THE 2015 PREMIERS’ CONFERENCE

THE GUADALCANAL AND HONIARA CITY COMMUNIQUÉ

Preamble

Whereas:

- The Premiers of each of the nine provinces of Solomon Islands and the Mayor of Honiara City Council ("the Premiers") convened at this conference in Honiara, Guadalcanal Province, from the 5th to the 9th of October 2015;

- The Conference theme was "Community Participation in Local Economic Development", where the Permanent Secretaries, invited guests, and resource persons were invited to make presentations relevant to the theme to assist the Premiers in their deliberations and decisions;

- The Premiers have deliberated on the presentations made and information provided in support of the theme and recognise the need to make progressive and forward thinking policy decisions for the benefit of the people of Solomon Islands.

Statement of Principles

The Premiers are guided by their desire for greater recognition by, and cooperation from, National Government. The status afforded to Premiers and Provincial Governments must reflect their close proximity and connection with the rural communities of Solomon Islands, which allows them to advocate for greater community participation in local economic development.
Having regard to the Preamble and the Statement of Principles, the Premiers hereby resolve that:

1. **Resolution 1: To seek clear direction from the National Government about the future governance structure(s) of Solomon Islands**

   The competing governance interests of Solomon Islands hinder development and confuse its citizens. The Premiers ask for a definitive statement from the National Government about its future direction and how these competing governance interests will be reconciled to avoid the current situation where money is being spent by institutions in competition with each other such as, for example, the RCDF, which detracts from the community participation in local economic development.

   *Primary administering body: Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet*

2. **Resolution 2: To amend to the Provincial Government Act 1997**

   Premiers and Members of the Provincial Assembly are elected by and from the same voter base as the National Government. Accordingly, the Provincial Government Act 1997 should be amended to:

   a. Enshrine the Premiers’ Conference as a forum for Premiers to discuss directly with the Prime Minister and his representatives, and to make decisions about the future direction of the country;
   
   b. Diversify the revenue sources for Provincial Governments so that they can better share in the country’s spoils;
   
   c. Immediately increase the Fixed Services Grant to allow Provinces to meet the rising cost and diversification of service delivery in the rural areas;
   
   d. Devolve Central Tender Board functions down to Provincial Government to facilitate the awarding of provincial contracts; and
   
   e. Review the entitlements of Members, including recognition for long term members.

   *Primary administering body: Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening, Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet*

3. **Resolution 3: To identify and support investments in rural communities’ local economic development**

   There are many different activities being carried out attempting to provide financial services and investments to rural communities. The Premiers support these endeavors
and would like to see greater contributions by the National Government to support small scale investments such as, for example, the re-establishment of the Development Bank of Solomon Islands.

*Primary administering body: Ministry of Commerce*

4. **Resolution 4: To improve the human resource capacity of Provincial Governments**

This resolution has been made before; however, this remains an issue of critical importance for Provincial Governments as they are unable to function without adequate and skilled manpower. The Premiers seek:

- The improvement of the appointment process of provincial seconded staff be made an immediate national priority; and
- The establishment of a provincial scholarship system to provide educational support in identified areas of need.

*Primary administering body: Ministry of Public Service, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development*

5. **Resolution 5: To support and encourage the involvement of women in provincial leadership and economic empowerment**

Women make up half of the country’s population and yet are underrepresented in formal leadership positions and require support to be active players in local economic development. The Premiers recognize the important role that women play in good decision making and facilitating community participation in local economic development and support them in their ambitions.

*Primary administering body: Provincial Governments, Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children’s Affairs, Non-Governmental Organisations*

6. **Resolution 6: To develop a Climate Change Framework and Disaster Action Plan for every Province**

Climate change and disasters are issues facing all Provinces. There are many different organisations delivering climate change and disaster-related programmes in the Provinces. Sometimes, these programmes are in competition with each other. It is important that these actors operate in strategic alignment and partnership with Provincial Government. The Premiers request the assistance of these actors to develop an integrated
framework within which they can all work to combat the effects of climate change and deal with disasters as they arise.

*Primary administering body: Ministry of Environment, Conservation, Climate Change and Disaster Management, Non-Governmental Organisations*

7. **Resolution 7: To review the investment menu of the Provincial Capacity Development Fund**

Provincial Governments have received limited support from national Ministries in purchasing essential equipment for the delivery and maintenance of basic services in and around the Province. The Provinces seek the review of the PCDF investment menu to ensure that it adequately responds to the needs of Provincial Governments such as, for example, the purchasing of small machinery.

*Primary administering body: Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening.*

8. **Resolution 8: To provide immediate support for basic functions in and around provincial headquarters and Honiara City**

Basic functions of Provincial Governments include waste management, the protection of traditional knowledge and artefacts, and the allocation of space for public burial grounds. At present, Provincial Government lack the resources needed to perform these functions and request the National Government assist Provincial Governments to purchase land for allocation of burial sites and rubbish dumps and to assist with funding for the establishment of provincial repositories of traditional knowledge and artefacts. The issue of waste management and burial grounds is of particular urgency in Honiara City.

*Primary administering body: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey*

9. **Resolution 9: To revisit and action resolutions in previous Communiqués**

There are several outstanding issues of importance to Provinces in previous Communiqués, such as the integrity of Western Province borders and secretariat support to implementing Premiers’ Conference Communiqués. It is important these are followed up on.

*Primary administering body: Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening*
We signify our assent and commitment to this Communiqué on this 9th day of October 2015:

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<tr>
<th>Premier</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hon. Selwyn Mapuli</td>
<td>Central</td>
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<td>Hon. Jackson Kiloe</td>
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<td>Hon. Bartholomew Vavanga</td>
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<td>Hon. James Habu</td>
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<td>Hon. Peter Chanel Ramohia</td>
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<td>Hon. Collin S. Tesuatai</td>
<td>Rennell Bellona</td>
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<td>Hon. Nelson Omar Menale</td>
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<td>Hon. Pye Roberts Kuve</td>
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<td>Hon. Cr. Alfrence Fatai</td>
<td>Honiara City Council</td>
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I hereby confirm my receipt of this Communiqué this 9th day of October 2015:

Hon. Augustine Auga
Minister for Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening