

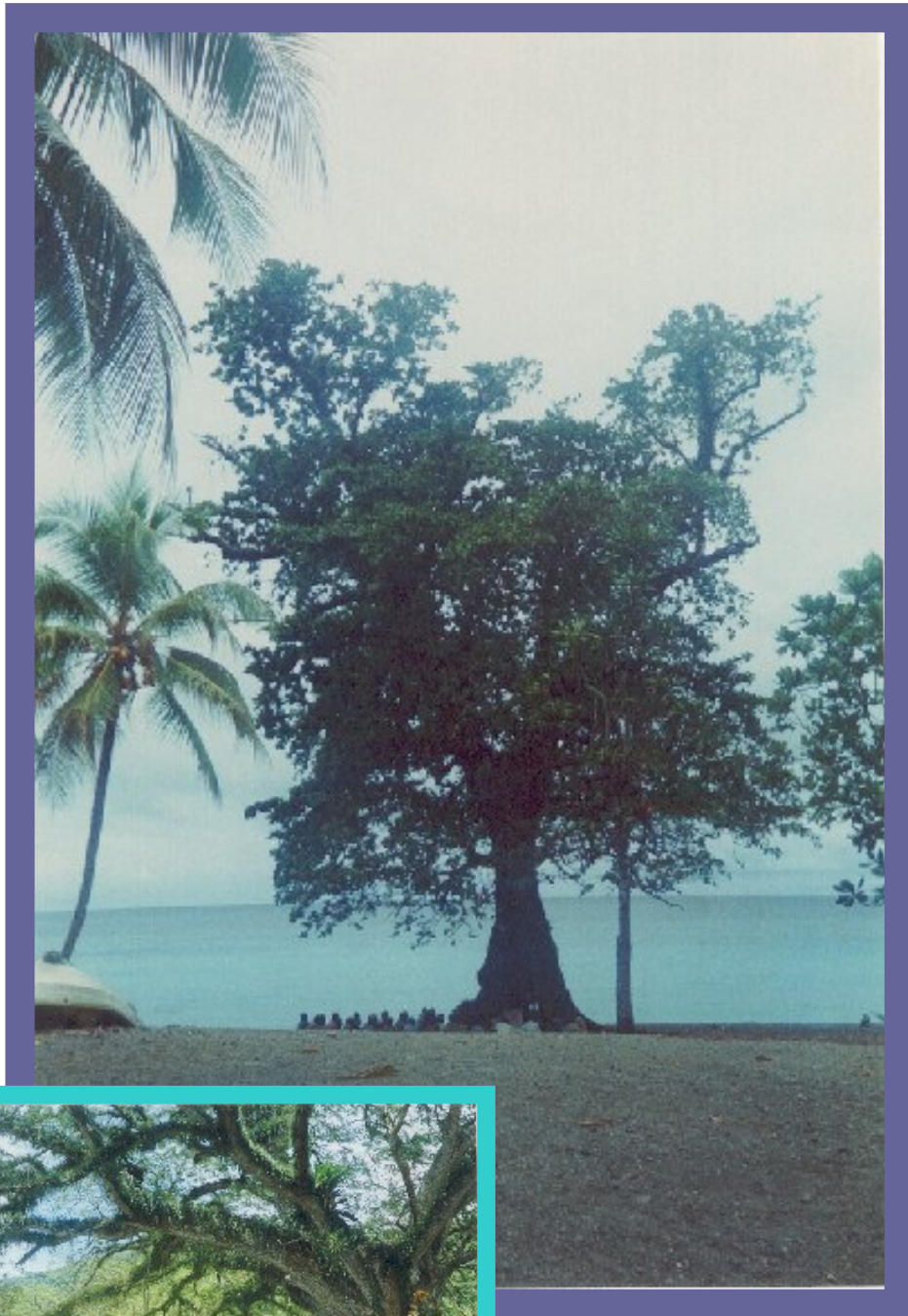


**Government of Solomon Islands and UNDP
Constitutional Reform Project (SOI/02/003)**

*Summary of the Provincial Community
Consultation Team Reports
March 2003*



Prepared by Henry H. Kellam III, Project Coordinator



UNDP/SIG Constitutional Reform Project
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"I believe the sentiments of it were raised everywhere the consultation teams went....

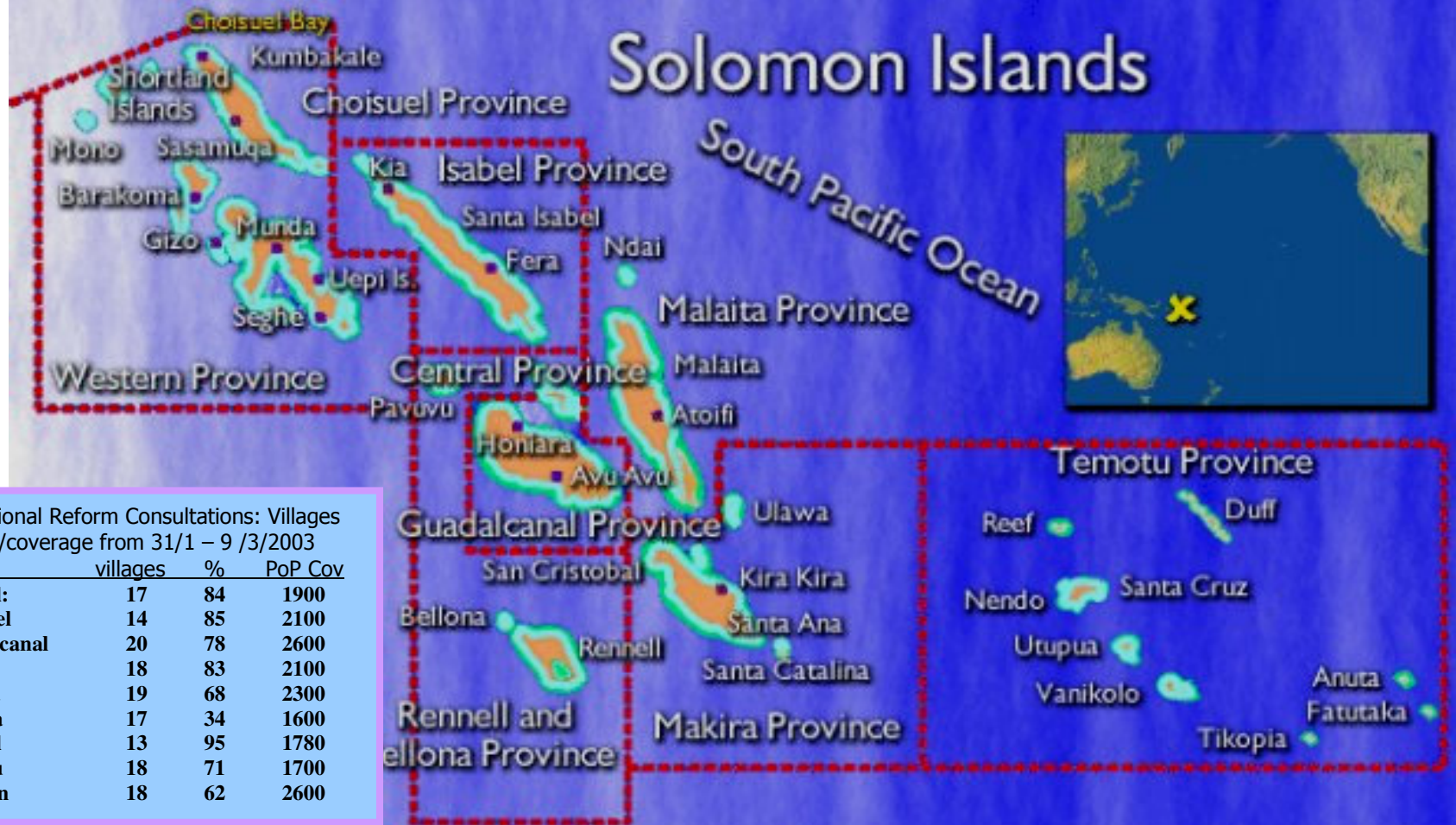
*The leaders said it with godly wisdom, the women said it with compassion, the youths said it with youthful frustrations, the men said it with an air of arrogance & pride and the old men said it with a quite wisdom - It was a simple short statement yet the implications so great - **"We Want Full Autonomy"**...*

As the people disperse, an old man looks at all the men in the meeting and said quietly - "We have played our part, we have told them what they want to hear from us - BUT - the final decision will be made behind close doors, amongst people who might not know us - only the final decisions will weight the credibility of this Constitutional Reform Consultation"
(PFnet News item)

Abbreviations

AusAID	Australian AID
BOR	Bill of Rights
CRC	Child Rights Convention
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CRP	Constitutional Reform Project
CERD	Convention on Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination.
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
HON	Honorable
MP	Minister of Parliament
MPGRD	Ministry of Provincial Government Rural Development
NGO	Non-Government Organisations
PS	Permanent Secretary
PG	Provincial Government
NZAid	New Zealand AID
RRRT	Regional Rights Resource Team
RCDF	Rural Constituency Development Fund
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SC's	Special Constables
SGTF	State Government Task Force
SESP	Socio-Economic Study Report
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
TPA	Townsville Peace Agreement
UN-HCHR	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WDF	Ward Development Fund

Solomon Islands



Constitutional Reform Consultations: Villages visited/coverage from 31/1 – 9 /3/2003

Province	villages	%	PoP Cov
1. Central:	17	84	1900
2. Choiseul	14	85	2100
3. Guadalcanal	20	78	2600
4. Isabel	18	83	2100
5. Makira	19	68	2300
6. Malaita	17	34	1600
7. Renbell	13	95	1780
8. Temotu	18	71	1700
9. Western	18	62	2600

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Delivering the Constitutional Reform “Drafting Instructions” to the Minister of Provincial Government. 3rd April 2003.

Right to left:
Moses Mose, John Tuhaika,
Henry Kellam, Walton
Naezon, Graham Powell,
Dykes Angiki.

Background to the Consultations

In March 2002 the SIG, through the Ministry of Provincial Government and Rural Development (MPGRD), requested the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) based in Suva, Fiji for assistance in the process of Constitutional Reform to carry out a public Consultation process to ascertain the views of a wide range of people on decentralization issues relevant to the Constitutional Reform process; and preparing drafting guidelines for a new Federal Constitutional, drawing on the 2001 State Government Task Force (SGTF) Report, the results of the Socio-economic study and the outcome of the public Constitutional process.

Solomon Islanders talk of the need for a 'home-grown' system of government, based on local experience and expectations. They express a need for greater integration of traditional and modern forms of leadership and a government that shares resources fairly, provides good services, upholds the rule of law and is honest and accountable. People want to feel secure. People want to understand why the current government system has failed and what the politicians' proposal for 'state' government really means. Solomon Islanders want to be active participants in the process of governance reform in their country.

*Solomoners talk
of a need for a
'home grown'
system of
government*

Expectations for 'state' government are high and there is a widespread assumption that a new system of government will 'make things right' again. There is no perfect model of decentralisation, nor is there a blueprint with step-by-step instructions. But what is clear from the experience of other countries is that if decentralisation is to be effective it must be methodically planned, not just be left to happen. Careful prior evaluation of the problems of decentralisation is expected to rectify should be regarded as a necessary first step and strong systems to ensure transparency and accountability must be firmly in place. It is also important that there be mechanisms to deal with any problems or grievances that may arise during the implementation phase.

This Report presents the consolidation and summarization of the findings of the nine Provincial Consultation Report. The individual Provincial Consultation Reports can be obtained from the Constitutional Reform Project Office at the MPGRD.

Outputs of the Consultations

The Constitutional Reform Project (CRP) recruited and trained (see *Report of the Consultation Teams Orientation Work Shop 27-30 January 2003*) nine teams (5/team) to carry out Village level Consultations in the Provinces.

The CRP Consultations began in the Provinces at the end of January and ended the first week of March 2003. Originally, each of the Consultation Team's target for village Consultations was expected to be between 10 and 12, based upon logistical issues inherent in various Provinces. However, the overall average of Village Consultations in each Province was approximately 16, which accounted for about a 30-35% higher coverage. This was primarily due to the very good weather conditions experienced during most of the Consultation period. There were well over 150 village Consultations carried-out by the CRP.

It is estimated that almost 20,000 people actively participated in these village Consultations. The Project places the overall coverage at an even higher percentage based upon a 10 km catchments area. The overall "impact Coverage" included villagers/communities that could have participated in the consultations. i.e. People having the opportunity to reach venues without incurring expenses. Therefore, the total mean coverage of the Consultations throughout the Solomon's was approximately 67%. However, bear in mind that this estimate is not based upon populations, but of total areas covered under the catchments area. The percentage may be skewed if you compare large Provinces such as Malaita to smaller ones like Renbell.

Objectives of the Project

The **Overall Objective** of this project for UNDP assistance is the provision of drafting instructions for a new Constitution, to the Solomon Islands Parliament. On the endorsement of the drafting instructions, and at the request of the SIG, UNDP would consider further assistance to Solomon Islands on the development of a new constitution reflecting a devolved government system that is widely accepted by the people of the Solomon Islands. The objective of this project will be attained through a process that is participatory and transparent, and includes analysis of the effects of devolution and full and open consultations with all stakeholders.

OBJECTIVE 1: To provide a socio-economic impact/study report of the proposed devolution process and complete comprehensive and transparent in-country consultations with all major stakeholders as input into the constitutional reform process.

OUTPUT 1.1: Socio-Economic Study Report (SESP): A socio-economic analysis report on the effects of the devolution in the Solomon Islands, which assesses the impact of measures already proposed by the SIG and gives recommendations for improvement:	Completed (January 2003) on time in line with the Project Work Plan
OUTPUT 1.2: Participatory Consultation Process	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed Village Consultations on 7 March 03. <input type="checkbox"/> Completed Provincial Consultation Reports on 14 March, 03. <input type="checkbox"/> Completed Summary of the 9 Prov. Consultation Reports on 1 April 2003

OBJECTIVE 2 To draft for review, debate and approval by Parliament - the drafting instructions and proposed framework for a new Constitution for the Solomon Islands.

OUTPUT 2.1: Drafting instructions for a new Solomon Islands Constitution ready for consultations, review, debate and consideration for approval by the Solomon Islands' Parliament.	<input type="checkbox"/> Constitutional & Human Rights Lawyers prepared drafting Instructions in coordination with the Overview Committee (5 sessions). <input type="checkbox"/> First draft completed 2 April .
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Training Work Shop for the Consultations

The purpose of the Training Work shop (27-30 January 2003) was to prepare and equip consultation teams for their important role in engaging the public in the governance reform process, an orientation workshop was held to provide background information and determine the most appropriate consultation methodology.

The objective of the community consultations is to involve Solomon Islanders in the process of governance reform; to increase their level of political awareness; to establish a firmer base for public participation in governance; and to inform the Solomon Islands Government and donors supporting the governance reform process of the public's views.

This is to be achieved by:

- ☐ Describing the history and process of governance reform and the role of the Constitutional Reform Project in supporting that process;
- ☐ Exploring key issues identified by the Socio-economic Study through facilitated community discussion of these topics; and
- ☐ Identifying and documenting people's views on key governance reform issues and their suggestions for implementation.

The objective of orientation workshop was to prepare the consultation teams by:

- ❑ Explaining the objectives and components of the Constitutional Reform Project;
- ❑ Reviewing the current government structure and history of governance reform in the Solomon Islands;
- ❑ Exploring the results of the CRP Socio-economic Study;
- ❑ Discussing and determining an appropriate methodology for the consultation process;
- ❑ Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of team leaders, team members and Project personnel; and
- ❑ Advising on administrative procedures related to travel, accounting and reporting requirements.

Of the 40+ people engaged in conducting the public consultations, all team leaders and many team members participated in the workshop. In total, thirty team leaders/members attended. Numerous resource persons also participated. This included the chairman of the State Government Task Force, John Tuhaika and several members of the SGTF. Representatives from the Suva-based Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) provided useful insights on human rights issues and participatory approaches. Ashley Wickham of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Solomon Islands contributed a great deal, both formally and informally, to the workshop. The Parliament Member for Ulawa-Ugi, Hon. Nathaniel Waena participated in several workshop sessions. As the previous Minister for Provincial Government and chair of the Buala Premiers' Conference (which established the SGTF), his perceptions and comments were especially helpful. AusAID and NZAID representatives attended part of the workshop as observers. There were also observers from other UN projects, government agencies and civil society at some sessions.

Training Methodology

The workshop training was conducted in a highly participatory manner. At the outset, participants shared their expectations for the workshop and their hopes and concerns regarding the consultation process. A "parking lot" was used to deal with outstanding issues; governance related terms were documented and defined. Timing, and to some degree, the content of the workshop was determined by the participants, working with the facilitator and drawing on the results of end-of-day evaluations. At the end of each day, participants provided written feedback on what they liked and disliked about the approach. Feedback was synthesized and shared with the large group; suggestions for improvement were incorporated in planning for the following day.



The workshop made use of formal presentations followed by large group discussion; breakout groups were used to discuss and analyze specific issues. Composition of small groups rotated to enable everyone to have a chance to work together. People took turns acting as facilitators, reporters and presenters. Role-playing was used to practice appropriate community presentation skills.

Based on the findings of the Socio-economic Study and information provided during keynote presentations, participants designed the data-gathering format for the consultations. While this proved a challenging task, it resulted in a well thought out, carefully vetted questionnaire that was fully "owned" by the participants. Team members also developed the "ground rules" for the workshop and a "code of conduct" for use during provincial tours. As much as possible, the workshop modeled the flow and style of the consultation process itself.

Methodology of Analysis

The methods used by the Project for the public Consultation process were targeted to ascertain the views of a wide range of people throughout the Provinces on decentralization issues relevant to the Constitutional Reform Process. This was to be particularly in relation to four theme areas: Civic Engagement, Security, Services and Traditional Leadership. A review of these methods are outlined below:

The public / village consultation was undertaken through:

- ❑ Review of documentation, including drawing on the SGTF Report results of the socio-economic study and other pertinent background information.
- ❑ In-depth Consultations with village Chiefs, Elders, Political/church leaders, Government officials, Women groups, Youths and Others.
- ❑ Written briefs prepared by the Community Consultations Team orientation workshop Honiara, January 27-30-2003.



