

NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

DAILY HANSARD

THIRD MEETING – EIGHTH SESSION

WEDNESDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2007

The Speaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea took the Chair at 9.30 a.m.

Prayers

ATTENDANCE

At prayers all were present with the exception of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers for National Reconciliation & Peace, Fisheries and Marine Resources, Justice & Legal Affairs, Education & Human Resources, Police & National Security, Mines & Energy, Provincial Government & Constituency Development and the members for West New Georgia/Vona Vona, West Guadalcanal, East Honiara, Ranogga/Simbo, East Are Are, West Are Are, North Guadalcanal, North New Georgia and Ulawa/Ugi.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**COMMISSIONER OF POLICE –
PROHIBITED IMMIGRANT**

24. **Mr HAOMAE** to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade: What is/are the reason(s), if any, for declaring the Commissioner of Police a prohibited immigrant?

Hon OTI: Mr Speaker, the Order issued on the 22nd December did not declare the former Commissioner of Police a prohibited immigrant.

Mr Haomae: Supplementary question. The Order was made under section 11 subsection (2)

paragraph (f). The Order the Minister made to declare the Commissioner of Police an undesirable immigrant is order that made him become a prohibited immigrant.

According to those laws, paragraph (f) cannot stand alone. It is part of subsection (2) of section 11. It is not a stand alone provision, and if the Attorney General (Acting) can enlighten us on this.

The fact that the Minister declared the Commissioner of Police undesirable, by implication makes him a prohibited immigrant. Because section (f) is the source of power that is laid under paragraph (f) derives from subsection (2) of section 11 of the Immigration Act.

Mr Speaker: Could you formulate your question please?

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, point of order. That is exactly why I responded the way I did because he has to rephrase that question to reflect on those legislations.

Mr Haomae: Mr Speaker, the fact that the Minister declared him undesirable under paragraph (f), is it not embraced by the provisions of section 11 which deals with prohibited immigrants?

Hon Oti: You can find the definition of ‘prohibited immigrant’ under the Deportation Act. That Order was issued under Cap.60 of the Immigration Act, and therefore those two do not relate to each other. They are independent. One is not consequential to the other. You cannot issue a prohibited order without declaring the person undesirable.

Mr Haomae: Mr Speaker, if the Attorney General can assist here. Is paragraph (f) of section 11 subsection (2) a stand alone provision?

Attorney General (Ag): Mr Speaker, it is a stand alone provision because under the Deportation Act a prohibited immigrant is a person who has entered Solomon Islands is defined as person who has entered Solomon Islands in breach of any law relating to immigration other than the Passports Act. So the former Commissioner of Police did not fit into those circumstances, and therefore the order made by the Honourable Minister was under the Immigration Act, and not under the Deportation Act. It is a stand alone provision and they do not relate to each other.

Mr FONONO: What are the reasons for allowing the Commissioner to go overseas first before he was declared undesirable? Why wasn't he declared undesirable when he was still inside the country and deport him? What are the reasons for that?

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, it was not because he was overseas, hence my issuance of the order. His going overseas was on his normal leave. My issuing of the order was irrespective of whether he was overseas or not. If he was still here then of course he would have been dealt with under the Deportation Act as made reference to by the Attorney General.

Sir KEMAKEZA: Mr Speaker, what are the reasons? You have not told us the reasons. Whether or not he is undesirable or whatever, what are the reasons of these differences?

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, I would have to base my reasons on the appropriate legislation. The question was framed on a different legislation which I do not have the response to.

Mr TOZAKA: Mr Speaker, on the question of this appointment, his appointment is subject to another independent body. Was a decision already made in terminating his appointment before the Minister made the decision of him being an undesirable immigrant?

Was any decision made on his appointment as the Commissioner of Police by the independent body before this decision was

made by the Minister wearing his hat as the Minister responsible for Immigration?

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, the appropriate legislations that we applied in this case has nothing to do with appointments, disciplinary proceedings or considerations. These are under the purview of different authorities and treated under different laws particularly the Constitution. It has no relationship neither was it tangential to any disciplinary proceedings that may have been put in place or applied at that point in time. This was a totally independent stand alone action based on the laws in question.

Mr ZAMA: According to the papers the subject of this question has taken early retirement and has dismissed himself from the Australian Federal Police. The question is, now that he is independent he is not an employee of the Australia Federal Police, would you think it would be appropriate to may be consider in future reengaging him as an independent Australian to be the Commissioner of Police?

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, that would be the responsibility of different authorities. At this point in time the person in question has been retired from the Australian Federal Police as of the 19th February, and then of course whether or not this law will still apply. Mr Speaker, on the same section the burden of proof that he should not be declared as such lies on the person, so it is not incumbent on the state or the government to justify those actions. It is up to that person to show cause as to why he cannot be declared as such.

Hon Fonono: Mr Speaker, that provision can only apply to expatriates considered of criminal elements in the country. The Commissioner is a public officer who is enforcing the law. The justifications of that order is what the Minister needs to tell the nation through this Parliament as to the reasons why he was declared undesirable. Reasons like, the Commissioner was involved in criminal things like this and that is why he was declared an undesirable immigrant. That has not really come out clear.

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, according to the provisions of the law in question, no. They do not have to be declared criminals.

Mr Haomae: Mr Speaker, can the Minister consider the view that the former Commissioner is allowed to come into the country so that the principle of justice prevails?

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, as I said, of course, if he has to seek redress for actions that have been taken by the state, as I have mentioned earlier, the burden of proof in the same law lies in that person and so he can be accorded the right to defend himself if he so wishes.

Sir Kemakeza: Mr Speaker, now that the former Commissioner has retired from the Federal Police, and if he decides to come to Solomon Islands as a tourist, can he be allowed to come into the country? This is because the Minister said that he did not impose anything on him. Can he do that or not?

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, in so far as the law requires, of course, I do not have any say on that. We have to abide by what the law says. If you know what the law says then you can tell us so that we can do it.

Mr Fono: Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm that the sole reason for declaring the former Commissioner undesirable is because during his posting here he instigated the investigation into the suspended Attorney General for which the investigation led to the Police raiding the Prime Minister's Office? That is the main reason for declaring him as an undesirable immigrant. Can the Minister confirm that to the House?

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, I categorically deny those reasons as the reasons for the declaration on the 22nd of December.

Mr Tozaka: In the good effort of the Ministry trying to normalize relationship with Australia, the Minister made the decision to declare this person undesirable. How did he see this in his efforts of normalizing the relationship with Australia?

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, these are the laws of Solomon Islands applied in the territorial jurisdiction of Solomon Islands, which we expect others to respect how we apply our laws.

Mr Haomae: Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs for answering the question, but I will submit another question under undesirable immigrant.

SUPPORT – LOCAL CHINESE BUSINESS PEOPLE

36. **Mr FONO** to the Minister of Finance and Treasury: Has the Government given any financial support to the local Chinese business people who lost their properties during the April riots?

Hon DARCY: Mr Speaker, my response is, no. There has not been any financial support given to any Chinese business people.

Mr Fono: Mr Speaker, has anyone of them requested government assistance since the burning down of Chinatown and their properties here in Honiara?

Hon Darcy: Mr Speaker, no, they have not asked for any financial support but they did ask for incentives to reconstruct.

Mr Fono: What about their Solomon Islander employees who suffered loss of employment; is there any policy by the government for assistance to support them a little bit because they are Solomon Islanders who lost their jobs during the crisis?

Hon SOGAVARE: Mr Speaker, the issue of compensation to the event surrounding 18th April is a subject of one of the clauses of the Commission of Inquiry, which requires the commissioners to establish if there is any compensation to be paid to the people who have suffered during the riot.

Mr Speaker, until the commission of inquiry sits and deliberates on the issue and come up with its findings, the issue of compensation is premature at this point in time.

Mr Fono: Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister of Finance and the Honorable Prime Minister for giving those answers.

OUTSOURCING DRAFTING WORK – NON PUBLIC SERVANTS

42. **Mr ZAMA** to the Minister for Public Service: Is your Ministry and other Government Ministries outsourcing drafting work to non public servants, and if so why is the Legal Draftsman not providing this service to your Ministry and other Government Ministries?

Hon SANGA: Mr Speaker, the first part of the question as to whether my Ministry or other Ministries outsourced legal drafting work; the answer is yes.

The answer to the second part as to why the Legal Draftsman has not provided this service, my Ministry is currently working on a new bill to be called the Solomon Islands Public Service Foundation which will address public officers' superannuation, welfare enhancement and pension scheme. This is a major bill that is still in draft form. The draft that we have so far has 61 clauses with three schedules attached to the bill. As I said this is a major undertaking which is currently outsourced to a local former public officer who is a qualified draftsman.

The other outsourcing was done by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in conjunction with the Ministry of Lands and Survey. This is to do with the drafting of an important regulation to the Land Recording Act which now allows for the survey and later acquisition of customary lands in the Auluta Basin and East Fataleka.

Mr Speaker, I must point out that without the regulation, the oil palm project could not have progressed beyond the survey ceremony that was launched at Auki last Saturday.

The other thing I wish to point out is that the draft bills and the regulations will be vetted by the Legal Draftsman before they are accepted. This is to ensure consistency and to avoid any conflict with other laws.

Mr Zama: Mr Speaker, what is the cost to government for this outsourcing exercise?

Hon Sanga: For each work on the different bills and regulation, it is about \$38,000 for the drafting.

Mr Haomae: Mr Speaker, the outsourcing that the ministries are doing, are they engaging non public servants by contract or not? Is there a contract with non public officers in the ministries to do this work for the government?

Hon Sanga: Mr Speaker, the outsourcing work was done by this non public officer. He is a well qualified person. The bill that has been processed by my Ministry gets the consent of Cabinet to outsource the work and also with the consent of the legal drafting office.

Mr Gukuna: Mr Speaker, by the figures the Minister has given it looks like it is a very reasonable cheap option rather than the other one, which is very expensive.

Does the Minister intend to pursue that to fully outsource legal drafting in the Public Service?

Hon Sanga: Mr Speaker, there only two qualified legal drafting people in the country who are well trained and qualified as draftsman. They were formally public officers but have left the Service and are now in private practice. We continue to rely on them because of their knowledge and expertise on local legislation.

Mr Zama: Mr Speaker, on Tuesday we heard the amount of money paid to the Legal Draftsman as salaries and other benefits, which is quite a substantial amount of money. Those that are now currently doing this outsourcing exercise are former employees of the Department.

Mr Speaker, in my view, one of the reasons why these people left the Department is because the current incumbent has been a stumbling block in the Department. With those reasons, for us to continue outsourcing work when this person is very highly paid, in my view, is unrealistic and needs to be reviewed and scrutinized in the future.

With those, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for his answers. Thank you.

Question No.47 deferred

BILLS

Bills – Second Reading

The Governors-General (Pensions and Benefits) Bill 2007

Hon SOGAVARE: Mr Speaker, I beg to move that The Governors-General (Pensions and Benefits) Bill 2007 be read the second time.

Sir the intention of the bill is straightforward as clearly outlined in the objects and reasons, and of course, the preamble to the Bill which says; “It seeks to provide pensions and other benefits for persons who ceased to hold the Office of Governors-General and for their widows and children and to provide for matters incidental to the foregoing or connected therewith”.

Sir, I know that this Bill will receive mix reactions from Members of the House. This is expected because when we are talking about committing public funds to an expenditure item that, I guess in our estimate may be seen as out of the normal, but I must appreciate that view. In fact, the House has a duty to ensure there is justification for expenditure of public funds.

But this Bill does more than just creating another expenditure item in the budget. Instead it raised a fundamental issue that Members of this honorable House are being challenged to acknowledge. That being, Mr Speaker, the duty of the State to look after former Heads of State. I guess the pertinent question is should the State take on that responsibility.

Sir, the Government is of the view and indeed convinced that the State is obliged to carry that responsibility. There is also the question of how far should the benefits be extended. The government is of the view that it is reasonable to extend the benefits to the widow and children of the former Governors-General.

Mr Speaker, the Office of the Governors-General is the highest public office in the land and the holders of that office must be accorded

the due respect they deserve during and after their term in the office.

Sir, we also have a duty to ensure that the respect due to that Office is maintained through the person of the holders of that office. This Bill seeks to facilitate that by placing the responsibility of looking after former Governor Generals on the State thereby giving them no reason to compromise the status of the office they once represent by seeking other employment because of financial pressures. They are statesmen and must be accorded the due respect they are entitled to.

In fact Sir, unlike other holders of public office, former Governor Generals are accorded the same protocol even after they left office. This is even stronger reason why the welfare of former governors general should remain the responsibility of the State.

