

TUESDAY 30TH MARCH 2010

The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Kengava took the Chair at 9.50 am.

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

At prayers, all were present with the exception of the Ministers of Finance & Treasury; Planning & Aid Coordination; Lands & Survey; Foreign Affairs; Commerce, Industries & Employment; Culture & Tourism; Agriculture & Livestock; Education and Human Resources Development, Peace & Reconciliation; Environment & Conservation; Justice & Legal Affairs and the Members for East Are Are, Central Guadalcanal, Lau/Mbaelelea, Central Makira, Ngella, North Malaita, Central Honiara, West Are Are, South Vella La Vella, Temotu Nende, East Makira, North Guadalcanal, Shortlands, North West Guadalcanal and South New Georgia/Rendova/Tetepare.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mr. Speaker: Honorable Members I understand the Minister has decided not to make the statement today.

MOTIONS

Motion to introduce an address in reply

Mr. Speaker: Honorable Members, on Friday 26th of March 2010, the Prime Minister moved that an address in reply to President Ma Ying-Jeou' s address be presented in the following terms.

"We the National Parliament of Solomon Islands here assembled, wish to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for Your Excellency's visit and address to Parliament on Thursday 25th March 2010 and for the assistance the Republic of China on Taiwan continues to provide to the Parliament, the Government and people of Solomon Islands".

Debate on that motion commenced yesterday and was adjourned to the next sitting day and today is that day. We shall continue with the debate and Members may now speak on the general principles. In so doing, I kindly remind Members to comply with the rules of debate set out in our Standing Orders and to please confine speeches to the subject matter of the motion. The floor is now open for debate.

Hon. TORA: First of all, I want to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for moving this very important motion on the floor of Parliament. It is the wish of Members of Parliament that an opportunity be given to each one of them to thank the Republic of China on Taiwan.

Before I move on to share what I have in my heart on behalf of my people in regards to this very important visit on the continuous support and help that Taiwan has been giving and is still giving to this country and, in particular, my own people of Ulawa and Ugi. Let me first of all thank the organizing committee for successful organization of the visit. I cannot mention your names but you know who you are. I also want to thank the Royal Solomon Islands Force, the PPF and RAMSI and all the students who lined the streets to welcome the President of ROC, Taiwan. Without them, this visit would not have been successful.

In terms of security, I must thank the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and RAMSI for maintaining peace in the city during the visit. I also thank the children for colorful uniforms they wore on that particular day lining the streets. I cannot mention the schools but they know who they are, which schools took part on that day. Not forgetting as well the cultural group that welcomed the President when he came down from his plane onto the tarmac at Henderson.

The motion on this visit and the continuous support that Taiwan provides is what each Member of Parliament is confined to contribute on. Although my people were not present physically during the visit of the President of Republic of China, Taiwan in our country, but my people are present in spirit. They know the date the President is going to arrive in Solomon Islands through their Member of Parliament. I can assure you that my people are also present in spirit during this very important visit.

For me, this visit is very, very important to this nation, especially when we look back at the 25 years we have established relations with the Republic of China, Taiwan, which is very important to all people in Solomon Islands. That is why I said the visit is very important to the children, the youths, the women and men of this country and, of course, we, Members of Parliament. I must thank God for the opportunity that has been given to the great leader of the Republic of China to come and visit this tiny country of Solomon Islands with a population of about 500,000 people.

I now want to turn to the assistance that Taiwan continues to give to us until today. Taiwan is indeed a friend, a friend that cannot leave us even when we went through our dark and difficult times during the ethnic tension. I believe you all will

agree with me that Taiwan did not leave us during those times, and that is why I said Taiwan is a true friend of Solomon Islands. Whatever government comes into power, successive governments maintained their relationship with Taiwan, they cannot turn a blind eye to Taiwan because they felt it, they touched it and they have seen what sort of assistance Taiwan has been giving us in terms of finance. All our people down in the rural areas feel it, see it and touch this assistance that is coming down from Taiwan. Without these assistances our people will still live like the days of before. Our people have seen a difference in terms of funds that go towards small projects in the rural areas, in the 50 constituencies, and therefore, I want to thank the Republic of China on Taiwan on behalf of my people for its financial assistance that came through the government, through their Members of Parliament and then down to my people in the rural areas. My people are seeing great difference to their lives than in the past. Taiwan, as I said, is a true friend of Solomon Islands. I want to assure Taiwan that my people of Ulawa and Ugi see you, the children and the people of Taiwan as the people of Ulawa & Ugi. You are our friends forever and ever. Even though this political relationship might be cut off but right at the bottom of our hearts we are still with you through the Government of Solomon Islands. We are just part of this country, Ulawa and Ugi is a part and partial of this country.

I believe when the honorable Prime Minister winds up this motion, he will say something more concerning the whole nation. But each Member will speak and thank the Republic of China, Taiwan for the assistance that comes through the government, through their Member of Parliament and right down to their people in the respective constituencies.

Without taking much time, as I said I will be very brief, thank you once again for giving me this opportunity to speak from my heart my profound gratitude, thanks and appreciation for the visit and the continuous support in terms of finance to my people of Ulawa/Ugi. With those few remarks, I support the motion.

Mr. WAIPORA: I cannot sit down as suggested by the MP for Renbell.

As somebody whose predecessor has had dialogue with Taiwan, I think it would not be fair for me not to contribute to give our thanks on this motion. And I thank the honorable Prime Minister for moving this motion.

In 1981 when my predecessor, the late Hon. Mamaloni took over the government he made this statement, "My government will turn its eyes to the north". What he actually meant was that it is enough to deal solely with old friends like Australia and New Zealand. I think it is high time to turn our eyes to the north. I can remember when he made the trip to Taiwan and he made the first arrangement, the first arrangement which became an ambassadorial level in 1983 when they became our friend by the government of Sir Peter Kenilorea. I feel it is good that I must speak on this motion so that I can also convey our heartfelt and profound appreciation and

thankfulness of our people because we are at least in one way have little contribution towards the relationship of Solomon Islands with Taiwan.

I must thank Taiwan that we in West Makira still have your flag flying in West Makira. I must thank everybody; the small, young, old, everybody, the high and low people of Taiwan on behalf of my constituency and also Solomon Islands as a whole. We are very thankful indeed for your assistance and we take with heart that the word they always use to say our lasting friendship is a friendship forever is not taken lightly. We know that talk people of Taiwan, the leaders of Taiwan, great leaders of Taiwan are using that phrase and it is from their hearts.

We in Solomon Islands say this is a Christian country but we cannot match the attitude, the character of Taiwan and their giving. If any Minister goes to Taiwan he would be given a little gift. If the Prime Minister goes to Taiwan he would be given a gift, like we also do. But somehow we in here interpret the giving of gifts as corruption, but that is their custom. When we go to their country they show their appreciation to us by giving us something. I am saying this because when some of us went to Mainland China, Taiwan and those places, we are nothing but they gave us presents. And I hope you do the same thing. I can see that this is a real practice of Christian principle that it is more blessed to give than to receive. That is what it is. It is not blessed to give and then you go after what you have given so that you work before you can get it back. Taiwan is not like that. It says that when it gives it gives it. We were accused of check diplomacy, but they still stand and not ashamed of it because it is their policy. But others termed that as corruption.

I am thankful for the attitude of the Taiwanese people because they are very kind people. Whatever they say they are going to give us is given to us. I remember when the former prime minister, the MP for East Choiseul and I were in the Marshall Islands we requested for solar lighting and that was given to us just last year. We requested that instead of buying a ship for the government we were advised about the Parliament Building, we agreed at that time and the Parliament Building is now in construction. This Parliament Building project is not CNURA's project but it is the project of the Grand Coalition for Change Government. I was present there in October 2007 when the deal was made.

I am saying this because I do not know how we could express our gratitude for the kindness and love of the people of Taiwan. I am happy that eventually the new president arrives here and we welcome him here. In fact, if you had not ousted our government, the President should have come here on October 2009. That was our arrangement but because you spoiled us and that is why he came this year because the relationship was not good. If you do not know it then that is the story and a fact. You have made a great mistake for doing that.

I think I am talking too much and so I want to thank the Ambassador of the Republic of China in here who is very helpful, thank you very much Ambassador.

Every time I saw you in the Solomon Star I said to myself you deserve to be there because you are helping us. Without Taiwan we would be just nothing, every one of us in here will lose because we will not get anything to give to our people. Whether you accept that or not is your problem, but that is my belief that without Taiwan we would have been nothing.

Instead of boring the House I thank Taiwan with a heart full of appreciation for what the ROC has done so far for us, especially for us in West Makira, as I have said, we have the flag of ROC flying in West Makira. But I told the Ambassador that flying your flag is not enough, I think you should build our airfield. With those few remarks, I thank you very much.

Mr. BOYERS: I shall also be brief in my contribution in our collective position in expressing our sincere gratitude and appreciation for President Ma's visit to our country and also in recognition to Taiwan's continued assistance to the Parliament, the Government and the people of Solomon Islands. In joining other colleagues in recognizing this, it also has to be repeated again the special relationship that we do have with ROC, Taiwan, and that the history of our relationship matures in the light of changing circumstances in the world today.

I was in Taiwan, I think, at the end of last year, arriving in Taiwan when the typhoon was on to attend a APP Union meeting of regional countries in my capacity as the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee in partnership with the Ministry of Justice. I had the privilege of meeting President Ma at that time but it was during a very awkward time when the typhoon hit Taiwan. It was a very, very difficult time because whole villages disappear, townships getting cut in half by rivers, there were deaths, damage and destruction. What I appreciated most about the leadership of President Ma was that he went to all these areas and took upon himself the burden, the frustration, the anger, the sorrows and grief of his people. He was not afraid to take that even though it was a very, very stressful period for him. But it showed his commitment to the humanity of his people and the true leadership qualities of a leader who is not afraid to move forward and do what is right.

I also would like to take note that under his leadership, and this is shown very clearly during his visit that he is a very open and transparent person, embracing and promoting unity and peace. I think that is something that needs to be saluted today where we have wars determining outcomes and overriding more peaceful processes that should be the way forward. In a world where if we are not careful, there are enough nuclear warheads to destroy the world 30 times over and enough pollution heating this world up and making our islands to sink. I think any leader who is in a position of inclusive, peaceful, progress and prosperity as the way forward, needs to be congratulated. On that, I too would like to salute him and we too should be supporting any process in the region that moves forward a peaceful and unifying process in

peaceful cooperation and unity. I think that is our responsibility in supporting those endeavors as a responsible country in this village called the world.

I would like to touch also on the most important thing, obviously to all of us, is the assistance package to Solomon Islands by Taiwan, and that is the much controversial RCDF assistance. I would like to correct the perception as a sovereign country we have to understand that it is not assistance packages from countries that should be blamed. RCDF is one of the greatest gifts that we can have for our people in light that we do not have first world standards called social welfare, we do not have unemployment benefits and we do not have handout process controlled by government. About 80% of our people are in the informal sector and are self-employed, which means unemployed. And these are people living in their country, a majority of them by their own means. The problem we have is that we have very relaxed processes of being accountable for these funds. It should determine at the end of the day what sort of leaders we are if we cannot manage funds accountably and transparently.

If anyone is of the perception that Taiwan is not assisting our country but helping corruption is a load of rubbish. Corruption, as everyone knows and as said in the Scripture is that your enemy is in your own household, and so our biggest enemy today is if we live to please ourselves. If anyone is misusing those funds then there is no one else to blame but the person that is using them. Let us get that perception right.

Recently, I was able to deliver over 500 aluminum water tanks, 3,500 sheets of galvanized roofing iron, and I can boastfully say that no donor in this country has ever helped my constituency more than what these funds have. I have worked hard on water security for a clean and safe drinking water for my people, for quality catchment of water through roofing iron and, of course, we are now working collectively in making sure that our people have solar units. This is all due largely to the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and the Republic of China (ROC), but then again if Members of Parliament wish to abuse that fund and decide to buy their own house, a car or spend it on something else, then the people suffer, and this has nothing to do with Taiwan and its assistance package.

This morning I was woken up by seven people at my gate requiring assistance because their uncle died yesterday and they wanted to fly him down to Munda. Someone noted that my officer came in this morning because I had to sign some RCDF cheques. We had to charter a plane to fly a dead constituent back to his home town. This would have been impossible without this fund and under my humanitarian assistance policy using this fund. In the light of that, leadership, unfortunately in this country, is a process of having to deal with things like that in the absence of a social welfare system and unemployment benefits and so the buck has to stop somewhere, and unfortunately it stops with us. And we are a long way, a long way away from the process of campaigning out there saying you need a leader to go into National Parliament to make laws and legislations but do not come and see me if you have a

problem. If you say that no one will get elected; it is simple as that. So let us not jump too far into the future, but let us move forward slowly without criticizing our development partner, Taiwan but understanding they play a functional role in helping this country move forward. Let the people understand that if their leaders abuse this fund, then do not elect them back in the next election. It is simple as that. Sooner or later, you will find a good egg.

The other interesting fact is that this assistance package from Taiwan goes straight into our consolidated fund. Under our Constitution all appropriated money that we pass here on the floor of Parliament is supposed to go into the consolidated fund. I think the Republic of China, Taiwan and New Zealand are the two countries that have the confidence or respect of that process, even though we have problems within our system of following financial instructions. We still have issues on money being misappropriated or stolen. We still have that, and that is evident in the Auditor General's report. We still have Members of Parliament maybe that are misusing funds some way or the other. But at the end of the day, most of the donors do not put their money into our consolidated fund, which is a vote of no confidence that we still have not capacitated our institutions enough for donors to have the confidence to work in line with a system in our Constitution. Taiwan needs to be congratulated and not interfering and not dictating outcomes with our system.

With those words of acknowledgments, those that want to criticize need to take more of an appreciative note. I think the Prime Minister needs to be congratulated for moving this motion in recognition of the past, present and future assistances that we have been receiving from the Republic of China and are still receiving. As the Member of West New Georgia/Vona Vona, I too would like to thank the President, the people of Taiwan and the government of Taiwan for their continued assistance through the development funds that we are enjoying that directly benefits us, and I know benefits my people. Even though it is not enough to address all our issues, but it certainly alleviates poverty, it certainly creates a better standard of living, it certainly creates more opportunity for my people to be more competent, skillful and appreciative of an economy that they are a part of in this country called Solomon Islands.

I want to make a simple analogy of leadership quality. It is impossible to be a leader without reflecting and improvement of the basic needs of your people. In this country, that goes right down to the bottom, the needs of the people at the bottom. You just have to put yourself in a rural setting to understand what the government is all about. Being a leader is a very, very difficult, burdensome and stressful position. The relief that we get from these funds are enormous. I just want to go on to say something in the spiritual context, but when you look at how you are judged as a leader looking after your people, you can probably look at the book of Matthew and see the judgment day where it says, when you stand before the judgment seat and you are told 'depart from me you workers of iniquity, I know you not' and then they respond by saying 'but

when did we not know you'. You know we went to church, we did this, we did that, and he said when you did it not unto one of these little ones you did it not unto me, depart from me ye workers of iniquity'. What he is saying is that in our position of responsibility when we did not look after others, we did not look after him. Actually it goes like this, 'when I was hungry you did not feed me, when I was naked you did not clothe me, and when you did it not unto one of these little ones you did it not unto me'. What this is saying is that in our responsibility of looking after God's creation, which is your brother, your sister or a little child, who are all part of God's creation, you are not worthy to be recognized because you did not serve the humanity which is God in every person on this earth.

As a leader, our difficulty of serving this country is being able to provide for a basic need in the absence of the government being able to provide for it. A lot of other countries are providing the social welfare system. That falls squarely on the shoulders of a public service, with public service delivery and the Member of Parliament. Unfortunately, that is the truth and that is how we are seen and judged by our people. I tell you what that come next election we are going to hear, 'depart from me, you workers of so on and on, and there is going to be a new person with that responsibility, which will have to take on that burden and address the same issue. In that light, even though these development funds from Taiwan are difficult to handle in nature, burdensome and stressful, those are burdens we have taken upon ourselves as the nature of our country and its system.

With those few words we would like to see an improvement to the system so that Members of Parliament who pass motions to have a more manageable process. At the end of the day, in my capacity as the Member of West New Georgia/Vona Vona, I am grateful and thankful to the Government of the Republic of China for their development funds that have made a difference to the lives of my people. With those few words, I support the motion.

Hon. MAELANGA: I am going to be brief in contributing to the motion moved by the Honorable Prime Minister in thanking the speech of His Excellency, President Ma Ying-Jeou of the Republic of China, Taiwan. I would like to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion.

