamentary term was left to an awkward time. Timing is important in terms of governance. Not only corruption but up and above is time. Because time is a reflection of God. Elections held at the end of the year. This is an awkward time. August should be the right time and not December.

We should never left elections to the end of the year because the results would be obvious. There are chaos during election time, chaos when the new DCC government tried to set up its administration and chaos when the New Year ensued with school fees to pay, constituency requests to attend to, deaths to support and respective ministries and departments ready to operate but for that necessary funds. That is the problem of putting together a government right at the beginning of the year and left elections right at the end of the previous year. Sir, this should not be allowed to happen again.

In view of land, the experiences of our people are quite instructive too. I am one of those who believe that our people would be willing to allow their land for development. I

think people will be willing. If you talk with them and gain their trust, they will listen because all of us will benefit. If our people fully understand and appreciate what the government tries to do, they can allow their land. But one of the major problems with land like other important resources is that, most times government people, leaders and officials often address land issues for development as the state always do. The states always behave in the same way. Governments come and go, the state is total infrastructure with processes altogether. The behaviour is always like that. It is not a new thing. For example, government people often lock initial negotiations with time limits. You tell them to meet today and you go back to Honiara, they will not believe us. Those of us in the villages, time is our freedom to do what we want to do. We do not have clock time, we only have people and even time. Then we give mobilisation funds right from the beginning. You give mobilisation funds to people; it is like bribing people in a reverse way at the beginning. We will be in trouble, and what the Governor General said will happen here. And this is where that idea of cargo cult and instructive is pertinent or relevant.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, this often gives rise to the cargo cultic attitude in view of land deals. Worse, government people sometimes take sides with one group of people against others. That is some of the problems that we have in terms of land.

We should forget that we were once colonised people. One issue will come in too because when white men came, they stole few things – women, land and our resources- gold and silver, but start with women. No wonder women have big problems with us in the country because we are living the legacy of colonisation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in terms of land, indigenous people have had painful experiences with governments, colonial or otherwise. Governments had used the law of adverse possession for example. This has taught people to jealously hold on to their land. So in Honiara, semblances of this can still be seen even today. I lived at Tasahe, the Tandai tribal people told me that limit of governments land is over there, now the government has taken our land and even our houses are now on government land. How can they trust us with this kind of land dealing? So, to say that our people have locked up their lands is to state what is apparently obvious. People do hold on to their land because of previous: bad experiences and from what people had learned from experiences from other countries, where through

the long arms of the law, many indigenous people and tribes had been dispossessed of their major means of survivability and livelihood.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, it is encouraging to see that the government intends to develop the first ever National Urbanisation Policy. I am very happy with that because the three of us Honiara members are in urban centres. This is to manage and control the rate of urbanisation in urban centres, so that speech stated. For Honiara honourable members of parliament, this is a breath of fresh air.

But control and management of urban drift is fine, but we need to create employment and engagement for our young people. So that when our young people are empowered, rural and urban cleavages would not be seen as barriers. Now if we made this policy clear, both rurality and urbanity would be perceived merely as alternative spaces of livelihood that people traverse at will, now and then. So when you put control and managing urban drift, it sounds like the colonial times. In this age and time, we move a little a bit. We put it like that, but we allow them to do something important in those places and useful to them, so that if he wants to reside in Honiara, he still have something to do in the village. At the moment it is one sided. That's the other way of putting it.

Honourable speaker, I am happy to see the proposed rural economic development policy, this is very good. We need this because it's overdue. This should conjoin with an urban economic development policy. For us the three Members for Honiara when we talked about rural economic policy make sure you put an urban economic development policy in place so that we are not left out. We in Honiara and other urban centres would like to have our own urban economic development centres. This in the policy but it is not clear in the written speech. This will provide an enabling environment to young people and older folk as well, in terms of providing employment, enjoyment and entertainment, those three 'Es' are important in a place like Honiara. If you have employment but you do not have enjoyment or entertainment we will be in trouble, likewise, if you provide entertainment and enjoyment without employment we will also face trouble. So we must address the three of them.

Mr Speaker, if you can recall I discussed a need for a second city in the Solomon Islands in my previous sine die motion presentation early this year. So I will repeat the need for a city

again. I still gun-ho about this; I will die on this, this is because I have a strong believe on it. The longer I ponder on this; a second city, the more convince I become. Plan properly a second city for Solomon Islands on Malaita would address the issue of urban drift and rurality together. And taken in the context of Solomon Islands of what we are and how we are and now the idea of a second city is ever attractive.

Honorable Speaker, under Home affairs I am encouraged that the government would review the citizenship of Act. In this day and age we should allow for multiple citizenship, so that the person who's married outside of Solomon Islands would have double or multiple citizenships and can live outside but can still be able to invest in the country. You create investment not only in the country but an investment which link the Solomon Islands and other economies. You can come back home but at the same time your investment is there, so it allows you to travel between these different places, but still a Solomon Islands citizen but investments are done in these different places, this how you create investment in this time and age. This is the responsibility of the Deputy Prime Minister. So I am pleased that he will make sure these things happen. And in view of the need to censorship board, we need that now in the age of run-away internet and instant computer connectivity, we need it now, I do not want to tell you more because it is on top of your mobile phones, you would appreciate this.

As for the review of Honiara city Act 1999, again this is way overdue, the Honiara city council as an important administration body for Honiara city has more to do but less power to act on. It is one of those entities that time and events has over taken and we need to review and amend that 1999 Act. One of the needs for these new amendments is to legislate for the relationship between Honiara City council and Parliament. Three members of Parliaments in Honiara are former ex-officio members of Honiara City Council, but there is no link between us, so that whatever happened in our constituencies we have the power to act because the Act of parliament empowers us to do so. Especially to connect with the official and our Honourable members of the City Council. This is exactly what I meant to say, this is because Honiara is important we feed from it and we must make sure we look after it.

