I maintained that position until late in 2009 when a large group of chiefs and community leaders from Small Malaita personally asked me to return to Solomon Islands to contest that seat in the upcoming 2010 general elections. I felt like I had been dragged into this political career — not to mention it ran against our family resolution. But out of respect for our tribal elders, chiefs and community leaders and in response to their passionate call, I had to discontinue my engagement with the World Bank and returned to Solomon Islands to contest the seat. I was not very well prepared for the election campaign, and I had less than 30 days left before polling day. Even so, for their part the chiefs and community leaders were prepared and we won the seat, albeit by a slim margin of 77 votes.

The Office of the MP — A Multifaceted Role

Soon after the results of the 2010 election were declared, all MPs-elect were asked to travel to Honiara, the capital. Among a number of formalities, we were given a week of orientation — mostly about parliament, the various line ministries and of course about the role of the MP. Much of that was familiar to me.

This paper is an expression of the personal views of the author, and does not reflect the views or position of any of the committees of which he is a member or political grouping to which he belongs in Solomon Islands.

Introduction

I never thought politics was going to be part of my career, much less becoming a member of parliament (MP). My brief encounters and experiences with politicians in the past had impressed on me that if there was a job to avoid, then it was that of MP. In fact, during my time at the Central Bank of Solomon Islands (1985–2008) my family and I had decided that I should stay away from politics. On at least two occasions (2002 and 2006) I was approached by our community leaders to leave the Central Bank and contest the Small Malaita Constituency seat in the national general elections, but I remained true to that family resolution and steered clear of any political engagements, including campaign meetings.

First, I found that the office of MP had no physical office and that there were no supporting staff. One had to make good use of what was available to be able to contribute to the job and to perform as best as one could as an MP. Yet how to do that was anyone’s guess. This was a very real challenge.

Second, I realised to my dismay that this is an office that has no opening hours and no closing hours — thanks to the mobile phone. As long as the phone is on, it just keeps ringing. People call their MP in the middle of the night, they call early in the morn-
ing; they call anytime. They call on anything and everything. They call for assistance with funeral expenses of dead relatives, assistance with school fees, to attend a wedding, to follow up on their project application, to attend a meeting on the local hospital project or just to ask for ‘top up’.¹

Third, I came to understand the reality of the Solomon Islands political landscape: there are no political parties — only a ‘numbers game’. In fact, the so-called political parties going into the elections are usually just collections of individuals with certain interests, not necessarily anything to do with national interests. One sees these interests coming out at the time of the election of the prime minister. It is not unusual to have successful candidates from a ‘political party’ ending up on opposite sides of the political aisle after the election of the prime minister. The numbers game is such that you can have arch rivals ‘in bed’ politically.

But more seriously, I found that the office of the member of parliament (MP) is not only about making laws. In Solomon Islands the MP has a multifaceted role which stretches from benefactor to legislator. Everybody sees the MP as the embodiment of the entire constituency and everything to do with it. Everybody believes they have a right to the MP. Everybody demands a bit of the MP. They believe the MP has the answer to all their questions — mostly requests for financial assistance in nearly anything. They travel to Honiara to see me and when I am in the village they travel there to see me too.

Parliamentary Roles

In Solomon Islands if the executive is on top of their job, parliament would be meeting up to three times in a year. Mostly, however, parliament meets twice a year, for an average of two weeks each meeting. Unless I am sick or absent from Honiara for an extended period of time, I have to be in Honiara to attend those meetings. Until very recently (see endnote 2 above), MPs did not even have a place (office, desk, equipment) to do work. Except for a poorly resourced library, there are still virtually no resources for MPs to use for their normal work. In my case, I do all my work myself: write speeches, draft press releases and prepare statements. I have to go through all bills and other documents that come before committees and to the floor of parliament for debate. I write my own letters and do my own administration work.

Apart from the role of MP itself, I have several other parliamentary roles. I am chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). The PAC performs a scrutiny and oversight role of public finances. This role requires my committee to conduct inquiries on annual Appropriation Bills, financial reports of the government, and on auditor’s reports and other reports on public entities and state-owned enterprises. This is a job which requires me to be in Honiara on a regular basis.

I am a member of three other parliamentary standing committees: the Public Expenditure Committee which scrutinises government expenditure against the budget; the Constitutional Review Committee which deals with amendments or any bills on the national constitution; and the Bills and Legislation Committee which deals with all bills before they actually come to the floor of parliament.

A major constraint to the operations and efficient functioning of parliamentary committees in Solomon Islands is the lack of human resources. Apart from sharing a committee clerk with other committees, there are no supporting staff for parliamentary standing committees. Office space was another major issue until in 2014 when committee chairpersons were allocated offices in the Paul Tovua Complex (PTC).

By virtue of my chairmanship of the PAC, I am also a member of the Parliamentarians Entitlement Commission (PEC). The other members of the PEC include the Minister for Finance, and three other members (who are not MPs), including the chairman, who are appointed by the government. The PEC deals with terms and conditions of service and the welfare of parliamentarians. The PEC derives its powers and is sanctioned in terms of sections 69A, 69B and 69C of the constitution. Until a year ago, the commission only had a chairman and minutes secretary. Now the commission operates from a small office and the chairman has two resource staff members. Meetings of the PEC are held every quarter, depending on the business at hand.

