

MONDAY 6TH JULY 2009

The Speaker, Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea took the Chair at 10.31 am.

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

At prayers, all were present with the exception of the Ministers for Planning & Aid Coordination; Justice & Legal Affairs; Foreign Affairs & External Trade; Women, Youth and Children's Affairs; Environment, Conservation & Meteorology; Agriculture & Livestock Development, and the Members for South Choiseul, East Honiara, East Are Are, North West Choiseul, North Malaita, Temotu Pele, South Vella La Vella, East Makira, Temotu Vattu, North Guadalcanal, Shortlands, North West Guadalcanal, Malaita Outer Island.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS

- The Bills and Legislation Committee reports on the Foreign Investment (Amendment and Validation) Bill 2009 (National Parliament Paper No. 22 of 2009).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Foreign Relations Committee

3. Hon SOGAVARE: to the Honourable Prime Minister: Can the Prime Minister inform Parliament of the processes that will be adopted by the Government in taking up the views of Solomon Islanders expressed to the Foreign Relations Committee during the consultations that may conflict with the focus of RAMSI assistance as already agreed between the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI in the recently executed partnership framework?

Hon. SIKUA: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Leader of Opposition and Member for East Choiseul for the question.

Mr Speaker, the views expressed by Solomon Islanders to the Foreign Relations Committee during consultations will form part of the report to be tabled in Parliament when it is ready during this current meeting.

I do say right from the beginning that all issues raised will be taken into account by the Committee and whilst I do not want to preempt the outcomes of the Committee's findings or recommendations, those that Parliament will be looking into will be discussed. Mr Speaker, once Parliament identifies the issues that RAMSI should go ahead to work on, and that falls within their mandate, then those can be addressed as such. Those issues that fall outside of the mandate of RAMSI will be left to the Solomon Islands Government to deal with under its normal policy guidelines.

I would like to say here that the partnership framework we have with RAMSI is a living document and is subject to evaluation, review and monitoring, and so when the time comes for evaluation and review of the framework, we can consider the views. That is another way of handling this; we can consider the views expressed by our people during the FRC consultations and see how best we can accommodate them in subsequent reviews of the framework.

The other way we can look at the issues raised is to keep them on the table and when the enhanced consultative mechanism between the Forum, RAMSI and the Solomon Islands Government meets then we can consider taking up the views of Solomon Islanders expressed to the FRC, and of course there is also the Forum Ministerial Committee on RAMSI which the Government can use to express these views wherever appropriate.

Hon. Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I thank the Prime Minister for that explanation. Just a supplementary question and before I ask it, the way we understand things is that the Forum Leaders need to express their views on whatever it is that Solomon Islands places before the Forum Leaders as to any new directions that we want RAMSI to take. Does this mean that any serious views expressed by Solomon Islanders and any new direction that Solomon Islanders want will be late for this coming Forum Leaders Meeting. Can the Prime Minister confirm this to us so that we are effectively looking at may be a year delay in taking seriously the views that Solomon Islanders might express in this review that may conflict with the position the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI may have taken already in terms of the new partnership framework.

Mr Speaker: I would like to remind Honorable Members that Standing Order 22(e) should not be interfered with in the sense that the actual proceedings of the Committee should not be delved into or dealt with. But I allow the question because it is simply asking the government what it is going to do with the report

when it receives the report. That in itself might also be hypothetical in that the government has received the report yet.

Hon Sikua: Mr Speaker, as I have said earlier on I do not want to preempt the findings, recommendations and anything that the Foreign Relations Committee will be coming up with and so I will leave those until the time comes to deal with when the Committee presents its report to parliament.

But in relation to the work of RAMSI and the partnership framework, the Cabinet has already approved and endorsed the partnership framework before it was presented to the Forum Ministers Standing Committee for formal endorsement on the 15th of May this year, and therefore the timing of what is in the partnership framework is not late, and therefore the framework will be presented to the Forum Leaders meeting in Cairns in early August this year for its approval.

But, Mr Speaker, as you have said, unless the Committee presents its report to Parliament, we still do not know what is inside the report. Because we have the enhanced consultative mechanism, whatever needs to be taken up with leaders, I am sure it will not be late for us to take it up at a later time. These are ongoing consultations and dialogue that we continue to have with Forum leaders and so I hope anything that is left out would be something for us to continue to dialogue and consult with leaders through the mechanisms that are there before us. The Forum Ministerial Committee on RAMSI and the Enhanced Consultative Mechanism are annual consultation mechanisms that we have, and so I hope it will not be late to continue to put things on the table for discussions and to move forward with them where appropriate.

Mr. WAIPORA: Mr. Speaker, I understand your ruling, but the question I want to raise here is like this. Since the Minister responsible for this Committee has been appointed as Minister, I would like to know the Committee's work at this time. That is the information I want to know. Is the exercise almost completed or where are we right now?

Hon. Sikua: Mr. Speaker, if I can with your permission, ask the chair of the Foreign Relations Committee to tell us where the Committee is at in preparing the report?

Hon. BOYERS: Mr. Speaker, at present the report is being prepared by the Secretariat. We believe there could be delay in presenting the report due to the enormous amount of bills being presented at this Parliament Meeting and the workload of the secretariat focusing on the government business at hand. But at

present the report is underway. We have closed our consultation process and hearings three weeks ago and the Secretariat are working day and night in preparing the report. Thank you.

Mr. OTI: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your ruling on the first point raised by the Leader of Opposition not to prejudice the outcome of the Parliamentary Committee's report. That being said, Mr. Speaker, can I have confirmation from the Prime Minister that on the one hand the partnership framework has no basis from the law? Those are two independent things and therefore for the Minister to confirm that this is merely an administrative arrangements and understanding between the Forum and the Solomon Islands Government. To be free to executive a partnership arrangement outside of the law is not necessary at this stage. Just for the Prime Minister to confirm to us that this is just an administrative arrangement and has no bearing on section 3 of the Facilitation of International Assistance in regards to the Notice that gave rise to the review. The question is that this has no basis in law, what you have concluded. Can you confirm that, Mr. Prime Minister?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I would like to remind us again of Order 22(h) that abstract, legal issues might be hypothetical and the Hon. Prime Minister might be expressing his own opinion at this stage. But if he has substantive answer to that question, he is allowed to make any clarification.