Honorable Speaker, as for women, youth and children, family affairs, this is the topic I am so interested in. It is good that I am not the Minister for that Ministry. I think this portfolio is

in the reverse. The minister is listening so that is very good and he is a nice person, and doesn't have a quick temper like some of us. The issues of women, youths and children logically speaking should all be subsumed under Family affairs and I will explain. In Solomon Islands family has long been the organizing matrix of our life since time immemorial. If you go to any community in the Solomon's they will tell you who is your father or mother. Not, how many rooms do you have in your house, not that. Rather they will ask you who is your father or mother? If your name is Suri, certainly you would come from Malaita or if your name is Akwai then you come from Malaita. If your name is Apato then you from Are 'Are, why is that because of the family tribe? It is important when you govern you must govern within that similar matrix's because you are building on a foundation which is already long lasting.

Therefore honourable speaker, to speak of women youth and children without giving primacy to family is to use a row boat approach. That is inverse in the context of Solomon Islands. I mentioned row boat approach because all of you know government's ships in the past when their crews row a boat, they row with their backs facing where they are going. They don't look at where they are going hopefully they will get there if they do not hit rocks at the first place. It is wrong- they have to turn the right way but I am confident that the most able minister responsible now listening will see to this and put the ministry arrangement once more in order. That is his prerogative and our government's priority.

Finally, as long as you and I are speakers of this parliament we should make sure parliamentary autonomy is achieved. But we cannot do it in void but we must do it now. As I have mentioned a few times in the past of the three branches of government parliament has a lot more latitude to reform, strengthen and expand. This parliament comes alive when we are in session, when we are not in session, we might as well be defunct or be bunk or be dead. That is what I meant here. Now with you and me or with the new clerk we will change the administration. For instance when I am writing this speech no body helps me but I am the deputy speaker of parliament. The officer should have helped me on this one. So we must turn it around so that we are sensitive to how and when and where parliament do things so that all of us are happy about a lot of connectivity there with the age of internet

and computers. We must reform and we must strengthen and we must expand, we will make sure this is achieved with the blessings of the DCC government.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the speech from the throne and Honourable Prime Minister, thank you for moving the motion. You have my full support and I support the motion.

Hon JIMSON TANAGADA (*Minister for Women, Youth & Children Affairs*): Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor. I rise also to contribute to the motion that is set before this Honourable house. I on behalf of my good people of Gizo/ Kolombangara, would like to join my Honourable colleagues of parliament to thank his Excellency the Governor General of Solomon Islands Sir Frank Ofagiro Kabui for gracing the house of parliament with his presence and in particular for his leadership by presenting an enlightening speech from the throne. His Excellency's address to me, redefines our sense for a great need of solidarity and strength as a nation. May I also respectfully thank the Honourable Prime Minister for moving the motion before this house to enable a lively debate on the address by the Governor General which had ensured. Sir, the future to which Solomon Islanders aspire will not arrive by chance. And I am thankful that a lot of my good colleague members of parliament have express opinions, views about the way forward for this nation. Grand visions for our nation future will come to nothing if we lost sight of the needs of our people, which we have expressed rightly for the past two days.

The speech from the Throne reinforces the assertion in providing an excellent overview of the situation of our people; the challenges they face and how best we can move into the future with serious attention to the issues, needs and concern. I therefore stand here inspired by my Ministry's vision for the future in which serious attention is given to investing in families which consist of men, women and children; issues of women and youth so that they can enjoy a peaceful and a rewarding present and the future that can sustain the welfare and wellbeing of our coming generations.

My ministry's work covers many aspects of human development. Human development that improves people's lives and their livelihood. It places humans at the

centre of all development efforts; it includes the processes of enlarging the range of people's choices of increasing their opportunities for education, healthcare income and employment. It also covers justice, equity and equality of human choices from a sound physical environment to economic and political freedoms. It values the accumulation of both material wealth and social capital, human development promotes development that addresses the root causes of poverty and human deprivation. Children are a large part of our society, almost half of our population are children and that about 35 babies are born each day in Solomon Islands, this rapid rate of growth means that most of our population will be young for quite a while to come. Our national data confirms this, our national medium age is 18.7 years old and so we have a young population. Almost all of the growth in the nation's population is composed of children, our population growth rate each week is more than seven classrooms full of children or the equivalent of an average primary school which implies a need for more than 50 schools equivalent that include new teachers, water supplies, toilets, clinics and etc each year. This also means that each school is supposed to be built for each constituency and it is a responsible for all of us the 50 members of Parliament.

Change is possible and children's rights are an effective rallying point for change because the future belongs to them. A lot of time we talk about the issues affecting women and youth and those are dead ends-results of our negligence to address issues of our children. And alot of this can be addressed if we spend the resources, time and effort, which the class have firm. And I am thankful that the colleague has mentioned, for us to relook at how we go about the issues that affect people- the mankind of Solomon Islanders. Mr Speaker, targeted interventions that achieve rapid success need to be pursued alongside large scale reforms and projects whose achievement may not benefit today's every needy generation. All must be done with due attention to sustainability and inclusive processes.

Multi-sectoral programs focussing on early childhood and support to families especially those families and children in unusually difficult circumstances. Merit special support because they provide lasting benefit for children's growth, development and protection and for breaking the inter-generational continuation of many situations in which we have gone through already.

Efforts should build on children's own resilience and strength in that respect we must develop and strengthen mechanisms that help our children to participate in our nations development efforts.

Mr Speaker Sir, Solomon Islands is also a youthful nation. Today's young men and young women are knowledgeable individuals who want to see their need and aspirations achieved in the foreseeable future. Not just for the development but also for the ongoing development of Solomon Islands as a whole. And as unassisted the frustration of young people can lead youth to focus intensely on single issues and this is exactly the reason why we see many problems caused by youth today.

Youth must therefore be central to planning for development, distribution of resources for youth development must be fair, Youth developments must be gender equal. Partnership between government, CSOs and development partners must be strengthened to facilitate youth's holistic development. The enabling environment for youth development must be developed and strengthened.