This Bill seeks to acknowledge the responsibility of the State and therefore the people of Solomon Islands in the following manner. Sections 3, 4 and 5 provide that all former governor generals are entitled to the benefits outlined in the bill from the date they ceased to be governor general. That right however ceased by the former governor generals is appointed to any other public office.

The rate of the pension is 60% of the salary paid to the current incumbent. This amount shall be paid out of the consolidated fund and spread out and paid on a fortnightly basis.

Section 6 of the Bill provides that the widow of the pension shall also be entitled to 40% of the total pension as long as she or he does not remarry. Mr Speaker, the Bill also ensures that the widow of the Governor General exercises duty of care to the children that are left to the care of the widow.

Section 7 prohibits the application of the pension for any purposes other than for the purpose of satisfying government or payment ordered by the court.

The Bill also accords the following benefits:- A terminal grant of \$75,000.00 to the Governor General. The spouse of the Governor General shall also be entitled to 50% of the amount paid to the Governor General as terminal grant.

The Government also Mr Speaker, is obliged to provide official residence free of rent to the former Governor General, water, gas and electricity also to be paid by the government. An official vehicle for use in connection with his normal duties is also provided for under the Bill. Medical treatment as prescribed from time to time for public officers. The former governor generals are also entitled. They are also entitled to receive protocols, courtesies, and benefits spend on national side.

Mr Speaker, as I said this Bill has noble intentions and I see no reason why it should not receive the support of the House, and I beg to move.

(The Bill is open for debate)

Mr FONO: Mr Speaker, first of all I would like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister or the government for that matter for seeing it fit in bringing this Bill to Parliament.

Sir, this Bill has very noble intentions, which is long overdue. In my view, I see it as very important to recognize the important role that former governor generals as Head of State are playing in our country in looking after our constitution.

This Bill as introduced by the Prime Minister is straightforward. We have seen former Governors General after losing office also seek employment, to some extent lowers their status as Head of State of our nation since Independence.

Mr Speaker, the general content of the Bill based on the recommendation of the Bills and Legislation Committee, the areas of concern are important for consideration in terms of precedence that this piece of legislation might create, which I believe when passed may be Prime Ministers of this nation also need to be given some recognition in terms of their entitlements or benefits after they leave office.

Sir, it is very important that respect is given to our former head of state as well as former leaders of the government in our nation since independence. Since this Bill will go through, consideration would also be made on former Prime Ministers of this nation.

Sir, I believe with a developing nation like Solomon Islands, when we put our acts

together, government revenue will increase if the economy is broadened so that government revenue increases to meet such costs.

Sir, one reservation I see here is the grants that the spouse is entitled to. This needs some clarification because whatever benefits may be only attributed to the office holder. The benefits that the office holder gets will be shared by the family.

Another point worth noting is on the official residence under Section 10. To me this should be optional to a Governor General upon retirement does not like to settle in Honiara, a retirement home in his/her home village should be considered according to his choice. There should be some flexibility here.

I doubt it very much that anyone upon retiring would like to retire in Honiara or in the capital city. It should be up to the person himself to decide where he would like his retirement home to be. I think there should be some flexibility rather than the Government committing itself to pay for an official residence of governor generals that retire in Honiara, which will be an additional cost to the government. May be a lump sum payment can be considered so that a good retirement home is built in the village or even in provincial towns where he come from. There should be some flexibility in this.

Apart from that, Mr Speaker, the other remunerations or benefits are straight forward according to objects and reasons for the Bill.

Mr Speaker, on section 9, I think rather than basing the terminal grant on the Prime Minister's salary as mentioned in in the Bill, "equivalent to and payable to a Prime Minister under the current PER, there should be a certain fixed amount or percentage on the package or the basic salary that the Governor General is receiving at this time.

Those are the concerns I see in the Bill, and there should have been consultations done in the first place before finalization of this bill for tabling.

However, Mr Speaker, as I have said earlier I will be brief. This Bill has a very noble intention in recognizing the important role that our former Governor Generals and the current incumbent have played as Heads of State in our nation.

With these few comments, Mr Speaker, I support this Bill.

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I guess silence connotes support for this Bill. I thank the Opposition Leader for contributing to the Bill and for the views that he expressed. In fact the intention of the government is to continue to look at other important offices as well. We have looked at the Office of the Speaker of Parliament as well as later on may be former Prime Ministers and even Members of Parliament. There needs to be improvement to pensions due to Members of Parliament after serving our constituencies as Members of Parliament. There needs to be a lot of improvement in that area to recognize all the heartaches and headaches that Members of Parliament have to go through in running the affairs and duties, and of course, Ministers of the Crown when appointed to portfolios.

The concern raised by the Leader of Opposition on the spouse, the government is of the view that where there is great man there is always a very supportive wife behind. First Ladies are also engaged in a lot of official duties and so the government feels that the support they are giving to the Governor General should also be recognized.

With those, Sir, I note that this Bill receives overwhelming support and so I beg to move.

The Governors General (Pensions and Benefits) Bill 2007 pass its second reading

Bills – Committee Stage

The Governors General (Pensions and Benefits) Bill 2007

Clause 1 agreed to

Clause 2

Mr Fono: This clause seems to interpret that even if a Governor General is in office for one year and died, is he entitled to this pension? Is that the interpretation here, of less than one year?

Hon Sogavare: Mr Chairman, it sets the minimum period for the former Governor General's to be entitled. Yes, he is correct it is not less than one year whatever happens to him.

Clause 2 agreed to

Clause 3

Mr Fono: Can the Government calculate the cost from independence until now as of our former Governor Generals and provide that information to Parliament? It will be interesting to know how much public funds will be used for our former Governor Generals since independence until now so that MPs are aware of such information. I am pretty sure the calculations can be done based on the entitlements provided for in this Bill.

Hon Sogavare: We can do that. In fact we have a purpose to start paying former Governor Generals. We have provided \$1million in this year's budget to cater for this, but that information can be provided to the House.

Clause 3 agreed to

Clauses 4 & 5 agreed

Clause 6

Mr Rini: My reading of this clause seems to imply that a Governor General is always a male. What about if a Governor General is a female? Would that section also apply?

Hon Sogavare: I guess we could refer to the General Interpretations Act to establish that in reference to widow and in its place a widower, as the honorable Member rightly pointed out we might have a lady Governor General in future. That is how we see that but we can resort to the General Interpretations Act that to establish that if it also applies to the Governor General being a lady.

Clause 6 agreed to

Causes 7 & 8 agreed to

Clause 9

Mr Gukuna: The concern has been raised in the speech of the Leader of Opposition, and this is on the tying of the terminal grant with the Prime Minister's salary, which is really effectively also tying this payment to the PER. I just wonder whether it is correct to be determining the Governor General's terminal grant to the PER.

Hon Sogavare: The advice is that it is legally right to do this. It is just to determine the amount of the terminal grant that is to be paid. That is all it is. If the Prime Minister's salary increases it will also be in line to that increase. It is just reasonable to do that because he lives in the same environment and that Prime Minister is living in. We are to ensure that he is not disadvantaged in anyway. It is just a way of establishing how much to pay.

Clause 9 agreed to

Clause 10

Mr Gukuna: Clause 4 talks about pension that if the person concerned takes up an alternative employment, the pension will cease. What about housing and vehicle? Should we treat them the same as pension or shall he continue to live in the official residence?

Hon Sogavare: Mr Chairman, we take to mean that if he is appointed to other public office he will be remunerated under that public office he takes up.

Clause 10 agreed to

Clause 11

Mr Tozaka: The last sentence there, 'with his normal duties'. Is this in relation him being provided with a vehicle when he undertakes any assignments on behalf of the government? Is that the basis of allocating him with a vehicle?

Hon Sogavare: Discussions we have held with former Excellencies reveals that sometimes they are assigned with some duties in their status as former Governor Generals. They have to do that

going around walking and so we feel we should also attach the use of vehicles as one of the benefits under this new arrangement.

Clause 11 agreed to

Clause 12

Mr Fono: Would this medical treatment also include overseas medical treatment?

Hon Sogavare: As the clause suggests they are entitled to medical treatment as prescribed from time to time for public officers, which also includes overseas treatment.

Mr Gukuna: We all understand that the Governor Generals as part of their life will get old. I think this provision while it is appreciated it needs to go on a bit further because the Governor General will retire at old age. Is it possible to be specific on the condition other than linking up to public officers because in my understanding a public officer is not heavy.

Hon Sogavare: Can the MP for Rennell repeat his question?

Mr Gukuna: I appreciate this clause but in my view by the time of their retirement age, most of the Governors Generals are in old age, and I think this provision is not deep enough to provide for that old age. I am just wondering whether we can set a condition that is specific – the condition of retiring. In my view, to link it to public officers is what we normally would think about the public servants, which is not too heavy, a very light one with due respect to the fact that the Governors General are getting older at this stage, their retirement should be specific with their conditions. I wonder if we can improve on this provision.

Hon Sogavare: That clause is general enough to maneuver within. I think we can fit in the concern raised by the MP for Rennell as it is a very important point

Clause 12 agreed to

The Preamble agreed to

Parliament resumes

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Governors General (Pensions and Benefits) Bill 2007 has passed the Committee Stage without any amendments.

Bills – Third Reading

The Governors General (Pensions and Benefits) Bill 2007

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Governors General (Pensions and Benefits) Bill 2007 be now read the third time and do pass.

The Governors General (Pensions and Benefits) Bill 2007 passed its third reading.

MOTIONS

Motion of sine die

Hon SOGAVARE: Mr Speaker, I beg to move that at the adjournment of Parliament on Friday 23rd of February 2007, the present meeting shall be concluded and Parliament shall then stand adjourned sine die.

Mr Speaker, this sitting of Parliament is committed to the 2007 Appropriation Bill 2007, and I would naturally like to focus this presentation around some of the issues raised in the House by those who have spoken to the debate on the bill.

Mr Speaker, in doing so, I would like to first of all, take this opportunity to thank the Minister and his staff for the job well done. It is not an easy task but the Minister has demonstrated his worthiness. Thank you very much my Minister.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity as well to thank my Ministers for the excellent manner in which they have defended the budget to its successful passage. I also thank your office and that of the Clerk for the excellent arrangement of the meetings.

Mr Speaker, so much have been said about the 2007 budget by the other side of the House. I find the contribution of the Opposition

spokesman on Finance and other senior members of the Opposition particularly interesting. The spokesman for Finance must have written his speech before the Minister delivered the budget because most of the issues he raised were actually addressed by the Minister.

Mr Speaker, with the indulgence of the House, I would like to comment on the Opposition's main criticism of the budget as follows:

Mr Speaker, they are concerned that the 2007 Budget does not emphasize security. This is a very valid concern because it is concerned about the environment within which the budget will be implemented.

Mr Speaker, it is clear that the concern about the lack of emphasis on security is based on the narrow understanding of the road to peace that is prevalent amongst many Solomon Islanders, including those who are here to help us.

Mr Speaker, I do not blame Solomon Islanders for thinking that way because they are framed into that mindset. There is a perception that this country is only safe with the presence of foreign forces because we can no longer trust ourselves. That is very sad. Mr Speaker, I find that very disturbing.

The last thing that we Solomon Islanders would want is to distrust ourselves. In fact trust is the essence of national survival and coexistence and we would be simply irresponsible to disregard it.

Mr Speaker, I would like to emphasize that this country is talking about adopting the state government system, and it is of paramount importance that we adopt it on a united front, and trust is a fundamental ingredient to fostering that national unity. Mr Speaker, I thought I express this concern at this juncture to underpin the importance of trust and confidence in our own people.

Mr Speaker, going back to the concern raised by the Opposition about security, I am afraid I just have to describe it as a very narrow minded view. Security issues are much broader than what Members of the Opposition or any one else in this House may have in mind.

Mr Speaker, in fact security threat to the nation has domestic and international faces. On

the international front, all we could do as a country is to cooperate with the international community to make the world a better place to live in.

Mr Speaker, the country does that through our participation in the international effort to fight transnational crime and terrorism. The greatest contribution that we can make as a country in the global strategy is to avoid Solomon Islands becoming a haven for such crime. I want to assure the people of this nation that this government is serious about this agenda.

Mr Speaker, in the domestic front the situation is much more complex than what we think the position is. In fact the concern for security encompasses the social, economic, religious, and cultural dimensions. Therefore, there is no one – model solution to the problem.

Mr Speaker, that is not to say that we should simply put our hands up and surrender. No. At least this government is not going to do that. I want to assure the people of this country that the government is concerned about the safety and security of our people.

Mr Speaker, because of that, what the government is saying is that the concern for security is synonymous with the need to sustain the peace process. In fact they are inseparable. People who are economically suppressed have an inclination to improve their economic positions through unlawful means. That has been proven time and time again in the world. Solomon Islands has just gone through a hellish experience to appreciate this fact.

