

Vision 2020



A Brighter Future for Solomon Islands

Report from the Maravagi Retreat

**Solomon Islands Government
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A. Introduction

The Solomon Islands as a nation and an important player in regional and global development strategies recognizes the need to develop its own strategy in order to be an active player on the international scene. In this regard it is important that the government identifies and prioritizes major public policy issues facing Solomon Islands over an extended period into the future. This approach demands setting of a **vision, goals, policies and a reform agenda**.

Solomon Islands' political history from colonization to independence and the imbalanced development processes that ensued, provides a wealth of information and experience that clearly indicates the need to reassess the nation's development agenda as clearly highlighted by the circumstances that led to the recent ethnic tension. There needs to be a clear vision, with a mandated mission that sets achievable goals and policy reforms in all development processes that takes into account a more balanced decentralized development approach.

The Solomon Islands is endowed with abundant human and natural resources and is at the threshold of an opportunity to lay the foundations of a brighter and progressive future. It is incumbent upon all Solomon Islanders and especially leaders to put into action a vision that captures the imagination and imposes a responsibility that cannot be neglected. We cannot be complacent but seize the opportunity to lay the foundations for that brighter and progressive future.

To map out a brighter future for the Solomon Islands the Executive of Government (all Permanent Secretaries) through a consultative process involving regular meetings, cluster group meetings and a retreat have put together this document to guide future governments in ensuring that Solomon Islands as a nation can be proud of its heritage, progressive in its endeavors, robust in its economy and political leadership and enjoying social justice, peace and harmony.

B. The Vision

The Solomon Islands will be a nation that is proud of its religious and diverse cultural heritage, progressive in its endeavors, robust in its economy and political leadership and enjoying social justice, peace and harmony.

B.2. The Mission Statement

To improve the quality of life for all Solomon Islanders through a purposeful and directed development process that takes into account the unique, diverse and community-based life of Solomon Islands. To involve all Solomon Islanders in this development process through which individuals and communities will be proud of their religious and cultural heritage, progressive in their endeavors and enjoy social justice, peace and harmony as a result of a robust economy and responsible leadership and stewardship of the natural, human and financial resources of the country.

B.3. Goal

The goal is to empower Solomon Islanders to be at the forefront of all development that is sustainable, worthwhile and meaningful. It is people-centered as development must be of the people, by the people and for the people as they own most of the resources.

Meaningful and sustainable development is also about improving the lives of people empowering people to participate in development and engaging them in useful and worthwhile employment that improves the quality of life which leads to peace and security. People-based development recognizes the value of the faces behind the statistics. The ultimate goal of development for Solomon Islands is when all individuals are valued, respected and from whom respect is expected.

C. Policy Reforms

Policy reform should not only strengthen regional and international participation but in so doing consolidate the country's national capacity

to manage its own affairs in a globalized world. The major objectives of the reform agenda would be:

- To develop an appropriate mechanism that would see a permanent and ongoing partnership between the SIG, resource owners, private sector, NGOs and the donor community that respects all parties and contributes to balanced and sustainable development – **stakeholder analysis and partnership.**
- To undertake a review of the relative roles and functions of the donor and local stakeholders in development – **security, good governance, economic reform, productive sector, basic social services.**
- To design a methodology for engaging the citizens of this country in the planning and public policy development process, and the particular needs associated with the inclusion of young people and women in the debate – **community engagement.**
- To assess the size, shape, capacity and the skills necessary for the public sector to deliver its core functions now and in the immediate and long term future –**public sector reform.**
- To assess the likely impact of federal system of government on the roles and functions of the public sector – **constitutional reform.**
- To identify a system that guarantees the ongoing implementation and monitoring of any agreed plans – **leadership.**
- To identify the likely impact of new technologies and their sustainability
- To identify regional development initiatives on collaborative projects and services across the Pacific (the Pacific Plan) – **policy implementation.**
- To analyze an agreed set of strategies that would progress the corporate planning process – **policy implementation.**

C.1. Ownership by communities of *development policies and processes.*

The major policy reform that incorporates the vision and goal in the development processes is *the communitization of development policies and processes.* It is clear that the decentralization of the development processes is necessary if the people of Solomon Islands are to actively participate in a process that not only ensures their own livelihood but also

a future for its indigenous people. This policy reform ensures that Solomon Islanders own Solomon Islands. This ownership assures a development process that leads to social justice, peace and harmony. It ensures an environment for economic growth which is the driving force of development.

