

## **FRIDAY 29<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2008**

The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Kengava took the Chair at 9:45 am.

Prayers.

### **ATTENDANCE**

At prayers all were present with the exception of the Ministers for Provincial Government & Institutional Strengthening, Environment and Conservations, Education and Human Resources Development, Health & Medical Services, Women, Youths & Children's Affairs, National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace, Agriculture & Livestock, Forests, Infrastructure Development, Development Planning and Aid Coordination, Communication and Aviation, Foreign Affairs, and the Members for Ngella, Central Honiara, Malaita Outer Islands, Makira, West New Georgia/Vona Vona,

### **PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS**

#### **By the Speaker of National Parliament**

- Status of the Audits of Solomon Islands Government Entities as at 30 June 2008 (National Parliament Paper No. 18 of 2008),
- Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts of the Solomon Islands Government for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004 (National Parliament Paper No. 19 of 2008).
- Report of the Auditor-General on the Accounts of the Solomon Islands Government for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005. (National Parliament Paper No. 20 of 2008).
- Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts of the Solomon Islands Government for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006. (National Parliament Paper No. 21 of 2008).

### **STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

#### **MOTIONS**

##### **Motion No. 5**

**“That the Government formally considers establishing a management and regulatory mechanism for the disbursement of Constituency Development Fund for which Members of Parliament are held accountable”.**

**Mr OTI:** Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing this opportunity to move Notion No. 5 standing in my name in today's Order Paper. Mr Speaker, the objective of the motion is that the government formally considers establishing a management and regulatory mechanism for the disbursement of constituency development funding for which Members of Parliament are held accountable.

Mr Speaker, the objective of this motion, therefore, is for Parliament to resolve that government considers as establishing a management and regulatory mechanism for the disbursement of the constituency development funding. Furthermore Mr Speaker, consideration by Parliament of this motion is in tandem with the CNURA Government's policy statement stipulating the establishment of a transparent mechanism for the management of the constituency development funding.

Mr Speaker, it is not the intention of this motion to suggest neither to compel the government to pursue a specific strategy to achieve that policy objective. That is the government's work. But it is now a common practice and expectation that as much as possible there is wide consultation with all stakeholders, and in this instance Members of Parliament, that whatever mechanism is finally adopted has the support of all stakeholders.

Mr Speaker, the consideration of this motion by this Parliament will also support the CNURA Government's Mission Statement, if you look at page 1 of the CNURA policy document, which states, "Further strengthen development through a bottom up and holistic approach that encompasses the empowerment of people through rural advancement strategies". That is how CNURA sees this policy. The GCCG government was also pushing the same policy vision but approached it in a different manner, Mr Speaker. Furthermore if the intention of motion is implemented by the Government it is anticipated that MPs can be relieved from the burden of and being reduced to acting like project managers.

Removing MPs from direct responsibility of the Constituency Development Funding will also enable Members of Parliament to concentrate and focus on the very roles and functions for which they were elected in the first place, and that is to be legislators and policy makers.

Mr Speaker, but how did we end up where we are now in terms of our role vis-à-vis the disbursement of Constituency Development Fund? Perhaps, Mr Speaker, if I take you back in history, I can shed some light as to how and where we may have gone astray and ended up as agents of social security scheme in a subsistence setting.

Mr Speaker, I do not have time neither do I think it necessary to laboriously labor Parliament on the intentions of successive governments since independence for that matter, but let me take you back to 1989 when rural development became a specific policy target by the then Peoples Alliances Party Government at that time. Because it gained landslide victory in the 1999 elections due to its campaign promise to grant state government and trickling down financial assistance to the rural sector.

Mr Speaker, in furtherance of that policy the government then created the SICOPSA. The creation of the SICOPSA funding was purposely aimed at enabling rural communities to be economically vibrant and self sustaining so that when state

government is introduced they would become self financing. In announcing the PAP Government's policy in a speech from the Throne in 1989, His Excellency the Governor General then said, and I quote "the government will establish a program for development of isolated communities under each small islands communities and provinces special assistance program (SICOPSA) targeting the outlying and isolated communities in the seven (7) provinces" Seven provinces because by 1989 Choiseul and Renbell were still part of Western Province and Central Province respectively at that point in time Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, SICOPSA grant was operational between 1990 and 1993 delivered and/or disbursed through area councils throughout the provinces. However, Mr Speaker, the 1992 National Budget show the introduction of another rural development funding in the name of Special Discretionary Fund (SDF) paid through Members of Parliament. The SDF started of with an annual allocation in 1992 of \$266,000. That is the total provision, Mr Speaker. The allocation of \$266,000 was for 47 constituencies until 1997. In 1992 the allocation I mentioned was \$266,000, meaning that at that point in time each constituency had an allocation through its MP of \$5,666.00. Notably also, Mr Speaker, during that period for two consecutive years, 1992 and 1993, the SDF and the SICOPSA grant were running concurrently. By 1994 Mr Speaker, the SICOPSA grant was out of the budget and the SDF was increased to \$6million from \$266,000, meaning that in 1994 the allocation per constituency was \$127,000.

Let me in summary provide the budget allocations for 1992 to 1997. As I already alluded to the years 1992 to 1993 had allocations of \$266,000 in total, \$5,666.00 per constituency; in 1994 the allocation was \$6million throughout in the budget, broken down into constituencies then \$127,000; in 1995 it reverted back to \$266,000, still the same amount of \$5,666.00 per constituency; in 1996 it is \$827,000 or \$17,000 per constituency; in 1997 it dropped back to \$232,000 or \$4,936.00 per constituency.

Mr Speaker, also notable between 1992 and 1997 was the SDF or CDF as was coined become an entitlement of Members of Parliament under the entitlement regulations. This is why in the PER you would see under appendix'd' the CDF but there is no other provision in the PER currently because it was taken out as an entitlement in 1998.

Mr Speaker, for the year 1998 the substantial increase to \$7.5million or \$150,000 per constituency; in 1999 it dropped back to \$5million or \$100,000 per constituency; in 2000 to 2001 respectively it was \$5million or \$100,000 per constituency; in 2002 it doubled to \$10million or \$200,000 per constituency; in 2003 it hit the \$20million mark until 2007. For those years with this \$20million it is \$400,000 per constituency. Mr Speaker, taking these amounts in total over those years from 1992 to 2008, a total of \$228,357,000 should have filtered down to the rural areas in the name of rural development. This amounts to approximately \$3.3million at this years' average. It is \$3.3million one constituency from 1992 to 2008.

Mr Speaker, apart from the RCDF allocation from 2007 that is last year there have been other funding allocations under the budget to supplement constituency development funds, namely the Millennium Constituency Development Fund and the

Constituency Micro Fund the allocation for which was \$400,000 and \$200,000 respectively for each constituency under these two funding.

Mr Speaker with the new budget lines for constituency development, the monies available to constituencies in 2007 amounts to \$1million per constituency. In 2008 with the introduction of the rural livelihood funding under the Ministry of Rural Development & Indigenous Business of \$1million per constituency and a further \$100,000 per constituency made available under the supplementary appropriation this year, it now stands at \$2.1million, although the \$1million per constituency under the livelihood funding does not fall directly under the responsibility of Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, in essence therefore, as of this year the real sum for which an MP is responsible for amounts to \$1.1million. From a modest allocation of \$5,666 in 1992 to an exorbitant sum of \$1.1million under the charge of an MP in 2008, I cannot see how the same delivery mechanism in 1992 can also handle the amount in 2008. It is just mind boggling, Mr Speaker.

As if this is not yet enough, Mr Speaker, MPs are even now require to have some say in rural development funding delivered through the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Fisheries, the Ministry of Forestry, the Ministry of Rural Development, and may God save Members of Parliament for we do not know what else will be heaped upon us. In effect, Mr Speaker, like the ever increasing price of rice and fuel, there are no signs in the horizon in the abatement of rural development financing. So are we going to continue with the status quo of relegating us MPs to project managers, or as I said earlier, as social security agents. These questions were what the motion by the MP for East Are Are, now the Minister for Mines and Energy, attempted to bring to Parliament through his motion on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2003. That motion reads like this, "That the government considers reviewing the RCDF policy with a view of making it more accountable, transparent and meeting the development needs and requirements of the constituencies consistent with development strategic programs and plans". That is the motion by the MP for East Are Are on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2003. He was a backbencher then, but the government defeated the motion. The Opposition I was in supported that motion. Therefore, he has no reason to oppose this motion Mr Speaker.

There was a lot of merit, as I said, Mr Speaker in the intentions of that motion but I do not have time to spell them out in detail at this time but you will probably hear from the MP concerned. But if you interested to know what the MP for East Are Are said in 2003, you can log on to [www.parliament.gov.sb](http://www.parliament.gov.sb), the website of Parliament under Hansard and you will see what the MP for East Are Are said and he will repeat that probably in this motion.

However, Mr Speaker, that motion and the one I am currently moving have the same and common objective. To quote what the MP for East Are Are said in 2003, "*The management method currently in use creates a mentality of cash handouts and therefore cannot cause and can cause false expectations to our people and create a culture of dependency inconsistent with our policy to encourage and motive entrepreneurship*". That is the statement of the MP for East Are Are at that time in 2003.

Mr Speaker, we should all agree, this Parliament should all agree that the present method of disbursement creates unnecessary problems and obstacles to Members of Parliament who by virtue, and some of them by virtue of their appointment as Minister of the Crown leave them little scope to deal with and effectively devote a good deal of their time to deal with matters of national concern.

For us ordinary Members of Parliament, Mr Speaker being bog down with trying to manage constituency funding like Ministers, leave us limited room to concentrate on legislative and policymaking functions, Mr Speaker. But in the absence of a uniformly applicable management and regulatory mechanism, particularly when rural constituency development funding started to leap into the million dollar mark allocation in 1998, different MPs and constituencies have adopted a number of mechanisms.

Take the case of Central Kwara'ae, Mr Speaker, the disbursement mechanism which I know practiced by the MP for that constituency and now the Deputy Prime, is through a constituency congress. He will bless Parliament with his intervention on this motion, Mr Speaker.

The details and method of operation, Mr Speaker, I am sure will be highlighted, as I said in his contribution to this motion. In like manner, Mr Speaker, the MP for East Choiseul and the Leader of Opposition will also relate to Parliament the mechanism to which East Choiseul Constituency manages and administers constituency funding in the name of rural development.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, the MP for West Honiara, a first term parliamentarian in the present House, in his intervention perhaps can also grace this house and will provide to this House how the West Honiara constituency manages and administers constituency development funding in the name of rural development. Mr Speaker, the present House, I am sure will also be graced to hear constituency development funding testimonies from Members of Parliament - the MP for Ulawa, for example, the MP for South Vella or any Member of Parliament.

I know that we have lessons to learn from one another in charting the way forward in designing a mechanism which can uniformly apply across the board because of the nature of these funds, as they are public funds and at same time the desired impact that we expect from \$3.3million over this period that we have not seen, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, in finding a way forward out of what I may term as self inflicted hardship in trying to administer constituency development funding, it is incumbent on all of us MPs in this debate to chart a common way forward in assisting the government to come up with a management and regulatory mechanism for the constituency development funding, which would be transparent accountable and most of all impact positively on our rural economic development, commensurate with the level of funding, the examples of which I have alluded to earlier.

Mr Speaker, any management and regulatory mechanism must also fit into prevailing public financial rules and regulations and laws. A mechanism which satisfies compliance with prevailing financial rules and regulations, however, should not be viewed as an end in itself. No, Mr Speaker. The broader objective of ensuring that

funding for rural development brings about the desired impact and effect is imperative Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, while we agree that rural development financing should be dealt with at arms length by Members of Parliament, there is scope for financial allocations to each constituency that the MPs can have responsibility over, and this is by entitlement through the Parliamentary Entitlement Regulations, and not outside of the regulations, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, it is my belief that the appropriate authorities, and in our deliberations on this, we will consider this proposition as a way forward to enable Members of Parliament to play his role and functions as a legislator and policy maker and at the same time perform his role as a representative and leader of his people in his constituency, Mr Speaker. With those remarks, Mr Speaker I beg to move.

**Mr Speaker:** Honourable Members, before I allow Members to debate on the motion moved by the Honourable Member for Temotu Nende, I wish to kindly remind Members to adhere to the rules of debate. I also ask all Members to be mindful when making their contribution so as to give other Members the opportunity to contribute as well.

*(The floor is now open for debate.)*

**Hon. FONO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to contribute firstly to this motion. Not because my name and constituency was highlighted by the mover of the motion but because constituency development funding under the CNURA Government has moved to the portfolio that I am now the Minister, the Ministry of Rural Development.

Mr Speaker, first I would like to thank the mover, my colleague MP for Temotu Nende for seeing it fit in moving this motion. He also made reference to the MP for East Are Are who moved a similar motion when he was in the opposition and that time the mover of this motion oppose it. Now that he is on the other side of the House he is moving this motion when the mover of that similar motion is now a government Minister under this current government.

Mr Speaker, I see there is no need for this motion because this current government has already put in place mechanisms to regulate and manage the constituency development funding under the rural advancement policy of the government, which I am going to touch on briefly in terms of the rural livelihood program.