Mr Speaker, what we are saying is that the first and most effective way of addressing the security of the country is to go beyond the suppressive and confrontational strategies where we only deal with the lawbreakers and disturbers of peace to address the underlying issues that continue to threaten our peace process.

Mr Speaker, we have 28 years of lessons to learn from. It is common knowledge that the issues that brought the country to its knees are predominantly development in nature. That is why the government is concerned that the heavy institutional and capacity building focus of the present RAMSI assistance may not be addressing the issues that really matter. The government will be working very closely with

RAMSI under the proposed review to refocus the emphasis of RAMSI on this matter.

Mr Speaker, I guess what I am saying in the context of the subject under discussion here is that the government is taking a comprehensive view on the issue of security. We believe that the acts of lawlessness are responsive actions and therefore we would only be wasting resources, time and effort if we overlook development issues.

Mr Speaker, this is exactly what the 2007 Budget is determined to do. It addresses the issues by appreciating the existence of different delivery agents and seeks to encourage a partnership approach to addressing the development needs of the country. Development here is used in a broader term, to include social, economic, cultural and religious development.

Mr Speaker, the concern for long-term security also extends to the distribution of investment opportunities in the country. We must avoid putting our eggs in one basket, thereby repeating the mistake at the domestic level – the mistake of the last 28 years which saw the economy in a hopeless situation when the seat of government and commerce was under siege.

Mr Speaker, secondly, for some reasons, and without regard to the government's position on the matter, the Opposition is bogged down in what it wants to describe as the deteriorating state of our diplomatic relations with Australia and is arguing that the success of the 2007 budget will depend on the relationship normalized.

Mr Speaker, whilst the Government fully appreciates this concern, it would be totally absurd to attribute the non-performance of the budget to the fact that we have a diplomatic stand-off with Australia. It is a very narrow-minded view. It is made without the slightest appreciation of the issues that caused the stand-off.

Mr Speaker, the Opposition went straight for the trees and missed the forest on this matter. A perfect example is the fact that the group is still moaning and groaning about issues that the government has fully explained to the people of this country as to why it took the decisions.

Mr Speaker, we fully appreciate that Solomon Islanders have the democratic right to express concerns but for these very few individuals to go on and on, and on expressing their concerns, especially when other Solomon Islanders do not share their view is simply absurd on their part. For a premier to threaten break away is even worse. It amounts to sedition.

Mr Speaker, contrary to the argument that the issues are compromising our position on matters of good governance, the opposite is indeed the case. Our actions are premised on the very principles of good governance and respect for constitutionally established institutions in the country.

Mr Speaker, moreover, there is also the concern for mutual respect for the sovereignty of our two countries. It is a cardinal principle of international relationship that countries respect the rights of each other to exist as independent nations.

Mr Speaker, in this regard, I was amused by the Opposition's plan as the basis for a motion of no confidence. They jump straight to the normalization of the relationship as the primary pillar of their plan of action as if this government is not addressing it. I want to call on the Opposition Group to grow up and act like leaders and adults instead of acting like kindergarten students, and stop misleading the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, thirdly, the Opposition Group is still bogged down with aid donors and it seems to be suggesting that we should continue to be dependent on aid donors for our long term survival. It was argued that successive budgets have been donor driven, and any moves toward getting Solomon Islands to be more responsible for the financing of the budget is out of the norm and therefore not in order.

Mr Speaker, this is simply absurd. The argument strikes directly at the heart of important issues such as our long term security and economic independence. It would therefore be totally irresponsible of us as leaders to continue to allow the country to be fully dependent on aid for our economic survival.

Mr Speaker, it should be our endeavor instead to ensure that we prepare the economy to be responsive to development strategies that aim

at fully utilizing our potentials. This is not a difficult task; all it needs is for us to adopt development strategies that will allow that to happen.

Mr Speaker, this is what the present Grand Coalition Government is determined to do during its term in office. This country is blessed with opportunities and as leaders we should not only be talking about it but formulate strategies that will facilitate the utilization of these opportunities. Cooperation is the key to success, not undermining each other through motions of no-confidence.

Mr Speaker, fourthly, the Opposition Group suggests that the government had its priority wrong. We should be emphasizing public investment on infrastructure development. Mr Speaker, the Government fully appreciates this concern, and we agree. In fact a serious impediment to getting development to the rural areas is the lack of important infrastructures in the rural areas. Unfortunately, the concern is made with the argument that the government must make that investment at the expense of important services like health and education. I think this is asking for the impossible.

Mr Speaker, this only demonstrates how narrow minded we could become. We are so long, I guess, in politics that we suffer from tunnel vision. This line of thinking advanced the belief that the government is everything and without it nothing will move.

Mr Speaker, this is a fallacy! In fact it is the advancement of policies that were formulated around this misconception that have been responsible for keeping this country as a least developing country all these years despite the fact we are blessed with bountiful natural resources.

Mr Speaker, we, the 50 of us, have a duty to come out of our little worlds and appreciate the involvement of other important players in the economy. This is not a new idea. In fact, it is a policy issue that is as old as this country, and it surprises me that as mature leaders we can be so careless.

Mr Speaker, this does not mean as a government, we should disregard the important concerns raised by the Opposition. The government has a better solution and one, which

is more sustainable than to go through the headache of convicting aid donors to understand us.

Mr Speaker, what this country needs is an aggressive private sector led approach, to compliment the selective efforts of our development partners. Such a strategy should be premised on mutual respect for the needs of the country and that of the investors; and of course the importance of creating a friendly investment environment.

Mr Speaker, it is on this premise that the government is adopting the Special Economic Zone strategy to compliment our efforts and that of our development partners. The effecting legislation will be presented to the House in the July sitting.

Mr Speaker, the Opposition also argued that the government would need to find 3 to 4 billion dollars to fund all the big statements that were made over the media. In fact the government is even accused of lying to the people of this country because it will not be able to deliver on its promises.

Mr Speaker, this argument is designed to mislead the public. Nevertheless, we welcome the challenge and only time will tell. But what I assure the people of this country is that the government is serious about delivering on its policies and will do so in partnership with the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, indeed, it is this fundamental concept of the new approach that is simply misunderstood by many people. There is the misunderstanding that the government is implementing the bottom up approach single-handedly. That is wrong. The 2007 budget or any government budget for that matter is a facilitating tool as opposed to the tool to deliver. There is glaring difference.

The Bottom-Up Approach: What does it mean? The rationale. Mr Speaker, the primary objective of the bottom-up approach is concerned with the important task of improving the ability of people to cope with the challenges of the fast changing socio-economic environment in the country that is created by the inability of the economy, engendered by the absence of appropriate strategies to cope with the rising demands for employment and other opportunities.

Mr Speaker, Solomon Islands has systematically become a victim of a grossly restrictive environment, most of itself created and we were unable to attract the right kind of investment and the level that would make a difference to the ability of the government to generate the level of revenue required to empower the government to take control of the direction of development in the country.

Mr Speaker, because of the restrictions observed here, the twenty-seven national budgets since the country's attainment of political independence have never been effective instruments of people empowerment, although they were and continued to be passed in the name of the people. All of us must take some responsibility for that incapacity.

Mr Speaker, whilst it is understood that basic essential services must continue to be the main focus of the budget, the long term sustainability of such a role can only be guaranteed by an active process of creating more taxpaying population. Failing that, Mr Speaker, the country will face a situation where the demand for services will out run the country's capacity to sustain it.

Mr Speaker, there is also the danger that such a development may systematically place the development of the country in the hands of foreigners and with it, the control of the destiny of this country.

Mr Speaker, the trickle-down theory which inundated the development policies and strategies of the country to this date has never worked, and will never work because it is based purely on assumptions about the active beneficiaries of the national wealth that is crated by the observed improved economic statistics.

Mr Speaker, this is a glaring fallacy of the crude capitalist ideologies of development where the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" are filled by a comprehensive social welfare program. It is the view of this government that Solomon Islands must not be driven along that path, because to do so would be to deny the very structure of the distribution of wealth in this country, which is more than eighty percent (80%) in favor of the people.

Mr Speaker, this placed the country uniquely different from developed countries where the resources and important factors of

production are in the hands of the state. It is this strength that the government would like to capitalize on in the new approach.

Mr Speaker, there is a lot of misunderstanding on this very important government initiative, and because of this I am hearing all kinds of criticisms against the budget as not meeting the expectations of the people.

Mr Speaker, the Opposition of course is still reeling in the thought that without the support of the donor community, the bottom up approach will remain a wistful thinking and so they are working day and night to instill doubt in the minds of members of Parliament including the government bench that the government budget for the year 2007 will not work.

Mr Speaker, I sympathize with them. My advice to them is, it is about time Solomon Islanders must come out of donor dependency and to work towards getting Solomon Islands to take the predominant role in financing its own budget. This is not impossible but if we do not start now, we will continue to plunge this country so deep into the disease of aid dependency that it will be virtually impossible to come out of it.

Mr Speaker, the government's bottom-up approach is premised on the concept that development is a corporate responsibility of every organization, individuals, and the various levels of government in the country, working within a development framework that takes the views of the various interest groups into consideration.

Mr Speaker, for clarification, reference to organizations includes NGOs; religious organizations; private sector organizations; various community development programs implemented by the various donor countries; national government; provincial governments; and individuals.

Mr Speaker, the government has already made its position clear that for better results and to ensure that the development assistance given to the country by donor organizations and NGOs are properly utilized to achieve national development goals, there must be proper coordination of the various programs.

Mr Speaker, this is an area that the government will be working on in the course of this year through the personal supervision of the

member for Auki/ Langa Langa. We are hoping that by July we should be able to finalize the national framework within which the various funding agencies should participate more transparently.

Mr Speaker, I do not see any reason why we should not be able to increase direct government's contribution into the constituency focused development program by matching Republic of China's contribution dollar for dollar. But this can only happen if the government is comfortable that there is a workable management system right at the constituency level.

Mr Speaker, as a starting point, the government is engaging the first 50 public officers at the constituency level and will engage a further 100 officers when the system is fully developed.

Mr Speaker, the government will also be engaging a number of Parliamentary Secretaries [Members of Parliament] to concentrate on developing specific aspects of the program. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Parliamentary Entitlement Commission for approving the sub mission I made to them for this purpose.

Mr Speaker, the reason for a better coordination is because the aggregate amounts of funds channeled under the various programs are phenomenal and address the same concern as that of the NGOs – the empowerment of the rural based population. It is therefore important that they are properly coordinated for greater efficiency.

Mr Speaker, the rationale behind the need for greater coordination is based on the fact that the millions of dollars that are being channeled through these organizations and funds were sourced in the name of various target groups in the country, especially in the rural area.

Mr Speaker, the government is determined during the course of the year to ensure that the extent of their overlaps and duplications must be determined and addressed, to avoid inefficiency.

Mr Speaker, there is also a need to strengthen the following aspects of the administration of the funds channeled to the rural area through the various funding agencies:-

- (a) Accountability and financial management.
- (b) Project identification, evaluation, appraisal and approval.
- (c) How it relates to provincial development plan.
- (d) Methods of funding the projects.
- (e) Effective implementation and success of the projects funded.

Mr Speaker, as I stated earlier, the government is implementing the rural focused development strategy through the various agencies, namely: The private sector; the provincial government; our development partners; the churches; the NGOs; and the landowners to name a few.

Mr Speaker, the private sector/landowner partnership have been earmarked for palm oil developments in Waisisi, and East Choiseul in addition to Auluta Basin and Vangunu. The Government will be working very closely with the member for South New Georgia Rendova/Tetepari constituency to develop the proposed coffee plantation. The willingness of the National Bank of Solomon Islands to assist makes it all the more exciting and I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the Honourable Member for the Constituency and Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee for pushing this initiative.

Mr Speaker, the government will also work very closely with the provincial governments as soon as the Special Economic Zone legislation is passed to identify suitable areas for the establishment of Special Economic Zones. Choiseul and Isabel provinces have already indicated their participation.

Mr Speaker, there are only few examples of the kind of activities that the government is seriously considering under this strategy. The government's comprehensive land reform program will help to open up more opportunities in the rural areas.

Mr Speaker, the government is determined to aggressively address the decentralization of major development to other provinces in compliance with the bona-fide demands of the people of Guadalcanal. Like I said elsewhere, the government, the

government's development strategy is conscious of the need to incorporate the reasons why the country collapsed in 2000.

Mr Speaker, the successful implementation of this budget depends on the cooperation of every stakeholder, starting with each and every member of this honourable house. This house must put up a united front to all our people, instead of trying to take each other down. I am saying this because it is a known secret that some elements of the Opposition group is working tirelessly to topple this government.