The Consultation Teams for the Provinces followed a four-prong strategy:

1. The first was to conduct consultations with village Chiefs, Elders, political Leaders, Government and church Leaders in order to obtain their views on a new proposed system of governance that will serve the needs of Solomon Islanders. The various Provincial teams wished to investigate how these could positively or adversely effect impact on the people of the Solomons by highlighting the four theme areas: Civic Engagement, Service, Security and Traditional Leadership.
2. The second strategy was to conduct consultations with village women in order to obtain their views on a new proposed system of governance for the people of the Provinces. The teams wished to investigate how these could positively or adversely effect impact on the people.
3. The third strategy was to directly conducted consultations with an all male (others group).
4. The fourth strategy was to directly conduct consultations with Youths in all the villages consulted focusing on the four themes.

*Alltogether
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Altogether nearly 20,000 people in the Provinces were consulted and interviewed. The consultations were conducted by single individuals or teams, depending on availability and timing of missions.

Clearly, it is impossible to present every view and describe or analyze every single part of the consultation process. As always, the consultation process has generated great insights and wealth of information, all of which cannot be reflected in this report.

While there is a tendency to wish to arrive at clear-cut findings, the reality of carrying out consultations in district grouping in Provinces, demands acceptance of complexity as well as sensitivity to local differences. Nevertheless, a number of issues relating to Governance emerged very clearly in the course of the consultations and deserve special mention. They emerged spontaneously from all villages covered during consultations and were expressed by all four target groups.

Composition of the Consultation Teams

The Project Coordinator gave careful consideration when recruiting Team Leaders and Team Members. Team Leaders were selected for their neutrality, good logistics and budget management and the quality of report writing/documentation of the Consultations. The Members were selected based upon various strengths they could provide the Team overall.

TEAM LEADERS	TEAM MEMBERS	PROVINCE
1. Martha McManus	1. Eddie Ene 2. Mason Nesa 3. Miriam Rubaha 4. Duddley Mazini (Prov/Rep)	Isabel
2. Bruce Edwards	1. Joe Rausi 2. Joy Kere 3. Francis Waleanisia (SGTF), 4. Ganita Filiramo (Prov/Rep.)	Malaita
3. Josephine Behulu	1. Jerry Pitisopa 2. Mere Levo 3. Joini Tutua 4. Jeffrey Pakipota (Prov/Rep)	Choiseul
4. Lenore Hamilton	1. Nairy Alamu, 2. Julie Makini 3. Levan Respioli 4. Narcily Pule (Prov/Rep)	Western
5. Mbella Ngomba	1. Tom Woods 2. Roselyn Menapi 3. James Nina 4. John J. Foimua	Temotu
6. Gordon Nanau	1. Adele V. Plummer 2. John Saunana (SGTF) 3. Joyce Murray 4. Hunter Masuguria (Prov/Rep)	Makira
7. Bill Pryer	1. Justice Denni 2. Stella Bulolo 3. Billy Gatu 4. Ishamel Avui (SGTF),	Guadacanal
8. Augustine C. Rose	1. John M. Tuhaika, (SGTF) 2. Peter Pitia (from Savo) 3. Nadia Butler 4. Ben Newyear (Prov/Rep)	Central
9. Augustine C. Rose	1. John M. Tuhaika, (SGTF) 2. Evans Tuhagenga (Prov/Rep) 3. Christina Nasiu 4. Johnny Tango	Renbell

(SGTF) Team Members representing the Solomon Government 2001 Task Force
(Prov/Rep) Team Members selected by respective Provincial Secretaries.

Overview of Consultation Findings

The comments below are a 'snapshot' of the discussions that took place during the consultative meetings throughout the Provinces. These comments do not reflect all views and opinions expressed during the meetings, but do capture the more dominant and commonly held ideas, thoughts, views and opinions of the people as expressed in their responses to the topics raised within the four main thematic areas: Civic Engagement, Security, Services, Traditional Leadership. For a more thorough treatment of the responses and discussions that took place during the meetings, these comments should be considered alongside the nine consultation team's more detailed 'Village Reports'.

Throughout the meetings, many of the responses of the people generally reflected those within the 'Socio-Economic Study of the Implications of Decentralization', and their ideas were similar to many of the proposals of the 'State Government Taskforce'.

Civil Engagement

People feel isolated, marginalized and disconnected from the political structures and leaders.

The centralization of political power in Honiara is widely resented by people in the rural villages of the Solomon's. People feel isolated, marginalized and disconnected from the political structures and leaders. Politicians are often seen to serve themselves, rather than the people within their constituencies who elect them to power. They are only visible during election campaigns when seeking votes; they do not return to the villages to keep people informed or to seek the views of their constituents; they are often suspected of misusing funds; and they are seen as placing their own interests ahead of those of the people. There is general distrust of the formal political process, at both the provincial and national levels.

People often complained of very poor communication, if any, existing between the people and both the provincial and national governments. People are not kept informed of political or social developments and their views not sought. Before the consultation team's visit, most people were unaware of the planned constitutional reform process.

People were extremely grateful to be given the chance to express their views and opinions during meetings. Most communities confirmed that this was the first time in many years that anyone had come to speak directly to them in a consultative manner. However, people were very keen that this set of meetings be the beginning, rather than the end of their participation in this process. Even if it is not possible to embark upon a return visit to all villages, people at least want representatives to attend further meetings in the Provincial Centers or Honiara, to share the views of the villages and to keep the people informed of progress in the constitutional reform process.

Communities made it clear that all people within society must be represented in the political system. Unlike the proposal within the State Government Taskforce Report that only people with chiefly lineage would be eligible to stand as a candidate for elected positions, people felt that all people should be free to stand as a candidate. However, communities voiced that they wanted some system in place whereby potential candidates could be 'screened' with respect to their eligibility and suitability to be elected as a provincial or national MP. Politicians elected at the Provincial or state level must be from that State and reside there full time and be accessible to the general public.

If a state government system is adopted, people are very keen for the state or province to retain, or gain, many powers that will enable the province to have a greater say in their own affairs. Generally, people want the province to have control of the exploitation of the natural resources of the province, including marine resources. They believe this will allow the province to have a more autonomous role in deciding development priorities and ensuring the most necessary services are delivered throughout the province.

Politicians elected at the Provincial or state level must be from that State and reside there full time and be accessible to the general public.

Most people recognise that any state-federal system will see the introduction of a resource-sharing agreement between the provincial and national government. Specifically in relation to exploitation of marine resources, many people expressed an interest in implementing a system where the province would retain control over, and responsibility for, the marine resources seaward to a certain distance (perhaps twelve nautical miles), whereas the national government would retain responsibility for the remaining body of sea beyond this mark (within the nation's Exclusive Economic Zone). Many people felt that the local administrative body (village, area council, ward committee etc.) should retain some responsibility, and privilege, over a small distance out to sea.

Security

Throughout the Solomon Islands, people have lost confidence in the police force. People want to feel secure and want the swift return of law and order. They believe existing police officers need to be retrained and new recruits need better screening before being admitted to the force and then need full and proper training. Undesirable elements within the police force need to be weeded out. People are concerned at the way in which known criminals and troublemakers during the ethnic tensions have been retained in, or recruited into the police force, either as regular police officers or Special Constables (SCs).

People want all areas to be disarmed as a matter of urgency

Many people expressed concern at the number of weapons that still remain in the possession of people in rural areas. People want all areas to be disarmed as a matter of urgency.

Despite the current lack of confidence in the police, people want more police posts to be located in rural areas – presumably with well-trained officers staffing these posts.

The provinces had differing opinions on police staffing. Some communities supported the idea of local police posts comprising police officers from a mixed range of origins and languages, while others wanted police to be only from their communities.

People were concerned about the emergence of small-scale crimes, particularly thought to result from the use of marijuana and kwaso (homebrew) amongst young men.

Many villages support the idea of establishing community policing initiatives. Some villages have already implemented programs such as volunteer security patrols at night. People would also like chiefs to have a role in maintaining security in villages and to be given the power to enforce fines and penalties for breaking the law.

Freedom of Movement

Throughout Solomon's, people essentially agree with the concept of freedom of movement being enshrined in the national constitution. Some people did express the desire to enforce restrictions on freedom of movement, and particularly freedom to settle in another area, since this was seen as one of the major causes of the ethnic tensions in recent years.

However, even in areas where people fully agreed with the concept of freedom of movement, people felt it important that people traveling and settling in areas should live in compliance with the laws, rules and regulations of the province (or state) to which they move, and honour and respect the traditional norms, customs and practices of the local area. People would like to have some means of ensuring people do comply with such laws and customs, along with a means of requiring people to depart the area if they do not comply.

In contrast, some communities supported the idea of restricting freedom of movement and settlement. However, this would be in conflict with international human rights treaties and conventions. People advocating some restrictions accept that they cannot expect the Solomon Islands to disregard their responsibilities and obligations under international law.

Services

There was widespread consensus throughout all meetings that people are most concerned about the provision of education and health care at the rural level.

People believe primary level education should be free for all

People believe primary level education should be free for all, with the government providing adequate facilities, material and regular and timely payment for qualified teachers. People recognise that educating the children of today is integral to preparing the leaders of tomorrow.

People accept that they may have to pay for secondary schooling for their children. Generally, people are reasonably happy to pay a small fee for quality education.

Throughout the Consultations, people spoke of poorly stocked, or unstocked, clinics. Even simple medicinal goods are not available and only limited services are on offer. Often, qualified and experienced staff are not available and when they do not receive regular salary payments (which is often) they may not remain on duty. Women speak of giving birth at home, in the bush or in the sea shallows, without necessary support available.

People often made the link of receiving support for industries that would allow people to pursue income-earning opportunities, in order that people could have the disposable income available to pay fees for the provision of basic services. People widely expressed the view that they are happy to pay a contribution for the delivery of services as long as they are regular, reliable and of a decent standard. However, without any income-earning opportunities, people are not able to earn the money required to pay fees.

Currently, many communities rely on the contributions of the local people, in the form of volunteer labour to assist in the maintenance, repair and cleaning up of existing service infrastructure. Community clean-up days are organized and the skills of various people utilized.

People want to be able to deal more directly with donor agencies and non-government agencies that could assist in the development of rural areas. People believe that at present, development funds that are disbursed through the national government, and then the provincial government, suffer from 'leakage' or amounts are 'siphoned off' by politicians, so that limited funds actually reach the village for projects.

Likewise, people at the village level want a greater control over the current Rural Constituency Development Fund (RCDF), which is disbursed at the discretion of the national MP. People believe this process is too easily abused and open to corruption. Many people supported the idea of a committee being established – at the local village level or ward level – that would have some role in deciding where RCDF projects should be implemented. This would make the RCDF more responsive to the needs of the rural areas.

While education and health care are undoubtedly the greatest concerns, people also feel that the government – provincial or national – should be providing better transport and communications networks throughout rural areas, as well as ensuring reliable water access, and would like support for agricultural and fisheries industries.

Traditional Leadership

The issue of Traditional Leadership is deeply entwined with the issues of Civic Engagement and Security. People saw an increased role for traditional leaders as going some way to ensuring greater levels of civic engagement and heightened security in rural areas.

Throughout the consultations, all people expressed the desire that chiefs, or traditional leaders, need to be given a greater say in the affairs of both the province and the nation.

Traditional leaders need to be given a greater say in the affairs of both the Provinces and the Nation.

While major differences exist in terminology used to refer to chiefs, and in terms of how chiefs or leaders are selected, or elected, or inherit their positions, all areas share in common the belief that the role of chiefs is important and underrated in current society and politics. (Some of the terms used for different chiefs – some of which relate to the same position, but in a different area are as follows: bush lawyer, elected chief, hereditary chief, local chief, paramount chief, political chief, registered chief, selected chief, tribal chief, and village chief.)

People were disappointed that Area Councils were disbanded without being replaced by a similar structure that would allow for village people to have a say. People recognise that not all Area Councils operated well, but believe the system could have been improved, rather than discarded.

People throughout the Solomon's want the position and role of the chief to be recognised by law and for chiefs to be given greater powers in respect of their role. People want chiefs to have the power to enforce decisions, customary laws and penalties for the infringement of such laws. People want the decisions of chiefs to be legally binding in some form. This is seen as extremely important to ensure that people respect their position and decisions. People recognise that there are cases that chiefs should not handle, that would then be referred to the police and be handled within the civil court system.

To ensure appropriate representation of and by women and youths, some people suggested that no minimum age should be placed on representatives of these chiefly bodies, and likewise, women should be eligible to be representatives. In several meetings, some men strongly objected to the idea of women being representatives in any chiefly structure, as they saw this contravening traditional custom ways. Often however, these same men supported the idea of women being involved in a civic leadership role, outside any traditional custom structure.

In relation to traditional leadership issues, the issue of land was often raised. Concerns related to land are bound up with anxieties about traditional systems of land ownership, development, identity and the general decline in the role and power of chiefs and customary traditions, all in the context of a rapidly changing social and economic environment.

People want their chiefs, or traditional leaders, to have a greater say in the resolution of land disputes and decisions regarding the future use of land, particularly in relation to development proposals.

Many people supported the idea of a local traditional court being established to deal with land issues and to resolve land disputes. Basically, the views of village people supported the proposals of the State Government Taskforce, regarding the creation of a local traditional court that would have jurisdiction over similar types of cases as those suggested within the SGTF Report.

Constitutional Drafting Options/Inputs from the Consultations

The Preamble

1. The consultation process did not address the contents of the Preamble as a specific issue. Much discussion however did center on the issues of traditional governance, matters of customary land ownership and also of transparent and accountable government.

The Basic Structure of Government

1. Nine States could be the starting point, but the amalgamation of States, or a small increase in their number might be provided for. A maximum number could be set.
2. Some special provision may be considered for remote and less privileged areas that are part of current States, but which may be under some disadvantage. This concern has been noted in consultation with people from the smaller and remote islands that currently fall within certain provinces. Some special acknowledgment of this situation may appease a call for a greater number of very small island "States".

Citizenship

1. The issue of citizenship of Solomon Islands did not arise directly in the public consultations.
2. However the issue of who is indigenous to an area within Solomon Islands was a recurring theme in the context of the debate on freedom of movement and settlement.

The Federal Government

1. There is a considerable groundswell of opinion supporting the introduction of a "State Government" system. This can be said to be nation-wide.
2. A recurring sentiment is the desire to require elected representatives to perform their functions. It is frequently suggested that there should be a means whereby communities may instigate an "impeachment" type of process.

State Governments

1. The Socio-Economic Impact Study recommended that the office of State Governors was an unnecessary expense and that it should be re-considered. However, it could be left to each State Constitution to determine the nature of the Office. Additional expense could be avoided if the State Governor is appointed from existing office holders. (e.g. PNG where regional MP's are State Governors) The details of this office in each State could be left to a State Constitution to determine.
2. This sentiment has been stated during the consultations. On numerous occasions it was said that each State must determine its political framework. The position of State Governor will have to be carefully considered where a concept of paramount chief exists. Concerns have been identified about pitting an elected office holder against the position of traditional chief.
3. Again it should be noted that sentiments exist in certain remote and "less privileged" areas that they will be disadvantaged by an automatic recognition of States based on current geographic boundaries. While the current provinces provide a useful starting point, thought should be given to ensuring that people harbouring these sentiments do not feel aggrieved for all time.
4. There is widespread acceptance of giving traditional chiefs a role at both State and national level. While this is universally acceptable the precise extent of a preferred role differs from place to place. Again it is best left to the State Constitutions to make appropriate provision in this regard.
5. Thought must be given to prescribing the full extent of the area (and jurisdiction) of States. Some opinion has been expressed that this should extend to the full limit of the relevant EEZ (and rights over reefs has received specific mention), and to the airspace.
6. In areas where landownership is vested in women it has been said that this should be recognized in the State Constitution.

State Governments Continued ‘

7. Some sentiment against the Westminster style of elected representation has been expressed. The State Constitutions are the best means by which more culturally based selection practices, and qualifications for office, can be provided for. It is best that the Federal Constitution does not become too prescriptive in relation to the provisions of State Constitutions. In this way unique and appropriate frameworks can be developed quite independently for each State.
8. It has been stated on a few occasions that the “first past the post” system for elections does not find favour. Again it can be left to the State Constitutions to determine an acceptable electoral system for each State.

Federal and State Powers

1. The focus is more on the expectation of “free” or increased service provision rather than on the issue of which level of government is to provide it. There is widespread support for the decentralization of health, education and service provision functions.
2. There is strong support for State police forces, but only some support for community policing.
3. There is also strong support for formalizing the role of traditional leaders in land dispute resolution and to hear minor criminal and civil cases. This is said by some to include a power of arrest. It is expected that these matters may be addressed in State laws.
4. Concerns are often expressed about the education curriculum. Many want some cultural (or at least Solomon Islands) inputs. Others strongly favour a greater technical training emphasis. There is strong resentment of the examinations that lead to the termination of a child's education.
5. The lack of transportation services is a matter of general concern, but there is no focus on the regulatory aspects of shipping and aviation. The problem is seen as purely operational.
6. There is no support for the “colonial” notions of state ownership of resources.
7. Land is a key focus. Simplified procedures for land dispute resolution at a local level are widely called for. There is some call State land registries. There is some call for laws preventing the alienation of customary land. The overwhelming view is that alienated lands should be returned to the customary owners. However the problems associated with this are generally recognised. As is the need for alienated lands in State headquarters locations.
8. There is a strong call for greater access to justice.
9. There is also a strong call for greater emphasis on agriculture extension services and the creation of income earning opportunities (particularly in the areas of forest and fisheries resources).
10. Banking services are called for, but no mention is made of locally based savings and loans societies or credit cooperatives.
11. Most provincial authorities favour having a State police force.
12. The position on State Courts is not so clear.
13. Many provincial authorities favour returning alienated lands to State administrations.
14. All favour lands administration as a State function.
15. All accept a role for traditional leadership (and possibly a formalisation of this role under State law).
16. All favour the resource areas of forestry, fisheries (to 12 mile limit), minerals and agriculture as State functions.
17. The functions of health, education and trade, commerce and industry are seen as being State or concurrent functions.