Hon. Sikua: As the Member for Temotu Nende already pointed out, the framework agreement of May 2003 has specified the work of the Visiting Contingent, which is broadly in the three areas of restoration of law and order and security, good governance and restoration of our economy. Therefore, any change in the original mandate of the framework agreement, will need to undergo a process of wider consultation and negotiation between the government and the participating countries of the region that make up RAMSI.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that any plans to make any change to the original mandate is subject to the normal process of wider consultation, dialogue between the government and the participating countries involved in RAMSI.

Mr. Oti: Mr. Speaker, my apologies if I sounded hypothetical, but I am just saying that this framework arrangement that the government enters now with RAMSI, what I meant is that it has no basis in law and so it is okay, we can just go ahead with and conclude that partnership arrangement because it has nothing to do with the law. That was what I basically wanted to find out from the Prime Minister, and I am questioning his opinion on what is its legal basis, I am just

saying that it has no legal basis and therefore for him to confirm that we can go ahead with the framework, the review will go ahead, those two are not congruent, they are not the same thing. Basically the Prime Minister has responded to my supplementary question.

Hon. Sogavare: Mr. Speaker, I can see that this question is worrying us a bit. In fact, I do not want to proceed on to ask a supplementary question on it, but with your permission I want to raise a point of order before I sit down and thank the Prime Minister. We appreciate the ruling you made this question. When the Prime Minister made his statement in response to the Member for Temotu Nende, he said that there is still scope to look at the views of Solomon Islanders, and the review of any mandate by RAMSI is subject to the wider review, wider consultation with Solomon Islander stakeholders. What this question acknowledges is that right now we are carrying out this wide consultation with our people, people who are really affected by the presence of RAMSI in Solomon Islands, which they are not hiding, they openly tell their views to the One News, and the question is specifically saying that we have a wonderful opportunity that wide consultations is going ahead now. Would it be convenient to delay the signing of any partnership agreement, any future directions of RAMSI until we get the views of Solomon Islanders and consolidated those views and take it to the Forum first under the process that is set out on how far we can deal with the mandates. Take the views of Solomon Islanders first, analyze it, take it to the Forum first and if it is agreed on under the process before it can be brought back here and if there is any need to amend laws or whatever before we can do it. That is all this question is trying to get at. But we are concerned about the areas that we do not want to venture into this question, the possibility of it giving rise to some areas that might not be appropriate to be discussed in parliament. I thank you for the ruling and I do not want to ask any more questions on it, and I thank the Prime Minister for answering this question.

Mr Speaker: Thank you honorable Leader, you did not want the Prime Minister to make any comment on your view at all.

Hon. Sikua: Mr Speaker, I just want to clarify that this partnership framework between the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI is not an agreement but a framework that describes the various activities that RAMSI agrees to assist the Solomon Islands Government with from 2009 and onwards. The framework describes the priorities and emphasis which whilst maintaining the original purpose of the Mission, it homes in on key issues and mechanisms that have to

be dealt with, an example of a key issue to be dealt with quickly is the electoral reform as political stability is one of the main guarantees of national security.

Sir, we must understand that RAMSI cannot be expected to be all things to the reconstruction of the economy and the institutions of the Solomon Islands Government, but it can help the Government to restore or construct a new and fundamental building block for democratic governance of our country. I just wanted to make the comment that the partnership framework is a framework and it is not a partnership agreement.

Hon. Sogavare: Could you allow me just to make a brief comment in response to what the Prime Minister has said. It does not make any difference whether it is an agreement or a partnership framework. The way we see it here is that it sets the direction that the assistance of RAMSI will focus on and that is why we are asking that question. We do not see any difference between the framework and the agreement. Thank you.

Control Measures: 2009 Budget

7. **Hon. SOGAVARE:** to the Minister of Finance and Treasury: Can the Minister brief Parliament on the control measures placed on the implementation of the 2009 Budget?

Hon. RINI: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Honorable Leader of the Opposition and MP for East Choiseul.

Mr Speaker, overall the government has adopted a broad policy response strategy package to address the challenges brought about by the impact of the global economic crisis.

Mr Speaker, these economic challenges include a worsening fiscal situation due to foreign revenues, the depletion of our foreign exchange reserves due mainly to a decline in the level of exports and also a negative economic growth.

Mr Speaker, the main focus of the package is a number of measures aimed at addressing a projected shortfall to the budget in the current financial year. We have therefore taken steps to bring the budget back into balance ensuring that the government continues to be able to meet its commitment to delivering services to its people by the followings:

- (a) Placing a 10% reservation on the 2009 recurrent expenditures across all ministries,

- (b) Freezing the recruitment process on all posts not yet advertised and holding new establishment posts and also reprioritizing spending in the 2009 Development Budget.

Mr. Speaker, the government has demonstrated it is serious about managing the problems of the economy. Despite the pressures and challenges impinging on the 2009 Budget, and the government's cash position, we are confident to control and manage the finance prudently in order to minimize the impacts of the global economic crisis and also to ensure services are delivered to our people. Thank you.

Hon. Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for his response. The way we take it from the Minister, the concern is really on the shortfall in revenue.

Can the Minister, I do not know whether at this point in time you have information from officials as to what is the estimated shortfall annualized until December that the Government expects this year?

Hon. Rini: Mr Speaker, the shortfall expected at the beginning of the year is about \$220million. After the end of the first quarter, the shortfall has been reduced to say about \$58million. The next report will be submitted to me, it is prepared by my Ministry is the report on the end of the second quarter, and that has not yet come. As soon as that report comes in, I will bring the paper to Cabinet before the report is released. But I can assure the House that report on the second quarter looks positive.

Hon. Sogavare: Mr Speaker, the other measure the Minister has mentioned is prioritizing of the development budget. Can the Minister brief Parliament what are the criteria used in setting priority to the Development Budget?

Hon. Rini: Mr Speaker, all the development ministries have already prepared which areas to prioritize in their budget. By the end of next week they are going to meet with the Development Committee to put forward their priorities to the Committee. What we are really looking at now is the five months left before the end of this year. We are looking at say, for example, under the current budget we might be projecting to tar seal five airstrips, however, since time is running out we might only tar seal two airstrips to be completed by the end of the year. We might also be saying, for example, build five or four new airstrips but because time is running out we can only build one or two. Similarly, with roads where the plan maybe is to construct this number of kilometers but because time is limited and the process of making tenders and so forth is going to take time,

we might be thinking now to just concentrate on this particular road or the maintenance of this particular road and so forth.