Mr Speaker Sir, as we heard from the Speech from the Throne gender equality contribute substantially to improving the wellbeing of women, men, girls and boys and the promotion of gender equality must be the half of this country's mission. I know its sensitive and in due time we will come to discussing it again how we are addressing this issue of gender equality in terms of how we can embrace it in culture, our believe in culture and religion as well.

Continuing to invest in women's in parliament is vital for achieving gender equality but it is also necessary that women and men work together to address attitudinal and institutional barriers to gender equality.

This sponsored bears repeating gender equality can only be achieved through partnership between men and women and this one it means, safe environment where respect for both inside the family environment, inside the private and public life of us as individuals.

Moreover the crosscutting nature of women's concern means that we take a multi-sectoral approach to advancing gender equality. Achieving gender equality means that all sectors within government must take ownership of the government's policy objective and play a key role in the implementation. It also means that we must continue to value the

important role played by the civil society organisations and our development partners in the implementation of government policy.

Mr Speaker Sir, government has put in place policy and planning frameworks which are aimed at addressing the need of men, women, youth and children. All policies play emphasis on the present and the future which we want to see for our women, families, youth and children. These policies will guide my ministry and stakeholders alike in the process of implementing DCC government policies strategies 4.08

Solomon Islands is a party to a number of human rights conventions and treaties. My ministry is responsible for coordinating and implementing the Conventions on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

CEDAW moves beyond mere guarantees of equality and equal protection before the law in existing legal instruments. It targets discriminatory dimension of past and current societal and cultural context which impede women's enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The provisions of the conventions encompass all dimensions of women's lives and draw on principals of equality, non discrimination and stead obligation.

Similarly, on CRC state parties are obligated to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all form of discrimination or punishment on the basis status, activities, expressed opinions or believe of the child's parent which is very sensitive, legal guidance or family members.

However, as the minister I believe all the issues surrounding Human Rights can be recognised that Human Rights is good governance, which can be achieved when we embrace our values on culture and religion where all these aspect must complement each other rather than contradicting each other.

Mr Speaker, in October 2014 the government entered into a constructive dialogue with the CEDAW committee to inform the committee on how this nation has addressed issues of women and girls in Solomon Islands. I am happy to report that the committee has submitted its concluding observation about the contractive dialogue which I will later

present to Cabinet. It is requested by the CEDAW committee to bring to the attention of Parliament.

As for CRC, Solomon Islands report on the situation of children has now been finalised. I will soon take the report to Cabinet for approval before it is submitted to the UN CRC committee for the constructive dialogue.

Mr Speaker, although Solomon Islands has taken some bold step to safeguard, fulfil and promote Human Rights essential cornerstones of good governance and the social economic and cultural development of this nation. As the minister responsible for women, youth and family affairs I am concerned that domestication of CEDAW and CRC into our national law is still a long way and I will ensure that we will be able to understand how we can put together human rights in terms of culture and our religious beliefs so that they can compliment for the common good of our people.

There is a current development and I am pleased to report to this Honourable House that Solomon Islands is a signatory to the Denarau 2015 declaration of Human Rights and good governance. The declaration was made by Members of Parliament including the Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs and myself that the declaration was made recognising the vital role of Parliament and parliamentarians to respect, fulfil, protect and promote the inheritance rights of all people in the Pacific. The declaration upholds our Pacific culture and noting that human rights and good governance can be achieved when we embrace our culture, engage its evolution and its many values that are linked to principles, treaties and conventions of human rights.

The notion that human rights is against our culture and religion, in my opinion, can be addressed so that we will ensure human rights, culture and religion compliment the good lives of our people in this country rather than seeing it as conflicting.

As Members of Parliament, we have a key role to champion the implementation of human rights treaties and obligations, which Solomon Islands have ratified. We have signed a lot of those human rights conventions.

The next step is to ratify and put into law. We also have a key responsibility to champion other human rights conventions, which this country is yet to ratify, such as Convention on the Rights of People living with Disabilities. I support colleagues who raise concerns about that special group of people. So many times we label this group of people as

sick. They are not. These people are deprived of the right to access the right service and infrastructure to live a comfortable life and possibly can also contribute to the economy of our country.

A lot of services and developments in this country become obstacles to this special group of people, the disabled people. I believe the DCC government, through the relevant ministry, and if it is my ministry, we will address this issue.

Finally, I have been pleasantly pleased with the value and standard of debate in this honourable House. I have learned a great deal from the sharing and interactions. I have noted with keenness how far this country has progressed and I am equally gratified that there is political will to carry out the government reform agenda. I note also that there is still a long road to travel. However, I am inspired and consoled by our strength and solidarity as a nation.

It is my fervent hope and prayer that we will give voice to the values, concerns and aspirations to all Solomon Islanders irrespective of the differences that we have as a people.

Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to share. Without further do, I support the motion.

Hon BODO DETTKE (*Minister for Forests and Research*): I would also like to contribute to the motion. On that note, allow me to recognise the chiefs, elders, senior citizens, community leaders and the youth of my constituency for their trust and confidence in me to lead and develop our constituency for the next four years. I thank you all. I assure you all that I will serve my constituency to the best of my ability for a better and brighter future.

On this occasion, I highly commend His Excellency Frank Utu Ofagioro Kabui, the Governor General of Solomon Islands for his reflections and sharing his advice to us as leaders and the people of this young nation through the powerful Speech from the Throne – thank you Governor General. It was an opportunity for His Excellency as the father of this nation to remind us of our roles and responsibilities as children of this developing country on how to thoughtfully and carefully advance and progress the social, economic and development reforms and aspirations of our people and communities at the current stage of growth and development in our beloved Solomon Islands.

On a similar note, I also wish to thank the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Honourable Manasseh Damukana Sogavare, MP, for his wisdom and initiative that enabled His Excellency to grace our second meeting with this Speech from the Throne. I also extend my sincere appreciation to members of the Cabinet and the Government Caucus for supporting this initiative, and for their valuable contributions to this traditional speech from the throne – thank you very much. In light of our customs and cultural diversity, our remoteness to market and geographical settings, our foremost challenge is to build our Solomon Islands to be a nation that our families can live together and co-exist harmoniously in our villages and communities.