Federal and State Financial Arrangements

1. There is a general call for the wealth of each State to remain substantially (or in whole) in that State.
2. It is also widely felt that the national contribution to State revenues should be based on the resource contribution of the State, and not purely on the basis of population. Sharing formulas in the range of 40:60 to 60:40 are often suggested or demanded. (Although this is sometimes as high as 95:5 in favour of the State Government, and in isolated cases it is suggested that it be entirely retained by the State level).
3. Some sentiments have been expressed that the revenue should be generated within each State, and that the Federal Government could then share in that. It is sometimes said that the taxation powers should be devolved to the States.
4. There is a general and strongly held view that a fair and equitable revenue sharing formula must be formulated and enshrined in the Constitution. It is sometimes said that this formula should be formulated and applied before the constitutional reforms are undertaken.
5. It is felt in many places that the States must have more control over the revenues generated from resources within the State.
6. It is the view of some that very detailed financial analysis of all implications of State Government must be undertaken. Doubts are expressed by some about the means by which a new system could be funded.
7. Discontent has been expressed about the level of royalties paid from logging operations.
8. It is widely felt that the States should be able to access foreign aid directly and more easily.
9. Temotu has raised the issue of revenues earned from fisheries and the air space. (This highlights a need to have the actual revenue figures available in order to clarify such matters, and may be dispel some misconceptions).
10. Banking is a service that is clearly missed in many parts of the country.

The key features of the recommendations from the Socio-Economic Impact were:

The purpose of revenue sharing is to enable national and sub-national governments together to provide fair and reasonable access to social and economic services of acceptable standard in all parts of the country;

1. The revenue sharing system should be established by statute;
2. The concept of a national consolidated fund should be preserved;
3. Payment to sub-national governments of whatever shares are properly decided should be a statutory charge on the consolidated fund;
4. Shares should be determined periodically in a transparent and publicly accountable manner in the light of the financial situation of the country; and
5. The process should be managed by a joint high-level body of national and sub-national governments.

The Legal System

1. The SESP makes some worthwhile observations about the low number of magistrates and their difficulties in accessing most parts of the country. The Report offers little guidance as to the reasons for this, other than an implication that it has arisen because of financial constraints. There is no real guidance in relation to possible remedies.
2. A constant theme from the community consultations has been the inability of ordinary people to access justice. Deficiencies in both the Police Force and the court system are identified in this context. These problems are seen as having contributed to the social unrest and to the inability to address the problems. Long delays in determining local disputes, particularly those relating to land, are noted as a major problem.
3. There is some nostalgia for the Colonial period when these problems were seen to be addressed by an impartial authority that had regard to local traditional structures.
4. There is a general appreciation that Chiefs, local elders and traditional systems should be accommodated in the resolution of disputes and the dispensation of justice.
5. Tradition and custom are generally seen as being more likely to provide an appropriate answer in any given situation.

The Public Service

1. The Socio-economic Impact Study makes a recommendation for a Public Service of four main branches (Education, Health, Police and an Administrative, Legal and Technical Services Branch), each with its own governance arrangement.
2. There is general dissatisfaction with the performance of public servants; with forestry, fisheries and agriculture extension officers being generally mentioned in this context.
3. There is a feeling that priority should be given to employment within a State of people from that State, unless the skills do not exist in the State.
4. By far the most repetitive response in the consultation process is the expression of dissatisfaction with the Police Force. However, it cannot be said that everybody shares a view as to how this can be addressed. While the SG taskforce appears to limit the Federal power in this area to a Federal Police Force it does not seem to specifically suggest that State Police Force become an area of State power.

National Capital

The location of the nation's capital has not been a specific issue identified during the consultation process. It is clear however that general resentment exists about a perception that a great deal of the nation's resources are committed to the capital, and that this is at the expense of other areas of the country.

Amending the National and State Constitutions

1. The specific issue of procedures for the amendment of State or Federal Constitutions was not one that arose specifically during the consultation process.
2. One option may be that a majority of State Legislatures must also vote in favour of any amendment to the Federal Constitution. This could be restricted to the amendment of any provision that relates to the Federal/State arrangements.

National Languages

1. This was not an issue that featured in the reports of the consultation process.
2. Provision might be made for all laws to be published in English and pidgin. If this were done it would have to be decided which version would prevail in the event of any inconsistency.

Leadership Code

The view is widely expressed that there must be transparency in government and good, honest leadership.

The Ombudsman

1. This was not an area that arose specifically in the consultation process. However, there was a constant call for transparency and accountability in government. And also for the scrutiny of persons performing official functions.
2. There may be a need to spell out the power of the Ombudsman to take legal proceedings in the name of the Office if it is felt that no, or no sufficient, action has been taken to remedy any matter reported upon.

Internal Security and Emergency Powers

1. Particular concerns have been expressed during the public consultations relating to incursions by armed persons in the Western parts of the country.
2. The "tensions" are blamed by many people for a noticeable and unacceptable decline in the provision of government services.
3. Many people stated a concern that national unity be a prominent feature of any new constitutional arrangements.

Exercise of the Prerogative of Mercy

These matters did not arise in the consultation process.

Constitutional Drafting Options/Inputs from the Consultations on Human Rights Issues

All human rights issues were not directly canvassed but some points with direct or indirect human rights implications are:

- ❑ The growing provincial insularity (looking more and more inwardly - implications for ethnic integration & the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD))
- ❑ The growing resentment towards small minority ethnic communities eg the Gilbertese in the Western/Choiseul provinces because of the pressure on resources
- ❑ The notion that marriage to outsiders (from other provinces) ought to be restricted/or regulated because of local constraints on land and resources
- ❑ The need for good governance at central government level (human rights and the rule of law are central components of good governance)
- ❑ The lack of people's participation in governance
- ❑ The need for a major human rights and political education. Corruption and lack of good governance occurs because people do not know what the roles of the State is and what their rights are viz the State
- ❑ Laws that concern the people should be translated into local vernaculars
- ❑ The need for an even and fair distribution of resources without discrimination and taking into consideration the needs of disadvantaged groups/outlying islands and the disparities between "richer and poorer" provinces
- ❑ Some groups want to define and distinguish who is indigenous and who is not (Implications for equality and obligations under the CERD Convention which SI has ratified)
- ❑ The right to proper housing, shelter, water, education and health should be guaranteed in the new Constitutions
- ❑ The perceived potential conflicts between rights/ formal law and customary law will be a source of many problems
- ❑ The role of customary leaders and their participation in modern governance - will recognising and formalising traditional leadership be against rights to equality? How do we make traditional leadership accountable?
- ❑ The belief that Chiefs should be given legal power to adjudicate in various levels of disputes because formal systems of power have failed people
- ❑ Some consultees said that if Chiefs were given power (eg to be in State Parliaments) and abused power how would they be dismissed? Would this mean they would no longer be MPs or would they no longer be chiefs too? Implications for traditional systems therefore chiefs should be confined only to administering customary law
- ❑ Gender equality and the possibility that customary law is biased against women. The perception that State governance will worsen that.
- ❑ Women are powerless, have very few opportunities to be leaders and have very little influence in decision making despite land being passed through women
- ❑ Many consultees insisted that there should be reserved seats for women within Parliament - quota system
- ❑ Isabel province wants women's right to be landowners protected in the Constitution
- ❑ Many provinces want to regulate movement within SI based on beliefs that internal migration is a root cause of many problems including ethnic conflict. Many also believe that this will be a human rights violation which will influence SI international standing.
- ❑ Freedom of movement should be allowed if necessary but settlement of outsiders ought to be restricted by appropriate Constitutional or land laws
- ❑ If new settlers come in they must respect and obey local norms, culture and customs.
- ❑ Fear of law and order breakdown and the perceived inability of the "law" to protect and respond.



- ❑ The ineffectiveness of the Courts in resolving conflict in many areas particularly land
- ❑ The unfair access to justice and the Courts between islands and within islands and provinces
- ❑ The lack of understanding about the links between human rights and the alleviation of poverty
- ❑ The lack of understanding of the relevant role of NGOs and CSOs in governance by the State.
- ❑ The lack of rights and opportunities for youth and their participation in governance
- ❑ MPs ought to be required to live in their constituencies at both levels of proposed Government
- ❑ There is discrimination in the award of scholarships at national level because of nepotism and croneyism within Government
- ❑ There should be affirmative action in employment for people who are from the State eg only people from Choiseul should be employed in Choiseul. Outsiders should only be employed if there is no relevant skills or expertise within Choiseul.
- ❑ Freedom of religion ought to be restricted in some areas because new religions are coming in and causing further fragmentation in unity

Women's Organisations Request for HR's Inputs

- ❑ The entire Section 9 subsection 1 on equal rights to citizenship of women and men in the Fijian Constitution to be adopted and included in the Solomon Islands Constitution. The current Chapter 3 is not relevant to Solomon Islands anymore
- ❑ Article 28 of the Child Rights Convention (CRC) must be inserted into the proposed Solomon Islands Constitution
- ❑ A quota system to be introduced in the National Parliament and Provincial Assemblies for 5 women to be in Parliament as well as in all the provincial assemblies
- ❑ Adoption of the CRC definition of a child into the Solomon Islands Bill of Rights
- ❑ The Constitution should provide for the application of the ratified International Conventions, Covenants and International legal Instruments
- ❑ At least one third of the membership of all government statutory bodies, Commissions and any public boards should be women
- ❑ Include women in any ex officio appointments



Central Province Village Consultation Findings

1. **Concept of House (Council) of Chiefs:** The concept of House (Council) of chiefs is not a traditional concept but it is showing some signs in Ngella and Savo. In Ngella and Savo, they have draft constitutions for their respective House (Council) of Chiefs but are basically operating under such arrangement. Russell Islands is yet to come to this stage.
2. **Alienated Land:** There is a significant amount of alienated land in the Central Province especially on Ngella and Russell Islands. The idea of returning the alienated land to the original landowners can create more land disputes and this may bring about slow development and progress in the Province. The concept of returning alienated land to the original landowners must be carefully handled and researched so that there is an amicable and harmonious return and minimise any land disputes.
3. **Freedom of Movement / Settlement – Savo Island:** It has been said that the freedom of movement, being a constitutional right, is alright but not settlement. If there is to be a complete ban on settlement then resettling of the people of Savo Island will become a problem when the volcano erupts.
4. **Russell Islands wants to break away from the Central Province:** The clear message heard in the 5 locations in the Russell Islands is that Russell Islands should become separate from Ngella and Savo and become a State of its own. It is believed that Russell Islands has enough land and sea resources to sustain itself as a State although it may take time to built up its manpower requirements and to built its basic infrastructure. Assuming that Russell Islands does not break away from Central Province and further assuming that Russell Islands, Savo and Ngella have formalised their House (Council) of Chiefs, this will be an important development since the Chairmen (Paramount Chiefs) of the House (Council) of Chiefs of these island groups may be considered to represent the chiefs in the proposed state government system. There is support for this course.

Civic Engagement

- ❑ It is clear from the responses that information about the reform in the government system did not reach the rural people fully. It would appear that passing of information through the radio and other means is not effective as face-to-face contact with the people. The people prefer the face-to-face contact on the basis that not all of them have radios.
- ❑ The people feel that they should take part in discussing and commenting on how the government system may be changed or reformed.
- ❑ It would also appear that communication between the government and the villagers is very limited so much so that the villagers are not knowledgeable about how the government system operate.

Services

- ❑ Different villages with their different circumstances and geographical locations have different requirements when it comes to services. It is a common view that services reaching the rural people now is very poor and need a lot of improvement. In terms of priority, common services required by the villagers include education, health, transportation, communication, agriculture extension, fisheries and income generating projects.
- ❑ In relation to education the people want free education. They want additional secondary schools to be built especially in the Russell Islands where there is only one Community High School. They also want their school children to go on until they reach Form 5. There is also a need to train more qualified teachers. More importantly there is a need for teaching materials and resources.

- ❑ In relation to health, the people want free health services and that they are within reach so that it doesn't cost them much to travel to get treatment. They also want to see more people trained to become doctors and nurses to serve in the rural areas and not just in the urban areas.
- ❑ In relation to transportation, the importance of transport to the people of Central Province cannot be overruled. They need it for transporting their market produce to markets in Yandina, Honiara and Tulagi and also for transporting the sick. They want a reliable transport system and they strongly believe that the Province should purchase and run a ship within the Province. They envy the other Provinces who are currently operating ships in the country.
- ❑ In relation to income generating projects, there is a belief that people need to make money to pay for their basic needs and enjoy a better standard of living. Finding money in the rural area is very hard and therefore the people call on the government to introduce income-generating projects in their areas.
- ❑ In relation to communication, there is a strong belief that communication is the gateway to the flow of services to the rural people. Contacts by radio, telephone, email and internet will mean that the right people who can provide the right kind of services may be contacted at the right time. Hence there is a call for the installation of radios, additional telephones at Yandina for instance, email and internet.
- ❑ In relation to agriculture extension, the people view agriculture as a backbone to their survival. They need every help from the agriculture extension officers to teach them the best agricultural techniques to grow crops for consumption and for sale.

Security/Police

- ❑ The legitimate body in the country to provide security and maintain law and order is the police force. The police force has been ineffective in providing security and maintaining law and order due to lack of logistic support or sheer laziness or due to low morale.
- ❑ There is a call for the government to built more police aid posts in the Province. For instance, in West Russells, Louna, Leitongo and Panueli. The people are not confident with community policing since it involves the community to find money to pay for the salaries of its manpower. They would be happy with it if the government provides the money for the salaries of its manpower.
- ❑ As for the composition of the police force, the people would want a police force with a mixture of locals and those from other provinces.

Freedom of Movement/Settlement

- ❑ In relation to the freedom of movement, it is clear that there is a general agreement that the freedom of movement be restricted, controlled and/or limited to avoid the abuse of this freedom. It is a belief that this freedom permits so many problems, for instance, dynamite fishing in Ngella and Russells. It appears that people would only accept movement for good reasons such as employment, education and medical treatment. In the case of settlement, the people want to put a stop to new settlements and want recognised settlements to remain as they are. For instance, such recognition has been given for the Tikopian settlement of Nukufero and the Rennell and Bellona settlement of Niu Munggava. In the case of intermarriage, it is the majority view that only the married person is allowed to settle with his/her spouse but not the extended family. However, extended families can come and visit but only for a limited period of time, say two or three weeks.

Traditional Leadership and Village Governance

- ❑ In the villages there are several types of leaders, namely, tribal chiefs, village chiefs and religious leaders. These leaders are not involved in the government system although they are closer to the rural people who comprise the bulk of the population of the province. There is a feeling that they should participate in the decision making process in the proposed state government system and at the village level. There is a

need to empower the chiefs to make decisions, execute decisions and impose punishment for failure to comply with their decisions.

- ❑ With the exception of Nukufero and Niu Munggava settlements, Savo, Ngella and the Russells are matrilineal societies. Land ownership is through the female.
- ❑ There is a general agreement that women and youth should have representation at least at the state government level. How they get representation at the state government level is still debatable but there are two options, namely, by appointment by the Governor based on set criteria or by the normal process of elections where women stand for special seats reserved for women.
- ❑ In Ngella and Savo, there is a House of Chiefs in each island group. They have draft constitutions but they seem to be operating in village governance especially in resolving land disputes. This system should be formalised in each of the island groups and may become an avenue to choose the chiefs' representative in the proposed state government system. For instance, the Chairman of the House of Chiefs may be appointed as the chiefs representative in the proposed state parliament.

Justice System

- ❑ The main complaint in the court system is that it is expensive as you go higher in the hierarchy. It is a commonly held view throughout the Province that in land cases the decision of the chiefs should be final on the premise that they are more knowledgeable about land ownership, distribution and custom. It is also a common view that the chiefs should be empowered to hear and determine minor criminal offences. Further each island should have a Magistrates court so that court cases can be dealt with within a reasonable period of time.



Choiseul Province Village Consultation Findings

Civic Engagement

- ❑ Elected Representatives on both national and provincial Government levels have not been informing their people about what the government is planning and what is going on in the country. They are expected to be providing the links between the big gap that exists between the government and the people and in the absence of this people are not kept well informed.
- ❑ The present centralized bureaucracy is too burdensome and seen as a barrier to an efficient flow of information.
- ❑ Awareness programmes carried out through media or village tours have language as a barrier as most village people do not speak or understand pidgin and English. People prefer that awareness programmes be translated into local languages that are readily understood.
- ❑ Timeliness of notices and information about awareness talk visits is important to ensure more people attend such talks and are well prepared with questions for learning and knowing purposes. The Constitutional Reform Process was cited as a clear example of poor communication and information case as not all people have radios. Written notices are much preferred as long as they are dispatched in good time in view of the slow national mailing system worsened by the distance of a lot of communities from Taro.
- ❑ Women in the rural areas do not have time to listen to radios. The few that listen get frustrated more about current affairs news that is predominated by items on compensation claims, murders caused by guns, criminal activities and so on. It is therefore not worth listening as it makes them feel more insecure.
- ❑ Presently only private two-way radios are available in the villages with costly fee charge and people could not easily afford to pay for communicating.
- ❑ A lot of people do not know about the Rural Community Development Fund (RCDF) as money that they can access for development purposes. They think RCDF is member's private fund and its disbursement is his discretion. This unawareness reflects the prevalence of non-transparency practice. Members are expected to inform their electorates about such public fund.
- ❑ Elected representatives to use constituency and ward tour budget allocations wisely for touring for purposes of informing their electorates;
- ❑ Elected members must inform people about RCDF and any other public money due to the electorates;
- ❑ Elected members must reside in communities to keep people constantly informed;
- ❑ Decentralise the bureaucracy for simple and easy communication and information flow;
- ❑ Set up a more effective communication system throughout the country to ensure a well informed populace;
- ❑ Establish a government radio frequency together with two-way radios for villages in order that villagers have easier access to a cheaper means of communication for a minimal fee;
- ❑ More newsletters and pamphlets are required by rural people especially women and youth, to be kept informed.
- ❑ Improve the mailing system for quicker and cheaper communication;
- ❑ Carry out more literacy programmes in the rural areas to have a literate populace that will readily understand disseminated information;
- ❑ Consultation such as the CRP and awareness programmes should be encouraged as means of informing the populace and to fully engage them in planning and development;

General Participation

- ❑ The present one-way participation process, top to bottom limits active civic engagement;
- ❑ Civic engagement is absent when decisions are made only at the top governance structure;
- ❑ The present law and order situation further limits civic engagement and only worsened by the lack of financial resources;
- ❑ Resource-owners feel deprived of involvement in planning and development of their resources;
- ❑ People participation in decision-making should not only be through election but also in the planning and development of the country.
- ❑ Most youth groups in communities are church based and only involve young churchgoers while the rest who are normally referred to as 'backsliders' as they had involved in some form of mischief, are kept out until they have reformed their ways. Communities ignore such youth and do not involve them in any youth group or community programmes and are mostly left to the parents to deal with;
- ❑ Participation process be changed to a two way process but emphasizing more on bottom to top arrangement to ensure people feel part of and have ownership of any decision formalised at the top;
- ❑ Active civic engagement can only be fully realized if power was based on people;
- ❑ Restore law and order situation to maximize civic engagement. The present effort to collect all firearms and ammunitions must be supported by all communities to have a safe and gun-free environment;
- ❑ Decentralisation of more responsibilities to state and village governance levels would ensure more people involved in the government decision-making and planning processes;
- ❑ Participation by youth is best done and ensured through the church structures as most villages in Choiseul have established church youth groups with organized programmes and activities;
- ❑ The National Youth Congress network be decentralized for easier access by the rural youth;
- ❑ People should allow resources to be used provided that the resource owners are involved in all stages including employment in resource extraction.

