



PM BREIFED ON PROGRAM

Permanent Secretary Dr. Frederick Rohorua, Director Mr. Sam Faluaburu and Consultant Lawyer Mr. Reginald Teutao of the Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU) have met with the Honorable Prime Minister on Tuesday 1st September 2009 to discuss with him issues raised at the last Joint CC/EPAC Executive meeting.

During the meeting the Hon. PM was updated on the current status of the reform programme. He was made aware of the issues and concerns raised in the Joint CC/EPAC Executive Committee meeting held on 25 August 2009,

which was also attended by the PS/CRU, Director and Consultant Lawyer. A copy of the 1st 2009 Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands was submitted to the Prime Minister. In a brief update to all CC/EPAC members, Dr. Rohorua (PS/CRU) noted that although the PM requested CC, EPAC and CRU (which is the Secretariat to CC/EPAC) to press ahead with the task of completing the new federal constitution of Solomon Islands, he was also very mindful of the challenges facing the programme & issues raised by CC/EPAC Executive. As such, in view of the acute financial *(Continue Pg2)*

First Joint CC/EPAC Plenary

The Constitutional Congress held a Joint Plenary Session with the Eminent Persons Advisory Council (EPAC) of the Constitutional Reform Program from May to June 2009. Both groups were in session for two months to review the Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands 2004, which was successfully completed on 26 June 2009 at the Red Mansion Inn Conference room.

The activity involved going through all the sections of the Draft Federal Constitution, changing texts or ideas where necessary, and passing the amended sections. The plenary also looked at the three theme committees findings, and considered the findings of Solomon Islands Boundaries Expert in Hydrography Patt R. Loe (CC member).

Critical issues which stood out during the Joint CC/EPAC Plenary were the Power Sharing between Federal and State Governments; Party-politics and Non-Partisan Government approaches; Federal Parliament Representation; Solomon Islands Boundaries; Solomon Islands President's role as Head of State; States' autonomy; Fundamental Human



George Saemane (CC Member) & Sir George Lepping (EPAC Chairman) chat informally during break on one of the plenary sessions at the C.Y.P Conference center in May 2009. Photo: Marilyn Maeta'a, CRU.

Rights such as Rights of a Child and Rights of Women in comparison to traditional and current practices, and to what is envisaged for the future; and Citizenship; to name a few.

The amended Draft Federal Constitution was passed by the Joint CC/EPAC Plenary as the 1ST 2009 Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands. The amended document will be used for the Provincial Feedback. ✍

“Solomon Islands is a nation yet to be born...”

Famous quote by Solomon Mamaloni, Chief Minister 1974.

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OUT-GOING CRU STAFF

The Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU) has farewelled three staff members, John M. Tuhaika, Thomas Woods & Mcfaddean Aoraunisaka this year.

Mr. Tuhaika was Permanent Secretary (PS) Special Duties for Constitutional Reform Unit. He was involved with the program as PS since its inception when it was under the *Provincial Institution and Strengthening Development Unit (PISDU), Ministry of Provincial Government & Institutional Strengthening*. He has taken the PS role of the Ministry of Provincial Government.

Mr. Woods left CRU in May to work on a similar program in Ethiopia (Africa). He was Chief Technical Advisor of CRU, contracted to prepare technical advice regarding the

constitutional reform for Congress/EPAC.

Mr. Tuhaika & Mr. Woods were also part of consultations, which led up to the Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands 2004, & White Paper on the Reform of the Solomon Islands Constitution in 2005.

Mr. Aoraunisaka left CRU in June to pursue further tertiary studies in Taiwan; he was CRU's Assistant Media Officer since April 2008. He was involved in producing various media programs for dissemination to the public.

CRU values the professional contribution that these staff have given to the program, & congratulates them on their new undertakings & wishes them success in their future endeavors. ✍

CC/EPAC Executive discuss issues facing Prov Feedback

The Joint Executive of Constitutional Congress & Eminent Persons Advisory Council held a brief meeting with Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU) on August 25, 2009 to discuss various activities for the completion of the Constitutional Reform Program.

The meeting proceeded with updates on the current progress, including the financial situation which may affect Congress' activities & the Secretariat's (CRU) work. One issue which stood out was the delay in activities of Congress due to the present financial crisis facing Solo-

mon Islands. Although concerns were raised with regards to the Provincial Feedback, which is Congress' next important activity after the 1st Joint CC/EPAC Plenary held in May/June 2009, the Executive discussed options that Congress can take with facilitating assistance from CRU to complete the program.