I believe that this is one of the important requisites for designing of long term development projects that are suitable for customary land. Our forest resources are depleting at an unsustainable rate and the DCCG through the Ministry of Forestry and Research is now embarking on improvising a strategic and meaningful approach that aim to relief and manage the activities and forestry protocols that contribute to this unsustainable harvesting rate. For instance, the ministry has reached an understanding with the Solomon Forest Association (SFA) to convene regular meetings to discuss some of these initiative, strategies and approaches.

In that regard, I am glad to inform this Chamber that a mechanism has been designed and will soon be adopted for monitoring and assessment of downstream processing of around eight (8%) of annual export logs. The mechanism and approach will ensure there is a steady supply of quality timber for the domestic market, which will provide an opportunity for our people to access quality timber for creation of other business opportunities as well as construction and maintenance of their homes. At the comprehensive levels there is an on-going initiative by the ministry and KOICA to design a 10-year master plan on forestry. In addition to this plan is a key strategy and action plan on forest information and strategic reforestation and research and development. This plan and strategy should be ready by June 2015. Therefore, we are confident that a more comprehensive program will be designed and submitted to our development partners for consideration, after wide consultation with our stakeholders.

In preparation for these plans and program, it is vital for other government ministries to support and complement the efforts of officers of the Ministry of Forestry and

research. Many of the issues that we encountered at the Forestry sector can be managed if officers of relevant Government ministries discussed these with their colleague in my Ministry and respond effective to the procedures and process of their ministries.

I am encouraged to learn that these officers are now coordinating the discussions through their sector clusters or reference groups.

In conclusion Sir, I encourage all of us to be more responsible and advocate leadership qualities that will promote comprehensiveness and harmony or happy living in our communities. Let us all be vigilant in dealing with our priorities and agree on common principles and guidelines for safer and secured society.

We need to invest in our youths now, and let us not wait as reluctant leaders. Let us not let this opportunity pass without any desire to leave behind a few legacies for other future generations. I believe the DCCG will deliver, a lot have being said by previous speakers; all good and positive things. I think the DCC is on the right track and has the right frame work for delivery that previous governments have failed. Our country is blessed with resources. Why are still in this situation? We could think about that and I know a lot of colleague will understand what I am saying.

I will not bore you with more complains but as a man who doesn't do much debating, rather I am a man of action. So let me assure you that DCC government will deliver at its best and hopefully we will deliver on time. I would like to ask this Honourable house that it takes a lot of time and hard work to put this country back on track, and a lot of commitment will be made by us the 50 members of the Parliament.

With thees few words I support the motion and I thank you.

Standing order 10 suspended in accordance with standing order 81 and standing order 10(5)

Question agreed to.

Hon ANDREW MANEPORA (*Minister for Lands, Housing & Survey*): Like other honourable colleagues who have spoken before me, I would also like to first of all convey our sincere gratitude to his Excellency Sir Frank Kabui for a very delightful and insightful speech delivered to Parliament and to the good people of this nation from the throne. Sir, before I

forget, please also allow me to take this opportunity to thank you also for taking up your appointment as Speaker of our National Parliament. Also, I would like to thank his lordship for his presence during the speech from the throne. And not forgetting, I would also like to welcome and say thank you to our new Clerk to Parliament for his appointment. Furthermore, I would also like to thank other honourable members who have accepted to take up their respective chairmanship of the various parliamentary standing committees. This is important to make our parliament fulfil its oversight function for the benefit of our people and our country.

In my opening remarks, I said the Speech from the Throne was very delightful and insightful because it outlines very clearly the policies of the Democratic Coalition for Change Government for the next three years or so in taking up leadership as the ruling government. The strategic areas that the current DCC Government is prepared to tackle head on with the necessary changes were clearly identified in the speech from the throne, and these are the fundamental reforms and the sectoral reform programs.

I was very keen listening to speeches from all Honourable colleagues who have spoken before me, especially from some Honourable from the other side of the House, it is quite interesting to know that some of them still have doubts as to whether the promised changes as outlined by his Excellency in the Speech from the Throne will ever happen in reality to bring about the much desired benefit for our people and our country at large. This is normal because the experiences that we have gone through over the past years is such that there are many empty promises in terms of government policies but nothing tangible is seen at the lapse of four years. Whether because of lack of resources to implement them or may be due to change in political priorities as often is the case.

I stand here to assure Parliament and our people that yes, the DCC Government is serious and is determined to bring about the necessary changes that have been either overlooked for so many years or were noticeable but less effort was put into addressing them in the past years.

Just by listening to the Speech from the Throne, I am already in the spirit of change. What are we waiting for, we need to change. I do hope the Speech from the Throne has already given some glimpse of hope for the people of this nation. Although we still have a long way to go in order for us to actually realize the result or the outcome of the policies of

the DCC Government as outline by his Excellency when delivering the speech from the throne.

I do not want to bore this house by repeating myself on areas or issues already been discussed by other Honourable colleagues 4.33 by repeating myself on areas or issues that are already being discussed by other Honourable colleagues who have already spoken before me and on that note I will not cover other issues that are already discussed. What I really intend to deliberate on in my speech is to discuss some areas or issues that were highlighted by other Honourable colleagues who have spoken before me, especially issues relating to land as that is what my ministry is about.

As alluded to by the Prime Minister while introducing this motion, he mentioned that we are land locked due to our current land tenure system, only 13 per cent of the total landmass of Solomon Islands is under the control or owned by the State. But about 87percent are customary land and so it makes it difficult for the investors to have confidence in us when we try to convince them to come and invest in our country.

