

**WEDNESDAY 21<sup>st</sup>OCTOBER 2015**

The Speaker, Mr Ajilon Nasiu took the Chair at 10.43am.

Prayers.

**ATTENDANCE**

All were present with the exception of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs & International Trade; Police, National Security & Correctional Services; Lands, Housing & Survey and the Members for Fataleka; Central Makira and West Honiara.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

*Assessment for Fisheries Potentials*

10. **Hon JEREMIAH MANELE** (*Leader of Opposition*) to the Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources: The Minister informed Parliament in the last meeting that his Ministry will carry out assessment in the constituencies for fisheries potentials and when that is done he will inform Parliament in its next meeting. Can the Minister inform Parliament of the following?

- a) The number of constituencies the Ministry has already conducted the assessments.
- b) Of the constituencies assessed, how many are viable and how many are not?
- c) The assessment criteria used when conducting the exercise?
- d) Can the Minister provide the information gathered during the assessment to the House?

**Hon JOHN MANENIARU** (*Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources*): My Ministry is yet to conduct assessment for fisheries potentials of our constituencies. We plan to do this in the first six months of 2016. We have decided to delay the assessment because we are taking stock of our entire coastal fisheries program. Since the Fisheries Management Act 2015 came into force on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, our coastal fisheries program was reviewed to link the programs to the constituencies' fisheries development. That is the focus.

**Hon Jeremiah Manele:** I thank the Minister for his responses. Can the Minister inform the House how many constituencies the assessment would cover early next year?

**Hon John Maneniaru:** The exact number of constituencies cannot be determined now, however, we have 50 constituencies and the 50 constituencies have fisheries, therefore the

Ministry will focus on priorities in terms of the comparative advantages and situations that are within the Ministry in terms of its work programs.

**Mr MANASSEH MAELANGA** (*Leader of Independent*): I would like the Minister of Fisheries to clarify to us whether the Suava Fisheries Centre has been assessed or not yet?

**Hon John Maneniaru**: Any question in relation to Suava will be answered in the next question.

**Mr Manasseh Maelanga**: The question is on assessment of all the constituencies that need a fisheries centre. I would like to ask the Minister whether any assessment has been done on Suava already. The next question is a different one.

**Hon John Maneniaru**: As I have said there are no assessments yet. Suava is a project the Ministry prioritises this year under the DCCG priority programs. As I have said, there is a thorough explanation that will cover that particular project in the answer to the next question.

**Mr Rick Houenipwela**: Supplementary question. This is in relation to part (c) of the question, which is asking about criteria. I am just wondering whether in the assessment the Minister is planning to do, there are already criteria in place, if he can clarify to the House.

I agree with the Minister's response that this is a very important job. I am just wondering whether what the minister meant is that the ministry is going to make assessments of all the constituencies or may be a pilot project for just a few constituencies.

**Hon John Maneniaru**: What I said was that we have 50 constituencies which fishery is very important to most of the constituencies. The Ministry has existing work programs and criteria on existing work plans and programs, but in particular in relation to the focus on the constituencies. In terms of our constituency fisheries centres as a priority policy program for the constituencies, there will certainly be prioritization in terms of the work program as to which constituencies need to be taken first in terms of the assessment. And as I have said, the Ministry will have with its own criteria when it actually undertakes the task.

**Mr DERRICK MANUARI** (*West Makira*): Can the Minister confirm to the House that the criteria are still to be made? And secondly, you are still to decide on which constituencies you are going to make assessments on?

**Hon John Maneniaru**: My answer is that we are yet to do the assessments and the criteria will be drawn up when we go into the program.

**Mr DOUGLAS ETE** (*East Honiara*): The connotation of fisheries in the Act is defined as anything from weeds up to fish. In terms of bechedemer, I have not seen any policy on bechedemer gone through Cabinet during my time as a minister for the past nine months or so. What are you really looking at assessing since you have said there are no criteria in place to do the assessment? What is the real objective of the assessment?

Secondly, what growth in terms of GDP will this assessment boost? I am saying this because in any national development prospects we always look at job creation. Otherwise we will only concentrate on fisheries centres and forget about loining. What really are you looking for here?

**Hon John Maneniaru:** It is indeed a very important question in terms of the function of my ministry. It seems to me that his question is a bit out from the principal question and I would like to encourage the honourable Member to put a separate question to the ministry so that we can furnish him with proper information in regards to his question.

**Mr Jeremiah Manele:** Further supplementary question to the Minister. Can the Minister clarify whether the delay or the postponement to the assessments are due to lack of funds or capacity within the Ministry?

**Hon John Maneniaru:** The assessments have not been done yet, not because of lack of funds but rather the ministry has taken on other important programs. The passage of the Fisheries Management 2015 requires us to align all our programs according to the Act and this is demanding on the the workforce in the ministry to prioritize the work programs as well as the community fisheries programs with the new legislation.

### *Fisheries Project*

**11: Mr CONNELLY SANDAKABATU** (*Northwest Choiseul*) to the Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources: The Minister informed Parliament in the recent meeting that his ministry is now coordinating all the fisheries projects in Doma, Tenaru Red Beach, Suava, Bina, Noro and mini canneries. Can the Minister inform Parliament on the following:

- a) Progress of all these projects?
- b) How much funds have been expended so far on these projects? and
- c) What sort of activities have the funds been expended on?

**Hon JOHN MANENIARU** (*Minister for Fisheries & Marine Resources*): The question is very important pertaining to the number of projects outlined in the questions, and so I will give a background answer to these three questions and I would like to ask Members to listen as I have a lengthy answer to these important questions.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources is working to rationalize its efforts to attract and facilitate new investments in the fisheries sector, particularly in attracting new investments in tuna processing. This is consistent with our national onshore tuna processing investment strategy, which aims to see one or perhaps two major global tuna industry operators invest in onshore operations that will process around 150 tons per day and employ around 2000 people each.

The goal of the strategy, which I am sure you will all agree, is to eventually see all the tuna taken in our waters processed in Solomon Islands by Solomon Islanders. Note that one

such plan will require around 26 metric tons per year of tuna. The annual harvest of tuna from Solomon Islands waters range from 50,000 tons to 300,000 tons per year. If global sourcing of tuna is available to processors exporting to the EU, the supply of tuna available in SI based processor could be much greater. In this way, we can realise the real potential for the tuna resource that has sustained our people for generations to continue to do so as well as providing the base for the creation of new jobs and livelihoods, better national food security, new business opportunities for our entrepreneurs and more equitable sharing of economic opportunity.

But, seeing our tuna resources used to best national benefit, true local value adding is a challenging task. Doing business in Solomon Islands is costly and burdened by public sector inefficiencies and investors face the very considerable problem of finding land to establish on.

Tuna processing is a globally competitive business and an operator establishing here must still meet high energy costs, lack of supporting infrastructures, high freight costs, relatively low labour productivity and the difficulty and cost of gaining and maintaining access to key markets for our tuna products. This includes food safety and legal tuna harvesting requirements of those markets.

Whilst we have the advantage of owning a significant tuna resource, we have much to do to attract new investment on onshore tuna processing. This is a real challenge. The Ministry's effort to overcome the first hurdle to new investment, finding suitable sites where an investor can establish is at the core of the honourable Member's question. Before I address the specifics of the question, I wish to note that the Government cannot ultimately decide where an investor should establish. That question is determined by an investor, considering the option of operational and logistical realities of tuna processing.

A tuna processing plant needs good access to deep water harbour so that fishing vessels can land fish and cargo vessels can load products for shipping to the markets. The plant needs access to adequate, consistent power and large volume of water as well as ready supply of labour. A plant also needs supporting infrastructure, wharfs, access roads, telecommunications and ready access to an airport. At the moment, only Honiara Port and Noro would seem to be good candidates for establishing new tuna processing plants. However, there is no space at the Honiara port and Soltuna operating at Noro is already struggling to recruit and retain enough labour to keep its operations efficiently.

As to Doma and Tenaru, potential investors have shown interest in both sites, and the Ministry is working long and hard to attempt to secure lands at these sites to be made available to investors, both of whom proposed the establishment of a major tuna processing plant that would each employ up to 2,000 local workers. The Ministry's efforts were supported with expert advice by the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency and the New Zealand Government and national agencies including Lands, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Infrastructure Development and the Attorney General's Chambers.

This includes landowners' engagement and awareness, land acquisition processes, wharf design, infrastructures scoping and costing, consideration of loan financing for infrastructures and other things. Despite several years of diligent efforts, both of these projects failed to materialise. For Tenaru, it seems the very large cost for wharf infrastructure deterred the potential investor. For Doma, the Government's move to secure title to the required land was ultimately denied by the court.

In terms of Suava and Bina, I am sure you are well aware of this Government's determination to see real projects developed in Malaita. It is my firm belief that the tuna processing industry may hold the key to seeing this determination realised. I believe that tuna processing can be the anchor industry that spurs new economic growth for our most populous province.

A tuna processing plant has long been envisaged for Suava, although this notion seems to have sprang from previous governments rather than from a potential investor as far as I am aware. Bina has been recognised since colonial times as a magnificent harbour with great potential for seaport development. The Ministry has worked for several years to support the mobilisation of land at Suava to be made available to potential investors collaborating with Lands and engaging actively with landowners. Progress has been slow and there have been several setbacks and important issues remain unresolved.

The Ministry's engagement at Bina has been limited to assisting a very credible potential investor that assessed the site some 15 years ago. At that time an agreement was reached for development to proceed, however, the civil unrest that occurred soon after deterred the investor. Since this Government declared its policies in respect of developments in Malaita, the Ministry has undertaken a concerted effort to fully explore the potentials to attract one or more tuna processing investments for Suava and/or Bina.

I will now jump to the third part of the question by the Honourable Member. The Ministry continues to work with the Ministry of Lands and the Attorney General's Chambers to acquire a suitable piece of land at Suava and has maintained its dialogue with various landowning groups. At the same time accepting that a technical fisheries agency is not necessary an expert in land matters and taking lessons from other failed and successful land acquisition efforts. In April this year, the Ministry commissioned an external review of the land acquisition issue inhibiting mobilisation of lands at both Suava and Bina and seeking advice on how sustainable settlement of land might be achieved at both sides. Work was recently completed and it is now under consideration and I expect to be able to present the Ministry's strategic plan for achieving settlement of one or more sites on Malaita very soon.

In parallel with the work, the Ministry has been able to enlist the support of the New Zealand Government through the '*Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries Program*' to provide additional resources to the Ministry to develop the project management capacity and procedures required to drive a major undertaking - something akin to the Tina Hydro project management office. Understanding that attracting a major tuna processing investment to either Suava or Bina will require the Government establish at least essential infrastructures, the Ministry has also been able to enlist the support of the World Bank Groups and International Finance Corporations (IFC) to provide both engineering expertise to scope and cost the maritime infrastructures that will be required to support a tuna fishing and processing base and subsequently an international seaport. That work commenced in August this year and the report and recommendations are expected before the end of this month. The IFC study is also considering how the required infrastructures might be financed, including consideration of the public private partnership arrangement and a landowner participation model aimed at supporting sustainable settlement of the land.

The IFC is also presently supporting the Ministry's effort by providing an economist with fisheries sector expertise to undertake a cost benefit analysis of new tuna processing investment. This work which commenced just last week will consider the economic benefits that would flow from a new large scale tuna processing operation against the cost to Government of financing infrastructure and possibly providing fiscal and other concessions to the investor equivalent to those available in neighbouring countries such as Papua New Guinea with whom we are competing to attract such investment.

Looking forward, I expect the Ministry will have a clear sense of land mobilisation potentials at Suava and Bina, along with a strategy and work plan aimed at sustainable land settlement by the end of this year. Concurrently, the Government will have a clear sense of the scale and cost of infrastructure required to trigger a new private sector investment at the site. And a clear sense of the cost benefit of embarking on this major undertaking.

I have not forgotten the mini-canneries. This is a project under the DCC Government policy and it is in progress in terms of its pursuance with the Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office consultants. These initiatives are under the active consideration by the Ministry, particularly a review of the economic and logistical feasibility of mini-cannery operations.

I have to say that I hope you will recognise that the limited resources we have available to promote new tuna processing operations onshore and create new jobs and new economic opportunities need to be carefully managed. The Ministry has embarked on the major initiatives to attract new investment to Malaita as I have described in line with the Government's overriding policy objective for the province. This will fully occupy the Ministry's staffs and financial resources over the next 12 months.