From the outset, I must say that rural constituency development funding has been a very controversial issue because a lot of people have questioned and criticized it only to find themselves upon getting into parliament unable to manage it well. During the general elections you would normally hear it becoming a topic used by intending candidates to criticize sitting members saying 'when I go in I will do this and that'. But when he is voted into the House he forgets all about what he promised to people to do

because of the pressure MPs always have in trying to implement programs and at the same time look at issues or pressures that people are putting on sitting MPs. It is an issue that is easier said than done. When we are outside we criticize sitting MPs as not managing well the RCDF, but when we are inside the House it is also hard for us to manage it properly or implement programs based on resources allocated to us.

Mr Speaker, I did a paper on this issue of constituency development in Solomon Islands, which I entitled "A prospective of constituency development in Solomon Islands". I did this in 2007 and my findings are similar to what this motion is raising that in the past since independence successive governments have used government departments to implement government projects, services to our people, through agencies like provincial governments. It was only in 1989, as the mover mentioned that the government decided to use Members of Parliaments because they would be close to their people and therefore can identify the needs of their people, and because of this they must have funds not only to deliver services to their people but also to help them.

Mr Speaker, less we forget our cultural context and setting we are obligated to help our people when the need arises. Mr Speaker, I will pass on my paper to the Clerk to photocopy and distribute to Members of Parliament because it highlights my findings on how much funds have been distributed through Members of Parliament from the time the RCDF was introduced. The paper also highlights a lot of challenges that Members of Parliament face in terms of pressures put on us by our people. Even with a very good constituency plan that one might want to develop for his/her social services and projects that would be of benefit to our people, given the limited resources available to us under pressure for individual requests and assistance, one does not find the time to implement constituency plans up to the expectations of our people.

Also in this paper I highlighted the need for a paradigm shift on the rural constituency development fund. And I am glad the CNURA Government has accepted the move to shift assistance towards government having control on implementation of projects. And what is why the rural livelihood, which I am going to touch on later, is in line with that process, and therefore I do not see the need for this motion. The Government has already put mechanisms in place through the rural livelihood program to address that.

My paper, Mr Speaker, highlights quite a lot of interesting findings that I made. I also suggested new criteria in my paper for fair and equitable distribution of funds to all constituencies based on population density because at the moment, Mr Speaker, there is unfairness. Smaller constituencies of less than 5,000 people are getting the same amount of funding compared to bigger constituencies like Central Kwara'ae with more than 20,000 people.

In my submission, a population of 10,000 across the board should get \$1million. A population of 10,001 to 13,000 should get \$1.2m. A population of 13,001 to 16,000 should get \$1.4m. A population of 16,001 to 19,000 should get \$1.6m. A population of 19,001 to 22,000 should get \$1.8m and a population of 22,001 to 25,000 should get \$2million. I think some kind of equitable distribution is considered. That is what I recommended in this paper. I will give this copy to the Clerk for distribution to

Members of Parliament for easy reading, so that we are on the same wavelength when discussing a change of policy on this very interesting area.

In as far as the move to involve constituency development, Mr Speaker, apart from the original method that successive governments have been doing since independence by utilizing provincial governments as agents and implementers of government services as well as current ministries or departments, the government has seen the need to equitably give funds through constituencies or Members of Parliament so that at least even isolated areas get support. One cannot deny that going through normal government system sometimes led to isolated constituencies or provinces left out in terms of government services.

Mr Speaker, the CNURA Government has also taken on board RCDF at the moment funding policies that successive governments have been doing. The objective of this funding is to provide means whereby rural communities are served so that they have access to funds through their Members of Parliament to not only be involved in income generating projects but social security, as highlighted by the mover.

Mr Speaker, the criteria, as we know already, is that there must exist in all constituencies RCDF committees to be selected during general meetings duly convened by Members of Parliament for the constituency. Each ward in the constituency must be represented in the committee. Members of the committee must hold office bearer positions like chairman, treasurer, secretary and all that, and they would be signatories to the constituency's bank account so that it is established independent apart from Members of Parliament. All constituency funds are not paid into Members of Parliament accounts as we have heard in media reports. That is totally false. All constituency funds be it paid by the last government or this government are paid into constituency accounts, which have office bearers in which a Member of Parliament is the chairman or a provincial assembly member is the chairman or somebody within the committee is the chairman. That is the general rule under this policy.

The chairman of the committee shall be the Member of Parliament or his or her nominee. The composition of the committee shall include at least chiefs, elders, church leaders, women, youth or farmers. There shall be an operational bank account in the name of the constituency for RCDF funds to be paid into and such accounts must have more than one or two signatories. Those areas are guidelines the government has put in place for the use and operation of the Rural Constituency Funds. All applications for assistance must be considered by the committee where approval is granted. The chairman and two other members shall sign the approved application. All payments for hardware materials will be paid to the supplier. All RCDF funds must be credited directly to designated constituency bank accounts. This rules out the notion that constituency funds are not paid into individual Members accounts, as some media prints have put it previously. That is misleading the public. The chairman of the RCDF committee or constituency committee shall sign all the retirement summaries. No Member of Parliament shall receive the next RCDF quarterly tranche unless previous quarterly tranche is fully retired. Such retirement must follow the acquittal form, appendix 3. The Accounts Section of the now Ministry of Rural Development shall be



responsible for checking RCDF retirements. All receipts and invoices must be attached to the summary. Retirements that do not follow the acquittal form shall be sent back to the respective Member of Parliament and that MP shall not be paid his or her RCDF until all requirements are met. A special imprest shall be raised for the next quarterly tranche if the account section of the Ministry is fully satisfied with the retirement. All RCDF related enquiries shall be made directly to the Member of Parliament in the constituency and the constituency committee.

Mr. Speaker, I am reading these because may be some of us have already forgotten that these are the guidelines, which even the GCCG has adopted. We just took it up and revise it to fit what RCDF is for. Mr. Speaker, as I have said, sometimes assistances that MPs are giving to members of our constituencies may be were not used as indicators when the Central Bank compiles its annual report because those assistances touch on the real needs of our people. For example, our social, moral and religious obligations is that when somebody in our constituency dies, and our people asks us to assist send the dead body back home, we have the obligation to charter a plane or a boat to send the body back. If we do not do that then we would be seen as not being responsible leaders. So we cannot take into account what they are doing overseas to control the RCDF. That is why purposely, the RCDF should be at the discretion of Members of Parliament. That has been the policy all along, which you cannot deny since it was first established.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, when some donors and development partners criticize us, including the source of funding, the Republic of China, I always question that if they are giving assistance such as doles to their unemployed youths, why not us Solomon Islands leaders helping our own people. In our cultural context, the support we are giving to our people is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I will move on to Rural Livelihood. I believe all of us have copies of the guidelines by now, and the guidelines are basically the intention of this motion - regulatory measures. At the moment the money is not paid to Members of Parliament. People of this nation must hear this.

The additional \$1million given by the CNURA Government for rural livelihood is based on projects submitted by constituencies. The need why Members of Parliament must endorse the form is to avoid people living in Honiara getting the funds most of the time. Sometimes people in another constituency because they are at the border, they tried submitting projects under a different constituency. Therefore, as a Member of Parliament he/she has to identify whether a request comes from a community within your constituency. That is the role of MPs. We are to certify and make sure the projects we endorse are inline with our constituency plans. That is basically our role.

The disbursement is made by the Ministry of Finance to the supplier. Funds are not paid into constituency funds neither individual Members accounts. That is the difference. That is why I would like to say that this motion has come in too late because the CNURA Government has already established mechanisms for the delivery of constituency funds. It so happened when I answered questions in this House that the delay in implementing the projects was because most funds under local revenue were

tied up in the 30th anniversary of Independence celebration. Now that some of our major events this year have gone past, we are quite confident to implement the Rural Livelihood Policy in the second and last quarter of this year, which each constituency is allocated \$1 million.

Mr. Speaker, the mechanism this motion is asking is already in place by the CNURA Government. We are now moving away from Members of Parliament direct control of Rural Livelihood to government departments funding and raising payments. Our Constituency Development Officers will be helping communities in implementing projects, hence have provided for that in the recent Supplementary Budget that we have just approved.

Sir, for ease of reference, I will also photocopy the official guidelines for the utilization of Rural Development Livelihood Project Funds for Members of Parliament in case they have forgotten. Already, a mechanism is in place, which is the intention or the purpose of this motion. That is why I said that this motion came in very late because the CNURA Government has already put in place a mechanism to manage the Rural Constituency Funds under Rural Livelihood.

Mr. Speaker, I will touch briefly on my setup or what I did in my constituency, mentioned by the mover. I would encourage any Member of Parliament if you have the opportunity to go to Malaita Province; the entry port is Auki where you will see that we have an office there. The secretariat to our constituency congress also has the structure and a lot of pictures of development projects I have been implementing or have completed implementing over the last 10 years as a leader for my people.

Mr Speaker, I cannot deny all of us have our own constituency plans. I noted and shared with other colleague MPs that they have their own structures through which they try helping their people in implementing constituency projects, and are working according to their structures touching the lives of their people. One cannot deny that. Although we cannot satisfy everybody at least we are trying our best to implement programs, Mr Speaker.

Sir, the constituency plan we are currently implementing in my electorate is now in its third phase from 2006 to 2010. It is in line with the term of Parliament because you never know whether you will be re-elected or not. Therefore, it is very important that constituency planning is based on the term of parliament so that you convince your people the need for you to continue implementing your programs in your constituency plan.

Mr Speaker, apart from other sectors and areas I am currently doing, which I see the Province not doing is the maintenance of feeder roads in my electorate. I have completed five feeder roads and I am sad to say that although \$400,000 has been given to Malaita Provincial Government, it has not been able to help out maintaining provincial roads. I see as very important that without proper road access our rural farmers cannot get to the market. I believe other colleagues have also done the same thing. I understand the Hon. Prime Minister too has used RCDF to repair roads in his electorate because the Guadalcanal Provincial Government cannot do it. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I am looking at pulling out the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant, and give it

back to the constituency based on the number of kilometers in each constituency. This is not the first time that the grant was not used on where it is intended. In previous years when communities demand the maintenance of roads and the provincial government has not been able to do it, I stepped in and hire equipments to repair the roads from constituency funds made available under my budget. It is an area I am looking seriously at addressing with the view of a change in government policy. An assessment of feeder roads in each electorate and constituency is given; a formula is worked out and funds are given to the Member of Parliament to maintain constituency and provincial roads. This is because when this grant was given down as monthly service grant to the provinces, it was used for other things and the roads are not maintained. That is my experience of this grant.

Mr Speaker, I would like to suggest that the Parliament organizes a Parliament Open Day so that Members of Parliament highlight and show to the public what we have been doing with the RCDF. For those of us who are third, fourth and fifth termers should have a lot to show our people what we have been doing in the use of the RCDF. For those who have just entered parliament, there will certainly be no major reports or projects available to showcase. I am making a suggestion, Mr Speaker, for Parliament to declare an Open Day so that the public come and see for themselves the projects of respective constituencies. Because the allegation is that Members of Parliament are not using their RCDF properly. That is generalization. I am defending that. I would like to encourage people to come to Central Kwara'ae to see for themselves how we have used the RCDF. I encourage Members of Parliament to go to Auki so that you see for yourselves what we are doing there. Let me know if you happen to go there so that I can arrange for you to go to my office and see what we are doing.

Sir, apart from social services I established the Farmers' Association which is now selling chicken, pigs and so on. This Association buys from farmers and it is now the main supplier of these to Honiara Markets. That is an avenue I am encouraging my people to participate in. I am sure many Members of Parliament can also testify to be doing the same. Therefore, criticisms and allegations that people have been leveling against Members of Parliament are not true.

Mr Speaker, the other point I would like to raise is that although there might be mechanisms, although there might be good constituency plans but if the attitude of our people does not change, nothing would happen in our constituencies. That is also a finding highlighted in my research paper. I have a good constituency plan to implement to improve the livelihood of our people by establishing water supplies, schools so that they have access to education, but when people always come to our houses asking for fares to go home, how do you expect us implement the projects in our constituencies.

I always pity some of colleague MPs because their houses are full of people so that they do not have enough time for their families nor do they have time for their children to teach and discipline them because people sleep all over the house so much so that they ended up even sleeping in the verandahs and the kitchens. I think the only Member who is brave to say this is the current Member speaking now. Everybody is afraid to say anything about it, although they are complaining bitterly.

Sir, what I am saying here is that the attitude of our people must be changed. That is the role that the UNDP Strengthening Project should be doing. I have been recommending to the UNDP to carry out educational awareness to the people on the real role of a member of parliament so that constituency funds are used to improve the livelihood of our people and not just for sea fares to go home. That is very important if we are to receive tangible changes in our constituencies.

In closing, Mr Speaker, I would like to express sincere thanks to the Government of the Republic of China (ROC) for giving direct support to the government, not only this government but successive governments as well for the Rural Constituency Development Funds (RCDF) that we are now trying to work with to help improve their livelihood. Had it not been for ROC support, the government may not be in a position to directly give assistance to Members of Parliament to work in touching their lives of our people and improving services to them. I also thank other development partners for supporting government programs in other Ministries that is reaching our rural people.