First, I would like to commend the aid funding from the Republic of China, Taiwan which our country really benefits from, and likewise other funding aids too from other donors. ROC funding really goes down to our rural people. I say this because I have seen it change my people of East Malaita Constituency. My people have seen it, felt it and touched it, and so I would like to thank the government and the people Republic of China Taiwan for their assistance and continuous support to the government and the people of Solomon Islands. I say this because I would like to comment on remarks made in the media. Some people came out on the media saying

that ROC funding did not reach their people. If that is true then it is up to us leaders as some speakers have already said, it comes back to us leaders and Members of Parliament, Members who are here representing our constituencies. If we do not properly disburse this funding then critics are going to come up in the media criticizing us. What I would like to point out here is if those who are writing in the media can be specific as to which MPs are not disbursing the funds properly and not to generalize as all Members of Parliament, because as I have said my people have seen what goes down to them through this ROC funding, the RCDF.

I really would like to thank the people and the government of the Republic of China, Taiwan for their assistance. In regards to climate change, I am really happy for the plan that was proposed for this country as mentioned by the President himself in his speech that Taiwan is going to help our country with the use of solar lightings. That is the way forward because that is the only way for small island countries to avoid climate change, especially carbon dioxide gases that we are seeing industries spewing out into the atmosphere polluting the air, which is the cause of climate change. This is a good plan by the Republic of China, Taiwan as mentioned in the President's speech that they will help us on this. I really thank the Government and people of Taiwan for that.

I also would like to thank the Government of the Republic of China, Taiwan for funding the Members of Parliament Office that we are seeing work on it has started already outside there. I thank them for funding that office building. That office is going to be helpful to Members of Parliament as well because when our people come up here wanting to see us they will come straight to our offices and not stand outside there like what is happening now. They come to our offices and see us in the office. But make sure Members do not run away from their offices too but be in their offices and see your people.

Also in the international arena, I would like to say to the President, the people and the government of the Republic of China on Taiwan, I believe that our country will continue to show our support towards the Government and the people of the Republic of China, Taiwan in any international arenas concerning Taiwan.

As I said I would be brief just to give my thanks to the President, and people of Taiwan on behalf of my people of East Malaita Constituency who really benefit from funds coming from Taiwan. I want to once again thank the Government and the people of the Republic of China, Taiwan for their support. I am looking forward to their continuous support to the people of East Malaita Constituency and also the Government as a whole and the people of Solomon Islands.

Lastly, I want to thank those who are involved in organizing the President's tour here in the country. I want to thank the police for providing security, a work well done in arranging security in the city. I also would like to thank students who are involved and also all the people who took part in the arrangement of President Ma's visit here in Honiara. I support the motion

Hon SOFU: Thank you for recognizing me to join other colleague Members of Parliament to contribute in the debate of this very important motion brought to Parliament by the Prime Minister that we, the National Parliament of Solomon Islands here assembled, wish to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for Your Excellency's visit and address to Parliament on Thursday 25th March 2010 and for the assistance the Republic of China on Taiwan continues to provide to the Parliament, the Government and people of Solomon Islands.

Sir, I think this motion is appropriate so that Members of Parliament would express their sincere gratitude for the many assistances rendered to this nation and its people by the Government of the Republic of China, Taiwan. Obviously, no one could this. Let me first of all register my thanks on behalf of my people of East Kwaio Constituency for Taiwan's continuous financial support from the government and the people of the Republic of China, Taiwan to the people of East Kwaio Constituency through my office. His Excellency's visit reaffirms his recognition of the Government and people of Solomon Islands including my people of East Kwaio. He is a man of very high standing and yet humbles himself to come and visit our beloved nation, Solomon Islands. Over the years, ROC Government's aid programs to Solomon Islands have been without strings attached. The focus has been on rural development and the needs of rural people of Solomon Islands. The ROC Government and people through this aid programs recognize the cultures of the people of Solomon Islands and that a majority of our population lives in our rural areas.

It is true that the aid program given to this nation recognizes the great population of this nation, the isles of Solomon Islands. The entire population of this nation, living at the four corners of Solomon Islands and Taiwan seems to me do the things according to the cultures and customs of this country. Solomon Islands is a Melanesian country and it has its own cultures in the way we do things is very important. The situation down there is very important for us. I think this motion is timely and appropriate so that we Members of Parliament express our sincere gratitude, our words of thanks on behalf of our people, our very humble people whom we represent in this honorable house.

Even, we Solomon Islanders are not doing things in the same way but we do things differently, as I said earlier on, according to our culture, the way we live, the way we do things. There is no word in our language that means bribery. You cannot find that word in our languages, but we have our own ways and our own means of helping others, our brothers, our sisters when they are in need. If I can mention a few of them; the Republic of China, Taiwan sees a great need on the area of medication, on the area of education, on the area of income generating projects, assistance to women, assistance to churches, household needs, projects and garden tools. You cannot say everyone in Solomon Islands is the same. Our locations and the situations we live in are all

different. And so the assistance given by Taiwan through the Government of Solomon Islands for our remote populace is trying to address the needs down there. It tries to improve the livelihood of our population down in the rural areas.

I would also like to thank the Republic of China, the Government and people for the support to the National Parliament of Solomon Islands for the financing and construction of the National Parliament Office Complex. This is a clear indication of their support for democracy. That is great and we salute you so that Members of Parliament can do their work, the important duties entrusted on their shoulders. That office is built purposely for us to perform our responsibilities as Members of Parliament. His Excellency did mention that the Republic of China's foreign aid policy would have to comply with three important goals mentioned in his speech, namely a legal purpose, secondly, the process has to be legitimate, and thirdly, implementation has to be effective. These are very fundamental to the maintenance of responsibility and transparency and I am just glad that a process will be in place to help with the gradual process of adaptation.

I believe that the CNURA Government and the former government, the GCCG, recognize this and have established the Ministry of Rural Development to provide guidelines in the disbursement of the rural constituency development funds (RCDF). The level of complaints coming from the public does indicate there is still need for improvement. And in this regard, I would like to see that officials from the Solomon Islands Government and the Republic of China Government should have consultative discussions to provide guidelines accepted by both governments. I see this as very necessary if we are to make improvements in the management of the RCDF.

Whatever complaints leveled against Members of Parliament in whatever form and in whatever avenue, I take those complaints for our improvements. Those of you who are good in going to the media, I think it is very important as well that you try and check your facts first before going to the media. You cannot just bla-bla-bla in the media. Make sure you get your facts right.

There are 50 Members of Parliament representing the entire population of this country; 50 constituencies. I want to ask you whether you have been to all the 50 constituencies. I need not inform this Parliament of what is happening in East Kwaio; I am very humble, but if one would like to find for her/himself what is going on there, please go there and ask the people there. It is simple as that, straightforward. You cannot label Members of Parliament as corrupt. We are leaders of this country voted in by our people who trust us. Our people mandated us to represent them and that is why we are here. If we are corrupt then we should not be here at all. All of us sitting here in this Chamber today have gone through the democratic process. We are here because of the decisions our people made on the very day declared for election. If there any intending candidates who are doing this, no one stops you, just wait for the time to come when people will make their choice.

Developments going on in our constituencies are not something for us to boast and talk about. People will make their own judgment. All of us in here, I think the spiritual citation made by the Honorable Member of Parliament for Vona Vona about us is true. We cannot hide away; the day will come, the day of recognition. It is not us to praise ourselves and talk about those things in here. It is the people who will make their own decisions. But I am happy that things like that build us up as leaders wanting our roots to go down deep into the ground so that we are strong and become good leaders. But the point I am trying to make is that you get your facts right first, take a good look before making your point.

While we thank the Republic of China for its continuous financial support to Solomon Islands, we must realize that the Republic of China Government has set a very good example in making improvements on its foreign aid policy and therefore there needs to be consultative discussions between the two great countries. This is very important.

We have heard of severe damages in southern Taiwan caused by Typhoon Morakot and that the Republic of China Government had to mobilize all available resources for relief and reconstruction work. I wish to record here that Solomon Islands financial contribution towards the Republic of China disaster relief, though relatively small, was given from the bottom of the hearts of every single Solomon Islander. We were with you during that very terrible time. We as your friend, your brother and your sister are there with you. For this, I would like to thank every Solomon Islander who has made contribution towards that relief effort.

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely wish President Ma and his Government a prosperous leadership for the people of the Republic of China, Taiwan. I am confident that the relationship between our two countries will prosper into new heights. Thank you once again and I would like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for it seeing fit in moving this motion to give us opportunity to sincerely register our thanks to President Ma and the government of the Republic of China, Taiwan. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

Mr. BOSETO: I thank you for the opportunity to join my colleagues in this honorable Chamber to express my sincere words of gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency, President Ma of the Republic of China's visit and address to this Parliament on Thursday 25th March 2010, and for the assistance that the Republic of China, Taiwan continues to provide to the Parliament, the Government and the people of Solomon Islands.

On behalf of the people of my South Choiseul Constituency, I express my words of sincere gratitude and appreciation. First, I thank His Excellency and his official delegates for being able to fit into their very busy schedules to come and visit our country this year 2010. His Excellency, President Ma's visible presence during the two

and half days with us here in Honiara has affirmed what His Excellency, President Ma said in his concluding remarks to this Honorable Chamber, and I quote: *“Your Excellency, I want to assure you of the continued friendship and cooperation of my country and honestly and earnestly hope the friendship and the cooperation between our two countries will continue forever. Long live Solomon Islands and the Republic of China on Taiwan”*. Those words of assurance and affirmation from His Excellency, the President of the Republic of China has helped us to see the Republic of China’s assistance to our Parliament, the Government and people of our two countries gone beyond financial and material support into an honestly and earnestly friendship cooperation and relationship between our two countries.

There are no adequate words for me to fully and sincere express the deep gratitude from my heart what the Government of the Republic of China and its successive presidents and people have done and will continue to do for our country and our people in the villages, constituencies, provinces and our nation. However, when we see and use our clinics, aid posts, classrooms and projects for agriculture, fishery, water supply, community hall, Church buildings and so forth through the RCDF in our rural villages, these are the tangible expressions of the government of Republic of China’s love in action for our country and for which on behalf of my people of South Choiseul Constituency, thank His Excellency, the President and his government of the Republic of China. Long live our friendship, long live our cooperation and long live the relationship between our two countries of Solomon Islands and the Republic of China.

With those few words of my gratitude and appreciation, I beg to support the motion.

Mr TOSIKA: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. First, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion so that it gives opportunity to us Members to say something in reply to the President’s speech here in Parliament.

I would like to say this to His Excellency, President Ma, his delegation and good people of Taiwan, Ma in my language of Malaita is ‘daddy’. So Mr President, you are our father in my language of Malaita and a father is a person with a character of honesty, love and caring for his family. Ma, on behalf of West Constituency, I would like to say that you are our father, someone with an honest attitude, who has love and is caring for people of West Honiara that the RCDF funding enable people to see the seed money that goes out from the RCDF to their households.

Mr President, I think words cannot explain our gratitude feeling of appreciation that we hold dear in our hearts for what you have been doing for the past 23 years when we established this cordial relations way back in 1983. The continuous support that the people of the Republic of China, Taiwan continues to show strengthens our friendship because you have provided funds to build the parliamentary office complex for all parliamentarians, you have given us solar lightings, you assisted us during the

tsunami, you also provided help that we did not expect during the tension period by allowing us to get loan from your bank in Taiwan to settle the minds of people during the hardest and the darkest hours in Solomon Islands. Those assistances, good people and President of Taiwan, we are very appreciative and very thankful that you are our strong supporter and from what you have done, we believe that your willingness to give is not a give because you have made relationship with Solomon Islands but because you hold Solomon Islands dear to your heart.

I do not want to talk much but I would like to repeat, "Long live our friendship forever". This is exactly what President Ma said in his speech in the warship. I thank President Ma and his delegation and the good people of Taiwan that your continuous support to Solomon Islands will be forever and strengthen further our cordial relations.

With these few words, I thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion and I support it.

Hon. SOALAOI: I also thank the Honorable Prime Minister for moving this motion. It is a very appropriate motion as it gives us an opportunity to express our gratitude towards the President and the people of the Republic of China, Taiwan for what Taiwan is doing in Solomon Islands.

I must also emphasize that we should be very thankful to the President for physically visiting Solomon Islands. Our colleagues who have already spoken also affirmed this and I wish to say again that to have the President physically visiting Solomon Islands is something very special. It made our meetings during that day as historic; it was a historic moment for us, and as the Minister for Health it was also a very historic moment for us in the Ministry when he also physically visited the Ministry and met with me and my officials and also the staff of the Taiwan Health Centre here in Honiara.

Even though Taiwan is far away from Solomon Islands, the President dared to visit this country physically and I was very impressed to see him physically shaking hands with children. Sometimes we leaders acted like we are too important that we even cannot talk to children. And so I would like to thank the President for showing us the kind of servant leadership that he has. I watched him physically here in the country during his short time and I learn a lot from him. I think he is a leader that we should learn from, he is a humble leader and he is a leader who has a heart to help people in need.

We would like to thank him again for the assistance Taiwan is giving to Solomon Islands. Also on behalf of my people of Vattu Constituency, I wish to thank the President and the people of the Republic of China, Taiwan for the assistance given to this country and to my people. As Member for the constituency, I would like to personally take this time to thank the President and the people of Taiwan, the more

than 23million people of Taiwan. We, the people of Vattu Constituency, sincerely thank you for your kind assistance towards our people.

I know that there are a lot of misconceptions regarding the rural constituency fund, but I must say that without this funding I do not think our people would be able to see anything. Just look at what goes through our Ministries, how much of that gets to the rural areas? I believe the only funding that gets to the rural areas is the rural constituency fund, which is controversial to most people. To me, it is not a controversial funding; it is the only funding that gets to the rural people.

I must thank the people of the Republic of China, Taiwan because by the time I go for the election my constituency will be fully solar powered. This is not something to boast about in this Parliament because we are here to make laws. But as we continue to make our people understand the misconceptions that always come out, even in the media because there are people out there who continue to confuse our people. I believe my people will not agree with those who are saying that funding from the Republic of China is a source of corruption in this country. Why not do good to people who do good to us, as the good book says?

I know we are people who are very proud of our customs, but looking at some of the editorials in the Solomon Star and other newspapers shows we do not have customs. We even criticize people who feed us. This is just like a child criticizing his father who is responsible in ensuring that he eats, he goes to school, his basic needs are met, but instead he turns around and talks against his father. I must continue to thank the people of Taiwan, because this is their taxpayers' money. As far as my constituency is concerned, we are making use of the funds you are giving us and making a difference to the lives of my people.

There is no Member of Parliament in this House who does not have critics. And I know that you cannot please everybody at any one time. Even some people living in town right now pretend to be people from our constituencies, and write all sorts of things about us. I remember telling somebody that he should talk about the Member for West Honiara because he is not from where I come from or you should talk about the Member for East Honiara or Central Honiara.

We are accountable to our people and we do that when we go and visit them. That is the very reason I do not respond to media statements and editorials because I am voted here to talk in Parliament and not to talk outside. We see the way the assistance given from the Republic of China Taiwan to us as really coming from the heart because there are no strings attached to it. In saying that, different constituencies in this country have different needs, and if we are given funds already with plans on where to spend the funds on, we will not be able to fulfill what we want to do. But because the funding is given to us to decide what to do with it, it really shows to us that our friend, Taiwan knows that we have different needs in our different constituencies and they respect us that we know better how to do good things for our people. If a plan

is given to me to implement in my constituency with the money given to me, I would not know what to do with that money. But if you just give us the money, we know what to do with it because we know what we need. For example, what I mentioned already is something, I believe, is the greatest need for us in our constituency and so we embarked on it, and like I said before we go to the polls again every single household in my constituency will be solar powered. As I am speaking now we are about 98% complete, and I must thank Taiwan for that. I do not think anybody from my constituency should talk against or criticize Taiwan for this assistance given to us. I also think nobody in this country should criticize the assistance given to us because when we think about it, without this funding where will we be today. Some of our constituencies, the remote constituencies are now seeing something because of this funding.

I already said we know nothing about what goes through the Ministries, as it gets absorbed in the system and never gets to our people. That is the truth everybody in here will agree with. When you talk about other ministries, it makes no sense to those of us coming from isolated constituencies. If we talk about something that is in our area, then it would make a bit of sense to us. But out of the 24 ministries we have in the country, we only know about the government because of our clinics, our schools, and because of what we are getting from the rural constituency fund. Those are the only things we know about and tell us that we are a part of Solomon Islands. Other sectors are not really making any difference to our lives. Maybe only those in Honiara have seen the whole government sector, they experience it and feel it. Here, I must thank the government for seeing fit in maintaining this rural constituency funding even though there are a lot of criticisms coming from our very own people.