I will now give the answer to part (b) of the question on how much funds have been expended so far on these projects. The works we have done to date were funded by our donors, namely New Zealand and IFC. MSSIF, under New Zealand's program within the Ministry, has already expended \$222,000 on land study; \$540,000 from the Policy Monitoring Unit Advisory has also been expended. IFC so far has expended \$400,000 to date on consultancy work and program engagement within the Ministry.

In regards to the Ministry budget, our work activities to the end of the year will be met from the \$2million allocated by the Ministry under our Development Budget.

**Mr Manasseh Maelanga:** I would like to ask my good Minister for Fisheries two questions. The first question is, listening to his brief answers I did not hear him talk about mini canneries. I know there are two mini canneries; one at Tatamba and another one at West Are Are, which is in the Minister's constituency. I would like to ask the Minister which mini-cannery he is referring to.

The second question is, how much funds have been expended so far on these proposed projects? I heard him talking about donor funds spent on consultancy so I would like to ask about the funds spent on consultancy. What consultancy? Can he inform to the House?

**Hon John Maneniaru:** He has already given the answers and so I will just add on to that. In terms of the mini-canneries policy, the DCC Government has a number of mini-canneries proposed in the policy statement. Some of which are Tatamba, East Are Are, West Are Are and

other constituencies as well. I wish to inform the House that focus and work now in progress is on the three mini-canneries at Tatamba in Isabel, Masupa in East Are Are and Tulagi in the Central Islands Province. Those are the three projects the Ministry can cope with at this time. The others might be still in progress because the statement is a four-year statement. Those are the only three that the ministry in consultation with consultants of the Prime Minister's office are working on at the moment. Work is now in progress on those three.

**Mr CULWICK TOGAMANA** (*Maringel/Kokota*): I would like to ask this question because the honourable Minister in his statement today gave the criteria for the mini canneries. The criteria are that it requires deep waters, large volumes of water or access to good water source, proper infrastructures and continuous supply of electricity. In terms of the Tatamba mini cannery, none of these criterial will apply to Tatamba. I therefore would like to ask the honourable Minister, what was the criterion used to select Tatamba for the mini cannery?

**Hon John Maneniaru**: In regards to the mini cannery projects, these mini cannery projects are listed in the DCCG policy statements. This means if the Member from the area where the cannery is going to be located is on the government side, then it is his/her project. And that is a normal thing. The only thing the Ministry is interested in, as you have alluded to, is assessment of its viability. It is the ministry's role to look into this with the view of giving proper advice to project holders and proposers.

**Mr Rick Houenipwela**: Can I make an observation on the Minister' statement?

**Mr Speaker**: I think you can but make it short.

**Mr Rick Houenipwela**: Thank you for your indulgence. This observation is in regards to the question by the honourable Member just a minute ago. Listening to the statement by the Minister which started off with rationalization of the activities and policy actions of the ministry, I could not agree more with him. The Minister talked about tuna production for which the objective is to ensure production is by Solomon Islanders, processed by Solomon Islanders and even exported by Solomon Islanders. The statement is about job creation and creating economic opportunities. Those are good rationalizations why assessment has to be done first.

The Minister then went on to talk about the challenges and they are real challenges that any assessment must take into consideration and the assessment has to be on this very point on what the honourable Member has just asked a moment ago about the criteria used to select a location. I think that is very important. A location cannot be just selected because a Member of Parliament comes from that place. No, we must not do that.

What about in a situation where the assessment is going to be done later, but the policy already states Tatamba as one of the sites for a cannery and the outcome of the assessment says there are no fish in Tatamba? The last time we asked questions about this, it seemed as though people have already planted potatoes for the employees. This is like putting the cart before the horse. That is my observation of this, and this is not good.

What is going to happen, and I am making an example of Tatamba on this assessment because he talks about Solomon Islands as not an easy place to invest in, which I totally agree with him for the very important reasons stated such as lack of infrastructures like roads, wharfs, utilities, telecommunications, etc., etc. But the point is what do you do when you have promised sky already? What are we going to do, is my question? What are we going to do when you have already promised these projects in these locations to those people?

**Mr DOUGLAS ETE** (*East Honiara*): First, let me thank the Government for its foresight in wanting to develop this country. My only concern is that development is very slow or no work at all has been done to progress any development.

The Nazar Grupa of Company Limited signed an agreement with the Government early this year for those canneries. When I was the caretaker Prime Minister, I called the people responsible under the Prime Minister's Office but there were no exchange of notes in regards to this development, there was just nothing being done. My question is what has gone wrong? There was no liaison whatsoever; if you pick up the file there is nothing inside between the Minister for Fisheries and the Company. The Minister is a hardworking minister who wants to drive things but there is nothing done within the Prime Minister's office itself. The Prime Minister must take this seriously to consider the people working in the Prime Minister's Office. From the good thinking the Prime Minister has, what went wrong with these projects? There is no fisheries technical development agreement after a MOU was signed. What was wrong in the last nine months?

My second question is there are 143 ships owned by about 19 companies that are fishing in our waters right now. When is the Minister bringing a bill to Parliament to say that 30 per cent of all catches must be processed in Solomon Islands? That is how we can create jobs. What time, is the question I am asking seriously for the betterment of the people of this country so that our GDP can be bolstered?

**Hon Manasseh Sogavare**: Since the Member touched on the MOU with the Nazar Grupa, when I made my statement on the floor I tried to explain that issue.

The observation is correct that the Government did sign a MOU with the Nazar Group and we have to move beyond the MOU. That is what happened. Now there appears to be the capacity, people who know how to actually frame the good contract because the way the MOU is written is that it will be under the PPP arrangement so there has to be a proper PPP contract with that group. We did not move beyond that and what the office is doing now is finding a suitable expert that will work in the Prime Minister's office to drive that particular program. That is the reason why we have not moved beyond the MOU. I have explained this on the floor of Parliament when I made the statement on the Nazar MOU with the Government.

**Hon John Maneniaru**: Yes, with your indulgence if I may also make a response on the supplementary question by the Member for Small Malaita.

The Member for Small Malaita in his statement said "putting the cart before the horse" and also talked about the mini- canneries as promised. In terms of the policy statement it is there and policies can be changed. I quite agree with what the Member for Small Malaita said



that when forming the government, we usually rush into making policies and coming up with programs without making any assessments, even liabilities and other factors that should be taken into consideration in the constituencies are not done. How many years going back is the same because we are yet to settle into really determining which projects are viable, sustainable and positive. That did not happen in all of the constituencies in Solomon Islands. That is the situation the DCC Government is facing.

For the past few months we have been trying to put together the policies and identifying projects and program and this is the result. But at least it is there to remind the Government that it has a policy to focus and work on. It is not wrong to go back to our people and tell them that even though these things are in the policy but this is the reality of the situation. I think that would be acceptable by our people.

**Mr Rick Houenipwela:** Hey, I do not think so.

**Hon John Maneniaru:** Oh, I think Small Malaita is like that.

I therefore can see nothing wrong with that and it is good that the Ministry is taking on those projects and work is being done to them, in consultation with the people who will be hosting the projects. So it is good for those projects to be in the policy.

I will now go back to the comment and question by the Member for East Honiara. It is very true that when work is not done, but he is the second boss of the DCC Government; he is sitting down there for just a few days. He was there. If he had been serious about the programs and policies of the government, he would have taken up the responsibility; he was a hard working DPM when he was there. So who are we going to point fingers at? Who is the second boss? The second boss is responsible of policies and he is Prime Minister too.

I just want to clarify that because it is important not to confuse ourselves and confuse the public who are listening to us. What he mentioned is very important in that we really wanted all the fish we catch in our waters to be processed by ourselves. But where are we going to land the catches? Where? Even the capacity of the cold storage facility Noro will not be able to cater for the catches. We really need to establish onshore facilities. The Ministry is trying its best, we tried Malaita but it is not yet possible but we hope that blessings will come.

I read the answer in the form of a statement which outlines our difficulties. And mind you, we are competing against our neighbouring countries in the region. We are under heated competition. We must allow our lands for development. If we have onshore facilities, we would not be sending our fish outside, but at the moment we do not have the capacity, we do not have the onshore facilities, cold storage in particular to store our catches.

We are seriously looking at the policy and our people need to understand that they will have to support us because we need land to build onshore facilities and cold storages. We want 100 percent of our fish to be processed here; they should not be exported, but what can we do. That is a policy in the heart of my Ministry. Thank you.

**Hon SAMUEL MANETOALI** (*Minister for Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology*): I would like to take this opportunity to respond to the comments made by the

MP for Small Malaita. Since you have allowed him to make a comment, Mr Speaker, I also have the right to make a comment, so thank you very much.

This comment is in relation to my constituency, especially in regards to the mini canneries. The Member for Small Malaita was referring to fishes like tuna and bonito. However, those of us around that area we do not have tuna, we only have topas there—

**Mr Rick Houenipwela** (*interjecting*): *Point of Order!* In my statement I did not mention anything about Tatamba. It was actually my colleague Member here that is making a question about Tatamba.

**Hon Samuel Manetoali**: I think when the Member for Small Malaita commented earlier on today I heard him mentioned the mini cannery at Tatamba and that is why I would like to reply to his comment.

It is not only about tuna and bonitos. There are lots of other fishes there; we can can any fish. We have mamulas and lots of other fishes there so we can do canning of other fishes as well and this is inside the policy of the government, and this is not because I am in the government. Thank you very much for allowing me to reply to the statement that was made in relation to my constituency.

**Mr Connelly Sandakabatu**: We have been going around my question in circle and I am happy to hear answers coming in on questions put forward.

What I am really looking at is the progress of those projects. Our people listening in would like to know how and when we are going to start. That has been their saying and thinking. And I seem to be having the feeling here that there has been no progress, maybe progress is only on paper.

My question really is about Suava as to when the land acquisition process will be completed and this can also goes for others that are earmarked for this so that we can have some timeframe in terms of when work will start.

My second question is, are there any investors willing to come and invest at Suava in particular and maybe others as well?

**Hon John Maneniaru**: In terms of progress, I can inform the House that the Ministry is making good progress, which I am happy about and I am going to outline this in my statement to the floor of Parliament later.

The Budget was just passed in June. As a new comer in the portfolio, there are a lot of challenges in the systems, and those on the other side have been in these systems before me. It is these challenges that are practically hindrances. Even our officers also have attitudinal and character problems on how they approach projects and programs. We may want this and that project, but it is those officers who are going to do the work. And we are all very familiar with the process of how any project or program is implemented, which is a challenge we have to work on. But the progress of this project is still ongoing.

In terms of Suava, yes, we are still head on. A lot of stakeholders have interest in it. Our consultants in the Prime Minister's Office have their strategies and plans on this project. My

Ministry also has a plan and we are trying to pull all these things together. Even landowners of that place are just many, and so a lot is happening.

I have come to realise myself as I head on to implement the policies as directed by government policy, it is very true why the British Government's progress was as it was. I found out that our own people do not have the same mind, they are not in agreement with each other, and they are the landowners. We were therefore of the view that if things are clear we should just go in to do land acquisition because the Government is ready. But not so! Some landowners maybe saying they are ready, but that is not true. We are the ones hosting and dealing with these projects and so we know the issues in detail. That is what we must understand. We cannot blame ourselves for this because it is to do with people's characters and attitude. We have many primary landowners, secondary landowners and then tertiary landowners to deal with in terms of land ownership on Malaita. That is a complicated issue. But I am happy the Ministry under the policy is progressing these things and I hope my people of Suava and Bina for that matter; two key project sites will be cooperative in the process so that we can progress those projects.

**Mr Connelly Sandakabatu:** I would like to thank my honourable colleague Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources for his very lengthy response to the questions I have asked.

### *Fisheries Development Programmes*

12. **Mr CONNELLY SANDAKABATU** (*North West Choiseul*) to the Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources: Can the Honourable Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources inform the House of the answers to the following questions?

- (a) What tangible achievements have been made with the \$938,158.25 expended under the Ministry as at 1<sup>st</sup> September;
- (b) How much of the \$2.4million for consultation fees under the Ministry's Development Budget have been expended, and what tangible outcomes have been achieved?
- (c) How many fish aggregates have been deployed by the Ministry and in which parts of the country?
- (d) How many seaweed farmers have been supported and what form of support have they received?
- (e) What is the progress made so far in the farming of Milk Fish?
- (f) What is the progress made so far in the farming of sea cucumber?