My other parliamentary role is Deputy Leader of the Opposition Group. This is a role which is not
too demanding but it nevertheless requires me to be on standby at all times in case I am required to stand in for the Leader of the Opposition. This position does not have a separate physical office.

**Constituency Role**

My constituency of Small Malaita lies at the southern end of Malaita Province. It is separated from big Malaita by the Maramasike Passage, a stretch of sea that cuts through many hectares of mangrove forest. As the local MP, I visit my constituency as often as I can. Due to my other commitments and budgetary constraints I do so three times each year on average. Given the distances and, most especially, the absence of basic transport infrastructure, a constituency visit is generally an expensive undertaking. Besides, travelling is always a risky and cumbersome exercise.

In my constituency it means having to travel by outboard motor or traditional canoe, or else walking. It therefore takes much effort and is time consuming. Most times you are directly exposed to the elements, so these trips can be very risky. Indeed, in the past many people have been lost at sea while on similar trips between islands in Solomon Islands. For these reasons, I have always tried to cover as much business as I can during each constituency visit in order to make the trip cost-effective. Most times I would cover up to four different events at different locations on one trip. For example, in December 2015, on one trip I attended a land consultation meeting for a new road project, attended a church anniversary celebration, attended the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for a new road segment, attended the Small Malaita Council of Chiefs meeting and, finally, convened the Constituency Development Committee meeting. To attend all these events meant that I was on the go (both on foot and by outboard motor) for over two weeks in the rain, sun and rough seas. Travelling in these conditions is definitely not for the fainthearted: it needs a lot of physical and mental stamina, courage, and a firm commitment to what one is doing.

But all that, however difficult it may be, has to be done. In Solomon Islands, to get a major infrastructure project such as a wharf done requires long lead times: many months of discussions, negotiations and encouragement with land owning groups, tribal chiefs and community leaders as well as discussions with various government ministries and agencies, including the provincial government. That needs a lot of administrative support: writing letters, writing minutes, drafting agreements, arranging transportation, accommodation and so on. The constituency office has three staff, but they deal mainly with project implementation and other operational matters. Therefore, I have to personally take a lead in all these preliminaries matters — for example, leading the talks and in various administrative support roles, such as drafting agreements, minutes, MoUs, and so on.

**Social Obligations**

On my travels around the constituency, I discovered situations which I had always taken for granted. For example, I was surprised to find that many families do not have basic items such as cooking and eating utensils, lighting or bed linen. I was surprised to see many children running around in the villages without any clothes on. And there were many young people roaming around, who are usually the unlucky ones that dropped out of school simply because their parents could not afford school fees after form 3, or as a result of lack of classroom space after that.

Given this situation, the constituents look to the MP as the source of all their needs. So they demand all and any resources that the MP has. Most people do not even distinguish between the MP's personal property and anything that comes with the office. In general, according to constituents, anything and everything the MP has also belongs to them: salary, business, car, canoe, house, and so on. Obviously, their economic circumstances partly explain this attitude, but more importantly this attitude is the result of years of the practice of living on MPs' handouts. This past practice has made constituents think it is the MP's responsibility to respond to their financial hardship. They believe it is the MP's duty to provide even basic items. They see the MP as the provider for every need.

The MP's social obligations extend beyond the family level. Apart from responding to personal and household requests, the MP is also expected to con-
tribute to various events — at least those considered to be important events. These might include chiefs’ meetings, chiefs’ funerals, chiefs’ weddings, church celebrations and other events, school events, sports tournaments and the like. In terms of Melanesian culture these social events are very important. The MP is expected to personally attend these community events; to do otherwise would show disrespect to community leaders. As a matter of practice, we therefore make provision for these sorts of events in the MP’s annual budget.

Dealing with Competing Demands

A Steep Learning Curve

Upon election, there were no handover notes on constituency matters so there was nothing to start with. The first year of my first term was spent just trying to learn how to manage all the competing demands on my time and attention. Considering that at that time I had little idea what an MP in Solomon Islands does — apart from making laws — the first two years were in some ways a period of trial and error.

To say it was challenging period is an understatement. In fact, it was a struggle between trying to prioritise the many competing demands placed on me while trying to meet the expectations of the job. I was still learning the ropes and, at the same time, my people had high expectations. I learned quickly that, for an MP, time is a scarce commodity. The learning curve was very steep as I sought to ‘make a change for good’ — to quote one of our campaign slogans.

Public Talks and Awareness Programs — An Absolute Necessity

I came to appreciate that public relations is an important aspect of the job of an MP. Yet that is where I am not so strong. We have delivered a lot of projects in the constituency but getting information out can be hard, which means that people on one side of the constituency might not know what is happening in other areas of the constituency. It is important that we get information in the hands and minds of our people. They need to know what is ‘going on’. In Solomon Islands, normal media outlets (radio and newspapers) only work to a certain extent. We do not have TV, and only a small proportion of the population can read. In fact, in my first term I developed a quarterly newsletter on all program activities in the constituency. We had to abandon it because of the escalating printing cost versus its very tiny readership. An example is attached to this paper. Sometimes, because of our scattered geography and poor transportation system, news can take a long time to reach rural areas such as my own constituency.