I agree with the Member for West New Georgia/Vona Vona who said that the greatest enemy we have is ourselves. I think we should also blame ourselves for where we are in this country, we should not blame Taiwan. We should only be grateful for what Taiwan has given to us. We also know during the darkest hour of this country, Taiwan was the only country that stood by our side and rescued us. Does that not give us enough reason to be grateful? Like I said, I think some of our people need to better understand our custom that when somebody does good to you, you should also do likewise, so you should do the same to him because that is what the good book says. But today even the person you feed turns around and criticize you. I must assure the people of Taiwan that as a leader in this Government I will continue to support Taiwan in whatever way I can.

On the international arena, I remember many occasions standing up and speaking on behalf of our good friend, Taiwan. And I am glad that today Taiwan is being invited to the World Health Assembly and I am looking forward to meeting with their Minister when we come together for the World Health Assembly in May this year.

Hon Lilo (*interjecting*): You would be finished by then.

Hon Soalaoi: I am going to that meeting before we go for the elections, and so it would be a relaxation of the mind before we go for the elections.

I am grateful that Taiwan is now being invited to the World Health Assembly meeting. Every time I go to this meeting I met them but on the sideline, but now I will be meeting them right in the conference room. As a friend who share has the knowledge of what Taiwan has gone through, I am glad that we now can sit together on the same table.

I think the misconception that seems to be around is because people think that it is the Member of Parliament. I must say here that it is not us but it is the constituency. The RCDF funding does not belong to Members of Parliament but it belongs to the constituencies. Every time we see it in the media, it is as if MPs are receiving \$100,000. It is not MPs. I think the way it is written on the newspapers makes our people think the money is ours.

Recently I was very confused because every time we try to explain, but there are people outside who continue to confuse our people, even before this meeting some people said that we are boycotting this meeting because of the nonpayment of the RCDF. I do not know about my other colleague Members of Parliament but I am not that kind of person to do that. I am not here for that RCDF, but I am here to be the voice for my people. After that news article is over, there was another claim on the newspapers that Members of Parliament are demanding the government to pay them the tithe money. There is nothing of that sort. If you come and ask Members of Parliament in here, it makes us look like we are running after money. There are people out there who want to paint that picture on us, but we are not that kind of people. I think some people are developing a culture of disrespect for leaders, and that is why instead of praying for your leaders, you criticize them every day on what you expect from them. That is why we must thank the people of Taiwan for continuing to assist us.

I remember trying to move a motion concerning this RCDF. I think I was doing the right thing and I wanted the RCDF to be removed from Members of Parliament. This government has this kind of thing in mind and our people should know that this is not our funds, but constituency funds. It is not the MPDF but it is the RCDF. I think this RCDF is a very welcome gift from our friend Taiwan because without this I do not believe our people in the rural areas will be able to see anything in terms of development.

I must thank the Republic of China on behalf of the Ministry of Health for its continuous assistance towards the Ministry in terms of infrastructure and also technical assistance. Without the Republic of China, Taiwan the National Referral Hospital would not have been where it is today, and we are so thankful that we also host the

Taiwan Medical Centre within the National Referral Hospital compound, which is right here in Honiara. I believe everybody would agree with me that the establishment of the Taiwan Health Centre is very helpful to the Ministry of Health and also our sick people in Solomon Islands.

In concluding, I must also say what other speaker have said, and may I emphasize that our friendship as a leader in this country, I believe and it is my prayer that this friendship will continue as long as our two countries exist on this planet. If climate change washes away any of these two countries then that friendship will end. But as long as Taiwan and Solomon Islands exist on this planet, it is my wish that this friendship will continue to benefit the people of our two countries.

I once again thank the Honorable Prime Minister for giving this opportunity to Members of Parliament to express their gratitude on behalf of their people and also on behalf of their Ministries for the assistance given to us by our good friend, the Republic of China on Taiwan. Having said that, I must once again thank them on behalf of my constituency and the people I represent. I must assure Taiwan that whatever funding given to my constituency will be put to good use and benefit our people.

Before I take my seat, some of the questions we need to ask includes, this funding comes to our constituency but when you give money to someone coming to you asking for money, do you also ask him what he is going to do with the money? Sometimes our people need to know as well where corruption really happens after receiving money. Some people getting money from Members of Parliament go and buy beer with the money and then they turn around and say Members of Parliament are misusing the money. That is the point I wanted to say because every time I talk with people I tell them what they are going to do with the money is what we do not know, but at least we need receipts back from them. With those, I wholeheartedly support the motion.

Hon. ABANA: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute to the debate on the address by his Excellency, the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan to this Honorable House last Thursday, and I will be brief.

First of all, I want to thank the Prime Minister for moving the motion. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of his Excellency George Chan on the gallery; thank you for coming here to listen to our debates. It was obvious from President Ma's address that the Republic of China on Taiwan has come a long way and faced with daunting challenges, but with genuine commitment and the wisdom of its leaders, it has now become a role model for emerging democracies in Asia. Furthermore, recently under President Ma's visionary leadership, a new page in the history of cross strait negotiations have been forged after 10 years of suspension. Whilst President Ma acknowledged that for his government this policy direction is for the promotion of peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region, in my view, perhaps these are also

important experiences to learn from in Solomon Islands but in our context. I further believe that President Ma's reference to this hallmark experience is a timely reminder to all of us leaders in this honorable House, especially when the national general election is just around the corner.

I also would like to echo the Honourable Prime Ministers acknowledgement last Friday of the Republic of China, Taiwan ODA assistance to Solomon Islands. As we are all too familiar with, more than 90 percent of ROC/Taiwan's ODA are directed towards enhancing rural and grassroots development throughout the country. Although there maybe varying views on this subject, I also believe that Taiwan is a responsible government and therefore will endeavor to align its foreign aid policy around both global and regional instruments for effective aid coordination. In addition, Taiwan continues to support training of our human resources through provision of scholarships and other key sectors, such as agriculture, health and renewable energy.

His Excellency President Ma made it very clear in his address that Taiwan's foreign aid policy hinges on three principle standards, namely a legal purpose, a legitimate process and effective implementation. These are very focused, strong and sound policy initiatives echoed by His Excellency President Ma, an approach, I believe, was openly welcomed by most Members of Parliament in this Honorable Chamber. These are fundamental pillars. These fundamental pillars are a step forward in further enhancing our long and cordial relationship with the Government and the people of Taiwan.

Solomon Islands and in particular the Fataleka Constituency will now and in the future continue to enjoy the benefits of our bilateral relationship with Taiwan, one that was built on confidence, trust partnership and long lasting friendship.

Before I conclude, allow me to thank all the individuals who have contributed one way or another in ensuring President Ma's visit to Solomon Islands is a historic and a memorable one, in particular his Excellency George Chan and staff of the Taiwanese Embassy, the Kukum Traffic Police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and staff, the Governor General, the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament and, of course, my big thank you goes to the people who gathered at Lawson Tama in the afternoon when the President of Taiwan arrived to cordially welcome him to our beautiful isles. I think our people need and deserve that thank you. They really came out in full support and showed such a welcome ceremony to President Ma on that afternoon. I think the Leader of Opposition was there and some of the Ministers as well. By way of concluding I would like to thank all of us once again for making everything possible for President Ma to be here with us on those two and a half days.

With these few remarks, I support the motion. Thank you.

Hon. LONAMEI: I will be very brief, and I want to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion to thank President Ma's visit.

I wish also to join other Members of parliament to thank the President of Taiwan, His Excellency Ma Ying Jeou for his visit to Solomon Islands. I thank him and also his good people of Taiwan for their many assistance to our people of Solomon Islands, especially for my people of Maringe/Kokota. It would be very unfair for me not to thank the President and the people of Taiwan for their assistance to the people of Maringe/Kokota.

I also want to thank his Excellency Ambassador George Chan and Mr. Ben who are here with us at the gallery. I must thank you very much for the \$200,000 RCDF that you have just given us, which we received last week but is already finished. The grants or aids that Taiwan is giving us one of the aids or grants that really touches the hearts of our people in Solomon Islands, especially my people of Maringe/Kokota. I repeat again that this grant funding really touches the hearts of the people of Maringe/Kokota.

Just this morning before I came to Parliament, two mothers came to my house crying that two of their children who are attending Pamua School were sent back because of nonpayment of school fees. They came crying to me asking for any assistance from me. These two mothers are single mothers whom their husbands left them to fend for themselves and their children. These mothers have been really trying their best to raise their children and also to put them in school but find it difficult to pay for their school fees and that is why they came to me. This morning I gave these two mothers the money for their children's school fees, and their faces of tears turned to smiles of joy; they are very happy because their children will now go back to school this afternoon. That is why I say this money really touches the hearts of people. We can also see the impact of this grant in the rural areas. If you go to Maringe/Kokota now you would see incomplete churches, churches they have stopped working on for the last five to ten years, today they are in full swing working on the churches. Some might say why spent so much money on church houses? I would like to tell you that we in Isabel, church buildings are very important to us because the church seems to be the centre point that puts us together. We live in peace and harmony because of church buildings, it binds us together and that is why it is very important to spend money on church buildings.

Not only that, but solar systems have already been given to the people. People who are engaged in small businesses such as selling petrol, running bakeries have already come and get the solar. Small impacts such as these are felt in the rural areas.

I believe many allegations that came up labeling us MPs as corrupt and misusing the RCDF funds is the making of intending candidates trying to disrepute us by making false stories to the people and that is why people came up with all sorts of criticisms about the RCDF. Regardless of such allegations, I want to say that the grants that come

from Taiwan really touch the hearts of our people and its impact in the rural areas is seen already by many people.

Once again on behalf of my people of Maringe/Kokota, I want to register my big thank you to the President of Taiwan and also his good people for their assistance to us. And as others have said, Taiwan grant is the only grant given to us with no strings attached to it.

In addition, I also want to thank JICA for starting to recognize this by saying they will repair our international terminal, and so I thank them for this kind of assistance like Taiwan is giving to us. Also the New Zealand High Commission is saying that they too will assist us in the upgrading of the Munda Airport. I want to thank those aid donors that came out clearly and freely saying they want to assist us. I thank them and congratulate countries that supported us in areas that we need help. With these few remarks, I support the motion moved by the Prime Minister.

Mr ZAMA: I also wish to register the thanks of my people to this motion. At the outset, I would like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for moving this motion for Parliament to thank the President of Taiwan for his visit to our country.

Although this is a good thing for us to do, the timing of it is a bit overdue. In fact it would be more meaningful if we do this thanksgiving session on Thursday when the President was here because that would have been more meaningful to me. As it is today, we can say our bit but it is just for the records.

Since this is a thank you motion, I wish to sincerely, on behalf of the Council of Elders of Tetepare and the people of Rendova/South New Georgia register their gratitude and appreciation on this visit. Taiwan, apart from Christ being the savior of the world is a savior to Solomon Islands. Its assistance and diplomatic relation we have had with Taiwan for the last 27 years is more meaningful than any other relationship I have ever come to experience.

The assistance that we get from this relationship is both for the living and for the dead. Some people will raise their eyebrows when I say it also touches the dead. Assistance and the relationship of these two countries for the last 27 years is a relationship that we must always cherish. I think as we move further, the relationship is growing stronger and stronger. In fact it is now 27 years of marriage. But like the saying goes, 'all good things must come to an end', we never know what will happen in the future, maybe 10 years or twenty years from now this relationship might come to an end. This is not prophetic, but we are in a global world, a global family and things are changing. But that said, what we get from Taiwan and what Taiwan get from us has been a blessing in both ways.

What I would like to touch on briefly is what the President raised in his speech in regards to their foreign relations, which he stated that Taiwan has adopted a policy of flexible diplomacy. I think that is important for us to understand. Whilst we are

enjoying this very cordial relationship, there is flexibility in that. This would give us some challenges too.

Based on that, there are some adjustments to Taiwan's aid. It is no longer a one way traffic thing, but the President made it very clear that some adjustments have been made to its foreign aid policy and this is based on three main important goals, and these are it has to have a legal purpose to continue its aid, and that the process that aid is to be channeled must be legitimate, and that the implementation process has to be effective. It is their money and so they have to have some conditions to it too. But that said, the assistance we have been receiving from Taiwan has touched everybody in the four corners of Solomon Islands. It touches the hearts of small children, the big people, the women, the men and everybody. To say that this money has been misused or whatever is not right. There have been a lot of media publicity, vocal, written and for the eyes about all these things. We always do not have the courtesy to make any appreciations too. We are always very good at criticizing, but I think we should at least make some good remarks on what these people are doing.

Taiwan built our hospital, our schools, our new parliament offices, and in my constituency, it is going to build houses for every single families whether married or single. It is the policy of the constituency through the assistance we are getting from our friends that will provide a roof for every single living soul in my constituency. That is why I have been urged by the Council of Elders to say this. The beauty about this is that people will no longer come to Honiara to get their roofing iron. They only have to travel by boat or by canoe to Noro to collect their roofing iron, which is all paid for by the Republic of China for their assistance. Everybody in my constituency is enjoying clean drinking water and this will continue so that every single soul and family in the constituency will benefit from that. Also, every single soul in my constituency is starting to benefit from solar lightings paid for and supplied by the Republic of China. This assistance will continue as long as this relationship remains intact. It is the policy of my constituency that by 2015 everybody should have a descent shelter, everybody should have access to clean water and everybody should have lights. These can all be possible through the assistance we are receiving through our bilateral relationship with our very good friends. My only plea, and that is why I said it would have been more appropriate if the President is here if he could increase the funding assistance to Solomon Islands. That is the only plea I have, my only appeal to the President, and if the Ambassador is here he can relay this to the President to increase funding to the people to Solomon Islands so that the funding can be well expended

Finally, once again on behalf of my Council of Elders of Tetepare, the people of Rendova and South New Georgia, I give a very big thank you to the President for his visit through the Ambassador who is here and for all the hardworking people of Taiwan through whom their sweat and taxes we are benefitting for the last 27 years. God bless Taiwan. Thank you.

Mr OTI: I too would like to add my voice on the motion moved by the Prime Minister in thanking President Ma of the Republic of China who visited us last week for two and half days.

A lot of things that have been echoed by Members of Parliament reflected, to a certain extent, the views of every one of us and some of individual MPs as to what we are thinking. As a house consisting of 50 different individuals we are bound that we must differ on some of our thoughts that we share here, and is healthy as a matter democracy that we have.

Yes, since 1983 when we established diplomatic relations with Taiwan, the world has changed since then as the President has said. While its policy, in particularly in terms of money it has given out to the international community, particularly to its allies, on the one hand, those times were geared towards winning friendship or maintaining diplomatic relations after it meant to leave the United Nations some 38 years ago. That period after the Taiwan left the UN, as a United Nations founding member, Taiwan was almost on back peddling to ensure it does not continue losing its allies, and therefore, the accusation sometimes on Taiwan as cheque book diplomacy, its diplomatic relations is geared towards maintaining the friendship it is having with the few countries that remain.

For us in the Pacific where the majority of the countries are as well as a few in the Caribbean and some in Latin America, in spite of what happened to Taiwan, we continue to enjoy that relations that we have with this particular country over the last 30 or so years. Perhaps the reasons for us to establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan in those days were different from the kind of relationship that we now have as a basis for maintaining and sustaining that relationship. Indeed, only through that period there are two different groups that ruled Taiwan; the KMT that continued until the DPP took over and now Mr Ma is part of the Kuomintang original establishment, and therefore, the ease to which he is able to reestablish the cross strait relations between Mainland China is basically because of it coming from a government that comes out from the KMT, which is different from the previous president who was a DPP, a pro independent Taiwan Government and president.

The present President's first effort is to reestablish that link across the straits, which has always been part of our foreign policy, and that is the relations between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the PRC on Mainland China is something for those two to sort out. We should not interfere as to what and how those two would like to maintain that relations and recognize each other. We have examples of Mainland China dealing previously with Hong Kong and later on in Macau.

It is from that stand point that anything that comes out from those two, must be from them and cannot be forged from outside. But taking that on to us, because the thinking was if the present government in Taiwan started to link back with Mainland

China, it will reduce the kind of cooperation it has with its allies. And from what we have heard from the President is probably not going to be the case, at least not in the short term, for the long term, yes, we can only expect that because processes are evolving and so it might go in that direction.