The same sentiments are also echoed by the Leader of Opposition, the Leader of Independent group as well as my good Honourable colleague from small Malaita from their speech that land is seeing as a major obstacle or hindrance to development in our country and that is true. It is only true to say that many efforts in the past to develop some of our major projects that should hopefully provide some leverage to our economy were delayed up until today due to land issues. For example, Bina Harbour, Suava Bay, NDomia Township and the list goes on. So therefore, land is a very important factor in any development. Everyone who spoke before me and touches on issues of land, they always say that land is the major hindrance to development and so we need to open up all these lands and if you can allow let me make this clear so as to make everyone understand. That when we talk about productive sector for any production or any development to happen, we need three things that must be made available, first, land, second, labour and thirdly, capital and we call these factors of production. These three things must be available before any production or any development can occur, so you see land is a very important factor in any development that we want to undertake.

I am not an expert in land management and I wonder why I was appointed as the Minister of Lands, Housing and Survey but maybe it is a divine call for me to clear up the

mess that was created in this ministry. The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey has always been accused of corruption and malpractices, especially in terms of issues relating to land allocation and so it is a very big task ahead to deal with. Anyway, under the DCC Government I will try every way possible to clean up the mess created over the past years and ensure that from here onwards all matters relating to land administration are done in a transparent and accountable manner. The establishment of the land board under the new revised Act is a good beginning to regain back public confidence in my ministry.

I will now discuss three important programs that my ministry will be undertaking this year as reflected in the budget which is yet to be passed by parliament in the next couple of days. As you can see, land is an important factor in any form of development. You cannot do any form of development without land. This is why I would like to highlight three programs my ministry will undertake in order to solve some of the problems we have been experiencing since independence before I conclude.

The first program that my ministry will be undertaking this year is National Urbanisation Policy. This policy attempts to acquire more land for town expansion. We need more land because we need to relocate our hospital, we need to resettle those that are affected by climate change; as alluded to by my Honourable colleague Member for Small Malaita that he did not hear anything about resettlement of people affected by climate. No! The National Urbanisation Policy will cater for that issue.

We also need to take more land because the housing problem that is currently experienced with our public servants. We will try and build more houses so that we can provide accommodation for public servants.

The second policy is Land Reform TOL Upgrading Project. At the moment there are more squatters within the town boundaries. This is a problem associated with urbanisation. If we do not address it now, it will get worse. Under this Land Reform TOL Upgrading Project, my ministry will check on all TOLs and subdivisions and give proper titles to those deserved to be given proper titles. This is so that we avoid the problem with squatters.

The third is the Land Reform Program. Under the DCC government we also have land reform program. As I have said, land is a very sensitive issue and we need more land for more development. Government only owns 13percent. What are we going to do with the

remaining 87percent? That is the struggle we have been experiencing since independence as to how we can deal with the 87percent of land owned by landowners.

Under the reform program, we have recognised that the constitution adopted after independent does not give recognition to our traditional right of land ownership. This is why there is no specific provision within the current Land and Titles Act that gave recognition to our system of customary land ownership. The only way to acquire land for development from landowners at the moment is to take away their PE titles and this is what our people are afraid of and why they are not prepared to allow their lands for development. This is important to note because thirty-seven have passed and the government only control 13percent. The other 87percent is in hands of customary owners. We need those lands so that we have more investors coming and more development to take place. We need those lands to be available.

The DCC Government is working on a system that will encourage land and resource owners to be part of the development process. This has not been done for so long in the development process that we went through.

For so long our people have been spectators of development rather than partners in our development processes. Therefore, my ministry under the DCC Government will work towards encouraging land and resource owners to participate in the economic development and become equal partners in the growing of our country.

This obviously requires enacting of new legislations to empower the house of chiefs and probably the establishment of land trust board to administer, control and manage land on behalf of the land owning tribal groups. For this we need to enact relevant laws to recognise the house of chiefs and the establishment of land trust board they do the recording of genealogy, land boundaries other related land administration. Once all these things are sorted out then the different groups can come out with their customary land and lease it out government for any investor to invest.

I think this process is missing since independence and we are still working on what system is best for us so that landowners can allow their land. This process will ensure that customary landowners can lease out their land for development while still holding on to

their Perpetual Estate (PE) Title. That is what landowners want. This is what the DCC government believes in so that more land can be available for development.

Sir, there are many other programs that Ministry of Land, Housing and Survey will focus on this year but I only make special mention of these three major programs. I dwell on other programs when we debate the budget.

I wish to assure parliament and our people who are listening out there that the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey is confident that we will do our best to fulfil our part within the DCC Government programs, despite we only have 8 or 9 months left before the year ends.

The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey is prepared to exhaust all available resources and avenues within our reach to support the DCC Government in its development effort as far as land issues are concerned.

I thank His Excellency for delivering the speech from the throne. I would also like to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion. I support the motion.

Hon MANASSEH SOGAVARE (*Prime Minister*): Thank you very much Mr Speaker for giving me time to wind up debate on the question that an address be presented to His Excellency, the Governor General as follows: *"We the National Parliament of Solomon Islands here assemble, to beg leave to offer thanks for the speech which has been addressed by you to Parliament"*. That is the objective of this motion - to give the opportunity to each and every Member of Parliament to stand and thank His Excellency for the Speech he presented to Parliament.

In doing so, I take this opportunity on behalf of the Members of Parliament here assembled to thank you most profoundly for granting us leave to express our thanks to His Excellency for accepting our invitation to address Parliament and for that, we are truly grateful.

As expected, the motion attracted a lively debate from both sides of the House. I think it is a fitting response by a responsible Parliament that is rightfully concerned about the direction the Democratic Coalition for Change Government is intending to take in steering this country forward through the implementation of policies and strategies that the

Excellency has outlined to us. And I take this opportunity to thank all Members on both sides of the House for participating in the debate and, of course, the ministers for further elaborating on their respective portfolios on policy issues highlighted in the Speech. I therefore do not need to talk about those things. His Excellency presented the Speech, ministers expound on their respective areas and, of course, Members on the other side also expressed their views.