Congress Chairlady Mrs. Jenny Tuhaika expressed concern to the Executive & CRU's senior officers, that planning the program's remaining activities have to be done & clearly explained to the Government concerning the situation facing the Reform Pro-



CC/EPAC Executive meets with CRU.

gram. Mrs. Tuhaika made reference to the Work-Plan Timeline of Constitutional Congress in relation to the activities to be completed before November 2009.

Congress' current activity, the Provincial Feedback has been hampered because of financial constraints facing the country. Congress' Provincial Nominees should have undertaken this activity during July/August 2009 period to get feedback from respective provinces regarding the result of the 1st Joint CC/EPAC Plenary

- the 1st 2009 Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands.

It is expected that the Constitutional Reform Program's Work-Plan Timeline be revised to a more realistic approach to the current situation so that the program can be properly done before the Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands' final content is brought before Parliament either by the CNURA Government or the next succeeding government in 2010. ✍

PM briefed on program

(Pg1 Cont...) difficulties facing government revenue which in turn impacts negatively on the Reform's existing work programme, the following was agreed to for the rest of 2009 whereby CC and EPAC will try to accomplish the following two things: (i) Complete the Provincial/Honiara Feedback planned for mid-September to mid-October 2009 (ii) Hold the 2nd CC/EPAC Joint Plenary in November 2009.

Both activities are aimed at reviewing contents of the 1st 2009 Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands document, which was amended from the Draft Federal Constitution 2004 during the 1st Joint CC/EPAC Plenary in May/June 2009. "Similarly we will in due course adjust the timeline so as to complete the remaining tasks (in 2010) set out in the approved work plan," Dr Rohorua stated in the update to CC/EPAC members. It was noted that the adjustment in the timeline had to be done as the Reform Programme is 3 months behind schedule. In the meantime, CRU has been tasked to secure funding from the Ministry of Finance and Treasury for the completion of the two important undertakings for the remaining part of 2009. ✍

CC elects new Chairpersons



Chairlady, Mrs. Jenny Tuhaika



Vice-Chairman, Mr. Joseph Huta

Constitutional Congress was nominated & stood unopposed as

The Constitutional Congress has elected Mrs. Jenny Tuhaika as Chairlady of Constitutional Congress, & Mr. Joseph Huta as Vice Chairman. Mrs. Tuhaika, who was the former Vice Chairlady of

the new Chairperson, while Joseph Huta also stood unopposed as Vice Chairman of Congress. Both were elected on the first Joint CC/EPAC Plenary in May 2009 & were voted on by Congress members. ✍

CRU welcomes new PS

The Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has recently appointed a new Permanent Secretary Special Duties to the Constitutional Reform Unit, Dr. Frederick Isom Rohorua.

Dr. Rohorua officially began duties with the Unit on Monday 16 February 2009.



PM highlights Reform to Media

Constitutional Reform was one of two important issues highlighted on Friday 6th November 2009 during the Prime Minister's presentation to the media in the Cabinet room, on CNURA government's reform agenda, which includes the Political Party Integrity Bill.

In his statement Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Derek Sikua highlighted some of the recommendations of Constitutional Congress (CC) & Eminent Persons Advisory Council (EPAC), which include the proposed three-tier Federal government system comprising Federal, State and Community governments; & the nation's capital, Honiara City to "retain its special status as the federal capital of Solomon Is-

lands" and maintain its important relations "with other State governments and in particular, Guadalcanal State".

In terms of State and Community Governments, he said that the respective State Governments will be responsible for drawing up the Community Government constitutions for the respective community groups in their various state jurisdictions.

This proposed federal arrangement and details have been highlighted in the 1st 2009 Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands, which derives from the 2004 Draft Federal Constitution together with recommendations from various consultations held before and after the 2004 Draft.

In addition to this Dr. Sikua said, with current work focus on making recommendations about *how to draft a Federal Constitution* for Solomon Islands, the remainder of work will be carried over into 2010, to see the first submission to Cabinet of the proposed framework of the Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands.

"It is envisaged much of this work will take most of 2010. All going well, the Federal Constitution Bill should be ready for National Parliament in November 2010," Dr. Sikua said. CC & EPAC are expected to complete two next important undertakings, which are the Provincial Feedback & 2nd Joint CC/EPAC Plenary by December 2009. ✍

thanked all members of CC/EPAC for their time, availability & contributions through such long but rewarding review exercise. She acknowledged the support given by families of CC/EPAC members, especially from the provinces, through the past two months. Consultant Lawyer

Mr. Reginald Teutao, legal personnel from the Constitutional Reform Unit, acknowledged the dedication of CC/EPAC members involved in the review. Mr. Teutao worked consistently with the CC/EPAC Joint Plenary through the last two months on this review exercise. "I look forward to working

with you all in the next plenary, after the feedback, to put together any contentious issues arising from the feedback in the Draft [Federal Constitution]." Mr. Teutao said in his closing remarks to the Joint CC/EPAC Plenary on its last day of meeting on 26 June 2009. ✍

JOINT PLENARY PIC



Members of the 1st Joint CC/EPAC Plenary during the meeting at Red Mansion conference in June (Top) and SIBC Conference in May (Below) 2009.