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

**Hon. HUNIEHU:** Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Member who is reintroducing this motion into this Parliament for our debate. I think he will covered issues that are of great concerns to our people.

Sir, when I moved this motion in 2003 it was a different kettle of fish because at that time I was a backbencher of the government and the motion was driven by the desirability of our people, the Civil Society, and NGOs wanting to see more sense of accountability and transparency exercised in the management of the fund. In effect that motion was re-sharpening the tools of democracy through the process of better accountability, transparency and control of public funds. Mr Speaker, if our people want us to be more accountable then it can only be this Parliament that can do that. That was the reason which gave rise to me moving the motion.

This thing is evolutionary as the speaker, the mover of the motion had said. It started off with SICOPSA but it was mishandled from the beginning by the area councils, the provincial councils and provincial assemblies. The SICOPSA was mishandled then. That is why those of you from Malaita might know that a point at Auki is called the SICOPSA Point. This is where all the project funds received by all our people in Malaita, not so much those of us on South Malaita but those on the other side, that is where all the project funds ended up, at SICOPSA point. They bought what is called the VB Projects and it ended up there. These problems have given rise to governments in the past to rethink changing the character of funding.

At one stage, Mr Speaker, it was controlled by the Ministry of Provincial Government. But when projects were allocated to constituencies, the public servants diverted them to different projects. This is the history pertaining to the issue now under question.

I can also remember during my first month in Parliament, the former Alliance Government changed the policy under SDF to provide funding through Members of Parliament, which became very popular from the beginning until our people started to

be inquisitive about whether the Rural Constituency Development Funds are used for the purposes for which they were intended.

It was because of the desire of our people to know more about how Members of Parliament spend or utilize these funds that forced me to move that motion so that if there is any other direction that Parliament or the government can take to satisfy our peoples' complaints, it must be considered. May be Members of Parliament would also realize that three quarters of the House lost their seats because of this particular issue – the RCDF, only 15 returned and thereafter only half returned because the system started to improve. There is accountability and the people were more informed through debates in this Parliament whereby Members of Parliament explained how they utilized the funding in their constituencies. That is why half of the House returned at that particular election. If those changes had not taken place, you would find one day, all Members of Parliament losing their seat because we are seen by our people as not accountable.

The preacher this morning was preaching to a convert. I am already a convert. All the issues I raised when I moved the motion were the same because they are the truth and the truth must be truth.

Sir, I did not just rest there but I persuaded the minister of a former government in which the mover of this motion now was the Foreign Affairs Minister to introduce in Parliament a bill to legalize and provide better administrative practices of the fund. I was the chairman of the Bills and Legislation Committee at that time and the Bill actually came here, but the previous government withdrew the Bill from the floor of Parliament because it said that the present financial rules already covered the administration of the fund and therefore there was no need for a bill to be introduced in Parliament for better control of the RCDF and other funds. Basically the reason for doing this is to make it more accountable so as to can attract more donor partners into funding of the RCDF. Because the concept and the principles of RCDF or whatever it is, is the right principle and the right concept. When Members of Parliament are given budgets, funds are used immediately. When funds are provided through the Public Service Departments, they become more politicized than when they are handed to Members of Parliament. Projects are delayed in implementing because of unknown reasons. That is what is happening in the ministries.

Mr. Speaker, even now when we are debating this motion, these are the feelings of Members of Parliament at that point in time. If \$400,000 is in the hands Members of Parliament, we have projects to implement and so this money would be gone by the next day. I think this is a good way of expending public money. The only thing that is lacking is what this motion is talking about, and that is to provide better accountability and mechanism.

I totally agree with the Deputy Prime Minister that this government has already taken serious steps in addressing the concern raised by the mover by establishing the Rural Livelihood fund through normal application through his Ministry. As I have said, it is evolutionary. One day who knows, if a better formula is found for all the funds, one

day it may end up like that. But it depends on the political character at any given time. That is why this government is talking about greater stability in politics.

We are talking about the integrity Bill which had been long overdue for the last 30 years. When there is political stability you can have a better mindset to make decisions, not to cause political instability. So it is not asking an administrative mechanism to establish the fund. There are a lot of issues associated with it. That is why I said that the reason for moving the motion previously was different. It is re-sharpening the tools of democracy through better accountability, transparency and a system to be appreciated by our people.

Mr. Speaker, because of improvements taking place from then until now, people are not complaining very much about the RCDF like in our times in the past. Because they know that once their projects have been endorsed by their Member of Parliament, the place to wait to receive the funds for it is the Ministry of Rural Development and Finance. It is improving, and I think it will continue to improve. It is an evolutionary process and we must not kid ourselves to think that things would happen overnight all the time.

I hope the mover of this motion will realize what I am saying. I believe that he himself was one of the obstacles in the past when good ideas and good plans were initiated during his time as Minister. I was a bit surprised Mr. Speaker, when the Bill was withdrawn from the floor of Parliament. We discussed it and it was a good bill. But I can only congratulate him for being the convert now, not me.

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

**Hon. GUKUNA:** Mr. Speaker, I want to join my two colleagues in thanking the Member for Temotu Nende for this very important and interesting motion. My only regret is that this is his last term and he only has one more RCDF tranche to pay out before raising this concern. Seventy (70) percent of the RCDF for this year has been used, and I was just wondering why he did not raise this earlier when the RCDF is still there. But never mind, I think it is very important, Mr. Speaker that we understand what the RCDF is for. By definition, the RCDF is meant for our rural people or for rural development. During our debates in one of the motions earlier, the MP for Shortlands raised one important point, which I like, he said this is the only fund that goes down to his rural people. When I heard that statement I then realized that the MP for West Honiara returned his RCDF, I can see a very big contrast here. But I do not blame the MP for West Honiara because he has no rural people, and rightly he should return all the RCDF to the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Speaker, I am speaking as a real believer on the RCDF. I believe in this fund and I think this fund is the only fund we can use it if used properly. I am not interested in here to make laws. I would like the idea of being here as a lawmaker and with that also able to assist in the development of my people in the rural areas.

Mr Speaker, in my first year I constructed a road. That road has been there for a long time, has been talked about for 30 years and when I came in I did that road in my

first 11 months in office. I completed that road and it is one of the best roads in our outer station of Bellona.

The only reason why I was able to construct that road was because of my RCDF. Had it not been for that fund we would still be talking about that road. When I pushed it through the Ministry of Works I doubt whether that project would go through because that road had been surveyed and went as far as talking about shifting the machines, which never happened. I believe I was able to do it because of the RCDF. Because of that I believe in RCDF, and in fact I want it to increase. I want more RCDF. I want some more. Let me tell you that you give me some more money and I will develop my place. I will do it because you have not done it for the last 30 years. It is my home and so if you give me money I will do it. You are always talking about a wharf. Give me the money and I will do the wharf. I believe in myself.

The system that is in place in my home is not working. Let me tell you some examples here. I constructed a water project using solar power to pump water, which cost me \$173,000 for that project. The other system did the same project through the Grassroots Project of the Embassy of Japan costing \$463,000. There is a very big contrast, about \$300,000 difference. Efficiency is very important here, and because I was able to use my RCDF I believe I did it the very efficient way. It is \$300,000 difference. If I had used half a million dollars I would have been able to do three more out of the same fund.

Mr Speaker, we are talking about this funding but this Parliament will not instill accountability on it. The system has been there but no one has been made accountable on how the RCDF was spent. Only the MPs would make it accountable. If we are concerned about RCDF accountability there are two ways to do it. We either remove the fund altogether or we get people who are here who are concerned about the use of RCDF. Only MPs would make it accountable. You put any other different system and it would not work.

On the point raised by my good friend, the MP for Central Kwara'ae on the use of committees, I must also say here that I do not believe in committees. I do not believe in it and I will tell you why. In the past we had 10 committees in my constituency, one for each ward and one for Honiara. This committee spent the whole four years circulating until the parliament term finished but this committee did nothing. This committee met rejected proposals, rejected ideas, sent it to Honiara, sent it back home until the four years were up. May this sounds a bit awkward, Mr Speaker, but I must admit to you that my system here is a one man show. I decided and I came in here with a plan. If I have money I implement my plan. I do not have a committee. When I assisted a project the money did not go through a middleman but it went straight to the beneficiaries. That is one reason why I do not believe on a committee. May be it works in other constituencies but I am talking about my own constituency where that system did not work.

In terms of flexibility on the use of the RCDF, I like what my other two colleagues have said that it is giving us the ability to help our people. Since I came in I have been able to assist my people send dead bodies back home, every single one of

them. It depends on how this funding is defined, but when we come to leadership we are leading a people with cultures. So that money has enabled me to help my people repatriate our dead bodies back to our home islands.

Sir, I do not want a system to be put in place that would really tighten that fund, because as I said, and has been raised by the MP for Central Kwara'ae, there should be flexibility in helping our people. After all other countries are giving out money through the dole system and I think we should be allowed the flexibility of how this funding is used.

There is also one thing the MP for Central Kwara'ae has raised, which I will also disagree with and that is that the distribution of the RCDF should be done according to population. I object to this. I really object to this because the least populated constituencies are the outlying islands. If we are really concerned about how this money is distributed, I think we should come up with something like a development index. Let us not forget that this is development money and not something for us to share it. Somehow we ended up having to distribute some of them. But the purpose of the RCDF is for development, and that is very important. We must be able to distribute it according to the ease of development. Take for instance if you go to islands like Anuta, some of you have not been to Anuta but some of us have. The islands of Anuta, Vanikoro, Utupua, and Duffs are very far. The same amount of \$400,000 would not do anything in those islands. The same amount of \$400,000 would do a lot in Central Kwara'ae. This \$400,000 would not do a lot in Renbel because of the ease of developing that place.

I think if we are going to be talking about the distribution of development funds, we should come up with a proper development index for all the provinces and all the constituencies so that we start there. If we truly believe in equal distribution of development, we must come up with an index that measures the ease of development in our constituencies and provinces.

I believe the distribution of funds from the Central Government is important when it comes to service delivery. If you look at the budgets of our provinces they are reflecting population sizes, because those funding relate directly to population and delivery of services. But for development, I think it should be pegged to how easy a place is to develop.

Mr Speaker, there is also another thing I would like to talk about and that is the perception that the RCDF is making politicians to be corrupt. As has been rightly put by the MP for Central Kwara'ae that perception is much generalized and is unfair to some of us. But let me tell these people that some of the NGO's in this country are more corrupt. There are more funds misused by the NGOs and sporting bodies. I want to tell the people of this country that sporting bodies in this country are misusing money. Why don't you go and complain to them. Sporting is supposed to go down to the rural areas and they have not been handling funds. Just look at soccer. Churches too are misusing funds. To the people who are accusing us of corruption, I want them to go and check out these organizations. Unfortunately some of these organizations are not producing reports but money is being misused everywhere.



When they see the RCDF with its good intention they started accusing MPs, but I want them to go and also find out how much money has been misused in other institutions. Even grants to schools have been misused left and right. Teachers are not being paid for six months. The bosses of teachers usually come to town and live for six or seven months not bothering to straighten the payments because they cannot retire the monies they are using.

The public, I want you to listen out that you go and check the other institutions because funds that are meant for us in this country are being misused left and right in other institutions.

Let me say that it is unfair to accuse MPs as being corrupt. And after all, some users of the fund should be blamed too. You cannot believe what some of the voters usually did. They come and give you all sorts of tricks and so you give them something, and the next day they come asking for something else. You give them petrol to cut timber for their house, the next thing they go and sell the petrol and then they come telling lies to you again asking for masonite.

Sir, I have said what I want to say but let me just say that we can introduce the system here, and I believe the accountability of RCDF if there is going to concern about it comes down to the MP. What is needed is for the MP to be accountable and responsible and try to handle it properly because only two or three of you are spoiling all of us. We are trying to make us good but you are spoiling everyone of us.

Mr Speaker, that is my comment. I support the idea, a very good idea but let us not put too many restrictions so that I cannot implement quick projects in my constituency. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr WAIPORA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to contribute on this very important motion moved by the Honourable MP for Temotu Nende this morning. Mr Speaker, first of all I would like to thank him for his courage in bringing this motion that is personally affecting Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, whether this motion will pass or not, the fact remains that two motions have been moved so far on the same thing. This is the second motion on the same thing.

Mr Speaker, whatever system we might come up with, we will go back to the colonial days. It does not matter we go into state government or whatever kind system we will just go back to square one.

Mr Speaker, I started off working with local authorities in 1966. I was an orderly and then went on to do clerical work and then I became the treasurer of councils and so I can see the changes that came about. The local government ordinance became the provincial government system we are now using.

The fact that we are able to get funding direct through Members of Parliament was because those people who introduced this funding may have been burdened by people going to them seeking assistance when MPs only depend on their salaries and allowances and this is why different kinds of rural funding were introduced.

Some of the funding I knew was the provincial revolving fund, the SICOPSA, as mentioned by the honorable mover and then the special discretionary fund that is with us until today.