**Hon JOHN MANENIARU** (*Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources*): The answer to the first question is that \$938,158.25 was expended on the following:

- Fisheries Constituency Projects. This is referring to organisation of the constituency fishery centres.
- Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD)
- Provincial Fisheries Housing. We have started assisting provincial officers in the provinces in terms of office and residential houses.

- Seaweed farming materials
- Community based resources management
- Milk fish
- Tilapia Farming Material

On part (b) of the question, in terms of the use of the \$2.4million under the Development Budget subhead consultancy fees, I wish to inform Parliament that we have only used to date \$88,410 under this subhead. This includes contracts and project position advertisements and other project related expenditures. The use of this subhead to meet other project expenses comes about because of the restricted nature of the Charter of Accounts system currently used where description of subheads are not ministry specific or project based.

Greater support for our local consultancy works have been from donors. The New Zealand funded “Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries” (MSSIF) Program is a key development partner in 2015 and their consultancy budget (separate from the \$2.4million) for this year is \$1.2million of which \$780,000 (62%) has been disbursed and spent up to the end of September.

The key activities implemented and outcomes achieved from these consultancy inputs include:

- International and national technical assistance (TA) to support the preparation of the Fisheries Management Bill passed in April,
- National technical assistance (TA) to support the preparation of the baitfish management plan, which is now with the Ministry for completion,
- National and international technical assistance (TA) to prepare environmental and social impact assessment guidelines for onshore processing facilities; this work is almost completed.
- International TA to support the development of the seaweed farming industry (ongoing extension and training work plus an economic and social review of the industry which will be completed this month).
- National TA to support the preparation of the implementation of fisheries regulations; this work is ongoing.
- International TA to support the implementation of the Hapi Fish project (an innovative inshore fisheries data collection project using mobile phone technology, this work is ongoing into 2016).
- National TA to assist in the preparation by my Ministry of a national aquaculture development strategy and plan; this work has been completed.
- National TA to undertake the land mobilization study as a first step in preparing for possible investment in developing onshore processing facilities on Malaita.

We anticipate that in the next two months we will expend about \$200,000 of the consultancy fees under our development budget. If you had listened properly, we have bilateral support within the ministry that is supporting us and when they support us, our budget still remains and is not used up. I want us to be clear on this.

In regards to part (c) of the question on how many fish aggregating devices have been deployed by the Ministry and which parts of the country, in terms of the deployment of fish aggregating devices or rafts, by the end of 2015, we should have 46 FADs being deployed in the country. Our approach is to deploy these FADs to over fished areas first, as fish is still abundant in areas where population is low. To date we have deployed 14 on Malaita, 5 on Guadalcanal, 3 on Western province, 2 on Isabel Province, 1 in Choiseul Province, 2 on Makira Ulawa Province, 2 in Temotu Province and 3 in Central Islands Province. A total of 32 have already been deployed and this work is very proactively taken up. We aim to achieve 46 and if possible to go beyond that number. It also needs to be clear that other NGOs are also in the program with the Ministry and I would like to commend them for that partnership. World Vision is also putting FADs. The World Fish Centre, Queensland University and TNC are also partners in this FAD program.

The other point we need to be clear about under this question is that some constituencies are yet to receive their rafts because of logistics and some have already received two, but it is an ongoing program and so it will come to you. I want all our constituencies to at least get two (2) rafts. That is the target and under this budget we will continue to spend on materials to be on standby so that when we go for the Christmas holidays, the program still continues. We have a very big program as a result of this FAD program.

On part (d) of the question on how many seaweed farmers have been supported and what form of support they have received, I have the following to report on the progress of the development of seaweed farming in the country. We are now the biggest producer of non-edible seaweed in the Pacific region, having overtaken Kiribati. The total production in 2014 was 1,520 metric tons worth approximately \$5.6million to the farmers. This is an increase in production from 874 metric tons in 2012. There are now approximately 1,000 farmers nationwide involving over 5,000 people. The total support given to seaweed farmers nationwide over the past three plus years includes:

- 17 dedicated seaweed farming training courses delivered involving 609 seaweed farmers (346 of which are men, 243 women and 20 youths).
- 20 buying agents have been trained,
- One training manual has been written and distributed to all farmers,
- 15 new farming sites have been assessed 15 new farms developed,
- New and existing farmers have also received supplies of ropes, shade cloths, plastic sheeting, harvesting bin, canoes & OBMs, water tanks and warehouse materials. These have been supplied free to new farmers and on a cost basis to cover internal shipping cost to existing farmers.

On part (e) of the question on what is the progress made so far in the farming of Milk Fish, farming of milk fish and tilapia is at an early stage but with increased interest coming from individual farmers and communities. To date, we have 41 farmers and their families farmed milk fish/tilapia farming nationally. Twenty (20) of these farmers are from Malaita, 10 are from Guadalcanal and the rest from the other provinces.

On part (f) of the question on what is the progress made so far in the farming of sea cucumbers, in terms of beche-de-mer farming, we are still at the research stage. You would recall we had a breakthrough in 2013 producing small juvenile beche-de-mers. The challenge now is to produce the animals in very large quantities. The efforts so far have resulted in our team producing 1,500 baby beche-de-mers and these we have trialled in growing them out in their rightful places on the reefs. This is a project carried out with communities in Marau. These experiments are ongoing under the leadership of our Japanese funded expert, Dr Komatsu Toru. It will be years before we can farm hatchery-reared sea cucumber in our provinces.

As I have said, we are at the experimental stage now and it is a breakthrough. We are the first in the region and we are third in the world and this is with the species called “peanut fish”. I want to acknowledge the OFCF for its continued sponsorship of this program. I also want to acknowledge our communities in Marau who have been very active partners in this program.

**Mr Speaker:** I will only allow a few more supplementary questions, and I would like to rule that there will be no more statements. We are running against time so we will have just a few more supplementary questions.

**Mr CHRIS LAORE** (*Shortlands*): With regard to funds, the Minister said that \$88,000 plus has been expended on FADs devices for the provinces. I saw the policy statement he was talking about that everything for the four years is around \$6million. The question I want to ask is the Minister stated that three devices were deployed for the Western Province, so where are those three devices deployed? Shortlands is in the far west and we also need FADs.

I want to know how many FADs will be for the Western Province because we are scattered islands. And when will Shortland receive its FAD because we have been asking for this FAD for a long time now. For your information, people of Fauro have to go all the way to Vella to one of the devices located there to do their fishing there. The question I want to know is out of the \$6million for the four years and which the Minister mentioned that only \$88,000 has been expended so far, how many FADs will the Western Province including Shortlands be receiving throughout the four years if the government follows its policies. A further question I want to ask is, are these equipment purchased overseas or manufactured locally and then deployed?

**Hon John Maneniaru:** Thank you for that very important question. In terms of the distribution of FADs, the objective now is to put at least two FADs in all the constituencies with sea water. And I have outlined today that we are behind with this program. About 46 constituencies are eligible for FADs, whilst some of our constituencies are inland and so their programs will be different under the ministry. Deploying FADs to the provinces is an ongoing program as I have explained earlier on today. In terms of FADs for the Western Province, the three that have been deployed so far are located in Gizo and Marovo. That is the information given to me.

In regards to funding, it not only covers FADs but also a number of activities under aquaculture are also under this funding. The question was referring specifically to FADs and that is why I only provided that information.

In terms of the FADs materials, all of them are ordered or purchased from overseas since we cannot produce our own in Solomon Islands, even the little ropes, wires and others and imported from overseas.

**Mr Rick Houenipwela:** I would like to thank the Minister for Fishery for his explanations, especially on this fish aggregate device project. In Malaita Province, one of the constituencies that benefited from FADs is Small Malaita. The way this program is designed is very good because all the communities work together, and in my area the devices deployed there are serving two constituencies at the same time, so it is a good one.

In the past some people used to remove those devices; I do not know why they did that but some people are removing those devices. I would like to know of any measures the Ministry is putting in place to ensure all the devices are not removed or damaged.

**Hon John Maneniaru:** I think Small Malaita is a beneficiary of the FADs program. We have received reports of the FAD device, which my colleague MP for Small Malaita referred to, it was just after seven days the device was put up and seven giant king fishes were caught. That is a true report which came through as information we are monitoring as to how effective the FADs are making in the communities and the timing taken for fishes to be caught. That is the report we have received from our fisheries officer at Afio, Malaita Province.

The problem of people removing the device is true, and therefore it is also one of our responsibilities as Members of Parliament to include this in our programs. The Ministry has done its part but it does not stop people who have such motives from doing it again. The radio program of the Ministry is ongoing and I hope our people in the villages are listening to these programs.

Another development that is happening is with the support of World Vision, awareness talks are going on in some of our communities but we need more of this.

Another measure taken by the Ministry now is that the devices are no longer located faraway but within paddling distance, about 2 – 3miles from the shore so that they can be monitored as part of the management. In the past, they were located far away from the shore.

**Mr Culwick Togamana:** Can the Minister inform me what percentage of seaweed farmers are from Santa Isabel?

**Hon John Maneniaru:** According to our records, less than 10 per cent of seaweed farmers are from Isabel. I believe seaweed is a good program we need to look at because it has been proven that seaweed farming is a good program for our people, especially those in the village. More than 50 per cent of the seaweed farmers are from Choiseul and that is where the big portion of the revenue I was reading out earlier on today went to.

**Mr Rick Houenipwela:** My question is on sea cucumber. We are trying to farm these but we already have them in our seas. What I have heard is that the stock we already have is running out. Is there any activity by the Ministry to maintain the supply of sea cucumbers in our seas?

**Hon John Maneniaru:** It is true that we do not have many sea cucumbers in our seas according to the scientific data given to us and that is the reason why we are rationing the harvest of sea cucumber just like water is now rationed in Honiara now. We have banned it and still monitoring it under the Sea Cucumber Management Plan. In fact, 32 species can be exported. According to the records we have, these 32 species are depleting and therefore the need for strict management of beche-de-mers in the country.

**Mr Culwick Togamana:** Isabel has the longest coastline and more than 70 percent of its population live along the coast. This seaweed farming is very attractive in terms of revenue for rural communities. My question to the Minister is, what promotional or awareness programs is the Ministry doing to encourage local farmers to engage in seaweed farming?

**Hon John Maneniaru:** It is very true that the places we come from are suitable for seaweed farming. There is an existing program under the Ministry that encourages potential farmers to link with the Ministry. The demand is there but staffs in the Ministry is very limited in number and so they are just focusing on existing farmers to make sure these farmers continue on because of many challenges in seaweed farming.

The other program the Ministry is actively taking up is the radio program. Information on a lot of the fisheries programs and management plans are put out through the Ministry's radio programs. We would like to encourage our rural farmers as well as rural people to listen in to our radio programs, as well as to come and access information from the Ministry.

**Hon Connelly Sandakabatu:** I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources for the very good answers he has provided on the floor of Parliament for our people to know. With that, thank you very much.

### *Ministry of Communication and Aviation Development Budget*

**16. Hon JEREMIAH MANELE** (*Leader of Opposition*) to the Minister for Communication and Aviation: The Minister or his predecessor in his Second Reading Budget Speech, the Minister of Communication and Aviation strongly believed that his Ministry will deliver. Can the Minister inform Parliament of the following?

- (a) What the Ministry has delivered so far?
- (b) What percentage of the Ministry's Development Budget has been spent already?
- (c) What tangible outcomes have been achieved so far under the Ministry's Development Budget?



**Hon PETER SHANEL AGOVAKA** (*Minister for Communications & Aviation*): The Leader of Opposition has raised important questions which the nation needs to know as well.

Firstly, the question refers to the speech made by the former Minister of Communication and Aviation during the debate and passage of the 2015 Budget earlier this year. For your information, part of our development budget has been transferred to the Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID) and the Minister for Infrastructure Development in his statement later on today will inform the House of some of the airports that have been done as well as some of the works that are currently in progress.

In terms of the Development Budget under the provincial airport program, we have Lata, Seghe and Taro airports being identified for tarsealing. So far, the topography and survey work has been completed and engineers are now working on the design on how to position the tarsealing.

To answer the question, the Ministry of Communication and Aviation who are aviators and communicators, will at the end of the year procure new equipment for sewerage and water pump. We will also try and connect with the town water supply because water shortage at the airport is causing problems to the toilets and so forth. The convenience rooms at the airport are also not very good and so we are trying to make improvements to both the domestic and international terminals.