I am particularly most grateful and encouraged by the support expressed by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Independent Group on the general direction of the government policy intentions in the various sectors and everyone from the other side contributed. If a message is to come out from them, it is the fact that we are going forward. The message that comes out very powerfully is "*man talem duim*" (do what you have said). That message comes out very powerfully and we have heard it. Hansard is recording everything we are saying and the points that are being raised. And we make it a point that members of the government bench have caucus and cabinet to express our views. For members of the other side, we will make it a point by asking officers from the Prime Minister's Office to collect the Hansard transcripts so that we see the views expressed by colleagues on the other side. This is all in the interest of working together as partnership to improve things.

Yes, we are custodians of all the policies we have been talking about. Eventually these policies will be implemented in our various constituencies with our people that we represent in here. Everybody in this House has the interest to make sure these policies are properly structured to address the needs of our people.

I also acknowledge, and for that, I acknowledge the same gestures by all those people who have spoken to the motion. I fully concur as head of this government with the reminder not to repeat the complacency attitude that spells the demise of good policy intentions in the past. As a matter of fact, I have no problem understanding the huge responsibility placed upon the government to implement the policy intentions. That is a challenge that we on this side of the House knowingly take upon ourselves in agreeing to be in government. But, of course, we will need the support of everybody to realise the objectives of the development policies. One very good illustration was given by the Member for Aoke/Langalanga that all of us are sitting inside a canoe and paddling in one direction,

so that we can move forward. I think the call for unity by His Excellency cannot be overstated as that is the only way for us to move forward; all of us sitting together, look forward and paddle the canoe forward – this side of the House and that side of the House.

When a matter is brought to this Parliament it ceased to belong to the government. When a matter is brought here - bills, budget and whatever is brought here, it ceases to be the property of the government but it becomes the property of the country. The government brings them here in Parliament to get the views and blessings of this Parliament. And when you give the blessings, you also own it and you have the responsibility to continue support that drive to take us forward. And I like the challenge 'we can do it, we are going to deliver'. That is a challenge we take upon ourselves.

I am overwhelmed by people who are now responding to the call of some of our policies. Just yesterday, somebody came forward wanting to fund the upgrading of the Kilu'ufi Hospital to a referral hospital. Just like that. This organization would like to take two more other projects - the Tatamba Mini Cannery and another one. In fact, I forgot the third project they mentioned, maybe I am too excited and so I forgot the specifics. But people are calling and offering their willingness to fund. We will deliver.

Of course, I cannot rule the possibility that we can become complacent during the course of the years and lose the impetus to move forward. We appreciate that will happen. This is where, I guess, the concern raised by the Leaders of the Opposition and Independent Group and the others who have spoken should be taken seriously. Those things do not fall on deaf ears. This is a four year journey, and the government cannot be complacent, not at all. That is the challenge by the Member for South Malaita. It is not only the leader that is inside the boat but everyone too - ministers on board and all of us move together with the assistance and understanding of the members on the other side of the House.

As correctly observed by the Leader of Opposition, the government is going to formulate a 20-year long term development Plan, which will be designed to provide a roadmap on phased approach – neatly broken up into five years phase to address the specific long term sustainable outcomes. In this connection, I take note of the Opposition's version of the long term development plan presented under the Vision 2050, which could become the Opposition's contribution to the finalisation of the plan proposed by the government. This is a team work.

Of course, there are arguments on the pros and cons for long term development plan. Some think that 50 years is too much, and that is why we have put it to 20 years. But it is something that we are continuing to discuss. We have four years to discuss it and already by the way we are going, there will be lively debates on the issues that we are talking about. So it does not fall on deaf ears the proposal by the Leader of the Opposition on Vision 2050.

Be that as it may, I am very pleased to note that at least the need for the formulation of a long term development plan is something that is widely welcomed by both sides of the House. I think that is the message that comes out very powerfully. I strongly believe like the Leader of Opposition that this country needs a long term development plan. At least to talk about 'the what to do', and we allow rulings government to talk about how to do it. If we need to legislate that, we are going to do it so that it is fixed so that when a new government comes in it will just talk about how to do things, maybe a bit of redirection. Good policies are continued like what this government is doing. Good works have been done. The basis of what we are doing today is picked up from the good work that has been happening some time ago and we pick them and continue with them.

We are also proposing to organize an economic summit if that came about in the later part of the year to get the views of important sectors and interest groups. I think that information could be useful for the formulation of the development plan. And I am encouraging the opposition and the independent group to participate in that summit.

Land reform is picked up and does not fall on deaf ears. Again, we continue the good works that have happened. It is a concern of governments after governments that we need to sort out the issue of land. The Minister really outlines the summary of what the government is trying to do in unlocking the 87% of land that is still locked up in complicated land customary land tenure systems. And, of course, the national urbanization program which the Minister has also outlined.

There is also the issue of properly managing the 13% of the land the government already has. For example, the Doma fisheries project - that land is locked up, and that is inside the 13%. That is government land but it is locked up because of some complications may be because of the inadequacies of our laws, so let us look into that. And some more lands are affected by the inadequacies of our laws, so we may need to bring those laws back, amendments to this Parliament so that we properly regulate those lands.

We talk about tough decisions, these are some of them. And we need to stand by and ready to take on some of these tough decisions. I do not want to go through what the Minister has already outlined as to what he is going to do in a nutshell in terms of land reform.

I noted that a number of useful observations were made on the policy to transit the country into the federal system as soon as work on the draft constitution is completed. I could not agree anymore with the concerns raised by both sides of the House because it is a serious issue. And we will not penalize anyone for expressing some serious views on the direction we are taking and what we are about to do in this country.

This country has come through a sad, sad experience of adopting a provincial government system that simply fails to work for us. Questions were properly asked by those who contributed to this debate whether the new federal system of government will address all the predicaments of our current provincial government system. I heard it straight from the member for South Malaita and the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee; it is raised everywhere. They are very appropriate questions to ask and the answer to that question must be observed, I guess, from the very structure of the system itself. I pick the point by the Member for Central Honiara and Deputy Speaker. We must also look carefully into that too.