C.2. Stakeholder partnerships reforms

The donor community provides an invaluable but unpredictable assistance to national development. A strong and ongoing partnership between the SIG and its public sector and the donor community will continue but a vibrant productive private sector is an important policy issue. Whilst donor assistance provides the necessary input into the economy, some of that assistance must be made available to the private sector, which will eventually take on a major development role.

C.4. Constituency and Ward Boundaries reform

Solomon Islands is a community-based environment. For more than 5,000 years our ancestors have waged war with the elements, with themselves and with the environment in which they existed. The sum total of that existence is the sovereign state of Solomon Islands, now divided up into constituencies and wards resembling some but not all of the communal demarcations that have evolved over those thousands of years.

In order for the country to move forward the constitutional boundaries must be redrawn to take into account natural and social divisions that can form the bases for development. Wards must also be redrawn so as not to straddle constitutional boundaries.

Once that has been achieved it is easier to engage the citizens of this country in the planning and public policy development process, and the particular needs associated with the inclusion of young people and women in the debate.

C.5. Constitutional reform

The inadequacies of the current Constitution warrant a new Constitution reflective of the wishes of the people and the whole reform agenda.

D. Sector reforms.

Sector reforms incorporate the capacities and the skills necessary for the public sectors to deliver on its core functions now and in the immediate and long term future. This reform is centered around the utilization of all available resources (natural, land, sea, space, human, finance) the development of infrastructures (roads, airports, wharves, energy, communication) and the management of facilities and programs that deliver the goods to the people.

D.1. Productive Sector Reform

- agriculture
- fisheries and marine resources
- forest resources
- environment conservation (pacific plan)
- mines and minerals
- commerce and industries
- tourism

The challenge for the productive sector under this planned period is to address the need for productivity of all the people in the community to ensure there is food security and to generate cash from the subsistence rural livelihood activities.

The key development strategies are Land, Labour, Capital and Infrastructures. Basic infrastructures in all provinces will stimulate economic development.

D.1.1. Agriculture

Agriculture is the backbone of the country's economy where all the activities in the community are agriculturally based and where people are able to produce their own food and generate cash to meet the cost of other necessities. Subsistence agriculture plays a significant role in the food security of the communities.

Major agricultural development in the identified Agriculture Opportunity Areas (AOA) such as the Auluta Basin will be pursued for Palm Oil

development, including the area at Vangunu in the Western Province and addressing the major coconut industry at RIPEL development areas.

Under the planned period the major agriculture development will be guided by these policies which promote, improve and lead agricultural development in Solomon Islands to a profitable and environmentally sustainable future. Research, extension, education, regulatory and other services to improve the sub sector contribution towards national food sovereignty and national economic recovery will in turn raise the standard of living.

D.1.2. Fisheries

Fisheries are a priority development arena where significant portions of the population are engaged. This sub-sector holds potential development and must be aggressively developed by community participation in food security and cash. Coastal fisheries are part of rural livelihood where fish consumption is estimated (1988) at nearly 34kg per head of population. This includes marine worms, seaweed, crabs and crayfish.

With regards to the Tuna Industry improvements must be made in management techniques to ensure sustainable catch and direct benefit to the local economy in terms of employments and other facilities. This will include review of distant water fishing agreements including the cooperative efforts on the part of stakeholders in the industry.

D.1.3. Forest

Forest is a valuable resource and a major income earner for government and forest owners. Care must be exercised to ensure that the future generation will still have the opportunity to use this resource to enjoy and enrich their livelihood through the use of the forestry resources. Since most of these resources are tribally owned, efforts must be made to ensure that resource owners benefit maximally from the use of the resources. There must be a policy to encourage and assist village communities to be engaged in replanting logged areas of high value trees.