Participation Through Decentralisation

- ❑ The majority wants immediate federal state government system and failing that a political independence for Choiseul;
- ❑ Any constitutional reform should strengthen and recognize the existing power base of Luru (local name for Choiseul) people who are tribal and community based through family units;
- ❑ Any government system and established structures must reflect the traditions, culture and custom of Luru people;
- ❑ Decision to establish or not to establish any level of government between the province/state and village governance has to take into account several factors including structural and manpower costs, simplicity, accessibility to the state government. Alternatively, leave the decision to the state to make based on the situation and culture of Choiseul;
- ❑ Decentralize decision-making on service delivery and development planning to the village governance;
- ❑ Churches be represented at decision-making levels.

Election

- ❑ Minimum voting age remain at 18 years
- ❑ Parliament term of office to remain at 4 years
- ❑ Constitutional provision for appointment of women representatives
- ❑ Both election and appointment arrangements be provided for in the constitution
- ❑ Traditional representative be open for any community leader and not just chiefs;
- ❑ Review conditions of public servants to allow them the opportunities to stand for election without resigning from work.

Services

- ❑ Resource-based provinces such as Choiseul which also currently generates revenue for the government be given back fair share of benefits especially in terms of services;
- ❑ Budget allocation for services be given to rural communities to decide on service expenditure;
- ❑ Immediately effect revenue sharing arrangement that gives the majority share of revenue back to the provinces for services purposes.

Education

- ❑ Decentralise education to province/state governments but with a higher share of revenue generated from the province so that teachers salaries and school establishment and classroom equipment can be maintained and improved;
- ❑ Decentralise the power to retain bigger share of revenues generated from the province;
- ❑ Grant free education up to a certain level if affordable by province/state government;
- ❑ Get all untrained teachers trained for quality education;
- ❑ Strengthen partnership arrangement in education between province/state, the churches and the communities

Health

- ❑ decentralize overall responsibility over health service to the province/state level and further down to village level with adequate budget allocations;
- ❑ decentralize responsibility for salaries of health and medical workers to province/state government but not without power to retain majority share of revenue;
- ❑ immediate action must be taken by the government to update payment of workers' salaries and provide adequate drug supply and medical equipment;

Technical/Extension Service

- ❑ Province/state should support the Luru Federation of farmers to help individual farmers in the communities;
- ❑ Government should give priority assistance in agriculture to rural dwellers especially women and youth, because they farm on their own customary land;
- ❑ Re-open fisheries centers at Taro and Wagina with functional machines and equipment;
- ❑ Further decentralise fisheries service by establishing more centers around the province for easy access to all communities;
- ❑ Deploy more fisheries officers to provinces and the centers;
- ❑ The province to review logging policies with a view to limit or halt logging applications and timber right hearing and facilitate locals wish to form logging companies;
- ❑ The revenue-generating province retains bigger logging revenue shares.

Transportation

- ❑ Carry out infrastructure development especially in terms of roads;
- ❑ More boats are needed to travel to and from Choiseulas well as around Choiseul
- ❑ Government to provide more reliable air transport.

Communication and Postal services

- ❑ Traveling/mobile bank agents is a possible way to ease difficulties in banking service for rural people;
- ❑ Establish some more bank agents around the island;
- ❑ Increase maximum limit for withdrawals;
- ❑ Review tight bank conditions and requirements for purposes of rural people.

Market Service

- ❑ Province to find ways to provide market outlets for goods and products produced by women;
- ❑ Re-open markets for copra and cocoa;
- ❑ Ensure regular payment of salaries of workers the benefits of which would trickle down to rural women.

Security/Police

- ❑ Decentralize police service/force to province/state and further decentralize to communities;
- ❑ Composition of province/state police force be decided by the provincial authorities and the people of Choiseul. Views from a majority representation of Choiseul people need to be re-sought here;
- ❑ Establishment of a defence force be decided by the provincial government and the majority of Choiseul people;
- ❑ Establish community policing in all communities;
- ❑ Re-introduce area constables in communities.
- ❑ Bouganvillians be restricted to move freely in and out of the Choiseul and Western provinces by effectively enforcing relevant customs and immigration laws of Solomon Islands;
- ❑ Review the Border Agreement between Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea to police and restrict the current free movement across the border by people on both sides;
- ❑ The current disarming exercise by the government must continue as a lot of guns are still at large in Choiseul;
- ❑ Village governments (if introduced) must screen all gun license applications to ensure unfit people do not have access to guns;
- ❑ Empower village governments to collect and confiscate guns and any deadly weapons from license holders who violate laws;

Movement

- ❑ Control measures for inter-province movement as well as that within the province;
- ❑ Control measures for movement within the province should adopt past practice of informing chiefs and elders of both the sending and receiving villages/communities;
- ❑ Control measures for movement in and out of the province must entail travel documentation such as issuing of entry permits and regulated length of stay, purpose of visits and so on.
- ❑ Customs and quarantine related checks must be done to reduce risks to security in terms of firearms and ammunition and to plants and animals in terms of introduced pests.

Settlement

- ❑ Lauru Conference to continue dialoguing with the Wagina settlers on all matters of concern to both groups;
- ❑ Wagina settlers to respect local culture and observe restrictions on forest and sea resources;
- ❑ Encourage more awareness programmes and campaigns on family planning and population issues;
- ❑ Awareness talks on alternative farming techniques must be encouraged and supported by the province/state;
- ❑ Any sale and lease of land be decided by landowning tribes;
- ❑ Landowning tribes who disallow land for community service purposes be denied the service;
- ❑ All alienated land be returned to original landowning tribes;
- ❑ Decentralize Land acquisition process and any acquisition be done by the landowning tribes;
- ❑ Land disputes be dealt with by traditional chiefs;
- ❑ Only non-choiseulese contracted employees are allowed to settle in the province for the period of employment with proper work and resident permits;
- ❑ All employment will be reserved for choiseulese unless expertise is not available;
- ❑ An effective human resource development and training programme be undertaken for choiseulese.

Conflict Resolution

- ❑ Decentralise judiciary system to province and village levels;
- ❑ Empower Chiefs and community leaders to resolve conflicts in the communities;
- ❑ Community policing, area constables (if re-introduced) to work with chiefs, church and community leaders to deal with rules and law infringements;
- ❑ Transform traditional conflict resolution set ups such as chief's committees into local courts based in the communities;
- ❑ Transform community rules into bye-laws;
- ❑ Magistrates and High Courts to be on province/state level

Traditional Leaders & Village Governance

- ❑ Provide for traditional chiefs representation in the national and state constitutions;
- ❑ Chief representation in the state parliament be by appointment;
- ❑ Consider provision for appointment of women and youth representation in the national constitution;
- ❑ Women and youth representation in the state be by appointment;
- ❑ Church representation in the state parliament be by appointment;
- ❑ Selection of Chief for appointment to the state parliament to be done by the chiefs themselves based on consensus;
- ❑ Consider establishing a Council of Chief as part of the State political structure;
- ❑ Empower people with authority to remove both appointed and elected representatives from office when found guilty of illegal and unacceptable practices.
- ❑ Transform village structure into village governance;
- ❑ Empower village governance as a legal entity by providing for it in the national and state parliaments;

Village Public servants

- ❑ State government to define roles and responsibilities of village government workers including the traditional leaders;
- ❑ Appropriate remuneration be given to village governance workers;
- ❑ Deploy public servants to the state and village governance;
- ❑ Undertake human resource development for village governance workers.

Decentralised Functions to Village Government

- ❑ Devolve functions on basic services including health and education, police and justice to the village governance;
- ❑ Financial allocation for the delivery of such services be given to the village governance to decide on expenditure based on priority areas to the community.

Link between Village and State Government

- ❑ Choiseul province/state to decide on the structural link between the state and the village governance based on affordability of the province and cultural set up;
- ❑ The people and the province/state to finally decide on the structural set up of Choiseul state government based on the situation, culture and views collected in this CRP report.



Guadalcanal Province Village Consultation Findings

Overview

- ❑ People's lack of knowledge about the systems of government should not be confused with a completely different situation in which people were ignorant of the issues of governance, such as accountability, justice, and transparency.
- ❑ The Constitutional Reform Project consultations were many people's first opportunity to discuss the constitution and government systems.
- ❑ The people of Guadalcanal, including most in Honiara, were generally unaware of many of the sections of the current constitution and government machinery that established obligations owed to them, or protections for them.
- ❑ Although traditional systems of service provision, rule generation, rule enforcement, rule interpretation, land management, and local governance are not supported through the formal government and budget, it has been the primary system for an overwhelming majority of communities for the past two decades.
- ❑ The Team endeavored to cover the entire Province in its tour, but one area in the south-west was not accessible for neutral and mutually secure discussions.

Services

- ❑ Very few services are available, and those that are in the area are not maintained or managed properly.
- ❑ Many accountability issues were raised.
- ❑ People want as much local control as possible over services decision making and monitoring. Control would be shared with the state and national levels as necessary, but the message was that all levels needed to be held accountable by the system.
- ❑ Budgeting for services should be a required priority over many other government expenditures.
- ❑ Accountability issues raised repeatedly – legal orders need to be enforced, and CDF funds must be properly distributed. Many calls for accountability to be made a requirement instead of an option.
- ❑ Abuse of structures related to resources and benefit distribution is a major concern in Guadalcanal and the people want these issues addressed in national and state constitutions.

Security/Justice

- ❑ According to some, the people of Guadalcanal have not had reliable access to government security and justice systems since colonial times. The chiefs have had primary responsibility for security and justice at the community levels even though their official role is not clear and does not receive support from the government.
- ❑ People requested a local police force for Guadalcanal security, properly trained and possibly linked to the chiefs.
- ❑ Guadalcanal communities suggest that the national police be completely re-worked and staffed by an equal number of people from each province.
- ❑ People expect a justice system that allows them to protect themselves when their government's money is stolen (even if it is stolen by the government), or their child's school is illegally closed due to a compensation claim, etc.
- ❑ People request much greater access to legal protection from business and political leaders in a variety of contexts.

Traditional Leadership and Village Governance

- ❑ Chiefs in communities have extensive responsibilities for addressing community needs and redressing community problems. They do not, however, have a defined role in the government structure that distributes resources and support.

- ❑ Since the role of chiefs has limited reach into the formal government structures and their decisions are not supported by security or justice systems (either by design or because the systems are simply not present), the ability of chiefs to handle problems, such as land disputes and extortion claims, is weakening.
- ❑ People clearly support the inclusion of traditional leaders into the state / national level government structure. Different opinions were presented on what level the chiefs should be involved, however the vast majority envisioned a state level role as an advisory body, with some form of oversight capacity. The state would then be obligated to pay for the chief's involvement.
- ❑ People clearly support the inclusion of traditional leaders into the state level government structure as links between the community and elected officials or as an approval mechanism for laws or programmes.
- ❑ Some stressed that traditional leaders also need to be monitored by the community, so care should be taken to include mechanisms to keep traditional leaders accountable in any new system.

Freedom of Movement and Freedom of Settlement

- ❑ Movement and settlement are inextricably connected to people's concerns over security. In the absence of security and justice systems, the people do not feel secure having people from other islands in their area.
- ❑ People of Guadalcanal expect anyone coming into an area to abide by the rules and customs of that area.
- ❑ People support a pass system or moratorium on movement and settlement in their area, at least until security and justice issues can be addressed.

Civic Engagement (People's Participation in Government)

- ❑ People do not understand the current government system and constitution, although they have a strong understanding of how systems have broken down.
- ❑ People generally do not know how to enforce their rights, and some admit that the main access to the system, voting, has not been used effectively.
- ❑ Several communities suggested that a community driven impeachment process be developed. Although this would be very confusing when added to the already unstable government structure, the idea parallels systems for controlling traditional leaders.
- ❑ The women of Guadalcanal want a greater formal role in community decision-making that reflects their contribution to the community and their traditional role in controlling land.

Land & Resources

- ❑ Important to note that the current system is not fully implemented in many areas because there is no way to firmly and fairly resolve disputes.
- ❑ Many in this area suggest that some form of control over land by the state is necessary to protect public welfare and allow for equitable development, particularly if there are strong inter-tribal rivalries.
- ❑ Most people use the near complete breakdown in services as a clear indication that resources are not being used in the best interest of the people, and state this as the primary reason for returning all land and resources back to the community.
- ❑ Systems separating the resources from the land are considered "foreign" and people want the "6ft rule" and limits to ownership of marine resources removed.
- ❑ People want stability and enforcement of boundaries around Honiara.

Isabel Province Village Consultation Findings

Finance

Isabel by and for Isabellans. Isabel people want more autonomy. They want to work out their own problems and have the control to do it. They want control of their own money to operate their own services. While many realize they are not as prepared (manpower and training) to do this as they would like, the feeling is that they would rather be responsible for their own problems that continue to deal with a Nat'l gov't that is unresponsive and unreliable. Isabel is more organized than some places and has been working for several years to take care of themselves. They want to build on this and control their own destiny. Still many recognize the need for national unity. *"The preamble of the Constitution should highlight the concept of a united Solomon Islands."* by a chief.

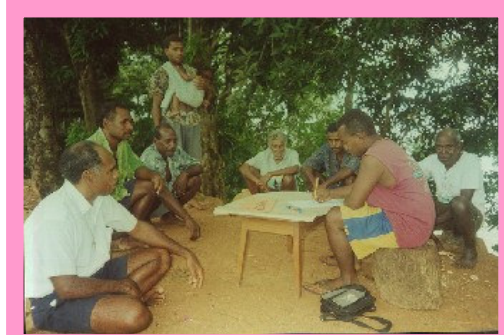
- ❑ Isabel must get the bigger percentage of revenues from Isabel resources.
- ❑ "Isabel wants to contribute to the national gov't and be a part of the Solomon Islands. BUT, we feel the distribution of funds to Provinces, from the national gov't, is not fair. Isabel contributes much through logging revenue but only a small amount comes back to Isabel."
- ❑ "With that much money and good leadership, surely we can provide our own services without depending on the Nat'l gov't."
- ❑ Nat'l gov't must return resource money to the Provinces based on Provincial production not population.
- ❑ Resource income must come to the State of Isabel first who then shares it to the Nat'l gov't.
- ❑ All income generating functions must be devolved to the Provinces/ States. (Including NPF, PAY-SUN, income taxes, export taxes and all licenses.)
- ❑ State must assist business development. Copra and agriculture industries need transport and markets.
- ❑ The State, with some assistance from the National Gov't, must create infrastructure, roads and shipping, to support new industry.

Land

Land disputes are seen as the biggest hindrance to development and thus to the ability of Isabel to take care of itself. People want these disputes settled now and believe the chief system is the only way to do this effectively. They repeatedly said that the high court is not the way to settle land dispute effectively and finally. Disputes must be settled locally, by chiefs, with the parties involved on the site.

- ❑ Land is also seen as a security issue. *"Ethnic tension was caused by land disputes."*
- ❑ Land boundaries must be agreed and recorded once and for all.
- ❑ The boundaries were set in straight lines rather than following the irregular boundaries of custom history. People feel justified in disregarding these new, gov't boundaries and that increases increase land disputes. Need to re-assess these for clarification/ rectification.
- ❑ Chief system must settle land disputes at local level through traditional process of:
 - 1- local chief → 2- Council of Chiefs → 3- Chief's Tribunal
- ❑ Women must be the majority in Trustee and Signatory Committees.
- ❑ Nat'l and State Constitution must recognize women in Isabel as the landowners.
- ❑ Need to diminish the role of foreign companies harvesting resources.
- ❑ Increase the role of the State and landowners and Isabellans by landowners operating in joint venture with the State and hiring priority being given to Isabellans.
- ❑ Return to traditional definitions of ownership, which include all adjacent reefs and unlimited depth. *"All the way to the magna"* This was strong and unanimous in nearly every consultation, possibly because it seemed a clear and solid point in the quagmire of land disputes.
- ❑ Alienated land must be returned to landowners now.

- ❑ Many pointed out that the State needs to use some lands for revenue generation. The most popular method suggested was for landowners and State to work in joint venture. Some suggested the State should lease the land or "right to use it" from the landowner.
- ❑ All gov't must recognize/ legalize custom ceremonies which define land ownership and rights. *"Sale of land is not recognized in Isabel. It is owned by the tribe, both past & future = cannot be sold."*
- ❑ Trustee system doesn't work. Trustees think they are "land owners" not merely "custodians".
- ❑ One village made up of settlers, *non-landowners*, raised the issue of legal protection of rights for settlers and landowners being needed.



Traditional Leadership

Legally give power to the chief to be local leadership and judiciary. People want the chief's system strengthened by legally and clearly defining roles and responsibilities, standardizing their judgements and fines, and adding the support of a State Police. Not once did anyone consider replacing the chief system with elected officials. People feel they have no contact with elected gov't. Chiefs are the only security, judiciary and leadership that actually touches their lives. They are happy to continue working under this system but recognize that it needs improvement. There is much concern over chiefs who are not traditionally selected – appointed rather than from a chiefly line.

- ❑ The issue of migration & movement and other "security" issues were often discussed under the topic of "traditional leadership" as the chiefs are seen as the regulating force.
- ❑ There is a strong need for regulation, standardization, definition, and training in the chief system. *"Chiefs often do not understand their roles, so they do nothing. As a result, they are perceived as weak and ineffective."* Raised by a chief.
- ❑ The chief system to have a written code; standardize compensation and penalties. This is seen as the way to balance the power chiefs have.
- ❑ Chiefs to judge both civil and minor criminal cases at the village level.
- ❑ Police to serve as back up for chiefs and be accessible to all chiefs.
- ❑ Chiefs to be more dedicated and well trained.
- ❑ Remuneration for Chiefs. This to be paid by the State. People see the chiefs as doing the local work of gov't.
- ❑ Chiefs to have representation in State and Nat'l Gov't.
- ❑ There were many indirect questions and references to "appointed" chiefs in addition to some direct statements about them. This indicates that more concern/dissatisfaction about this situation than people felt comfortable saying.