Like I have said earlier, Mr Speaker, whether we do not accept any mechanism, as the mover of the motion wants and also the previous one by the MP for East Are Are it will come about. The question is, how are we going to implement this rural funding when state government comes?

I have a humble view, Mr Speaker, about a system. I would like to see a mechanism, which I would support down in the constituencies and that is to establish constituency governing councils or congresses or something like that.

This was already mentioned to us by the Deputy Prime Minister. But during my review in 1998 we were coming up towards constituency governing councils. We also wanted to do away with the provincial government system so that from constituency governing councils to the congress to be headed by a governor in Auki or Kirakira. The chairman of the constituency governing councils would make up the congress. When we talk about state, this small group would work towards state government because the footing in the constituencies was already strong economically and socially.

Mr Speaker, this is what I want us to think about it. If we are going to come up with a mechanism, I think there is need to strengthen the constituencies, and it would be 50 constituency governing councils that Parliament would allocate money direct to.

Sir, in my personal and humble view I think that mechanism would be recognized. Mr Speaker, the amount of money read by the mover of the motion in his speech is increasing. Therefore, it is inevitable that we have to look into a mechanism that would really control and manage funds that are coming up.

We, Members of Parliament are going to have heart attack if we control these things ourselves. Because pressure on us from our people and pressure on us in our role as a Member of Parliament and especially Ministers, we would have heart attack and even high blood pressure.

I think it is advisable and wise, Mr Speaker, that a mechanism should be considered as called for by this motion. We must start it off because two motions have been moved in here about the same thing. I am not in parliament when the MP for East Are Are moved the first motion. But I think it is a sign that we do it now for Parliament to consider seriously requests like this.

Sir, in my humble view if this structure is adopted this time, not state government first. This is what I think. We should first of all establish constituency governing councils, if I may call them, in our constituencies so that they become strong before we work through congresses to be headed by a governor in Kira Kira or in Auki with public officers before we think about state government. We should think about state government that time because our footing at the village level is already strong.

Mr Speaker, the Deputy PM mentioned how he organized his constituency, which is exactly what I am trying to explain here. It is just a matter of strengthening.

Mr Speaker, this is the powerhouse to decide on a mechanism. The motion that is here before us now needs responsible people like us who are now in the powerhouse

to consider it. We should not only consider thinking very narrowly on this mechanism but we must look beyond because we are going towards state government. In my view we should put aside state government and sort our footings down at the constituency level first before we go up and adopt state government and we are set because we are strong. At the moment it would fall down on us if we are not ready.

Mr Speaker, what I am saying here is that I think it is very, very important that we look seriously at supporting this motion because we will start it off. It does not matter because when we are out from here those who come after us will also talk about it because the amount is increasing to \$3m or \$4m for one constituency. And we Members of Parliament cannot handle that kind of amount of money.

Mr Speaker, I must admit that I have not set up any committee, although I was thinking of setting up a committee in my constituency. I want to divide my constituency into three parts, but I have decided not to do that yet because I want to decide for myself to get something, which I think would help my people first. If there is a committee we will go on talking about things and nothing will happen. I want to do something first time because under the regulations it is MPs that are accountable for this money, and because I am accountable I must decide what is better for my people. That is why at the moment people are very happy about things like sawmill, which has already gone down and people are using it now, every one of us has it. Copra drums and driers have already gone down, and my ship goes around fortnightly collecting copra, unloads them here and returns home. If we are going to set up this mechanism now, which I support but I must do it first before anything happens after.

Mr Speaker, if anybody accuses me of the RCDF for West Makira Constituency, I must tell them that \$2.6m was used to buy the ship. All the records are there. I have already distributed copies to them to see.

Sir, we must seriously look at this so that we set up a mechanism that can help us as long as we get the right people to help us out. And if they help us out it would be different from you yourself controlling it because that is why some of the former Members have not been successful in their election because they were accused falsely, may be of the RCDF.

Sir, if a mechanism is put in place and good people are put in place they would help us to be successful because they would say this Member is very cooperative with us, and that is why we come up with this one, and if there are differences if our Member does not work together with us, we would not be able to achieve things but because he works together with us.

Sir, the point here is that if we do not accept this motion today it will come up again. It will come up again because it is like water running down that we cannot stop. Some Members have already expressed that they want more of the RCDF and because we want more we must be prepared for a good house for it.

I am encouraged to hear the Deputy Prime Minister already preparing for what I am thinking about. In my view, we must encourage that so that money goes direct and no middleman. That is why when I was Minister of Provincial Government I have my own way by putting outside area councils, and I was on the way to taking provincial

governments aside so that we set up this one but I was not able to do that because I was toppled by a coup.

Mr Speaker, this motion is very important to help us Members of Parliament. The Deputy Prime Minister is successful because he set up that mechanism. But what this motion is calling for here is for us to recognize that it must be according to regulations or something like that because it is public funds.

I am sure if this fund is properly organized and a mechanism established, I think the aid donors would be happy to help us because they know that their money is going directly down to the rural people for the purpose of their money and not somewhere.

Mr Speaker, with this very short contribution, I think it is a very important motion that responsible Members of Parliament must think carefully about supporting so that it is passed and the government sorts out all the details, the meat and the bone of how we are going to implement it. For me, I think it is a very important motion that we must support, Mr Speaker.

With those few words and remarks, Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

**Mr SOALAOI:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to the motion before the House. I would also like to thank my colleagues for allowing me to contribute first before them.

At the outset, Mr Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague MP for Nende for the motion, which I consider as very important and necessary for the development of our rural areas.

Mr Speaker, in supporting the motion, may I first of all say why I support this motion. Mr Speaker, it has been my desire and I also believe our desire as leaders to ensure we govern our constituencies in a transparent manner. I also support the motion because it is in line with our government's policy in our effort of governing this country in a transparent manner.

I think all of us would realize that our most important and primary role as Members of Parliament is to make laws and policies. Mr Speaker, we are elected in here to make laws for the good governance of our nation. The use of the RCDF has made Members of Parliament become somewhat like accountants and managers of companies, putting us under a lot of pressure diverting our attention away from our primary role as law and policy makers for the good of this nation.

Mr Speaker, I believe as leaders we all agree that the management of the RCDF by Members of Parliament has somehow contributed to the different ways and attitudes that our people have adopted reacting to how we manage the funds. Mr Speaker, I think there is also the need for our constituents to understand that we, the Members of Parliament are not there to hand out cash and at the same time expecting us to develop our constituencies. I think this motion requires our constituents' understanding.

In saying this, Mr Speaker, may I ask how do we deal with the needs of our constituencies that do not satisfy set criteria and procedures that must be met in order to access funds from the Constituency Development Funds? I believe the truth is that it is easier said than done like other speakers have said. We usually promote transparency

and accountability during campaign periods only to find that when we are actually in Parliament it is somehow a bit more challenging to manage the funds taking into account the different needs our people are coming forward with. That is why I am saying there needs to be understanding on the part of our constituents in regards to this motion and also our aid donors who are funding the RCDF.

Whilst I support the motion, Mr Speaker, I believe there is also need for some flexibility in order for us to cater for the various needs our people are coming up with time and time again as we endeavor to develop our constituencies.

Mr Speaker, there are needs that do not need any criteria under financial instructions or whatever mechanisms that are in existence, for example, if somebody from your constituency died in the National Referral Hospital and a Member of Parliament is being asked to buy a coffin you cannot find in any established criteria that you are allowed to buy a coffin. That is why I am saying there needs to be understanding on the part of our aid donors and our people in trying to demand for transparency and accountability from Members of Parliament

Mr Speaker, I would like to make a suggestion. In supporting this motion I believe the only other appropriate motion to utilize any established mechanisms following the passage of this motion is for the government to consider channeling its sector funding, especially development sector through constituencies. Mr Speaker, I am saying this because if we set mechanisms then we need some more funds in order for us to fully utilize any mechanisms that we put in place. Another reason why I say this is because just look at us after 30 years. I believe if we change the way we prepare our budgets this country will never be the same as in the past 30 years.

Mr Speaker, our budgets are usually based on the cost of activities designed by our ministries or government sectors. On this point, Mr Speaker, I would like to suggest, as I have already said that with an established mechanism, constituencies need to be given more funds in order for them to fully utilize the mechanisms and also fully develop their constituencies according to their constituency plans.

Sir, in preparing our budget the budget would be based on the cost of activities contained in our various constituency plans. Like I have said after 30 years of running the same type of budget that we are running up until today, we are not seeing very much. I believe very strongly we can only develop with a change. I believe it is a change that is going to be hard for us to adapt or to easily consider going into the type of budgets where funding is directed through constituencies and ministries become bodies that only monitor the progress of projects. This is because we are always told by ministries that they lack the capacity to implement projects they are supposed to be implementing. But I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that the capacity to implement projects that are in line with constituencies needs is found in the constituencies.

Also, our constituencies have different potentials. Some constituencies are strong in agriculture, some are strong in tourism and some constituencies are strong in fisheries. There is need for funds from these sectors to be channeled through constituencies, according to the potentials of each constituency, Mr Speaker.

The system we are using at the moment is that we are only seeing our resources being spread thinly and not achieving any results or only achieving very little results, Mr Speaker.

Sir, I will be very brief, and firstly in supporting this motion I believe it is our desire as leaders to ensure that we govern our constituencies and our country in a transparent manner as we practice good governance, which is also stipulated in the CINURA government policy.

Mr Speaker, I have made the two points, which I believe are very important on the part of our constituencies and also us Members of Parliament as we manage this so called RCDF for the very purpose of developing our rural areas. I will continue to emphasize that sectors based in the capital will never have the capacity to implement projects that are aimed for rural areas because of the challenges that include transport costs and other related costs making it more expensive to get even project materials to areas concerned.

Before I finish, if I can mention an example, our neighbour PNG is channeling \$10 million to every Member of Parliament and PNG is seeing a lot of development in the rural areas because of the amount of money channeled through each constituency, given that they have established mechanisms in utilizing the funds.

Mr Speaker, before I finish may I emphasize that if we are to establish a mechanism, the only proper thing for us to do is to find money to utilize those mechanisms, otherwise there is no need to establish mechanisms and leave them there just for the sake of having something in place. Mr Speaker, let us not waste our time working on something and never using it. Mr Speaker, the only proper mechanism like I have said after the passing of this motion is for the government to consider changing its budget to be based on the cost of activities contained in the various consequence plans. That is the only way we can develop the rural areas because I do not believe activities that are designed by ministries are sensitive to the development needs of the rural areas.

Mr Speaker, we have seen budget processes that only involve activities of ministries based in Honiara, and that is why I believe if only we take into account the costs of developing constituencies based on our development plans then we can be assured that we can change our constituencies or rural areas for that matter.

With those few remarks, Mr Speaker, I believe I have said what I want to say. I believe I made myself very clear and why I support this motion. I want to say it again that let us not waste our time putting something in place and never using it. We want to work on something that we can use for the benefit of our people.

Mr Speaker, with these few remarks once again, I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the motion, and I support the motion.

**Hon. KEMAKEZA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me time to contribute to this very important motion. I was tempted to take the floor because of comments by the Member of Parliament for West Makira because he is contradicting himself on the very noble intention of the mover in this motion.

Sir, I say this because the Member for West Makira abolished all the area councils and now he wants to put in place another 50 governing councils. What kind of leader is he for abolishing the area councils and now you are crying over what you did wrong before. That makes me to ask whether the colleague MP is thinking or not.

The mover is consistent on what he is saying because this fund came about time when he was Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Provincial Government. He was the initiator by putting place the original mechanisms. He cannot go wrong if he continues to pursue this. This idea started in 1989. The mover put the mechanism in place when he was PS in the Ministry of Provincial Government. There were three types of funds at that time and not one. It was only later that others were added on. When a government comes in it adds on another one and when the next one comes in it keeps on adding on to it until it reaches millions. I thank the Leader of Opposition for moving it up to \$1million with a different name but the same thing.

When the mover was Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Provincial Government a certain funding was called SICOPSA, and this goes to area councils. Another one called ward grant goes to provincial members, and Parliament Members got what is called the CDF. Now we add on 'R' to it and so it becomes 'rural' to change the paint of the house from blue to yellow, and of course, with good intentions.

During that time many Members of Parliament or politicians for that matter, all politicians at all levels, and you yourself, Mr Speaker, were a premier then, you went down in the history of Choiseul Provinces as its first premier, if they went to aid donors or embassies here in Honiara seeking assistance to build a church or whatever in their constituencies, they cannot give them any assistance because their funding criteria is not for building churches. This is the reason why we came up with the idea that because church is very strong in our islands from the beginning until the end of this world, we have to look somewhere for assistance. So we went to business people making politicians look as though they are beggars in their own land. That is the baseline or the reason for this funding. Even if we ask for assistance for school fees or for social issues, they cannot give you the money. Even if you ask money for your custom obligations you would not be given anything, and that is why this funding came about. Even some went to the embassies for other things only to learn that their requests were not within the funding criteria. That is why this funding came about.

The other question, Mr Speaker, is how this fund is being utilized because there is already a mechanism. This motion is talking about regulation but the mechanism is already there initiated by the same mover. Now he wants to put in a little bit of strong teeth to bite. It is alright but it can back fire because only time will tell.