There must be a strategy to deal with the population pressure on fertility of land due to constant use. There must be balance between environment conservation productive utilization of the forest resources.

It cannot be overemphasized that the productive sector is important for long term guarantee of sustainable development in Solomon Islands.

D1.4. Land

Eighty seven percent (87%) of land in Solomon Islands are held under customary and tribal ownership. These include forest, minerals, reefs and islets off shores. Land and resource-owners must be assisted to improve their management system in a community based and participatory concept. There must be an integrated management system to enhance social relationships that are conducive to development.

The major objective is to make suitable and productive land available for development. Land use must encourage a development process thereby creating an environment where the rule of law is upheld and business can thrive and investors have the confidence to invest. There must be transparent and secure property rights and sufficient infrastructure that will open capital markets and for all stakeholders.

D.1.5. Mines, Mineral and Energy

The productive sector is the driving force for the revitalization of the economy. In this regard the major economic project such as Gold Ridge and others must be assisted to reopen and that a full participation by the resource-owners will be encouraged. Prospecting work for epithermal gold must continue in other parts of the country. Under this policy further work will be done on new Gold deposit in the area adjacent to Gold Ridge mine

Besides mining other potential natural renewable energy resources (hydropower, water resources, Solar Power and other natural resources) will be pursued for development purposes.

D.1.5. Commerce, Employment and Trade

This covers the important economic sectors of local and foreign investment, in the areas of trade, employment, commerce and industrial development. New and vibrant policies will be put in place to revitalize the sub sector to return to progressive development after the ethnic tension. It will be ensured that investment in the public and private sector are encouraged. It is in this area that emphasis will be put on regional industrial development to diversify the economic base of the country.

D.1.6. Tourism

Tourism offers the greatest potential for development in the productive sector. It is a growing market in the international, regional and national arena and as such it is an economic booster in terms of foreign earnings, employments, and enhancing the growth in other productive sector such as transport infrastructures, food industries, and hospitality services. Given the nature of land tenure system, tourism is best suited for development by the local community utilising their land and other resources. The development will be guided by a policy which is based on sustainable development and to promote Solomon Islands diverse culture and environments.

D.2 Finance and Public Administration Reform

As a third world and developing country it is necessary to consolidate and effectively manage the current resources that are available to the governing entities and service providers. In this regard, the target groups and the means of ensuring that the resources and services are maximized should be well defined. In this context, the services should target the mass of the populace who dominate the productive activities of the rural sector to contribute towards the growth of the national economy. One should bear in mind the need of strengthening the modes of support services to these productive activities for effective and constructive methodologies when measuring the growth rate.

Against the above principles, it is envisaged that provincial and national ruling governments will adapt workable fiscal and monetary policies that fosters equitable development at all levels in the country. The provincial centres will be resourced with necessary financial and planning tools along with the correct number of human resources to build their capacity for professional measurement of the effect and/or impact of the deployed resources to these centres and communities.

It is envisaged that the central planning process at the national level will be promoted at the provincial and community levels by the competent authorities.

The financial injection to the rural economy will gear towards sectors that will generate income and promote sustainable activities as agreed by the competent authorities. The involvement of the community and provincial planners in the planning process and the level of human resources

deployed to the provinces and community will also focus on strengthening the current agreed programs by both the provincial and national governments for continuity of the ongoing activities targeted towards the youth and the rural dwellers.

Assistance and support from the other sectors will proliferate the development process. In doing that our development partners will support the ongoing schemes of activities for improved livelihoods of our citizens. It is envisaged that these developments will evolve into satisfactory stages that will necessitate pursuance of other support services apart from health and education at the community level. These services could include banking, mailing and other facilities that will enable the producers and customers of the rural economy to concentrate on their streams of production and promotion including marketing.

D.3.0 Law Justice and National Security reforms

Law and order sector reform are vital to ensure the rule of law reigns but that with it adequate legislative framework and appropriate legal mechanisms are in place to facilitate the right environment where infrastructure developments and reforms take place and facilitate the various reforms in the other sectors in Solomon Islands. In order for other sectoral reforms to take place, peace and justice must prevail and the sectoral reforms in the law and order sector need to focus on ensuring and enhancing the right environment exists for reforms in the sector to take place including reforms in the other sectors.