We decided that a strategy based on public awareness campaigns was the best option in the circumstances. This has turned out to be a very effective tool in terms of managing the demands on the MP. It also has the advantage of allowing the MP to interact personally with his constituents and to mingle with people, something which cannot be achieved through other means of communications, such as radio, newspapers or facebook. Face-to-face meetings mean the MP’s interaction with people is direct — people ask questions and get answers then and there. We have the opportunity to discuss, negotiate and sort out issues firsthand. Although the process is not cheap, for me the impact of these campaign meetings is huge. I talk one on one with chiefs and community leaders and I get to see for myself what is happening on the ground. On top of that I found that these meetings attract big crowds, which means that messages get spread very effectively.

In my first (four-year) term I put a lot of effort into issues I believed were of public interest and which could be understood by local village folk. Some of the issues we covered were: the importance of getting an education; why communities should support the police; why we need infrastructure; how communities could be empowered to be self-sufficient rather than depending on the MP; how the local clinic could be supported; why the family should have a decent home; and how (i.e. the proper procedure) to apply for support from the MP. We also covered broader subjects such as government taxes, the budget, the role of parliament and the role of the MP.

Over the years, we used various means to spread messages and to conduct outreach. Early in my first term, I was the first MP to invite the par-
liament's civic education team to do public awareness programs in my constituency. I also used the regular constituency visits and campaign meetings as opportunities to hold public awareness sessions.

I have found public talks and awareness programs to be absolutely necessary in order to drive messages home. We still use these methods, including through outreach programs conducted by my constituency staff.

Another very effective strategy for conveying messages to my constituents is through the constituency organisational structure. I have established 10 zone committees within the constituency; two members each from these committees form the overall Constituency Development Committee. There is also a technical committee. I am able to use all these committee structures to spread information on constituency operations. From time to time, I also appoint ‘special envoys’ to carry out awareness campaigns in the constituency on specific subjects.

It is evident that these awareness programs and civic educational activities are paying off. For example, the practice of demanding cash handouts from the MP has reduced significantly over the last three years. In the past, most constituents considered that once they had spoken to me by telephone to request support, then that was already an application for project funding. That has now virtually stopped because we have consistently repeated the message through our awareness campaigns that all applications need to be submitted in writing through a formal process. This process is now understood by everybody. As a result, over time, we have been able to manage our resources better and have been able to fund more projects than before.

A very important but challenging issue in our awareness campaigns has been how to establish boundaries between my public and private life; for instance, to distinguish between what is public property and what is family property — like our family house. In Solomon Islands, the norm is that the MP’s house is considered to be every constituent’s home and that it should be literally open 24/7 for them. Blended with the Melanesian ‘big man’ tradition, this is a very strong practice that was difficult to deal with. As part of our awareness campaign, we sought to discourage it. I took a very direct approach by explaining that my private house is off-limits to constituents. At the same time, though, we built a separate house on my property where we can hold constituency meetings and deal with other constituency business. We discourage constituents from using it for temporary accommodation. We also put up certain household rules that users have to observe. Now we do not have people lining up on my doorstep. I think we have found the best possible arrangement in the circumstances, one where I am — more or less — in charge of my schedule and of who I see and talk with when it comes to dealing with constituency business.

The Role of the Constituency Office

Notwithstanding all of the above, our efforts through public awareness activities would have been wasted without establishing a physical constituency office. We took the important step of establishing this office, including its internal systems and procedures, within 18 months during my first term in parliament. In hindsight this was one of the best decisions we made, not only in terms of addressing the demands on the MP but more especially in terms of managing expectations. I found out later that Small Malaita was one of only two constituencies with a physical presence in the constituency itself.

Zone Committee

Before constructing the physical office, I set up a governance and organisational structure for the office, based on a committee system. We divided the constituency into 10 zones — each having its own zone committee. Members of these committees are elected by the communities in each catchment (zone) area (see Box 1). Neither I nor any officers of the constituency office has a role in this election. However, we established some minimum guidelines for appointment and qualification of candidates (see Box 2).

It was quite interesting to find that the above criteria disqualified some church leaders and chiefs from membership. In the first two years, we did not have women representatives. Currently, we have women representatives on six of the zone committees.
Every two years, when new zone committee members are appointed, we always run an orientation workshop for them — on the roles and duties of zone committees (see Box 3) and other information on these committees. The zone committees deal mainly with development projects and other development issues in their respective zones.

In terms of the governance structure, the Constituency Development Committee (CDC) is an outcome of the zone committees: the chairpersons of all the 10 zone committees are automatically members of the CDC. The CDC has overall responsibility for the constituency (see Box 4). The qualifications/disqualifications, terms of appointment and other criteria of the CDC are exactly the same for zone committees. The MP is chairman of the CDC and the Constituency Development Officer (CDO) plays the secretary role.

The zone committee system spans the entire constituency, so all communities are represented on the zone committees. Catchment areas are zoned after considering population density as well as the geographical size of zones. Consequently, we have some small catchment areas with a large number of villages, while there are also some big catchment areas with a small number of villages. Through this zone committee system, we deal with the usual project application/assessment process and project delivery. But equally important, the system also provides an effective conduit for information dissemination around the constituency as well as a strong source for logistical support, especially during constituency visits and other programs.

