EXPERT GROUP MEETING

“Integrating Sustainable Development and Peace in Post-conflict Situations: Role of Public Institutions and Public Administration”
(25 – 26 October 2017, UNDESA, New York, USA)

Discussion Paper - Implications for Sustaining Peace
Role of Public Administration to support the adoption of public policies and multidimensional conflict sensitive and development oriented approaches for sustaining peace

25 October 2017
INTRODUCTION
This discussion paper is purposely to inform this Expert Group meeting on certain institutional and programmatic based approaches or commitments that the Solomon Islands government through its national public institutions and public administration have undertaken with the imperative to reconstruct, prevent and sustain peace.

Given that this discussion paper is specifically on the roles of the national public institutions and public administration in the reconstruction, prevention and sustenance of peace the discussion that will be delivered from this paper is set-out in the following manner.

Under Part 1, is to provide an overview of the constitutional arrangements that derived the mandatory status of Solomon Islands national public institutions and public administration, with prior to this, a snapshot of the country’s past experience of an ethnic based tension / conflict that dearly costs the country’s national public institutions and public administration.

Under Part 2, is to highlight the overarching strategic directions both in policy, framework, processes and systems inclusive of the institutional and structural building and development that had happened to the country’s public institution and public administration to responding to the importance to reconstruct, prevent and sustain peace especially from after what the country had gone through in past.

And, under Part 3, is to share on what is perceived as successful experiences that certain agencies of government have taken in the broader national public institutions and public administration in the country particularly with the other stakeholders, and with a conclusive remark to this discussion paper.

PART ONE (1) – BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1.0. PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIVE IN PERSPECTIVE

The period 1998 – 2003 in the history of Solomon Islands sees one of ever-experienced period that the entire country’s social, economic and political fabric was both put to a test of its endurance and as well a witness of a near collapse of its state’s public institution and administration. From what is locally known as the ethnic-tension that sees the engaged confrontation and conflict between certain unlawful formed elements from the two major provinces in the country, challenged the still progressive stage of the country’s public institution and public administration to a stage of dysfunctionality.

Prior to the experience in the period 1998-2003 and pretty much the post-independence period, the public institutions and public administration in Solomon Islands (and in this case the broader public sector or government) is in fact a transposition of the legacy of the colonial past. There hasn’t been a high percentage of qualified graduate(s) or qualification in the public institutions and public administration back then. And public institutions and public administration were more along colonial leadership and systems knowledge – that is not to say that there are no formal managerial practices and so forth.
They are there, but not as what it is to-day where especially the public administration is more structurally strategic and locally sensitized and contextualized.

Coupled with the structural and institutional progresses and development within the country’s public institutions and the public administration during the two post-periods (post-independence and post 1998-2003), a shift from what is usually a general upgrading or restructuring of the country’s public institutions and administration to manage and maintain stability in government’s public financial capability, occurred to the realization of the importance of peacebuilding and sustainable development as versus statebuilding in this regard.

1.1. CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS – PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

The public institutions and public administration in Solomon Islands are constitutionally oriented. This constitutional orientation is established through the three (3) following public institutions which are the apex of the country’s public administration. These are;

1.1.1. The Legislature – was established under s.46\(^1\) of the National Constitution of Solomon Islands as a single Chamber and shall be known as the National Parliament of Solomon Islands. Further, the Legislature through the National Parliament of Solomon Islands under s.59 (1)\(^2\) of the Constitution gives power for the National Parliament to make laws in the following areas; peace, order and good government of Solomon Islands. Inclusive of other more constitutional functions and bodies as per mandated under the legislature, the National Parliament as the country’s constitutional public institution is said to administer public administration as well.

1.1.2. The Executive and the Cabinet – both was established under s.30 (1)\(^3\) and s.35 (1)\(^4\) of the National Constitution of Solomon Islands respectively. The Executive authority figure head is the Head of State whilst for the Cabinet is the Prime Minister including the Ministers of the Cabinet. Subjective to both the Executive and the Cabinet including Ministers of the Cabinet constitutional placement, the carrying out of the public administration in this respect by both, has in fact is constitutionally oriented and mandated. And in particular the Cabinet through the formation of ministries and agencies of government including the constitutional Commissions, (the most relevant one for this case is the SI Public Service Commission), public administration is equally visible.

1.1.3. The Judiciary – also was established under the Constitution and Chief Justice as the head of the Judiciary, equally visible as a public institution in the delivery of public administration through interpretation of all laws and hearings.

\(^{1}\) See the Constitution of Solomon Islands in http://www.pacilii.org/sb/legis/consol_act/c1978167/


1.1.4. The Public Service Commission – as also established by the Constitution under s.115 (1)\(^5\) the PSC equally exercised public administration through facilitating of appointments (including confirmation of these appointments), to remove and to exercise disciplinary control over public officer holding such public office.