We are also looking at procuring air-conditioning systems, in particular for the arrival section. You would remember very well upon arriving you are sweating under the hot sun and when you come inside the arrival terminal, you would get even sweatier so we would like to procure some air conditioning system so that when you arrive you will not be dehydrated.

We would also like to tarseal the car park at the domestic terminal as it is full of potholes at the moment. We will tarseal the domestic car park with the help of the MID. Before the end of the year we will try and also construct a walkway, an access that connects the international airport to the domestic airport so that passengers coming out from the international terminal would be able to walk to the domestic airport to catch their next flight to whichever destination they are going to in the country. We are also trying to repair potholes at the terminal and also improve drainages at the airport so that we do not have the problem of water blockage during rainy seasons and floods.

The answer to part (b) of the question in terms of the percentage of the development budget that has been spent, from records to the end of September 2015, the Ministry has used up \$9,576,098.87 of its total development budget of \$15,537,661.13. In terms of percentage, that would be about 62 per cent the ministry has used. That means we are left with 38 per cent and we would have expended that money by the end of the year.

With regards to part (c) of the question on tangible outcomes, the answer to that is the same answer to part (a) of the question. We are going to achieve what I have read on in answer to part (a) of the question. In terms of the other airports, the Minister for Infrastructure will inform the House on the status of the other airports in the country.

**Hon Jeremiah Manele:** Just a supplementary question. I did not clearly hear the Minister but I think he mentioned a number of airports for tarsealing - Lata, Taro and one or two others. Is that going to be done this year or next year or has work started on the tarsealing of those

airports? Secondly, I also heard that Suavanao airstrip will be tarsealed, is that in this year's program or next year's program?

**Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka:** The airports identified for tar sealing are Lata, Kira Kira, Seghe, Auki and Taro. As I have said topographic survey work has been completed and now the engineers are doing the design as to how the tarsealing will be done. This is now in the work plan of the engineers. After that, the tarsealing work will be put to tender for contractors who would do the work.

Suavanao has not been identified for tarsealing but certainly we have identified places like Kaolo, San George and Sasamunga as new strategic airports in the country. Next year, maybe when we have the funds we will be looking at Suavanao and the airports that are strategically important for our tourist industry.

Mr JIMMY LUSIBAEA (*North Malaita*): I know there are several airports up for tarsealing. I would like the Minister to inform the House as to when the Gwaunaru'u and the Manaoba airports will be fully operational again?

**Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka:** In terms of the Gwaunaru'u airport, it is still with the courts and we are still waiting for the outcome of the land dispute. The Minister for Infrastructure will further explain in his speech as to their status. In terms of the Manaoba airport, so far \$62million has been spent on the Manaoba airport. We only spent \$40million for the Munda airport but no plane has ever travelled to Manaoba as yet. I am looking at a number of claims that are sitting on my desk for the Manaoba airport. I am going to bring a paper to Cabinet to make a decision on the way forward for the Manaoba airport. It is an expensive airport with a lot of money already spent on it, so what will the Government do with it? Should it continue with the airport or what? But strategically, Manaoba airport is important to Malaita. We are now looking at the outstanding claims that are coming in, and I think by the time all the claims are added up, the cost will be just under \$70million for that airport alone. Even for Munda, the claims that are coming in now for payment of gravel is about \$70million as well but the airport has been professionally done.

**Mr. MANASSEH MAELANGA** (*Leader of Independent*): I would like to ask my good Minister and my good friend a question. Since his predecessor's airport is Lomlom in the Reef Islands, when will Lomlom airport be opened? What is the cause of delay in opening up the Lomlom airport?

My second question is on the Munda airport. We want Munda to be one of our international airports but what is the reason why nothing is being done to the airport so that it can be opened for international flights in terms of tourism for the Western Province? What is the status of work at the Munda airport?

Thirdly, the Minister said his ministry has already spent most of the \$15million allocated in the development budget, which is approximately 62 per cent with 38 per cent still left. What sort of work is still outstanding for the Ministry to do with that 38 per cent?

**Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka:** In regards to the Lomlom airport, there are a number of claims about Lomlom coming in that are still sitting on my desk. The problem there is with land right claims and disputes. Until the land issues at Lomlom are resolved, work cannot proceed. There are a number of land claims there, which I have to sit with landowners and talk with them to find a way forward. Lomlom is an important airport as it serves the eastern part of our country. If tourism is to develop there, Lomlom will be a strategic airport in the eastern part of our country.

With Munda, an alternative international airport, there are a number of work that we wanted to do there, such as fencing, putting up runway lights, navigational aids and fire & rescue facilities. Those things are not there and we need them. The New Zealand Government would like to assist us with the second phase in the development of the Munda airport for it to become an alternative international airport.

In regards to the question of expenditure, 62 per cent of the development budget has been spent and 38 per cent is left. For the leftover, we are planning to construct a walkway between the international terminal to the domestic terminal. That is one of the work that we are planning to do. The other end of the fence at the international airport is broken so we would like to repair that fence and also maintain the drainage. These works will cost money and so we need contractors to do those works.

**Mr RICK HOUEINPWELA** (*Small Malaita*): I want the Minister to further clarify his answer with regards to question (a) on what has the ministry so far delivered. The Minister's answer only touched on three airports in Taro, Seghe and another one. What he mentioned is that those airports are earmarked for tarsealing. He also stated that Henderson too is earmarked so everything is earmarked. However, the question is about the things that have been already done. That is what I want to be clear about.

My second question is about airports in Malaita; I want to know what airports are in operation now – I am not only talking about Gwaunaru'u and Manaoba but other airports as well in Malaita. If the other airports are not operating now, what is the Ministry doing to ensure they are operating? I want to know what steps, actions and measures the Ministry is taking to ensure those airports including the other two I was talking about earlier to become operational.

**Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka:** In the policy documents, those airports are earmarked for tarsealing. What I was saying is that for Lata, Taro, Kirakira, Seghe topographic survey work has been completed, and this work is not cheap. The design work for actual tarsealing of the airports is what is being done right now. When the design work is done, it will be tendered out for contractors to do the tarsealing. That is the work done so far on that.

In terms of the Henderson Airport, we are planning to put an air conditioning system at the arrival lounge. There is a borehole at the Henderson Airport but when the borehole is clogged with dirt and mud, there is no water available for drinking and for the convenient places. This has led to the need to connect to the Honiara water supply system and this is very

costly. There is a sewage system there and right now we are working on purchasing equipment such as a pump for the sewage and the water pumps because they are no longer working.

We are also repairing the toilets, both at the international and domestic terminals and with the help of MID we are going to tarseal the domestic terminal car park. We are also going to repair the potholes and improve the drainage system at the Henderson airport. Those are the current activities going on at Henderson and it is ongoing. Thank you very much.

**Mr Rick Houenipwela:** My second question is not yet answered.

**Hon Peter Shanel:** What is the second part of the question?

**Mr Rick Houenipwela:** My second question is about the airports in Malaita province. The Minister talked about two of them but I want to know about the status of all the airports in Malaita province, whether services are still working. And if there are problems, I want to know what sort of actions the Ministry has taken to ensure those airports are operational.

**Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka:** Malaita is strategically an important province in which airport infrastructures have to be placed there. There are two parts to an airport; the first part is infrastructure for which the MID is responsible for where construction and tarsealing is done by. When it comes to aviation, our ministry as the aviator is responsible for that in terms of certifying planes flying there, the standard of the airport, its measurement and so forth.

Airports in Malaita; particularly Manaoba is on halt at the moment, and a cabinet paper will be brought to Cabinet on the way forward to Manaoba. The Auki Airport is still a court case between the landowners.

There are some other landowners who have written to us expressing their desire to put airports on their land so we will sit with them to discuss how we can advance those interests to help our country in putting airports on their land. The important thing is to assist those landowners in their meetings when they have tribal land disputes to resolve those disputes. That is what we are intending to do. At the moment we have problem with land issues. Until those land issues are solved, we will not be able to progress any further if those land issues become a hindrance to the development of airports in our province of Malaita.

**Mr Derrick Manu'ari:** My question is regarding the Kirakira airport. As we know there are two projects that are incomplete there. I am not sure whether they are incomplete or have failed and that is the fencing of the airport as well as the terminal.

What is the position of the Ministry in relation to those projects? Is the Ministry going to still complete those projects or just abandon them like that?

**Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka:** Kirakira again is strategically an important airport in terms of aviation. Assessment has been already done and so we are ready to advance the fencing and also the tarsealing project. Thank you.

**Mr Douglas Ete:** I would like to ask three questions. First of all I would like to correct the records. Manaoba is \$7million; for Munda, it was MacDowell Group of Agreement, when I was Chairman of Public Accounts Committee, the New Zealand Government funded NZ\$25million. Therefore, when the Minister said \$40million, I think your answer is not correct.

Secondly, DVOR under (ICAO) - the International Civil Aviation rules; Solomon Islands failed because all its aerodromes are not done, and the current government does not even recognise it as well. Currently, they are using wireless to communicate with those down there. Only a former MP by the name of Holosivi established the DVOR there. I would like to ask the Minister when he is going to install that equipment. Because the ATC control here at Henderson airport; you know very well Mr Minister and I too know very well is no longer working. When you call Seghe Airport, "Seghe Seghe, is it clear there or not" should never be the means of communication in this 21<sup>st</sup> century in Solomon Islands. When will the Ministry fix that problem?

Thirdly, what is the Government's policy regarding the money collected from our airspace, which we are currently using to meet the cost of brushing the grasses and a lot of you here have contracts there; I can name those people which some are not even in the tenders too. All the papers are just with us, and all of us know it very well. What is the policy of the Government in regards to that?

If we say no and tarseal all those areas instead of brushing because we cannot fight against humidity in this country where you cut the grass today and tomorrow it grows again. When will the policy be made, Minister? If we are serious and aggressive to alleviate the proper management of funds there by saying the policy is here, let us fix all the aerodromes, it will be done tomorrow. The question is when? Those are my three questions I want the Minister to answer.

**Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka:** I would like to make a correction on Munda because the actual cost is what I have alluded to earlier and it is going up because of the gravel claims; it is \$40million. With the \$25million, when I was Foreign Affairs Minister last time, I signed that with the Foreign Affairs Minister of New Zealand for the Munda Airport project. So I know the costs involved there.

In terms of the airspace funds, at the moment internal auditors are auditing that account, and after the audit is done and a report on the audit is available, I will then bring a paper to Cabinet for a way forward on this.

This is just my second week in the Ministry as of Monday. Regarding the equipment, I was the one doing maintenance to those equipment when I used to work with the telecommunications with those people that you named. We know the equipment and they are not working today. They are not working because the last NCRA Government never fixed them, it failed to fix them. Now a minister who knows the system is being put to that ministry and this is just my second week. It is coming soon, mark my words. That is my answer to the question by my good colleague.

**Mr Manasseh Maelanga:** Can the Minister inform the House whether Civil Aviation funds are used for infrastructures? What about the CASI fund, what are you using that fund on?

**Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka:** The CASI Funds are used for aviation equipment for the airport.

**Hon Jeremiah Manele:** I have a supplementary question, but I will just leave it. First of all, I would like to thank the hard working Minister for Communication and Aviation for his responses. I would also like to thank my colleagues from this side of the House for their supplementary questions.

I think all airports in the country wherever they are, are very important. I thank him for highlighting Kaolo Airstrip in Hograno/Kia/Havulei as a strategic one. A lot of nickel prospecting is going on there and the population is there, so I hope some work on this airport and the other airports we talked about today are being progress with. I thank the Minister for his responses to my question and to the supplementary questions asked by my colleagues from this side of the House.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS: MINISTER OF ENERGY, MINES AND RURAL ELECTRIFICATION.**

*“Promote a Conducive Environment for Resources (mining, water, energy and geothermal) development”*

**Hon DAVID DAY PACHA** (*Minister for Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification*): In my statement, I would like to present to this House a brief overview of the potential of developing our mineral, petroleum, energy and water resources of this nation Solomon Islands. It would include stories of successes, challenges, experiences and our endeavours to drive the economy through sustainable exploration and utilisation of these natural resources.

The Minerals Sector is one of the potential areas for development which can bring about economic prosperity and betterment of life for Solomon Islands. However, it must be properly managed within the bounds of a workable legislative and governance framework aligned with best international industrial practices and it must suit our local context.