Following the passage of the Constituency Development Fund Act in 2013, the then government pursued enabling regulations, and the Constituency Development Fund Regulations 2013 (No. 1 of 2013) were drafted. However, due to differences of opinion on both sides of the aisle in parliament over the regulation of constituency funds, the draft regulations have not come before parliament to this day. Since then the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) has used administrative measures to bring these funds under some minimum regulations. Some of these measures are discussed in later sections of this paper. But in terms of the CDC, the MRD has started to impose clause 9 of the draft

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<th>Box 1: Zone committee (ZC) terms of appointment/composition</th>
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<td>1. Communities in each zone will elect members of their zone committees.</td>
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<td>2. Maximum membership is SIX — membership of the ZC shall be drawn from the community.</td>
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<td>3. Officers (Chairperson, Deputy Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) shall be elected from among the elected members.</td>
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<td>4. Term of the committee is for two years. Committee members shall be eligible for re-election, provided they meet the qualifications for membership.</td>
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<td>5. A member will receive a sitting allowance of $100 for each meeting.</td>
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<td>6. A member may not serve more than two consecutive terms.</td>
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<th>Box 2: Qualifications/disqualifications for zone committee membership</th>
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<td>• Members shall be persons of good repute in the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Candidates must hold a leadership role in the community: chief, church, women, or youth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No person with a criminal record (previous or outstanding) shall be eligible for membership.</td>
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<td>• Persons with allegations of misconduct, abuse of office or public resources, or similar offences, may not be eligible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A member shall be disqualified from office if convicted in any court of law, regardless of the offence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A member shall be disqualified from office if found to mishandle resources or abuse public office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A member may be liable for prosecution, and removed from office, if suspected of misconduct, in breach of public trust or in breach of the constituency rules and regulations.</td>
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Constituency Development Fund Regulations 2013 on constituencies — the relevant sub clauses are at (2), (3) and (4) — see Box 5 below.

In order for the office to function systematically, I designed internal procedures and instructions. These are critical in dealing with one of the core businesses of the constituency — that is, access to development assistance in general. The internal procedures and financial instructions cover project applications and procurement procedures, financial instructions, the filing system, and the accounting system. Each year we produce an updated copy of the general guidelines for access to constituency funds. This information is issued free and disseminated through zone committees in the form of a leaflet (a copy is attached to this paper). Together with our consistent public awareness over the years, this leaflet is a very important medium for enhancing understanding in the communities.

As noted above, we proceeded to establish physical offices — both in Honiara and in the constituency. This is a very important part of the MP’s role in constituency outreach and information dissemination. By constructing physical offices we are able to designate specific locations where the constituency business is conducted: places for constituents to make inquiries, obtain information and to conduct other business. In the constituency we built an office and accommodation at Afio by leasing from local house owners, both in the previous and current term. We renovated the building and drew up a lease agreement where the total cost incurred for renovations and improvements is recovered over the four-year period. In the previous term, except for assistance with equipment and furniture by the MRD, the total cost of about $400,000 came entirely from our constituency funds. In the current period, the total cost of $360,000 was split between MRD and our constituency financial resources.

For the convenience of constituents, we found that we had to open an office in Honiara as well as in the constituency itself. The small Honiara office opened this year and operates on a rental basis ($4,000 per month) — which comes from our constituency administration budget. Currently, most of the constituency business is conducted in Honiara between our Honiara operational office and the Ministry of Rural Development.

Another important factor is recruitment of full-time staff. It took four years of pushing with the public service to finalise the appointment of our current staff establishment of three officers, namely

**Box 3: Function and duties of the zone committee (ZC)**

- Meetings of the ZC shall be held on a quarterly basis.
- The chairperson will provide a schedule of the committee meetings and copies of the minutes of all meetings to the constituency office.
- Meeting expenses of ZC meetings will be covered by the constituency office.

The ZC will:

- Be responsible for the budget and development programs in their respective zone.
- Attend zone committee meetings arranged by the chairperson.
- Assist to identify community and other projects for their zone: for the appraisal, endorsement, implementation and reporting of all projects in their respective zone.
- Facilitate delivery of projects in their zones.
- Liaise with the SMC Office on all matters concerning their zone.

**Box 4: Duties of the Constituency Development Committee (CDC)**

- Provide policy direction and general guidance to the Constituency Development Plan (CDP).
- Approve the CDP and annual work plan.
- Make appointments to the secretariat [except CDO].
- Set the terms and conditions of service of secretariat staff.
- Approve the annual budget, reports, and new policies.
- Perform duties under other powers in the rules and regulations of the constituency.
the Constituency Development Officer (CDO), the Constituency Project Officer (CPO) and an accountant. This has significantly improved our ability to put the management of constituency funds, and the general administration and operations of the office, at arm's length from the MP himself.