Mr Speaker, one Minister was approached by a prominent figure of the Opposition group with a promise that his loan will be paid in full by the Opposition group if he could just move across to the Opposition group to support the move to oust the Prime Minister. This is very interesting. Where would the Opposition get the money to do that? Of course from evil sources! We should be ashamed of ourselves.

Mr Speaker, two prominent leaders in the Opposition group requested the former members of the MEF in Rove and Malaita to make false affidavits against this Prime Minister about his alleged involvement in the 2000 coup.

Mr Speaker, in fact I have actually seen false affidavits signed under oath alleging that the member for East Choiseul was wearing mask and directed the raiding of the Armoury at Rove and later went up to put the former Prime Minister under House arrest and neutralized the security at the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr Speaker, how can people dare to deliberately lie, especially when they call themselves Christians? I challenge these people to stop going to Church because they are no better than the heathens. There are people who even say that the Prime Minister is involved in organizing the recent riot in Parliament. This is simply to tarnish the image of the Prime Minister as a criminal.

Mr Speaker, if that is not enough, Ministers and backbenchers have been bombarded left, right and centre by people who have personal scores to settle with this Prime Minister. I am saying this because the other side is going around campaigning against this Prime Minister. You know what their message is?

“Let us get rid of the Prime Minister and continue with the government”.

Mr Speaker, I find that very interesting. For refusing to bow down to the dictates of foreign governments? For demanding respect from those who have become totally unreasonable in their dealing with an independent sovereign nation? For insisting that the laws and systems of this country are respected? For insisting that the principles of Cabinet Government system are respected?

Mr Speaker, I want to remind those who are bent on pursuing this agenda to grow up and demonstrate maturity in leadership. If we exercise our leadership role with the desire to cut each other down than we are no better than those who brought the country to its knees during the ethnic crisis.

Mr Speaker, the government for the first time is taking a bold move to engage members of Parliament who are not members of Parliamentary Standing Committees as Parliamentary Secretaries assigned to manage specific program that are crucial to achieving the overall objectives of the new rural emphasis development strategy. These Parliamentary Secretaries will be remunerated at the level compatible with the Deputy Speaker.

Mr Speaker, these programs include the fine-tuning of the bottom up development strategy; the establishment of Special Economic Zones in selected areas throughout the country as a strategy to decentralize major development infrastructures to Solomon Islands; and the establishment of specific agricultural projects in identified locations throughout the country.

Mr Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretaries will also be engaged in the review and development of an innovative tourism strategy targeting the rural area; and the development of a workable strategy for the effective participation of rural Solomon Islanders in the development of the forestry, and fisheries sector.

Mr Speaker, this needs the participation of all members of Parliament to put aside our pride and ambitions and work together for the advancement of our country, and not to stab each other in the back. In fact we have no reasons to.

Mr Speaker, the Accounting Officers in all 21 ministries of the government are the next in line to ensure that the development programs advanced under the budget are fully implemented.

Mr Speaker, in addition to the proposed Cabinet Development Committee, and the inter-ministerial development committee, the government would also like to see the Public Accounts Committee taking in an active role in ensuring that the budget is implemented within the bounds of proper rules financial management. Accounting officers will be held accountable for any impropriety in the management of their budget.

Mr Speaker, statutory organizations and state own enterprises are also required to cooperate with the government in ensuring that their services are compatible with the new direction. The ongoing reform in this sector will ensure that these organizations are effective and efficient in delivering their services. Any privatization of State Owned Enterprises will be guided by strict criterion.

Mr Speaker, churches are already receiving more than \$150 million direct budgetary assistance from the government for the delivery of health and education services in the country, and therefore have a solemn duty to ensure that these services are effectively and efficiently delivered. Since more than 97% of the country's population belongs to one of the many churches in the country, churches have a duty to nurture their members to be good citizens of the country.

Mr Speaker, indeed, a country's image is reflected by its population and how they relate to issues of good governance, law and order, and respect for authority. These issues strike directly at the very core of the values that Christianity is advancing and one would justifiably expect Solomon Islands to be standing tall when measured against these values.

Mr Speaker, the point I am getting at here, is, this is where our churches are expected to deliver. These are matters of the heart and only when one is fully converted would he find himself comfortable with them. Having said that, the Government is fully committed to the tithing policy.

Mr Speaker, considering the rising level of lawlessness in the country, one is fully justified to question whether we fully appreciate the religion of Christ, or better still, whether our churches are doing enough to mould our people to appreciate their duties as Christians. This is the difference between practical Christianity and one, which is only based on the mere knowledge of Christianity.

Mr Speaker, it is because of this concern that the government is determined to work very closely with our churches to reach beyond the delivery of health and education services to touch the issue of the heart through the tithing policy. We should be able to establish the level of the tithe which will be based on the excess of revenue over expenditure as soon as the 2006 Annual Accounts of the Government is finalized.

Mr Speaker, in this regard, churches have a serious responsibility to ensure that they take care of their flocks. The fact that our youths find the dancing clubs, kwaso, marijuana, and other activities more appealing to them may be an indication that church programs are inadequate and boring.

Mr Speaker, the other important group that needs to cooperate with the government in order to achieve the objectives of the 2007 budget is the land and resource owners. Their cooperation is important because of the rural emphasis of the government's development strategy.

Mr Speaker, the success of any rural development lies in the cooperation and participation of land and resource owners. This is imperative in light of the fact that one of the main hindrances to rural development is land disputes.

Mr Speaker, the government is taking a giant step to address this age-old problem in our land reform program, which among other things is designed to address the main cause of land disputes in Solomon Islands by settling the question of proper titles to customary lands throughout the country.

Mr Speaker, I think I have bored the house enough and must stop here. If we have forgotten what I have said, my message is this country has suffered enough and cannot afford negligence by leaders. What this country needs

now is for all of us to put our differences aside and work together for the common good of our people.

Mr Speaker, we have a duty to ensure that we do not become hopeless victims of other people's agendas because that would only make us traitors. This is our country. Let's be proud of it.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move "that at the adjournment of Parliament on Friday 23rd February 2007 the present meeting shall be concluded and Parliament shall then stand adjourned sine die."

Thank you.

(Motion of Sine Die opens for debate)

Sitting suspended for lunch break

Mr DAUSABEA: Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to take the floor for me to participate on this first motion of sine as the MP for East Honiara.

Mr Speaker, as alluded to earlier by the Honorable Prime Minister, I too support the call he made for the two sides of the House to come together and work together for the betterment of this nation and our future generations.

Mr Speaker, we should not take that call lightly in the light of what this nation is going through but we should take it seriously and focus on the sovereign future of this nation.

Mr Speaker, after winning my election for the third time as the Member of Parliament for East Honiara, I decided to join a government that cares more about the grassroots people and is forward looking for the indigenous people of this nation.

Mr Speaker, I have been in two past governments and we came in always half way to the term of parliament and there is no focus from the beginning from the political leaders of the government on the aspirations of our people. That is why I have decided from day one to switch side and join this government that is more focused on our people's needs and aspirations.

During my campaign, Mr Speaker, I did make it very clear that my platform is based on three things. The first one is sovereignty of this

nation. That is in my platform when I campaigned for the East Honiara seat. The second one is justice for all. Thirdly is a government system that reverts to the hand of the indigenous people. Those are the three things as my platform when I went on the campaign trail. I put these to the people of East Honiara and let them decide for themselves. Fortunately, after weeks of campaigning I was finally elected on those three bases which I used as my platform. Mr Speaker, the rest is history because after I nominated you, Sir, I was missing from this House until the beginning of this meeting.

Mr Speaker, on sovereignty, when I was detained at Rove I listened to many Members talk about the sovereignty of this nation. There are different views and different beliefs about sovereignty by our political leaders here. I took sovereignty in my heart.

Mr Speaker, after winning the election I was chased by the overseas media wanting to interview me. It was from these interviews that I became the target. This is because I said it very clearly in one of my interviews to the foreign media that the immunity clause in the Facilitation Act is not needed in this country. One of the overseas media guy asked me if I am going to challenge that clause in court. I said to him that since I am now an elected Member of Parliament I will be waiting when the Bill is brought up for review, and I will try to seek an amendment to it. That statement alone has put me on the firing line. Mr Speaker, after that statement I was in the newspapers, the print media, the television and the broadcasting media.

Mr Speaker, when one looks at the word 'sovereignty' you heard it from somebody else some may take the definition differently. But for me, I will say it well and clear in this sovereign House that the sovereignty of this country and my people is what I will always stand for.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I got the opportunity to be bailed to come here in this honorable Chamber to participate and represent my people views and aspirations in this honorable Chamber. I want to make it very clear that something is wrong.

A lot has been said about the budget that we have just passed. This is the first time, may be in 28 years, a budget of bottom up approach is ever presented in this honorable Chamber. There are certain views opposing and supporting. But like the Honorable Prime Minister's call this morning, which I am in support of, let us all come together and put the budget to the test and let see whether it will work for our people or not. Only after that, can one make his view or opinion known after putting it to the test. Because there is a saying that says, 'Don't judge a book by its cover'. Don't just look at the cover and make your judgment. There could be useful advice inside the book that you need. I call on all our colleagues here, let us support this budget that we have already passed and let us work together.

The problem I have in my constituency is not my problem. The problem the MP for Central Honiara has in his constituency is not his problem. The problem the MP for West Honiara has in his constituency is not his problem. It is every ones and all our problem.

Sir, I am in support of this government. Last Saturday was a milestone or history in the making in our homeland in Malaita. Mr Speaker, I am a Fataleka man and I know that allowing ones land is not an easy thing in our culture. But last Saturday I saw my tribes allowing their land to be surveyed for the much talked about development on Malaita.

Mr Speaker, the occasion was indeed very touching and moving because we have amongst us the Premier of Guadalcanal Province and three Cabinet Ministers from Guadalcanal attending the ceremony. Their presence speaks louder than what is put in the news media

My only disappointment is not seeing my other four colleagues on the other side of the House attending the ceremony with us. That is my only disappointment. Had they attended it would have been the whole Malaitan Members of Parliament attending the ceremony. I urge them to attend next time. When we go for the groundbreaking ceremony they must make an effort to attend because this is all about development on Malaita.

Mr Speaker, I could remember what the late Mamaloni once said to us. He said; "You solve the problem of Malaita, you solve the

problem of Solomon Islands". That is why even as a Member of Parliament for East Honiara I have to make an effort to attend to show my support for Malaita. We three Members of Parliament for Honiara decided to attend to show our support for the project, to support the landowners and their tribes.

Mr Speaker, that is history in the making and a milestone in the history of Malaita. I would like to thank the honorable colleagues of Guadalcanal and their Premier for coming with us.

Mr Speaker, as covered in the media the people received us with happy and open hearts when they welcome us over there in Malaita. Malaita is a sleeping giant. A lot has been said about us but once fine tuned Malaita will move on in its development at a pace that even this Parliament cannot stop because they are hard working people.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate the Premier of Malaita and the landowners for participating in that ceremony. I look forward to the continuation of their support until the groundbreaking and until the project takes off the ground.

Mr Speaker, a lot of groups have been calling on the government in Honiara. Transparency Solomon Islands is one, the civil societies, claiming to be representing 90% of the people. I am lost because I cannot understand when were they given mandate by the people? Because the people that I understand whom the people have given the mandate to are the 50 Members of Parliament sitting in this honorable House.

There is even one person from Germany who appeared in the Solomon Star two days ago claiming to represent 90% of the people.

Mr Speaker, we must be honest. I want to make the records straight. Mr Speaker, on one front page of the Solomon Star it was stated very clearly that the government is wrecking the justice system. It was by TSI.

I do not know where they get their analysis from but as one who has gone through the system of oppression and suppression, Mr Speaker, I do not need people to tell me what is happening in there because I felt it and I knew it.

They are blaming the government as wrecking the legal system. They even accused

His Excellency the Governor General. Mr Speaker, who gave them the mandate to come out in the open and attack his Excellency? Even the German guy in the Solomon Star two days ago called Ministers and backbenchers 'well trained little puppies'. I am not a dog neither a puppy. I am a Member of Parliament mandated by my people.

Mr Speaker, for someone coming in for a hunting trip and cannot find a boat back home turned around and called me a leader of this sovereign country a little trained puppy is very insulting. I need an apology from him on behalf of my people of East Honiara. If not he should be declared persona non grata too. Mr Speaker, they are our guests coming in to find money to make business and how dare you insult sovereign elected leaders of this sovereign country, belittling them and calling them little trained puppies. You do that in your country Germany and you will have Police knocking on your doors. Anyway we uphold freedom of expression and that is his opinion about us.

But like I said earlier I want to put records straight concerning the attack on the government as wrecking the legal system of this country. I think it is the TSI that is wrecking the legal system of this country. I want to give a few examples of what I meant by that on what I have gone through and what I have experienced.