Draft Federal Constitution's first review complete

The Constitutional Congress (CC) & Eminent Persons Advisory Council (EPAC) have completed a two-month review of the Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands 2004 in a Joint Plenary on 26 June 2009 at the Red Mansion Inn Conference room.

As part of the ongoing Constitu-

tional Reform Program, the Plenary sat from May 4 to June 26 to review the 2004 Draft Federal Constitution. The Plenary passed the amended document on 26 June as the *1st 2009 Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands*. Changes to the document reflected various findings of CC Theme Committees' meetings

held late last year; & Community Identification programs, which CC Provincial Nominees held early 2008 with respective provinces. The meeting ended with a high-note on participation of members on this very important task, which the government anticipates for completion this year. CC Chairlady Mrs. Jenny Tuhaika

Brief on Theme Committees

A brief review of what the Theme Committees have done from September to November 2008, regarding the main themes of the 2004 Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands.

Public Finance & Revenue Sharing

Public Finance & Revenue Sharing Theme Committee was the first to meet from September to November 2008. It discussed ideas & experiences dealing with public finance & revenue sharing as currently done in Solomon Islands. Members contributed ideas based on sources of revenue currently in existence such as taxation, aid money, natural resources to name a few; & considered the fiscal aspect of Federal System, including macro-management of the country's financial systems.

From 3–17 October, it invited expertise to the meetings held during this period,

who were representatives from the Inland Revenue Division, Ministry of Finance, & Central Bank. The committee also heard views of provinces through information gathered by Congress' Provincial Nominees representing each province in Constitutional Congress. Based on information given by speakers & documents relating to public finance & revenue sharing, the committee analyzed how revenue is currently handled; sources as given to the central (National) government, & then distributed to sectors of the nation based on what is perceived as appropriate and regulated - to what is envisaged for the federal system. Meetings were

prolonged to put together its report from 3–14 November 2008. It's report was submitted to CRU on November. ✍

Federal Political Systems & Powers

Federal Political Systems and Powers Theme Committee is one of the two Committees of the Constitutional Congress, which met from October to November 2008.

The committee's main work focus was on the development of a federal political system that would accommodate political offices, structures and power sharing between federal and state governments. Through out the meetings,

the most evident system of the proposed Federal Republic is a three-sphere system of government, structured as the Federal government, State governments and the Community governments.

This finding was based on a comprehensive work by Provincial Nominees in Political-Community Identification early 2008.

Aside from this, the committee looked at issues such as political communities, political parties; power sharing including powers of the federal government and state governments; constitutional empowerment of political set up of the community governments; and three-sphere government structures.

This committee met simultaneously with Federal Foundation from 20 October till 7 November 2008. It submitted its report to CRU on 25 November 2008. ✍

Federal Political Systems and Powers theme committee looking at a proposed Federal Government structure during one of the committee's sessions in October 2008, together with members of Federal Foundation committee (Right). Members of the Public Finance and Revenue Sharing during one of the committee's sessions in September 2008. (Below)



Federal Foundation

Federal Foundation Theme Committee was the one of two Committees of Constitutional Congress to meet from October to November 2008.

It's focus was on issues relating to the basis of a Federation & foundational matters that would shape the framework of the Federal Constitution. It dealt with six subjects; the *Preamble, Norms*

and Values, Social Charter, Structure of the Federation, Citizenship, & the Foundation & Characteristics of a Federation. It also looked at different models of Federation of other countries; considered what Solomon Islanders want, including

issues and risks of having a federal system; & strategic views on what is envisaged for the future. In addition, Provincial nominees of CC were called on to make presentations on views gathered during the Political-Community Identifi-

cation period relating to this theme. Meetings were held from 20 October till 7 November 2008. It's report was submitted to CRU on December 2008. ✍

THEME COMMITTEES

Theme Committees are technical working groups of Constitutional Congress (CC), that comprise members of Congress & the Eminent Persons Advisory Council (EPAC). The committees consider main themes within the Draft Federal Constitution 2004, & report on findings to Congress as a whole, based on discussions, interviews with experts & CC provincial nominees.

Past Events

In August 2007, the Constitutional Reform Programme came into action when the Government mandated the Constitutional Congress and appointed the Eminent Persons Advisory Council to undertake tasks under the Programme.