Last but not least among the ways I manage my time as an MP is the effective use of the mobile phone. This is an elementary method of dealing with business but it is working very effectively in dealing with constituency business. I maintain two telephone handsets: one for government matters, family members and close associates. The other is for constituents and everybody else. Through ongoing outreach and public awareness campaigns, I advise everybody of my contact number. Unlike many of my colleagues, I do not change my contacts without telling the constituents. I encourage everybody to call me on any constituency matter. In the early days, as expected, that phone kept ringing and it kept me very busy — just answering routine enquiries. But I was consistent in answering the phone and consistent in my explanations, including about how to approach the constituency office and how to submit applications. Over time, calls became more irregular and now, after several years, I generally receive no more than two calls a day. The phone is not necessarily the most efficient and effective way of dealing with office and other inquiries, but it has helped in mitigating the issue of constituents lining up at my house and office.

A Three-Level Development Plan

Early in my first term, it dawned on me that the role of the constituency office in acting as a conduit for development assistance was not going to diminish any time soon, if at all. After much consultation in the constituency, I decided that in order for resources to be used efficiently, and in order to be consistent and to ensure we have measurable progress, it was important that we have some kind of a development plan. Going beyond the standing requirement for a constituency development plan, we have set out a long-term infrastructure development program (IDP) over 25 years. Reviewed every
year, this document forms the basis for all our funding requests and other project funding.

Apart from the IDP, we prepare three other documents as a matter of requirement by government through the Ministry of Rural Development: the Constituency Development Profile (which is reviewed annually); the Administration and Development Budget; and, finally, the annual work plan.

Our IDP is segmented and presented on three main levels. The annual budget is also segmented according to the same format.

At the household level we are pursuing a number of programs. The first of these is rural housing, which targets individual households. The goal here is to ensure that every household has a decent house for shelter. To complement our housing program we are also implementing a household solar-lighting program. Our goal is that all houses in the constituency should have solar lighting. Under this program we also fund solar lighting for community buildings such as community halls and churches. At the household level we also fund income-generating projects. Under this program, the goal is to support households with income-generating activities. These cover a range of sectors including transport and sea transport (outboard motors and boats), tourism, forestry, and agriculture and fisheries.

At the community level the infrastructure development plan aims to enhance social infrastructure projects. Here we support projects such as village water supply and sanitation; rural clinics and health aid posts; primary school and early childhood education centres; community-based buildings, such as churches and community halls; youth and sports and cultural events. We also run a Youth Volunteers Scheme, which aims to nurture leadership potential and upskilling programs for school dropouts in communities.

At the constituency level the IDP addresses major long-term infrastructure projects for the constituency as a whole. We have projects in every sector including aviation (the airport); road transport (the road network and road-making machinery); maritime (three wharves); health and medical (a regional hospital project); and industry development (the development of three sites intended to attract private sector investment). We are also pursuing two other important infrastructure projects which had been on the drawing board for nearly 10 years, namely rebuilding the police station and construction of a new court house. All these projects are being pursued with the line ministries concerned, but the constituency office plays a key role in facilitating funding and ensuring projects are progressing according to plan.

I found that having the development plan as a reference point has been a very effective way of explaining to constituents why many of their requests for assistance cannot be funded: we explain that funds are not sufficient to meet everybody’s demands. In my constituency, I am confident this message is understood clearly.

**Reporting and Accountability**

All constituencies receive the same amount of resources, regardless of their geographical size or their population. Resources used by the constituencies are derived mainly by way of budget allocations through the Ministry of Rural Development, the Republic of China (Taiwan — ROC), as well as line ministries. Over the years, the Solomon Islands Government–funded allocations have grown significantly. This year, 2016, for example, of the $SBD6.5 million allocated to each constituency 60 per cent is channelled through the MRD, 22 per cent is derived from ROC funding and 18 per cent is administered through other line ministries. All ROC funding is accessed by cash transfers, while all funding from government is administrated by way of invoicing — that is, the constituency offices do not handle cash directly. Instead, the Ministry of Rural Development administers the funds, and constituencies only receive the materials or items for projects after submitting pro-forma invoices from suppliers. Beyond this, it is a requirement that constituencies report on all cash transfers — this is in compliance with the Public Financial Management Act 2013.

For me, such reporting requirements are another important means of dealing with the competing demands I face. We report on constituency operations mainly through a cash acquittal report. All constituencies must report on all cash transfers received into their accounts — whether it is from the ROC or from the government the reports are
done on a template developed for this purpose by the MRD. We submit cash acquittal reports only for cash transfers to the constituency account. Line ministries report separately on those funds they administer on behalf of constituencies. Of course, through the quarterly and annual reports, constituencies are required to report on all projects and program activities during the period.

Reporting on constituency operations in Solomon Islands is still very much a work in progress. Until five years ago, almost all constituency resources were handled directly by the MP. However, in recent years reporting requirements have been strengthened, mainly through administrative measures. Over the period we have seen an evolution from the ‘one-man show’ model towards more committee-type management of constituency resources. In addition, the MRD is upskilling constituency officers to deal with the administration of constituency budgets and general matters more consistently than before. Now we know and appreciate, for example, that cash payments may only be approved and paid if the previous tranche of cash grants have been satisfactorily reported on and acquitted, something which is now done quarterly.