This motion has very good intentions. In fact, I use the RCDF to build every church building on Savo/Russells. No one missed out, starting from leaf houses to roofing iron. If people from Savo/Russells are listening in they would agree with me. From Russells to Savo I build every church building for them. No one is left out. I want anyone or the Police to investigate whether we have misused or abused the RCDF money to go down to Savo and Russells and find out for themselves. That is why I continue to come back in every general election.

I built classrooms for schools using the RCDF. I build a few secondary schools, clinics, aid posts, water supplies and I also paid school fees using RCDF. Mr Speaker, in past times for anyone from Savo to have a degree is like traveling from here to the moon, it is very hard. But today there are many degree holders from Savo who have no jobs living in town. That is made possible because of the RCDF.

Sir, I spent a lot of my RCDF money to send students from Savo and Russells to go and get scholarships. So the RCDF has a very good purpose, meaning and intention. Also because of the mechanism that was put in place on the RCDF, and the mover can confirm this, the RCDF or what sort of funds we are receiving would be audited. The Audit Division is going to audit the money we are receiving and investigate it because it is public money. I think that is what this motion is driving at; to avoid us being investigated because from experience a few Members of Parliament have already gone to prison on the RCDF. Therefore, I am happy the mover tabled this motion.

The only problem here is that if the regulation is put because GCC Government created 50 CDOs and it created the Ministry of Rural Development looked after by the Deputy Prime Minister. The intention of this is to look at the bottom up approach policy. Now because it is a good policy, like the Member for West Makira is very good at when he tried lecturing to us about that system, and what will happen in the future, it still falls short of the idea of the bottom up approach. He has to learn from me on how to apply the bottom up approach so that it comes to the end of the thinking of the bottom up approach. If we approach the word 'bottom up approach' in isolation to the development of the country, then you are missing the point.

If we are to make the system and regulate it in order to suit this, then you miss the point, Mr Speaker. In fact, I have already seen the point of the mover. This will be a product to market in 2010. But it cannot beat my product because it still falls short of the idea.

What I was thinking originally about this bottom up approach is that it goes in line with development and to strengthen provincial governments. That is why the CNURA Government is giving additional wards to provincial governments and not constituencies. Because if this idea goes in line with what the Member for Temotu/Vattu who seemed to be repeating his two points over and over again, then right mechanisms have to be put. I do not want to mention them now because it would be the product that you and I are going to sell in 2010. This one still falls short. I will see to the regulation that is going to come. But where will the regulation suggested by the mover be born out from, Mr Speaker? Where? Would it be a subsidiary to the Provincial Government Act? We leave this to the mover to tell us later on because you are regulating the fund and it must have the mother law, and that is it will be under the Finance and Audit Act. That is why I said that it still falls short but I will help the mover to complete it from here up to the outside of the door, I leave it there.

The final point in supporting this motion, this side of the House supports it, but I should not vote I should have gone out so that I am absent. Mr Speaker, please all the interested parties as I have said three weeks ago, the people who are contesting with us like West Makira had somebody that comes closer, our margin is not that far. And this



year I am not mindful of putting this thing together. He says he has already broken the law – rule he is not qualified to draw any of the RCDF because he does not have a committee because the money must be paid to the RDCF committee but if you do not have it, the Deputy Prime Minister is here so do not give it to him next time. Sorry, that is the right of his people but the point is regulation is okay but where will it be born out of. But I said it still falls short of the situation in the country. The way we are going because we miss the very important people in this sector, the resource owners, but if we are connected to the Provincial Government Act, then we must take the provinces onboard, because that will be the stepping stone, the end of Haununu. That is my contribution, Mr Speaker, it is a good idea but we need to do more research and take those important areas on board.

For Savo and Russell's, in case the Deputy Prime Minister wants to know it is transparent and it is there for inspection. Also I went as far as giving the RCDF to individuals and every single family in Savo. If anyone in Savo/Russells says no, I will come and report to you. I went that far, for the information of other members, everyone, no one is missing, even those who opposed me or even candidates who contested with me I gave them their share because the good intention of the RDCF is for development purposes. If we regulate it, it is a good idea but it will still fall short. Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I support the motion.

**Mr. TANEKO:** Mr Speaker, I want to thank the mover of this motion for this very important motion that is exciting to the public because everybody is talking about it because when you become a Member of Parliament it becomes a pain in your ears.

Mr Speaker, the motion itself I believe has mechanisms set under the Constitution and the Financial Instructions Act. We already have the Development Bank, the Treasury and the Minister of Finance who can administer the RCDF. It is all in there. When I came in, there is an animal I know under the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations called the RCDF. The message says that this money is spent at Member's discretion to deliver services to those at the very bottom who give you power, and it is for rural development to benefit communities, individuals for income generating projects. I for one see the RCDF as a good allocation to be given to the rural sectors.

Today you would witness in my constituency the standard of living of my people has improved a lot because of the RCDF. The motion we are now debating wants mechanisms to be set in place to establish the management of that fund. The truth in this House is that if we do not want to directly involve on this RCDF so as to make our leaders corrupt or whatever, then we just do not hold it. Simple as that. There is a mechanism set already but let us see the weakness of the mechanism.

Let us ask ourselves the question, why did we set up the Development Bank? That is a very good name and a very good animal. Is that mechanism set by government work? I believe the government of the day tested it by allocating funds to the Development Bank and the Development Bank lends out money endorsed by the Member and may be it did not work, and that is why it did not put money any longer to

the Development Bank. But that is a mechanism. It is not free but it attracts a bit of interest. Is that good and did it work? Those are the questions that arise.

Mr Speaker, there are already 20 ministries in place according to government policies, the government of the day. There is the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Fisheries, and so forth. Those ministries are supposed to manage any money allocated to them. If you want to be free those are the mechanisms already set under the Financial Act. It is already there. But the question that arises is that any allocation channeled to the Ministries, do they equally share the allocation to the beneficiaries in each constituency? That is the question.

Mr Speaker, is it not good to give the RCDF to Members? This motion is trying to find the best solution in managing the RCDF for the betterment of rural development. The geographical setting in each constituency is not the same. Some come from far away places and some just close to Honiara. Therefore, those that live nearby can just come across and get their materials, but some of us who live faraway if we want to get heavy equipments it would take us ages. We might wait for 10 to 20 years and still no bulldozer.

Mr Speaker, I believe the mechanism is there. All we have to do is strengthen the weak part of the mechanism that is already set within government policy. I thank the CNURA Government for the Rural Development Ministry. We are trying to implement the \$1million that has already been allocated. But may I say again that \$1million is not enough. If we want to change the face of the constituencies, we need more money. Nobody in here is going to deny that. We cannot deny it. We want to change the face of the constituencies but it depends very much on how much money is given to us. But the problem is how to manage and how to change the constituencies we are representing.

Mr Speaker, I will be very brief. This is talking about establishing the management of that fund that is allocated to us. I know that the RCDF is no longer in the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations now. It is going to be allocated to the Ministry responsible for it. But as I see it we should just strengthen the loopholes to help Members. For me, I believe the RCDF is the only money that the rural sectors, the constituencies feel, touch and see, especially through income generating projects. We might ask the question, is it good to give money to individuals or is it good to allocate it straight to development. If it is for education, it should be allocated straight to education and so it has to be the Ministry for Education and it is the Ministry of Education's job to go and build classrooms and everything. The mechanisms are set already. If it is for fisheries project then money should be given to the Ministry of Fisheries. For forestry projects it should be given to the Ministry of Forestry.

The Ministers are already there to manage the fund, and that is why the ministries are established. There are accountants and administrators in the ministries to manage the fund. There is also the Ministry of Provincial Government. Mr Speaker, the provincial governments and the constituencies represented by their Members of Parliament are contradicting each other. They are doing the same things. The question is – is it good to have these animals together? Of course, yes but how to administer them is the question. The allocation to provincial governments has been given by the

executive as well as allocation for roads, health, fisheries and everything, but the question that is going to arise is - are those funds allocated to respective ministries and the provincial governments being properly managed? Is it workable, is it working today? I do not think so.

I am somebody who came from a faraway constituency, but one thing I want to say in here is that each and every one of us who enters this house has the vision to change our constituencies. We all have a vision. If we come in here because of the RCDF then this is not our right place. This place here is for the legislators with the vision to change our constituencies and the nation as a whole. We are supposed to be partners in development. We are partners in development so that we can work together to change this nation for the benefit and betterment of our people.

Mr Speaker, I thank the mover of the motion. All the motion is asking is a very simple question, and that is how to establish the management of the RCDF.

For myself, I think that under the Financial Instructions Act, the Constitution of Solomon Islands, the supreme law, and the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulation, all the regulations are there already. It is only that we have to be honest and truthful in the use of the RCDF. That is all.

Mr Speaker, I want to tell us that 2010 is coming and there would be no other topics that those who would oppose us would use but the RCDF. No, Mr. Speaker, this is wrong. They should instead set their minds on how they are going to develop the constituencies. They should ask whether they are better than us. They should ask how they are going to serve their people and how they are going to develop their constituencies. They should not use the RCDF to campaign. If there is no RCDF, how can we change our constituencies?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an example. If the Minister for Rural Development listens to the Honourable Member Taneko and gives me \$1million, I will use that money to buy copra, and Shortlands would change tomorrow. That is the wish of this Member because that is the strength of my people. The community is there and the timbers are there but the regulation and the principle how to do it is the challenge. Therefore, even if a leader wants to change that place, the law is hindering you as well.

Sir, we have to indirectly earn wealth. We have to sweat the Bible says. We must work and bring forth something. Who created this handout in the first place? That is the question that was raised in here. Who created this indirect handout so that people come to us and ask us for school fees, airfares, medical expenses, repatriate dead bodies back home and many more things? But who created this mentality? It was created by none other than the highest supreme law making body on the land. Simple as that. There is no other way.

We all agree that we want to be set free, and so get out and give it to the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Infrastructure. I am complaining about my road, which needs repair but I think he is going to repair it now. I am complaining about a wharf. Allocate the money and give it to the Ministry of Infrastructure so that it can construct

my roads and bridges. I am a law maker who must make sure my fellow citizens reign and rule in peace and harmony in this nation of Solomon Islands. That is our work.

Sir, the mechanisms are there but let us see the weakness of the mechanism. Let us make a SWOT analysis to find out strengths and our weaknesses. The Melanesian culture of weakness is that when you become a leader you become a father. That is your weakness because if you do not deliver then you are not a leader. We must be straightforward. If you do not deliver then you should not be here because you are not a leader. Our people expect us to be a father to them because you have a vision that you care for them and you have the vision to meet their needs. We have to make sure that as leaders we must make it right in here. This is the legislative body to protect leaders because prevention is better than cure.

Sir, when the time for the election of the Prime Minister comes, we go to the hotels, we sleep everywhere, we lobby and we go to every house asking who am I going to support as prime minister. The people in the village are just like that. They wonder that if they vote for this man would he be able to deliver services to them. Or if they vote for another man they also wonder too whether he is going to deliver services to them. That is the truth about our people. But this motion is about how we are going to manage the RCDF.

In accounting terms one plus one is two but in political terms one plus one is seven. This is true. Whether we like it or not but accountability is one plus one is two. You add the figure and you will come back to the figure they gave you. That is a big question for us.

Mr. Speaker, of the 100 percent of the budget, only 15 percent or 20 percent is felt by the small man in the village. About 85 percent of it is used up here in administration. If we want to change this nation of Solomon Islands, and before we change it, we must make sure the living standards of the human beings we are representing must be right. They must have food; they must have accessibility to the market place and be accessible to the hospitals so that they could take their children to the hospital when they are sick.

Today we are short of medicine. There are no medicines in my home. I am always in the newspapers on this issue. The vision that God gave me is that the only way I can change Shortlands is to have accessibility to the market and this is transportation so that they can put their goods into the ship and take it to the market place. But still others are not happy. Therefore, what should I do to make them happy? The Bible says "Be content, be happy with the little that you receive". We will never be satisfied. All we have to do is to reign, rule and administer things faithfully to our people. That is it.

This simple motion before us now is a message to us. The point of view of the man from Shortlands is that the mechanisms are already there under the Financial Instructions Act or whatever but it is already there. There is the Ministry for Finance; there are tons of graduate economists and accountants with no jobs. We should give them to administer this fund, so that we create jobs for them.

There is the Development Bank. Some of us in here obtain loans and are enjoying it. Let us strengthen that house. Dump all the RCDF money to the DBSI and strengthen it. That is why it is called the Development Bank. There are agriculture extension officers everywhere. Some of them right now are receiving money in bales. They are not working but are receiving fortnightly salaries. Let us strengthen these people so that they look after the fund. Maybe that is the best way. Let us strengthen the agriculture extension officers so they can administer the fund under the policies of the government of the day under rural development. I thank all successive governments and this government that I think every vision is there, but let us see the weakness. We do not have to create avenues so that people talk about them and criticize them. Members must be looked after and given the best so that they can become good leaders. Let us not indirectly create things to damage or rubbish the name of a leader.