Although Taiwan has diplomatic relations with only a few of the Forum Island countries, in terms of benefits to the Forum Island countries both through regional arrangements and bilateral arrangements. Taiwan continues to also have aid programs in countries where they have no diplomatic relations with, including almost all the Pacific Island countries like PNG, Fiji, Samoa and so on, to a certain extent that sometimes when you look at the books, probably more Taiwan aid is flowing to these other countries than to us here in Solomon Islands. So it is not as simple as we would like to assume that because we have diplomatic relations with Taiwan, we are benefitting more from them.

Also, as we know too in the language of aid, 'nothing is free', I give because I am also taking, and on this note perhaps for our government through the Ministry of Fisheries, in particular giving access through the sovereign state of Solomon Islands to Taiwanese fishing boats to our waters is also part of the process that we are not only taking from Taiwan but we are also giving. Taiwan is also receiving from Solomon Islands in terms of commercial economic interest from us. The fact that they are giving us those funds, I think we should also think outside the box. Go look beyond why they are giving us those funds. But we thank them and we also should thank ourselves and congratulate ourselves that it is a give and take process.

A lot of the fisheries access agreements signed between Solomon Islands and Taiwan also brings benefit to the government and to that country, much as we also get money from them through their taxpayers' money where people, and part of it perhaps through tax paid for by fishing companies, which is money that comes back to us and we are enjoying its benefits.

I am particularly pleased perhaps that much as I wish to join other colleagues in criticizing the media, the only consolation I have is that I am not accountable to the media, neither is Parliament. This in your words, Mr Speaker, I can recall in the last meeting when you said that when we bring up something the media reported in here as to the reaction of parliament, the Speaker said at that time is that Parliament is not accountable to the media. But perhaps we could take the things reported in the media as a check, and some maybe out of ignorance as also expressed in here, lacking the facts to substantiate the accusations that are made either to Taiwan or against Members of Parliament.

On the 29th August 2008, I moved a motion on this floor regarding the RCDF or the Constituency Development Funds for which a mechanism was required for it to run or manage these funds. I would like to register my appreciation to the Government, first of all, because I am looking down the line that ultimately Taiwan must have an exit

strategy to get out of continuing to fund the rural development fund, and it must be our own responsibility, the country's responsibility because we cannot continue to depend on outsiders to develop this country. It must fall squarely on the people, the government and the Parliament of Solomon Islands.

On that note, I think the establishment of \$50million under the budget for the last two years under livelihood is a measure the country is starting to take so that we not only depend on outsiders to fund rural development but we show that we can also take on the responsibility and finance rural development in this country. I hope in years to come, we can ultimately go without Taiwan funding in terms of rural development funding. Although only a small portion of their funding goes to constituency funding through the RCDF, Millennium, ROC Micro Projects, which currently for the last three or so years have featured in the budget in terms of rural development until in 2008 our Government comes up with the livelihood funds and complement the effort that comes from outside.

The difference is that there are many rural development funding into Solomon Islands currently, and the difference with funding from Taiwan is that it does not come with human beings to administer that funding. When Taiwan gives it, it says this is yours; it recognizes the legitimacy of our laws. Reference was made today to even when you go to the macro scale, the larger scale, in terms of Section 100 of our Constitution, all Government funding comes through the appropriation bill of Parliament and appropriated for by Parliament. Only one funding that satisfies this constitutional or legal requirement is funding from Taiwan. Taiwan's money comes through the process and administered, and that becomes a sticking point for a lot of aid donors who want to deal with rural development, financing and development in this country outside of the legal processes of this country. We must start to bring back everyone in line to sing the same tune or bail out.

On this note, I want to touch on the expectations of Taiwan announced by the President of Taiwan on its aid program in the region. First he said, and I quote, "we are eager to share our valuable development experience with our allies, particularly knowledge and skills which we accumulate during the processes. Secondly he said, 'our cooperation project should suit local conditions'. Thirdly, 'coordination and cooperation', these two perhaps are inline and in tune with other aid donors but the first two, 'to share their valuable development experience and also to suit local conditions'. This is where we must be careful.

First on sharing valuable experience, we will never, never be like Taiwan no matter how much we share and we try to emulate the experiences they have. There is a standing fact that we will never be the same so we must take ownership of what suits us and adjust according to our needs. But it also shows that in future, investment in foreign aid of Taiwan must go towards those two particular areas, on skills training and education.

We have seen how they come in on health, and that is build the hospital. Somebody else is being left the responsibility of building the prison, but Taiwan comes in on the hospital. Other donors are more interested in building prisons. This Parliament Building we are now inside was financed by the United States and built by Japan. There was nowhere for Members of Parliament to meet with our constituents, and so Taiwan stepped in; the building on the western side that is going to be opened in 2011 is also a gift from Taiwan.

We have been sitting on one important project that we do not recognize at this time. Where is the Solomon Islands University, a higher education training institute for Solomon Islands? It should be priority now for any thinking government for the future generation whom he already talked about, and that is share our valuable development experiences, particularly in terms of knowledge and skills calls for education. Perhaps this is something the Minister for Education should now think about seriously. For a long time now we have been talking about higher education in Solomon Islands, a university for Solomon Islands, but there has been no movement about it until today. It is something we should think seriously about now, for the next big project of Taiwan to undertake if we are going to make headway into the future.

This is the third largest country outside of Australia and New Zealand in the Forum, second only to Fiji in population, PNG is the first, Fiji second and Solomon Islands third. In terms of landmass it is second to PNG, every other forum country; the smallest ones have already gone beyond us in terms of investment in education, universities and technical colleges. We are far behind them. If there is anything for investment in this country from Taiwan, I bet you, Sir, that I want all leaders to be thinking now that education and a university for Solomon Islands is a must, as it is something that many in Solomon Islands, both living and yet to be born, will benefit from in the long term, and truly they will learn from the experience that Taiwan has gone through in its development by moving away from the agrarian society into industrial and now they go in technological and electronic inventions. This is where Taiwan has got through.

The road that Taiwan has been following, although there are no shortcuts but there are differences we can use in our development endeavors for the long term of this country. As I said, I want to be looking at much more broader issues than the current issues surrounding the constituency development funding, because I think it is within the reach, within the scope, and within our ability for us to redirect the whole system. I have no criticism for any particular constituency, neither do I boast about what is happening in my constituency because it is a never, never ending story, it is a process that you cannot address, like the MP for Rendova/Tetepare has mentioned that by this particular year all households in his constituency will have a roof top, and also the MP for Vattu has also said that by the end of the year perhaps, all households in his constituency will be solar powered as well. But is your population not growing? You

will never, ever address this because population will continue to grow and you will never, never address and completely address the needs of our people as long as you do not address health issues regarding longer life, more children being born and so on. It is a fallacy to think we can satisfy the needs of everyone at a one particular point in time when forever there are children being born every day. But for the time being and for political rhetoric, perhaps it is worth making these statements for the current time.

With those few remarks, I thank you for your indulgence and I thank the Prime Minister for the motion for which I render my unreserved support to it. Thank you.

Sitting suspended for lunch break at 11.57 am

Parliament resumed at 2.15 pm

Hon IDURI: I rise to join my honorable colleagues who have spoken on this very motion moved by the honorable Prime Minister. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to make a very short statement in thanking his Excellency, President Ma of the Republic of China on Taiwan in response to his Excellency's address to Parliament on the 24th March, 2010. I must say that it is only fitting that this opportunity is granted to Members of Parliament so that we can individually express our heartfelt thanks to the President for visiting Solomon Islands.

First of all, I would like to thank his Excellency, George Chan, ROC's Ambassador to Solomon Islands and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and their good staffs for jointly organizing his Excellency's visit

Your Excellency, President Ma, I wish to personally register my most profound thanks for expressing your commitment to supporting Solomon Islands as you have well expressed in your address. Indeed, you have been a true and firm friend to our small island state through your continuous bilateral commitment and support in spite of the political pressures you have faced both in your country and in the international community regarding your country's status.

At the individual level, on behalf of my people of West Kwara'ae Constituency, I would like to deeply acknowledge your support through the bilateral arrangement of the Rural Constituency Development Funds. Your assistances have helped a lot in improving the livelihood my people and today, I can proudly say that there have already been visible changes in the lives of my people because of your assistance.

At this juncture, I now wish to conclude by saying that I will continue to render my unfailing support to the government of Solomon Islands in its continued effort in petitioning the international community to recognize the Republic of China on Taiwan as a sovereign state worthy of being a member of the United Nations General Assembly. To this end, I now resume my seat.

Hon. SOGAVARE: I want to join my other colleagues who have spoken to speak in support of the motion moved by honorable Prime Minister a few days ago, and that is for this Parliament to express its appreciation and thanks to the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan for visiting us and also for us to say thank you for the many assistances that the Government and the people of the Republic of China are giving to our country. I think this motion is straightforward and is fully supported by this House when eventually vote is taken on this motion. Of course, we only have a hard copy of the President's speech, which we are going to focus our contributions on. Of course, the Prime Minister's motion also highlighted issues that are also carried in the President's address to Parliament and so I take it that issues raised in the President's speech are what we are basing our contributions on in thanking the President and acknowledging his visit to our country.

A lot has been said and so I am not going to focus on my constituency as others have done, nonetheless, people from my constituency are also very thankful for the assistances that Taiwan is giving us. I think the Parliament is carried away with the RCDF and so it focuses only on that, but Taiwan has done more than that and not only the RCDF, and probably that is where the focus and attention is, so all the resources is thrown at defending Members of all the comments and contributions that have been made so far.

The President started off in highlighting the basis of the relationship of the two countries, and I do not think it is a mistake why Solomon Islands when it decided to establish diplomatic relations with the Republic of China and not Mainland China when that decision was made way back when we started talking about in 1981, which culminated in actually forging that relationship in 1983. I know it occupies the minds of our leaders at that time, and it was quite a very tough decision that our leaders have taken, but eventually they made that decision, and I think it is a decision we can look back in retrospect and say it is a straight decision.

The decision is based on our common belief in democracy, in human rights, freedom and peace. Some of us who have had the opportunity of becoming prime ministers in this country took the world podium; we stood there at the highest podium with Ministers of Foreign Affairs as well. When the Prime Minister is not there, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and sometimes the Deputy Prime Minister took the world podium and say to the world that we believe in the important principles of democracy, human rights, freedom and peace.

I think that is all we can do because we are small, we do not have an army, we do not have a navy, we do not have, I guess, people who are skilled in combat to go and sit down with big countries fighting wars in the name of democracy. The world spends billions of dollars; in fact, it runs into billions of dollars every day. The statistics are alarming when you put together the wars that are now fought in the name of

democracy, in the name of human rights and in the name of freedom and peace; it runs into billions of dollars every day to fight these wars.

We do not have armies to send to these wars, and so all we can do is to stand on world podiums, whether it be the World Health Organization that the Minister of Health used to go and stand up on and put the views of Solomon Islands to it that may be it is time the world starts to see the position of the Republic of China, as the Member for Temotu Nende said earlier on, and all of us know that the seat in the United Nations was actually first occupied by the Republic of China. It was in 1971 that the Republic of China was expelled from the United Nations, and gave that seat instead to the Peoples Republic of China.

I think small as we are, but I think we have the right to stand here and express how much we deplore that kind of decision. And it makes you start to question where the United Nations is going on this? If you go outside of the United Nations you would see this big plaque put up there talking about peace; we shall tread our sword, trash them, break them and all these fundamental principles that the United Nations and its various agencies stand for. And when it comes to the way the Republic of China is dealt with by none other than the United Nations that believes in these fundamental principles, you start to question it. Little countries like Solomon Islands will ask what really is happening here. Does the United Nations really believe on what it is saying? We fight for democracy, we fight wars that cost billions of dollars for democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan, and we continue to fight this never ending war in the Middle East, and now we are putting pressure on North Korea all in the name of democracy and we say these are rogue countries who do not believe in human rights and so the Western world said that we know better as to how this world should be organized.

Questions like that continue to linger around the minds of leaders in little countries, in fact, 23 of us that continue to take the world podium and tell the United Nations that it is about time you put your actions where your mouth is. If you believe in democracy then let us believe in it in action too. If human right is what we fight for then let us put our actions where our mouth is.

I am not embarrassed to stand here and say this. These big countries will go down as the biggest hypocrites in the world for saying something that we do not believe in. If democracy is what you are fighting for in Iraq then go and fight China to liberate the 23 million people of Taiwan who believe in democracy. But yet we are prepared to go and kill 500,000 people in Iraq, another several hundred thousand people in Afghanistan and you continue to perpetuate the Zionist war in the Middle. We are hypocrites. If democracy, human rights and freedom is what we believe in then I think there is need for some appropriate actions there. What I am saying here is that Solomon Islands will continue to stand in the world podium and will continue to say that and, of course, with only one qualification.

The President started with that, so I would like to emphasize that. The President recognizes the fact and which is an issue for us as well is world peace and unity continues to be the issue for the world and bring it to a smaller scale. Solomon Islands has its own problems and issue in regards to peace and national unity. This will continue to be a serious issue for Solomon Islands, and that calls on us leaders at the dying stage of this house and another house that is coming that peace, national unity and issues like that will continue to be very important issues for us, and the President emphasized that at the global scene and how the Republic of China on Taiwan relates to it, is something that is very relevant to us.

In regards to the RCDF and the Millennium Fund, as the Member for Temotu rightly pointed out this Parliament is not answerable to the media, and for us Members of Parliament to stand up here and drag Parliament in debate against the media is bringing this Parliament too low. Although the media is an indication of something not really right with the thinking of people, what should encourage us to do is to take some serious inward look on why people come up with statements like that, and the place to explain it, is to explain it to people in our own constituencies because they are the people who are going to vote for us and those people living here in Honiara. Just that we labor this Parliament in trying to debate against people writing articles in the newspapers, which is dragging this Parliament too low.

I am a bit confused and that is a direct challenge to Government Backbenchers and Ministers on some of the issues. In fact, the statement made by the Minister of Health in denying what the media said about some Members of Parliament wanting to revolt against the government because of non-payment of some dues, if we labor ourselves in trying to defend ourselves then something is really very wrong because we are hearing different stories. When we stand up here on the floor of Parliament we must say things that are true.

I am hearing something and I want to appeal to whoever has such thoughts to grow up and act like leaders. There are people who do not want to support government bills coming to this Parliament if no payment is made. That is not right so let us develop some mature attitude. I am hearing that, I mean we are sitting in the kitchen outside there and we hear stories like “we are not going to support those bills because payments like this and that are not being paid”. And I do not know how many more bills are still coming to this Parliament, maybe five or six or whatever. If it is government business, let us see the merits in which it is brought into this Parliament. If it is good for us, we support it because we are decision makers, and not support or not support it on the grounds that some dues are not paid to us. It is about time this Parliament grows up and be mature.

Solomon Islands effort to convince the international community to admit Taiwan to various arms of the United Nations and be part of the United Nations (the UN family) is something that we continue to do. But the onus is really on the shoulders of

23 million people of Taiwan, and not us here in Solomon Islands. We entered diplomatic relations way back in 1983, and these are the agenda items, agenda between our diplomatic relations. We fought for the readmission of Taiwan to the United Nations and to the various agencies of the United Nations.

What we are saying here is that today we can talk like this, but the future of Taiwan and how it wants to relate to Mainland China lies squarely on the shoulders of the people of the Republic of China. Solomon Islands as a country will only go along with the decisions of the people of Taiwan. We will cry if we hit our heads against the brick wall all the time. Probably our battle is seen by the outside world as fighting a losing battle. If I understand correctly the rationale behind why we entered into diplomatic relations with Taiwan is because of the values and principles that hold despite whatever happens. But it would only come to a place where Solomon Islands has to make some serious decisions when the people of Taiwan themselves say that they want to go this way. It was KMT when we entered into diplomatic relations with Taiwan during your time, Mr. Speaker, and it was KMT all along until 10 years ago when the people of Taiwan at that time said that they have not been aggressive enough in pursuing this agenda because the KMT started to become slack, and so the people of Taiwan said let us bring in a government that will pursue this thing with a bit more aggressiveness and so they brought in the DPP.