Sir, I uphold the legal system of this country but there are certain things that are not done by the government but by certain people mandated to look after our legal system. Mr Speaker, I want to cite a few examples here so that it is clear in the minds of those people and even the TSI.

I was arrested on the 18th of April and some where around November an American was convicted and sentenced to three years imprisonment at Rove. He was convicted and was sent down to Rove. Mr Speaker, surprisingly he was bailed even though convicted. An Asian was arrested for Inland Revenue Offences, which is a crime and was convicted and sent for five months imprisonment at Rove, however, he was bailed. I was on remand and held at Rove after a long PI has been completed. I have been applying for bail more than 10 times but I was never given a bail.

When I see the TSI attacking the government as wrecking the system, I have to put it back to them as a person who has been suppressed. May I put it to them Mr Speaker, who is wrecking the system?

These are convicts and yet they were bailed. I am on remand applying 10 times until I cannot walk because I was partly paralyzed at the Central Hospital before I was given a bail on medical grounds.

This is why when people are talking a legitimate and elected government of this sovereign nation in the media, I wonder if they ever did their homework. This is a free country and so we can go out and say what we want to say but let us do in a much more balanced approach. Anyone has the right to say what he/she wants to say about a government but make sure it is balanced and factual.

Or was I not given bail because my skin is black, I am asking them? Was it because I am black?

Mr Speaker, I am very, very sorry that some of us leaders allow ourselves to be used by this people, and these people are having a free ride in our society, they are having a free ride in our country using us to fight against each other.

Mr Speaker, the suspended Acting Attorney General is one of such clear case. I said under no certain term in this Parliament that we should be united together to ask who is causing all these problems that an appointed officer of a sovereign state of Solomon Islands found himself stateless in a foreign country. And yet we parliamentarians allow ourselves to be used because the big brother says so. I find this interesting. I find this very, very interesting.

We all should be asking, what is the cause, who is causing the problem before making our stand. Instead we jump there because they said. We should be protecting the interest of this country, all of us 50 Members of Parliament and not only the government side.

Mr Speaker, I want to put it right to the TSI who is attacking the government for wrecking the legal system. There are even brothers down there who have been on remand for three to four years now, yet to be bailed, not even convicted. What is wrong? Justice delayed is justice denied. That is what they said.

Mr Speaker, I brought this to the attention of this honorable House because may be only when you get down there you will know what is going on down there.

There are certain things that need to be looked into and put right. As I said earlier the normal remand period I know of when I was a Police officer was only 14 days, not eight months, which the time it took me.

Mr Speaker, the other man who was arrested for plotting to assassinate the Prime Minister was only on remand for 14 days. That is the correct time. Why did it take the MP for East Honiara 8 months, one month sick, partly paralyzed and chained to a hospital bed? This country ratified some of the charters in the world like the Human Rights Charter. Where do we go from here? I was chained to a hospital bed for six weeks and handcuffed.

Yet we are pretending everything is well. I am just giving us a warning because some of us might end up there later and we will regret it.

Mr Speaker, that is what happen. Solomon Islands is a signatory to human rights and ratified that charter and we should uphold it. However, that is not what is happening. That is not happening and that is why this government wants to put things right. Yet people continue to attack us saying we are doing this and that. You only have to go through what I went through and you will appreciate what I am saying now. Mr Speaker, I am telling you from my heart what I have gone through.

When this appointed officer found himself stateless, we should be asking why was that done to him. He should be allowed to come into the country and they should deal with us in a more diplomatic and sensible manner. You are dancing on that side and I am dancing on this side but the one who is causing all these problems is sitting in his air conditioned office looking at us saying go ahead and also laughing at us. It is time we grow up and stand for our people and nation.

Mr Speaker, the other reason why I support this government is the time frame of acquiring the federal system for this nation. We have been talking about the federal system way back in 1987 or even on Independence Day when you, Mr Speaker sir, became the Prime

Minister. At last this government puts its feet down and listens to the people of this nation. This government will start implementing that process this year. That is why I support this government.

Mr Speaker, nobody in this House dislikes RAMSI. No we all want RAMSI to stay. It is this Honorable Chamber that invited RAMSI to come into the country. But we invited them in with a clear line of responsibility, a clear line of performance of duty and a clear line on the rules of engagement in their areas of responsibility.

Mr Speaker, what has now transpired is that there seems to be no demarcation on the rules of responsibility between the two – the invited brothers of ours and the sovereign government of Solomon Islands. When this government tried to put this right everybody was crying all over this place as if the hell is going to open and a mighty rock falling out on this earth.

When RAMSI was invited, Mr Speaker, I wish to make records right that I was with the former Prime Minister on that Saturday morning. He told me that he was going over to Australia because the Australian Prime Minister is sending a charter flight to pick him up and so he left at 3 pm. I was with him all day that Saturday. Mr Speaker, my mind only goes back when we were in government in 1999 when the government of the day knew very well the limitation of its military capability and so it asked for Australia's intervention to come and help.

Mr Speaker, the same Foreign Affairs turned around and said it is our internal problem. Anyway I am still grateful that RAMSI came and I did my bit as a parliamentarian at that time to help return 465 high powered guns from our militants in Malaita. I did my part as a responsible leader.

But one thing is for sure that I am always on the wrong side of their approach. This is one thing we need to put right in this honorable Chamber as well. When RAMSI came in it already had in its list the names of those they are going to arrest because some jealous people fed them with the wrong information.

Sadly the MP for East Honiara was on their list at that time. And upon RAMSI's

arrival in the country I was still under their surveillance. This is not a joke, it is not tell-tale here. People supplied them with the names of those who should be arrested

The MP for East Choiseul explained this morning about an affidavit that was made because we took over the government at that crucial time. With the MP for Savo/Russells we tried to find a solution at that time, the most difficult time in this country. Yet we have not been given any ovation for that instead we have been suspects all along. The affidavit stated that the Prime Minister was in Kung Fu clothes and masked at was at the armory. It is unbelievable that a parliamentarian can do that.

Mr Speaker, fabrication is another thing. I want this honorable chamber to know that this is what is going on and this is what happening. If we all put fabrication aside and we all go for the truth, this nation will be a very lovely nation because we will live in the truth, and walk in the truth. Even the Son of the Almighty says, "If you know the truth the truth shall set you free". Mr Speaker, is that true? We need to be free inside and not only outside. Mr Speaker, it should not only be on Sunday that we wear necktie and go to church. Our hearts must be first of all cleansed.

Mr Speaker, I am not going to bore you and my colleagues very much but I wish to put things right that these NGOs who are claiming to represent 90% of this country I am challenging them that they only represent 009%. Many groups are coming up, many organizations are being created because they get funding from the very forces that want to topple this government.

If they want to prove the 99% or 95% that they claim to represent, I will call on them through another arena, and that is to call on my constituency to prove that number. Let us not tell lies on the paper. The person from German also claimed to represent 90% of the people. We must be honest and true.

This government is addressing the much delayed and talked about development since independence. After only eight months in office the Auluta Oil Palm survey consent was signed last Saturday. These are the kinds of development we need in this country. We have to create development so that the people who are causing problems in my constituency can go

back to their respective land and engage in employment, useful employment making a meaningful life for their province and this country as a whole.

I am happy Isabel Province is opening up its land for development and so is Choiseul Province. When lands are opened up, as a responsible government we need to facilitate development for our people.

Mr Speaker, before I resume my seat I would just like to conclude by thanking once again my landowners of East Kwara'ae and East Fataleka for the first step to development. As a great Chinese leader once said, "It is going to be a long march that started with the first footstep", and we have started with that first footstep last Saturday. I thank the Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Prime Minister for his energetic speech of reassurance to the people of Malaita. Let us support them with the resources they have.

Once again, Mr Speaker, I thank you very much and I resume my seat.

Mr HUNIEHU: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing the floor for me to participate in the debate of this traditional motion of sine die moved by the Honourable Prime Minister this morning.

At the outset, I wish to welcome the Honourable MP for East Honiara and the MP for Central Honiara for their attendance at this Parliament Meeting. I believe that the question of presumption of justice is that nobody is guilty until proven by a court of law and therefore I am inclined to ask the Minister responsible for Justice to amend the laws so that our people, Solomon Islanders and foreigners alike are not unnecessarily put in the cells when under investigation. In fact they are not guilty until proven by a court of law that they are guilty. This is my plea to the good Minister.

Mr Speaker, in the concluding statement of the Prime Minister this morning, he said it is time that we all work together for the good of this country. I think the Member who has just spoken also amplified the same statement that we must all work altogether because we have suffered too long and therefore the only thing left for us to do is to put our hands together and work together for the interest and benefit of the

people of Solomon Islands. I am in support of that statement as well.

Sir, but I would like to outline why I see it impossible for us to work together as a Parliament, as a government and as an Opposition Group because it has to do with our policies. You cannot expect me to work together with the government when I do not believe in your leadership policies, in your development policies, in your policies of managing the affairs of this country. If the Prime Minister is serious in that urge then I am also appealing to him to take on very seriously the views of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, the differences we have on the issue of security are unmatchable. The Government side believes that the way to secure the security of this country is to engage in arguments with the very institutions this Parliament brought over to address the security issue of this country. This side of the House believes that we should continue to maintain strong relationship with these institutions because time is not right for us to start kicking the door suggesting that drastic changes have to be made to the arrangement of security.

I am talking about the RAMSI operations facilitated through the Facilitation Act passed by none other than this Parliament. When this government took power it started to seriously address RAMSI by threatening everybody that during its leadership it would like to send off RAMSI from Solomon Islands. That is scaring people in this country. That is scaring our overseas investors and that is scaring partners in this arrangement, if I may say.

This side of the House is persistent that there is nothing wrong with RAMSI because only Parliament can review the Facilitation Act and leave it to Parliament because anything else is not acceptable.

We also do not agree with that side of the House's involvement in the Judiciary. Cases have been appearing in the Solomon Star and in the press from day one when this government took power. How could I be asked to cooperate with a government which I do not believe in its policy of starting to show the exit door to RAMSI when the time is not yet right? How could I be asked to cooperate with a government that started to interfere with the work of the

Judiciary? It is non-negotiable as far as I am concerned. Unless you seriously address this issue and stop tampering with the Judiciary, then I can agree with my friend, the Prime Minister. I have no problem working together with him.

During this Parliament Meeting the Government opposes a motion from this side of the House asking the government not to rearm part of the Police Force. In spite of the fact the whole nation was with the Opposition that the time is not right to rearm the Police the government rejected that motion. And here the Prime Minister is calling on the MP for East Are Are to join him to work together. But rearmament is a fundamental difference in policy. I believe that all Solomon Islands, even if the motion was rejected, do not support the government. Even the Cabinet itself is split on rearmament. It is split. Whenever rearmament is discussed in Cabinet only a few Ministers attended the meetings. Is this not reflective of the cohesiveness and solidarity of a Cabinet and a government? You may say that I am not telling the truth but the onus is on you each individual Cabinet Member. I believe in what I am saying.

Mr Speaker, even the motion asking the government to allow the PNG Commission of Inquiry to enter Solomon Islands was rejected outright by the government. Sir, what is this? What are we trying to hide? The Opposition Bench is supportive of this move as a healthy sign of creating a healthy atmosphere between our two countries. But as long as the government continues to ignore important issues of strengthening our relationship, I find it difficult to concur with the Prime Minister's call for us to work together. I would like a more qualified statement as to why the government did not allow this Commission of Inquiry to come here to deal with the issues it wants to do in Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, our relationship amongst our neighboring countries of Solomon Islands, PNG, Vanuatu and Australia is based on common understanding of partnership between these countries. Otherwise there is no need of preaching better understanding when we refuse to allow important Commissions of Inquiry from their countries to come and deal with issues here

which is affecting the relationship of both countries.

As I understand it, the Commission of Inquiry in PNG is now demanding the Prime Minister of PNG to be called to the witness box to answer for himself as to how he is not involved in authorizing the clandestine flight to Solomon Islands. That is how far this has gone in PNG. But how far it has gone here is that it has been rejected on the floor of this Parliament - the defender of democracy, the defender of our Constitution, the defender of our laws. This is what this Parliament has done.

Sir, on the Budget this side of the House concluded that the budget is a public sector expansionary budget and is not addressing the real issues in the rural areas. With a \$970 million budget only \$188 million was allocated for development. Are we so blind to see this minimal allocation to development projects in the country? During our time it was \$300 million but now it has gone down, and \$80 million of the development budget was funded by local revenue. Because had we maintained cordial relationship with our development partners, the development aid for this 2007 Appropriation Bill 2007 should have been \$300 to \$400 million.