Services

Currently the Nat'l gov't receives the large majority of Isabel's resource revenue and so it should be responsible for providing adequate services. As revenue allocation changes – and this is expected or rather, assumed – then responsibility for services must change to the State accordingly.



- ❑ Lack of funds is blamed for lack of services. Some said there should be enough money for the gov't, *both Prov and Nat'l*, to provide basic services but mismanagement is the problem.
- ❑ The Ethnic Tension and following repercussion are blamed for much of the financial problem: money paid for lost property, Special Constables who are not in the budget, inappropriate compensation payments and extra police actions.

- ❑ People accept that they have responsibility in service support. They feel they are doing their share but since the ethnic tension, gov't is not doing their part.
- ❑ Example: "Our clinic bldg. is still unfinished".
- ❑ Education and Health Services must be completely free of charge to the public. Health care systems needs upgrading and to be made more accessible to the public.
- ❑ Education must be expanded to older youth by eliminating placement exams until Form 5. Addition to (*more RTCs*) and strengthening of the existing non-formal education institutions is desired to better prepare youth for life skills and to reduce the problem of "lieus". Development of jobs is needed to follow up education to address the problem of youth who have no way to contribute to society. There is a strong feeling that the youth problems are growing and must be addressed quickly before they get out of hand.
- ❑ Children need the extra years of school (Std 6 to Form 5) to mature.
- ❑ Students need the extra years of education for knowledge & self-sufficiency.
- ❑ Need more RTCs to address youth problems.
- ❑ RTCs need to focus on education for self-sufficiency

Security

The current pressing security issue is that of people of other islands moving into and through Isabel. There is a strong demand for regulation and control over this. There have been unprecedented incidents of visitors demanding compensations, that are not part of Isabel custom, and threatening villagers. A desire to see Isabel "codes of conduct", *i.e.* "custom" enforced indicates that development of a strong and more pervasive State police is required. Isabellian concern is great enough for many to suggest a need for patrol boats to monitor State boundaries.

- ❑ There were a few indications that women are nervous about increased police. At other times they were strongly for it. It may be that they don't totally trust them. This could be a reaction to the Special Constable situation or just to any man with a gun and power.
- ❑ Women and men are animate about proper training for any police force.
- ❑ Law & order must be restored and enforced. "*We want real police not just a picture of police.*" There is concern over a growing illegal drug trade in marijuana and homebrew. (*Called "kuaso" in Isabel.*)
- ❑ Some sort of "pass" or "I.D." system needs to be developed to use in monitoring movement between Provinces/ States.
- ❑ Enforcement of "Isabel Custom Code of Conduct" is a must. People from other provinces must follow this when in Isabel. Police and legal system must be able to enforce this.
- ❑ Limit the "new" churches moving in to Isabel. Isabel is a province of "one church". 99% of the population is Anglican. There is much public concern that other religions would upset the "status quo". People have seen families split by religious differences and do not want those sorts of divisions created in Isabel. They feel that religious unity is one of their strengths as a Province/ State.
- ❑ Local security issues were not a loud priority. People felt these could be handled by the chief system if the chiefs were given training and available police back up.
- ❑ A police post in each (8) district in Isabel.
- ❑ The State needs its own court system with magistrate and full staff.

Civic Engagement

Women's involvement in decision-making must increase. Women want more education so they feel confident about participating in all gov't: Local, Provincial, and National. Women in Isabel have ownership of land by custom but have never exercised control over it. They want power over decisions of land use and ownership. Women are concerned about the environment and discussed issues of damage to the future by misuse of resources. They want to be the majority signatories on contracts dealing with resource use and many men appear to agree with this.



- ❑ Women to be the majority in Trustee and Signatory Committees.
- ❑ Nat'l and State Constitution must recognize women in Isabel as the landowner.
- ❑ Women must have representation in State and Nat'l Govt.
- ❑ All people said they have virtually no contact with elected representatives, they don't know what the gov't is doing.
- ❑ People want a system that forces elected representatives to be accountable. They want a

way to eliminate reps more quickly than waiting for the next election.

- ❑ A chief and former elected official that "If law allowed the Leadership Code Commission to legally try people then it could be effective. This would require a magistrate inside the Commission. Currently it has no teeth to bite."
- ❑ People need more awareness of how gov't works. *"We need more meetings like this consultation."* *"The Constitution must be part of the Form 1 – 5 curriculum."*
- ❑ *"Constitutional reform will only be productive if education comes with it. – No more, No less!"* by a well educated Poro chief
- ❑ Communication is a factor in this lack of knowledge. The villages we visited have no newspapers and few people have (or use) radios. I found only four people who had heard of the consultation process by radio, only two who had listened to Dyke's pre-consultation programs.
- ❑ Youth need to be more involved in local gov't. They should have representatives in village meetings and committees.

Transition Period

Several points were regularly discussed which address the issues of preparing for Statehood, even though the term, "transition period" was not brought up specifically in the consultations.

- ❑ Isabel State gov't must assess the future (*skilled manpower*) needs of the state and plan for training to meet those needs. This must be done to make the idea of hiring only Isabellans possible.
- ❑ Suggestions were made for scholarships for advanced studies in areas where Isabel is lacking and bonding of those students to insure they work in the State.
- ❑ Need for development of infrastructures such roads and shipping to allow for economic growth leading to self-sufficiency.
- ❑ Stop logging while the money is going to the National gov't. People are afraid there will be no resource income left for the State and they are counting on that money for the initially for the State to operate.
- ❑ Start planting economically viable trees now.
- ❑ Settle land dispute now and finally! When the land is tied up in dispute no new development project can be done.

Makira Province Village Consultation Findings

As would be seen in the full Makira Provincial Consultation Report, a multiplicity of ideas, opinions and suggestions were given to the Makira Ulawa consultation team. Many of the suggestions are indeed practical and could be easily adopted by the constitution. Others, however, need elaborate analysis. Whatever form the new/amended constitution may take, important works are yet to be done. Awareness on the reformed constitution must continue. Moreover, financial implications of the new structure must be clearly laid out and resource-sharing formula defined. Most importantly, local sentiments and understandings must be featured heavily in the amended constitution to ensure that it is a *real* national constitution of Solomon Islands.

1. **Political awareness and education on the new constitution and governance structure must continue:** Before a final version of the new constitution is drafted, it is extremely important that people are fully informed and educated about it all. Massive awareness and educational campaigns on the new constitution and governance structure must be embarked upon to ensure people feel part and knowledgeable of the new system.

More importantly, provincial authorities (representatives of people) should be informed and invited for final comments before the system is finalised and adopted. Popular participation (civic engagement) must be maintained as much as possible at all stages prior to adoption.

2. **Financial analysis of the new system must be completed:** It is highly recommended that the financial analysis of the new government structure be completed immediately before the new constitution is drafted. This should give people and provinces a clear indication of what the cost is and what is expected of them. This is an urgent part of the whole reform exercise that must be cleared before proper decisions and awareness of the new system as required in recommendation 1 above.
3. **Revenue sharing formula to be instituted immediately:** Closely related to 2 above is the urgent need to clearly specify the revenue sharing formula. Since revenue sharing of national and provincial wealth were heated issues during the consultation, urgent work must be accorded to it. The province claimed that they gave more in terms of logging since independence but receive less in return.
4. **Local understandings of situations must take higher consideration over international views on certain issues for the constitution to be “home grown”:** It is highly recommended that the new constitution should interpret issues and define matters in the light of local understandings. It has been proven from the current (1978) constitution that where local understandings are not in built in the constitution, problems bound to happen. Draft the constitution to ensure that it is owned by Solomon islanders and centred on Solomon Islands' values and principles.

Civic Engagement

- ❑ Throughout Makira Ulawa province, people revealed that they do not understand how the present system of government operates. They knew however that they voted parliamentarians and provincial assembly members to represent them at various levels of government. What this representation means is another question. It is obvious that people never had feedback from either provincial government or national government about development ideas or programmes of government and its institutions. People had nothing to do or do not feel part of the government.
- ❑ They suggested an improvement to current structures to facilitate the ease of communication between government and rural areas. Indeed, they are interested in being part of governance but only if they are given the chance. If the constitution is to be reformed, emphasis should be on the empowerment of people through the flow of

information. Civic engagement is currently lacking and the reformed constitution should ensure that this is facilitated.

Services

- ❑ People throughout Makira Ulawa province felt that the government is neglecting services it used to provide. Apart from the sorry state of medical and health services, other services are almost non-existent. Moreover, having access to these services is getting expensive and people in rural areas could ill afford costs of accessing these services. Not that they do not want to, but rather, market outlets for their untouched resources are not available. The general feeling is that if government expects people to pay for services, there should also be avenues for people to sell their produce or even look for alternative employment. Makira Ulawa province and its people wanted government to continue providing services to the best of its ability and where there is real need to give some to other institutions, government should do so after careful consideration.

Security

- ❑ Much security issues in communities that are concerns to people were highlighted during the consultations. They range from personal security, community security to security over private properties. It was revealed that in rural communities, security lies in the hands of individuals, traditional leaders, and church leaders. The police service is regarded as not functioning at the time of the consultations. They wished that police service could be improved so those village chiefs could work together with them to ensure security in communities throughout the province.
- ❑ With regards to judiciary and the justice systems, Makira people felt that if traditional leaders, church leaders, and others community leaders are non-existent, situations in villages would have been chaotic. There are no links between the formal judiciary and traditional forms of dispute resolution. What was coming out clearly was the need for reformed constitution to recognise the importance of traditional leaders and institutions they serve and incorporate these into formal government structures. The two systems should always complement each other rather than operating independently as they currently do.

Traditional leadership

- ❑ Similarly, it was obvious from responses that people wish to see the incorporation of traditional leadership into formal governance structures. Chiefs and traditional laws should be recognised in formal government structures and national constitution. It must not be downplayed that traditional leaders shouldered bulk of problems in Solomon Islands. They should therefore be supported through cash or kind to assist them in their duties. The common call throughout the province was to recognise the work of traditional leaders and have that featured in the national constitution.
- ❑ In addition, traditional leaders should play a part in controlling movements and settlements in the province. Suggestions are that the right to free movement should be restricted to ensure that cultural norms of the province are not tampered with. It was also clear from responses that settlements by others in the province should be discouraged.

Maliata Province Village Consultation Findings

Civic Engagement

- ❑ The centralization of political power in Honiara is widely resented by people in the rural villages of Malaita. People feel isolated and marginalized, disconnected from the political structures and leaders, that are seen to serve themselves, rather than the people within their constituencies who elect them to power. The establishment of provincial government seems to have done little to allay these feelings.
- ❑ People often spoke similarly – and rarely kindly – of both their respective provincial assembly members and national members of parliament (hereafter both referred to as MPs for ease): they are only visible during election campaigns when seeking votes; they do not return to the villages to keep people informed or to seek the views of their constituents; they are often suspected of misusing funds; and they are seen as placing their own interests ahead of those of the people. There is general disenchantment with the formal political process, at both the provincial and national levels.
- ❑ People often complained of very poor communication, if any, existing between the people and both the provincial and national governments. People are not kept informed of political or social developments and their views not sought. Before the team's visit, most people were unaware of the planned constitutional reform process.
- ❑ People were extremely grateful to be given the chance to express their views and opinions during meetings, feeling that this was the first time in many years that anyone had come to speak directly to them in a consultative manner. However, people were very keen that this set of meetings be the beginning, rather the end of their participation in this process. Even if it is not possible to embark upon a return visit to all villages, people at least want representatives to attend further meetings in Auki or Honiara, to share the views of the villages and to keep the people informed of progress in the reform process.
- ❑ People felt it important that all people within society be represented in the political system. Unlike the proposal within the State Government Taskforce report that only people with chiefly lineage would be eligible to stand as a candidate for elected positions, people felt that all people should be free to stand as a candidate. However, people would like there to be some system in place whereby potential candidates could be 'screened' with respect to their eligibility and suitability to be elected as a provincial or national MP.
- ❑ If a state government system is adopted, people are very keen for the state or province to retain, or gain, many powers that will enable the province to have a greater say in their own affairs. Generally, people want the province to have control of the exploitation of the natural resources of the province, including marine resources. They believe this will allow the province to have a more autonomous role in deciding development priorities and ensuring the most necessary services are delivered throughout the province.
- ❑ Most people recognise that any state-federal system will see the introduction of a resource-sharing agreement between the provincial and national government. Specifically in relation to exploitation of marine resources, many people expressed an interest in implementing a system similar to the Australian system, where the province would retain control over, and responsibility for, the marine resources seaward to a certain distance (perhaps twelve nautical miles), whereas the national government would retain responsibility for the remaining body of sea beyond this mark (within the nation's Exclusive Economic Zone). Many people felt that the local administrative body (village, area council, ward committee etc.) should retain some responsibility, and privilege, over a small distance out to sea.
- ❑ The discussion below on the theme of Traditional Leadership overlaps with many ideas raised when discussing Civic Engagement, particularly in relation to how traditional structures can be utilized to ensure people have a greater say in local, provincial and national affairs.

Security

- ❑ Throughout Malaita, people have lost confidence in the police force.
- ❑ People want to feel secure and want the swift return of law and order. They believe existing police officers need to be retrained and new recruits need better screening before being admitted to the force and then need full and proper training. Undesirable elements within the police force need to be weeded out. People are concerned at the way in which known criminals and troublemakers during the ethnic tensions have been retained in, or recruited into the police force, either as regular police officers or Special Constables (SCs).
- ❑ Many people expressed concern at the number of weapons that still remain in the possession of people in rural areas. People want all areas to be disarmed as a matter of urgency.
- ❑ Despite the current lack of confidence in the police, people want more police posts to be located in rural areas – presumably with well-trained officers staffing these posts.
- ❑ Whilst there were exceptions in several locations, most people supported the idea of local police posts comprising police officers from a mixed range of origins. A great majority of people thought it desirable to include police from not only other language groups from within Malaita, but also police from other provinces within Solomon Islands. People saw this as an important to avoid the undesirable consequences of wantokism, with locally-based police being seen to exhibit favouritism and bias within their work and investigations. This was succinctly summed up in Auki following the death of Sir Fred Soaki, when one local Malaitan resident expressed the following sentiment, after commenting that the identity of the perpetrator had been public knowledge within 24 hours of the murder: “If the killer of Sir Fred was not Malaitan, he would have been in custody the next day.”
- ❑ People were concerned about the emergence of small-scale crimes, particularly thought to result from the use of marijuana and kwaso (homebrew) amongst young men.
- ❑ Many villages support the idea of establishing community policing initiatives, as proposed by former Police Commissioner, Mr Frank Short. Some villages have implemented limited programmes similar in concept, such as volunteer security patrols at night.
- ❑ People would like chiefs to have a role in maintaining security in villages and to be given the power to enforce fines and penalties for breaking the law. See the section on Traditional Leadership below for further discussion of this issue.

Freedom of Movement

- ❑ Throughout Malaita, people essentially agree with the concept of freedom of movement being enshrined in the national constitution. Some people did express the desire to enforce restrictions on freedom of movement, and particularly freedom to settle in another area, identifying this freedom as having been an express and direct cause of the ethnic tensions in recent years.
- ❑ However, even in areas where people fully agreed with the concept of freedom of movement, people felt it important that people travelling and settling in areas should live in compliance with the laws, rules and regulations of the province (or state) to which they move, and honour and respect the traditional norms, customs and practices of the local area. People would like to have some means of ensuring people do comply with such laws and customs, along with a means of requiring people to depart the area if they do not comply.
- ❑ Conversely, even in areas where some people strongly supported the idea of restricting freedom of movement and settlement, people were aware of the difficulties this would present in the context of the Solomon Islands abiding by its obligations with respect to international human rights treaties and conventions. People advocating some restrictions accept that they cannot expect the Solomon Islands to disregard their responsibilities and obligations under international law.

Services

- ❑ There was widespread consensus throughout all meetings that people are most concerned about the provision of education and health care at the rural level.
- ❑ People believe primary level education should be free for all, with the government providing adequate facilities, material and regular and timely payment for qualified teachers. People recognise that educating the children of today is integral to preparing the leaders of tomorrow.
- ❑ People accept that they may have to pay for secondary schooling for their children. Generally, people are reasonably happy to pay a small fee for quality education.
- ❑ Throughout Malaita people spoke of poorly stocked, or unstocked, clinics. Even simple medicinal goods are not available and only limited services are on offer. Often, qualified and experienced staff are not available and when they do not receive regular salary payments (which is often) they may not remain on duty. Women speak of giving birth at home, in the bush or in the sea shallows, without necessary support available.
- ❑ The Ato'ifi Seventh Day Adventist Hospital was the one notable exception, where people praised the service provided. The hospital maintains a very good standard of service due to the significant support provided by the SDA Church, with only a small portion of financial support coming from the government.
- ❑ Whilst education and health care are undoubtedly the greatest concerns, people also feel that the government – provincial or national – should be providing better transport and communications networks throughout rural areas, as well as ensuring reliable water access, and would like support for agricultural and fisheries industries.
- ❑ People often made the link of receiving support for industries that would allow people to pursue income-earning opportunities, in order that people could have the disposable income available to pay fees for the provision of basic services. People widely expressed the view that they are happy to pay a contribution for the delivery of services as long as they are regular, reliable and of a decent standard. However, without any income-earning opportunities, people are not able to earn the money required to pay fees.
- ❑ Currently, many communities rely on the contributions of the local people, in the form of volunteer labour to assist in the maintenance, repair and cleaning up of existing service infrastructure. Community clean-up days are organized and the skills of various people utilized.
- ❑ People want to be able to deal more directly with donor agencies and non-government agencies that could assist in the development of rural areas. People believe that at present, development funds that are disbursed through the national government, and then the provincial government, suffer from 'leakage' or amounts are 'siphoned off' by politicians, so that limited funds actually reach the village for projects.
- ❑ Likewise, people at the village level want a greater control over the current Rural Constituency Development Fund (RCDF), which is disbursed at the discretion of the national MP. People believe this process is too easily abused and open to corruption. Many people supported the idea of a committee being established – at the local village level or ward level – that would have some role in deciding where RCDF projects should be implemented. This would make the RCDF more responsive to the needs of the rural areas.

Traditional Leadership

- ❑ The issue of Traditional Leadership is deeply entwined with the issues of Civic Engagement and Security. People saw an increased role for traditional leaders as going some way to ensuring greater levels of civic engagement and heightened security in rural areas.
- ❑ Throughout the consultations, all people expressed the desire that chiefs, or traditional leaders, need to be given a greater say in the affairs of both the province and the nation.