Solomon Islands is blessed with its people and natural resources. The intertwining of our cultures and natural resources including land means that beside the government and investors, our people must be fairly compensated and be directly involved in the development of the minerals sector. However, this can only happen through cooperation and collaboration between investors, the government and landowners. However, this must be transacted within the bounds of relevant legislation and agreed governance arrangements.

In this connection, next week my Ministry in partnership with Nature Conservancy and other key stakeholders within and without the government will be co-hosting a mining forum. As far as I am concerned, it is an opportunity to hear from a wide range of stakeholders on the challenges we have and more importantly on how we can create a better mining industry.

Four (4) non-mining operations and explorations occurring in Solomon Islands are the Gold Ridge Mining on Guadalcanal, Rennell Bauxite on Rennell Island, Wagina Bauxite on Choiseul and Saint George Island Nickel project on Isabel. In order for Gold Ridge Mining to

operate the resource base, any new interested company must be strengthened and any such negotiations to reopen the Gold Ridge Mining must involve the Government. Therefore, any interested company should and must come through the Ministry. There is a viability of reopening only if an interested company is willing to take up risks and cooperate with landowners so that the land can be further explored and increase resources.

Be also informed that that the sale between St Barbara Mining Limited; Guadalcanal Resource Mining Limited (GRML) and Gold Ridge Community Investment Limited (GCIL) is a private sale and did not involve the Government through my ministry. As I speak now, the current owner, the GCIL does not have the resources, technology, finance and what not to progress any such mining operations and therefore nothing is happening. It is also being alleged that GCIL is selling assets at the mine site. My Ministry is in the process of ascertaining whether the GCIL is genuinely representing the interests of the Gold Ridge Council or not.

As far as the Rennell Bauxite operations are concerned, relevant license issued to APID Limited and PT Mega Limited are un-procedural, unlawful and controversial. Although relevant royalty payments were already being paid by the company, the said royalty payments are being held up in the Central Bank of Solomon Islands due to regulatory requirements. As I speak now, the mining operation on Rennell is temporarily on hold due to cancellation of its provincial business license.

On the Wagina Bauxite, as far as my Ministry is concerned, all legal administrative and protocol requirements and processes have been fully complied with for the issuance of a mining license. However, issuance of a mining license is pending land and social issues.

On the San George Island Nickel, the matter is solely before the courts. As a way forward, the Mines Division had stepped up the checks and balances in the application processes ensuring the processes are transparent, accountable and credible. It means that now all application for licenses must meet all legal and administrative requirements before transmission to the Mines and Minerals Board for deliberations. The Board must not be called upon unnecessarily to sit at extraordinary meetings but as scheduled by the legislation. The DCC Government is working to ensure that gaps and improper application of existing legislations are addressed amicably to create a conducive investment environment that upholds and safeguards the interest of the private sector, government and landowners and the country at large.

The DCC Government reform policy objectives for mining include reviewing and amending the Mines and Minerals Act, development of the National Mineral Policy and review exploration and mining operations. In this connection, I am pleased to report that my Ministry with the support of the Australian Government through the World Bank is now working to engage experts to support our efforts to reform our mining legislative and operational frameworks. Similarly, we are also being assisted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in the drafting of the policy and legislative framework to guide deep sea mining.

The Ministry is also embarking with development budget support on reviving the geology laboratory, which is pivotal to support the Government's endeavour to reform and maximise accruable benefits from mining in the country. In addition, we are also strengthening our geological information management system.

I have to point out here that critical capacity and resource gaps exist in my Ministry and also the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology to monitor and enforce compliance with our legislations. And I call on relevant authorities to favourably consider our bid for additional staff and financial resources.

In terms of energy, this is the division of the future. The DCC Government recognises the importance of energy as a key drive to trigger and sustain economic and social development in the country and further recognise the current constraints that the sector faces due to our sole dependency on high cost imported fuels for our electricity generation and transportation. Access to reliable grids based electricity is limited only to Honiara and our nine provincial centres with approximately only 12 percent of the national population enjoying this service, while 79 percent of the country's households are without access to any electrical supply. The geographical spread of our islands, dispersed population and low housing density has made it difficult for everyone to be connected to a single national grid. Even electricity access in urban towns is limited only to people who can afford the high cost of electricity tariff.

The DCC Government therefore has come up with a policy to identify and develop alternative renewable energy resources that have considerable potentials to provide access to affordable renewable electricity to both urban and rural areas. My Ministry is working vigorously to bring the price of electricity down. And I am pleased to announce that there has been a review of the electricity tariff conducted in the last three months, to which we should expect some positive changes in our electricity tariff structure.

In terms of long term reduction in the cost of electricity, the Ministry together with the Solomon Islands Electricity Authority (SIEA) and, of course, with the support of our development partners, especially the World Bank, DFAT (Australia) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) have been discussing with Korean Water from the Republic of Korea during the year and hope to soon finalize contracts to get the construction of the 20 megawatt Tina River Hydro Project underway.

I congratulate the resource owners of the Tina River Hydro Project, core land areas for their cooperation and understanding for allowing their land for this very important national energy infrastructure project. Given the uniformed tariff coverage applied by SIEA throughout its operation in the country, the Honiara grid subsidizes SIEA's operations in the provincial centres and therefore the Tina River Hydro project scheme will generate immense benefit to the national economy.

Furthermore, my Ministry has progressed work on developing hydro power for provincial centres with success in securing funds from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to develop the Fiu River Hydro Project, which is expected to completely replace diesel for electricity generation for the Auki electricity grid. The 750kw Fiu River Hydro Project is the first hydro scheme to be implemented under the Government's plan to replace all SIEA diesel based electricity generation in the provincial centres with renewable energy generation. The Ministry has plans to develop other hydro schemes in the future such as, just to name a few, the Huro River Hydro scheme in KiraKira; the Luemba Lele River Hydro scheme in Lata; the Sorave River hydro scheme for Choiseul Bay and the Mase Hydro scheme for the Noro, Munda grid. Once again, I as the minister responsible for mines and energy and rural electrification



would like to thank resource owners of the Fiu River for their willingness to open their land for development of the hydro scheme.

My ministry in pursuance of harnessing renewable energy in the country is also conducting wind speed monitoring in the country to explore the possibilities of harnessing the wind energy. The government's plans in the future to pursue investigation into our geothermal resources that we have in the country, especially on Guadalcanal, Savo, Vella la Vella and other site. The SIEA is working with the World Bank to access US\$4.4million, which is equivalent to SBD\$40million funding to subsidize and facilitate low income household access to electricity services in Solomon Islands.

Under the scheme, the World Bank through the SIEA will subsidize the wiring of houses, service lines and tariff meters. This will assist to increase the customer based and increase the footprint of electricity in Solomon Islands. The scheme will cover the out sketch of the Honiara City, including Burns creek, Gilbert Camp, Lau Valley, Abira, Ohiola, Lio Creek, Kobito 1 & 2, Green Valley, Fulisango, Gerema, Kwaio Valley, Feraladoa, Kofiloko, Zion, Matariu, Jericho, Aekafo, Kaibia, Titinge, Mosquito Valley and Banana Valley and so on and so forth.

In our endeavour to increase penetration of renewable into our energy grid, construction will soon commence on a one mega solar plant to integrate into the Honiara electricity grid. This solar plant is jointly funded by the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the Government of New Zealand and will be installed at the fighter one at the Henderson airport area. The ground breaking ceremony, which we intended to call "A soil turning ceremony", took place yesterday.

My Ministry has submitted a budget for the 2016 fiscal year to conduct a thorough feasibility study on the project to finally establish an implementation agreement between the Government and the two oil supply companies on the way forward to implement the relocation process. The DCC government through my ministry will oversee and monitor the implementation of the project to successfully relocate the fuel storage terminals out of the Honiara City Central Business District with no harm to population, properties, infrastructure, environment and lastly but not the least, to beautify and enlarge the Honiara City area.

In 2009, Solomon Islands lodged an entitlements claim over four regions of the extended Continental Shelf to the United Nation. Of these, three are partial submissions - Charlotte Banks, North Fiji Basin and Rennell Ridges. The fourth is a single joint submission with the Federated States of Micronesia and Papua New Guinea over the Continental Shelf in the Ontong Java plateau region. The three states commenced joint defence on the submission in 2014 and the next appearance before the United Nation Sub Commission is scheduled for 26 to 30 October, 2015 in New York. Regarding the areas of partial submission, as soon as instruments for joint cooperation with Fiji and Vanuatu are finalised and concluded, joint compilation should commence. The Rennell Ridge submission is a single Solomon Islands submission. All these efforts are aimed collectively to increase Solomon Islands seabed territory.

Solomon Islands will now have an up-to-date baseline. Cabinet has just recently approved the gazettal of Solomon Islands four archipelagic baseline and six territorial sea baselines. A joint interim taskforce comprising officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Ministry of Mines, Energy & Rural Electrification, Ministry of Lands, Housing & Survey, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and SOPAC now Geoscience Division of the SPC updated the baseline. After gazette and depositing the instruments with the United Nations, Solomon Islands will be able to negotiate and conclude its outstanding maritime boundaries with neighbours Fiji and Vanuatu. The updated baseline contributed to Solomon Islands four claims of extended continental shelf entitlement.

My Ministry confirms being in custody of a successful application for petroleum prospecting which the Petroleum Board had already approved and the Government is about to enter into a petroleum agreement for petroleum prospecting in Solomon Islands.

My ministry supports the Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA) for water supply improvement for Honiara and Auki and we also prioritise the strengthening capacity to address non-revenue water and SIWA development plans. The Ministry also fully support Solomon Islands Water Sector Adaptation project where six pilot sites in Malaita, Temotu, Makira, Choiseul, Western and Rennell/Bellona provinces will provide funding support for improved water supply services through increasing shortage capacity and water sources and adaptation to appropriate technology that will provide portable water in times of disasters and emergencies.

The Ministry also promote activities in operational hydrology to further hydrological services in Solomon Islands through the collection, processing, storage, retrieval and publication of hydrological data. The Ministry assists in disaster risk reduction management program in consultation with the National disaster Management office and we also deal with water governance. In this connection, my Ministry will submit to Cabinet a water resources and sanitation policy which was finalized last year in 2014. This will pave way for the development of a new water resources legislation to replace the outdated River Waters Act.

If we are to successfully develop our mineral, energy, petroleum and water resources, we need to work on the weakest and most vulnerable gaps of the system guiding this interest and that is by setting strong and relevant legislative and governance framework to guide all stakeholders - investors, the government to landowners, and to address critical capacity resource gaps in my ministry.

**Mr Speaker:** We are running against time and so I will only allow a few short questions on the statement we have just heard. Be reminded that debate is not permitted on ministerial statements.

**Mr RICK HOUENIPWELA** (*Small Malaita*): Let me thank the Honourable Minister for the statement and we are happy with what the Government through the Ministry are working on. I have two small questions, and the first question is on power from geothermal. I want to ask about the Savo project, I want to know about the progress of that particular project.

The second question is to do with the objective of providing power throughout Solomon Islands through the SIEA, which the Minister has outlined that all the outskirts of Honiara will be covered. I want to know whether there is any policy objective to cover the rest of Solomon Islands.

I understand that SIEA alone has its own objectives to do that. This year it has the objective to deliver power to Choiseul, Western and Malaita provinces. I want to know how the Ministry and the SIEA are working together in terms of this. There are two policy objectives, of which one is providing electricity to Solomon Islands. Secondly, of that policy, how much of it contains the policy for renewable energy. I think those are three questions and I am sure the Minister can clarify those three.

**Hon David Day Pacha:** I would like to begin with your third question that yes, we have a policy to supplement SIEA operations and its programs.

In regards to the second question, we will just begin with SIEA in extending electricity to the villages. The name of my ministry is rural electrification at the end, never forget that so we are working towards achieving the name of that ministry - rural electricity and we are just starting here and then will cover all of us in the future.

In terms of your first question, the company that is interested in developing geothermal is currently carrying out technical and feasibility studies on the project.

**Mr CULWICK TOGAMANA** (*Maringe/Kokota*): Thank you Minister for the information provided in relation to this very important sector, the mineral sector and you also mentioned about the review of legislations etc., which we will anticipate. I understand that the due process for Wagina is now completed and that mining will be carried out there. The tendency now is that miners that are coming in now are only interested in raw materials; they wanted to take the soil and ship them out. Does the Ministry have policies in place to ensure down processing of these minerals must take place in Solomon Islands before they are shipped outside, rather than simply digging the soil or raw as it is called and exported, which in my view gives us just peanuts for the real value of the valuable metals we are mining.