Of course, I can take refuge in what the Prime Minister said that we should not continue to depend on aid. I think he has not properly thought out that statement. This country, since Independence has been depended on foreign aid up until now. This is the first Prime Minister asking the people of Solomon Islands not to depend on foreign aid.

Mr Speaker, if foreign aid is not in the best interest of our country, then as a government you do not have to accept it. But it is your duty as a Prime Minister, and as a government to market the interests, the needs of our people to our overseas development partners, but you have not been doing that to the last budget.

Mr Speaker, why was the debate of the budget prolonged from last year to now? We thought the reason for prolonging the debate of the budget was for you to improve, but there was no major improvement on the Budget. This is a fundamental point that I will continue to amplify that the 2007 Appropriation Bill 2007 is a public

sector driven budget. I could not be convinced one bit that this budget is for the rural people of Solomon Islands. No, it is not! That is the reality.

The development budget is \$188 million, but there is no project for my constituency and no projects for Malaita Province and yet 13 Malaitan Members of Parliament are supporting the government. Where is the cream for Malaita Province?

Look at this book. This is the book. I appreciate what happened last Saturday, and I think it is a good start. But it was started by the last government and so this is only a follow up. The Minister for Agriculture knows this very well. He used to be the Secretary to Cabinet and he knows it. He is nodding his head and that is denying the truth. As a Minister you are not allowed to deny truth in this Parliament. That is one of the reasons why there is barrier between the government and the Opposition. You better fix our doubts.

The investment barrier is a consequence of your attitude and recalcitrant behavior, and it is affecting the budget. It has affected the budget and it will continue to affect the budget for next year. That is the truth. It will flow over to next year. We only hope our local revenue source will improve and implement taxation reform, and you can improve by \$100 million. Stop the duty exemptions, make the taxes to be fair, broaden the tax base and you collect more out of the tax revenue to fund more rural developments. And most importantly there must be savings in the public sector budget.

Sir, we cannot afford to continue spending money and approving expenditures in this Parliament, building hedges around us, around our political appointees, and around the public servants who are supporting us. No, this country does not belong to these people alone. It belongs to both the Opposition and the Government side and the little people in this country. This country does not belong to the big people. It belongs to the little people in the rural areas who have been deprived for a very long time.

There is no miserable way of addressing the development aspirations in the budget. Just look at the development budget and you will see that \$80million of the \$188 million is from local

revenue. Well and good. But when we were in government the revenue increased from zero level by 80%. The revenue base had increased by 80%. We started the system and we hope you build upon it. I am trying to relate nothing but the truth that is required of Members of Parliament in this House. We are in total difference.

The investment barriers must be removed. This side of the House began the process of trying to engage in meaningful partnership and negotiation with foreign investors until these same foreign investors became threatened of their investment as a result of some of our actions or if not they are threatened by all of our actions. I never heard any positive message from the government since it took office.

The question of tithing as well is confusing the public. The government is deliberately confusing the public and the Churches. We, on this side of the House want a proper message to be given to our Churches because tithe is interpreted as 10% of the gross revenue of the country. But the government interprets it as 10% of the net revenue. But I tell you that by withdrawing the \$11 million from the Development Budget from the Ministry of Aviation, the projected surplus revenue of \$5 million will make the budget in deficit so how can you pay 10% tithing of a deficit budget.

I have seen a corrigenda that \$11 million credited to the Consolidated Fund has to be withdrawn because the Parliament has passed a legislation allowing the Ministry of Aviation and Communication to collect its own funds and deposit those funds in its own account to be administered by the Minister sitting there and the Permanent Secretary.

Mr Speaker, the Budget also indicated that there will be a net surplus of \$5million. That withdrawal is a deficit. The Prime Minister was saying that we will have to wait and see the figures coming out in the media on the level of expenditure and revenue but it was already revealed in this budget that this is a deficit budget.

Mr Speaker I do not have to be an economist to be able to see this. I learn my economics and economics theory in this Parliament. I did not learn it overseas. I learned

it here and only Parliament can confuse me, that this is what I read from the budget.

Sir, sovereignty is the catchword and in fact this is the very word that drives the Prime Minister so made. He thinks that somebody is robbing the sovereignty of this country. Nobody is robbing our sovereignty.

Sir, I made a statement on this floor during the debate of the Facilitation Act saying that we have been brought down to our knees, our sovereignty is at stake, we are not providing sufficiently for the table and so I can compromise sovereignty for foreign assistance to rebuild the status of our sovereignty. That is the truth about three to four years ago.

All Solomon Islanders were merely chasing up funds at the sub-treasury, in particular the able Police Force continued to rape the little finances available in the Ministry of Finance much to their own benefit and there was nothing left for people in the rural areas that we talked so much about. So there is a limit to what we mean by sovereignty.

To you mean sovereignty might mean Solomon Islands ably handling the issues by its own self without depending on foreign partners, private sector, investors from overseas, our development partners. This is what we mean by sovereignty and therefore we do not like their security arrangement, we do not like their Commissioner of Police, we do not like their officers working in the Judiciary. No! We have misconstrued the sovereignty of this country.

I know that I am a Solomon Islander and all of us are Solomon Islanders but let us not overemphasize sovereign because it can be negative to development virtues that we very much need.

'The underlying causes' of the social ethnic tension is a phrase the Prime Minister always wants to use in all his speeches. But what appears here is seriously nothing. He is using the underlying causes may be to get the Malaitan people and the Guadalcanal people to support him. But the substance is not to be found. Of course, there are expressions that the government is going to address the underlying causes.

For me, expression alone is not good enough. You have to define what you mean by the underlying causes. I cannot see it in this

budget, and I will continue to complain until you provide something concrete and evidential in the next budget next year or this year. So you are proposing a mini budget, another one is it.

Mr Speaker, on the millennium funds from the USA, I want to make a statement that Solomon Islands has been included as one of the countries not qualified for the millennium fund because of our actions. Take my word, Mr Speaker, that I have already got it from the horse's mouth that unless we clean up, unless we change our attitudes, unless we respect the rule of law, unless there is no interference in the Judiciary, unless we can prove that there is good governance in this country and this government, and unless we continue to apply barbaric type of policies to our development partners, we will not have access to this fund.

Vanuatu already gets its money because it has complied with the rules of compliance. There is good governance there. There is no military coup there. The judiciary is left to the Judiciary. There is separation of the various arms of the government. The government does not interfere with the other two government organs. It complied and so it is allowed to apply for six to seven hundred million dollars and it has been offered that assistance.

Sir, I am urging my good friends on the other side not to see foreign fund as negative development approach for our people. The Prime Minister mentioned in his speech that many Members of Parliament would like to think that Solomon Islanders can be bogged down with development aid as the basis to develop their plans to take over the government. No! Mr Speaker, our policy has always been to make friends to those with development aid in order for them to inject funds into our little economy.

Sir, if we can get eight to nine hundred million dollars from the Millennium Challenge Fund from the United States, that is where we should be starting the bottom up approach. We are preaching bottom up approach here with no funding arrangement. This is a fundamental issue. It hinges on our foreign relations, it hinges on our foreign relations, it hinges on our partnership, it hinges on the way we develop partnership with our development aid partners.

We must grow up and see this as taking away our sovereignty.

There is a big point of difference between the government side and this side of the House. The Minister for Foreign Affairs who is not here said during an interjection by the MP for Renbel that 'Solomon Islands is eligible and gave different reasons why we should not. After I heard him saying that I know it is not right and so I went straight to the source, and that is what I am revealing now. If we improve our relationship we can begin the process of negotiation immediately. This side of the House will immediately cooperate with you because it was our government that started it in 2003 when our Foreign Affairs Minister went to America and had audience with the former Secretary of State, Collin Powell to begin the process of negotiation, and two representatives from the State Department visited Solomon Islands. They had a session with the Prime Minister. They asked Solomon Islands to develop good partnership with RAMSI and with Australia. That was in the news. It has to do with building bridges and mending bridges so that we can access this development aid.

They were here and have already left and so it is up to us to qualify under their rules of compliance. How can you expect the Opposition side to work with you when you are obstacles to development aid assistances to our country?

The political theory that is going on now is that the government must be Malaita influenced. This is building up, this regional type of politics. As leaders of this nation we must see all of us as leaders of this country and we must not promote regional politics. I hope that the Prime Minister's statement this morning that four Members from this side of the House who did not attend the celebrations in Auki was not meant to be an insinuation on Members of this side of the House – political insinuation. I hope this is not what he meant this morning. In other words, 'since I have got 13 already never mind four of you' but we are the four wise men but too many. If we want to comply with the Scripture four is too many so I do not know which one is not one of the wise men may be the one speaking now and I accept that. But

politically Mr Speaker, this is dangerous for political leadership in this country.

Malaita Province with the highest population in this country has to be put in the right political position. What the Malaitan people need is more development. Malaitans need to be compensated for all developments that were missing during independence. Every government wants to use Malaita's political support to get political expediency but never did they realize that the problem of development in my constituency is the issue that must be addressed. Now we are saying the right things and we have started to do the right things too. But I am speaking on what I can see in this budget.

Sir, I am complaining because what about the displaced victims at Burns Creek. What about the squatters here in Honiara? What about the displaced victims of New Zealand Camp. These are issues that could divide and could further break up the unity and peace of this country. Create more development in Malaita Province so that these people can go back and become more positive and useful in their home province. That is what I want to see in your mini budget. If I see nothing in that mini budget, I will not support you.

I want the 13 MPs from Malaita to make the point enough is enough. We have been talking so much about development for Malaita Province and nothing is happening. The provision for Bina Harbour of \$400,000 in the development budget is not enough. M goodness \$400,000 is only US\$20,000. What are you going to do with this money?

Sir, during our time \$4million was allocated for Bina. Where is it Minister for Development Planning? When will it come? Where is it the MP of West Kwaio? It is all gone evaporated into thin air. I am talking on behalf of my people of Malaita and on their behalf I represent in this House. I am saying this with all good intentions. I am saying this to expose what did not happen in this budget to address their issues and hunger and thirst for real development.

I am sure the MP for West Honiara will totally agree with me because he is a man I respect for his development drives. When he talks about development he drives behind the

wheel and gets it happen. I hope he will do this for our people in Malaita Province.

Mr Speaker, I am just relating to this Parliament why some of us on this side of the House find it difficult to cooperate with the government. If you address these issues I would be the first one to jump. I was the only member of the Opposition Group who attended the launching of your statement of policy at the King Solomon Hotel. I was the only Opposition MP who attended. When I looked at those statements written in Queen's English, no grammatically error but when I compared them to the actions the policy is going this way and the actions are going that way. I begin to think whether these people are serious.

They talk about having strong ties with our development partners, foreign affairs ties, and yet they are engaging in confrontational politics. They behaved as if we in this country are donors. We can get rid of this donor partner it is okay because we can get funds from it. No, Mr Speaker, this is where marketing Solomon Islands becomes the most urgent step for this government to address - marketing the Solomon Islands.

The Prime Minister must understand that his role as Prime Minister is to market the interest of Solomon Islands, and not so much emphasizing sovereignty. The best way of marketing Solomon Islands is to bring more investment into this country and provide more employment, and not chasing away investment from our country.

Sir, I would like to see the bottom up approach of this government defined. The only time I see some sensible writing about the bottom approach is in the Prime Minister's speech this morning. I think he was trying to justify and define what the bottom up approach meant. The bottom up approach is not new. It has been here with our colonial masters who were better implementers of the bottom up approach but now all our funds are politicized and I do not know whether they can be implemented under these difficult circumstances.

Sir, RAMSI development aid, I am very serious about this because the reason why we want to maintain strong partnership with RAMSI is because one day we should be asking

them to scale down its technical aid on security when the right time comes. At the moment RAMSI is spending a billion dollar just on the Police. When the right time comes we should be telling them to divert more funds from this to development aid on agriculture, fisheries, renewable energy so that it can benefit the majority of our people. That is what you are saying but you are not practicing it. You are creating road blocks, and this is what I am telling you.

Mr Speaker, I see what you are doing as creating road blocks. My goodness, this is like throwing a fishing line to a big rock. What kind of fish will bite your hook when you throw 10 tons of rock after the fishing line? Isn't this what I am trying to say?

Sir, we can only be successful if we maintain close relationship with these people and genuinely ask them to divert. But instead of maintaining the good relationship with the opening up of the High Commissioner in here, the Foreign Affairs Minister was arranging for the Prime Minister to have a face to face meeting in Canberra or in Bali or somewhere else. I cannot understand that kind of foreign policy rationale. I could not understand it.

Did you shake hands with Prime Minister Howard in Fiji when you met there during the Forum? I heard from the Papers that he was sitting on the other side of the bench and you were sitting on the side of the bench so that you do not see each other eye to eye.