There is a regulation already and so there is no need to put in applications. If a Member of Parliament wants a fisheries project there is no need for him to apply to the Ministry of Fisheries or to the Ministry of Forestry if he wants a forestry project or any other developments. No, this is wrong. We know there are 50 constituencies so just allocate the money and give it to them and let them implement their projects. The MPs role is to support them by monitoring the projects. Then we will be free and free indeed. You will be set free.

Proverbs 3:27 says do not hold back when someone asks you for something. You must give it on the same day if you have it. The power is in your hands, and this is in the Scripture. Some of you say you do not have anything but you have something. You can see that this is biblical.

I thank the mover of this motion because it wants us to be accountability. Let us see how we can manage this fund so that we help our people. That is all what this motion is asking us. But I believe the mechanisms are already in place. There is the Ministry of Finance and 20 other ministries as well as the Rural Development Ministry. The mechanisms are already set. Since the government is formed all the mechanisms are there. Let me give you an example of this. During the colonial days when I was a small boy I used to see ships coming to my home every fortnight with officers from the ministries in the ships- health officers, lawyers, magistrates and others touring the constituencies bringing message and services to the rural areas. After Independence, I did not see ships fortnightly. Sometimes we did not see ships even up to two to six months. The question is, have we seen its weakness? This man who is speaking right now said "when I get in there the first thing I will do is to get a ship". I thank the government of the day for supporting me in getting M.V Bikoi 1. That is your blessing for recognizing us. But still some of my people are not happy. See, as long as we live on this place we will never agree together but as long as we work together and try to change and manage how to rule our nation and our constituency, I believe this motion is for our betterment. All this motion is asking us is, is to establish the management part of it. It is true that we are legislators, and we are here to make laws for our country. We are not here to be bank officers or accountants of everything. No, every one of us in here knows each other that we are all legislators. But we must also ask ourselves that when

we go outside people are waiting for us right now at the doors of our homes and offices. So we must ask ourselves, is this right? If we say they are disturbing us, then that is why this motion must come to regulate it so that our people do not come and disturb their leaders but wait at home to develop your constituencies. That is the intention of this motion. Do you agree?

Because some of us in here are saying "I will give this to you so that you vote for me". People are listening now. No, it is not by giving you the RCDF that people will vote for us. You have to vote a man with a vision. The Bible says that a man without a vision perishes and he will not reign and rule and cannot develop. I am telling you that this is the main thing.

Now everybody is against us because they heard that there is more money coming up, millions of dollars are coming up. Of course, we need more money. If you give me \$5 million you forget about Shortlands. This is true. If I can use that money on copra alone, I can change my constituency. That is their strength. Every single family has a coconut tree and if they can pick one coconut tree, they can change their homes tomorrow. You have to see their weaknesses and find ways to strengthen the weaknesses. You have to find the opportunity on how you can give something so that men can rise and increase. You must kill the threat. My threat is the ship. We have copra, timber, fish, trochus, bechedemer but we look to heaven but there is no ship and so Taneko said "well, I have to get a ship." That is the truth.

Now the ship of the mover of the motion is not going, and so I want to tell him that my ship is there and so he can use it to take rice and everything to his island. That is why the ship is there. Even though the vessel is for Shortlands but that ship, M.V Bikoi is for all the 50 Members in here. It is not only for the Shortlands Constituency but I have the vision for that ship for all of us in here. You must not be jealous or angry where I get the money to buy the ship. You must support me so that I can transport timber and rice for your people in it because you did not have the vision of getting a vessel. I am the only one who has that vision.

This motion is talking about management. All this paper is asking us to do is to establish a management. We already have the Minister of Finance, he should be here, and tell the Minister for Finance to get the RCDF back to his office and get more accountants and economists to manage it. There are many graduates now. Many of them were sent by the Minister for Education to Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. There is a whole bunch of graduates, the professional people now in the country without jobs. We must strengthen them by giving them money so they manage it so that we will be free. Are you happy? We are looking for the reason but the reason is very clear, and that is we have the Ministry for Finance; we have the accountants, the lawyers and the economists; take all the money and give it to the Minister for Finance so that he employs the accountants, the economists, lawyers and manage the money. We are here to make sure people do not kill or steal from each other. The law has to be right for them to rule and reign in peace and harmony. Is that true?

I tell you my good friends that we have to be prepared. In 2010 the people who will oppose us will use the topic of the RCDF to attack us. They will not use their vision

on how they are going to reign and rule Solomon Islands. All they are going to do is complaining about you on the RCDF. We better remove it now before those people come in. Let us test them. Are they going to come if there is no RCDF?

This house is for people who have vision to reign and rule for the betterment of the nation of Solomon Islands. We are legislators and peacemakers. We are the ones to build bridges from islands to islands, and that is why I bought a ship, but still some of my people are not happy. If I get a submarine they will not be happy either.

I thank the mover of the motion once again. This is a very simple motion as it only asks us to formally consider establishing a management and regulatory mechanism for the disbursement of the constituency development fund for which Members of Parliament are held accountable.

One plus one is two, and so if you want to be free tomorrow or next week, we give it to the Minister who is responsible so that he administers it. But make sure the constituency account of Shortlands must be given to me if I come and endorse it because it is for my classrooms and my roads. Send a bulldozer to fix our roads. Do not say there is no money when I come to you, but you sign it because when the RCDF comes, I give it straightaway to many people. Anyone who cries and comes to me I give it to him/her. I know my people are listening to me right now. Whether my people voted for me or not but if they come I give it to them because they need it. Sometimes I heard this comment "that person did not vote for you". No, I am their leader and so even though they did not vote for me at least I have to give him a test. They must try it and see if it is workable then good on them.

Once again I would like to say that there is already a mechanism set in place for the RCDF. We just have to find out where our weaknesses and strengths are.

I thank the government and ask them to strengthen the agriculture extension officers. Today is not like the colonial days. All the copra that we have now are from the British colonial days. They encouraged people to plant coconut, coconut, coconut and cocoa, cocoa, cocoa. But what about today? The Minister of Agriculture should be here today to take note of this. He must check all his Agriculture Extension Officers whether they are doing development?

This motion is talking about managing of the Rural Constituency Development Fund in which the regulatory mechanisms have already been set but we are still not strengthening our weaknesses? We are not addressing our weaknesses.

The question before I sit down is, can we re-strengthen the Development Bank? Or now that the rural livelihood is there with every mechanism set, I thank the government of the day, the CNURA for that and successive governments as well.

Mr Speaker, with this small contribution, I believe we can help each other so that we live right as leaders. With that I resume my seat.

*Sitting suspended for lunch break until 1.30 pm*

**Mr NUAISI:** Mr Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to contribute to the motion moved by the Member for Temotu Nende. I also thank mover of the motion

asking us to consider establishing a management and regulatory mechanism for the disbursement of the Constituency Development Funding for which Members of Parliament are held accountable.

Sir, this motion is a good motion as it has noble intentions. I say this because we Members of Parliament normally receive complaints from our constituencies. For example, Mr Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister has an established office in Auki where the RCDF funds go through and is being managed by his constituency officers with set criteria to ensure the smooth running of the fund. Mr Speaker, through this establishment we can see the funds given to the Deputy Prime Minister and Member for Central Kwara'ae being disbursed very smoothly enabling him to achieve a lot of his constituency plans through that office.

Sir, this is however different to some of us who are from the remote areas with no infrastructures in place in order to establish a conducive or a good office to implement our activities or plans. Even to up date our records, is a problem. It is one of our major problems because we are doing this on ad hoc basis, should I say because every time we expect our constituents to come to our family houses, which is not conducive to attend to their needs. Sometimes they meet us on the roads, outside the Parliament areas during parliament meetings waiting to ask us questions or ask for money from us. That in itself is already a problem because we do not have proper places to properly administer this fund. Therefore, it is really not in the best interest of the constituency because some of the queries or projects coming from constituents are not being considered properly or not screened well by the Member of Parliament but for purposes of avoiding pressures and so forth the MP just say yes to the requests or he committed himself to funding the requests from the constituents, only to realize that he had made a wrong decision. But who is to be blamed? Some times it might be the people from the constituency because the Member of Parliament did it in his right as the Member of Parliament of the constituency but the motive of who comes to ask for assistance might not be right. Those are some of the issues I see that can cause problems to the disbursement of this constituency fund.

Sir, what I can see is that once we come up with the relevant legislation or regulatory mechanisms, I think that each MP should have an office. The office should be staffed with officers to assist the Member and his constituency. If that kind of set up is established it would free the MP to do his work as a legislator or as a Member of Parliament representing his constituency in this legislature.

Likewise, Mr Speaker, a set up like that can enable Ministers to be free because with a constituency office, constituency matters would be dealt with in that office and the Minister would be free to carry out the policy of the government of the day ensuring the ministry is at rest and the nation is being served by that Minister. These are the things that are causing problems to us MPs.

Sir, whilst I agree with the establishment of a mechanism to ensure the disbursement of constituency funding is proper, people who want to complain will always complain because not any one person will do what is right that everybody agrees with. Even ourselves in this House of Parliament we have our own views on how we



present things, Mr Speaker. Differences cannot come together. Even if we try to put them together we will always argue with each other. We will always say this is the best system or that is the best system. It very much depends on how each constituency manages its own fund. And I must say here that those constituencies that have constituency development plans produced by the Ministry of Provincial Government are very fortunate because they have their development plans in place that they will work according to it. For those of us who do not have a constituency development plan, it is another disaster for us.

Sir, not only that but there is another thing I see that is causing a lot of problem. This is the need for continuation of a Member to continue implementing projects and disburse services. What I can see here is that when a member loses the election, I as the new MP do not know where the former MP has reached in regards to development in the constituency. Because of that problem, a new Member who comes into Parliament would seem to be doing the same thing the former MP has been doing. This is repeating what has happened before, and so a MP achieves nothing because throughout his term he is just addressing the same things, which the previous Member of Parliament has been doing. That is a problem to some of us.

With these few remarks on this important motion, what I can see is that from the government through MPs, the regulatory measures for that are already in place. It is from Members to constituency and may be from government to ensure that Members from constituency is flowing smoothly according to plans, is the missing part. Our reporting system back to the government is also another problem because how can a Member of Parliament report back when he/she does not have time to do that. It is not easy disbursing constituency funds because for some of us this is done may be on a beach or even at your house, sometimes on the road and so records are not in order. Things like that are causing the problems of putting records together to be sent back to the government.

But all in all, Mr Speaker, while this funding has its motive, a good motive to help the constituencies, I think infrastructures should be first and foremost put in place. If we are given offices, I can tell you that constituency funds would be properly monitored because officers would be there to screen applications and foremost there would be a filing system of record keeping in place.

Mr Speaker, from experience I have established a committee when I first came in but then the committee members also have problems. All these things have advantages and disadvantages. The proper place for Members of Parliament to work is difficult because you do not know who is serving you at this point in time. You must weigh these things too. Being politicians we must be always mindful of ourselves too. We will take into account all these things but if an office is provided and there is continuation of the disbursement of the constituency fund making sure when a new MP comes into Parliament he would be able to see what the previous MP has done, and so the new MP would know where he should continue from, would be a great advantage.

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

**Hon. TORA:** Mr Speaker, I also would like to thank my good colleague MP for Temotu Nende for tabling this very important motion for us to debate and make a decision upon this afternoon.

Mr Speaker, I shall be very brief as most of the areas worth noting have been covered by previous speakers and so I do not want to prolong the debate because this motion is timely and straightforward.

Mr Speaker, this is another change, as far as I can see this motion. It would be another experience for our constituents and for us MPs because we are trying to change the old system that we have been following, and we are looking forward to following laws to guide us on the disbursement of the RCDF. But that aside, this motion is very, very, important in order for us to change and to move from the present system to a new system. But it would take a while for our people to understand and accept because currently our people are expecting quick money, which I would like to term as 'handouts', which does not require long consideration or anything to guide us as it is a discretion fund given to MPs to assist their people in the constituencies.

Sir, as previous speakers have said, this money is used for the quickly assistance of our people. But sometimes we overlook very important points that we should be following, and I believe that is the reason why the honorable colleague, the mover, tabled this motion so that we do away with the system we are now doing and we move on to a proper system where there is mechanism to regulate the disbursement of this fund to our constituencies.

Since the introduction of the RCDF, Mr Speaker, whenever our people hear that money is in the accounts, they come forward to MPs because they know that they would get quick assistance from MPs. That has been the trend for now. So a change to a new system that would be much more legalized, I can see that our people human as they are would murmur and complain. Although the mechanism would safeguard Members of Parliament our people would see it as the commercial banks. But again, Mr. Speaker, the intention of this motion, I think would take a while for our people to adjust to these changes.

Mr. Speaker, one very important point I would like to emphasize is the PV program. I would like to commend the GCC Government for seeing it fit by introducing and accepting this very important PV program in this country.

As we have heard, almost everyone everywhere in Papua New Guinea is joining the PV program. Mr. Speaker, the PV program can change our peoples' mentality. I know it is very hard as it is our culture to get out of this handout mentality. It would take time for us to change. When we are used to doing things the easy way and to suddenly change to another system that would take some time for our people to wait, you would hear a lot of murmuring taking place. But again it all depends on us leaders because when changes come, it is entirely up to us to ensure our people adjust to the changes.