**Hon David Day Pacha:** The review of our mining Act, which I referred to earlier on will also look into the possibility of downstream processing as well. Thank you.

**Mr Rick Houenipwela:** One question in relation to the Gold Ridge Mine. I do not know whether I heard the Minister correctly, but I think I heard him say that a local company, probably landowners own the company and the assets. But it is also disturbing news that instead of them making it operational they are selling the assets. I am therefore not sure what we are going to use if the mine becomes operational again.

I want to know what the ministry is going to do as the ministry responsible for minerals and mining and so forth.

**Hon David Day Pacha:** The information I heard is what I have said that my ministry is carrying out investigations to find out what is actually going on up there. This is what we have heard so far.

**Hon Douglas Ete:** I thank the Minister for expressing the government's interest to partner with landowners into national development programs. I think that is a healthy policy.

I am more concerned about Fiu because nothing transpired in Fiu. About US\$50million has been signed this year where landowners come and stay in Honiara for three months but the government never gets to meet with them. My question is when

In terms of mining, the issue with APID and Bingtang and the Minister knows very well that TP Bingtang is illegal and APID has a valid license. We must inform Parliament that APID has a valid license.

When I asked Cabinet as to why it wanted to terminate APID's license (because Cabinet does not have the power to do it), but I want to express it as a statement here that APID has a valid licence for mining in this country. Cabinet does not have the powers to do so and APID has a valid license to mine in this country.

In terms of the Wagina bauxite, partnership is important because the Volekana tribe owns that place. Mr H. Broughton and Mr Morre have already transferred that land to landowners of Wagina. Only a segment of Wagina belongs to the Government, and the lease agreement is under the old indentures which have already expired in 1981 and was transferred to the Lands and Titles Act 221(a).

I would like to ask the Minister when are they going to meet the landowning groups to facilitate this because the Volekana Tribe is still there and they have taken the Government to court in 1966. The documents are available. I also have the documents to this court case. We always talk about good statements in Parliament so when are we going to go down and talk with landowners. It is already three months now but still there is no consultation with landowners about the Fiu Hydro? What time, is the question I am asking.

**Hon Manasseh Sogavare:** Since Volekana Tribe in Choiseul is mentioned, I am a man from Choiseul and so I am going to answer that question.

Consultations between the settlers (but we no longer call them settlers anymore but Lauru people living in Wagina) and the people we acknowledge as original landowners is being arranged for them to try and sit down and talk because there are deferring views between the Volekana Tribe (the landowners) and the people that settled there.

If the law is strictly interpreted, land belongs to the Government and therefore it has the right to do anything it wants to do on land. But we also respect the rights of the people who originally owned those lands. So we are asking them to sit and talk. Both sides have differing views and so they need to sit and sort their issues. Many people on both sides want mining as well as are against mining as well and so they need to sit down and sort out their problem, and that is the process that is still going on. These people came to the Prime Minister's Office and we established the process to continue. How far they have gone in their consultations is a matter we need to establish.

With regards to the statement by the Member for East Honiara on the APID licence, the Attorney General is here and so we will allow him to brief Parliament on what the Government has been doing and the status of the licence and the operations of APID in Rennell. The Government can only act on legal advice given by the Chambers.

**Attorney General:** The case of APID, as the Member for East Honiara stated, it is true that APID still has a valid mining lease under the Mines and Minerals Act. That is because initially

the Minister has issued a show cause letter to APID saying that the process whereby APID got the license is not right according to law. Therefore, under the procedures of the Act, the Minister has to issue a show cause letter and a show cause letter simply means inviting APID to come and explain why its license should not be cancelled because of the allegation that the license was initially granted illegally, not in line with the law.

When the Minister issued the show cause letter, instead of APID coming forward to make the explanation, APID went to the High Court and applied for a judicial review to review the decision of the Minister issuing the show cause letter. When APID filed that case in the High Court, it means the hand of the Minister is tied up and cannot proceed with the process to determine whether the license is valid or not and to cancel that license. That is the state that case has reached. APID case is still there in the High Court challenging the validity of the show cause letter and so as soon as the High Court determines that case and if the High Court decides that the show cause letter is right, then the Minister will proceed on to the next step which is to ask APID to explain why the Minister should not cancel its license. Since the license is not yet cancelled, according to law, APID's license is still valid under the Mines and Minerals Act.

When business is carried out in the province, our provinces also have business laws such called ordinances. Under the Provincial Government Act, provinces can make laws for the provinces themselves about certain areas, and in this case, business is an area under the Provincial Government Act where provinces can make ordinances to govern licenses.

Some people are of the view that since it is a provincial ordinance, it is not lawful or it is just a piece of ordinance that is not important to adhere to. Not so, it is the law of a particular province and needs to be complied with. Anyone operating in the province has to comply with provincial ordinances. If any business does not comply, then it is operating illegally in that province - not inside the country but it is operating illegally inside that province.

With this APID case, the instructions I received from the Province, whether it is true or not, it is for the High court to decide because the case is before it. But the instructions I received from Renbel province, which forms the basis of my advice is that APID operation is not according to law in Rennell is because the province said it has already revoked APID's license to do any business in the Province. Now if that is true then it means APID does not have any right legally to operate in Rennell province in terms of mining. In fact that applies to mining but there are also allegations that APID is also carrying out logging in the Province. On this case, even APID itself admitted that it does not have any logging license to do logging. Therefore, if it does any logging operations in the Province, then on its own words, APID is truly wrong.

In the case of mining, as far as the Mines and Minerals Act is concerned, APID still has a valid licence. But as far as provincial laws are concerned, it does not have the right to operate in Rennell, if the allegation by the Province is true that it does not have a licence because the Province has already revoked it. That is my explanation regarding the legal position of APID's operations in Rennell.

**Hon. David Day Pacha:** I just want to make a response to the comment on the Fiu hydro. The Ministry is now in consultations with SIEA on this matter; we are not doing this on our own but

we are doing this with the SIEA. Discussions between the SIEA and the Ministry are still underway.

*Sitting suspended for lunch break at 1.25pm*

Sitting resumed at 3.26pm

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

***“Infrastructure Development – Status of Policy Implementation Programmes”***

**Hon STANLEY SOFU:** Mr Speaker, I rise to present to this Honourable House my Ministry’s status of policy implementation programs of the Democratic Coalition for Change Government.

As you are aware, the Ministry of Infrastructure Development has the second highest Development Budget of approximately SBD\$250million and there is high expectation from the Government and the public for my Ministry to deliver its Development Budget passed in late April 2015. In spite of the late passage of the Budget in 2015, my Ministry has committed and maintained a consistent effort in its implementation of the Democratic Coalition for Change Government’s infrastructure policies and programs in the past nine months.

Over the last nine months, my Ministry has been working to implement many of the new infrastructure policies of the DCC Government. I will outline to you our main actions and achievements under the key policy headings. As the House is aware, the policy objectives of the DCC Government is to rehabilitate damaged and social and economic infrastructure and building of new ones to create a vibrant and robust economic environment to stimulate economic.

Another policy is to provide an enable environment to stimulate economic growth, especially in the rural areas. The next policy is to address and meet the basic needs of peoples in rural areas and generate jobs and increase employment opportunities for the growing population and achieve high economic growth, wealth and social wellbeing for all Solomon Islanders.

The key DCCG infrastructure development policies include maintain and improve all roads and feeder roads throughout the country; construct 100 kilometres of dirt road and 50 kilometres of tarsealed roads per year. Construct domestic seaport terminal facilities to allow safe embarkation and disembarkation of passengers. Construct international seaport terminal facilities to allow safe and a more welcoming berth for tourist cruise vessels. Support constituencies to maintain roads and feeder roads. Relocate the National Referral hospital. Facilitate construction and development of high flow economic airstrips, roads and bridges in the country. Review the provision of domestic shipping services serving uneconomical routes in the country. Strengthen and support the National Transport Plan with the intention to include road transport in the plan.

My ministry has made a strong start on many of these tasks that I will outline in more detail below, starting with the crucial issues of funds and resourcing. The 2015 SIG Budget includes approximately SBD\$250million for infrastructure projects across Rural Transport Infrastructure (RTI), Development Investment Program (DIP) and the National Transport Fund

(NTF). Of that amount, SBD\$58.5million is being contributed to the National Transport Fund, where it is pooled with Australian donor funds from which we are on track to expend a total of SBD\$102million on infrastructure by the end of this year. That will be an increase of some 25 percent over 2014.

A further increase in the National Transport Fund Expenditure is planned from SBD\$102million in 2015 to about \$120million in 2016, with expected approval by year's end of the STIIP loan grant program which will secure a five year funding stream from 2016 to 2020. The required amendments to the National Transport Fund Act is currently prepared to come before this House would certainly provide more say of the Government on project funded under the NTF, and that would see the Government endorsing STIIP loan component for additional financing to NTF.

There are several major benefits from our use of the National Transport Fund funding mechanism. Our contractors are now assured of receiving their invoice payments within standard timeframes and are no longer subject to unpredictability sometimes arising from the wider SIG financial system. Implementation of the National Transport Fund has given confidence to donors that their money will be well spent and will be used for the purposes for which it was allocated. The National Transport Fund has also given us a flexible mechanism to rapidly respond to emergencies such as repairing infrastructures damage caused in the April 2014 floods.

Within the transport sector, it is in roads that my ministry carries perhaps the biggest responsibility for contributing to the essential wellbeing and economic development of all Solomon Islanders. We are also expanding our efforts to support maritime transport services and wharves.

The Ministry of Infrastructure Development through one of its departments, the Central Project Implementation Unit 2015 work plan includes 88 contracts for awards. This comprise the 340 kilometres of roads under the MID Corporate Plan (2013 – 2015) targeted for 2015. Seventy contracts have been awarded to date in 2015 and a further 30 are under various stages of procurement. The target total is 100 contracts for civil works to be awarded in 2015.

There are currently 765 kilometres of road contracts underway which cover approximately 79.4% of maintainable road length in Solomon Islands. This is a magnificent achievement and represents more than doubling of the proportion of our country's road length that is now both in maintainable condition and is actually being maintained.

I am proud to inform the House that the Ministry is now operating road works contract in every one of our nine provinces and in Honiara City. This year, 2015 is the first in which my Ministry has truly provide nationwide coverage for better infrastructures across all the provinces. In the rural areas, better quality roads are making a twofold difference in improving people's lives. Our citizens now not only have more reliable road access but the majority of the work in rural areas is being done by local community based contractors under our Labour Based Equipment Support (LBES) works program. This provides direct economic benefit to the livelihoods of the men and women our contractors employ.

The recent cyclone Raquel has caused damages to transport infrastructure on Malaita such as roads and bridges which has been prioritized by my ministry. These are some projects my Ministry has implemented on Malaita Province: Emergency repair works on north and east

Malaita road awarded. Clearing and grubbing on North Malaita road section Silolo to Fouia awarded. Emergency repair work to damaged Section 2 Auki unsealed road damaged by cyclone Raquel awarded. Design and reconstruction of the Taba'a Bridge in North Malaita awarded. The labour based equipment support routine maintenance of South Road Section 1, 3, 3 and 6 in Malaita have already awarded. The Fiu Bridge medium term bouldering, contracted but delayed after land issues arisen. The Fiu Bridge long term pile works tendered.

In terms of community wharves, the domestic maritime support project has completed three wharves this year. I need to mention the three wharfs that have been completed this year are Vurango wharf in Choiseul; the Lambulambu wharf in Western province and the Susubuna wharf in Isabel province. Work on the Lengana wharf has already commenced and will be completed in three months' time. The cost of the additional wharf was made possible due to savings made by the ADB and the Government through reduction in the contract sum for additional wharves contracted to the same contractor.