Mr Speaker, I am warning this Parliament that the only way we can successfully negotiate something tangible is to maintain strong relations. It is not because we on this side of the House are bogged down with the development aid mentality. No. We are trying to be resolute in our thinking. We are trying to get Solomon Islands to where it must be led.

You should maintain good relationship with them and in three to five years time you can tell them that we can now handle the security, we can now arm certain sections of the Police to provide security but at the same time what we need is economic development. Can you do it? If you suggest that to John Howard tomorrow he would not agree with you. No.

Mr Speaker, this meeting of Parliament to me is very colorful. We have passed the budget in flying colors. We have rejected three important motions in flying colors as well. We have approved the Bill for the Governor General's increment. With such a huge increase I understand certain MPs are now vying for the job because it is good retirement benefit. I will nominate some of you may be my good Minister for Agriculture when it comes to Malaita's turn you will get my nomination.

Mr Speaker, this country belongs to all of us and in my submission here I have tried to amplify the road blocks between the Opposition and the Government and why I find it difficult for this Opposition to work together with the government.

Sir, there is nothing wrong in working together but unless you are serious in addressing the fundamental differences in your policies. Why not?

The MP for East Honiara is asking me to sit down and since I do not want to take any more of your time I hope my contribution to the sine motion is on behalf of the people who elected me into this Parliament, the people of East Are Are. Thank you.

Mr OLAVAE: Mr Speaker, with your indulgence I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Prime Minister for moving this motion this morning and also previous speakers who have contributed to the motion.

Mr Speaker, previous speakers who contributed raised issues on governance, economic and financial problems we have inherited since obtaining independence.

Mr Speaker, since the creation of Solomon Islands we were blessed with the wealthy healthy resources of four islands throughout the four corners of this nation. There is nothing wrong with the creation of Solomon Islands. We were blessed with the productive sector. The resources we have been talking about, the resources the government has been deriving money from has been budgeted for in the last 28 budgets that we already implemented, and the one we have just passed.

Solomon Islands was created as scattered islands geographically and has been reflecting and calling for decentralization. This

country was not created as one big island but it was created in a scattered form and in a bottom up approach basis. When the colonial masters and the missionaries came to our shores they decentralized the gospel and preached the gospel of our Almighty to the rural parts of Solomon Islands and decentralize infrastructures and rural economic activities throughout the rural parts of Solomon Islands purposely to develop our citizens spiritually, mentality, economically and socially. Our people during those days experienced those developments.

Look at our infrastructure developments throughout the country on wharves, bridges, roads, airports and one might ask, what was the purpose of those infrastructure developments? Those infrastructure developments were built purposely for those people, the private sectors, and the rural farmers to participate in economic activities so that they contribute towards the GDP of the nation's economy.

Decentralization started way back during creation and when the colonial masters came in they continued with that decentralization program. Look at all the banks, the bank branches, the Commonwealth Bank. The staffs of the Commonwealth Bank during the colonial days were deployed throughout the four corners of this nation. Our people have access to banking services throughout the rural parts of Solomon Islands.

In fact the bottom up approach that this government is advocating has already started even during creation and the colonial days. I am glad this government realizes that the only way forward to revitalize our economy under this recovery and restoration program is the bottom up approach.

Mr Speaker, our track record in the last 28 years has shown that this country's economy has been going from good to worse financially, economically, governance wise and so forth. Mr Speaker, the factors pertaining to the downfall of our economy in the last 28 years, as we all know, is that successive governments instead of facilitating the private sector and the rural farmers, and continue to improve on infrastructures that the colonial masters started, it neglected them. The Government and the provincial governments continue to run business

instead of facilitating the private sector and the rural farmers.

Look at the infrastructures that I have just alluded to earlier. They were ingredients to stimulating rural economy. They were ingredients to earning foreign exchange for this country. During the colonial days, Honiara, Auki and Gizo were built as urban centres purposely for public servants to deliver services and for importers to deliver goods and services to the rural parts of Solomon Islands. The rural infrastructures were meant for Solomon Islanders to participate in their own islands so that there is balance of trade.

Mr Speaker, because of globalization and because of our adoption of the multilateral trading system, Solomon Islands cannot be isolated and so it accepted the multilateral trading system to compete with the rest of the world in trading. The infrastructures were put in place so that we can participate fully in competing with the rest of the world to earn foreign exchange for this country.

Mr Speaker, during colonial days because of those ingredients put in place such as the private sector, rural farmers were able to participate in economic activities. There were also good economic policies in place which contributed towards our currency at par with the Australian Dollar at Independence Day.

But for the last 28 years the rate of our dollar to the Australian Dollar is almost six times. What has gone wrong? The problems we have are inherited problems. That is what we have been echoing here in Parliament by both the Government and the Opposition because we have to find solution to the problem.

Mr Speaker, the solution to this very big problem that we inherited is good economic policies, rural development strategies this government is embarking on and other ingredients that we have to put in place so that it will be workable. There must also be capacity building of those 50 constituencies is also important.

Mr Speaker, 28 years is enough time for us to be able to address the problems. This is the time the present MPs must identify the problems and formulate policies that will be conducive to the economic development of the country that this government is embarking on.

There has to be solutions. We all know what our problems are and all these have to be addressed one way or the other.

Mr Speaker, last year when the government took over office, the government increased the rural development fund from \$400,000 to \$1million and the budget we have just passed also takes on board another \$1million for this year.

Mr Speaker, that is an indication of better things coming up may be next year. What I want to see for rural development is increase funding to the rural areas because successive governments for the last 28 years have been draining money out of people's resources into the government's tills but in return nothing goes back to where the money came from.

I believe 90 percent of the people are anticipating for the bottom up approach that this Government is embarking upon. Since the country has been facing economic and financial problems or has inherited there will be a lot of time needed by this government to really work on the issues affecting us.

Mr Speaker, before I resume my seat I think both the Government and the Opposition side have already realized the steps we will be taking to really alleviate the situations we have inherited.

With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, I resume my seat.

Mr ZAMA: Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor of Parliament and may be after me we will have to adjourn the floor. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Members who have spoken in support of this motion.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you for your leadership in Parliament. I would like to take this opportunity also to thank the Clerk and her team in Parliament, especially those sponsored under the UNDP program that have greatly supported the Public Accounts Committee in one way or the other in our deliberation of the budget before Parliament met.

Mr Speaker, I will be very brief in my contribution to this motion. It is a traditional motion and normally it is an opportunity for Members of Parliament to thank people in their

constituencies and in the various walks of life they are engaged in.

Mr Speaker, we have just passed the 2007 Appropriation Bill yesterday, which I believe is going up to the Governor General for his royal assent to give authority to the government to spend.

Mr Speaker, in my view, this is the first time in the history of Solomon Islands that the Government recognizes its people. Mr Speaker, we have heard so much about governments talking about people, talking about resources and these are mere lip services. But this government, which I am part of and I am very proud to be part of, has seen it fit to make that realization come true.

The highlight of this year's budget, Mr Speaker, which has been the centre of discussions by Members of Parliament and people on the streets, is the bottom up approach. Mr Speaker, I was not given the opportunity to give an account or definition or meaning to this policy. But I wish to take this opportunity to try and clarify, in my own view as to what this proposed bottom up approach policy is going to be like.

Mr Speaker, I do not want you to agree with me on the views that I will express but I would want you to respect the views that I will make on the floor of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, when this policy came up and was introduced by the government, there were a lot of mixed feelings by Members of Parliament. There were a lot of doubts expressed even by people on the streets, and there were a lot of uncertainties on this policy. But whatever those doubts are or the uncertainties expressed, they are yours and I do respect those views.

Mr Speaker, on the periphery there can never be one definition of this vernacular that would fit into the 50 constituencies of this country. But on the bigger picture the bottom up approach concept is really to empower people in the rural areas through the creation of opportunities.

Mr Speaker, there are three statements that emerge from this concept, and these statements are to empower people, to create opportunities in the rural areas, and to utilize resources based in the rural areas.

Mr Speaker, in a more monetized economy there are three main factors of production, and these are land, labour and capital. Under the proposed bottom up approach policy of this government, our people already have two of these factors of production. They already have their land and they already have labour. This is why the approach that is going to be taken by this government in moving forward will be in a form of partnership and this would take various forms on how the policy will be implemented.

Mr Speaker, it is important to note that as a government and as a people and as leaders, we still always need each other. There has been a lot of talk that we do not need our donors or people have discouraged donors. But our donors still play a very important role in the economic, social and political development of this country. So we still need each other for the development of this country.

Mr Speaker, moving on from that this year there has been a lot of improvements in the constituency development allocation. I am very sad and surprised to see the MP for East Are Are being unable to see the difference in the presentation of this year's budget. I do not blame him because he is a bit ill and maybe he is blind and so is unable to read between the lines to see the difference between the presentation of the recurrent budget and the development budget of this year. This year this government has made a milestone in the presentation of the budget.

In the previous years' budgets the allocation to rural areas cannot be isolated and have not been specifically identified. But this government has seen it fit to clean up the centralized allocation from the headquarters and departments into the appropriate sectoral segments throughout the budget. That is one of the big differences that can be seen in the recurrent estimates, for which this Government must be given credit for.

The other difference I can see in the presentation of the development estimates is that the government has seen it fit to only include what it has authority over in the consolidated fund. That is the big difference from previous presentations and preparation of development estimates.

My colleague from East Are Are has said that only \$188 million was allocated to the development estimates. Yes, that is correct and that is what the government has allocated to develop the rural areas. But that said there is an enormous contribution by our donors to rural development and to this country. If all those are put together there is going to be more than \$188 million for the development estimates collectively supported by our donors and the Solomon Islands Government. To strictly limit the arguments that only \$188 million is for the rural areas is untrue and should be ruled out.

Mr Speaker, the proposed bottom up policy is a big development that this country will see and it will be the first time that our people will truly participate in the economic development of this country. Our people for the last 30 or so years have been sitting spectators, and this will be the first time that small developments will take place in the 50 constituencies of this country.

This is the first year and we will not expect big improvements in development. But as a first step forward we truly believe that Members of Parliament have a big responsibility in this regard. In terms of getting this policy driven into the rural areas, there is already \$1million allocation for each of the 50 constituencies.

In this regard, I would like on behalf of my people to sincerely thank the people and the Government of the Republic of China for having seen it fit and appropriate by giving this fund. The ROC has always stood by the people and government of Solomon Islands to support the efforts in enhancing the welfare of our people in the rural areas.

Mr Speaker, we always talked so much about people in the rural areas, and most of that, in my view, have been mere lip service. The assistance by our very good partner and development friend, the Republic of China is truly in support of this initiative through this allocation in the development budget for our people in the rural areas.

Getting back to the bottom up policy by this government, it is truly a new concept and that people will not fully appreciate or grasp the meaning or the definition of this policy and how it is going to be implemented in each of the 50

constituencies throughout this country. But it would be wrong to suggest that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Planning will have the sole responsibility of implementing this policy in the 50 constituencies. No, that is not correct. That is the responsibility of each 50 Members of Parliament. The 50 of us must realize and fully exploit the potentials of our constituencies, as this has not been utilized for the last 20 or more years. Therefore, Mr Speaker, from this year onwards our government needs to understand and needs to realize that there is enormous potentials that our people can play in the economic development and nation building of this country.

Last Saturday's occasion on Malaita is a big, big jump for the people of Malaita and for Solomon Islands. The consent by the people to carry out survey in the land of the people of East Fataleka and East Kwara'ae is a big, big thing. And I am very proud and privileged to be part of the government delegation that attended and witnessed this ceremony.

There is going to be big things happening in Malaita, and I just want to thank the government for seeing it fit and appropriate to really push and drive for this development. As long as I am the backbench of the government, I will really push hard to make sure this development takes place in Malaita. We need to identify and associate with people and to open up opportunities that are available in our rural areas.

Mr Speaker, there are certain things that are disturbing our development in the country, and colleagues on the other side of the floor have also raised the same issues that will not make this country to move forward. That is why the Prime Minister in his opening debate this morning has given the call to all of us to work together.

We must put our minds together regardless of the differences in our opinions and policies. Yes, those things will always be there, but unless we consolidate ourselves as leaders and as a Parliament to look at those issues that are affecting our country, we will just be going around the circle getting nowhere. That is why I want to call on every leader of Parliament, the 50 Members of Parliament to work together to solve our problems. This country is moving

forward and moving on and there are good things that are going to happen to this country if we stand together.

Sir, so much has been said about RAMSI. I want to take this opportunity to thank RAMSI and all our donor partners that are here with us for being in Solomon Islands because without them we will not be able to be sitting and enjoying life as we are enjoying today. On that note, I would like to thank them through the Special Coordinator and everybody and all those countries that have contributed their personnel, their people and for supporting our effort in bringing about peace in our islands. I wish to take this time on behalf of my people of South New Georgia/Rendova/Tetepare to thank them because without them we will not be enjoying the peace and tranquility that we are now enjoying in our islands. That said, I think the bottom plan here is that we have to respect each other. That is all. We must work together and respect each other in everything we do.