D 3.1 Police and National Security

Community participation and ownership in policing is vitally important in the provision of policing services. Reforms in this sector calls for the restoration of the integrity, capability, confidence, efficiency and effectiveness of the Royal Solomon Islands Police, community participation in policing and presence of policing services in every community throughout the country and the sustaining of a highly capable and independent police force and services throughout the country.

Prisoner rehabilitation and sentencing reforms to ensure people are made to reform should be the goal of any reform in the prisons sector, but reforms must also ensure the infrastructure reforms and development are in place to provide secure prisons which in turn provide a secure environment for the country to enable other developments take place.

D.3.2 Legal Services

Reforms in the legal services must be geared towards improved and readily available and accessible legal services and service delivery, law reforms that enhance effectiveness and efficiency in the legal, justice, economic, financial, infrastructure, social services and other sectors of the country. Legal reforms must focus on improved, effective and efficient legal services delivery to enhance government services, good governance, human rights, more secure society, empowerment of leaders and elders to participate meaningfully in the upkeep of law and order in the communities as well as enhancing policing roles in the various communities. And in partnership with other sectors to devise and install mechanisms that recognizes and enhances the mutual resolution of disputes on land and especially customary land throughout Solomon Islands which should enhance developments and reforms in the other sectors. To advance the reforms envisaged, infrastructural and institutional strengthening needs as well as ongoing training and provision of incentives to sector personnel must be pursued.

D.3.3 JUDICIARY

The pivotal role which the judiciary plays in any democratic society must be recognized in any reforms. The independence of the Judiciary and its role in upholding people's rights must not be tampered with. Reform however is required in the way the judiciary operates, to enhance service delivery, create and sustain national confidence in its impartiality in the resolution of disputes. Reform is necessary in the processes and procedures under which it operates to have it become more accessible and less costly to ordinary Solomon Islanders and how it is structured. Reforms are required in its customary land dispute resolution mechanisms to ensure a speedy and early conclusion to dispute resolution as well as empowering village and community leaders to dispense justice on minor criminal and civil matters as well as customary matters and innovative assisted dispute resolution mechanisms that can help build business and investor confidence in Solomon Islands. Reforms are required to ensure people have easy access to and the judiciary is easily accessible to everyone in Solomon Islands whilst maintaining the judiciary's independence of the other two arms of Government.

D. 3.4 Reconciliation and Peace

Reforms proposed for the various sectors cannot be properly pursued without there being prevailing peace in Solomon Islands. Peace and security are two of the most important prerequisites for meaningful development and progress in any country. To continue with the prevailing peace and to sustain peace in the long term, reforms are necessary to provide and enhance mechanisms to facilitate and sustain true reconciliation, rehabilitation and restoration amongst people and entities in Solomon Island, build mutual trust and respect and the benefit of a diverse but united and progressive Solomon Islands.

D. 3.5 Foreign Affairs

Solomon Islands can should realize its surrounding as a nation in transition of a globalized world. As a sovereign nation it should embark on key activities that will articulate activities at a national, regional and international scene for fair representation of its citizens at regional and international fora. To enable Solomon Islands to be a strategic player in the regional and international scene reforms to ensure that the country has highly skilled international experts are bred and groomed, mechanisms to enhance national interests and strategies in regional and international flora, strategic alliances and partnerships are developed and progressed. Reforms are necessary in actively assimilating Solomon Islands into regional and international agreements, which are of mutual benefit to Solomon Islands the region and the world.

As a sovereign country our programs should foremost promote our identity and history to potential investors and friends for greater cooperation.

D.4.0. Social Sector Reforms

Social Sector Reforms are dependent on an adequate infrastructure with the necessary linkages of transport, communication and energy. Although Social Sector tend to be seen as the 'consumer sector' because of the huge resources that is needed to support the sector, it must also be realized that any funds that will be expended to reform the sector will be a huge investment on the human resources of this country. Our more than adequate Human Resources need to be educated, kept healthy and governed adequately in order for this country to benefit from it. A poor, unhealthy and uneducated population is a recipe for national disaster of diabolical proportions.