Shipping services provided through the Franchise Shipping Services have been highly successful with seven subsidized routes now operating and serving communities in remote areas without reliable commercial shipping services. The uneconomical routes are Temotu, Ulawa, Weathercoast of Makira, Weathercoast of Guadalcanal, Rennell/Bellona, Sikaiana and Lord Howe. This will be fully funded by the Solomon Islands Government and managed by the Ministry of Infrastructure Development upon completion of the Domestic Maritime Support Project in the second quarter of 2016. The new projects initiated by the Democratic Coalition for Change Government are now in various stages of planning, scoping, preparation and procurement by the Ministry. The first is the Mberande/Aola road and bridges, feasibility studies, scoping and tender preparation by end of October 2015. The Aola to Marau roads and bridges feasibility study will be completed by the end of November 2015. The White River to Ndoma 1 roads and bridges is ongoing. The Ndoma 1 to Kobo and Naro east hill to Naro hill west road and bridges is ongoing. The Naro hill to Lambi roads and bridges contract awarded. The Lambi to Kokona road feasibility study, scope and tender will be in mid-November 2015. The Varina Road feasibility study, scope and tender will also be in mid-November 2015. The Marasa to Mbabanakira roads and bridges improvement plus new roads and bridges feasibility study, scope and tender will be in mid-November 2015. The Lavangu to Hutuna road, East Rennell road, feasibility study, scope tender preparation by end of October 2015. The Bellona road Lot 1 (West Bellona road) ongoing contracts. The Bellona Lot 2 (East Bellona road) ongoing contracts. The Tasimboko roads and bridges and culverts, scope, tender preparation and contract to be awarded by mid November 2015. The Numbu roads and bridges and culverts, scope, tender preparation and contract to be awarded by mid November 2015. The Tenakonga roads, bridges and culverts, scope, tender preparation and contract to be awarded by mid November 2015. The Teatupa roads & bridges and culverts - scope, tender preparation - contract to be awarded by mid November 2015. The Kolona roads, bridges and culverts, scope, tender preparation, contract to be awarded by mid November 2015. The Honiara Roads Extension Project - scope, tender preparation and contract to be awarded by mid November 2015. The East Malaita (Atori to Atoifi roads) - scope and tender by the end of November 2015. The Malaita South road (Auki to Bina to Hauhui is ongoing (LBES contract). The Buala to Garanga (phase 4) - scope, tender preparation, contract to be awarded by mid November 2015.



Some contracts have been awarded such as the Bellona road maintenance of 10 kilometres; the Busurata to Okwala new road of 10 kilometres; the Naro to Lambi upgrade of 16 kilometres; the Kukum Highway upgrade (5 bridges); the Noro industrial estate (2 kilometres); the North road missing link (14) and Auki township road upgrades of 17 kilometres and Gizo "D" road.

There are several wharves which my Ministry has to implement under the DCC Government priority projects. First is the Tulagi wharf - scope, tender preparation and contract to be awarded by mid December 2015. The Koriobuku wharf for tender and award of contract soon. The Lengana wharf has been awarded and work is being carried out there. The Nuatabu wharf for tender and awarding of contract soon. The Nuhu wharf for tender and awarding of contract soon. The Ugi wharf for tender and awarded of contract soon.

There are also airstrips which my Ministry has implemented under the DCC Government project priorities, which I would like to report on the progress undertaken by my Ministry in its implementation. First is the Tingoa Airstrip upgrade Phase 1 -Extend, Phase 2-Seal, no feasibility study as yet, however, plans are in place to undertake feasibility study as soon as possible.

Another one is the Marau Airstrip upgrade Phase 1-Extend, Phase 2-seal, no feasibility study as yet. Plans are there to undertake feasibility study as soon as possible. The Minister for Communication and Aviation stated in his answer today that topographic survey is already completed and they are continuing with the design. This is an on-going project. The Fera Airstrip sealing is completed, topographic survey is completed and design is on-going. The Sasamuga Airstrip sealing, topographic survey to be conducted in November 2015. The Lata Airstrip sealing and topographic survey is completed, and design is on-going.

I need to clarify some doubts by my colleague members from the other side in relation to airstrips in Malaita. There are airstrips in Malaita but not all of them are used. I think the answer is simple and that is to do with land issues. We need to work together; national and provincial government and the landowners through the responsible Ministry. The airstrip in North Malaita is also an issue that needs to be sorted out.

On other projects, three significant transport infrastructure projects are also underway, overseen and coordinated by my Ministry. They include the JICA funded Kukum Highway reconstruction for which preparatory works, utility relocation and land acquisition activities have been substantially completed, ready for tendering of the main construction contract which is scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2016.

The JICA funded Honiara Port Development Project is also well underway. The current activities include piling and gravel backfilling. The expanded port area and additional large ship berth are scheduled for completion in mid-September 2016. The ADB funded transport sector flood efficiency recovery project (TSFRP) is now nearing completion of the design phase. Civil engineering works expected to be implemented under the TSFRP include reconstruction of five bridges under designing stage in East and West Guadalcanal.

On the Ministry of Infrastructure Development's support to other ministries, MID essentially is the only SIG Ministry with significant depth of technical experience in civil engineering and the development and operation of civil infrastructure. Apart from operations undertaken by the MID in its own right, my Ministry is also represented on most SIG

committees that involve infrastructure matters and frequently assists other ministries with technical advice and support to their infrastructure needs.

During this period, the MID has engaged in providing technical input to other ministries including the National Referral Hospital (NRH) relocation, the NRH seawall construction, the Honiara land use planning, co-implementing the World Bank funded rapid employment program (REP), undertaking smaller works (footpaths, Jacob's ladder and street cleaning in Honiara) and technical support to the new Gizo prison development.

The relocation of the NRH under my ministry's key DCCG infrastructure development policy has compounding land issues that need to be sorted out by the responsible ministry, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey as we continue to provide needed technical assistance.

There were questions raised about the Munda international Airport. I wish to inform Parliament that Phase 2 upgrade to meet international airport standards commenced in 2015 with SBD55million funded by New Zealand. Tenders and technical evaluation committee report has been completed and recommendations have been submitted to the New Zealand Government for awarding. Bid validity period has been extended to February next year, meaning the awarding of the contract would be done around February 2016. New road sealing works in Tuvaruhu and Zion in Honiara have been awarded and a contractor is ready to mobilise anytime soon.

On shipping grants, the shipping grant was abused by several recipients of the fund in 2013. This year my Ministry has developed a shipping grant implementation policy that was recently approved by Cabinet. The shipping grant implementation policy provides a mechanism for screening and approval of applications or shipping proposals that warrant funding assistance. In the past recipients of the shipping grants were decided in Cabinet but today the DCCG through my ministry has invited submission of proposals through tender that would be evaluated and recommended in compliance with the shipping grant implementation policy. At the closure of tenders on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 for shipping grant assistance, several proposals were received and evaluated by the shipping grant implementation committee and recommended for funding assistance.

Applicants of the shipping grant funding assistance were evaluated under three categories - vessel purchase, boat building assistance and assistance to existing shipping operators. Successful applicants will be notified shortly and funding will be disbursed as soon as applicants receive their award letters.

My Ministry has recorded 33 percent of its development budget being implemented as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015. The insignificant percentage of the development budget implementation has been attributed to the late passage of the budget, preparation of the work plans, approval of work plans by the Ministry of Planning and Aid Coordination and procurement processes.

A lot has been said as to why the implementation rate is very slow. I think this is because of the late passage of the 2015 Budget towards the end of April and there are formal procedures and processes that we need to go through. But looking at my Ministry's current status of policy implementation programs and the level of commitment of my officers, I can confidently assure this House that my ministry will exceed 70 per cent implementation of its development budget in 2015.

I once again thank you for allowing me to enlighten this Parliament and the public of Solomon Islands on the stages of policy implementation programs in the Ministry of Infrastructure Development. Thank you very much for listening and I resume my seat.

**Mr Speaker:** Honourable Members, I will again allow a few short questions on the statement we have just heard. Please be reminded that debate is not permitted on ministerial statement.

**Mr CONNELLY SANDAKABATU** (*North West Choiseul*): Please allow me to say a big thank you to the Minister for Infrastructure Development for his briefing to Parliament.

First of all, I would also like to continue with his progress report. I would like to thank him for the wharf in Vurango, which is in my constituency, as it is going to be very useful to us. Secondly, I would like to thank him that North West Constituency has made its first payment for its ship, Vatate, to Japan on the 14<sup>th</sup> of this month. Thank you very much for that. To those people sitting outside who have doubts about this ship, please be assured that the payment will be completed by January next year and the ship will be moved over. Why, because it is still a working boat.

I also commend the Minister on your strategy to do the right thing by not giving the shipping grant to just anyone. Do the same that you have done to me to any others that are going to receive this shipping grant; and that is, go and arrange for the ship and transact the money direct from the Government to the shipowners wherever they may be. That is what this Government did to me and I did it and it is possible. I applaud the ministry for that.

Coming to my question now, the wharf that was built at Voza in my constituency, even a ship of two and a half metres deep is not able to berth at that wharf but that wharf, my goodness, cost millions of dollars. What are you going to do with it?

**Hon Stanley Sofu:** Thank you colleague Member for North West Choiseul for that very important question because when an infrastructure is built, we need to fully utilize that infrastructure, and not something for our eyes. I can admit here that that place is very shallow and therefore cannot be used. It is very important to put such an infrastructure in that place for people in that area to benefit from.

**Mr RICK HOUENIPWELA** (*Small Malaita*): I also want to thank the Minister for his very excellent statement to the status of where the ministry is in terms of its budget implementation. My question is on the marine navigational aids for which I think the Minister said that this program is ongoing. I do not know which part of the country is this ongoing; maybe he will tell us. I say this because I have just returned from Malaita and I had to go through two lagoons and one passage when I went to my constituency, namely the Maramasika passage in the Are Are lagoon and the Langalanga lagoon. I can see that the places where the navigational aids are put, only the posts protrudes out from the sea and it is very dangerous. I travelled by canoe during my visit and when it is high tide only the tip of the head protrudes out and canoes can run over it. I want to find out from the Minister that if these things are not yet addressed, when are they going to be addressed?

Secondly, the three important projects on Malaita, which I think he has already named. One is the Auki township road tar-sealing, another one is north missing link – the north road, I want to hear from the Minister if can clarify to us the status of those roads - the Auki township road tar-sealing and this missing link road in the north road?

**Hon Stanley Sofu:** What the MP said is very true that it is a big concern to our country when the lights are not working. The hydrographic section used to be under the Ministry of Lands and Housing since the 1980s and is moved to maritime two years ago during the time of the NCRA Government. Since the office is new and has just started to establish, it is now trying to get the right equipment to improve the lights in the Small Malaita Lagoon and the Langalanga Lagoon, and not only those two lagoons but other parts of the country as well. The budget for this year for navigational aids is about \$2million. I asked the officer in charge of the office and he told me that they are now trying to purchase machines and equipment for this purpose.

There is one problem Marine is facing now. In the past, it used to have landing crafts that can do this work. But the DCC Government is looking at addressing this great need so that this section can do its work properly.

In relation to the second part of your question, work on tar-sealing of the Auki township road has been awarded already to a contractor and preparations are now underway by the contractor for work to start. The contractor who has been awarded the contract informed the department responsible within the Ministry of Infrastructure Development that they would either go over to Auki this week or next week. I believe that because everything has been already done - mobilization payment is already paid and this contractor is now trying to put together all the machines to go over to Auki for the tar-sealing work and we expect work to start in mid-November.

In terms of the North Malaita road, a contractor has been already awarded to do the work. Information I also got from my ministry is that this contractor too is now mobilizing its machines so that it can go to North Malaita to do the work.

**Mr CHRIS LAORE** (*Shortlands*): Firstly, I want to thank the Minister for everything his Ministry is doing, except for those of us from Shortlands, nothing is there for us. When I look at the policy translation there is nothing there and I am saddened by this because it does not feature any activity for Shortlands.

My question is, why is this franchise shipping not awarded to any ships for the Shortlands route? I would like to know whether Shortlands is in the economic zone or not? And why is there not one franchise shipping awarded to any shipping company to serve Shortlands? I want an honest answer from the Minister so that my people from Shortlands can hear it as well.

**Hon Stanley Sofu:** I want to thank my colleague MP for Shortland for asking this important question, a question that our people are very much eager to hear in regards to services the government is providing.

For the uneconomical routes, there are eight uneconomical routes, seven are here and Shortlands is included. I would assume there was no application coming from any shipping

company to serve the Shortland routes. That is the honest information I got from my ministry. Tenders were put out for shipping companies to apply to serve the uneconomical routes but none was received for Shortlands. I therefore would like to encourage private ship owners to apply for the Shortlands uneconomical route so that ships can serve our people from Shortlands.

**Mr MANASSEH MAELANGA** (*Leader of the Independent Group*): I have a few questions to ask the Minister. The first question is by listening to the Minister's statement earlier on today, I did not really get what he said about sections (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) under road maintenance which he referred to in his statement. I want him to clarify that.