Sir, I believe very much on the PV program and I want to see this PV program go down to the rural areas so that our people can change their dependence mentality. Our

culture is such that even though our children are married, they would still depend on their parents. Nobody can deny this. I know this happens everywhere in Solomon Islands and even in the Melanesian countries. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think this motion is timely and important so that we learn how to look after ourselves, and we learn how to do things ourselves rather than others doing things for us and rather than depending on each other.

I know it is very difficult, Mr. Speaker, to throw away our culture but at least in learning new things through the PV program, it would help us and our people in the rural areas so that we can see changes taking place.

Mr. Speaker, as I said I will be very brief because most of the things and areas have been covered by previous speakers, but I just want to make the last point before I take my seat. I would like to see if this motion is passed and we establish the mechanism, I know all of us here, Members of Parliament, have been trying to create money lending schemes for our people in the rural areas, for instance, credit unions or saving schemes. I wonder if the mechanism can be flexible allowing Member of Parliament to start schemes like that. I believe some of us in here have started this already, which is good. If such schemes are established in the constituencies, money will go direct to the accounts and MPs would have nothing to do with the funds. The board of directors or board of trustees controls the money and our people just apply. To make it fair for everybody to receive this money, I think it is good that they receive it in the form of lending, like the credit unions and in return they pay a small interest just for administration work of that scheme.

Mr. Speaker, that is the last point I would like to share. I would like to see it a bit flexible for Members of Parliament and it is not restricted to certain areas or one particular area but I would like to see it open so that any Member of Parliament who wants to start a scheme is able to do so.

With these few remarks, Mr. Speaker once again I want to thank the honorable mover for moving this motion before the Parliament. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

**Mr. OLAVAE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the floor to contribute briefly towards this motion moved by the good MP for Temotu Nende. I would like to thank most of the speakers who have contributed significantly towards this motion. I thank them for the very important points already raised in this Chamber.

The important thing is that I have to contribute my bit as well. Firstly, Mr. Speaker, since our obtaining of independence the last 30 years, we realized that most of our problems are inherited in regards to rural development. We have been saying this over and over again and it is our duty to identify those problems.

Mr. Speaker, all of us have our own interpretation in regards to how we are going to tackle rural development. For the last 30 years since obtaining independence, our country's economy has gone from bad to worse, and that is why we are here simply to put our policies right in order to tackle our economic problems through short, medium and long term measures.

Sir, for the last 30 years our political structure, a manmade structure are what our people have been promised. All the development ministries for the last 30 years have not brought about any economic development to our rural constituencies. Those are the areas that we have to identify. Because failure to identify our problems as to why we have not progressed for the last 30 years then we will never know how to solve our problems too.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, it is our bountiful duty that we must know where we have gone wrong. What are the strategies we have to put in place under our policy statements so that we revitalize our rural economy? Mr. Speaker, the RCDF fund allocated to each one of us here, is what I term as one of the 'doses' to the local economy, and I have the South Vella La Vella Constituency economy, because constituencies have been blessed with island economies since creation. The thing is that since independence, the islands we have been talking about because of neglect on their road infrastructures and neglect on other rural economic activities that the colonial masters have put in place or have prioritized; after 30 years we know that we have gone from bad to worse. Because those infrastructures were once upon a time stimulated the rural economy bringing in foreign exchange earning to this country. This is no longer there because successive governments have centrally located all infrastructure developments in provincial capitals and also in Honiara; stimulating only those goods that trading partners have been supplying to us.

Let us see what has been happening. Just look at the inflation and the cost of goods which have skyrocketed. This is no miracle, and that is why I think each Member controls the RCDF so that under this new road map, under rural development strategies, each one of you is trying to revitalize, while waiting for the base to be strong, it is good that each one of you controls the RCDF because the drift from rural to urban will not stop until the base is strengthened in the next 5 to 10 years. We have been victimized by this system of government. It was the negligence of successive governments for not putting right infrastructures in the constituencies or not improving the deteriorating roads and bridges for the last 30 years, which attracted people in the rural areas to go from the rural to the urban. Because of that, Mr. Speaker, we can support this motion but that does not mean people will stop coming to visit you tomorrow or the next two to three years.

Under the recovery stage of this new road map, let us see what has been happening in the last 30 years. I am happy with the GCC Government and the CNURA Government for identifying the problem and have established the new Ministry of Rural Development to target constituency economies. I praise both governments although you are sitting on both sides of this House, but all of you believe in the same strategy and that is why I commend all of you because under this new roadmap we are trying to prepare something for the future generations. We are preparing purposely for the children who were born in 1998 during the ethnic tension, so that they do not drift from the rural to the urban. That is the real issue why the RCDF and the Rural Livelihood allocation were put in that Ministry for Members to control.

May be five years down the track, we can lump \$1 million of the RCDF to Rural Livelihood so that by that time they can obtain their economic autonomy through rural developments or rural development strategies or growth centres for that matter, Mr. Speaker, is realized.

Mr. Speaker, whilst I appreciate this new government's policy of establishing the new Rural Development Ministry, one thing we should realize is that the ministries that have been there for the last 30 years and have been allocated millions of dollars for productive sectors in the constituencies, I do not think we will realize what we are trying to embark on.

If we are targeting the constituency economies, I think the only way forward is that all the development ministry monies budgeted for should be lumped together to the Rural Development Ministry next year onwards so that we target the productive sectors that each constituencies have and get rid of the timing part of it because we have been losing a lot of time. If for 30 years these ministries have not delivered despite of the millions and millions of dollars injected or allocated to those ministries, but they have not produced any good results, then the only thing is that in next year's budget lump the millions of dollars to the Rural Development Ministry so that it can easily facilitate or expedite it from there.

We are here to find solutions to our problems. If we keep on budgeting billions and billions of dollars for those ministries and we keep on doing the same old things, then we are merely wasting our time in this Chamber hoping that rural development will be realized in the future.

Mr. Speaker, whilst I appreciate this government's and the last government's policy, it is better that we take a holistic approach in regards to a new strategy so that it would be effectively facilitated and monitored from one ministry so that it can alleviate the problems we have encountered for the last 30 years.

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

**Mr BOYERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will be brief as is my custom in regards to debates that I participated in. Sir, I would also like to join my colleagues in thanking the Member for Temotu Nende for tabling this motion in the House. From the outset, Mr. Speaker, I see nothing wrong with this motion as it says that the government formally considers establishing a management and regulatory mechanism for the disbursement of constituency development funding for which Members of Parliament are held accountable. The question here is, "are we not held accountable already?"

I remember back in 2004 & 2005 there was an audit report by the office of the Auditor General on the Rural Constituency Development Fund, which is not a good sight, especially for me because I thought I did a good job but the weaknesses were exposed. And I can also remember that the RCDF was dispense with quarterly. We had to retire our imprest before the next trance was to be released, but in the last few years all I know is that my account has been topped up periodically and I have never retired any of my funds although I kept my records and checked requisitions etc. for my own

report. I would also like to know how the fund has gone from \$600,000 to \$2million and we have been unaccountable for this.

Sir, that is one of the reasons why I think this motion is good. I also know that there are measures, financial instructions that require us to be accountable. I believe that this motion should be withdrawn and it should be resubmitted in a form of Parliament agreeing to put in place a select standing committee to look into ways that will make Members of Parliament more accountable for these public funds.

The level of degree that an oversight should be nominated so that there is an yearly audit reports on Members of Parliament and their constituency development funds to the extent that if they are found unaccountable they should lose their seat. This should give a Member of Parliament the justification to all his people of his constituency the level of responsibility that he has to be accountable for these funds.

At the moment there is no backstop. The Members of Parliament are pressured in to funding this and that and left, right and centre under a normal position of not being able to say no. Today, Mr Speaker, the Sergeant came in and gave me a note with a RCDF cheque for me to help fund a dead person to be flown back to my constituency. I believe the Member for Gizo/Kolombangara is paying half of the charter as well, and even while we are sitting here we are still getting the pressures. I found nothing wrong with it, except that there is no accountability for this at present.

I know the CNURA Government is now enforcing processes, but I would like to say that it needs to go further than that. I think it would need the justification of an oversight institution that we have to follow the rules that makes us and gives us the justification to our constituency.

I know when I campaign, Mr Speaker, I said what I could do and I also told the people what I could not do and I told them what I would not do. So I have no problem in telling my constituents now when they come with this and that, what I can help them with and what I cannot help them with. But I suppose this openness determines the position for Members of Parliament to either be honest with the funds or to be dishonest with the funds. I heard a Member saying that this is one of the reasons why we have such a high turnover of Members of Parliament during elections. That is a good thing because may be those that keep on coming back are the honest ones. But at the end of the day, Mr Speaker, it is public funds and we are subject to the law and we should be answerable to it.

I have also heard that this is why we are creating instability. For example, Mr Speaker, a government's power base is threatened on the basis that the RCDF should be increased and if it is not then a determination to say "we move and support the other group so that we change the government and increase the fund so that we take more". But the reason is that there is no real mechanism in place to hold Members of Parliament accountable. Even if you increase it tomorrow it still is not going to solve the problem. The more money you have, the more money you spend, the more money you want, more money and you are just going in circles.

Sir, with these few comments, I resume my seat.

**Hon. MANETOALI:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity to contribute to this motion. I would also like to thank the Member for Temotu/Nende for this motion as well. The motion is geared towards setting up a management and regulatory mechanism for the disbursement of the CDF.

Mr Speaker, today each MP has his own management and regulatory mechanisms for a constituency. The RCDF as has been mentioned today has a history. It started way back in the 1980s. When one is elected as a Member of Parliament, people have expectations to lead them – lead them to the right destination.

People in the rural areas already have their own rural government set up. They already have their own business set ups. They already have their own farms, whatever farms they may be. What our people need from us is to improve on what they already have. They want to improve their housing, their gardens, their fishing, their poultry, their piggery, copra, cocoa, sanitation, water supplies and so on, hence they need money to improve on what they already have.

The motion seeks to establish a management and regulatory mechanism for the disbursement of constituency development funding. To me, this is a wonderful idea, as it will bring all MPs to a uniformed mechanism. Each Member of Parliament has his own way of disbursement. The Member of Parliament for Temotu/Nende would like all Members of Parliament to wear one uniform, a uniform of disbursement across the board.

To all Members of Parliament, the needs which come before us come in the following ways: school fees, sea fares, medical assistance, customary obligations, church groups and organizations, business activities, livestock, piggery and poultry, fishing, copra, cocoa, sports, farming. People request assistance on what they know they can do. There are three different types of people who come to you. First, people who are serious in projects; secondly people who are not serious with projects; and thirdly community.

Sir, in April 1998, this CDF funding is regulated pursuant to the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulation. There are guidelines in that regulation. The funding is for individual projects, group projects and community projects. Whether or not the CDF is not regulated now, the use remains the same.

Sir, the CDF is like a flower. It attracts people of all ages and walks of life to come to you. They come to your house, to your office and even here in Parliament to look for you. The CDF is one of the criteria in which people judge you. If you do not give them they will say “a rubbish Member, do not vote him next time”. If you give them you are on top of the air. When the fund runs out, the Member of Parliament will say “come back tomorrow”. So much so that sometimes Members of Parliament, some of us are called “Honorable come back tomorrow is coming” or “Honorable come back tomorrow is going”. Those are some names they called some of us now because the money is finished.

Mr Speaker, I am in favor with a similar system like the rural livelihood. It is a system that will safeguard as from all unexpectedness. I thank the Minister of Rural Livelihood for the wise idea put into the rural livelihood funding. I think that is the answer to all our concerns.

The CDF is one of the campaign tools of every candidate to the National Parliament. Each candidate would talk about how he/she will distribute the CDF when in Parliament. Whoever comes with the best distributing formula is likely to win more votes.

Sir, as a Parliament Member, you are like a father to your people. People knock on your door day and night for hundreds of reasons including sicknesses, deaths and other emergencies. You being a leader have to answer them. But at the end of the day, it is important to have a mechanism to regulate the distribution of the RCDF.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Republic of China for the funding geared towards my people. Finally, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for Temotu Nende for this motion. I support the motion and beg to take my seat.

**Mr TOSIKA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this very important motion. First I would like to thank the Member for Temotu Nende for moving this motion. As we are well aware, the intention of the motion is very clear. I think one of the reasons why we always receive pressure from people is because of the RCDF. The RCDF is one of the mainstays of our constituents and most time they feel that they have right over this money and so they come to us when the money comes in.

Mr Speaker, if we do not regulate or hold this money we will not see any tangible change in our country. We will be the same to think that this money will improve the livelihood and improve the standard of living of our people. But at the end of the day the answer remains the same.

Mr Speaker, one thing we must remind ourselves here is that giving money to people actually creates poverty for them. This is why I say that. If we keep on giving money to people without any mechanisms in place or if we do not regulate its use, it would create the attitude of unproductiveness, attitude of laziness, the attitude that people do not see themselves as people. They will be always there depending on the RCDF. They will take the boat and come over to Honiara and then ask for fare to go back home. That is what is going to happen now and then because there is no mechanism in place to control it.