Crucial events that led up to the formation of the Programme include the forming of a Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands in 2004 and the passing of the White Paper on the Reform of the Solomon Islands Constitution in 2005 by the Solomon Islands Parliament. These events were mainly

spearheaded under the Ministry of Provincial Government's PISDU (Provincial Institutional Strengthening and Development Unit).

In mid-2007, the Government established a division, known as the Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU), as the Secretariat responsible for the management and coordination of the programme. Staff were taken from PISDU, including the Permanent Secretary Special Duties (former) John M. Tuhaike, Director Sam Falu-aburu, Consultant Lawyer Reginald Teutao, Technical Advisor Thomas Woods and Personal Secretary Stella Pitiveke to

Latest Committee News

Due to time constraints & budgetary reasons, it was suggested that 4 themes (as fol-

lows) will be dealt with by Joint CC/EPAC Plenary;

- Fundamental Human Rights & Freedoms & Other Rights;

- Constitutional Institutions, Representation & Public Service;
 - Law & Justice;
 - Transition
- Although not covered in detail as

the other 3, these 4 themes have been covered in the review of the Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands 2004 by Joint CC/EPAC Plenary from May-June 2009. ✍

the Office of the Prime Minister & Cabinet. Later on, CRU took on board staff to carry out administrative, media and accounting responsibilities.

By August 2007, the Congress and EPAC had an induction to the Constitutional Reform Programme, and started off planning for the first activity – Identification of the Solomon Islands Political Community.

From May to July 2008, Congress' Provincial and Honiara City Nominees went out to their respective provinces and in Honiara for the Identification activity. This involved meeting with the Provincial Executives, as well community representatives within the respective provinces. In May 2008, the CRU also launched its Media Awareness Programme for 2008, which followed developments of the activities of Congress and publicized information to the

Members of 3 main Committees

Public Finance & Revenue Sharing

Attendance

- Warren Paia [Chairman]
- Walton Naezon [Vice Chairman]
- Daniel Ho'ota
- Danny Philip
- Fr. John Gereia
- Rev. Lazarus Munamua
- Phyllisca Fate
- Matthew Quan

Federal Political Systems & Powers

Attendance

- Paul Tovua [Chairman]
- Hudson Kwalea [Vice Chairman]
- Roselyn Lemoba
- Joseph Huta
- Tion Vainga
- Sir George Leping
- Henry Manuhea

Federal Foundation

Attendance

- Jackson Piasi [Chairman]
- Judith Fangalasu [Vice Chairlady]
- Simmy Vazarabatu
- Hilda Nose'e
- Josephine Kama
- Artaban Tropa
- Sir Baddeley Devesi

general public via the radios, television, newspapers and website.

From September to November 2008, Theme Committees of Constitutional Congress were called on to meet, namely the Public Finance and Revenue Sharing; Federal Foundation; and the Federal Political Systems and Powers. In early December 2008, the three committees held a joint Plenary to discuss their findings. Each committee drew up their reports and submitted these to CRU.

During the plenary in December, CRU also facilitated four (4) public talk-back shows at S.I.B.C, in which members of the three committees discussed with the public the findings from the meetings they had and the concepts of constitutional reform in general.

In addition to these events, Congress and EPAC members also attended the Western Province Symposium in November 2008 at Gizo, Western province. ✍



In front: Provincial Nominee Fr. John Gereia, EPAC members Henry Manuhea & Collin Gauwane during the tour around Malaita province for the Political Community identification in June 2008.



EPAC Member Sir Baddeley Devesi making a point during 1st Joint CC/EPAC Plenary in May 2009.

REFORM IN PICTURES

Some of the photos taken by the Constitutional Reform Unit's Media section and other's supplied by Congress members during the Constitutional Reform Programme's activities in 2008.



Live talk-back show with members of the Political Systems and Powers committee and Simon Papage of S.I.B.C. on December 2008.



Youth Coordinators at a stakeholders' meeting organized by C.Congress Youth Reps in May 2008 at the SIBC Conference.



A youth raising a question during the Honiara Nominees' last meeting with youth members on the Identification of political community exercise on February 2008.



Youths of Central Province during the Political Community identification exercise at the province in April 2008. Photo supplied: Central Islands Provincial Nominees



Media personnel in a press conference between 3 Theme Committees & the local media on September 2008 at Casablanca, IBSH.