Another important requirement as of 2014 is that, each year, every constituency must submit at least three important documents: the annual Constituency Development Plan, the annual constituency budget and the annual constituency work plan. In line with the regulations discussed earlier, these plans have to be approved by the Ministry of Rural Development in order for the constituency to have access to its allocated funding. As of 2015, constituencies are also required to submit quarterly and annual reports on their operations. Beginning in 2016, there is a new requirement that each year there has to be a formal grant agreement signed by the MP before any cash grants are transferred to the constituency. Without these documents constituency funding will be very slow. So, overall, we are seeing a gradual improvement in accountability requirements, in order to be compliant with the Public Financial Management Act 2013.

I personally ensure the accuracy of the constituency’s reports before submission. I prepare the annual development plan, which is derived from the long-term Infrastructure Development Plan for the constituency, the annual budget and the annual work plan. In the system I have established for my constituency, these plans have to be approved by the Constituency Development Committee before they are submitted to the Ministry of Rural Development. The constituency staff implement these plans, draft the reports and prepare acquittals which only I have the authority to sign off before submission.

The Constituency Office — Is it the New Delivery Vehicle for Development Assistance in Solomon Islands?

Over the past five years, while dealing with constituency business — and particularly on general service delivery to my people — I have asked myself the question: is the constituency office the appropriate delivery vehicle for development assistance in Solomon Islands? During the last 10 years it has been observed that successive governments have consistently increased budgetary resources to constituency business, and these increases have been very significant in recent years. In addition, the Ministry of Rural Development, which plays the key support role to the 50 constituencies, has increased its staff numbers and office space. The trend and emphasis is very clear: the constituency office is quickly becoming the preferred delivery vehicle for development assistance.

That said, it is also clear that the emergence of a delivery mechanism running parallel with the current provincial government system gives rise to legitimate questions. Some may see it as reinventing the wheel — when other options already exist, namely the provincial government system. Some might argue that it will give rise to overcrowding and overlaps in the delivery of development assistance to rural Solomon Islands and that it may also create — if it has not already — a situation where MPs and their respective provincial assemblies compete for resources from the central government.

There is nothing to show that Solomon Islands has done better in the management of its development assistance and, more especially, service delivery, under the existing provincial government system. I think in fact that we have done worse than before.
The Case for the Constituency as the Delivery Vehicle

In the final section of this paper, I will be arguing the case for the constituency office to be recognised as the new channel for development assistance in Solomon Islands. I will contend that not only should it be recognised as such — rather the constituency office should be used more for service delivery in Solomon Islands.

I will show that in the case of Small Malaita Constituency, and the southern region of Malaita Province more generally, we have fared worse under the provincial government system (which had been in place for the past 37 years) after independence than the 10 years before it. And I will use examples in my own constituency to support the case.

Like many developing countries, Solomon Islands is still going through a period of finding a way of ensuring the best and most effective means of delivering services to our people. This is the same process that has taken many (now) developed countries hundreds of years and, in a few cases, maybe thousands of years. As in those countries, during the course of this process we are experiencing inequality of services and wastage of resources. Undoubtedly, it is a period when the system itself is seen as corrupt, and we see many examples of unintended outcomes.

This is what we have been going through for the past 38 years of our existence as a nation. It seems to me that as a consequence of this imperfect process we have not seen any new development projects in the 25 years prior to 2010. In my constituency we have an airport, one wharf, one area health centre and one senior secondary school: all of these were constructed before independence. And while the provincial government was provided funding for their upkeep, all of these important facilities were left to decay over the period before 2010. At the same time, we have seen development projects going up closer to Auki, the Malaita provincial capital, and in the northern part of the province. The southern region has been totally left out. Obviously, the system has continued to benefit those regions that were already ahead in their stage of development.

This is a common story across the country. Many regions of our country feel left out. Many parts of the country feel as if the government is too far away from them, and that government services will never reach them. This is one of the reasons for the current push towards a federal system of government. The search for an effective and better delivery mechanism for development assistance is therefore a legitimate one and has been underway for a long time. Some people believe that a federal system would address this more effectively than our present system.

In the meantime, though, the constituency office has quickly gained momentum as a favoured channel for project delivery. The simple explanation for this is that MPs have a very direct interest in it. This mechanism ensures that the distribution of financial resources is shared equally among the 50 constituencies. The resources are applied in line with the respective constituency plans which are managed by their own staff. To that end — depending on the plans — the majority of rural dwellers in many constituencies now see some development taking place in their local area compared to some years ago.

In my own constituency, constituents will attest to having seen assistance delivered to households and communities in their local areas over the last five years. For example, since 2010, we have delivered construction materials for over 800 homes; delivered solar lighting to around 2500 households; assisted more than 400 school children to continue their education; and assisted more than 200 households enhance their incomes at the household level. At the community level, we have assisted in the construction of over 20 church buildings, 10 community halls, assisted six rural clinics restore services, assisted three schools with their school classrooms construction, assisted four communities’ water and sanitation projects. At the constituency level we facilitated rehabilitation of our only airport, wharf and 10 kilometres of road. Apart from that, we provided support to our traditional chiefs’ programs, women’s programs, youth and sporting programs and many more examples. None of this was possible in the previous 30 years because all funding was channelled through the provincial gov-
ernment at the provincial capital Auki — and has remained there.