1.1.5. The Ministry of Public Service – also established and administered by an Act of Parliament – that is the Public Service Act [Cap 92]\(^6\), the Ministry of Public Service through its Minister facilitate public administration in these areas; public service reform, recruitment, selection, separation and retention; regulations and ethics of public service; general employment and condition of services; training and development; and corporate and support services.

Aside of the legislature (that is the National Parliament), the Executive and Cabinet and the Judiciary, both the Public Service Commission and the Ministry of Public Service in Solomon Islands context, are the key leading public institutions in the delivery of public administration – with envisaging a professional, efficient, and ethical public service that carries national pride, is pragmatic and adaptive to the changing demands for better service delivery to Solomon Islands.

In addition, the broader ministries and agencies of government are equally doing that though in their specific ministerial mandated areas and functions. So the broader machinery of government (as led by both the Public Service Commission and Ministry of Public of Service), in their respective policy and legislative portfolios are directly discharging the role of public administration and to some extent are doing so indirectly.

PART TWO (2) – INSTITUTIONAL AND STRATEGIC APPROACHES AND DIRECTIONS

The key aspect of recognizing and focusing on public institutions and the role of public administration in responding in the reconstruction, prevention, sustainable development and peace in post-conflict situations can also be carried out through the development of philosophical and practical approaches or interventions by government through its institutional and strategic processes, that is appropriate and relevant for reconstruction, prevention, sustainable development and peace in such situations.

In Solomon Islands, the following philosophical and practical approaches or interventions is taken by government in enhancing the role of public institutions and public administration in effectively responding to the reconstruction, prevention, sustainable development and peace.

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\(^6\) Seehttp://www.paclii.org/sb/legis/consol_act/psa152/
These are: -

2.0. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURING AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

2.1.1. Institutional Structural Development for Peacebuilding in Solomon Islands - MNURP

In early 2000 the government decided through Cabinet process to establish a specific ministry of government that will be another ministry amongst its existing one and will form part of the public institutions of government, which directly and indirectly deals with peace or peacebuilding in the country.

Government has taken this initiative as its commitment back-then at the national level, as it appreciates and ensued in its political processes, the importance of peacebuilding as equally necessary for its social and economic development. And this sentiment and or view, has since then remain relevant regardless of political changes of government since early 2000 until this time.

The Ministry of National Unity Reconciliation and Peace is a public institution of government in the country. And as such it fully delivers public administration as similar to other ministries of government directly in accordance to its peacebuilding mandate and responsibility including receiving technical and financial resourcing and support from government.

As a public institution, that its mandate and roles are directly related to peacebuilding, and that is also equally required to deliver the broader public administration as like any ministry of government, the ministry, developed a Corporate Plan 2016 – 2019 (which is a reviewed one from the 2011-2015) that clearly stipulated Key Priority Areas (KPAs) to advance peacebuilding in this respect. They are: -

a) Peace and Post-conflict Rehabilitation Programs;
b) National Consciousness and Unity;
c) Traditional Governance and Systems and Structures;
d) Organic Tradition and Structures;
e) Infrastructure and Communication Development;
f) Corporate and Administration Services;
g) Policy, Planning Programme Development;
h) Coordinator and Stakeholder Partner Coordination and Donor Support

2.1.2. Institutional Structural Development for Peacebuilding in Solomon Islands – Community Policing Division under the Royal SI Police Force

Recently established under the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force is the Community Policing Team that was designated to engage community with the police in awareness and advocacy (proactive policing) in crime prevention. Being also as a public institution of government, Community Policing Team endeavours in delivering its role (in the context of community policing) to reconstruct, prevent, sustain development and peace.
2.1.3. Strategic Development Framework, Plans and Policies

Equally important to respond to reconstruction, prevention, sustainable development and peace by public institution and public administration, are also through the developing of strategic development framework, plans and policies.

In the country, the following strategic development framework, plans and policies presents this direction and as well what public institutions or ministries of government will pursue in the reconstruction, prevention, sustainable development and peace.

- **SIG – National Development Strategy 2016-2035**

The country’s National Development Strategy 2016-2035 provides the strategic visionary pathway to guide the country’s socio-economic development in Solomon Islands. This NDS maps out a strategic direction for the future development for the country. A framework for development policies, priorities and programmes where both the government through its public institution and public administration and as well development partners and multilateral bodies can all use it as a base or basis for their support programmes and projects. For this NDS its first Objective is related to this subject matter, which is to “unify nation with stable and effective governance and public order, including its MTS 14, which is to improve national unity and peace and promote cultural heritage at all levels”.