But as I have said, Mr Speaker, the reprioritization of the development budget will be discussed next week when all the development Ministries put in their priority projects to the Development Committee.

Hon. Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I guess we will wait for the exercise the Ministry is doing. I think for the purpose of public information, I would request the government to continue keep the country informed of what we are doing because we are observing people actually lining up waiting for their projects, and it has not happened yet. It is important that whatever we do in prioritization that we keep the country informed.

But in saying that, I think the question has been answered and so we will be waiting for the exercise that the Ministry of Finance and the other ministries are doing. Thank you.

HTC: NZ bilateral aid

25. Mr. WAIPORA: to the Minister for Home Affairs: What areas in the development of the Honiara City Council is the \$13.8 million NZ bilateral aid focusing on?

Hon. TOM: Mr Speaker, I rise to respond to the important question by my colleague for West Makira. This question has been deferred from last week because the Honorable Member excused himself to do some more research into it, and so this question appears again today but as I look at this question it is still giving a wrong figure of \$13.8million. I do not know my Ministry receiving any of such funding and so I do not have any answer to be able to clarify this \$13.8million. If any of the other ministries might be allocated with this figure, then they might be able to explain it, but may be you should raise it as a new question and directed to that ministry.

Hon. Sogavare: Mr Speaker, it is just common knowledge that came to our attention that the government has signed a bilateral aid package with the New Zealand Government for this \$13.8million and is focused on assisting the Honiara City Council and that is why we raised this question for the Government to explain the purpose of this money that New Zealand is to assist the Honiara City Council with. We can actually provide information that the Government has signed an aid package with the New Zealand Government for that amount.

Hon. Wale: Mr Speaker, I am not sure whether I am going to add any more clarity or confuse it further. But this amount seems to be funds for education going to the City Council. I suppose this is an important question and one that needs to be properly answered and so perhaps the question could be reframed focused on the NZAID bilateral agreement and its components and so forth as opposed to focusing on a figure that causes a bit of confusion to us. That is just my suggestion and thank you.

Mr Waipora: Mr Speaker, since the Honorable Minister for Home Affairs has denied this, we will provide information. But I would like to thank him for his answers and also thank the Honorable Minister for Education.

Certainly, Mr Speaker, I must assure this House that we will provide the information.

Hon. Tom: Mr Speaker, I am not denying any funding coming in, but it is only that figure of \$13.8million that I do not know how to explain because funding from NZAID comes to more than one Ministry, like the Ministry of Education, Health and Home Affairs.

Mr OTI: Mr Speaker, just to add on behalf of the Minister, the question is directed at you because you are the Minister responsible for the Honiara City Council and so you have to find out first from your colleague ministries which of their sectors does this funding goes to, and that is why you did not know. You have to ask them first as the Minister of Education has suggested. That would have helped you as you are responsible for the Honiara City Council to answer the Honorable MP for West Makira. Thank you.

Mr Waipora: Mr Speaker, the only thing I would like to say again is that I would like to thank the Honorable Minister and I will provide the information.

Choiseul Township Development

28. Mr WAIPORA: to the Minister for Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening: Can the Minister inform the House of the current status of the Choiseul Township Development and how the \$3.5m allocation for the project in the 2009 budget was utilized?

Hon. MAELANGA: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the hard working Honorable Deputy Leader of Opposition and Member for West Makira for asking this question.

Mr Speaker, the current status of Choiseul Township Development is as follows: Due to the nature and size of the project, it is designed to cover three phases over a period of 10 to 20 years. The first phase is the programming stage of two years from 2008 to 2009, the second phase is the feasibility stage for two years from 2010 to 2011, and the third phase is the implementation stage, which is for 5 to 10 years from 2012 to 2020.

Mr Speaker, we are currently in phase one of the project. All our activities and work program relate to pre-feasibility studies, project analysis and design, planning and programming, setting up all logistic work and dealing with and settling of all land issues.

Our vision is that by year 2015, Mr Speaker, Choiseul Province will have a well established and functioning provincial center that serves the provincial government and the people of Choiseul.

Mr Speaker, at the present time we are at phase one of the project. This program phase involves the following activities:

- Set up a coordination office at Taro
- Set up a steering committee and a management committee
- Pre-feasibility studies on socio economic infrastructure and economic viability of the new township.
- Lodge a study on the survey of Taro Island and the surrounding areas including business registration.
- Land settlement including initial payment in accordance with the valuation.
- Arrange for a ground breaking ceremony to be held at Taro.
- Lodge an environmental impact study of the new township.
- Conduct details to topographical survey of both sites.
- Registration of new sites and transfer title to the Province.
- Prepare a development agreement with landowners.
- Detailed terms of reference for feasibility studies.
- Discuss with donors through National Planning and Aid Coordination Ministry on possible funding and budget preparation.
- Prepare site planning design for the first provincial site.
- Rehabilitate road on the first site.
- Facilitate road development of the first provincial site.
- Engineering survey of the main road on the first site.
- Engineering design of the main road on the first site.
- Assess relocation of the Provincial Secondary School to a new site.
- Discuss with land owners on possible further acquisition of land for industry and port related use.

Mr Speaker, this year the Ministry has reassigned a project advisor to assist in project coordination. Planned activities have been executed slowly because of limited resources in terms of human resources and finance, but with outsourcing of work to local consultants, much work has been achieved.

Mr Speaker, for this year 2009, the government has approved the execution of \$3.5million under the development budget under my Ministry. The work program was approved by the National Steering Committee and also by the National Planning and the Ministry of Finance. Funding sources include the balance of fund are ready in the Ministry's project account. The Choiseul Provincial fund earmarked for the township, road and housing, and lastly the \$3.5million under the Solomon Islands Government Development budget 2009.

Mr Speaker, the three sources of funding this year 2009 work program are as follows:-

- The 2009 Development Budget is \$3.5million and the Ministry's account balance from 2008 is \$893.064 million and post tsunami rehabilitation for township budget is \$2.85million which is in the Provincial Government budget which totaled to \$7,243,064 million.
- The project budget has a total of \$7,243,064million. This total amount includes \$3.5 million under our development budget for 2009.