In my constituency, examples abound to further argue this point. We have eight rural health clinics which are managed by the provincial government. When I was elected in 2010, we found that six of them did not have staff because the provincial government was not paying their wages. We immediately took over to supplement their wages, which saw the clinics back in full operation after many years. Our only wharf was destroyed by high seas some 20 years prior to my coming into office. We had it repaired in 2011 to the delight and great relief of our seafarers and of course the travelling public. Additional maintenance was performed on the wharf last year to maintain good service to the public. The only area health centre, at Afio, the administrative centre, had a water supply system that was in disrepair for many years. We had that fixed in 2012 and now there is running water in the health facilities and throughout the medical compound.

Through the constituency channel, services and development projects are not only visible, but reach the beneficiaries faster and more directly. In 2012, for example, we had our second wharf completed within four months, and the same year our only airport was fully repaired and rehabilitated in three months, after many years of being out of service. The following year we had nine kilometres of our only road rehabilitated in two months. These projects were not initiated by me. It only required a push. The point is that they remained in disrepair for years under provincial government supervision (or lack of it). Lack of resources cannot be used to explain this. The funding and resources I used on the projects came from the same source — the Solomon Islands Government. It is clear that these infrastructure facilities had been left unattended for years because the provincial government did not bother about them. More seriously, though, the central government does not trust provincial governments to implement any project funding because of the poor track record they have established in the past 30 years or so. In fact, in the case of Malaita Province, it was only due to political interference by the prime minister that it was saved from dissolution in 2013.

Another important factor is that I made the extra effort to pursue these infrastructure projects because they were in my constituency. In other words, their location was a strong incentive for me to have them done because these are in my constituency — we took ownership of the infrastructure. This underlines the point that when the local MP has a good plan and is interested in service delivery, it is possible to see tangible development occurring much more quickly and directly at the constituency level than when these come under the provincial government.

These, and many more examples, demonstrate the point that the constituency channel can deliver services more effectively and efficiently than any previous systems. An important reason for this is the support from and influence of the local MP; when they take ownership of projects and programs, we see tangible development occurring. But the system can work even better and more efficiently when the constituency pursues a good development plan that is administered under a sound management framework — which includes strong accountability rules and regulations. This is an objective we are actively pursuing in the Small Malaita Constituency.

**Past Practice Equals Wastage**

As noted earlier, because the constituency channel has demonstrated an ability to deliver services quickly, along with the personal interest taken by MPs, it has attracted significant budgetary resources in recent years. In the last three years, allocations to the constituency development budget have increased almost twofold. It has to be acknowledged that, across the country, there have been mixed results: while we have examples of very good outcomes, there are also cases of huge wastage.

The reason there has been so much wastage is simple: the absence of a sound governance structure, including the lack of good financial management procedures, lack of good record-keeping, and few if any robust reporting requirements.

In this connection, past practice remains a very big challenge to overcome. The practice of giving ‘handouts’ is still widespread and so ingrained that it is still the main drive at election time. The MP is
still expected to have bags of cash available to hand out as donations and as gifts upon request. This is partly explained by reference to the traditional Melanesian ‘big man’ mentality. More commonly, however, the MP simply feels compelled to ‘be everything to everybody’ out of fear of what might happen at the next election.

**Policy Actions to Date**

All that said, it seems clear that the constituency channel will continue to be used as a preferred model for service delivery. Whether motivated by political expedience or by a genuine urge to deliver tangible services to the populace, the 50 MPs are not in a hurry to remove constituency funds from the constituency. If anything, the indications are very clear — this will continue and resources may continue to increase. That being the case, the most logical thing to do is to strengthen the rules and regulations that will enhance the effective and efficient use of those funds, and ensure that the intended beneficiaries do receive these services. Instead of opposing it and playing the ‘blame game’ on MPs, a better approach would be to work with government to strengthen the policy framework and operational procedures. If the constituency has shown it can deliver quickly and directly to rural communities, this is an opportunity to make sure that happens cost-effectively. We should work on ways to enhance the sustainability of this model over the long run. After all, we should all be working towards serving the same beneficiaries — the people of Solomon Islands.

The previous NCRA (National Coalition for Reform and Advancement) government (2010–14) took some important policy actions to address concerns about the efficient use of constituency funds. One step was passage of the Constituency Development Funds Act 2013 (although this legislation has never really been implemented). The NCRA government also sought to establish supporting regulations to the Act (which have suffered a similar fate as the legislation). Subsequently, as noted above, administrative measures were introduced to standardise the rules and regulations governing constituency funds, to strengthen reporting requirements, and to ensure timely and comprehensive acquittal reporting. And it is clear (see above) that under the current government these administrative measures continue to be strengthened. These measures are being introduced to ensure improved compliance with the Public Finance Management Act 2013, but also to ensure that funds are spent as intended. The opportunity should be seized by all stakeholders to support the government to strengthen the constituency office as an important vehicle for service delivery and of development assistance so that it can do its work more effectively and efficiently.

**Conclusion**

Since my election to parliament in 2010, I have had to learn to deal with a variety of challenges, while trying to perform what I believe is the proper role of an MP. In this job it is not easy to separate public life from private life. It is not easy to separate family from constituents. The constituency office and the MP are not easily separable. The demands and expectations on the MP vary enormously and are huge. Everybody believes they are entitled to your time and to everything you own.