- ❑ Whilst major differences exist in terminology used to refer to chiefs, and in terms of how chiefs or leaders are selected, or elected, or inherit their positions, all areas share in common the belief that the role of chiefs is important and underrated in current society and politics. (Some of the terms used for different chiefs – some of which relate to the same position, but in a different area are as follows: bush lawyer, elected chief, hereditary chief, local chief, paramount chief, political chief, registered chief, selected chief, tribal chief, and village chief.)
- ❑ One of the most widely shared common thoughts and ideas for a means for providing an improvement in incorporating chiefs into the political system, suggested time and time again in all areas of Malaita, was for the creation of a 'Council of Chiefs' at the provincial level. Below this, a 'House of Chiefs' would be established in each ward, or language group area, or similar political unit within Malaita. Below this level, many villages suggested other groupings of chiefs or bodies of people should be formed to work up to the 'Council of Chiefs'. Different terms were given for these bodies at each various level.
- ❑ People were disappointed that Area Councils were disbanded without being replaced by a similar structure that would allow for village people to have a say. People recognise that not all Area Councils operated well, but believe the system could have been improved, rather than discarded.
- ❑ People throughout Malaita want the position and role of the chief to be recognised by law and for chiefs to be given greater powers in respect of their role. People want chiefs to have the power to enforce decisions, customary laws and penalties for the infringement of such laws. People want the decisions of chiefs to be legally binding in some form. This is seen as extremely important to ensure that people respect their position and decisions. People recognise that there are cases that chiefs should not handle, that would then be referred to the police and be handled within the civil court system.
- ❑ To ensure appropriate representation of and by women and youths, some people suggested that no minimum age should be placed on representatives of these chiefly bodies, and likewise, women should be eligible to be representatives. In several meetings, some men strongly objected to the idea of women being representatives in any chiefly structure, as they saw this contravening traditional custom ways. Often however, these same men supported the idea of women being involved in a civic leadership role, outside any traditional custom structure.
- ❑ In relation to traditional leadership issues, the issue of land was often raised. Concerns related to land are bound up with anxieties about traditional systems of land ownership, development, identity and the general decline in the role and power of chiefs and customary traditions, all in the context of a rapidly changing social and economic environment.
- ❑ People want their chiefs, or traditional leaders, to have a greater say in the resolution of land disputes and decisions regarding the future use of land, particularly in relation to development proposals.
- ❑ Many people supported the idea of a local traditional court being established to deal with land issues and to resolve land disputes. Basically, the views of village people supported the proposals of the State Government Taskforce, regarding the creation of a local traditional court that would have jurisdiction over similar types of cases as those suggested within the SGTF Report.

Renbell Province Village Consultation Findings

Overview

- ❑ **Renbel wants to break away from the rest of the country and become a separate nation:** Some believe that Renbel is small with little resources and manpower and so statehood is a better option. Some believe that bigger provinces that press for state government are full of jealousy and hatred. They just do not want to share their resources and manpower with the smaller provinces.
- ❑ The support for a separate nation and for a state government system is based on grievances felt the current centralised system. The current system being centralised meant that services reaching the provinces are very poor and so people have the feeling that they are a forgotten race. Development and services are mainly for the urban areas such as Honiara. As one person on Bellona Island puts it, "The current system today needs to be changed. It only benefits the people in Honiara. The beneficiaries are those working in the three main arms of the government (Legislature, Judiciary and Executive) in Honiara. The powers are centralised and the 80/90% of the people who live in the rural areas are always victimised."
- ❑ **Concept of Council of Chiefs:** The concept of a Council of chiefs is not a traditional concept but is been used in both Renbel and Bellona. This concept will become handy if the country accepts chief's representatives to be involved in the decision-making province in the different levels of government. The chiefs representative maybe appointed by the Council of Chiefs or that the Chairman of the Council might become the Chiefs representative in the state parliament. In Bellona there was a suggestion that the chiefs could form a Electoral College of Chiefs who could elect the chiefs representative.
- ❑ There is support from the chiefs, women and youth that there should be a chief's representative in the state parliament. The Council of Chiefs or the Electoral College of Chiefs could thus elect the chiefs' representative. With regard to chiefs' representation in the federal level, the youth on Bellona are very strongly opposed to the idea of a chief's representative in the Federal Government on the basis that they have a more important role in the state and village level. However, this view may not have due regard to the fact that in the future the chiefs might be more educated and more knowledgeable.
- ❑ **Capacity Building Process:** Renbel province is geographically located very far from the main islands of the country. This maybe one reason why transportation is very hard in this part of the country. Shipping services from Honiara is very unreliable and limited. Ships do not visit this province often (maybe once every three months) and this causes shortage of food, fuel, petrol, kerosene and medical supplies.
- ❑ This is really a forgotten province. If there were to be any capacity building process, the Province would need a lot of assistance in a lot of areas. It would need to rebuild its Headquarters for the Province and the Police since they were destroyed by cyclone Nina. It would need transportation and communication facilities. It would need a wharf on each of the islands.
- ❑ There is no or little commercial activity in the Province and one wonder where the people find their money to pay for their basic needs such as soap, kerosene, rice, etc.
- ❑ The island has potentials for tourism (World Heritage at East Rennell), logging especially on Rennell and marine resources.
- ❑ It needs to build up its human resources in the fields of doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, engineers, technicians, administrators, etc.
- ❑ **Marginalised Groups – Women and Youth:** Renbel Province is a patrilineal society and is male dominated. Its tradition is still very strong and culturally women and youth are marginalised when it comes to making decisions in the village and government level. Chiefs make decision and expect everyone to obey and follow them.

Civic Engagement

- ❑ It is clear from the responses that information about the reform in the government system does reach them through the radio and other means. However, the people prefer the face to face contact on the basis that not all of them have radios.
- ❑ The people feel that they should take part in discussing and commenting on how the government system may be changed or reformed.
- ❑ It would also appear that communication between the government and the villagers are very limited so much so that the villagers are not knowledgeable about how the government system operates. The people feel that their representatives should be reaching out to them by paying them visits. In Bellona, the women were very vocal and came up with the idea that the constitution should have a provision requiring politicians to visit their Constituency or Ward's three times per year.

Services

- ❑ Different villages have different circumstances and geographical locations and thus have different requirements in terms of services. It is a common view that services reaching the rural people now are very poor and the people expect a big improvement. In terms of priority, the people place the following services as priority, namely education, health, transportation, communication, agriculture extension, fisheries and income generating projects.
- ❑ In relation to education the people want free education. They want additional secondary schools. There is also a need to train more qualified teachers. More importantly there is a need for teaching materials and resources. They believe that the Ministry of Education is unfair when awarding scholarships. This affects Renbel's manpower.
- ❑ In relation to health, the people want free health services. They want the government to build a hospital and more clinics in the province. They also want to see more people trained to become doctors and nurses to serve in the rural areas and not just in the urban areas.
- ❑ In relation to transportation, the importance of transport to the people of Renbel can not be understated. Their geographical location, being far from Honiara, meant that transportation is highly essential to bring food supplies, medical supplies and other important things. They require a regular and reliable shipping service. Currently shipping service is very poor with ships calling in at the province once every three or four months.
- ❑ In relation to income generating projects, there is a strong believe that people need to make money to pay for their basic needs and enjoy a better standard of living. Finding money in the rural area is very hard and therefore the people call on the government to introduce income-generating projects in their areas.
- ❑ In relation to communication, the province will need a big improvement in its communication facilities. Radio is the only means of communication in the Province but a Telekom communication facility is badly needed. A better communication network will perhaps help the flow of services to the rural people.
- ❑ In relation to agriculture extension, agriculture is the backbone of our country. The people need every help from the agriculture extension officers to teach them the best agricultural techniques and skills to grow crops for consumption and for sale.

Security/Police

- ❑ The legitimate body in the country to provide security and maintain law and order is the police force. The police force has not been effective in providing security to the people and maintaining law and order due to lack of logistic support or sheer laziness or maybe due to low morale caused by the lack of regular pay.
- ❑ The sad thing about the Province is that it has no building or proper office for police. It only has one policeman in the whole province, who is the Provincial Police Commander (PPC). The PPC has arranged special constables (SC) in the main villages but they rarely report to him about law and order situations in their respective

villages. The PPC has no transport to move around the two islands. The PPC is virtually handicapped for lack of proper office, manpower, transport and logistics. On the whole, for the police to be effective in their work in this province, it needs more logistics support, manpower, transport and a proper office.

- ❑ The people are not confident with community policing since it will involve the community finding money to pay for the salaries of its manpower. They would be happy with it if the government provides the money for the salaries of its manpower. Further it was said, in particular on Bellona, that it would not work well in their community because of their attitude.
- ❑ As for the composition of the police force, the people would want a police force with a mixture of locals and those from other provinces. This will overcome some cultural barriers and minimise any favouritism.

Freedom of Movement/Settlement

- ❑ In relation to the freedom of movement, it is clear that there is a general agreement that the freedom of movement be restricted, controlled and/or limited. The main reason for this is that this freedom has opened the way for a lot of problems. It seems that people would only accept movement for good reasons such as employment, education, trade and medical treatment. They do not want lius (vagabonds). In the case of settlement, the people are very concerned about settlement and would want the government or state to control it. One Bellona man puts it this way, "State to state movement is no problem but the problem is what they do when they get to the other state. They squat on another person's land. They use other people's land and sea resources. They settle on another person's land and appoint their own chief. This is the problem." In the case of intermarriage, it is a general view that only the married person is allowed to settle with his/her spouse but not the extended family. However, extended families (relatives) can come and visit but only for a limited period of time.

Traditional Leadership and Village Governance

- ❑ In the villages, they have chiefs and religious leaders. There is a general feeling that the church leaders are assuming the roles of the chiefs. A good example is the organising of feasts and festivities. In Bellona it was said that maybe the confusion is that most of the church leaders are chiefs themselves.
- ❑ The chiefs are not involved in the government system although they are closer to the rural people who make up the bulk of the province's population. There is a general feeling that they should participate in the decision making process in the proposed state government system. It is noteworthy that the Renbel Provincial Executive favours the involvement of the traditional leaders in the state government system. The chiefs feel that they should be remunerated and recognised for carrying out their work as chiefs in the villages. It is a commonly held view that the chiefs should be empowered so that their decisions have a legal force and effect. This empowerment will have the effect of causing the people to respect the Chiefs' decisions. The respect for the chiefs decision is currently lacking.
- ❑ The chiefly system is male dominated and is inherited. It is a partrilineal society. Land ownership is through the male.
- ❑ There is a general agreement that women and youth should have representation at least at the state government level. Some women and youth would want representation at the federal level. The women would also want a women representative in the Council of Chiefs.
- ❑ There is a Council of Chiefs on each island. If state government is introduced and requires a chief's representative then they could use the Council of chiefs to choose the chief's representative. For instance, the Chairman of the Council of Chiefs may be appointed as the chiefs representative in the proposed state parliament or that the Council of chiefs may be convened for the purpose of electing the chiefs representative in the state government. There was a suggestion that the Chiefs could form an Electoral College of Chiefs who have the power to elect the chiefs representative.

Court system

- ❑ The current centralised court system has its limitations and this maybe the reason why maintaining law and order is ineffective. There is no frequent visit by the Magistrate and cases have piled up since 1997. Where the court system is ineffective, law and order will become a problem. The people would want a Magistrates court on the island so that court cases can be dealt with within a reasonable period of time.

Women and Youth Involvement in the Consultations

- ❑ The women recognise that culturally they have no part in the decision making process, be it in the village or government level. However, they do play some part in the decision making process in church affairs. On the whole, the women are marginalised with regard to decision making because of their traditionally male dominated society.
- ❑ The women are eager to fight against this discrimination and wish to be represented in the chiefly level and in the government level, both provincial and national levels. They believe that they have an important part to play in the decision making process. They want representation so that they can raise and discuss matters or issues that concern women. Perhaps they have a case. In Bellona the women argue their case by saying that in the olden days they act as mediators between warring parties and thus act as peacemakers which is an important role.
- ❑ It was suggested that if there is to be a women representative in both state and federal level, then the leaders of their respective womens' groups would elect their representative.
- ❑ Like in other parts of the country, the women have womens' groups such as Dorcas Federation, SSEC Womens' Fellowship and the Renbel Women Council. It was said that there is some church restriction in joining the Renbel Women Council. These womens' groups could be used to voice womens' concerns and issues and also as avenues to collect information and acquiring skills and knowledge. There is a need to organise these groups to become useful groups for the women. It is said that workshops are needed for the women on the two islands. If they (women groups) are organised well then, as the women wished for, the leaders of these groups could be used to elect their representatives in the state and federal level.
- ❑ The women understand the current system of government but are not sure about its functions. The communication linkage between the government and the people, which includes the women, is lacking. There is a big concern that their elected representatives do not visit them to inform them about government plans, policies and programmes. In Bellona, the women were very vocal and wanted a provision in the national constitution that requires members to visit their constituency or ward three times a year. This kind of requirement will ensure that their elected representatives do actually carry out their work. The Bellona women again say that the constitution should set out some criteria to measure the performance of elected members of the different levels of government.
- ❑ The women unanimously agree that services are very poorly delivered in the province. All services, which includes, education, health, agriculture, water/sanitation, transportation and fisheries, are poor.
- ❑ The women unanimously agree that the police service is very poor in providing security and in maintaining law and order.
- ❑ The women of Bellona say that freedom of movement should be allowed and maintained in our constitution but there should be some restrictions imposed on settlement.
- ❑ The Bellona women say that the Electoral Act should be amended so that registered voters who have been resident in the constituency for a certain period, say 6 months, are the ones who can vote.
- ❑ The youth say they have heard about the government reform process over the radio program "pipol, place and government" and understood the different levels of government but not their functions. They prefer face to face consultation as the best

and effective means to communicate and inform people about government systems and how they operate.

- ❑ The youth say that their traditional leaders are their chiefs who are responsible for solving problems within the community. They say that the religious leaders have stepped over some of the roles of their chiefs. They also confirm that chiefs lacked recognition and respect.
- ❑ There is an overwhelming support from the youth that the chiefs should have a representative in the state level and that they can appoint their own representative. There was a big debate when asked whether there should be a chiefs representative in the federal level. A young female favoured the idea but her male counterparts argue otherwise. They questioned the role that he will play in the federal level. One speaker said that he doesn't mind chiefs, women and youth having representatives in the state and federal level but was concerned about people's attitude (corruption).
- ❑ There was a consensus from the youth that women should have a representative in both the state and federal levels and that they should have a designated seat. They felt that for fairness, men and women should vote in the seats contested by both men and women.
- ❑ In relation to youth representation, the youth agree that they should have representation in both state and federal levels and that the chairman of the Youth Federation should represent them.
- ❑ It appears that there is a general agreement that movement should be controlled, restricted and/or limited. Movement, they say, should be for a good reason such as employment, education, health assistance and business. In the case of inter state marriage, it was felt that the spouse from another state can stay and settle but not the relatives. The relatives may, however, be allowed to remain for a short period of time. One person was too strong to say that people move around to find easy access to money and so the government should set up places in the area where people can make money. In other words, there should be equal development in the provinces to deter people from moving about without good reasons.
- ❑ The youth joined their chiefs, men and women in confirming that the police service in the province is very poor. The police lacked logistics. The police have no police station or office and that manpower is also lacking. They felt that each ward should have a Police Aid Post. They say that special constables deal with law and order issues but not effectively. They would rather have someone put in there by the government.
- ❑ The youth felt that all services are important, such services include, education, health, communication, transportation, water / sanitation, agriculture extension, banking, postal services and income generating projects.
- ❑ The youths say that their schools, both primary and secondary, need upgrading. They need qualified teachers and school materials.
- ❑ The youth say they need a hospital. They are very concerned with the constant low supply of medicine, lack of doctors and not enough nurses and nurse aids. They are also concerned that there is no clinic because of land dispute. The youth also felt that they could not afford to pay for services of a private clinic although one youth argue otherwise.
- ❑ One person was of the view that in criminal cases where a person is found not guilty he/she should be compensated because his/her reputation would have been damaged based on the imputation that he is a criminal.

Temotu Province Village Consultation Findings

Overview

- ❑ It is clear view of leaders that in the case of Temotu special Circumstances arise that require the region to be given Special Constitutional consideration in order to overcome present obstacles and perceived injustice arising since Independence.
- ❑ The predominate view of Leaders is that Temotu should be free to structure its own system of governance with Jurisdiction to exercise a high degree of autonomy over the regions domestic, financial and economic affairs.
- ❑ The aforementioned is echoed by the women groups. The women reintegrated that imposing a system of Government without seriously considering the views and will of the people of Temotu would be a replica of what the British government did to them in 1978. The women earnestly suggest that any system of governance be it "State or Federalism" "for Temotu People" be determined "by Temotu People"
- ❑ Geographical Location and isolation of Temotu Province has been a Contributing factor for the neglect by the present system and donor Community to the development aspirations of the Province and its people. An out cry of most Village women as a supportive example is the market house which has taken almost 11 years to be re-built and the lack of any visible development programmes for women in Temotu Province.
- ❑ On services, all groups consulted say education and health including sanitation are considered important. Education came under much criticism. Generally, Youth are despondent of the education system and feel neglected. They stress that the views of Youths be considered in any future system of governance for Temotu.
- ❑ Inadequate medical services and insufficient medical supplies for a province with an unreliable transportation services, with scattered Islands geographically remote from the Central Hospital and the National Pharmacy store unit.
- ❑ Close tied to the above point is the issue of sustainability.

Security

- ❑ On security, there is a general call to the present government and the Ministry of Police to take note of the following concerns: Move all police officers from Province to Province; All Police Posts in Honiara and Provinces be manned and controlled by foreigners and lastly, sack or make redundant the current Police Force in any new proposed system of governance in the Solomon Islands.

Movement/Settlement

- ❑ On the issue of movement / settlement, it was widely agreed that movement of people should not be restricted but should be controlled. Generally, women see the following areas a major security concern: The sea-the negligence of the Government to notify the people of Temotu of foreign fishing Vessels fishing near their Islands. They maintain that should these Vessels engage in illegal fishing, the government should consider such actions as unacceptable. Instead, the Government does the opposite.