Mr Speaker, I would like to touch on some of the achievements so far. Remember, the project is currently at planning and programming stage, phase one. Mr. Speaker, a local engineering company has been engaged to survey and design the main road of the first site. All survey of the road is now completed and a detailed design is being prepared.

A team of surveyors were in the field working in Choiseul to complete the topographical survey. They have been contracted by the Ministry to carry out topographical survey of the Tarakukure site. It has taken them three months to complete the job, and now we have a full topographical survey of the Tarakukure site completed and also in digital form.

A lawyer was engaged to discuss with all stakeholders in formulating a development agreement, which will govern the overall development of the township. We want to avoid problems that are surfacing in centres such as Honiara, Noro, and other centres where conflicts exist between original landowners and government over the right to develop resource ownership and urban services. The first draft has been completed. This is the first of its kind in Solomon Islands and we are assured that this development agreement will lessen conflicts in the future.

We have engaged a land administration consultant in the preparation of all land dealings with landowners, the Province and the Lands Ministry. His primary duty is to finalize land registration and transfer of the site to the provincial government. We have set up a coordination office at Taro, equipments were sent over to Choiseul and also landowners were given few furniture and equipments.

The Honiara Coordinating Office in my Ministry where the Project Advisor occupies was also established and runs most of the coordination activities. We have engaged an environmental consultant to carry out initial environmental examination and environmental impact assessment of the township. Work has already started and this week the final report was presented to my Ministry.

We are in the process of preparing the terms of reference for pre-feasibility studies in socio economic infrastructure and economic viability of the new township.

Mr Speaker, I have presented some of the activities that have been done for the past month since the Budget was passed and also when the project phase one started. Mr Speaker, so far this year we have spent about \$200,000, mostly from funds available in the project account within my Ministry. We anticipate spending \$3.5million this year for the purpose of paying land premium and construction of roads. This \$3.5million is still with the Ministry of Finance. My Ministry has requested that this amount be transferred to our project account and administered through the approved work program this year. However, this has not been done due to the recent financial crisis and revenue downturn experienced by our Treasury. We have been advised to reduce our project expenditure to only \$1.5million. This drastically reduces the work performance this year.

Mr Speaker, I have outlined these activities because this is a very big project so that the Member can look at the activities I have mentioned to better understand how far my Ministry has gone with the project. Thank you.

Hon. SOGAVARE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his very elaborate response to the question. I have a supplementary question. This project has been around for a very long time, and the Minister has mentioned three phases and he also outlined the activities to be done under the first phase.

Since this project has been around for a while, which of the activities the Minister has outlined to us have been already addressed through the allocations put in the budget nearly every year?

Hon. Maelanga: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Leader of Opposition for that very important supplementary question. The first phase as I mentioned earlier today is the programming stage, after which the feasibility stage and then the implementation stage. Mr. Speaker, we are now in the planning stage and there can be delay anytime between the stages and things will not happen in their stages. The project is now going ahead in its first stage, which is the programming and planning stage. That is what I know from feedback from people who are working on this project. The project is in the programming stage where negotiations are going on in regards to land and talking with landowners, surveying and all these.

Mr. ZAMA: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm the cost for phase one?

Hon. Maelanga: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier on in my statement, \$200,000 has been spent so far on the first phase. I also said that this is not a small project but one that attracts huge costs, and due to financial constraints we are experiencing now, some of activities in phase one are not yet completed. The budgetary provision for Phase 1 is \$3.5 million but because of financial constraints it has been reduced to \$1.5 million.

Mr. Waipora: My supplementary question is on the \$3.5 million, and I will confine myself to that question. The Minister said that \$3.5 million is still with the Ministry of Finance and was not made available to the Ministry of Provincial Government. The Minister said that they have already spent \$200,000. What did you spend that \$200,000 on?

Hon. Maelanga: Mr. Speaker, the \$3.5 million is the budgetary provision allocated for the project. The \$200,000 is from budgetary provision within my Ministry. Just to make it clear too that this project is funded by the Solomon Islands Government. May be in the future we will seek funding from our donor partners to help us on this big project. Mr. Speaker, I also want to inform my good colleague Member for West Makira that if he wants more information about this project in Choiseul, I am willing to provide information to him.

Hon. Sogavare: Mr. Speaker, the Minister made reference to a special accounts that the funds are used from. From what we have heard from the Minister, no funds have yet been used from this \$3.5 million and now it is reduced to \$1.5million but we have not really used anything from this fund. But this \$200,000 comes from a special fund or a special account. How is this fund administered and how much is in this account at this time?

Hon. Maelanga: Funds for the project is in the Ministry of Finance and is administered by them. We requested funds to be transferred to our Ministry so that we can administer it, but it is still in the Ministry of Finance, they are yet to release what we requested. As I mentioned, the \$200,000 is available from an account within the Ministry and that is how we have used it. We are still waiting for the Ministry Finance to release the funds to the Ministry so that we can use it for the project.

Mr. Waipora: Mr. Speaker, this project that I am raising the question on is a very important project for the people of Choiseul. The three leaders of Choiseul are here with me and they are very anxious to know about the project as well as the Choiseul Provincial Government. I want to ask the Minister whether the program he read out to us today has information like, survey will take so many days equals how much it costs. Is that program available so that you could provide such information in our pigeonholes so that people from Choiseul have such information?

Hon. Maelanga: I think if the Deputy Leader of Opposition had listened carefully, I said that if he wanted further information I can provide it to him later. As I have mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, and for information too, this project is a big project and my Ministry is starting to work closely with the Ministry of Infrastructure so that we put this project to the Ministry because it deals with people in the fields of survey, engineers and professions like that. At the moment we are working closely with the Ministry of Infrastructure so that the project is handed over to them for implementation. At the moment, Mr. Speaker, I do not have the details now but seeing that the Member requested it, I will provide it to him.

Mr. Zama: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question. This project is a one off project to develop the Choiseul Province Township. I just want to find out from the Minister the basis that the Ministry or the Government used in reducing budgetary allocation from \$3.5 million to \$1.5 million because the control that government is applying is 35%, but this cut is more than 35%, it is almost a 60% cut in the budgetary allocation. Can the Minister confirm the basis for that huge reduction?

Hon. Maelanga: Mr Speaker, I said earlier on in my statement that the allocation was reduced because of the recent financial crisis. That is the reason for the budgetary reduction. But if the situation improves, and come back to normalcy,

my Ministry can look at increasing the budgetary provision to its original allocation.