The agenda at that time was very, very hot. As I said we only support the agendas, the programs and direction the Government on Taiwan is pursuing. We have no agenda, our agenda is with them. When the Government of Taiwan pursued that aggressive agenda, all the allies in the world really worked along with Taiwan in pursuing that very, very aggressive agenda to win more allies to join these small 23 countries that based our relationship on the principles and values as mentioned previously. The people of Taiwan have spoken loud and clear again in the last election by saying that they no longer wanted to pursue that agenda aggressively. The onus is really on Taiwan to let its allies know where we are going on this issue so that we can reorganize ourselves accordingly. If the agenda of self-determination is no longer the issue, then tell us so, so that we can adjust accordingly as well.

What I am saying here is that we can say whatever we want to say in here but the future of Taiwan and Mainland China and how we, the 23 countries should relate to that depends entirely on the way the 23 million people of Taiwan decide on their future.

On the Cross Straits policy, the President told us very clearly that he wants to advance a more peaceful reconciliatory agenda across the Straits. Now, it would not be really proper for this House to draw an analogy there because it has to be understood in their context, be understood that we have issues with other countries. It is understood that the President of Taiwan would have to take that line of action or that policy direction because Taiwan is not a sovereign country as far as the world is concerned.

Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations; the United Nations does not recognize Taiwan as a country.

Solomon Islands is different, it is a small country but we have one vote in the United Nations; we are a member of the United Nations and recognized as a sovereign government, a sovereign country. The issues are different as well between us and the countries in the regions that if any analogy is to be drawn there then it is a very wrong analogy. The issues are different and the context there is also different. What we admired President Ma of is the new policy direction he is taking because that is what he feels and probably what the people of Taiwan, the 23million people of Taiwan believes is the direction they should be taking because there is so much strain in the relationship between the China Straits. I think this is how we should approach this agenda too. If the ultimate agenda is still fighting for self determination then we really need to know as allies as to where this kind of approach is going.

The point the Member for Temotu raised earlier on that it is a give and take situation is very true. We have been receiving aid money from our friends and we got carried away with it that we forget how much we actually give as a country. An analysis by somebody, an expert has given us in Caucus one time revealed that we should be getting about \$3billion from the development of our tuna resource if we pursue the policy of downstream processing. That is what we should be getting from downstream processing of our tuna every year, \$3billion, and probably more than that. Okay, we appreciate that this is still in the agenda of both governments who want to see that eventually achieved. But right now we only receive a very small amount in terms of our tuna because we are only paid access fee of fishing boats coming to harvest our fish, and taking those fishes back with them, and go to with are the benefits of downstream processing than all the other benefits this country should be getting.

What we are saying here is that, that is an issue we should develop further with not only Taiwan, but Korea, Japan and other countries that have access licenses to fish in our waters. If it is true that they are our real friends then that is the direction we should continue to aggressively pursue with those countries. It is good that you are giving us money but that is not really good. Going back to the Chinese proverb that you give fish to somebody he will come back and ask you fish; this comes from Confucius himself, but if you give him a fishing line he will fish for himself. We were like that in real sense. Ongoing discussions with them must continue to happen so that eventually those friends that come to harvest our fish here can be seen by us setting up downstream processes facilities in Solomon Islands, so that we benefit fully from our resources. Right now probably we give more than what we are receiving but nonetheless we are thankful for what we have been taking. And so I fully endorse that it is a give and take thing, and I would like to see that policy direction pursued further.

Climate change is another issue raised by the President, which is true and a little country like Solomon Islands has all the reasons to be concerned because of our

smallness. The Copenhagen negotiations collapsed on its face. I do not know the ins and outs of the discussions that were held, maybe the Minister of Environment may want to elaborate on what the discussions were and the positions of the small countries. But I understand that the Forum countries were supposed to put together a position on this to be presented during the discussions. So how the big countries took that presentation is something the Minister can brief us on.

But this whole thing about climate change and, of course, the policy strategies Taiwan is taking to encourage its allies to go into solar lighting is something that we are thankful for. But the issue on climate change itself and the emission of greenhouse gas is something that needs a lot of inward look by every country. We hear emission rates by big countries such as Taiwan, which is only 1% of the world emission, but they went ahead and take the opportunity of coming up with a strategy to help and focus on its allies.

I think statistics are still not clear with us, and I think in future negotiations with big countries on this issue, we need to be clear with our position. I say this because when I was still Prime Minister and we went to the UNGA, small countries were called to a meeting and when I looked around I can see that these are all countries that participate in logging, the logger countries. That person who took us to the meeting stood in front and asked us how many of us are signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, and all of us raised our eyes, and he asked why did you sign the Kyoto Protocol? All of us did not have any answer for that question, we all just looked at each, and he said, 'you guys, do you have statistics, you guys put together emit more greenhouse gas into the atmosphere than the bigger countries per capita'. He put it down to us as we are fast depleting our forest resources, and that is a fastest way of emitting greenhouse gas. We are all not scientists and so we just sit down and looked at each other, and we cannot answer him. But he came out with all the scientific evidence and all that. Some of us who were sitting down later on said that in future negotiations we really need to put up some positions and really understand ourselves first before we go to these big negotiations so that we can say to the world that we only emit this much, then probably we would have a position. But because what those bigger countries are doing is affecting us. We are the ones who suffer most and they said that the logging activities we are doing adds to the destructions of our environment. I think it does not need much evidence to prove this during floods. Before you see rivers behave themselves by following the right paths they are supposed to follow. Now, the rivers just break through the bushes because of many things stopping their paths and so we are having problems with it.

What I am saying here is that maybe the relevant Ministry should give us the picture as to where we are in our contribution to greenhouse gas emission, how much in forestry, how much in mining, how much in agriculture and how much in the fisheries sector or whatever that these are emitting so that we know our position. We

asked for this statistic quite awhile ago when we had some discussions on environment and we were promised to be given some day, probably this information will be provided in the pigeonholes eventually so that leaders know exactly where we are on this issue. But otherwise we are thankful to Taiwan for taking steps to work with its allies on this issue. Temotu Vattu, maybe his whole constituency will go solar panel at the end of this term, and the challenge posed by Temotu Nende is that we have new generations coming in, so probably he will look at how to sustain that, to continue providing solar panels for his people.

I think that is all I would like to say in response as my contribution to all the words of thanks that we are all putting together to say to the President that we are very happy of his visit and also for the continued assistance given to us. But, of course, there are rooms to continue to improve this relationship and the benefits that accrue as a result of that relationship that comes out very clearly from some statements that were made today. But in saying these, I support this motion.

Mr. TANEKO: I also want to contribute on this very important motion to give my support on the motion moved by the honorable Prime Minister that an address be presented to his Excellency, President Ma of the Republic of China on Taiwan in reply to his Excellency's address to Parliament. "We the National Parliament of Solomon Islands here assembled to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for your Excellency's visit and address to Parliament on Thursday 25th March 2010, and for the assistance the Republic of China on Taiwan continues to provide to the Parliament, the Government and the people of Solomon Islands".

I believe everyone in this House who has contributed to the motion, all give their great appreciation of his Excellency's visit to our beloved country Solomon Islands. President Ma's visit was highlighted in the newspapers and the region as a whole. I believe what Taiwan has given in the region, especially to our country, Solomon Islands cannot be denied. We cannot deny the great support that Taiwan is giving and is showing us, a nation of 23million people and on the other hand considers the nation of Solomon Islands with its 500,000 plus people.

In saying that, I can see that this nation of Taiwan is very concerned about us and that is why its President visited us by physically coming here and showing us his great support for the future of the nation of Solomon Islands since it established diplomatic ties with us some 27 years ago, way back in 1983. Taiwan is developing friendship, democracy, freedom and peace in our two countries.

Having said these, we as a nation and its people must be partnership in development. We have to have the spirit of ownership in democracy in order for development to be fair. I thank Taiwan for its great support that it continued to give us in terms of financial assistance, both for national development and rural constituency development. But that is not the end of its support. In the future development of this

nation, there is a time period for Taiwan's money to finish. Infrastructures can erode but whilst having this opportunity that a country shows to us and supports us. Every time I mentioned about having a solid partnership in development, whatever situation and circumstance that will come, we must respect the money that is injected to develop this nation of Solomon Islands.

I do not want to mention the things we can do, but especially when money is injected and budgeted for in the areas of education, school, health, roads, bridges, and you name them, those are developments that a country is giving us to develop our country.

I want to give my congratulations and support on behalf of my people that the world is starting to recognize Taiwan, in particular the World Health Organization for which Taiwan is now becoming a member of in the United Nations. Taiwan has been struggling for recognition; it has been trying to be in partnership in developments throughout the world for its 23million people, to be somebody to be vocal within the Union body. Congratulations, and I thank the Solomon Islands Government for its support to Taiwan. I was once upon a time a Minister for Health and I went to Geneva and there was being able to be vocal to the WHO supporting Taiwan to be part of the union body, to be vocal in the development on behalf of their people. I thank the current Minister for always working hard for Taiwan to be recognized in this world organization body. I thank Solomon Islands, and let us continue with our support for Taiwan.

As others have mentioned, development is a give and take thing, where they bless us and we bless them as already mentioned. The second point, I also want to thank Taiwan on its improvement of the Cross Straits relationship with Mainland China so that peace and security is developed in the Asia Pacific region. Some of us who have had the chance of visiting Taiwan would look down from the mountains and see the Pacific Ocean, this big open mass of sea that is needed to be controlled and manned at that level, but which is lacking. I am very happy that such a country looks after us with its right people, trained officers for security purposes and peace and stability in our country. I thank Taiwan for that. Not only that, but some countries in the Pacific region, our big brothers like New Zealand and Australia who are not one must know that this is a partnership arrangement. But today it is our time to thank Taiwan and so I am happy. That is on improvement to the Cross Straits relationship.

I also want to thank Taiwan on behalf of my people for the great support that all of us are receiving from Taiwan. The people in this nation and Members of Parliament have seen already that Shortlands Shipping is seed money from Taiwan, \$300,000. I thank the Solomon Islands Government for giving me \$1.2 million, which is a total of \$1.5million and that is vision. There are three things here: vision, faith and action can move mountains but a lot of us in here do not believe this. Ministers concerned in the development area must hear this, and I repeat that vision, faith and action; these three

things go together. If we do not have these three then we better pack our bags, go home and sleep for we are not supposed to be here; we are not supposed to be here and be vocal because we have no vision to change the nation of Solomon Islands. Thank you Taiwan for giving me \$300,000 and now we own two ships for the Shortlands Constituency. Thank you, and now we are going for a third ship. If it is development I would have gone out from here, and the people who are in here who really mean development would have given me a cheque to support me to go and deliver my third vessel, because I need the money. But if you do not give me I can make it happen as well, and it is happening and is coming.

We are talking here to thank Taiwan for the reality of the seed money given to us. When you plant a crop all you need is a seed. When you want a coconut, which is my symbol, I came into this house with the symbol of a coconut seed because when you plant one coconut seed you would get more than 300 fruits on top and when these fruits become dry you can plant another 300 coconut trees as well. These people do not believe on this. That is a practical action. I want to say here that we will not be able to satisfy everyone. Some of us in here are saying, people in our constituencies are saying that what Taiwan is giving us is big money. No, there is need for more to come. We need more ships, we need more roads, we need more schools but we are not really telling the truth in here. There is a need for the island nation, Solomon Island is scattered, nine provinces are scattered where you need a bridge to go those places and people to travel.

I thank the Lord Almighty because through Taiwan I have two vessels, which are bridging the island of Shortlands and my people can come to Honiara. The children, women, the blind & crippled can now come to Honiara, praise the Lord! This is the reality of development but some Ministers here do not understand the reality of development.

May I quote the Scriptures, which goes like, "If you have to choose between good reputation and great wealth, choose good reputation". That quotation is from the book of Proverbs 22:1. It is a bit tough if we have to choose between good reputation and wealth, but the Holy Book says, 'choose a good reputation'. That is a very difficult thing to choose. There is a great future to go and more to come. But we have to have our strategic plan to be right.

Last night I was watching the TV, and I saw the message coming that in 2012 the world will end. Are you prepared? Are we prepared? If the world ends that year, are we prepared? This is a message to all of us, the 50 Members of Parliament. Let us focus our nation with the right strategy, in right motives and characters. There is a saying in the book of Proverbs that your character is your destiny; my character is my destiny. The future is in the hands of the Almighty supreme.

I thank Taiwan for channeling its blessing through its Ambassador here in Solomon Islands knowing very well that its support through national projects, through

constituency developments will reach our people directly and indirectly. Indirectly, I can mention one example; Taiwan gave me \$300,000 for shipping, and now the ship is serving Malaita Province and Western Province but all the Western Members here are not supporting me. They believe that we need a bridge to support but they did not support me. Even the executive in Gizo does not support me. What are we talking about here? The reality is when you see the vision, tangible asset, tangible where you can touch it, you can smell it, and you can see it with your eye - tangible. And yet in here, the 50 Members do not believe what this man who has a vision is doing it but they do not believe in the vision.

Let us move, let us move because Solomon Islands is beautiful, and I can give you one example of this. Yesterday I talked about the Mbalalae war relics. An allocation was made under tourist development for \$500,000. I understand that the Member of Parliament should utilize that allocation so that his vision can materialize. Sorry, forgive me, it did not come through me and so it did not materialize. Therefore, what I did was build a small home stay and Japanese people went there and spent two days there and some people earned \$6,000 just in two days. That is development, home stay development. I cannot see all the projects. Even the Ministry did not believe a vision that somebody has to look after those war relics and bring in foreign people who are going to bring in with them foreign currencies in their pockets. They did not believe that because the vision was not supported. What are we talking about in here? Taiwan is ready to pour in development funds. Thank you Minister for Rural Livelihood; my \$1million goes right to people whose names appear there but yet people in Shortlands are still not happy with Taneko. I paid them all, cheques were paid to every member who is due to be paid according to Proverbs 3:27 which says, *"don't say no to him give"* but yet they are not happy. Why? Because the Bible says be content, be happy with the little blessings that we have but when you give him \$5,000, next time he comes around and he is going to ask you another \$10,000 or \$20,000 more. This is a fact. Am I right? Members, I am talking now and people are watching us, but I want to say that when we give him \$1,000 next time he comes crying saying it is not enough, he needs some more bags of rice, he wants some more tickets and so on. No, there are others as well that need help. We in here are representing many Solomon Islanders as national leaders. But we do not believe in that. Even we know, those of us in here that we Members of Parliament are legislators. I have been saying this. The system corrupts us. You are talking about corruption, but it is the system that is corrupt. If all Taiwan money goes straight to schools, go straight to clinics, go straight to the roads, it is not given to the MPs, what is wrong with that? What is wrong with that? We have been talking in here but we are not telling the truth. We do not have to receive those moneys, they give me headache. I am not an administrator. If you are talking about development then say so, so that it goes straight to farms, to fisheries, to roads, to classrooms and there is no need to give it to Members of Parliament because people are talking about us, finger pointing

us in the newspapers and in other mediums. Oh, maybe if you have a gun you would have shot me straightaway. Sorry, I withdraw that one. I am saying this because this is our only opportunity to talk about the Taiwan funds. The Taiwan fund is very good money but it is not finished there. Taiwan is so kind to give us money and we give it to our people. But misappropriation comes about when we give you the money and you go and misuse it. We give you thousands of dollars and you got drunk with it. That is not right. We give you the money and you go and buy two or three cartons of beer then that is wrong. We give you goods because you say you want to be a businessman, and that is good, praise God. But I am not God, I cannot judge you, but when I will give you \$10,000 or \$20, 000 worth of goods for you to be a businessman but if you go and just supply to your wantoks, do not blame the honorable Member. You do not blame the honorable Members because you are misappropriating the funds. What is needed maybe is legislation in here that if someone misuses the money given by his/her honorable Member then he/she must get the consequence for misusing the money because the honorable Member passes on the money into your hands.

I very much appreciate this visit by the President of Taiwan as it signifies that somebody, a brother, a neighbor who lives miles away is concerned about Solomon Islands. On behalf of my people of Shortlands, the little that we receive, I tried my very best that people get it and utilize it, accounted for it properly, and use it for development. From where I come from, I as the Member for Shortlands support this motion because it is justified. Some constituencies have more population but we receive the same amount. I think the formula must be changed so that a constituency with a much bigger population receives a bigger amount so that he feeds his people, only then would there be justice. There is no need to increase the number of Members to come in here but just increase the funding to the more populated constituencies.

With these few remarks, I thank Taiwan as a true partner and friend. Let us continue with this diplomatic relations, strengthen this better friendship so that the Pacific Region that looks after us can enjoy it. I support the motion.