Civic Engagement

- ❑ The issue of civic engagement according to the Temotu people, were never consulted on Independence. They pointed out that few village people understand what Independence really mean and only became aware of constitutional change when their systems or institutions of governance were substituted for a foreign system. The apparent view under the current constitutional reform process is one of suspicion and distrust. The people do not feel part of the process and strongly believe that decisions are already made without consideration of their views or that of the position of

Temotu. In short, leaders here express the view that outside forces will eventually determine Temotu's Constitutional destiny.

- ❑ While there is a tendency to wish to arrive at clear-cut findings, the reality of carrying out consultations in district grouping in Temotu Province, demands acceptance of complexity as well as a sensitivity to local differences. Nevertheless, a number of issues relating to Governance emerged very clearly in the course of the consultations and deserve special mention. They emerged spontaneously from all villages covered during consultations and were expressed by all four target groups.
- ❑ The 5 regions of Temotu (Nende, Pele, Vatu, Vaeakau and Tikanu) are capable of being divided into sub regions. These constitute the main governmental groupings of Temotu. Prior to 1978, those groupings were autonomous and it was not until 1981 when the Province of Temotu was created that the groupings were merged in deference to the regions diversity to form a single and uniform provincial governing entity. For purposes of provincial administration Temotu was divided up into 17 wards that bear no relationship to the Geographical groupings of clans.
- ❑ The regions of Nende as well as Pele and the other three regions that comprise the Temotu geographical region were never consulted to form a single governing entity as prescribed in the provincial Government Act 1981. There seems to be an understanding that the 5 regions have always historically, traded with each other and that in terms, politically identify themselves collectively belonging to a grouping called Temotu.
- ❑ On Civic Engagement and Women, they criticize the current provincial authorities for being complacent as a result, a curse to Temotu because it has never acknowledged the isolation of Temotu from the Centre, hence high cost of service delivery unlike the rest of the Solomon Islands, the impact and effect is hitting hard on a province with poor cash flow. They argue that Temotu women must be given the full participation in the designing of a system of governance suitable for Temotu. A system that must have their identity secured as not only women but as individuals in a cultural setting, so they can truly develop a sense of pride and patriotism for their nation. They stress that they do not want to be marginalized or to be seen as mere copy – cats who cannot “think” for themselves.

Leader's Point of View

- ❑ The leaders strongly expressed the view that any future reform of the governing system must start by the 5 regions themselves agreeing to form a single governing entity. The groups themselves must exercise according to their own Politics the Creation of a common union. Only according to that process may the ethnic groupings forge the creation of a governing system in recognition of their diversity.
- ❑ The leader unequivocally denounced the current governing system. They argue that the present system is perceived irrelevant at the village level. It is a totally foreign import having no relationship with the governance system of Temotu that they say has evolved over a thousand years based, customs and choice of Political systems. There was total support for the reintroduction of home based village governance. The view is that the traditional village institutions of governance are still largely intact although dormant as a result of the imposition of the current system of governance. They appear confident that the reintroduction of governance at the village level would work in the present context. Traditional village governance is a formal institution in its own right with the capability to adopt universal standards of governance.
- ❑ The leaders in view points are totally supportive across all other groupings in the consultation process with regards to the restoration of village leaders powers in all matters of governance including law and order. They also agree that there should be active policing at the village level but have mixed feelings as to who should undertake policing. One view then argues that the current police should work alongside village leaders supporting traditional leaders actions and decisions in the area of enforcement. Yet another view is that the villages should have their own police such as area constables having jurisdiction solely within the village. The traditional view, which is partially supported by some leaders, is that everyone in the village is a “Police officer”. The local police commissioner supports the concept of community

based policing and the prospect of traditional leaders sharing responsibility with the village community for the maintenance of village order.

Service

- ❑ On Service it was agreed that the introduction of government services is a new concept for Temotu. It is argued that up until 1978, Temotu received no official government service. Since Independence, the government has failed in the delivery of service to many of the village in Nende and Pele. Some rural villages do have access to basic education and health services, but those services are run down.
- ❑ There is a general feeling, a feeling shared by all the groups of a strong sense of service deprivation throughout Temotu. They understand the problem is avoidable and caused basically by Government policies of revenue distribution. There is a general awareness that the revenue earning Capacity from the region's resources are sufficient to address service needs. They seek therefore a more equitable distribution of revenue, which they argue should be based on what each province derive from its own resources and man Power. Again, there seem to be a broad consensus that these and other matters must be dealt with adequately in any new system of governance on Temotu.



Western Province Village Consultation Findings

Civic Engagement

- ❑ The majority of people told the Team that they did not believe that they had a good understanding of the present system of governance in the country nor much awareness of the ongoing issue of Constitutional reform. This view was however, much more prevalent in the villages than in the towns or provincial centers. Even in government substations there was more awareness. This could be because in the provincial centers and towns and to a lesser extent in substations there is greater daily interaction with government offices; government personnel work and live there and there are generally better communications. So, for example, in Koriovuku in Ranongga which is a government substation 5 people said that they had heard the radio programmes and word had spread to such an extent that elders had traveled from 2 or 3 nearby villages to attend the meeting.
- ❑ Suggestions as to how people's awareness might be improved: (a) Improve communications using the methods suggested above; (b) Produce pamphlets / booklets on various aspects of the topics / issues and distribute them.
- ❑ Introduce the free government newsheets / newspapers and circulate free to schools, libraries and village organizers – even if only for the duration of the Constitutional reform process.
- ❑ Conduct more face-to-face meetings as these provide the opportunity for interaction and for questions to be put and answered.
- ❑ Introduce governance etc to the school curriculum
- ❑ Run adult education courses / workshops
- ❑ Use the elected members to educate their constituents.
- ❑ One particular suggestion that overlapped civic engagement and the provision of services was the reintroduction of the method used by the colonial administration in sending a small ship around on tour every two weeks or so with a team of administrator, magistrate, doctor, agricultural officer etc. This had the advantage of maintaining regular contact and regular exchange of information on a face to face basis and because it was regular it was expected and people were ready for it and anticipated the visits. They could also be used for transporting some cargo.
- ❑ On the matter of communication between people and their provincial and national governments, people were the most outspoken. There was practically unanimous condemnation of politicians at both the provincial and the national level.
- ❑ Their elected representatives were blamed as one of the main reasons why the electorate are so ill informed on current issues. The team was told repeatedly that once elected, members do not return to their Wards or to their Constituencies either to inform nor to seek the view of their electorates on current issues. Some communities even felt that they were being discriminated against specifically by their members either because of the villages religion or because the village did not vote for that particular member in the election. Though quite how, given the fact that there is meant to be a secret ballot system operating, a member is supposed to know who actually voted for him, was not made clear.
- ❑ It was very apparent however, that there is a universal disillusionment with the politicians. People view them as corrupt and self interested. They ask repeatedly why certain behaviours are not prosecuted, such as embezzlement of funds. When people say that there should be laws introduced in a new system against certain actings by politicians and are then informed that in fact such laws often exist already in the present system but are not enforced, then they are somewhat at a loss to suggest what can be done to address their grievances. For example one contributor said that there should be a law against candidates paying people to vote for them. This is already an unlawful practice under legislation relating to elections.

A number of suggestions were made though as to what mechanisms might be put in place either in a new system or to improve upon the existing system. These may be summarized as follows:

- ❑ That there should be stronger criteria for standing for election in the first place such as a basic standard of education. Any previous convictions or contraventions of the leadership code while in office should bar anyone from standing in future elections.
- ❑ The Leadership Code should be further strengthened and the Commission should be given greater independence and wider powers of investigation and teeth to suspend / fine / dismiss members.
- ❑ The office of the Ombudsman should be strengthened and he should be given powers to make orders which have to be met rather than recommendations which he has no powers to enforce and which can therefore currently be ignored.
- ❑ There should be a clear and easy to follow complaints procedure established for the public to be able to use against any member or government officer.
- ❑ Elected members should have a job description or agreement with their electorate as to a certain minimum level of behaviour, breach of which would be grounds for their removal from office.
- ❑ There should be greater accountability and transparency of members dealing with monies so that they should be required to furnish their electorate with published accounts annually of the money that they have received for and spent within their ward or constituency.
- ❑ An electorate should be able to petition for removal of their member after 2 years in office.
- ❑ There should be a statutory requirement for members at provincial and national level to visit their wards or constituencies a certain minimum number of times per year.
- ❑ The electoral system should be reformed. In more than one constituency the team were advised that due to the 'first past the post' system of voting, the national member had gained his seat with 40% or less of the total vote.
- ❑ The RCDF (Rural Community Development Fund) provided by the National Government to national members and the WDF (Ward Development Fund) and Discretionary Fund provided by Provincial Governments to their members should be abolished and such development monies should be administered/distributed differently – either by a Ward or Constituency committee established within the relevant level of government screening applications and determining successful applications against clear criteria on a merit basis or some other equitable basis.
- ❑ Although in the minority the view was also expressed that in fact there was nothing drastically wrong with the current constitutional system that merited wholesale reform. That indeed only improvements were needed such as those described above or as one speaker suggested at the Gizo meeting that the Constitution be amended removing the restriction that only the national government has the power to impose taxation, to allow the Provincial level taxation powers over certain commodities so that it can improve its revenue collection.

Services

This topic was designed to cover all services such as Health, Education, Water and Sanitation, Transportation, Telecommunications, Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry extension and Power. It was aimed to elicit information on the current standard of the services provided, who provided them, who should provide them and how communities might contribute to their provision.

Communities varied according to their particular circumstances as to which services they considered to be of most importance to them. Usually, although not always, the service considered to be of most importance was the one that was currently most deficient in the community. For example in Patutiva, in Vangunu, across the channel from Seghe, they have only one or two standpipes for an extended village population of over 2000 people and therefore this is very much a top priority for them.

- ❑ **Transportation and Markets:** Interestingly, transportation and markets topped the list for several communities. For example at the meeting in Vavanga the community were of the view that the establishment of markets for their produce and reliable transportation for the export of their produce is central to their development. It is only in this way, through such development that they see themselves being able to generate income which can feed back into the government to help fund essential services and to provide cash to the community to help pay for certain charges for those services. That community also made the link between such development and civic engagement. Thus they felt that through development they would come to feel part of a system from which they currently feel remote and indeed isolated. This was reiterated in other villages where the team were told that the village people were very hard working but found their efforts to be in vain due to lack of markets and transportation and also the inability to access information they consider vital to development.

Another feature of transportation is that it is closely linked with access to medical facilities. Whilst most people would seem to have access to clinics of some sort, getting to hospital can be expensive due to fuel costs and lack of access to motorized transportation.

- ❑ **Health:** People's main complaints in this area are that nurses are not being paid and that often medicines are not available. Where clinics exist but are staffed by a nurse aid rather than a registered nurse the opinion is widely held that the standard of service is not adequate especially with regard to maternity care. The lack of available transportation from clinic to hospital is of concern as is the inability of health staff to travel out to outlying villages. Also there would seem to be little in the way of general health education or awareness programmes. People cited charges that they were making for basic health care and whilst there was little objection to the payment of these charges, apart from the general observation that health services should be free, the main concern was lack of accountability as to how the money was being spent.
- ❑ **Education:** Most, if not all villages had a primary school, although the standard of these seemed to vary greatly as did the level of school fees. Generally, it was the Church run schools, which seemed to be operating more efficiently, although their fees also seemed to be higher. What was a common complaint was that there were frequently not enough teachers for the number of children and the use of composite class teaching methods and staggered classes was commonplace. Generally people too, were in agreement that education should not be free, but that the level of fees should be reasonable. One contributor did suggest that at least primary education should be free as it was of vital importance to the development of the country that it should have a population that could at least read.
- ❑ Another concern which came from a meeting that was attended by a large number of students at a school located in the village, was the appropriateness of the current curriculum to their lives. They suggested that more vocational subjects should be introduced even in schools which were not primarily vocational to include subjects such as industrial arts, home economics, business, canoe and leaf house building. This stems from a concern that there are no longer the opportunities in employment or further education for which the current curriculum is designed.
- ❑ **Water and Sanitation:** These are also pressing areas for improvement at village level. The quality of both can seriously impact on the overall health of the village. From comments made to the team it also appears that there is uncertainty as to how to access information on how the village themselves can make improvements in these areas. For example in one village where water closet toilets are not entirely suitable due to the limited water supply they would like to investigate how to construct the 'dry pit' toilet but have little access to information.
- ❑ **Telecommunications:** Some villages mentioned that the introduction of telephone services to their community would be advantageous. Yet it was generally seen as a future stage of development in communities where even access to a functioning radio is severely limited or indeed non existent.
- ❑ **Power / Energy:** Communities were in general agreement that the government should be doing more to investigate and facilitate the introduction of alternative forms of energy production, especially small hydro schemes. Several are apparently

operating very successfully throughout the country and people would like to see their use greatly extended.

- ❑ **Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Extension.** Whilst Fisheries extension were viewed as useful – probably because several small fisheries centers have been established throughout the Province, Agriculture and Forestry were universally castigated. In no village that was visited did anyone say that they had been visited by such an officer to provide advice or information since the attainment of independence. Even where, as in New Georgia, communities are heavily engaged in reafforestation primarily of Teak, they claim that the initiative came from the communities themselves, information having spread by word of mouth. Time and again calls were made for the abolition of these offices which is a serious indictment of their performance. At the same time the Team witnessed a tremendous thirst for knowledge in these areas. People at the village level want information on how to improve upon their current methods and information as to new types of crops or products into which they can diversify.
- ❑ **Community Participation:** It was seen as the governments role to pay staff such as teachers and nurses and to provide equipment and medicines. It would appear that where they can communities are willing and are already participating in providing materials for and building staff houses. Where outside donors have supplied materials the communities have supplied the time and the labour and are willing to continue to do so. Indeed many communities on talking through the issue concluded that rather than funds being provided for community developments which can so easily be misappropriated at government and even village level, it would be better to provide materials alone. It does not appear that any villages have a community development committee in place at the present time to identify their particular needs or to plan strategically for development over a number of years. This function seems to be left to elected members to deal with piecemeal through their RCDF or WDF. There would appear to be a willingness however, for the community to work together with the Churches and the government to address this.

Security

This topic is of particular concern to many communities especially in light of the 'tension' afflicting the country since 1999 and through the events of 2000. Connected are particular issues of security for each community; the operation of the existing Police Force within those communities; traditional means of settling disputes and the current debate over Freedom of movement and Settlement.

- ❑ **The Police Force:** It is clear from the consultations that at least amongst the population of the Western Province there is a deep distrust and lack of faith in the Royal Solomon Island Police Force (RSIP), especially of the upper echelons. In part, this stems from the actions of the Force during the 'tension' of 1999/2000. It appears to be a generally held view that Western Province should have its own Police Force, though whether this should be entirely independent of the National Force is less clear. One view expressed was that a national level of control would be necessary to maintain certain minimum standards of training etc. A more generally agreed upon view was that even if linked to the national force that there should be established, by the proposed new State Government, a set of criteria for admission to the police force in the western province or state. Such criteria it was suggested should include such things as a minimum level of education such as Form 6 and 7, and basic good character. There is concern that there is not stringent vetting of new recruits with greater emphasis being placed on brawn rather than brain and that subsequent training is inadequate.
- ❑ The majority view was that the Police force in Western Province should be staffed with people only from Western Province. However this view was tempered with concerns over nepotism and wantokism. Complaints were routinely leveled against the police officers currently stationed around the Province that they are too ready bow to pressure from an accused's or victims relatives to either release or to arrest a suspect. Even where people called for the Force in the Province to be staffed by persons from the Province they also called for the Commander of that Force to be

from outside the Force in order to maintain some impartiality. There was concern expressed as to the partiality of senior officers in the current police force stationed in Gizo to certain elements hailing from Bougainville. Although the majority view was for a wholly western province staffed force a large minority were of the view that it did not matter from which Province police recruits were drawn so long as they were responsible reliable officers.

- ❑ **The Bougainville factor:** The prevailing security concern in the Western Province is the ongoing issue with Bougainville. Although the 'war' is technically over, it would appear that cross border traffic now continues with alacrity. People are concerned at the number of Bougainvilleans who continue to travel to the Province often armed, and with impunity, and rumoured to be at the invitation of the Provincial government. People have been severely frightened and alarmed by incidents of armed Bougainvilleans running amok in the Province during the tension, with incidents penetrating as far as Patutiva. People are still fearful and wish to see a strong police force who are prepared to intervene and disarm these visitors. At one meeting the Team were told of Police removing their uniforms and running away in the presence of armed Bougainvilleans. Whilst one person said that the Police should not be armed as she was terrified of seeing any guns, the prevailing view was that whilst the Police generally should not be armed, there is a need to have an armed response unit which is trained to deal with incidents in which illegal weapons are involved.
- ❑ **Routine policing:** As regards normal policing currently in the Province there was also severe dissatisfaction. Rural communities complained that there are no substations anywhere near them. For example there is no police post on the whole of Vella island. When Police are contacted they are unable or unwilling to attend to incidents citing lack of fuel or transport. Sometimes they will only come if the community is willing to provide transport and fuel. It may be that the distances involved mean that the Police are unwilling to pour valuable resources into what may turn out to be a matter that would be more appropriately dealt with at village level, but as the communities themselves pointed out they need to work more closely with the police to establish just what their respective roles are.
People did say that they perceived that some of the problems currently experienced with policing arise from a generally demoralized police force who are coping with inadequate resources, late salary payments and bad housing.
In Munda policing seems to have broken down with the community saying that there the Police are afraid to respond to calls as they tend to get beaten up by the local population.
- ❑ **Community Policing:** There is generally a desire to see substantial expansion in community policing. People often referred back to the colonial system of Area Constables and suggested that this should be reactivated. They also wished to see the decisions of the Chiefs or Chiefs Committees being given legal status so that they could be enforced and for young people (it was suggested those who excel at martial arts) being deputized to assist the Area Constable and Chief.
The degree of success with which smaller matters are currently handled at village level depends very much it seems on the strength of the Chief and the degree of respect held in the community. Some villages said that their youth had little or no respect for the Chief; some said that they didn't have a Chief at present – more a committee of elders; to one village where they said they have few problems at all as they have a 10pm curfew and a rigorous penalty system for a range of minor offences.