Mr Zama: Supplementary question, Mr Speaker. Earlier on the Minister was very clear in his statement that budgetary control and restraint in spending is for the recurrent expenditure. However, this is a development project, and I just cannot find any reason why the restraint that is applied to the recurrent cost is also applied to the development budget. I want the Minister or the Minister of Finance, Planning and may be Environment too because some of the activities raised are to do with the economics of environment and because the Environment Minister is very closely advising the Minister, may be they can give advice to this Parliament because I see no justification for this reduction. The 35% restraint is on recurrent and here the government is cutting back on development?

Hon. SIKUA: Mr Speaker, this project is a long term project and the total cost is so huge that over a period of, say 15 years we could be looking at something like \$50million. The Government is really committed in ensuring that the right studies are done and all the preparatory work to make the township a model one in the country.

Reprioritizing is done on the development budget and it is true that the 35% restraint is on the Recurrent Budget. Because of the current financial crisis, we have to reprioritize the Development Budget as well and therefore that is what happened to this project. We are reprioritizing to see what can be done given the financial circumstances that we are facing at the moment. But I want to assure the House that this is a priority project and given the availability of funds we want to continue to commit money on it so that it can become a model town and a good and well planned town for the provincial headquarters in Choiseul Province. Thank you.

Mr Zama: Mr Speaker, the allocation for this project has been drastically reduced from \$3.5m to \$1.5m, and we are now five months away from the closure of our financial year.

Mr Speaker, I want the Minister for Provincial Government, the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister to confirm to Parliament, confirm to Choiseul Province and confirm to the people of Solomon Islands that there will be no further cuts. Regardless of the constraints we are facing that the \$1.5m will be a firm commitment to be expended in the next five years. I want that commitment and confirmation by the Minister of Finance. Thank you.

Hon. RINI: As we have said that we have to reprioritize projects, but I would like to assure this House that when the cash flow improves, and government revenue improves, yes this reservation can be lifted and this project will be implemented.

Hon. Sogavare: Mr Speaker, this will be the last question. This project has been there for many years now and continues to carry on, but one fact is that it does not suffer from land disputes, there is no land disputes unlike other projects in other provinces that are prevented by land dispute. Land is alright with this project. It looks like the problem is with the processes that need to be done to get the project implemented. While arrangements are still going on the year ends, and because it is in the budget, the funds for it also goes with it, it is ended as it cannot be carried forward unless it is in a special account.

The suggestion made by the Minister that it is his wish that maybe funds need to be transferred to a special account so that even if the program is not completed in one year, at least funds are in two accounts because work still continues, it should not be affected by the fact that the budget stops implementing it.

As I have said the land is alright and everything is fine with this project. It is just for the Ministry and those responsible for this project to continue working on it, and I think one of the issues is funds that when we come to the end of the year, the funds go and you have to ask for new money again in the new budget. If a special account is created, funds are there and so even if the budget is not passed but work still continues because funds are transferred to a special account.

Can the Minister assure us that you will proceed to get the government to do what you have said that you will establish a special account and put money in the account and get this project moving?

Hon. Maelanga: Mr Speaker, I think that is what my Ministry is doing now by continuing to work closely with the Ministry of Finance so that the money can be transferred to an account within my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, as I have also mentioned today, this project is a huge project and we are looking to working closely with the Ministry of Infrastructure as it has the right people that can work on this kind of project. I think that is what I can say in regards to that question.

Mr Waipora: Supplementary question, Mr Speaker. How many people are actually engaged in this special project apart from the Provincial Secretary of

Choiseul Province and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Provincial Government? I want to know how many people are 100% engaged in this work and what is the overhead cost of that group?

Hon. Maelanga: There are capable qualified people working on this project at this time. There is also a set up in the Ministry of Provincial Government with a consultant who are working on this project together with officers from a committee that was also set up in the Choiseul Province.

Mr Waipora: Mr Speaker, before I thank the Minister and sit down I would like to ask those detailed information for the next meeting of Parliament so that I know the costs involved with this project because it is a very important project for Choiseul. When I was there in the Ministry, people from Choiseul came to see me almost every week about this project and that is why I asked about this project. I hope there will be information for all Members of Parliament about this project in our pigeonholes next week. I thank the honorable Minister for your answers.

Hon. Maelanga: Mr Speaker, because he asks for further information, I can assure him that I will provide that information in his pigeonhole.

Alternative Forestry Development Plan

38. **Mr OTI** to the Minister for Forestry: What strategic alternative forestry development plan if indeed there is one has the government put in place as an alternative to the mass harvesting of our forestry resources should log prices continue to take a downward trend?

Hon. TAUSINGA: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for Temotu Nende for that question.

Mr Speaker, the government is aware of the fast depletion of our natural forest due to harvesting over a number of years gone by, and in response to that the Ministry or the government for that matter has implemented strategic support to reforestation and downstream processing. Currently, Mr Speaker, there is no strategic alternative forest development plan in place as an alternative to the harvesting or the mass harvesting of the forest resources should log prices continue to go down.

Hon. Sogavare: This is a serious matter of concern. How is that position taken by the government reflect on the ongoing concern of aid donors and

environmental groups in the continued depletion of our forestry and the effect it has on the environment if the government does not think about an alternative or starts to sit down and seriously think about an alternative development strategy of our forestry resources? How does that auger with the widespread concern that donors and the environmentalist have on how we relate to the forestry resources in Solomon Islands?

Hon. Tausinga: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Leader of Opposition for his concern of our natural forests.

Mr Speaker, the government is not unaware of the concern of everybody and that is why the government in its policy is trying to carry out a balancing exercise in terms of what you are taking out to that which you are putting back except the encouragement for forest plantations. The government, as I have said does not have anything in particular as an alternative to the harvesting.

There might be some thinking in respect of downstream processing or sawmilling and exporting of timber overseas, but again what we must appreciate here is that forest harvesting in this country is considered to be a revenue source both for the government and resource owners. Until the government finds an alternative to the plantation forest, the government does not have any particular alternative except those I have mentioned.

Hon. Sogavare: In terms of alternative strategies, the last government and also this government has seen the importance of small scale downstream processing by resource owners, thus the projects of giving sawmills to our people. I guess that is one example of an alternative strategy. The question is, is the government in a position to brief Parliament on the success of that strategy because nearly 50 over sawmills have been given to 50 constituencies or to Members of Parliament and only kept by Members of Parliament. That is an example of an alternative strategy. Whether there is some analysis or assessment made on the success of that and if you think it is alright we would probably pursue that path. Has any analysis been made in that respect?