Mr OLAVAE: Thank you for allowing the floor for me to contribute briefly towards this motion moved by the Prime Minister. Before I briefly contribute towards this motion, I take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister who has seen fit for us to elaborate further on this motion so that we convey our sincere thanks and gratitude on behalf of the people of Solomon Islands to thank President Ma for his address to Parliament. The content of the motion had been adhered to by all of the MPs who are sitting down right here.

I, on behalf of my people of South Vella La Vella, convey our sincere thanks to President Ma who contributed so significantly towards what Taiwan has been doing and will be doing in assisting Solomon Islands financially in the future. So far we have been receiving huge amounts of financial assistance from Taiwan since signing

diplomatic ties with Taiwan 27 years ago. This is the time to commend Taiwan for what it has been rendering to us financially to assist and reinforce all sectors that have been weak for the last 30 or so donkey years.

In regards to the give and take situation we have been in for the last 27 years, as some speakers who have contributed earlier on stated, there is no such thing as free lunch. When somebody wants to get something out of you, he will be your sweet darling diplomatically, politically or what have you. That is why at this juncture, may I take this opportunity again to thank the Taiwanese Government for what it has been rendering financially to this country's economy towards our rural road development strategies, the financial support it has been supplementing all of us. No one will deny the fact that Taiwan has done a great job financially to each one of us, and it is up to you or it is up to the Government to take stock of what each MP has done with all those funds that have been injected into your constituency accounts.

The policy of the Taiwanese Government is truly commendable and must be saluted. There is no doubt that all of the MPs who are sitting down right here are happy and content with what Taiwan has been rendering to us. I know that most MPs who have contributed earlier on have already gone out because I know they are content with what they heard from other colleagues who have spoken earlier.

Finally, funding from the Republic of China has been assisting Solomon Islanders and has been assisting our constituency, the South Vella La Vella Constituency so on behalf of my people and my chiefs, there has been formidable difference in our constituency in terms of building our economic centres with Taiwanese funding. We believe in doing trading, and trade and tourism related activities have emerged through funding from Taiwan because we know that we cannot continue asking Taiwan all the time to help us, but we have to make sure that funds received from Taiwan must be utilized in building economic stimulus for our constituency because all the ingredients for making multiple effects into rural macro economics have been lying idle, and that is why I am very happy with Taiwan for assisting us on that so that we realize our rural economy, so that foreign exchange earnings filter into our rural economy because that is what we believe in. We want supplementation of funds from Taiwan all year round so that those rural macro economics can be realized and fruition in the future.

That has been lacking in some constituencies maybe, but it depends on each one of you to continue with your own visions because all of us have been living in our small islands of economy because that is how our Almighty blessed us with, the scatteredness of our islands, which no one will deny. Even any policies of the Government cannot change the scatteredness of our islands. What is needed is to put the right formula, to decentralize a budget package if a new government comes in. Taiwan will always supplement but it is up to the new government in the future to come up with a new

decentralization budget package so that each constituency comes up with its own economic strategy, so that the people work rather than relying on the government.

For the last 30 years government driven policies have not worked, and they will never work so let us trust our people who are our private sectors and who can participate in macro economics, the productive sector, all the ingredients to make the rural economy to be revitalized or reinvigorated have along been with the people. You need to have proper decentralization budget package for each constituency. This supplementation by Taiwan is only a supplementation but the Government has to take the lead. Money is not a problem, because it is up to us to fiddle around with that recurrent budget that we have been expending, year after year.

If the PPP can come and lead this country next year or Our Party or which leader who has the same vision, a minimum of \$5million, the government has to allocate such funds. Because what we have been praising Taiwan for is only \$1million which is only enough for school fees and buying bags of rice for the people, which is political money and is not for development purposes, it is political money for you to come back so that you come up with better strategies. When you want to talk about rural economy you put \$5million into it before you can realize any foreign exchange earnings.

All of us, I know, so far have been spending the Livelihood Funds and the \$1million ROC funding on imported items. This \$2million, what have you done with it, there is no foreign exchange earnings from this money. We only buy solar, tanks, school fees and these things are not helping the rural economy to grow, it is not helping our foreign exchange earnings. If you want a rural advanced economic then you put \$3million on top before you can talk about rural development and rural advancement. Taiwan money is political money because you have not done anything with it. We are only paying people with this money so that we come back in the next election. This is the truth I am talking about.

The government has to make sure that if it wants to change this country, put a minimum of \$5million for each constituency. This is not for Members to hold onto it, but it must be given for specific infrastructures or it can be a good working capital to buy copra, cocoa and timber. Because what people have in the rural areas needs a minimum of \$2million before you can meet the demand for buying of copra, cocoa and timber. A lot of people are already developed, the products are there but there is no money to buy, there is not enough capital to buy products. That is the problem.

That is why I praise Taiwan but Taiwan is not going to solve most of our problems. It is just here to supplement our struggles but if we do not have the vision or a model, then I am sorry because the same private sector that is in Honiara will take all the money, it is a boomerang money somehow and it will continue to be a boomerang fund if we do not change this trend.

Once again, I take this opportunity on behalf of my people of South Vella La Vella to thank Taiwan. I think we are in the dying hours of the house when we will all

be going out and some of us may come back and some of us will be going out altogether. Let me once again thank the Government and people of Taiwan for its financial assistance it has been rendering to all of us in here. We will continue to support Taiwan as we go along, especially a new government that may come in July/August will continue to maintain the diplomatic ties with Taiwan. With this, I take my seat.

Hon HAOMAE: Thank you, and I shall be very brief. At the outset I would like to thank the honorable Prime Minister for moving this important motion. It is fitting and proper that the Prime Minister moves this motion, and the motion is asking Parliament that we, the National Parliament of Solomon Islands here assembled wish to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for Your Excellency President Ma's visit and address to Parliament on Thursday 25th March 2010, and for the assistance the Republic of China on Taiwan continues to provide to the Parliament, the government and the people of Solomon Islands. My contribution will concentrate on the principles of the motion, and it is in two parts.

First is the visit part of it, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency, President Ma for visiting Solomon Islands as it was an important visit. The visit was preceded by the visit of the Foreign Minister of the Republic of China on Taiwan and subsequently the Director General of the National Security authority in Taiwan. It was an important visit preceded by two other advanced teams.

During the President's visit, there was also a visit by two naval vessels from Taiwan. This is also important because as you know the cost of naval vessels traveling from Taiwan to Solomon Island is quite significant, it range in millions of dollars. I also would like to thank that particular Ministry in Taiwan for dispatching those two vessels to Solomon Islands and for the performances they made at Lawson Tama, and in that regard I would like to thank His Excellency the Governor General for the invitation extended to His Excellency, the President of Taiwan for visiting the country and also the Prime Minister for being an excellent host to the President in his capacity as the head of government and all those who are involved in the visit: the Government House, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries that were involved in the visit, and also the Embassy of the Republic of China, Taiwan based in Honiara and their technical teams. They have done a very excellent work. I also thank school children who were eager to see President Ma when he was here in Honiara.

The visit lasted two days. As you would know some of the Pacific Allies that President Ma visited last about five hours or half a day, but the fact that the visit to Solomon Islands lasted two days and some more hours, underlies the importance that Taiwan attaches to this diplomatic relation and its relations to Solomon Islands, and the

relationship between Solomon Islands and the Republic of China on Taiwan remains solid.

In terms of the address that the President gave to Parliament, he talked about flexible diplomacy. There were some suggestions made in various quarters, both in Solomon Islands and outside of Solomon Islands that the improvement of relations across the Taiwan Strait could lead to other things. But let me quote to you what His Excellency President Ma actually said when he delivered the speech. He said, 'Taiwan's improving relations with Mainland China will not affect the relations we enjoy with our diplomatic allies. On the contrary, Taiwan is more willing than ever to come up with concrete measures that strengthen our bilateral cooperation'. During the visit the President had bilateral discussions with the honorable Prime Minister. If we can sum up the conduct of diplomacy and its new policy as announced by the President on the Cross Strait relations, I would like to take that assurance by the President when he addressed Parliament.

Let me come to another thing the President said during the address, and was quoted by my colleague, the Member for Temotu Nende, and on expectations. First of all, he said "we are eager to share our valuable development experience with our allies, particularly the knowledge and skills accumulated during the process. After all, while tangible resources are easily depleted, knowledge and skills can create unlimited possibilities. Secondly, our cooperation projects suit local conditions and meet the real needs of the people". The Member for Temotu Nende referred to building a university that we should sort of tap some of these resources for that particular purpose. But if you look at industrialized countries like Japan, they have a double approach in that whilst building their own higher institutions they also dispatch their students to train in other countries' higher learning institutions with the objective of building whatever they plan, whether it is industrialization or the philosophy of self help or things like that.

In terms of university, one of the great law universities in the United States, the Yale University started with one student, and so we should make an approach that is suitable for Solomon Islands, for example, whether we should build one school first as a university and then proceed from there. This is only food for thought at this particular time.

In speaking about knowledge and experience, the President also talked about the possibility of Taiwan building a solar centre in Solomon Islands. There are advantages in advancing solar technology in Solomon Islands. The sun is always there, nobody claims the sun. If you have hydro, it is alright but you will have to go through land negotiations, river negotiations, the river snakes or zigzags through many tribal owned lands and hence in the context of Solomon Islands, you would have to go through those negotiations and there are claims laid to those resources. But the sun, nobody claims the sun, maybe because it is too far for anyone to claim it and so power from the sun if

harnessed properly, it will cut off all the other encumbrances and difficulties that we may have.

The suggestion by Taiwan to build a solar centre in Solomon Islands is a good suggestion. The President said, and I would like to quote, “afterwards we plan to establish a solar powered training and maintenance centre so as to train skilled workers and create job opportunities. We hope this will enable the people of Solomon Islands to understand the advantages of solar power, which can reduce the cost of energy imports, save foreign reserves and conserve the environment by saving energy and reducing carbon emissions and therefore we can create a win-win situation among our parts. That is what the President said, and I was sort of expanding the fact that nobody claims the sun. It seems to be a universal energy that can be harnessed by almost everyone that the sun shines upon.

In terms of development assistance given for purpose of rural development or to advance the policy of rural advancement, the views of the rural people can be summarized in the journey that the chief from Isabel took from Isabel to Honiara to present donation to the Taiwanese Technical Team for purposes of assistance after Typhoon Marokot hit Taiwan. I think we can summarize the people’s feelings and the people’s views on the development assistance that is being channeled through the rural communities in that particular example alone. The gratefulness and thankfulness for the development assistance being given to all constituencies throughout the four corners of this country can be summarized in that particular journey taken by the chief from Isabel. He went through a couple of troubles across the sea to present his token of appreciation to Taiwan when Typhoon Marakot badly affected the people of Taiwan. We can argue for or against the particular assistance that the Republic of China give to Solomon Islands, but you cannot argue against that journey. Thank you, and I support the motion.

Mr. KENGAVA: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to also briefly contribute to the motion by the Prime Minister. First, I thank the Prime Minister in moving the motion to allow us Members express our opinion on the address made by His Excellency Ma of the Republic of China.

First of all, I totally agree that the President’s state visit is more meaningful to this country if instead the six allies went to a forum and only the Government leaders attended that forum. I think a state visit is more meaningful to us and therefore it causes us today to debate the President’s speech. The fact that he came to Solomon Islands means that a close friend, a strong friend of Solomon Islands actually came out to reach the people of this nation, and we can hear, feel and see for ourselves that the people of the Republic of China do care about their bilateral friends. Last week, I am sure the Solomon Islands Government experienced the presence of a state leader.

The address made in Parliament by the President is right and fitting, and I am sure Solomon Islands accorded the head of state, a great opportunity to talk to Solomon Islands, especially to all of us Members of Parliament because after all we are the ones who actually received directly the financial assistance of \$1million each for a constituency, and it is right and fitting the President talked to us so that we know what the future plan is, its policy change and what it thinks about its future relationship with Solomon Islands.

I think the Republic of China on Taiwan's assistance, in my view, cannot match any other donor funding to this country because of two reasons. The first is, and I support what the Member of Temotu Nende said that probably the Republic of China is the only bilateral or donor partner that gave money directly to the consolidated fund through appropriation. I think this is a respect of our Constitution and respect us leaders also and the Government so that you can have the right and the freedom on how to use that donated money to you. We do not see any Taiwanese or non government organizations or aid agencies in the rural areas implementing projects, building water supplies, clinics, etc. Whilst those are good, sometimes they tend to contradict what we are doing in the villages. Because not only do they build projects but at the same time they hold workshops, and I think in terms of looking at what they are saying to the people while doing projects, they tend to also influence people to think otherwise. I think the Republic of China is doing the right thing by giving funds directly to the consolidated fund.

The second point is, you would see that funding from the Republic of China on Taiwan reaches the people directly, the 90% of our people in the rural areas through Members of Parliament when we provided them with cash, materials, various projects, training and humanitarian assistance. We cannot rule out the fact that through this funding people in the rural areas actually receive assistance. But we always would expect criticisms from people in our communities. But I for one see criticism in the media or by the public as healthy because once criticisms are positive and correctional, I accept them because it helps my people, myself and this country on leadership to improve on it. But if criticisms are negative and detrimental to people's wellbeing and the leadership of this nation, then I do not accept such criticisms. And at this point I would like to say something about the media. I think the media plays a great part in the development of any nation. Although Parliament is not accountable to the media, which is correct and fitting, as a leader I would like to state that a country, its leaders and its people are as good and united as the media tells the people, the region and the world. It is very important because today the media is very important in putting together a nation or breaking it up. I say this because when there is more negative reporting on how Members of Parliament use funds on what is going on in this country, then people of this nation will think negatively about everything and that we are not moving anywhere, and someone else benefits from that. If more positive reporting is

made about developments that Members of Parliament are doing, what leaders of churches, the government and the people themselves are doing, we will also see people have positive thinking about the future of this country.

I think it is time, especially now that the time of election is coming that the media must change its attitude of reporting on what is going on in this country. It must report more on the good things that are happening in this country; the developments, the progresses, the happenings, the gatherings and the joys that are happening in the communities.

Sometimes Members of Parliament do not have the privilege of being reported on their own developments. If you look at the non government organizations, every single tank, every single clinic, every single water supply that is opened, you would see them front page in the newspapers being reported upon in regards to what they have done in the rural areas, as if Members of Parliament are not doing the same thing. I think all of us are doing more than what the NGOs are doing. It is time that reporters go down to the villages and find out what Members of Parliament are doing there in the villages and the constituencies.

Sometimes when I look at the newspapers, our local news, about 90 percent of the local news is all negative news, things that are not good for this country. It is talking about crimes, deaths, rape, killing, stealing, police arrests, and nothing about the good things happening in this country such as developments, schools being built, the gatherings, the fundraisings, the sporting activities, which are positive things that should be reported on. In my view, I think the media has the responsibility of progressing or destroying this country. If it wants to see its Members of Parliament improving in the future, if it wants to see future governments in this country progressing, if it wants to see Solomon Islands as a nation moving ahead, then it must take a positive attitude and report on good developments that are happening in this country; turn its news into 80% positive news and 20% negative news, and you will see Solomon Islands, the new generation, the students, the children will think much better and positive about our leadership.

Today, it saddens me to know that people in the villages are more confident and trust the NGOs and foreigners more than Members of Parliament, the leaders whom they elect into this Parliament. There must be a turnaround to this.

I think it is the responsibility of the media today to look more into what their leaders are doing for their people to build up positive thinking in the rural area so that the coming election will be that of a positive election, and not a negative one.

I want to register here that it is a shame reading from one of the leading print medias an editorial made, which to me is a very low esteem way of comment during the visit of His Excellency about the RCDF. This is not the way, in my view, culturally and also traditionally. I think we are putting ourselves too low by telling somebody we are not happy about how their money is used in this country. I think it is time that we also

look at other means to counter the negative approach prevalent in this country. I know there are outside forces, in my own feeling that are working stealthily to dislocate the trust and confidence that our people have in our leadership in this country because they want to be seen as the savior of this country themselves. But we are the saviors of this country, the leaders of this nation. We build our own country, we decide for it, not outside people. I think it is about time that maybe the Housing Committee in the next Parliament should think about having its own newsletter, newspaper to inform our people what Parliament is doing for this country. Or maybe the government should revive the news drum informing the nation developments the Government is doing rather than depending on private papers. We must balance information going out to people in the rural areas.

Whilst saying this, I respect the freedom of the press, but I think the freedom of press does not mean destroying this country and building negative attitudes. We must build this country by bringing in positive attitudes. And the coming elections are very important for Solomon Islanders to have a positive attitude when they go to the elections. Despite criticisms made on the RCDF or whatever funding by the ROC on Taiwan has made to this country, there is consolation that the President's address to this country tells us that the Republic of China's foreign policy is also changing, it changes with time.