Freedom of movement/Settlement:

- ❑ Freedom of movement is enshrined in the current Constitution. Since the 'tension' and the conflict between Malaita and Guadalcanal there has been much debate over the issue. It would appear however, that the concerns expressed by the public throughout the country relate not so much to movement as to settlement by 'outside' groups on land to which they are seen as not being entitled. It also relates to lack of respect by 'outsiders' for the hosts customs. It has been termed 'freedom to move – and keep on moving!' That it is more a concern over 'settlement' issues was borne out by the consultations conducted by the team. Whilst there were calls for the

introduction of passports, visas and entry checkpoints to the Province there were equal concerns raised as to the impracticality and the cost of such measures. What received more general approbation was possibly the carrying of identity cards but certainly the laying down of some criteria or rules by the State as to who was allowed to remain in a Province and for what purpose. For example one main area identified as sources of potential conflict are someone who has married into the community causing problems and their wantoks coming to stay with them for extended periods. One village said that women should follow their husbands on marriage as it was incoming men and not incoming women who largely caused problems – women it seems being more adaptable. However, wantoks following and staying were more resented and it was suggested that the village organizer should be given similar powers to the village headman of colonial times to tell such visitors how long they were able to stay and when they would be expected to leave. His decisions should be enforceable.

- ❑ Another source of incomers are people coming in to the Province to work. It was suggested that only people from the Province should be employed unless the position could not be filled from within the Province and even then when an employee's contract had expired they would be expected to return whence they came.
- ❑ Another source of settlement conflict is people settling on alienated land. This land belongs to the government and the Team were told that it is mainly concerns over lack of control as to who is setting up home on these lands that underlie calls for return of such lands to the original landowners. There are Malaitan and Gilbertese communities creating new settlements on such areas. Some of these areas are former plantations which were taken over by the government at independence.
- ❑ Perhaps rather disturbingly, the community seen as most unwelcome and a potential for future conflict is the Gilbertese community. Repeatedly communities consulted with warned of potential future conflict with the Gilbertese community along the lines of the situation recently experienced in Fiji. The Gilbertese population is seen as growing rapidly so that the lands they currently occupy will not be sufficient to sustain them, thereby putting pressure on them to move into customary land or alienated land. There are already unofficial settlements. The Gilbertese community is perceived as not assimilating and in some instances trying to isolate themselves further from the Melanesian community – for example in one area where they want to break away and form their own branch of the United Church. There are also clashes over fishing practices. The Gilbertese are accused of using illegal fishing practices, such as diving with scuba to take beche-de-mer on traditional reefs without permission and indeed squaring for a fight if asked to leave.
- ❑ The Gilbertese community themselves seem to be rather restricted in what economic activities they are being permitted to undertake in order to legitimately bring in revenue to sustain themselves.
- ❑ Whether perceptions on either side are accurate or not there could be said to be a attitude prevailing which is one of 'freezing out' the minority group.

Traditional Leadership

The Constitution provides that Parliament will consider the role of the traditional chiefs in the provincial level of government. To date the role of traditional Chiefs has been 'considered' on a number of occasions but no mechanism has yet been put in place which would formally

link them to the government system. The traditional system of governance is still relevant and important at village level – it often holds rural communities together. How therefore can the traditional leaders be involved in any new system of government?



- ❑ The Magistrate for Western Province at the Gizo meeting pointed out that the term 'Chief' is not really appropriate for the Melanesian traditional governance system. The term 'traditional leaders' would be more appropriate. The term 'Chief' brings with it certain connotations of power and authority vested in a single person, which is not

necessarily the case. There can within a village be different leaders with different responsibilities. It was found from the consultations that the position varies from village to village. In some villages there was a person termed a 'Chief'; in another there would be a 'Chief' for each tribe with an overall Chief for the village; in others there was no Chief at all but a Committee or Council of Elders – but the terms also seemed to be used loosely with no rigid or formal systems in place. How 'Chiefs' came to be 'Chiefs' also varies, and it would seem with expediency. Some are appointed by the previous Chief; some are appointed by their tribe; some are appointed by neighbouring Chiefs if there has been a vacuum left for some reason. The Team were also informed that the practice of appointing Paramount Chiefs is a relatively new phenomenon and not 'traditional'. What seems to be happening is selecting leaders on a consensual basis with a view to undertaking certain roles and responsibilities within the community. Such roles and responsibilities can be rather onerous – such as the settling of land disputes and the general maintenance of peace and harmony within the village. Indeed such a range of tasks can be too much for one person. Often in villages people said that their Chief was overworked and in need of assistance. There are roles within the village too for the Village Organisers and for Church leaders – with the Church leaders and Chiefs especially involved in dispute resolution. The level of organization and the relative strength of the village leaders given that there is no overall or uniform system can vary dramatically. From the village where there is no acknowledged leader to that where there is a well organized and identifiable set of leaders with clear roles and responsibilities and rigid community rules which are enforced. In some communities there is a 'Chief' who has been basically sidelined because he is considered too weak or infirm.

- Throughout the different communities visited however, it seems that there are moves taking place to try to organize their traditional leaders into more formal networks. Thus there have been 'Councils of Chiefs' established in parts of Vella and Ranongga/Simbo have gone so far as to have established a Council and have codified their customary laws.
- Whether customary rules are adhered to by the population depends on the consensus of that population and the strength of the community. Formerly, if rules were broken the ultimate sanction in custom was death. This is not an option today. Therefore many communities are seeking some form of legal recognition of the Chief's power, so that his decisions can be given the force of law and be enforced presumably by the courts. There does exist the Local Court system but this has largely ceased to function in recent years. Given that in some villages there are no 'Chiefs' and in some the 'Chief' is considered to be very weak or too infirm to function properly, and also the concern that it is not good practice to give too much power to one person acting alone, it would seem more appropriate to consider imbuing some Chief's Councils with legal recognition or authority. To not imbue a single individual with all power but rather for decisions to be taken by a group such as a council or committee is the traditional way of ensuring that the traditional leaders remain honest. Any deliberations should also be held in public.
- Whilst some contributors were of the view that their Chiefs should automatically become full members of the provincial level of government, this was very much the minority view that the Team encountered. Most people said that they want their Chiefs to remain in the village and to focus their attention on maintaining peace and harmony and trying to mediate disputes. However, a mechanism was suggested in most consultations with varying degrees of articulation, but which would provide for a link between the chiefs and traditional leaders and the government system. The idea is basically to develop and utilize the formation of Councils of Chiefs. That there would be established for each island or region a Council of Chiefs, to which every traditional leader would have the right of membership. Each Council of Chiefs would elect a representative to a Western Province or State Council of Chiefs and each State Council of Chiefs would in turn elect a representative to a National Council of Chiefs. Opinion seemed to be evenly divided as to whether representatives would be elected for 1, 2, 3 or 4 years. However such a system would allow for the traditional leaders to organize and hold meetings as they are starting to do anyway to discuss matters of interest to the region or island but would also mean that most village chiefs would remain in the village as their people want to attend to their traditional functions.

It was proposed that the representatives sent to the Provincial level would not receive salaries but would receive sitting allowances, travel expenses etc for attending meetings and that they would receive administrative support. What was not spelled out was how close their relationship to government would be. That is would they at one extreme be merely observers at Assembly meetings for example or at the other would they have perhaps full voting rights – or would they perhaps form a consultative body, with legal obligations on the elected body to hold regular meetings with the Provincial / State Council of Chiefs to seek their input on matters of policy or on issues of State importance.

- ❑ At the level of how it is decided who are the traditional leaders that would be entitled to sit in the Council of Chiefs, that is not something which can be uniformly determined. There is so much variance between villages and communities that it would have to be left for each village or community to determine for themselves, as they are already doing where these mechanisms are already being established.
- ❑ There was great variance too between communities as to the role of women in traditional leadership. From Munda, which basically seemed very opposed to the idea to parts of Vella where there are already women chiefs and female elders. People generally also seem quite divided on whether in their community history there were female leaders in the past. It appears to be the position that it is very much a matter for the individual community, even within a particular island. On the whole though even where there were no women leaders, people including the men were not opposed to the idea and indeed welcomed it provided they said that the particular women was knowledgeable in custom and tradition. All contributors also pointed out that women are able to stand for election to non-traditional government systems and should be encouraged to do this. It would seem that in a few places there have been female candidates standing in recent elections but it would also seem that people have not voted for them at all, with one female candidate scoring a mere 3 votes. In that election the women said that the candidate was not voted for as she had a bad reputation for making false promises in other capacities in which she had acted in the region. It also seems that women whilst saying that they would be more capable than men of carrying out their responsibilities once in government, are extremely distrustful and disparaging of individual female candidates when they do have the temerity to put themselves forward.
- ❑ People also said they were in favour of youth being involved but again with the proviso that they needed to be of good character and to have the necessary traditional knowledge to adequately fulfill the role that would be demanded of them.



Marginalized Islands Village Consultation Findings

VATDU: Vanikoro, Putua, Anuta, Tikopia and Duff Islands.

Services

- ❑ Very few services are available, and those that are in the area are not maintained or managed properly.
- ❑ Many accountability issues were raised.
- ❑ People want as much local control as possible over services decision making and monitoring.
- ❑ Budgeting for services should be a required priority over many other government expenditures.
- ❑ Accountability issues raised repeatedly – legal orders enforced, CDF funds properly distributed. Calls for accountability to be made a requirement instead of an option.

Security / Justice

- ❑ According to some, the people of VATDU have not had reliable access to government security and justice systems since colonial times. The chiefs have had primary responsibility for security and justice at the community levels even though their official role is not clear and does not receive support from the government.
- ❑ People requested a local police force for VATDU security, properly trained and possibly linked to the chiefs.
- ❑ VATDU suggests that the national police be completely re-worked and staffed by an equal number of people from each province.
- ❑ People expect a justice system that allows them to protect themselves when their government's money is stolen (even if it is stolen by the government), or their children's school is illegally closed to punish them for expressing their opinion.

Traditional Leadership and Village Governance

- ❑ Chiefs in communities have extensive responsibilities for addressing community needs and redressing community problems. They do not, however, have a defined role in the government structure that distributes resources and support.
- ❑ Since the role of chiefs has limited reach into the formal government structures and their decisions are not supported by security or justice systems (either by design or because the systems are simply not present), the ability of chiefs to handle problems, such as land disputes and extortion claims, is weakening.
- ❑ People clearly support the inclusion of traditional leaders into the state / national level government structure. Different opinions were presented on what level the chiefs should be involved.
- ❑ Some stressed that traditional leaders also need to be monitored by the community, so care should be taken to include mechanisms to keep traditional leaders accountable in any new system.

Freedom of Movement and Freedom of Settlement

- ❑ Movement and settlement are inextricably connected to people's concerns over security. In the absence of security and justice systems, the people do not feel secure having people from other islands in their area.
- ❑ People of VATDU expect anyone coming into an area to abide by the rules and customs of that area.

Civic Engagement (People's Participation in Government)

- ❑ People do not understand the current government system and constitution, although they have a strong understanding of how systems have broken down.
- ❑ People generally do not know how to enforce their rights, and some admit that the main access to the system, voting, has not been used effectively.
- ❑ VATDU suggests that a community driven impeachment process be developed. Although this would be very confusing when added to the already unstable government structure, the idea parallels systems for controlling traditional leaders.
- ❑ People of VATDU want a greater formal role in community decision-making that reflects their contribution to the community and their traditional role in controlling land.

Land & Resources

- ❑ Important to note that the current system is not fully implemented in many areas because there is no way to firmly and fairly resolve disputes.
- ❑ Most people use the near complete breakdown in services as a clear indication that resources are not being used in the best interest of the people, and state this as the primary reason for returning all land and resources back to the community.
- ❑ Systems separating the resources from the land are considered "foreign" and want the "6ft rule" and limits to ownership of marine resources removed.

Ontong-Java/Lord Howe and Sikaiana

Traditional Leadership

- ❑ The Lord Howe and Sikaiana Islands traditionally had two types of traditional leaders; Chiefs and resource managers or high priests. The high priests are advisors of the chief. These forms of traditional leadership are inherited through tribal or family lineage. Those two play key role in the village, keeping law and order, organize village meetings, solve land matters and generally looking after their community.
- ❑ The changes which took place in government systems over the years had dismantled the traditional system and had replaced the chiefs and high priests with the Headman and had created House of Chiefs which are foreign concepts to Outer-Islands culture and tradition. More so, the Headman is appointed by the government instead of the local people.
- ❑ It came out very clear from the consultation that any new form of government system must put back the real traditional leaders into the system. It was expressed that they must be given the power under the new constitution to participate in the decision making process and deal with village problems more effectively.
- ❑ It was proposed that due to the uniqueness of the Outer-Islands traditional system which is not even recognized or taken into account by the present form of rule, a provision should be made in the new constitution to allow them a separate state of their own.
- ❑ It was argued however that existing systems for governance, both government and traditional are quite appropriate but needs some improvements by way of more provisions in the constitution to allow for more participation in the decision making process and governance by the traditional leaders.

Civic Engagement

- ❑ On the question of civic engagement, one of the important but problematic areas identified in the current system is the lack of information flow from the 'top' to the bottom, from political representatives to the people in the village. There is a perceived gap between rural dwellers and the government which resulted in the blockage of information flow.

- ❑ Although there is linkage through political representatives which should facilitate information flow, the linkage is handicapped in that there is no legal requirement in the current constitution to enforce that linkage. As a result, political representatives can maneuver the system to suit themselves. Therefore, the linkage from National to provincial to House of Chiefs is not functioning according to people's expectations.
- ❑ It was pointed out that one of the many reasons why the current linkage is not working as it should have been is that people from the constituency living in town are the ones causing the problem by creating mistrust and ill-feelings amongst different communities. As a result of that, information is not passed down to the grassroots level. To curb that, all people should share the responsibility of working together to facilitate development information and services to the rural people.
- ❑ It was suggested that to improve the flow of information to enable people in the villages are better informed of what is happening at the national and provincial levels, a provision must be included in the new constitution to require political representatives to go back to their constituents 4 or 5 times per year.
- ❑ Another suggestion was for a provision in the constitution to direct political representatives to visit his/her constituents but the number of times and how to do it should be left open.
- ❑ It was also suggested that MPs and MPAs should be barred from crossing the floor as this causes disruption to any visits which might already been planned before crossing the floor.

Social Services

- ❑ The Outer-Islands is a fragmented raised atolls and being isolated and remote from urban centers identified transport and communication as their first priority needs. The problems of un-scheduled and limited shipping services and lack of good communication facilities are outlined:
- ❑ Future government system to subsidize monthly shipping service to the Outer-Islands
- ❑ Services should be given to the people to run them
- ❑ All services should be provided free but rural people should also work hard to ensure sustainability
- ❑ Constituency to form a shipping company
- ❑ Micro project submission from the islands should be given priority to improve the situation of the people and
- ❑ Want to extend the EEZ boundary in recognition of the smallness of the islands and that people's livelihood is dependent on marine resources

Security

- ❑ On the issue of security, in general, there are no security issues on the island. This is understandable due to remoteness and isolation which limits negative urban affluences from cultivating on the islands. Moreover, the smallness in population size discourages spreading of criminal activities amongst the young population.
- ❑ Have community policing
- ❑ Wantok system is having a negative impact on the police force and overseas police should be engaged to provide security in the country
- ❑ Power should be given to the chief in the new constitution to deal with security issues in villages
- ❑ Freedom of movement should be allowed in the constitution to allow outer island people to move freely due to global warming
- ❑ People employed should be allowed to move freely but must respect the customs of the place where they are working
- ❑ Outer-Island people should be considered a special case for re-settlement due to small land area and population pressure
- ❑ Small communities and islands should be protected from being marginalized

Provincial Village Consultation Locations

Province	Village Consultation
Central	Koilovala, Ngella Tulagi (women & men), Ngella Tulagi (prov/exec), Ngella Boromole, Ngella Belaga, ngella, Leitongo, Ngella Pokilo, Savo Bonala, Savo Louna, Russells Yandina, Russells Hae, Russells Marulaon, Russells Nukufero, Russells
Choiseul	Taro, Pro/Exec. Voza Sasamunuqa Katurasele Posarae Wagina Nuatabu Paqoe Susuka Vurango Sirovanqa Taro
Guadalcanal	Gorou Vuramali Kulu Aola Bubunugu Totongo Makina (Marau Bush) Suhu (Marau Islands) Makaruka Avuavu Kuma Mbambanakira Tangarare Lambi Visale Mataruka
Isabel	Ghoveo Baolo Kia, Group1&2 Kia, Group3&4 Dedeu Somasodu Susubona Kolotubi Sepi Nagoglau Huali Poro Area Guguha Area Buala Nareabu

Makira	<p>Kira Kira, Makira Maniwiriwiri, Makira Naharahau, Makira Panisa, Makira Manivovo/Tahanamae, Makira Paregho, Makira Maroghu, Makira Tetere, Makira Tawaraha, Makira Tawatana, Makira Wango, Makira Kaonasughu, Makira Tawarodo, Ugi Aurighi, Santa Catalina Gupuna, Santa Ana Piru Piru, Ulawa Ripo, Ulawa</p>
Malatia	<p>Auki, prov/exec) Dala north Malu'u Sulagwalu Takwa Ngaliwawou Funaafofou island Sulofoloa Ngongosila Kwai Ngongosila Ato'ifi Nggounaambusu Manawai Maasupa Hunana'awa Tarapaina Fio meeting Rohinari Lalaro Maoa Malafe Auki: debrief prov/exec.</p>
Renbell	<p>Teavamagu, West Rennell Tahanuku, West Rennell Kagua, West Rennell TNT, West Rennell Bellona Airport (Public Meeting) Bellona Bellona (Chiefs) Bellona Bellona (Women) Bellona Bellona (Youth) Bellona</p>

Temotu	<p><u>Santa Cruz Islands:</u> Venga Nemba and Manoputi Lata Station Banua, Ne'ele, Matemba, Manau, Nou and Uta Luepe, Napir, lo'o, Nep and Mateone Balo, Nepa and Pala Noipe and Bania No'ole, Nonia and Baimawa Nea and Neboi Malo, Menivi and Neo Luesalemba, Otomogi, Luemimi and Manelu Matu</p> <p><u>Reef Islands:</u> Manuopo, Otambwe, Ngamanie, Otelo and Bwanepe Nenubo and Ngamablou Balipa'a, Napali, Laro and Lipe</p> <p><u>VATDU To be completed 15 April</u> Vanikoro Putua Anuta Tikopia Duff Islands</p>
Western	<p>Vavanga, Kolombangara Keru, Marovo Vakambo, Marovo Lagoon Patutiva, Vangunu Ugele, Rendova Munda, New Georgia Gizo, Ghizo Island Titiana, Ghizo Island Dovelle (Boro), Vella Lavella Irrigilla, Vella Lavella Koriovuku, Ranongga Lale, Ranongga Vonunu, Vella Lavella Shortland Islands Mono Island Fauro Island</p>