Hon. Tausinga: Mr Speaker, yes the government is also looking into downstream processing in view of trying to help resource owners market their product. Mr Speaker, may I also add here that the government is also investigating the possibility of overseas timber markets, but until we receive concrete information as to the attractiveness of that particular timber market, what we have in place currently is the forest plantation for purposes of continuity of the timber industry.

Mr Oti: Mr Speaker, as alluded to by the Leader of Opposition perhaps while it might not be a deliberate policy option in terms of downstream processing because of the small and scattered nature of that arrangement, it might not be an option or an alternative to what the country would like to do in terms of providing an alternative to the export of round logs, but 100 percent or substantial percentage of processing of timber before they leave the shores based on a predictable market that the Ministry or the government through relevant avenues find an alternative market for this.

In the meantime, Mr Speaker, what sort of arrangements does the Ministry have in place to make sure it checks the output of the portable sawmills that have been funded through the Ministry of Forestry and some through the Ministry of Rural Development. Whether they have in some measures address this issue of alternative and sustainable use or harvesting of our forestry resources? What mechanisms does the Ministry have in making sure the sawmills are producing some outcome positive to the negatively viewed logging practices that have been happening and for which we do not have any alternative plans yet in the foreseeable future.

Hon. Tausinga: Mr Speaker, I wish also to thank the Member for Temotu Nende for this supplementary question.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry is in regular contact with the people who were issued with the portable sawmills under downstream processing. We have extension officers in the provinces that try to help them by upgrading their skills and also encouraging them by way of training to enable them produce quality timbers for the domestic market.

But I do appreciate the concern of the Members of the Opposition. But the government is not unaware and is continuing to explore the timber market, not only in the country but very much so in the international market.

Mr Oti: Mr Speaker, with your indulgence, perhaps this question was asking from the forestry perspective as an alternative and the Minister has said that currently there is nothing quite substantial that they are looking into.

In the interim the issue about sustainability in terms of forestry will not go away, in fact, it will go from bad to worse until they caught up on us. But on the other hand, there are, of course, other options in terms of conservation, may be one, not to use the forest. But with your indulgence and the Minister of Forestry, can I ask the Minister of Environment whether we can address the issue not through forestry but find an alternative through environmental concerns that we are part of it at this time so that it is not all gloom because there is no plan but

there are options available, with your indulgence and the permission of the Minister and the Minister for Environment.

Hon. LILO: Mr Speaker, there are two distinctions that I think we need to draw from this question. First is the alternative to forestry development, and the other one is an alternative to forestry if there is a decline in forest income. The first one is what we should do now to address the un-sustainable harvesting of the forestry. I will leave the other one out because I respect the Minister of Forestry on that matter, but even if a question is asked I would be most willing to answer.

Mr Speaker, in the context of the Environment Act, as you know, before any development happens you have to obtain development consent and the process involved in obtaining the development consent requires all developers to provide a public environment report and there are certain conditions prescribed under the Act. What we see in this public environment report is that any development does not go to the extent of affecting the environment and does not affect the biodiversity that exists in a particular environment and so forth.

I think we have now almost reached a stage that if we do not care about the bio-diversity of this country, we may, as what a lot of experts regard, reach a point of bio-bankruptcy, which basically means all the other resources we have always relied upon to earn income will be all gone. That alarm has already been sounded out in terms of our forest sector that if we do not control the way we are harvesting our forest resources, it is one of the major factors contributing towards the bio-diversity laws of Solomon Islands. What we can do right now is basically enforcement of the law, and that is every public environment report that is produced to the Ministry has to ensure the bio-diversity of this country is well protected. Just last week the Cabinet endorsed the National Bio-diversity Strategic Action Plan that is now put out as public document for all users, developers, environmental organizations, and donors who are interested in major developments in the country so that they can know exactly how we are conforming to the way our bio-diversity in this country stands at this point in time. But in terms of forestry harvesting is where we are at. We are enforcing the Environment Act as stringent as much as possible. With the enforcement we have put in place, which is enforced right now, you will see a slight reduction on approved harvesting plan granted by the Ministry of Forestry, which is good news for us, especially in a fragile environment that if harvesting is allowed to continue it would affect the environment and the bio-diversity of those areas.

A case in point here is Vangunu, for instance, that Vangunu is situated in the epicenter of the coral triangle in the the Marovo Lagoon, which is the biggest coral we have ever have within the coral triangle. If we continue to cause deforestation in Vangunu, there would obviously be erosion and leaching right

into the sea that would eventually cause destruction to our coral. The choice that we have to make is whether to continue with the deforestation of Vangunu or go to other alternative developments, and this is where the coral triangle comes into play; the choice we have to give to the people whether they can opt for conservation development or other forms of development that would help them to ensure the livelihood, not only now but into the future can be guaranteed out of this development. That is on the coral triangle.

The options that other NGOs have gone around the country preaching to our people that we need to go into other conservation development is a good one too, but again how sustainable are those options. The question is even if it is sustainable what does it mean to the environment and the bio-diversity of those areas. These questions will have to be answered through the way they have prepared themselves and research into that kind of development as well, Mr Speaker.

Another program we are running right now is in terms of coming up with a national interpretation of palm oil in Solomon Islands. We have to certify Solomon Islands as a good place for palm oil development so that all palm oil products that come out from Solomon Islands are certified. That is the exercise that is going on right now. We have not still been able to determine whether or not it can be done at a large scale or a national scale because right now the only place that palm oil can be done is only here in Guadalcanal. It should also be Vangunu but it is not happening and so we are still investigating those things right now.

In terms of forestry harvesting and the un-sustainable harvesting of the forestry sector, the only important tool that we have now is this Environment Act. If every one of us respects the application of that law, then surely we would be able to see some successes in it. Thank you.

Mr Oti: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for his explanation and perhaps this was basically because of the question that was raised to the Ministry of Forestry, and the question was answered appropriately in terms of there is none as yet and the answer to this cannot be found in the Ministry of Forestry. The Ministry has been all the time concerned with maintaining the status quo or because the resources do not belong to the government but belong to the people and therefore until such a time there is an alternative whereby the government can use and is available to communities in so far as making income from that resource without harvesting it at the current rate, I requested the Ministry of Environment knowing that some of these are not development but really the sustainability of the income from that resource, it is also affected by the sustainability of the availability of that resource. When it becomes unsustainable

in the medium to long term it will become unsustainable too as a source of revenue for the country and therefore the answer in this area must necessarily lie outside of forestry itself.

I would like to thank the two Ministers for the response. It is becoming a bit more acute now when we are getting, not the maximum but in fact very low prices for our forest products and so this is a double killer to Solomon Islands because we lose the resource and we also lose the money that is supposed to come from this resource. On that note, I thank the Ministers for their responses.

41. **Mr OTI** to the Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources: In respect of the 2009 \$16 million rural fisheries enterprise project, can the Minister inform Parliament as follows:

- How many projects have been approved under that funding for implementation this year broken down into provinces
- What is the total cost of the projects approved
- How many of the projects approved have actually been funded?

Hon. LENI: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Temotu Nende for the question. On part (a) of the question on how many projects have been approved for implementation broken down into provinces, the answer is zero. For part (b) of the question, the total cost of the project approved is also zero. Part (c) on how many of the approved projects have been funded, the answer is also zero.

The reason is that we are yet to complete the 2008 projects. We have managed to only fund half of the total of 107 approved projects for last year and half are yet to be funded, and so that is the delay. As soon as the backlogs for 2008 are cleared, we will then proceed to fund the 2009 projects.

Hon. SOGAVARE: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister brief Parliament how the 2008 backlog projects are featured in the 2009 budget?

Hon. Leni: Mr. Speaker, there was a backlog in the 2008 projects because we cannot pick up the revenue we need to be able to fund the total of 107 projects which reflected the \$6 million in our 2008 budget. Because the independent taskforce approved 107 projects when we submitted the projects for funding, we only received half of the total allocation in the 2008 budget, and so we were only able to fund 53 projects out of the 107 projects and so we cannot proceed on with the 2009 allocation with this \$6 million that we have for this year's budget. I believe this is the effect of the financial problem that we have at the moment.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, if there is money available we must clear half of last year's projects before we will follow on to do this year's project

applications. Mr Speaker, we actually received 1,028 project applications in 2008. Our committee scaled down the applications to only 107 approved projects. Our view is that we will not have problem in looking for new projects because there are also the 2008 projects that we can also fund by going through the applications again and pick out the appropriate ones that we need to pick up for the financial provision in the 2009 budget allocation.

Mr. Oti: Mr. Speaker, only five months is left for this financial year, and still no funds yet are committed for half of the 2008 projects. Of the total of 1,028 project applications for 2008 plus those that are in the waiting list for 2009, it is very likely, and this is just for the Minister to confirm that the chance for the Ministry to dispense with the applications for 2009 maybe is remote, may be they are looking to next year so that project applicants do not come when none of their projects are going to be considered this year.

Hon. Leni: Mr. Speaker, what the Member has said is what is very likely to happen because it is almost impossible for us to do anything if we cannot complete the 2008 projects. Within these remaining five months we hope to receive something from the Ministry of Finance so that we complete the projects. Yes, the question that was asked is likely to be the case now.

Mr. Oti: Mr. Speaker, I do not have any further supplementary questions and so I would like to thank the Minister for his response to my question.

Bill - Second Reading

The Foreign Investment (Amendment and Validation) Bill 2009

Hon. HILLY: The Speaker I move that the Foreign Investment (Amendment and Validation) Bill 2009 been now read the second time.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this is twofold; firstly to address a few issues in relation to the commencement date of the Foreign Investment Act 2005, and secondly to amend a few clauses in the same Act to reflect the contemporary business law and administrative reforms that the Coalition of National Unity and Rural Advancement Government, along with its development partners and stakeholders are jointly implementing at this moment.

Mr Speaker, a few notices of commencement dates for the Foreign Investment Act 2005 were gazetted and published since June 2006 with a few oversights. These oversights then necessitate the Foreign Investment

(Amendment and Validation) Bill 2009 as notices of commencement date with oversights or errors cannot be effected retrospectively.

Mr Speaker, despite of these oversights, administrative decisions and conclusions were made and reached in good faith between the 26th June 2006 and the 19th October 2007 by the government and in light of these consultations and advice from the Attorney General's Chambers, those decisions were void as they were made by persons who had no formal legal existence or power to make the decisions. In that context, the Foreign Investment Amendment and Validation Bill 2009 also intends to retrospectively validate the administrative decision and conclusions made and reached between the 26th June 2006 and 19th October 2007.

Mr Speaker, the other aspect of the Bill seeks this honorable House to amend certain sections of the Principal Act and introduced a new section to accommodate compounding at administrative violation provisions and to convert penalties from monetary value to penalty unit to be in consistent with other bills that have recently passed through this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, the compounding and administrative violation provision intends to deal with dishonest investors. This provision will also empower the Registrar and the Minister to enforce penalties on violation administratively or recommend for prosecution unto the right resources to where they can be best utilized.

Sir, the compounding and administrative provision will protect the government against any false declaration by an investor and will greatly enhance the capacity of the Registrar in enforced compliance with the Act.

Mr Speaker, we envisage that this Bill when enacted will bring about confidence in the minds of potential and genuine investors to invest in our country. In that regard, I am pleased to inform this House that since the introduction of the Foreign Investment Act 2005, it impacted on the economy by the increased number of foreign investors investing in our country, Solomon Islands, and therefore the passage of this Bill is very important for the benefit of our people and country.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I commend the Foreign Investment Amendment and Validation Bill 2009 to the House and I beg to move.

Mr Speaker: Honorable Members, the Minister has moved that the Bill be read the second time. Normally, the Second Reading debate should continue but I understand that the honorable Minister wishes to instead adjourn this debate and I call on him to make the necessary steps.

Hon. Hilly: Mr Speaker, the report of the Bills and the Legislation Committee on this Bill has just been tabled this morning, and so to give Members time to read

the report in order to contribute meaningfully to the debate, I move that the debate on the Foreign Investment Amendment and Validation Bill 2009 be adjourned until the next government sitting date.

Mr Speaker: Honorable Members, the honourable Minister has moved that the debate be now adjourned. Unless any Member wishes to comment briefly on this motion, I will now put the question.