Mr Speaker, as I have said I will be very brief, I would like to say on behalf of my people of South New Georgia/Rendova/ Tetepare say that we will always support this government in its efforts and endeavors. The chiefs in my constituency told me that our land is available. The constituency is available. Whatever the government wants to do, it is open. This is not going to be the first time my constituency is opened up for development or it continues to support the government or it continues to support this country.

Sir, for the last 20 years my constituency was badly destroyed environmentally for the good of this nation and so we will stand behind the government. We will stand behind this country to continue to support even to the extent that may be our reefs would be destroyed and our forests would be destroyed, but this is for the good of this country. But out of destruction goodness will come, and that is why we will always work with the government.

Sir, we will open up the island of Rendova to build the roads so that we can have access to the highlands where we can plant coffee. We will open up South New Georgia and the beautiful lagoons there for tourism. This is what will come out from all the destructions

because if we have not allowed our land, nothing would have happened. We will not be able to access the inner island of Rendova. But as I have already shown to you on the floor of Parliament, this island is rigged with roads, and I am calling on my government to supply our constituency with heavy equipment and machines so that we can maintain these roads so that we can continue to push and drive the economic developments that this government and this country wants. We want to be part and parcel of the developments that this country would want to undertake so that the bottom up approach that has been talked so much about will truly be part of the people and part of the constituency so that together we will build up a nation and together we build our country and together we become one people, one country and one nation.

Mr Speaker, on that note I would like to thank you for your leadership as Speaker of Parliament. You have all my confidence and support. To the Clerk, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you. Some of us have not been sitting long in our chairs but you have been very committed to your work. Also the staff of Parliament, the Hansard officers, we have not seen them here but they are hard at work. Whilst we are talking here they are going ahead cracking the machines. Surprising but that is how efficient our officials are, and on this note on behalf of my people I would like to thank every one of you for your leadership in Parliament.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Prime Minister, Ministers of the Government and my colleague backbenchers, the Leader of Opposition and all Members of Parliament on the Opposition bench. I call on every one of you to day, especially the MP for Rennell and Bellona who is also a shipping tycoon himself who has allocation in the development estimates for tourism development on Rennell and Bellona, please be part of this development. Come and join the government in the efforts this government is doing.

I also call on the MP for East Are Are to be part of the government. Do not just sit there on the Opposition side making a lot of noise on the same issues, which are boring to this country. Let us work together. Those issues

that we are discussing will get us nowhere, absolutely nowhere. The same issues are what we hear during question time and I believe the same issues again will be repeated in the motion of no confidence that you are going to move. Who do you want to convince?

Mr Speaker, those issues have been dealt with by the government. For you to continue to deliberately mislead the public and people, as a leader is very irresponsible leadership. I hope people listening out there will carefully read between the line of argument and debate on this floor of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, my people as I have said are always in support of this government from day one and we will always support whatever governments that come into power because there will always be only one government. The Opposition is an alternative government and it is not the government, and so I cannot support the Opposition. I will only work with the government because there will only be one government and it is only through the effort, support and contribution through the government that we can have developments in our constituency. Whatever development aspiration and endeavors we would want to do can only be realized through the government.

Finally, Mr Speaker, on behalf of my people I like to thank all Members on the government bench, the 32 of them who have just recently made their commitment to the government. I want to call on the Leader of Opposition and the MP for Small Malaita who is not here, he must be working his guts out thinking and breaking his mind to please come and join the government. Support the government because you obviously do not have the number in your intentions and attempts to move this motion because the government is extremely solid with its numbers. This is not a bluff colleague MPs on the Opposition bench. We see it as inappropriate and untimely to continue moving motions of no confidence on the government.

The door is open, the Office of the Prime Minister is open to all of us, and not only the government. The Leader of the Opposition can just lift the telephone or the MP for Small Malaita and talk to the Prime Minister. If you leave the telephone you can go and see the

Prime Minister because he is not only the Prime Minister of the government bench but he is the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands. Whatever feelings or misunderstandings or misconstrued thinking you might have, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is there, go and see him, knock on his door, he is your minister and my ministers. He is the minister of the government and the minister of Solomon Islands and the people of Solomon Islands. He is not the minister of the people of Temotu Nende but he is the minister of the crown and the minister for the government of Solomon Islands, the only government we have.

I would like to thank the hardworking Minister for Commerce, a young but hard working minister and also the Minister for Health. My best friend, the Minister of Fisheries has just announced that more money is coming in the fishing industries. My Minister, make sure you supply our constituencies with this bottom up approach where our people can go out and fish for themselves. I am pretty sure that after this meeting we will have an audience like you have promised to come and see you in the office. So I will come and come and see you for more dialogue for developments we want to do in our constituencies.

On that note, Mr Speaker, finally thank you very much on behalf of my people and constituency of South New Georgia and Rendova. We will always stand behind the government and we will always support this government whatever it takes.

With that I thank you and support the Prime Minister on this motion.

Mr GUKUNA: Thank you again Mr Speaker, for giving me time to make a brief contribution to this sine die motion that has been moved by the Honorable Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, in my very short time in this Parliament I found this particular motion of sine die very pleasing. It is very pleasing because it is the first time that I have seen the Prime Minister smiled when he delivered his introduction speech. That was good and I am serious to see the Prime Minister put a very human touch to this motion ending three weeks of arguing and debating.

It was good too to have received some lesser bashing from the Prime Minister and fury as an opposition MP this time. Having said this, let me say that most of our criticisms on the budget were meant to be constructive. There are many questions that have the good intention of making sure that the good intentions carried in the budget become real.

Mr Speaker, the Prime Minister saw this otherwise, and he saw no need to thank us for supporting this very important budget. Nevertheless, over the last three last weeks we have had the privilege of making ourselves known to our people. We debated, argued and expressed conflicting views on issues of interest to us and the people we represent in this honorable House.

We made comments, we questioned and in some instances we threw insults and recriminations in order to press our points. Our views may have been diverse, we may have expressed them in different ways but at the end of the day we did all these. Regardless of how we interpret them it is because we all love this country, all of us in this House.

Mr Speaker this country is our country for good or for worse, and ugly it may have been, it is our country and it is ours forever. No one, no one will take this away from us. Mr Speaker our forefathers who went before us passed this country on to us and we will in turn pass this country to our children and their children.

What kind of Solomon Islands we pass on to our children depends in part on the 50 of us in this House and what we decide on today. This means, in my opinion, that our decisions now will affect thousands and thousands of families and their many children in the future.

By enormous Mr Speaker we have no right to decide for them but by convenience only however we have been mandated to decide for their future. Therefore, the best we can do for them is to work together and decide together in order for us to pass on to them the Solomon Islands that is better than what we receive.

Mr Speaker, I believe this is why we talked so much about development during the past two weeks. We did this because we recognize that development is the key to improving the standard of living of our rural

people, the people who send us to this honorable House.

Mr Speaker, one truth here is that we will not stop talking about development in this House. Those who went before us talked about it. We are talking about it today and our children and their children will continue to talk about development.

Mr Speaker, just this week we all agreed to place the hopes of our people on an approach to development that we have judged to be the best way of attuning development for our people.

Mr Speaker, we have agreed to put this approach to test and we have no quarrel about this. Sir, we agreed to be very mindful that this approach will face challenges never mind our good intentions. Over the past days we discussed expenditures at length. We spent a lot of time discussing expenditures. We spent time on this to ensure that they are right and that they match our intentions. In fact we have been careful because these figures represent one of the most immediate challenges to development, and that is the cost of development.

Mr Speaker, this budget is necessary, not so much because of accountability on its own. Rather the primary reason for budgeting is because the financial resources we need to develop our people are often not enough. This budget is meant to ensure that these limited resources are spread out properly to take on the cost of developing our people.

Mr Speaker, fundamental to our desire to development we must always recognize that development is not a destination that we can reach but rather development is a journey, a journey that will not end as long as we remain human. Also, if we are to attain any level of development, we must overcome the cost of development. Of course, Mr Speaker unless we overcome the cost of development we will not achieve any real development.

For these reasons Mr Speaker, the three constituencies in Honiara are qualified to get funding under the Rural Development Community Funds even though they are not qualified by definition of the categories of funding. They too need to continue to aspire to develop our people here in Honiara.

Mr Speaker, while on these Honiara Constituencies, allow me to remind my good colleague MPs for Honiara that they are Members of Parliament for Honiara. They are not MPs of some constituencies in Malaita Province.

Mr Speaker, I said that fundamental to development we must overcome the cost of development. To this end I am so pleased that the 2007 Budget Speech recognizes the importance of overcoming the cost of bridging the distances that separate our many islands if we are to move on in development.

Mr Speaker, what this recognition amounts to is that the cost of developing our people and our island villages is driven by our geography and the vast distances that separate our islands and our people.

Mr Speaker, I am sure that you have been to the Outer Islands of Temotu. By boat it took me four days to travel from Lata to Duff, Utupua, Vanikoro to Tikopia and then to Anuta. Mr Speaker, as well as appreciating the beautiful sceneries of these islands, I also come to appreciate the huge costs that we will need to expand in order to bring some reasonable development to this part of the country.

Mr Speaker, this is one of the least populated areas in the country. If we are to make a deliberate decision to allocate to these islands development funds based on per capita, we might as well make alternate decision to live them alone, and not to give them development funds because this decision is justice.

Mr Speaker, I myself come from one of the most beautiful parts of this country representing a people with unique cultures. We have the only recognizable lake in the country, the biggest in the South Pacific, excluding Australia and New Zealand, the biggest raised coral atoll in the world, and undoubtedly one of the most pristine and unspoilt environment setting in this country with an unique ecology of world standards.

Mr Speaker, not long ago because of our status we have made a deliberate decision to commit all these. All we have acquired as our heritage for our future generation, to at least allow them the chance to appreciate in the distant future the original land where our fathers live, is our simple and noble intention.

Mr Speaker, but irony of this innocent commitment is that this place is underdeveloped, as it has failed to attract adequate development funds and commitment to promote any meaningful development in these islands.

Mr Speaker, because of our desire to develop, allow me to now inform the government that our need now is to turn our underdevelopment to a set of national and international standard. That is an intention that we will need injection of substantial capitals to get through. With this reason also I must thank the government for allocating some funds in this budget through its bottom up approach for us to at least set the basis for this new development direction.

Mr Speaker, as I have said I believe we all had a good intention of improving the lives of our people and create a much better Solomon Islands for our children. The peace and tranquility we have gained over the last four years through the untiring good work of RAMSI provided us with the best opportunity to do just that. We have been given the blessed opportunity to create wealth, improve our budget surpluses and reserves and put in place a sound development base on which our children will build on. Politically this government has been given the best chance to create the worst Opposition Party in this country. We could have done all this at least cost to us.

Mr Speaker, I have expressed some opposing views because of these sole reasons. These are views that have been based purely on my interpretation of government actions and stated policies. Sir, we have not misconstrued their policies. We are not complaining because we have not been consulted. We have made our position of some of these policies, particularly this gun issue known in this House, and I must thank you, Sir, for allowing us plenty time. Let me just say this that if you have any more reasons to defend these policies, I will leave it to you to explain these reasons to the parents who lost their children, the motherless and fatherless who lost their parents through guns over the last few years.

Mr Speaker, I took a strong opposition on rearming of the Police because I believe the government is not sensitive enough to the damages that guns had caused to this country

only three years ago and the potential damage that guns could impose on this country again. Of course, Mr Speaker, I did so as a Solomon Islander neither as an Australian nor a pro-donor as has been painted by the government.

Mr Speaker, the worst we can do for our children is to pass on to them a country that is full of unworkable credit schemes. The worse we can do for our children is to pass onto them a land system of collateral that the banking system will not recognize. The decision to pass on to them a country that they will have to travel interstate or may be internationally between our islands is already bad enough.

Mr Speaker I believe that the best we could do for our children is to pass onto them a country that is full of confidence for our banking institutions and overseas investors. Sir, these bankers and investors are very smart people. They will not be attracted to this country by our words and whatever schemes that we come up with.

Mr Speaker, the only thing that will give them confidence is our actions and our behaviors. It is therefore important that we act in the right way because our action will speak out louder. My concern is that we have been acting contrary to our words and what we have written on paper.

With these comments, Mr Speaker I thank you for your indulgence. That is my contribution to this sine die and I thank you again for allowing me this chance and I support the motion.

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the debate on the Sine Motion be adjourned.

Debate on the Sine Motion is adjourned under Standing Orders

The House adjourned at 4.20 pm