The Social Sector is about 'people'. Good governance, improved health services and education is about managing our human resources. The Social Sector is about community involvement in governance, health and education services. A reform in the social sector must take into consideration the infrastructure, facilities and management of the sector to involve and engage the communities at all levels.

D. 4.1. Governance

Community participation and engagement at all levels of governance is absolutely necessary for good governance. The current democratic system of government in Solomon Islands provides for the pillars of freedom and free enterprise and must be guarded at all times. However, it must be ensured that social justice and the rule of law must apply equally to all without prejudice against rural dwellers who make up 80% of the population of this country. It is therefore emphasized that representation of the population at all levels of government must be strengthened.

Recommended reforms in the social sector involve political boundaries, the electoral processes and leadership at all levels (national, provincial and area council) including traditional and church leadership. The Constituencies already provide the basic unit for good governance and responsible leadership at all levels. Each Constituency in this country can be regarded as a development unit with leadership at the national, provincial and community (area councils) already in existence. There are basically two things that need to take place:

- (1). Redraw the map so that constituency boundaries reflect as much as possible the geographical and social cohesion of the populations of this country and no Ward Boundary should straddle two constituencies (e.g. Ward 9 in Malaita Province which straddles Lau Mbaelelea and North Malaita)
- (2) Revive and fund Area Councils and form a Congress of Leaders to be chaired by the National Member of Parliament with Provincial Members (by Wards) and all community leaders as part of the congress, mandated to guide the development process in the constituency.

This reform will then allow for all other sector developments in the constituency whereby economic growth centers as advocated by NEDERP can flourish and law and order can be adequately dealt with at the constituency/community level.

D. 4. 2. Health and Education

Based on a formula which takes into account the educational and health needs of each constituency and the environmental factors hindering development, it shall be determined that each constituency must have at least one community health center, one community high school (Form 1 – 3), a community development center (economic growth center), and community policing and financing facility. Senior High Schools, District Hospitals and other major seaport, airports and economic centers can be shared between constituencies but as much as possible no constituency should lack any basic infrastructure, transport and communication linkages and the necessary energy to effectively run the development process in each constituency which will in turn support the social services we advocate for the entire population on an equity basis.

D.4.3. Partnerships

In partnership as is being implemented by the Education Sector Improvement and Reform Program, the Health Care Reform and Review, the State Government Federal System and the Political Reforms advocated by the Coalition and good governance by RAMSI it is anticipated that all these reforms will lead to reforms at the social sector involving schools, curricula (formal, non formal-TVET, informal), universal education, sector-wide approach, partnerships.

By 2015, five years before Vision 2020, there will be universal basic education available to all Solomon Islands children. The skilled manpower needs of this country will be met and all Solomon islanders will participate intelligently in all development processes.

In the Ministry of Health and Medical Services the process of Health Care Review and Reform is already underway, emphasizing Primary Health Care Focus, rationalization of curative services and forging partnerships with funding agencies, other sectors and the communities.

By 2020 all communities in this country will have access to primary health care, quality curative services and state of the art training facilities for all health disciplines in conjunction with training institutions all over the world.

E.0. Policy implementation

The implementations of these reforms takes into account the availability and growing efficiency in new technologies and their sustainability in improving ways and methods of doing things. Linkages to regional development initiatives on collaborative projects and services across the Pacific (the Pacific Plan) are real possibilities that can be taken on board as we set strategies that would progress the corporate planning and development processes.

The government leadership must recognize the important role of good governance and its political responsibility in ensuring that the instruments of government are respected and followed. Thus it is important that in areas of political decision this approach must aim:

- To ensure that all Cabinet papers are in line with government policies and priorities, financial capacity and the laws of the land – **transparency and good governance.**
- To ensure regular meetings of cluster groups for the purposes of formulating relevant policies that direct all forms of development– **policy consultation and policy development.**
- To formulate **Consultation and Concept Papers** that sets directions for detailed planning and budgeting – e.g. **Forward Budget Estimates and Corporate Plans.**