Debate on the Foreign Investment Amendment Bill 2009 adjourned until the next government sitting day.

MOTIONS

Hon. SIKUA: Mr Speaker, I move that at its adjournment today on Monday 6th July 2009, Parliament shall stand adjourned until Wednesday 8th July 2009. Mr Speaker, the reason for moving this special motion is because tomorrow, as all of us know, we will be celebrating the 31st Anniversary of Independence of our country. That is the reason of moving this special adjournment motion.

Mr Speaker, as you know, tomorrow we will remember our independence from Great Britain and also tomorrow we will remember and celebrate the 31st Anniversary of our existence as a nation and also celebrate our sense of nationhood and pride and, of course, nationalism that our people celebrated when we attained independence 31 years ago. I feel we need to observe that day tomorrow so that we resurrect our spirit and promote our spirit of nationalism, nationhood and national unity. We will have that day off and then come back on Wednesday to continue with the business of Parliament. That is the only reason I want to move this special adjournment motion. With these few comments, I beg to move.

Mr Speaker: It has been moved that at the adjournment today, Parliament will stand adjourned until Wednesday 8th July 2009. I would allow a few comments on this motion before I put it to question, if any.

Hon. SOGAVARE: Mr Speaker, the request that the Prime Minister has put across in this motion makes us not to have any option but we need to support it because the independence celebrations tomorrow, and so I guess we are bound to support it.

Mr Speaker, before I sit down I would like to say something on the proper use of time in Parliament, which really boils down to the government's judgment on bills that come before the House.

The Bills Committee still has a lot of bills to deliberate on, and we observe now that every morning we came in, in fact, we passed a motion in previous days that we will start at 9:30am but we do not really start at 9:30am, but every time we start at 11:00am and that is because the Bills Committee has to deal with government business placed before the Committee before Parliament can meet and look at the business that comes before Parliament every day. We are going to save a lot of time if bills come in good time to Parliament so that the Bills Committee does its work on the bills to prepare reports ready to be submitted to the House. I think by doing that we can get over these bills even in just one week, even with the 13 bills you are talking about. I just want to express that concern since we have two weeks of meeting and we are not really progressing with the number of bills that the government wants us to go through because of the fact that the bills are submitted and the Committee, some of us who are involved in this committee do not sleep well day and night having to work on the bills and preparing reports for Parliament to deliberate on. But even when we produced the reports, the Parliament does not seem to have an interest on business that comes before the House too and on government business too.

Sir, I have no problem with request the Prime Minister has proposed for us to adjourn today and come back on Wednesday but I think we really need to re-look at how we use Parliament's time so that we can get government business going. Thank you and I support the motion.

Hon. LILO: Mr Speaker, I do not intend to contribute to the motion, I fully support the motion, but I just want to ask a point of order. July 7th is a gazetted public holiday and the fact that it is a gazetted public holiday Parliament cannot sit too on that particular day. Logically speaking the next business day of the government would be the next day after that public holiday. The motion here is a right motion but it is a motion over a gazetted public holiday, which normally Parliament cannot sit too on that particular day.

I am just raising this just to clear my mind on why do we have to gazette public holidays that are legally recognized as resting day for the government and all public institutions in the country. That is the point I want to raise, but I support the motion, and thank you, Mr Speaker.

Hon. TORA: Mr Speaker, I stand to support this motion. I want to take note of the very important point raised by the Leader of the Opposition that the ball is on our side, the government's side. I want to see this side of the House to be reminded to sit in the chamber during meetings as it is very important.

As the Chief Whip of this side of the House, I really support what the Leader of Opposition has said. I keep reminding Members of this side, both

Ministers and backbenchers that it is our responsibility to be here to discharge the duties and responsibilities our people mandated us with and therefore, I really support what the good Leader of the Opposition said. Thank you, and I support the motion.

Hon. WALE: Mr Speaker, the point of order raised by the Honorable Minister for Environment notwithstanding, I rise to support this motion and perhaps to offer some reflection after 31 years of independence, reflecting back on the leadership our country has had since that time, of course, Mr Speaker under your very able and good leadership you provided in leading our leaders to negotiate independence from the United Kingdom, and of course, subsequent houses since that time has seen good leadership in our nation, especially in the early part of the life of our country, leadership that is patriotic not suffering from turf mindedness, which perhaps only focuses on ones own province or ones own region. We have had leaderships that have wanted to rise above petty interests, looking at national interest and to build a one true united Solomon Islands society and nation.

Sir, perhaps this motion provides an opportunity in allowing us to reflect 31 years on and to look forward to what kind of leadership we want to build and we want to nurture. The recent challenges that we are facing in parliament, we are facing in governance and we are facing throughout our society, like issues of violence, issues of general breakdown perhaps in governance, weakening public institutions and so it is time to look forward and renew our resolve to honor the memories of our leaders like yourself, Sir, for leading our country to independence and to renew our commitment and our pledge in making this country a truly happy isles and a great nation in the Pacific region. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr OTI: Mr Speaker, I too would like to contribute briefly to the motion. I oppose the motion basically, not because of tomorrow but because of the abuse of the Standing Orders where unless a motion has been moved previously that we sit on a public holiday then we have to move a motion to annul that. On that basis, this motion is out of order and I will not support it. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: The Honorable Member for Nende asked for the point that public holidays are non-meeting days anyway under Standing Order 9. But in the spirit of special adjournment I suppose that is where the Prime Minister raised this particular motion. It therefore makes no difference whether or not we support the motion, we do not have to have meetings tomorrow, anyway. The only possible motion to do if you want to have a motion tomorrow is to move a

motion that we meet tomorrow under Standing Order 9. Honorable Prime Minister, would you like to close our discussions?

Hon. Sikua: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank all honorable colleagues who have stood up to contribute to the motion. As you can see, it is a special adjournment and not a normal one. It is just to be doubly sure otherwise we are not doing the right thing is why I moved this motion. Just to be doubly sure that we are following rules and things like that. We all know that tomorrow whether we are sitting or it is independence anniversary but it is a public holiday since provisions are there, but just to be doubly sure that we are doing the right thing and have not erred in what we are doing in this honorable House is why I moved this Special adjournment motion. Thank you everyone for contributing to this motion, and with these few remarks, Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The motion agreed to

Mr. Speaker: Honorable Members that concludes our business for today.

Hon. Sikua: Mr Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The House adjourned at 12.32 p.m.