The provincial government system operates on a loss and I do not need to remind us of these things because we are just reminding ourselves that these are known facts. It operates on a loose principled agent relationship which has no clear backing of law. If there was, then the national government would be taken for serious neglect of the welfare of the people of this country to the operation of a provincial government system that was restricted to function as intended.

This is the 10th Parliament so probably it is easy point fingers back but we would want to fix this. The national government is responsible for continuing to suppress the provincial government system. It does not allow that system to work the way it should work - principal agent relationship, and now we have to pick up because it does not work. I guess the fear that is talked about here is that we must be jumping from the frying pan into the fire on this matter so let us be careful.

The national government acting as the principal grossly neglected the development of the provincial government system over more than 30 years of the existence of the system much to the detriment of the 85% population of our country whose welfare are supposed to be taken care of by the provincial governments through the devolution processes. That is how it should work. Devolve functions, devolve money and devolve technical capacity and infrastructure too. That is how it should work but it did not, it did not work. Only a bit was devolved and then it was found out that it does not have the capacity. Well, who is responsible to address the capacity of the provincial government system? It is us, the national government that is responsible but it did not do that.

Successive national governments did not do that since the provincial government system was established in the 1980s; it did not do it. Now we pick up on the failure of that system and we are challenged and this country is now talking about a new system - the federal system. I repeat again that successive national governments have never taken the step to develop the provincial government system and this in turns compounds the inability of the provincial government system to look after the welfare of our people because of serious lack of capacity purposely designed that way by successive national governments because of insatiable desire for power and control. That is a sad state of affair, and any right thinking Solomon Islander would be taking a very cautious approach in consenting to the proposition for the country to adopt another system of government when we have failed to make the provincial government system work.

As a matter of fact, the provincial government system lacks everything that makes the government system work including finance, trained human resources, logistics and a host of other capacity issues simply because the national government failed to fully implement the system which is structured under the principal/agent relationship. The major difference now, and I am just crossing my finger as I have always said that a system must work and we must be comfortable that the system works before we go into it.

I do not want us to repeat the mistake of the provincial government system. And as rightly questioned by half of the speakers here on the constituency summit, there is going to be 200 people who are going to talk about this new thing. Once it goes through those 200 people, the 50 Members of Parliament will have the opportunity, 50 others from the provinces, 20 eminent person groups and 80 more others to debate the issue. And the points

we are raising here should be raised again that time so that we talk about them. The last power this Parliament has is the amendment to section 61 of the Constitution. That is the last power this Parliament has. If we are not satisfied that system will not work then I do not know want to give any hint. Please just support the amendment and it will work.

We were given the opportunity as 50 Members of Parliament to sit down with the others to properly look into the federal system and if we are happy then we can go on with it. As rightly pointed out by the Member for Aoke/Langalanga, it looks like taking this thing out of the hands of politicians, and that is how the people of this country want it. The people do not want us, the politicians to talk about these things. They are saying they are sick and tired of the provincial government system, it does not serve them and so they want a new system that will work for them. That is what the people of this country are saying - take this thing out from your hands and you will only be part of the process to decide whether that thing is good or not. We leave aside the amendment to section 61 of the Constitution and let us go and attend this meeting; 50 people attend this meeting and then we can sit down and amend section 61. If we are happy with it, amend it and everything will rock n roll, and then we adopt the new federal constitution.

But the major difference with the proposed state government system is that there is a minimum guarantee under the new constitution to address the capacity issue from day one; something that is not there in the Provincial Government system. It is up to the discretion of the Minister of Provincial Government and the Cabinet whether they want to devolve and devolve with it the money, capacity and all that; it does not leave it there. It is embedded in the constitution; it is clearly stated in there that so much of this money will be devolved and this and that must go too to make that system work. That is, I guess, the only minimum guarantee this Parliament does have at this point of time to comfort us that probably this system will work. It is the law that defines the revenue sharing formula and the structure of the system and how it should work.

In terms of the government, appreciating the problems that the provincial government system has gone through over the years and their inability to prepare themselves to adopt the federal system, we believe it, and I think this was hinted briefly by the Minister of Fisheries and Marine resources earlier on today that the national government must take on that responsibility now. It cannot be anyone else to improve the provincial

government system to prepare them to transit into the federal system. It is the national government that must do it. This government does realise that and that policy decision will be reflected in the 2016 Budget onwards to prepare state governments to transit into the new federal system.

The other issue I want raise is on foreign relations, and we take note of the points and issues raised on the floor of Parliament. His Excellency announced that the government will continue to strengthen our relationship with our traditional partners and we are taking pragmatic approach to develop the Look North policy and the South-South strategy. But the other thing was raised by the Member for West Makira. Since he has brought it to Parliament, people would be eagerly wanting to hear it. We appreciate that the government has been a bit silent on this issue because it feels that it needs to handle it properly.

At the outset, the government's policy on this matter has not yet changed, but it is something we can discuss as we formulate the position of the Solomon Islands Government on this matter and the fact that the MSG meeting will happen here on July, which Solomon Islands will chair. And this matter is the West Papua case. We are fully aware of the call by concerned groups in the country and the region for governments in the region to take a proactive role in the issue of West Papua. My only comment at this point in time is that the government is not turning a deaf ear on the call; our ears are open wide. But on the call of self determination, the government is fully aware of the sad history of the situation in West Papua and the international blunder, (This is a fact of history and so we can say it here on the floor of Parliament) surrounding the so called Act of Free Choice in 1969 and, of course, the lack of commitment by the United Nations to ensure that the arrangements under the so-called New York Agreement and its implementation by United Nation's temporary executive authority to facilitate the question of self determination for the people of West Papua. That is a powerful point. Do not talk about the Solomon Islands Government. This issue is a 1969 blunder. It is the United Nations and not the Solomon Islands Government. This sad history is allowed to happen by prominent world powers that have the capacity to enforce any United Nations solution to the issue of West Papua. At that time, they would not be bothered for reasons known only to themselves. I am sad about this and now we are taking it upon the Melanesian countries.