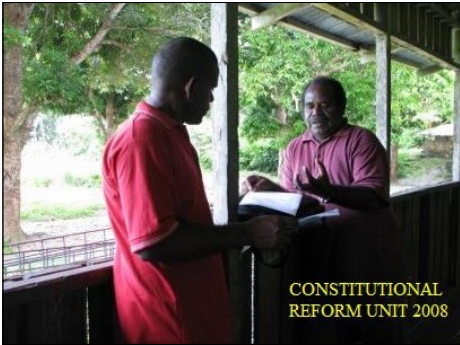


Women attending the Guadalcanal nominees' Political Identification activity in June 2008 at CYP. (Above Left) ~ ~ From left: Sir George Lepping (EPAC Chairman) John Tuhaika (former PS/CRU), Sir John Ini Lapli (former CC Chairman), Hon. Fred Fono (Deputy PM) and Warren Paia (CC Member) chat before the launching of Constitutional Reform's Media Awareness Programme in May 2008 at Honiara Hotel. (Above Center) ~ ~ Prime Minister Dr. D. Sikua attending a ceremony during the Political Identification activity of Guadalcanal CC Nominees at CYP in June 2008 at CYP. (Above Right) ~ ~ Youths attending a day's workshop organized by Congress Youth Rep at Tinggoa, Rennell Bellona Province on May 2008. **Photos: Mcfaddean Aoraunisaka, CRU 2008.**





Technical Advisor Tom Woods making a presentation to the Political Systems & Powers Theme Committee on Nov 2008. (Right)



Judith Fangalasu (Vice Chairlady Federal Foundation Committee) having a chat with Robyn Slarke of UNIFEM after the talk-back show on 7 December 2008. (Left)



Central Province Nominee & team leader George Saemane explaining the constitutional reform activity to a school teacher at Paposi, Savo Island on October 2008. (Below Left)



Paul Tovua (Guadalcanal Nominee) preparing chiefs for a Political Identification meeting the following day of the Commemoration of Chief Moro at Komuvaolu village on October 2008. (Below Right)



Member of White River community making a point during a session with Honiara City nominees on October 2008. (3rd Below Left)



Youths that attended a session with the Honiara City Nominees and Congress Youth Reps at Honiara City Council chambers in February 2008. (3rd Below Right)

Photos: Marlyn Maeta'a, CRU 2008



Students at Choiseul Bay P.S.S in an Awareness program carried out by Choiseul Congress Nominees. Photo supplied: Connelly Sandakabatu, CC (Left)

Fr. John Gere (Malaita Nominee) and Henry Manuhea (EPAC member) chat with community leader as they prepare for a meeting with communities at Faumamanu market centre, East Malaita on June 2008. Photo supplied: Hudson Kwalea, CC (Right)

Students & Teachers gathered in Paibeta C.H.S, Savo Island for the identification exercise on 3rd October 2008. Photo by Edyka Maeta (Below Right)

Community leaders discuss Political Community in June 2008 at Ngella, Central Province. Photo supplied: Catherine Pule, CC (Below Left)

A Summary: Activities of Provinces

Honiara City



A meeting with White River Community elders & women in October 2008.

Honiara Team Leader Joseph Huta & colleague nominee Catherine Adifaka, Tapualiki Samasoni (EPAC Member), Jenny Tuhaka (Congress member), Judith Fanggalasu (Congress member), Harry Alick (Congress Youth Rep), Phyllisca Fate (Congress Youth Rep) met with about 200 people on separate meetings to identify Honiara's Political Commu-

nity concept.

Three meetings with 17 community leaders & 3 with 18 youths representing East, Central & West Honiara; one with 8 women leaders from various women's groups, who responded to the meeting request; 6 meetings with various TOL-based communities in East, Central & West Honiara with an attendance of 155 people in all; one meeting with Solomon Islands

Chamber of Commerce; another with S.I Chinese Association; one with S.I Women Indigenous Business Association; & with S.I Business Enterprise.

Through these meetings about 53 TOL-based communities & 49 FTE (Fixed Term Estate)-based communities. The team noted that some communities are organized, while others are not.

The report stated "Honiara City is multi-racial and multi-cultural, therefore there is need to create a system under the Federal Government to govern & deliver services to Honiara people."



Central

In its 2008 preliminary report, the Central Nominees team held 5 consultations with leaders of the three island groups of Central Province, namely Savo, Russell & Gela islands.

The team, comprised Team leader George Saemane & colleague nominee Hilda Nose'e, assisted by James Vaukei (EPAC Member) & Catherine Pule (Congress member), touring & meeting with leaders and chiefs of these islands, accounting to more than 150 persons. 13 from Savo's House of Chiefs (Savo Gizi Kato Tuvu) in April; 72

community leaders and people from 4 main community areas, & 34 teachers & students from Kalaka and Paibeta schools in Savo Island in October; 21 chiefs & community leaders from Gela islands in April; 10 chiefs from Russell Islands in April; and women representatives from Mother's Union and communities in Gela islands in October.

The consultations covered how tribal leaders are chosen, the selection and role of other leaders within a

community, & the ideal leadership to be identified in the Federal Constitution that would provide village-level decision-making and linkage with the state or federal government.