There are two very important points raised by the President that I want to reiterate here, and that is the President has three noes he made in an interview to a print newspaper, but I could only remember two of the noes. I remember when he was asked about his government's new stand on the Cross Straits relations, the President said he has three noes, and the first no is no unification, no independence, the other no I forgot. But this means that the current government, although it mends its relationship closer to Mainland China, it has its own interests, its own policies to stand to. As the Leader of the Opposition had said, it must listen to its 23 million people, and this is very important.

The second point is the policy on how aid is given to its allies and non-allies. The three principles of that is that it must be legal, it must be legitimate project and effectiveness on how aid money is being used. To me, this means that the Republic of China will always remain as Solomon Islands bilateral friend. Therefore, in my brief contribution I would like to ask about the future of Solomon Islands and the Republic of China. I think our bilateral relations with the Republic of China, in my view, should remain but we must monitor the development of the Cross China Straits so that our foreign relations or foreign policy also keep up with the change that is happening between the two Chinas.

Meanwhile, let us not sit down and be complacent or be too happy about the \$1million given by ROC to the constituencies through us as custodians of the RCDF, the Millennium Development Fund and the ROC Micro funds. Instead with the

relationship now getting stronger and stronger, solid as ever as we have heard, I think it is now time that the new government that comes into power must move a step ahead, move another level in the area of agriculture, education and technical assistance. I think these are the three areas, in my view, that we should look more strongly at strengthening our relationship now. The RCDF is what is given directly to Members of Parliament until such time maybe the policy is changed so that Members of Parliament do not have to be worried about the RCDF but instead allow the Ministry of Rural Development to deal with like the livelihood funds.

On the area of agriculture, I think it is now time to start look at what we want the KGVII Demonstration Farm to be like in the next five to six years' time. My simple opinion is that I think it is time now to renegotiate that agreement, so that we can turn that demonstration farm as a joint venture institute of agriculture and research between Taiwan and Solomon Islands. Let us take another step further so that people will do training and be a place of study and research for us, and Taiwan will be pleased, I am sure, to assist us in that particular field.

On education, I will support what the MP for Temotu Nende has said that I think it is time we build a university in this country. In the 1980's, the famous late Professor Ron Crocombe mentioned that at the USP Centre at Lawson Tama during a seminar there. He said at that time that Solomon Islands should have its own university. I think we had listened and taken note of that particular professor's statement, probably by now Solomon Islands would not be spending so much money overseas, and we will also be educating more people this time and Solomon Islands would advance forward in its progress and development.

I want the next government that is coming in must look seriously into negotiating with the Republic of China Taiwan to fund a national university for this country. I know that other countries or other donor partners have their own particular agendas and that is why they are drying this particular point with us, and it is something that we must do. Lastly, we must look at the field of technical assistance. I think we have JICA from Japan, the Peace Corps from the United States, the VSA who are volunteers from Britain, New Zealand and others. I think we should search whether Taiwan has organizations like this so that we can have their technical assistance coming in to help us, especially on the area of engineering. I think nearly 100% of us in here have been to Taiwan and we can see how good they are in engineering works. We must bring them in to help us in our road building, wharves, airport etc. I think these are more tangible aid assistance in this country so that we are not seen as a country that enjoys receiving gifts and money but a country that is leaning skills and also being assisted in developing education and agriculture.

Finally, on behalf of my people of North West Choiseul, I also would like to thank the Republic of China on Taiwan, for providing grants to the Solomon Islands Government. Through the National Budget my constituents are able to enjoy services

and development funded either directly through Members of Parliament or through the normal budget of education, health etc.

The visit made by His Excellency, Ambassador Honorable George Chan in August 2009 last year to Choiseul Bay in my constituency, manifested the Republic of China's desire to let people know that the Republic of China cares for the people of Solomon Islands and is ready to visit and meet them. That visit was a memorable one for my people in the Choiseul Bay area because it was during those two days visit that the Ambassador handed over two footbridges, a market house, the North West Choiseul Constituency Office and a North West Choiseul Cooperative, which are all done by the funds provided by the Republic of China. I am sure the Republic of China is very happy to visit our constituencies, and I would like to encourage all Members of the new Parliament to invite the Republic of China to come and visit your constituencies.

I thank His Excellency for that special visit representing his Government. The President's visit, His Excellency Ma's visit, reconfirms our bilateral relation that is based on democracy, freedom where the people of Taiwan, the 23million people on Taiwan really need to be embraced within the United Nation. With the aforementioned remarks I support the motion.

Hon MANETOALI: Thank you for the opportunity to contribute as well to the motion moved by the Honorable Prime Minister. I also thank the honorable Prime Minister for this motion to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for His Excellency's visit and address to Parliament on the 25th March 2010, and also for the continued assistance provided by the Republic of China to the Parliament, the Government and the people of Solomon Islands.

Most of the things have been said by Honorable Members hence my contribution shall be very brief. Before I start I would like to start off with this diplomatic relations between Solomon Islands and the Republic of China entered into in 1983. I would like to take this opportunity to thank leaders at that time for having the wisdom to enter into such a relationship during that time in 1983. From that year until now is more than 25 to 27 years, which means this relationship is one of the longest relationships, and it means it is a mature relationship. I say this because legal age is 18 years and 21 years is the age for marriage, but 26 to 27 years is quite a long time for a relationship to be entered into. And this relationship is a signed one, it is a legal relationship and not a defactor one, like in marriage signing the paper before a magistrate or in church is a legal relationship, and not signing a paper is a defactor relationship. In fact, this relationship is a legal one, which is more than 26 to 27 years, which also means Solomon Islands and the Republic of China have been trusting each other until now.

I would also like to join the Honorable Member for South Choiseul in reiterating the words of His Excellency President Ma as quoted by the MP for South Choiseul

earlier on in Parliament today, which goes something like this and I want to repeat it as it sounds good to me. He said, "I want to assure you of the continued friendship and cooperation of my country and I honestly and earnestly hope that the friendship and cooperation between our two countries will continue forever. Long live the friendship between Solomon Islands and the Republic of China on Taiwan. This is very true in regards to Taiwan and also very true in regards to Solomon Islands. This quotation or this statement by President Ma that I have just read is marked by two things. First of all, it is marked by His Excellency's visit to Solomon Islands. Secondly, it is marked by the continued assistance by the Republic of China to the people of Solomon Islands. Those words by His Excellency can be summarized into two events; the first is the visit of the President of Taiwan, and second is the continued assistance by the Republic of China to Solomon Islands.

Such a visit was undertaken by our leaders since this relationship was entered into until today. I want to give an example that in March 2008 our honorable Prime Minister made his first visit to Taiwan. I was there to witness that visit by our honorable Prime Minister in March 2008. The Government of Taiwan has to make a red carpet welcome for the Prime Minister outside of Government House with 21 gunshots by soldiers and policemen, and the Solomon Islands flag was flying on the streets of Taiwan during the visit of our Prime Minister. Likewise, when the President of Taiwan visits Solomon Islands a similar sort of welcome was done, but there were no gun salutes. Visits have been exchanged by our leaders since then until to date.

In terms of continued assistance, yes, as most have already mentioned, especially bigger developments in this country like our National Referral Hospital, the Parliamentary Office Complex and the RCDF that goes down to people in the rural areas. How those funds are administered depend upon the Members of each constituency. Whether those funds go down or not to the people, each constituency handles the funds in accordance with what sort of policies or rules or committees are set up in each constituency.

I would like to touch on the three goals on foreign aid as mentioned by the President. The three goals on foreign aid mentioned by the President are first, it has to have a legal purpose, and that is whether it is lawful; secondly, a legitimate process upon which aid comes into our country, and lastly the effective implementation of the aid. In terms of effective implementation, as I mentioned today, it depends on how each constituency administers the funds. And I got from the President's speech that there is improvement on this aid later on in future on how they would be administered.

Those are the only few points I would like to raise, especially to thank His Excellency, the President of Taiwan for his visit and for his messages to us Solomon Islanders. Lastly on behalf of my constituency and people of Gao/Bugotu, I want to thank the Taiwan for the assistance it has been helping us throughout until today. With those I support the motion and beg to take my seat.

Hon. KOLI: I too would like to be brief in expressing my inner most thank you, gratitude and appreciation to his Excellency President Ma-Ying-Jeou of the Republic of China, Taiwan's visit to our shores. I would like to also thank the Prime Minister for moving the motion for us to thank the President for his address to Parliament.

A friend in need is a friend indeed. I recalled during our dark hours of our country when other countries evacuated their citizens from Solomon Islands, but the Ambassador and his officials of the Republic of China Taiwan still remained with us. They fulfilled and showed their true and genuine colors as true leaders of their country serving us. Our suffering is their suffering and I admired their leadership style and funding as well.

I would like to thank President Ma and the people of the Republic of China, Taiwan for their continuous since 1983. There are some similarities in our cultures, as I can see when I visited Taiwan. We value Taiwan's assistance to us in so many ways in the field of education, health and medical services, economical development, women in development, agriculture and renewable energy, etc.

The Republic of China Taiwan's success and recognition globally is a fine example we should learn from. Though we are far away in terms education and technology, one thing I admire is that the people of Taiwan are hard working people and utilize their resources into productivity. Time means money to them.

On behalf of the people of East Guadalcanal Constituency, I thank the Republic China on Taiwan for the funding you have rendered to our constituency. You give us assistance that reaches my people right down in the rural areas. Other countries and people may say what they want to say about your assistance but my people and I do feel, touch and accept your assistance. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

Hon. LILO: I will be very brief, less than the 10 minutes remaining before 4.30pm. Let me also add the voice of the people of Gizo/Kolombangara to be a part of this motion in expressing our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the visit made by His Excellency, President Ma of the Republic of China. I also ally myself with those who have thanked the Republic of China for the assistance, development assistance it has been providing to Solomon Islands, and especially those that reach our constituencies, and also the overall development program that the Republic of China has provided to this country ever since the establishment of our diplomatic relations with the Republic of China.

The relations that we have with Taiwan has grown to be one that has been very good, robust and that we can say that the people of both countries have enjoyed that relation and it is only prudent on the part of our Government to continue to nurture the diplomatic relations that we have with the Republic of China.

I also would like to thank the people of Taiwan for electing this person, Ma Ying-Jeou to be their president. He is a very wonderful and very cheerful person; highly

qualified and I think he demonstrates the kind of a person he is, especially the priority he has put in normalizing the Cross Strait relations, and the principles he is following. I think that is the theme he left with us. He left us with three principles; the principle of dignity, responsibility and cooperation. Those are the principles he adopted in normalizing the Cross Strait relations with mainland China. I am pleased that relation has normalized because it has to happen like that. China is a big force in this world; it is the kitchen of the whole world, the factory of the whole world, everything we eat comes from China. And so I think President had made the right thing in normalizing that relation, in recognizing that relation has to be normalized for the benefit of everyone. So I really congratulate President Ma for doing that.

The theme he left with us is one that I think we need to look really deep into it and try to apply in our own context; the principles of dignity, responsibility and cooperation. For me, I view it this way that in our own context if we need to restore dignity to all our institutional structures in this country including leadership we need to do that. We need to sharpen up our responsibility towards our effort in rebuilding our country or even continue to building our country. We need to sharpen up our responsibilities. I think that is what Ma left us with. Ma also left with us the need for the whole country to cooperate, cooperation; provinces, our people need to cooperate. He applied this principle in normalizing the Cross Strait relations. It worked for the whole because the whole world wants to see that relation between Taiwan and Mainland China needs to be normalized, and he did that. In our own context, this is what I feel that he has left with us; that theme. These are very important principles: dignity, responsibility and cooperation. We need to restore dignity to all our institutional organizations and structures in this country, including leadership too. We need to sharpen out our responsibility to what are the priority actions that we need to do to make this country continue to move forward, in our continuous efforts to build our nation and that this country must cooperate. We need to strengthen the unity of this country. The provinces, our people need to speak with one identity as Solomon Islanders; cooperate. And not what is coming out of the papers that we are this and that, and then some of us leaders align ourselves too with that kind of spirit. That is wrong because cooperation is what is required here. That is what the President left with us in his address. It is just a very simple message, a very simple theme for us to follow. I really praise this person for coming to leave this message in this very important house of our people, in this very Parliament, this honorable Parliament. He came and left this message in this House for us to follow. As we all know, in two or three week's time this house will be dissolved so let us take these principles with us. That is what Ma is putting to us.

The President, in his address too, said a lot of things on the involvement and the desire of the Republic of China on Taiwan to part of the United Nations. Solomon Islands continues to support those desires, including recently they formally made a

request to be part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in which we did; Solomon Islands also has its support for Taiwan to be part of the fight to address the whole global climate change crisis that we are now facing.

Yes, they also did sound out their intention to promote partnership with their allies in the Pacific in the areas of addressing climate change. I think that is a right policy because it is touching humanity. And as we can see, even though the total emission of Taiwan is less than 1%, they are working towards cutting down their emission by about 45% of the total emission that they have, and that is a welcome development they have made.

For us here in Solomon Islands, and today the Leader of Opposition asked the question whether we have taken stock of the greenhouse emission we are putting out into the atmosphere. Our position has not changed we are some 0.001% emitters. I do not know which meeting did the Leader attend in New York but it could be one of those meetings where those who are totally against logging or deforestation attended, and that is why they came up with that kind of very panicky statements to leaders when they met in New York.

But as you know we must not confuse these two things. For us to remove logs is not emitting, we are just basically reducing the carbon sink. But that is not emitting. We are just basically reducing our carbon sink. In terms of per capita emission we are still very low, just less than 1 %.

In fact, the whole 43 member states of the small islands developing states are even emitting less than 2 percent of the total greenhouse gas emission. It is just less than 2 percent; I think it is about 1.9 percent or something like that. Thank you Prime Minister.

Hon. Sikua: It is now 4.30 pm and to allow continuation of the debate, I seek your consent to move suspension of Standing Order 10 in accordance with Standing Order 81.

Mr Speaker: Permission granted.

Hon. Sikua: I move that Standing Order 10 be suspended in accordance with Standing Order 81 to permit the debate to continue until Parliament is adjourned by the Speaker under Standing Order 10(5).

Standing Order 10 suspended under Standing Order 81 to enable the business of the House to continue after 4.30pm

Hon. Lilo: Thank you Prime Minister for seeking that leave to give me a little bit more time. I will have two minutes more because this information is very important so that we are not wrong in our thinking about what that particular issue is.

When the whole of the 43 member states of the small island developing states are put together, we are still less than 2 percent emission in greenhouse gas. In fact, it is just about 1.9 percent, but we are the most vulnerable countries to climate change. So we must thank Taiwan that regardless of the fact that under the United Nations it is not recognized as a sovereign state, but we as a sovereign state, Solomon Islands as a sovereign state, recognizes them as a state. And there is nothing wrong with that; that is accepted also in international law. For Taiwan to express its desire to help its allies in the Pacific in the fight against this climate crisis we are facing is a welcome move. I really welcome this as Minister responsible for environment and climate change. We should welcome it because our people here in the country are now facing the real threats of the climate crisis.

If you look at the initiative taken by Taiwan, for instance, in promoting renewable energy in the form of solar photo world technology, is a good mitigation action against climate change. This is a very good mitigating exercise. And if we further the discussion and the cooperation in this area of renewable energy development, and as you know we have also signed up to what is called the SEEDS doc on renewable energy as a way to mitigate the impact of climate change. Taiwan would fit in very well in the initiative.

What the President has delivered to this House is not only relevant for our own country, but is very much relevant in the international agenda the whole global world is facing at this time, especially in the areas of climate change. In that way, I am very grateful on behalf of the Ministry of Environment as Minister responsible for climate change, I am very grateful with the commitment delivered to this House and the people of this country by President Ma, His Excellency the President of the Republic of China to help countries in the Pacific and, in fact, half or all of those countries that are allies of Taiwan in the Pacific are the ones that are mostly vulnerably affected by climate crisis; they are the ones. It should be a very important agenda that we will continue to promote with them; we need to continue to promote with them.