I raise my hat to the Government and people of Vanuatu for standing tall and come out clear. Solomon Islands need to tread over it carefully. We want to put the issue to where it lays so that it lays there. Despite the blunders and the indecisiveness that marred the way, the issue of West Papua was handled by the United Nations. This House and Solomon Islands are comforted by the fact that the world body is guided by conventions. That, we must be clear. We are comforted by the fact that the United Nations still believes in the rights of people to self determination and to be free from acts of atrocities pursued on grounds of politics, religion, economics, culture, ethnic and other selfish motives. It is very clear that this is the work of the United Nations.

Solomon Islands believes that these conventions are not just there to window dress the United Nations system, but rather they are there to be acted upon. And if any intervention, that is where we will intervene - tell the United Nations to respect these conventions but not to undermine and tackle the sovereign state of Indonesia.

As a matter of fact, the principle of self determination is prominently embodied in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter. Paragraph 1 of this article provides that "All peoples have the right to self determination". All people include the people of West Papua, unless we do not recognise them as people. Article 1 further provides that by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue the economic, social and cultural development. That is embedded in United Nations charter - the right to self determination of peoples is recognised in many other international and regional instruments, including: (i) the declaration of principles of international law concerning friendly relations and corporation among states adopted by the United Nation General Assembly in 1970. (ii) The Helsinki final Act adopted by the Conference and Security and Corporation in Europe in 1975. (iii) The African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights of 1981. (iv) The Co-operation Among States Charter of Paris for a New Europe adopted in 1990. (v) The Vienna Declaration and Program of Actions of 1993. (vi) It has been affirmed by the International Court of Justice in the Namibia case that people have the right to self determination. (vii) The Western Sahara Case. (viii) The East Timor Case, further more the scope of the content of the right to Self determination has been elaborated upon by the United Nations Human Rights Committee. (viii) The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. (x) Numerous others leading international jurists say that people have the

right to self determination. When it comes to the issue of human rights violation and atrocities, Solomon Islands stands, and our position is no matter where atrocity happens, human rights violation happens, whether it be in Uganda, Solomon Islands, Australia, United States of America, Sahara or Indonesia, Solomon Islands stands to condemn it. That is our position. But we do not march on the streets and talk about it. That is the reason why we open our Embassy in Indonesia and we maintain it. We believe that talks will continue to happen and human rights violation, the Human Rights Commission in Geneva is the right body. And I am happy to announce that Indonesia has set up its own Human Rights Committee to look into these things. It is taking proactive action to address human rights violation there. When we are not satisfied, Solomon Islands approach is to address it through its embassy in Indonesia; discuss with them. I think it is healthy to have discussions amongst friends. We befriend them before we discuss issues that we are not happy about. I think that is the way to do it, instead of us having a confrontational attitude towards this issue. I thought I need to clear that. The Solomon Islands Government is looking forward to chairing the MSG meeting with leaders coming here and we will talk about this issue. I also believe there has to be a combined/joint position by the Melanesian Group. We need to do that to address the plights of our people in West Papua.

We have been sitting in here for quite some time now, and if there is any powerful message that comes out from everything we are saying here today it is 'man talem duim' (whoever says it, do it). That is the message that comes out from what we are saying in here. That is the challenge this government would want to take on, that is the challenge that these people sitting down here with our policy advisors – permanent secretaries, the government machineries to take on. The political government is coming out with its policy books. We have His Excellency to declare on the floor of Parliament that this is the direction this Government is taking. It is pronounced loud and clear in here. What is left now is to implement it, and we bear that in mind – the advice from that side, so let us implement it. Everything we talked about today boils down to that. This government cannot do this alone. It will need the support of every one of us. There will be more discussions happening because policies are coming. As soon as we finish this budget meeting and we prepare some development bills to come here, and please let us get them passed to facilitate some of the big things in the policy statements.

I would like to repeat what His Excellency has said before I sit down. 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. Let us not disappoint our people. Let us work together - Government Caucus, Independent Group and the Opposition bench to do a difference in the lives of our people – working together.

I am very happy indeed. Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing your chamber for us to invite the Head of State to come and sit down with you to address Parliament two day ago and Members of Parliament have taken and expressed their views on the statements expressed by His Excellency.

I would like to move that we, the National Parliament of Solomon Islands here assembled beg leave to offer thanks for the Speech which has been addressed by you to Parliament. I beg to move.

Question agreed to.

(Motion is passed)

MOTIONS

Motion No.4

Motion of Special Adjournment

Hon. MANASSEH SOGAVARE (*Prime Minister*): The motion reads that at the adjournment of Parliament on Thursday 26th March 2015, Parliament shall then stand adjourned to Thursday 2nd April 2015.

The reason is that, and I heard you reminding us at the beginning of the debate of this motion that two very important committees of the House will need to sit down and clear two very important business of the House. The first one is the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015, which the Public Accounts Committee needs to sit down. I received a letter from the Chairman of Public Accounts Committee that he needs 10 days. We have discussed it and

we have no problem with that. In fact, we want to take a tooth for a tooth approach on this one because during our time we were given four days to clear the budget. But I think this is an important document which will eventually come to Parliament, and so we consented to allow them to start now before we have the Easter break next week. I would like every ministry to be called up to appear before the Public Accounts Committee.

The next important business is the Fisheries Management Bill which will come in. It is quite a long bill, more than a hundred clauses – I think 147 clauses. It is a very important bill the government would like to pass in this meeting because it addresses some of the issues that His Excellency raised with regards to management of the fisheries sector. So we would like to allow the Bills and Legislation Committee (BLC) to sit, unhindered by parliament meeting to do that work. If it can finish it in time, we should probably have the two reports by the time we start parliament so that we go straight to those businesses. That is all the reasons behind this motion, and I beg to move.

The House adjourned at 5.32pm