Sir, when the RCDF was introduced way back in 1998, why did we not put in place regulations to guide us in the use of this money? Comes to the time it was in the PER we also found that there was no regulation to govern it as well.

I think the intention of the motion to support RCDF so that we can see the productive part of it is a very good thing. I think it is time that we should be mature, and time that we should be honest with ourselves and think about doing something good for our country.

Mr Speaker, I do not have difficulty accepting this motion because for me in the West Honiara Constituency, it is the constitution that rules. I have a constitution for my constituency that I register with Charitable Trust Act. The people managing the system are not elected by me. They elected themselves within the 10 zones I put in place. I do not find people coming to my house, not even a single time, not at all.



I live inside my constituency and I do not find people coming to me because I am very sincere and honest to them. When money comes I call my trust board to sit down and dish out money to people according to the visions and activities that people would like to do.

But I am happy that it is time we have a uniformed mechanism to be in place. If we have that system we are mature so that we can move forward. We have been wasting a lot of money on those areas. We have wasted it because some of you MPs, with due respect to you, say that it is because of pressures from people coming and so you just give money here and there. That, we cannot deny. But the fact is that if we do not have any mechanism in place that kind of system would continue, and that is a very bad system that we have to curtail and we have to stop and so we have to regulate it.

Mr Speaker, I do not have any difficulty with this motion. But I think it is time that we leaders should be honest with ourselves and give some kind of hard decision and turnaround decision so that this country can move forward.

With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, I support this motion, and thank you.

**Mr GHIRO:** Mr Speaker, I rise to contribute to the motion before the House moved by the MP for Temotu Nende. Motion 6 is asking this Parliament to enable the government put in place appropriate mechanism, to improve the management of the RCDF funding to achieve transparency and accountability.

Mr Speaker, the current arrangement has no uniformed mechanism but is standard to all MPs and their constituencies and therefore so often MPs are subject to a lot of unfair criticisms from the constituencies and the wider public at large, including some self acclaimed puritans from non-government organizations. Here too, criticisms have been left unanswered because MPs do not have at their disposal a proper standard mechanism to respond to those criticisms.

Mr Speaker, it must be noted that our own people too share the blame for the RCDF for not using it on rural development as was originally intended. This is because of various needs that they could not meet themselves, such as sea fares, transport and other cause related to their families etc., etc.. For example, Mr Speaker, the MP for Central Makira has no problem with this motion. I have a very good focus and a good development plan for my constituency. But it is also not working. It is not because I am not honest with the funding but it is the voters. Sometimes they come asking us money for rice. That is the problem and that is why we must be carefully with this motion. This is very important.

Sometimes people come to you, and your plan is there, but they have personal needs not related to the RCDF. The name RCDF speaks for itself, Mr Speaker. We must give money for development. If you do not agree then we change the name so that it reflects the name. In my opinion, the title 'RCDF' means rural development. If you want it then let us change the name so that it reflects charter of ships for dead body or to pay rice or pay whatever. Let us give it a different title to reflect what it is being used for. The title RCDF reflects development. That is my understanding. We do not need to beat around the bush but straight to the point.

Mr Speaker, do you know why the economic base is not broadened even though millions of dollars have been disbursed? Tell me why? It is because the money was not used on what it was intended for. It cannot be broadened on a dead man. It cannot be broadened on a man asking for fare. It is hard! Let us be honest with ourselves that this money is purposely for development and it is supposed to broaden the economy of this country. A dead man for what and a fare for what! Let us be serious, Mr Speaker.

Every time you have been talking too much in here, but you do not know what you are talking about. From Independence until now, have we moved forward? But our money is getting weaker. This is the obstacle, Mr Speaker. Do away with it so that it goes back to our people and ourselves in this country. We seemed to be talking very much, and talking very loudly in here as if we are inside a box because we talk too much in here but we do not know what is outside. And so when we open the box we find we are in problem. This is what is happening to this Parliament. You talk too much but you do not know what you are doing in here.

Mr Speaker, I am serious that we must put this thing in order. Mind you my good colleagues that this is an obstacle to the economic development of this country. Why the economy of the country is not broadened is because of this. That is one of the reasons. The RCDF is just to pay for rice, fare, dead body etc. Those are things are not counted in here. The RCDF speak for itself. Therefore, I would like us to be serious and change this so that it goes straight to then nation.

One thing, Mr Speaker, as a MP all of you have been saying this and that are what I have been doing with every tranche of the RCDF. But the report of the CBSI reveals only Makira to be improving in cocoa and copra. This is evidence. So what have you been doing? I am questioning you MPs. It is easy to say that you are using the RCDF on this and that. That is a wrong use. I am true, that is wrong use.

That is why I thank the MP for Temotu Nende for bringing this motion. This motion is timely, Mr Speaker. You do not normally see me contribute in here. My contribution is only for today because this is a very important motion. If you do not know the RCDF is an obstacle to economic development. Put it right and this country will move forward. I am someone who has been doing this and so I know it.

People are crying but at the same time they should be blamed too. I say this because when this funding comes my house is full of people coming for sea fares, for this one and that one. I have plans for my constituency but it is very hard for me to implement it because when I do not give it to the people my name is being rubbished. I mean these are the problems.

Sir, I want us to be free from blame. I want our people to stop blaming us and so I ask you to put this right. With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, I support this motion.

**Mr Speaker:** Honorable Members, if no further Member wishes to speak then I will ask the mover of the motion, the honorable member for Temotu Nende to deliver his speech of reply.

**Mr Oti:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank all honorable colleagues particularly Ministers who contributed to the debate of this motion, and the various views that have been expressed across the spectrum of the Members of Parliament, particularly taking into account the difference in time that most of us in Parliament are in Parliament. Some who have talked have relayed experiences as fourth termers, fifth termers, third termers, second termers and some new Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, at the outset, in my summary I would like to clarify particularly the language used on the motion. I say this with due respect to the first contributor to this motion, the Deputy Prime Minister that indeed this motion is untimely or late because the government is in the process of putting in place that mechanism.

Mr Speaker, when we are in this Chamber we are Members of Parliament, first and foremost. The Ministers wear two hats - the Executive and Legislature at the same time. When you are in the Chamber you are first and foremost a Member of Parliament and therefore it is this Parliament that must resolve this issue.

It is not saying because government has done it already and therefore we need not. We have to make that distinction. It is Parliament making the decision. You are sitting here as Members of Parliament, first and foremost, and secondly, you are a Minister. It is your accountability to Parliament that makes you to listen to the government and will carry forward. What we as a Parliament agreed on then you as a government must carry it forward. It is not that because the government has already a process in motion. That is straight. But the government and the Parliament are not one and the same thing, Mr Speaker. Parliament is basically to resolve it and in fact to reconfirm what the government is already in the process of putting in place. So there should be no ambiguity in the way the motion has been coined.

Secondly to clarify also that this motion is telling Parliament to call on the government to 'consider'. It is for the government to consider and it does not compel you, as I mentioned in my introduction this morning. The Parliament is requesting the Government to 'consider'. There is no ambiguity and it is not dubious construction in the way the wordings have been put together. It is genuine and it recognizes the responsibility between Parliament and Government and that is why it is worded the way it is. If the government is already putting in place the mechanisms then Parliament is actually appreciating and complementing and endorsing what the government is already putting in place. We are here supporting the government. The Parliament supports the government, and so all of you will support this motion. If you understand it then you will support the motion. If you do not understand it, you will be opposing the wrong thing.

Mr Speaker, one thing that came out clearly and why this motion was moved is basically this. One country, one people and there should be one system. That is what it is. The way we are currently managing this funding is because of the absence of that management regulatory mechanism, a uniformed one, and that is why we are hearing different constituencies having different ones. But it should not be like that because if we are going to have a common grant to getting development in the rural sector then we must approach it collectively. The system must be the same. We should not say you do

it like this or do it like that. How would you be able to put together the summary of the impact and effect on this policy if we are traveling in different directions? Basically the call for the mechanism is so that it is widely applicable right across the board; we are all the same.

The different scenarios that have been presented to Parliament in terms of the different mechanism employed by different constituencies are the ones we are going to try taking onboard. Which ones - which combinations of which?

In my introductory statement I said that we are stakeholders and so in the consultation that the Ministry and the Government will be undertaking to try and see where the way forward is in this, of course the input of individual MPs will count, other stakeholders will count and the NGOs will count, their views, especially in putting their perspective right and understanding what we are talking about here. It was all wrong out there and I complement statements that there a lot of misconceptions out there by what this money is all about. That is what we are trying to protect.

At the moment somebody goes and explains that the RCDF is like this and that. Another MP because he is different tells a different story. And then another MP goes he also tells a different story. All of us have to be speaking the same language to the critics. It is only one system. At the moment we do not have that.

Sir, with due respect, and of course, whether or not the present mechanisms, present regulations, financial regulations apply to this, I will leave that to the authorities to answer that question. But as a lay man I think it is not enough, it did not go far enough.

Perhaps for financial auditing yes, under the Finance and Audit Act and legislations like that, can go in terms of who is the accounting offer and disbursement of the funds, it is okay. But when comes to performance auditing, the present mechanisms actually do not come as low as where we want to take that to measure the impact of the investment of the \$3million over the years since 1992 into the rural economy.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to thank those Members who have contributed particularly those who saw the need for the mechanisms. But let me put it this way, if a mechanism already exists, mechanism used in the context of this motion is broader than just systems, law, regulations like that. It addresses a lot of issues that were brought up, for example, physical infrastructures, offices, communication, manpower resources, financial resources and logistics. Those are mechanisms that will make sure this money goes according to how it is supposed to go.

As pointed out by the MP for West Are Are, it is good for you Central Kwara'ae or Temotu/Nende, your constituencies may have capital, telephone, telecommunication, and everything in it, but what about people from Vattu? What about people from Weather Coast? What kind of infrastructures are there so that the mechanisms are more than just institutional or legal mechanism. It has to do with administrative, super structures, infrastructures to support the implementation of these funds, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, much has also been aired in the debate regarding how these funds have been used. How these funds have been is not the subject of this motion. It was never the subject of this motion. In fact it is how the funds have been used as we relayed Mr

Speaker, is what should give you the kind of mechanism you should employ. You either have two choices. The number of choices is really in the extremes. First, is to totally take the funding out from the control of the Member of Parliament and put it through the mechanism, for example, now employed under the livelihood funds, which is a model to take. This means you offload the whole allocation, the \$25million this year of RCDF, put in under the Ministry of Rural Development Funding and disburse it through that arrangement. Those are the options. Take the ROC micro project funding, take it out and put it through the Ministry of Rural Development. Take the Millennium Funding out put it through the Rural Development Ministry because that is the mechanism of delivery. Now if that is acceptable, then of course it is something we have to agree to. There is nothing wrong with it, but it does not remove it one bit, as what the MP for Central Makira has said and all of us have repeated. Even though we put everything there, the house will still be full. How do you address that? Hence, Mr Speaker, why I suggested in my introduction also that we revisit that aspect of it through the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations, and because of that we can cater for both, and that mechanism will protect Members of Parliament and it will protect our people. So that if the people want to see their Member of Parliament for projects then they go to the Ministry of Rural Development.

That Ministry needs to be extended, it has extension officers, put the CDOs, for example down to the constituencies so that the Ministry has arms to evaluate and monitor the progress of the projects, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I also agree and in fact if this management mechanism is put in place, it is possible for your to top up the constituency funding by removing all those project funding under the Ministry of Forestry, under Fisheries, under Agriculture and offload them to constituencies through the Ministry of Rural Development. But, of course, the MP for Renbel does not agree to staggering the allocations. But in fact, Mr Speaker, that is exactly what the SICOPSA grant formula is doing in 1989, which is \$8.00 per head of population and then other factors come in like distance or location. Those can be taken into account but this is something we have to look at also in the way forward because still the cost of delivering a project is more expensive in Vattu, in the Weather Coast than here in Honiara or may be in Central Kwara'ae and Temotu Nende may be is cheaper. So you do not want to spend 50 percent of your money to administer 50 percent of the funds. That is wrong. So a percentage could be worked out to see how much of that is acceptable for you to implement that program, over a certain limit, of course, it calls for you to top up.

Population in terms of direct benefit is also paramount in this instance. Those are the aspects that in the government's consideration of the way forward on how to address this issue into the future, we hope it can take those into account.

Mr Speaker, I thank once again all those who have contributed to this motion. There is nothing dubious; there are no hidden motives, no hidden agenda in the purpose of moving this motion. It is a genuine one and a concern because we have come along long way since 1992.

As the Minister for Forestry has said today, I was the accounting officer, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Provincial Government in 1992 when this fund was started. I have watched how it has grown and how the same medium of delivery has not changed.

Mr Speaker, I think something is not quite right in this instance, and so it is really trying to chart a way forward. Because I do not see as I said, I do not see this money coming down. It is going to increase and in fact there is all the more the reason to increase it if we put in a mechanism.

With those remarks, Mr Speaker, I thank you all for supporting this motion. Thank you and I beg to move.

*The motion is passed*

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

**Hon Sikua:** Mr Speaker, I move that Parliament do now adjourn.

*The House adjourned at 3.00 pm*