On the point that others have raised on the issue of aid and what is there behind the aid assistance is very true. It is one thing that we need to conduct some very healthy discussions with our friend Taiwan. We are located in one of the richest tuna grounds. In fact, if you go through the record of the Ministry of Fisheries, I think Taiwan is one of the countries that has the highest number of fishing vessels fishing in our waters. But as you know the current access arrangement in tuna fishing in our waters is only the access fee. We do not have a resource rent kind of regime, but only access fee. The kind of analogy that people make that they come to fish in our waters, go back and process the fish and then maybe the tax goes to them and the other tax that

is due to us is what is paid to us, which could be right as well. But these are things we need to discuss with Taiwan in a very healthy way so that we can improve on these areas in the future.

Having said that, this motion is worth debating in this House by us and it is worth us as Members of Parliament to be part of this motion to say, yes, we sincerely appreciate and sincerely thank the government and the people of Taiwan, the Republic of China on Taiwan for the opportunity that their President had in addressing this House to visit our country and the message he delivered to us. With those remarks, I support the motion.

Mr MAGGA: Thank you for allowing me the floor of Parliament to contribute to this important motion. First of all, I would like to acknowledge other Members of Parliament who have contributed so far to this very important motion. I must particularly thank President Ma for visiting our country, Solomon Islands which obviously shows the fundamental relationship between his government and the government of Solomon Islands.

I strongly believe that the Republic of China, Taiwan is one of the helpful countries that continues to provide assistance to the government and the people of Solomon Islands, through bilateral and cordial relationship with Solomon Islands. I would also like to thank President Ma and his government through the government of Solomon Islands. I am grateful to inform once again the House that the CNURA with the support of the Republic of China, Taiwan had assisted my constituency purchase a ship, and so I, on behalf of my people in Temotu Pele as their elected leader who represents them in Parliament had obviously reflected as the necessary condition for rural development. This also improves access reliable and affordable rural infrastructure service in terms of transportation, telecommunications and energy source, which are central pillars of rural growth and energy. For that matter, I really appreciate President Ma's visit which shows commitment and dedication to the people of Solomon Islands. As we know, the Republic of China, Taiwan has assisted our rural dwellers in so many ways, especially, in the education and health sectors. Moreover, on infrastructure projects in the short to medium term, a more coordinated and strategic investment in transport infrastructure development.

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of my people of Temotu Pele Constituency to sincerely thank our donor partner, especially the Republic of China, Taiwan for its continued support and commitment to our country, Solomon Islands.

Lastly, I would like to thank the hardworking Prime Minister for moving this motion, which all Members of Parliament contribute to this very important motion on the development programs provided by the ROC, Taiwan. With these brief remarks, I support the motion.

Hon. FONO: Thank you for allowing me to contribute briefly to the debate of this motion before the Prime Minister winds up the motion. In so doing, I would like to allow all other colleagues to contribute to the motion so that any other areas left untouched will be covered by me as Minister responsible for rural development, and not rural livelihood, as some have alleged. In doing so, I would like to thank honorable Prime Minister for moving this motion so that Parliament can discuss the statement President Ma delivered in this Chamber.

During my 12 years as a Member of Parliament, this is the fourth dignitary that addresses Parliament. If I can recall and my memory serves me right, at one time the Prince of Tonga also addressed this Parliament, and maybe the Prime Minister of Tonga. We also have the former President of the Republic of China, President Chen Shui-bian also addressing this Parliament. Some years back we have the Duke of Gloucester also addressing this Parliament, and fourthly this recent visit by the President as well of the Republic of China. Indeed, we have had the opportunity of listening to a few dignitaries who visited our nation when they were given the opportunity to address Parliament, something that is very, very rare.

Much has been said about the statement of the President, and I must also congratulate the Republic of China for allowing the President to visit Solomon Islands. In fact, my understanding was that there was supposed to be the allies meeting here in the country agreed on by the former Prime Minister when the GCCG Government was in power so that we host Taiwan's allies here in the Pacific. However, because of Typhoon Morakot that meeting was postponed, and not because GCCG was out of office as claimed by the Deputy Leader and MP for West Makira. I would like to put the records right that the Allies meeting was indefinitely postponed because of the typhoon. Our Prime Minister also invited the President to visit, and I reiterated that invitation when I led the parliamentary delegation to Taiwan in November last year when paying a courtesy call on the President. Therefore, we are fortunate the President accepts our invitation and visited us.

As alluded to by some of the speakers, we are the only country during his visit that he stayed much longer with us for two days and two nights, because in other countries he only paid a visit just for a number of hours and then left. This reflects the importance the government of Taiwan attaches to the Solomon Islands Government because of this strong and cordial relationship.

As you know, some of countries in the region that ally with Taiwan, at one stage or another have tried to shelve that relationship and move to Mainland China. However, over the last 27 years, the Solomon Islands Government, successive governments continued to maintain that diplomatic tie, something I must congratulate all successive governments about for maintaining this diplomatic tie with the Government of the Republic of the China.

One of the points the President raised is the very good relationship the current administration under the leadership of the President has developed with the PRC Government on the Cross Straits relationship. It is important that relationship is improved compared to the previous government of the DPP. This is much to the advantage of both countries that there is continued increase in trade investment and also cultural exchanges that they continue to benefit from. Its implications to us, who are its allies in the Pacific is what we should be asking the Republic of China so that it is flexible in allowing us sovereign governments to establish similar trade ties with the Peoples' Republic of China. A case in point is if you compare a lot of investors coming into our country, we tend to have quite a number of these from Mainland China and not the Republic of China. It is important that we develop that trade relationship and investment opportunity so that our nation continues to benefit from that trade and investment relationship, and that is an area future governments should continue to liaise with the Republic of China Government to try and strengthen in order to establish a trade mission or in order to allow investors from Mainland China to come and invest in our country.

Much have been also said about the new foreign policy highlighted in the President's speech, and those three goals are basically the policy of Ma's administration, which indeed allows us as a recipient nation to take stock of how we utilize Taiwan's aid money. On that particular area, I would strongly recommend the future government coming after the elections to review the aid package we are getting from the Republic of China. There are options that can be considered. It is important for the review to look at the impact of the aid assistance we are getting, especially the Rural Constituency Development Fund that successive governments have been receiving from. There is merit in the point raised by the honorable Member for Temotu Nende that we need to look at the government taking over this assistance to constituencies leaving Taiwan's aid money to be used in other national projects. It is important that a review be made to determine the impact of micro funding that is going through the constituencies. When I look at some of the acquittals of colleague Members of Parliament, a lot of these funds go towards micro projects or assistances that are more like personal welfare support, which maybe in the long run do not have an impact if the option of macro bigger projects is considered.

Just look at the period after independence on a number of donor supports that were given to successive governments, they built infrastructures, they built bigger roads, especially here on Guadalcanal and Malaita and maybe some other provinces like Makira and Temotu. Successive governments over the years have not embarked on road infrastructure or bigger projects that would allow people to have access to the markets. That is an area that needs to be considered because without proper infrastructure there can be no economic development, so one needs or any future

governments need to look into that and review the assistance we are getting whether to continue with constituency funding in terms of micro projects or otherwise.

I raise this because of the informal sector. If one is to study the assistance that not only the Republic of China but other donor supports have been giving to the informal sector, millions of dollars have been pumped into the informal sector. But the return on the investment is very much not evident, for instance some of the income generating projects our people in the rural areas might have operated it for a month or two and then it died out and so they come back and ask for some more money to operate a similar project. Those are considerations that future governments need to look at in terms of the assistance given by the Republic of China.

In addition to that is the option of not channeling funds through Members of Parliament but legalizing constituency set ups so that they deal with the funds so that people do not come and pressurize us Members of Parliament because quite a number of colleagues are complaining about the pressure being exerted on Members of Parliament. These are areas that must be looked into.

What I am saying here and why I am raising this is that the onus is on us Members of Parliament who are legislators to put in place mechanisms that would put to effective use the funding we are getting from the Republic of China. The onus is on us Members of Parliament and the government, and not only this government but future governments have to review and putting in place mechanisms and policies so that donor funding can be used effectively.

There was also comment about media statements highlighted in the papers during the week the President was here. Whilst I agree that Parliament is not answerable to the media, the media is a very powerful tool that can influence people. It can provide wrong information to the general public to change their perception on the government. It is important that Parliament continues to give out the right information on the usage of these funds. There is a lot of generalization by the media that we, politicians are abusing funds given by the Republic of China, something they cannot prove. One just needs to go to respective constituencies to see how the funds are used. I must now inform people of my constituency that after Parliament is dissolved, I will be launching my four (4) year report based on the funds that I have been receiving or the constituency congress has been receiving over the last four years and how the funds are used. This is something I also did the first two terms I served as a Member of Parliament.

I challenge all of us in here to also produce reports. Based on acquittals you have been giving to the Ministry of Rural Development, I have assigned my officers to put together as annual reports on the funds so that I table it here in Parliament as it is public document. I am very surprised that some of my colleagues do not want to publish such information. It is public funds and so our people need to know how we have spent the Republic of China's funding. These are mechanisms we are putting in place, although

this is the eleventh hour, but it is important the Ministry comes up with an annual report on all constituency funds used in 2008 and 2009 to be tabled in Parliament. That is separate to the livelihood funds under government funding. It is a requirement of this Government that those reports are produced, and I am looking forward to tabling that at this meeting if it is ready. Otherwise the next government that comes in can have the privilege of tabling the report so that the public knows how the livelihood funds under the CNURA Government funded project for respective constituencies in 2008 and 2009 are used. This is public information and our critics or opponents can use it against us if they want. That is the transparency and accountability we have been advocating because it is good governance.

Finally, on behalf of the people of my constituency I would also like to thank the President of the Republic of China and his delegation for according us the visit and also the continuous support they have been giving us, not only through rural development but also other sectors as highlighted in the debate; the agriculture sector, the education sector, the health sector and others. I also would like to thank working committee with the Ambassador of the Republic of China and his staff for putting together the program for the visit that most of us have enjoyed because we had the opportunity of meeting the President and the other dignitaries that accompanied him. I also would like to thank the general public for their cooperation and good behavior during the visit and also enjoying the celebrations that took place at Lawson Tama.

Lastly, but not the least, I thank the Royal Solomon Islands Police for the security provided during the visit enabling the visit to be peaceful. I believe not only the President's delegation but the squadron that visited us, the 800 officers of those three warships enjoyed their three days visit here with us. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

Hon. Sikua: I stand to wind up this debate I moved to say thank you to the address the President of Republic of China on Taiwan made in this Parliament last week.

I find it quite difficult to reflect on all the contributions that all Members of Parliament have mentioned in their debate to this motion. But I would say that on a whole everyone has spoken in support of the motion and I thank them for their kind words.

We all agree that the visit and the address to Parliament by the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan confirms the very cordial and close relationship that exists between the Republic of China on Taiwan and our country Solomon Islands. We all agreed that we value our relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan and our relationship over the last 27 years remains as strong as ever.

If I can remember correctly, Solomon Islands is one of the countries that is a staunch supporter of the Republic of China, unlike other allies that sometimes threatened to move to the other side or indeed have moved to the other side and then

came back again. But we have been a staunch supporter of this relationship with the Republic of China. And as the Leader of Opposition has stated it is because our relationship is built on certain principles of mutual respect on values we embrace like democracy, good governance and respect for human rights and dignity.

The coming of the President of the Republic of China itself testifies of their support for us. I would like to join all colleagues who have spoken to the motion to thank everybody who is involved. Before he arrived a committee was set up comprising relevant sectors and groups within government and, of course, the Embassy of the Republic of China, and as other colleagues have already mentioned it is a wide cross section of people within government and also outside of government. From the time he arrived, the arrangements and programs we have fall in place nicely which culminated in a very successful visit of the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan.

I think the points I put down to wind up the debate, most of them have already been covered by my Deputy Prime Minister. That is why it is very good to have a very able and supportive Deputy Prime Minister, so I want to thank him for rebating the points that I had intended to clarify. Even right at the beginning when the first speaker, my good backbencher Member for West Are Are was speaking, he also moved a motion. As you can see this is the beauty about this thing, we all help each other, so after I moved it, he also moved it as well, and then my Deputy Prime Minister also helped me to wind up as well. So this is all good.

But again just to reiterate one of the issues brought up by my good colleague the Member for Temotu Nende and my good friend on the need to use Taiwan funding to support our tertiary education sector, I just want to inform the House that the Cabinet has just approved the tertiary education policy, and we are moving forward with it. Not only are we seeking funding from the Republic of China on Taiwan, but we are also seeking funding support from our other donor partners as well and so there is the possibility of co-financing, because it is going to cost us a lot of money. But I thank my good friend and Member for Temotu Nende for that very good idea.

Of course colleagues, dwelt at length on talking about the expenditures and accountability we have on our RCDF, micro-project and millennium development funds. It is good that this opportunity is given to colleague Members of Parliament to clear the air and tell our people what we are doing with the funds and to ask the papers to be a bit more responsible in their reporting. I think much is desired on the quality of reporting of newspapers, but I want to assure you honorable colleagues that the media is not running this country, but the government is running this country, and they have to know the difference on that.

What was pointed out by the President of Republic of China, and what I had said in reply gives back the onus on us, the Members of Parliament, and if what the Deputy

Prime Minister has stated is something that can be done, then I think we should welcome it.

Listening to some of the debates today, I can sense that some of my colleagues are using it as a means of wanting to start their campaigns. It is good that you can utilize this opportunity but the next one is coming up, of course, in the motion of sine die so prepare your notes very well when we come to the sine die motion when we can go ahead to campaign. But I am happy to have this opportunity afforded to our colleagues.

The honorable Leader of Opposition is very correct in his views about the western world's defense of democracy of saying something and doing the other; they do not walk the talk. Sometimes I wonder about this too, as to why it is like this. But at the same time I also realize the sovereign decisions of other countries and their rights to exercise the way they want to handle their international relations. But it is a question that always comes up in my mind, just even in the region as to why it is like that. It is something that saddens me sometimes.

On climate change, a lot of people have spoken in support of the President's point on climate change in his address. Yes, I think there is that support we have in that regional centre that is going to be set up here. I think the project on solar power for schools was well received last year. I have already spoken with my minister for energy that we go into phase 2 so that we receive another lot in phase 2. I think if the paper on it comes quickly to Cabinet, it is something we can look at and probably receive another supply of solar. But maybe we have to look at the need include other things inside, like torches, fans and radios. Probably we just focused on the lights.

I think the only point that has not been responded to is the point made by my good friend and colleague Member for South New Georgia, Rendova/Tetepare, and this is why do we not debate this when President Ma is still. That has certainly been raised on the floor and perhaps I should just explain this a bit. It has been raised on the floor that perhaps my motion should have been moved on the day His Excellency, the President of the Republic of China made his address to Parliament. I understand the Member's wish to thank the President in his presence, however, while I did consider that possibility prior to the 25th of March, the procedural advice I received from the Clerk's Office was that I had to delay the motion to a later date. But let me relay that procedural advice I alluded to. Standing Orders are silent on this address by foreign heads of states to our Parliament. The only provision relates to the speech from the throne, which is an address by His Excellency the Governor General and the address in reply from Parliament. And so by convention, however, our Parliament can invite any foreign head of state to make an address to Parliament, and on making that address, Parliament can then make an address in reply. This is an established Westminster practice.

In terms of that address, if we look at Standing Order 7, as an example of how we go about Standing Order 7(5), it provides that immediately after the Governor General delivers his speech known as the speech from the throne, the sitting must be suspended or adjourned to a later date. The motion to introduce parliament's address in reply is then moved at that later day. These rules apply to addresses by foreign heads of state and the corresponding address in reply. That is the reason why it is done that way. I just want to clarify this, otherwise if we want to reply President Ma's address in his presence then he will be sitting down with you there in front, Mr Speaker, and both of you will be tired sitting down there. That is why it is like that.

Finally, I just want to reiterate what I said in my introductory remarks that I believe Taiwan will always be a friend of Solomon Islands. It has been with us through our difficult times and our most challenging times and through thick and thin, as I have said. It has been a true friend and we all agree on that. Therefore, I am confident that the fundamental principles that underpin our bilateral and diplomatic relations will continue to grant us the resolve and the commitment to address the challenges facing our two countries and peoples.

With these remarks, I know that the Minister for Environment has prepared some refreshments for us outside, it has been a long day and so I once again wish to thank you for your permission in allowing the President of the Republic of China to address Parliament and to thank the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan for visiting our shores and his important address to Parliament on Thursday 25th March 2010 for the assistance that the Republic of China on Taiwan continues to provide to the Parliament, the government and the people of Solomon Islands. With these remarks, I beg to move.

The motion is passed and the address will be presented to His Excellency by the Speaker through the Embassy of Republic of China on Taiwan in Honiara.

The House adjourned at 5.17 p.m.