- **Sector Policy – Solomon Islands National Peacebuilding Policy**

As an sector policy approach or intervention by the Ministry of National Unity Reconciliation and Peace (MNURP) and as well an public institution of government in delivering public administration (in this context) through the creation of a sector policy, the “Solomon Islands National Peacebuilding Policy” in line with the NDS. This sector policy seeks to build a united, strong, prosperous and peaceful SI including its responds to the challenges that have arisen in the last 13 or so years after the ethnic tension and to re-direct its efforts towards socio-economic development – where national reconciliation and healing and facilitation of long term peacebuilding initiatives with special attention to statebuilding strategies are recognized.


A sector policy by a public institution of government – the Ministry of Mines and Energy that sets to provide the overall policy intent and direction on minerals in the country including the aspect of peacebuilding approach (grievance management and dispute resolution) by all engaged parties or stakeholders to this social economic development.
PART THREE (3) – SYNERGIES AND EXPERIENCES

3.1.1. Institutional Partnership and Collaboration

The partnership and collaboration with the MNURP and the UNDP in delivery peacebuilding in the country through the United Nation Peacebuilding Fund in a designed peacebuilding programming – “Supporting Peaceful and Inclusive Transition in Solomon Islands Project” an aspect to deliver the objectives of the Solomon Islands National Peacebuilding Policy and the National Development Strategy appropriate objective targeting youths and women through conduct of youth peacebuilding innovation entrepreneurs workshops and such other empowerment activities and programmes.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute (MPI) with the Director of the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute on 20 May 2016. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) states the intention of cooperation for collaboration on mutually beneficial broader learning and development opportunities in areas of peacebuilding between the Ministry of National Unity Reconciliation and Peace (MNURP) and the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute Foundation, Inc, Davao City, Philippines. This learning and development opportunities are to be provided to the mid-manager and senior technical peacebuilding programming staff or officers – upskilling their level of ability and capability in all subjects of peacebuilding in order to take the lead in delivery knowledge to target groups as resource peacebuilding facilitators.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Solomon Islands National University and the Ministry of National Unity Reconciliation was also entered in 2016. The MoU was signed between the Permanent Secretary of MNURP and the former Vice Chancellor of the SINU. The purposes of this MoU are: Cooperative activities under this MOU will be carried out in the fields of research, training and policy making, research in the field of peacebuilding and training of officials according to the Human Resources Development Plan 2013-2017 of the MNURP;
3.1.2. Peacebuilding Programme Development Inclusivity and Governance Arrangements

- The formation of the National Peacebuilding Advisory Committee (NPAC) – that includes Permanent Secretaries of the following Ministries such as Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination, representative of the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, General Secretary of the Development Services Organization (oversight body of NGOs and CSOs) and General Secretary of SI Christian Association (oversight body of Churches).

  The NPAC is chaired by the PS of the Ministry of National Unity Reconciliation and Peace with the role to provide advice, support and makes decision on the implementation of the policy. This includes providing overall advice and guidance on the implementation of the NPP and such other roles seen necessary to implementing the NPP.

- Placement / part of the Social Sector Cluster group (a sector policy arrangement under the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – Policy Implementation Evaluation unit) with relevant ministries of government that deals with social policy related issues as part of reporting on policy implementation and to discuss resolutions where it is needed to ensure the policy of government becoming effectively implemented;

- Provincial Peacebuilding Focal Points (PPFPs), with Provincial Governments (9) including the Honiara City Council. Their identified and selected direct employees who deal with community affairs or such related matters in the PGs, be as the ministry’s PPFPs where the ministry will provide these officers capacity building and development – workshops, trainings and attending seminars and attachments on peacebuilding, developing them to deliver peacebuilding in their provincial locations and areas they are looking after.

CONCLUSION

In making conclusion to this subject, given Solomon Islands perspective as per this presentation, the following are suggested areas worthy of taking on board. These are: -

a) The extent to which public institutions and administration is seen as matters especially that peacebuilding or in this case, the need to respond to reconstruction, prevention and sustaining development and peace is contextually dynamic;

b) The level of priority and provisions for technical and financial resourcing from government given the importance that both peace and development nowadays are interchangeable especially for sustainable development and the overall economy;

c) The importance to consider the inclusion of institutions and stakeholders that their roles and responsibilities are not traditional on peacebuilding but their inclusivity may assist the core roles of public institutions and administration in this regard;

d) The need to consider taking into account the systems knowledge that are with traditional and other institutions in how they also responds to such need in peacebuilding in order to complement public institutions and administration in this regard;
e) Especially with multilateral and bilateral partners in country that are either directly or indirectly dealing with such peacebuilding matters the need to jointly collaborate with local government officials or public institutions especially in the area of harmonizing and agreeing on which peacebuilding activities both are to carry or implement in country;

f) Importance of especially public institutions in country to forge connections, collaborations and partnership with national, regional and international bodies or institutions in order to acquire the needed support and professionalism to advancing peacebuilding in country;

g) Continually pursuing peacebuilding within the broader public sector in country, to be a socio-economic indicator to development including it to be a future leadership development programme focus area in the sector including national scholarship access.