The team's report noted that the "people of Gela, Savo and Russell islands have similar cultures and are culturally related" and that this realization "is an important point to understand in terms of defining any political agenda for the province."



Chiefs & leaders of Gela Island during the identification of Political Communities, which the Central Province Congress nominees held on April 2008.

Isabel

Team leader Chief Dennis Carlos Lulei & colleague Jane Tozaka, with assistance from EPAC member Clement Rojumana, had 8 meetings with representatives of Isabel for the identification activity.

On April 2 & 12, the team held consultative meet-



Representatives of Isabel at CYP Conference, 18 April 2008.

ings in Honiara with the Provincial Premier, Isabel's Minister of Finance & 3 MPs.

They held consultative awareness & educational meetings with over 199 people of Isabel,

inclusive of Isabel Provincial members, Isabel Council of Chiefs, women & youth reps, former premiers, students & teachers, farmers, public officers, provincial workers & church leaders. The team's interim report indicated, 6 meetings on 18 & 28 April in Honiara, 30 April, 26 & 27 August at Buala Provincial Headquarter, & 16 September at Ko-

lotubi—Hograno District.

The report noted that, there were 8 districts namely

The structures within the communities noted, include District Chiefs (which is currently prac-

"Isabel...can be identified as a Tribal community, as the island belongs to the clans, lineages and people living in it." 2008 Isabel Interim Report.

Bugotu, Hograno, Gao, Maringe, Kokota, Havulei, Kia, and Katova with 116 main villages & have 52 tribes, clans or lineages.

ticed), Mother's Union, and the Diocese of Isabel—all of which have influence on the lives of Isabel people.

Makira Ulawa

On March 2008, Provincial members, Executive government, churches, community leaders, cultural leaders and schools were educated about the 2004 Draft Federal Constitution, focusing on Chap-

ter 12 (State Governments).

The team comprise Nominees Jack Faga & Clera Rebitai & Daniel Ho'ota. Team's Spokesman Daniel Ho'ota (EPAC Member) said in an interview with CRU in 2008, said that those who were present were

given the document and the *White Paper on the Reform of the*

"There is no controversial voice, everybody seems to accept that we should change the government system"

Solomon Islands Constitution. They were asked to read through & submit their opinions on it. Information was

collected in May, via written submissions & verbal interviews. The information was collected to assist them in how to frame a government for Makira Ulawa State. Much of the information to conceptualize a structure, the main principles envisaged & the type of

arrangement was put in the report *Makira Ulawa Province Stand for the Solomon Islands Constitution*, drafted in June 2008. Meanwhile the team, identified eight main tribal communities, namely Arosi, Bauro, Haununu, Rauo, Santa Anna & Santa Tatalina, Star harbor, Ulawa & Ugi, and Wai-

noni. These communities have the same languages, same mode of cultural activities and beliefs. "So far...there is no controversial voice, everybody seems to accept that we should change the government system," said Mr. Ho'ota.

Guadalcanal

Paul Tovua, Hilda Kari and Chris Tagarania (provincial nominees of Guadalcanal) held three meetings with leaders and people of the island to discuss political community identification.

They worked together with Walton Naezon (Congress member), Jerry Sabino & Sir Baddeley Devesi

(EPAC Members) to arrange consultation meetings with Guadalcanal Provincial Assembly; workers from Guadalcanal, chief and women leaders living in and around Honiara on 5th of June 2008; and with about 1,500 followers of the Qaena-Alu Movement in 25th October 2008 during the commemoration of the Paramount Chief Moro at Komu-



Civic leaders of Guadalcanal meet with CC Guadalcanal Nominees & EPAC members in June 2008.

vaolu village.

The team's preliminary report stated that Qaena-Alu is a structured political community bounded by the followers of the Movement. Paul

Tovua (team leader) & Jerry Sabino (EPAC member & a chief of Qaena-Alu) met with other Qaena-Alu chiefs regarding political communities. It was noted that Qaena-

Alu covers areas in terms of the existing wards in the province.

The report stated that those speaking during the meeting, including the Premier & his

deputy, endorsed the need for a change into a Federal state system of government, which is the final stage of the constitutional reform.

Rennell Bellona

As part of the Political identification activity of Rennell Bellona province, the team structured its meetings for the two nominees, team leader Joy Abia & former colleague nominee Leonard Kaitu'u & Congress member Alice Puia (assisting RenBell nominees) to

cover Bellona, West Rennell, and East Rennell si-

"Political communities of East Rennell are...tribal communities, seeing that Rennell Bellona Province boundaries are divided according to customary boundaries"
East Rennell Report 2008

multaneously and respectively.

However, East Rennell, and West Rennell were the only ones put into reports.

East Rennell, which was covered by Mrs. Puia involved meeting community members, getting their views regarding the political community. In summary, East Rennell has 5 main tribes identified under a sub-clan of the Kaitu'u Clan in Rennell.

West Rennell was covered on 20-30

May by former provincial nominee Leonard Kaitu'u, consulting chiefs & elders of this sector.

The West Rennell report thoroughly identified clans & sub-clans, their origins, hereditary-based leadership style of governance; and arrangements of groups into villages & communities.

Both Mr. Kaitu'u & Mrs. Puia met with Provincial Executive on separate

"Every Manaha-hakanohonga & manaha-hakatau (semi-original homestead & subdivisions) were sub-traditional political communities in that, apart from district community to which they owe allegiance, they consider themselves as independent tribal & family units, when it comes to the management of their communal affairs." *West Rennell Report 2008*

occasions, Mr. Kaitu'u in 6 June after the identification exercise for West Rennell; while Mrs. Puia had an audience with the Executive on the 2nd week of May 2008. The feedback from the

Executive was that they were satisfied and impressed with the reform's progress, & emphasized that Rennell Bellona be considered a State in the federal structure.

Western

West's team leader Warren Paia indicated in several Congress meetings that much of the ground work has been done well before this reform phase as indicated in the Western Provincial government's Summary Booklet of official reports on State Government 2000-2007.

On the other hand, other Congress/EPAC members, have taken on



Members of Shortlands community in West Honiara meet at Bishop Epalle School hall on June 7, 2008 organized by Sir George Lepping.

some work with regards to Political community identification. These include the Shortlands, Kiribati community in West, & Rendova Island.

It is understood that Shortlands

has been covered by Sir George Lepping (EPAC member), holding several meetings with Shortlanders including those who are Honiara-based during 2008.

For the Kiribati community living in West, EPAC member assisting the nominees Vianga Tion, noted the relevance of Kiribati lifestyle, & observance of long-held traditional governance.

While Rendova

Island was covered by Danny Philip, & his report indicates 3 major (at Ugehele, Lokuru & Mbanaiata) & 3 smaller consultative meetings (at Rendova harbor, Egholo/Agagana & Ela beach) were held on the month of November).

The report noted village communities within the Rendova area, 4 language groups, tribal and land tenure, including other factors impacting communities within this

areas, such as; religion, education, modern governance, economic activities, transport and communication.

The Western provincial nominees were also part of the Western Peace & Reconciliation Symposium, held in Gizo, Western Province in November 2008. The idea of constitutional reform was also discussed more diligently on the subject of Federalism and State governments.

Nominees for the province are Warren Paia (team leader), Patt R. Loe & Jackson Piasi. Together with other CC/EPAC members, such as Sir George Lepping (EPAC), Vianga Tion (EPAC) and Danny Phillip (EPAC). ✍



CC/EPAC Members join the Western Province Symposium held in Gizo on Nov 2008.

Temotu

Temotu team leader Sir John Ini Lapli & colleague nominee Roselyn Lemoba did "A report on indigenous & local governance in Temotu Province identified communities" with submissions from Artaban Tropa & Rev. Lazarus Munamua (both EPAC).

Information collected by nominees were done through interviews

with island groups representatives, which were estimated statistics & knowledge of each village & grouping.

Temotu comprises people of both Melanesian & Polynesian heritage, however it is vastly diverse, in terms of cultural & traditional belief systems; governance methods; language & dialect; lifestyle; land tenure, economic & trading systems. Temotu is naturally divided into 5 distinct regions,

namely Nende (Santa Cruz), Pele (Reefs), Vatu (Vanikoro & Utupua), Vaeakau (Duff & other Polynesian outliers) &

their relationships & care for their resources based on traditional governance." However, the most common form of

"Temotu...people will design & agree on the structure or form their proposed State and community governments will take." 2008 Temotu Report.

Tikuna (Tikopia & Anuta), with various languages (dialects & accents). Although "kinship governance was severely disrupted by European colonial imperialism, people still structured

governance that has emerged over the years, is 'committee' governance—i.e. Village Committees, Church committees & so forth, which has proven provision for orderliness in villages.

Though this was the case, traditional systems mentioned earlier were still accepted norms.

In terms of future governance, four options sprang out of discussions regarding Community governments as a sphere to be resonated within the Federal Constitution & governing structure. **Option 1:** Village as the sphere to continue to exercise community governance; **Option 2:** Church districts to

form the basis of community governments; **Option 3:** Establish island governments, e.g. mainland Santa Cruz as its own government; & **Option 4:** Establish Ward level governments. Both the people, & Provincial Executive preferred Option 1 as the structure was already existing, & would be practical to set-up. ✍

Malaita

Malaita team leader Hudson Kwalea & colleague nominee Fr. John Gere, assisted by EPAC members Henry Manuhea & Collin Gauwane to identify Political Communities for 5 regions of Malaita.