I also want to ask the Minister about road maintenance, and I know the Minister is aware of this - the allocations to the east road, where does that cover? For us in the east, the Kware road is in really bad condition and we have written a letter to the ministry and to the minister about two months ago but there has been no response from the Ministry. My people mainly use trucks to go to Auki to sell their produce. I want the Minister to enlighten us about this.

Another question is on this employment labour based work, and I want the minister to confirm where there is any report or survey being done to look into the effectiveness of this labour based work. Are we spending money on it but the quality of work is not good. If you check those who have taken the contracts, they are using any sorts of iron to fix the potholes. That kind of work is supposed to be done by machines and not done manually. I want to ask the Minister whether there is any report to look into the quality of work of this labour based work.

**Hon Stanley Sofu**: I also do not have any clue about the lot numbers, but I would assume they are plot numbers where they are doing work in those areas. But it is very important for us to know as parliamentarians on what those lot numbers are. It could be that work is done on one lot and then they move on to another lot. I think that is what the numberings mean.

In relation to the question on maintenance of the east road, I want to inform Parliament and our people who are listening in right now that I have received the letter from the MP for East Malaita and even the Malaita Provincial Government. What happened was that when Cyclone Raquel struck our country, it damaged all the drains and culverts, and therefore causing a lot of problems for eastern travelers and there is a great need for quick improvement to the road. Work on this road is done under the emergency repair work, but I feel sorry for the people of East Malaita, East Are Are, East Kwaio and Fataleka because that road is not serving the needs of those four constituencies. However, another requirement that has to be met is fulfilling all government process to enable such work to start, and that is what they are on at this time. According to information I obtained from my ministry, the work is now tendered out and a contractor has won it. I just forgot the name of the contractor but he is a qualified engineer and he is the one who won the tender to repair the road.

The concern raised by my colleague MP for East Malaita is very important and the Government is giving priority to this road. This road is very important because we depend

very much on it to travel to Auki to sell our produce. For the information of other Members of Parliament, we depend very much on this road because our people use this road to bring their cocoa, coconut and other things from the other side to come over to Auki to do their marketing and to board ships to come over to Honiara. A contractor has won the tender and we want to see work to be done.

The third question by the Leader of Independent is on the labour based program. I must say here that I do not support this program. This is because how can they fix the roads when they are not properly formed. It does not work; labour based contractors can only work on roads that are properly done where they keep the grasses short, make drainages, remove stones, boulders, ground and dirt from the drains, but they cannot construct new roads as that would need machines and equipment. I think that is an important concern of the labour based program, which is under review currently. There are reports coming to the office about the labour based programs and so it is going to be reviewed and should there be any improvements needed, it will be done. Thank you very much Leader of the Independent Group for raising very important questions and concerns.

**Mr ALFRED GHIRO** (*East Makira*): Thank you colleagues for giving me time to help me get clarifications on a few doubts I have with the statement by the Minister for Infrastructure Development.

I thank the Minister for the statement and at the same time would like to say that I am from Makira and I am very sad because there are no MID projects this year or next year for Makira.

I have two questions. The first is whether you are still going to look for any road projects or any infrastructure projects for Makira, in particular for East Makira. My second question is in regards to the logging roads. These roads have been neglected after the logging companies left and therefore I would like to suggest if the government could take up the responsibility of improving such roads by registering those roads for purposes of sustainability of road infrastructure. We find it difficult to construct new roads and so the government should maintain such roads for our people to use because some of these roads go through our potential areas, our agriculture potential areas in my constituency. Those are my questions and thank you.

**Hon Stanley Sofu**: Makira is not left out, especially the constituency of my good brother asking the question. We cannot do everything at one time but there are reports that scoping work is being done and maybe it will appear in the 2016. That is for the information of Parliament.

The focus of the Government right now is on Malaita province where a lot of roads are in very bad condition and Guadalcanal, especially the Palm Oil plains. That is the focus of the Government at this time, but that does not mean Makira is forgotten. As a government, it is trying to hold everybody's hand by looking at all our provinces in terms of infrastructure - roads, airstrips because we will try and accommodate them in the National Transport Plan.

I did not get the second question of my colleague so can you repeat your second question please?

**Mr Alfred Ghiro:** My second question is to do with logging roads constructed by logging companies when they extract logs. We have a lot of logging roads in Makira and some of these roads go through agricultural potential areas. I would like the Government to take on the responsibility of maintaining such roads since it cannot construct new roads for purposes of sustainability of such infrastructures which private investors have put in place.

**Hon. Stanley Sofu:** That is a very good question on logging roads constructed by logging companies that have been neglected. Before any logging operation takes place in a particular area, it has to have a development plan to construct roads that will link them to agricultural potential areas in the rural areas. I think that is an important policy the Government should be looking at when a logging company comes in to fell logs. When a logging company constructs roads, those roads must be constructed to the required standards of a road where it can be used. When that logging company leaves, the Solomon Islands Government will continue with maintenance of those roads so that people can use it for agriculture development in the rural areas.

**Hon Chris Laore:** Thank you for giving me one more chance and my final question to the Minister with regards to Shortlands. As I said earlier on there is nothing for Shortlands in the policy statements of the government.

It is very interesting to hear from the Minister that the shipping grant now goes back to the Ministry. I only hope it is not biased against some of us. If it is open for all the 50 constituencies, I want you to honestly say it on the floor of Parliament so that my people can hear whether we can apply for such a grant. Bikoi I is a war canoe and it is not serving Shortland Islands at this time. Bikoi II is for the convenience of market vendors; it has wrecked. I want you to honestly tell me following the criteria if we can apply for one more ship to serve our people in the non-economical route. It not, then like the Minister for Fisheries has said, policies cannot change unless there is a change of government before policies can change. That is my question requiring a honest answer from the Minister.

**Hon Stanley Sofu:** The things the Government is doing are not only for specific people but they are for every one of us. The advertisement is already made and like I said in my previous statement, there is a committee that makes decision on these things. I encourage all Members of Parliament to apply for that grant in the 2016 Budget. We must look at the four corners of this country for fair distribution of shipping. That is what the Honourable Member was asking so that it serves our people. This is what this Government or any government or governments in the past are doing in trying to provide services to its people. The Member for Shortland Islands has asked a very important question that the Government must consider in terms of providing services for our people throughout the country.

**Hon Manasseh Sogavare:** It is now 4.30pm and I seek your consent for suspension of Standing Order 10 in accordance with Standing Order 81.

*Standing Order 10 suspended in accordance with Standing Order 81 to permit the continuation of business after 4.30 pm*

**Mr Jimmy Lusibaea** (*North Malaita*): Just a supplementary question to the Minister. Can the Minister explain how the current CEO of Ports Authority arrived in the country and yet recruitment procedures for SOEs have not been completed?

**Hon Stanley Sofu**: The arrival of the Ports Authority CEO has sparked a lot of statements and has become one of the controversial issues. Recruitments in any country have processes and proceedings. What happened is that a lot of applications were received; I do not know how many, the administration would know and out of those many applications, only three applicants were shortlisted and went through the process of interview. The Board then proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the current CEO is the most suitable candidate. This is because the CEO is not our wantok so that he will give favours to anyone. He is a person from another country altogether and so he will not have this wantok business.

There are three applicants who were shortlisted; one from Solomon Islands, the other from Fiji and the third one from Singapore. The one from Singapore was selected after interviewing the three candidates. All the requirements under state owned enterprises have been met in the process.

**Mr. MATTHEW WALE** (*Aoke/Langalanga*): I am just concerned about us purchasing too many second hand and old ships from Japan and they seem to end up at almost all of our beaches in the country. Solomon Islands has become a junky eye to Japan. This shows a lack of depth in our own policy thinking around shipping in this country. In the past when we brought in Belama, Butai and Baruku, they are new brand ships.

As I understand it, there is a policy approved by Cabinet but does not go deep enough to look at that aspect. I am just wondering whether there are any guidelines on this shipping funding to guide constituencies or those who apply on what kind of ships they should be looking for. Or is there none of such policies so people just purchase any ships they deem fitting to purchase.

**Hon Stanley Sofu**: That is also a very important question because our seas are increasingly becoming polluted. I support the notion that when we buy ships we must buy good quality ships. We now have an institution called the Solomon Islands Maritime Safety Administration which was passed here in Parliament. The same minister now talking brought this into Parliament. This body ensures there is safety of all ships operating in the country.

The Cabinet has approved guidelines that need to be observed so that the concern raised by the Member for Aoke/Langalanga is avoided where a ship is brought in and just after one year of operation it wrecks along the Ranandi beaches. When a ship is purchased, you must make sure marine officials inspect them. The MP is hearing the answer to his question now. Marine officers inspect the ship and must ensure that the ship is seaworthy and lasts for a long time. Safety is very important to us.



**Mr. Rick Houenipwela:** I have four short questions, which I want straightforward answers to. The first one is to do with airstrips, and I want to go back to the response by the Minister for Civil Aviation that he will refer the question to the Minister for Infrastructure Development to answer it. My question earlier on today is I know the issues already and the Minister has repeated it as land issues. My simple question is, what are those two ministries doing about land disputes?

The Minister named three airstrips on Malaita which are currently under dispute. I would like to know what the Ministry or the Government is doing in terms of trying to get these airstrips functioning again.

The second question is to do with the JICA funded project for the ports expansion. I did not hear anything on a very important project at the wharf called the Cruise Ship Terminal. I know the Ports Authority is very much in favour of this project and so I would like to know whether this is in the Government's plans or not.

Thirdly is the National Referral Hospital. The Minister mentioned in his statement two very important projects. One is relocation and the other one is seawall. Those are two big projects - building a seawall to stop sea water from coming into the hospital compound and the other one is to relocate to another place. I would like to know which of these two projects is the Government putting more emphasis on. What sort of priority is the Ministry putting into these two projects, and I want to be informed especially on the relocation.

Lastly is the Munda Airport. The Minister mentioned Phase 1 for which the cost is going up to \$55million, I would like to know what comprises Phase 1 of the project?

**Hon Stanley Sofu:** Land issue is the main problem with airports that are not operational on Malaita. The Government is now trying to negotiate with the landowners, and this process still continues. What we need to understand is that land in Solomon Islands is owned by tribal groups and therefore is a hindrance to the progression of government projects. When landowners say no, there is nothing we can do about it. And if they say yes, work can continue.

Now the government cannot just sit down and do nothing but it has to try and address the issues because these are important infrastructures for Malaita as well as the rural areas where there is lack of accessibility of roads. The Government is establishing a taskforce to talk with the landowners. Some of the issues are just between the tribes themselves. But the Government is continuing with its part of talking with landowners. If we see the airports operational, then it means the Government is successful in its negotiation with landowners. It is not really good for important infrastructures like the airport to close down and not providing service for a populated province like Malaita. That is the reason why my colleague Member for Small Malaita is very concerned.

The second question is on the terminal tourism project. Yes, we have plans for that project. The budgetary provision for this project will be seen in the 2016 Ministry of Culture and Tourism budget, the 2016 Ministry of Infrastructure Development budget and part of it under the Solomon Islands Ports Authority. This terminal will serve tourists coming into the country by boat because they have to walk under the hot sun when they disembark from the

boats. There is a plan to construct a terminal with air condition for tourists coming into the country.

The last question is in regards to the seawall at the National Referral Hospital. Work on constructing a seawall is going on now to stop the sea from further damaging the shoreline of the hospital. The contractor is now working on the seawall.

Can the MP repeat his last question as I seem not to get it?

**Mr Rick Houenipwela:** Yes, I can repeat it. In the answer by the Minister for Civil Aviation earlier on, the Minister talked about several components such as lighting, fence, firetrucks, etc, etc. The Minister talked about Phase one, I want to know what components are in Phase one.

**Hon Stanley Sofu:** When the Minister for Aviation talked about Phase 1, I did not quite get it. I am talking about Phase 2 and not Phase 1, and this is for us to upgrade the airport to meet international standards so that planes can land at the Munda International Airport which costs about \$55million.

The question is very important and I take note of the question to find out what comprises Phase 1. I think the components of Phase 1 will be provided to your pigeonholes so that we know what it is and what are the things already done in Phase 1.

**Mr Speaker:** Honourable Members, I think those are enough questions for this particular statement so we will proceed to our next item of business.

## STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

*The House adjourned at 4.47pm*