In all, the team produced 5 reports, chronologic accounts & details of it's tours undertaken from the period of December 2007 till September 2008.

Major planning was underway in February for the

Political community identification, in simultaneous consultation with Provincial Executive including the Premier & Deputy Speaker, regarding the process & work programme on February & May.

They approached communities through focal points of the regions, which includes Fadanga House of Chiefs, Lafari Centre (all in West & East Koio region); the Faumananu market centre at Ma'alu, North Malaita, Fiu village in Central Kwara'ae, to name a few.

In April, team

People attending the Political Community Identification talks with Malaita nominees at Lafari centre, East Kwaio, Malaita in June 2008 (Below). Team leader Hudson Kwalea and tour boat driver during Political community identification in June 2008. (Right)



leader Hudson Kwalea traveled to Gizo to collate information from Malaitans living there. Meeting with 214 people on May 15 & 20, who were informed of the constitutional reform &

their views noted regarding the change.

The identification activity on Malaita was done, involving a total over 1,300 people from Central Kwara'ae, North Malaita,

team indicated that they are yet to reach the Malaita-Outer Islands (MOI).

Although the concept of Federalism faced skeptics (as reports noted), the idea of political

community with the proposal for more autonomy for traditionally recognized leadership in this constitutional reform was embraced by many.

In terms of political arrangement within the region (statistically) the number of main tribal communities identified & Houses of Chiefs in Malaita were, 13 tribes & 5 Houses of chiefs for East Malaita; 31 tribes & 5 Houses of Chiefs for Central/West Kwara'ae; 5 tribes & 1 Council of Chiefs for North Malaita; 1 tribe & 2 Council of Chiefs, Lafari

Choiseul

From May 25 to June 2, 2008, Choiseul team members represented in Constitutional Congress & EPAC undertook a one & half week awareness tour & meetings in Choiseul to identifying the Political Communities.

Prior to this tour, preparation was done by Honiara-based members (Ms. Viola Malasa and Mr. Connelly Sandakabatu) to design; coordinate & implement a tour program with the necessary support & liaison with Constitutional



(Below) The team [from left:] CC Provincial Nominees team leader Simmy Vazarabatu, Sir Moses Pitakaka (EPAC Member), Viola Malasa (Provincial Nominee CC) and Connelley Sandakabatu (National Nominee CC) also faced a threat of tomado storm directly heading towards the canoe while traveling at sea, between Choiseul Province and Vella la vella (above).

Reform Unit.

The team met with the Provincial Government for the final review & adoption of Choiseul Province Position Paper. They also visited at least 3 village communities on East & Northwest Choiseul constituencies; the Provincial Assembly; provincial workers; teachers & students of two sec-



ondary schools, and Choiseul people working and living in Western Province.

During the tour, they also found that general awareness & understanding was

needed on the concept of 'Political Community' within the Lauru context as a government entity for and by Lauru people in the proposed State Constitution under the new Solomon Is-

lands' Federal Government system.

Though time was insufficient to allow for meaningful discussions to contextualize the idea into a coherent 'Lauru's' political community, it was found the island is quite diverse in language dialect, culture, custom and tradition; and with the recent resettlement of our Micronesians dissident at Wagina, the need to find the optimum local governing unit must be treated with uttermost care and a sense of wisdom.

The team was also able to gather

information on what people envisioned for the current process. It was also realized that the people recognized their participation in the whole process of achieving constitutional reform as very important & that they should not be marginalized.

It was a very worthwhile tour in both consultation and education awareness on constitutional reform project's agenda.

The Provincial Position Paper has been completed and waits final endorsement by the Choiseul Provincial assembly.



Solomon Islands Government

Constitutional Reform Unit

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ABOUT CRU

The Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU) is the body responsible for the management and coordination of Constitutional Reform Project.

It is an established division within the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and it is the Secretariat for the Constitutional Congress.

CRU has 9 staff members that carry out administrative, media, legal and financial related undertakings for the Constitutional Reform Programme.

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Publisher's note: Much of the content in this issue are reflective of activities from 2007 (Congress) to date.

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www.sicr.gov.sb

Constitutional Development Overview

Below are important events that mark the constitutional development: From a constitutionally reformed British Protectorate turned Independent, Solomon Islands sought to adopt a structure more suitable to the diversity of its people. This Independent nation has brought reform again from the books, in the form of the present Constitutional Reform Programme, with the view that Federalism is the best form of governance for Solomon Islands. These events are central to the constitutional development currently underway in Solomon Islands.