Early in my first term, I went about a rigorous awareness campaign on issues of interest to my constituents, in particular the work of the constituency and my role as MP. I learned that public awareness and keeping everybody informed about the constituency office operations is the most effective way to deal with these varying demands on the MP. But I found it is important to establish the constituency office with adequate staffing to manage the affairs of the constituency on a foundation of clear guidelines and instructions. This not only ensures that normal office work progresses, but it is an effective method of dealing with demands on the MP’s time: the office deals with inquiries rather than the MP himself. I have also found that while the mobile phone leaves no opening or closing hours for the office of MP, at the same time when used well it can deal with much of the constituency’s business. I think it is always good for the constituency and the MP to establish a practical and sound development plan. This must be supported by a realistic budget and a well-developed, practical annual work plan. I have found that project implementation is a big challenge in this country; reporting is made easier with these plans in place.
Finally, I argue the case for the constituency becoming the vehicle for service delivery and development assistance in Solomon Islands. I have provided a few examples in my own constituency to support this contention. But importantly these examples also go to demonstrate that when we have a good development plan which is supported by a genuine commitment to deliver on the part of the MP, then the constituency can serve as an effective channel for tangible service delivery and development assistance more generally.

In any case, it is very obvious that MPs’ strong preference for the constituency as a channel for service delivery will not be easily removed. The political incentives surrounding constituency funds are just too embedded to undo. In my mind there is no question that this mechanism will remain a key mode of operation for the foreseeable future. To that end, I believe that MPs’ political motivations can be harnessed to ensure the development aspirations in the constituency are achieved and that the positive intentions for constituency development funds can be met.

In conclusion, I think a key long-term goal must be to bring constituency funds under strong accountability rules and regulations. To be sure, there will be wastage during the transition period to a more accountable system. But no system is free from wastage. The provincial government system has been in use for the past 30 odd years — with very little to show. Donor partners have tried to deliver assistance by using parallel systems. These have certainly seen not only huge wastage but also long delays in delivery.

I believe the constituency office offers the best option in the search for an effective delivery vehicle for tangible development assistance in Solomon Islands. I believe there are enough MPs who want to do better for their constituencies and their people. I believe there is sufficient goodwill and mutual interest between MPs and constituents to strengthen the rules around constituency development funds. It is therefore in everybody’s interest that the constituency is further strengthened to ensure it works better. Working with the government and MPs on this aspect will be the most fruitful way of ensuring that development assistance is efficiently delivered in Solomon Islands, especially to rural areas. If the 50 constituencies are strengthened towards that objective, I am sure they can deliver services and development assistance that will reach the majority of Solomon Islands’ population more efficiently than ever before.

Author Notes

Rick Hou served as Governor of the Central Bank of Solomon Islands for over 15 years during the 1990s and the first half of last decade. He was elected to parliament in 2010 and re-elected in 2014. He served as Minister of Public Service from April to November 2011, and as Minister of Finance and Treasury from November 2011 to September 2014. He is currently the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of the Solomon Islands National Parliament.

Endnotes

1 At the time I was on a two year stint (2008–10) with the Solomon Islands Constituency Office at the World Bank in Washington DC. In November 2009 I was on a scheduled visit to Solomon Islands, when more than 20 tribal chiefs and community leaders travelled from Small Malaita to Honiara to meet me. Their goal was to request me to consider contesting the Small Malaita seat in the 2010 national general elections. Their plea was simple: they were very eager to ‘hear from the horse’s mouth’ my decision. But it was more than that: coming in a big group had the effect of amplifying their call for me to return. And indeed they succeeded in persuading me and the rest of my family.

2 This was before the opening of the Paul Tovua Complex in 2012. Named after a former speaker, this building provides offices for Solomon Islands’ 50 MPs.

3 Solomon Islands term for buying mobile phone credit.

4 In 2015 the PEC made several awards to MPs, one of which was to make MPs’ salaries tax-free. This sparked public outrage and resulted in a successful High Court challenge. I was not present at the meeting which made the award and I spoke against it on the floor of parliament, and protested by requesting that my salary not be made tax free — indeed, my salary is still taxed. The chairman and other members of the PEC were annoyed with my position on this matter, which resulted in my not being invited to PEC meetings until March 2016.

5 North East Choiseul is the other constituency.
I. Development News Update

Live Industrial Park

This project has made further progress with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Malaita Chazon Authority (MCA), Malaita Provincial Assembly and the Live Land Trustees early this year. The next milestone that we now look forward to is the groundbreaking - when the actual civil engineering work should kick start. All parties to the MOU are committed to this project.

Afo Economic Growth Centre

Given the importance the national government attaches to this project, the Ministry of Rural Developments is also going to take the lead role in developing the Afo Economic Growth Center. As a sign of its commitment late last year, the central government transferred a total of $1 million to the Malaita Chazon Authority bank account – funds which are earmarked for the development of the three growth centers in Malaita Province, namely Suva Bay in North Malaita, Faumanamu in East Malaita and Afo in Small Malaita. Of this amount, $1 million is specifically allocated for Afo economic growth center, which Hon Rick N Hou has written to the MCA to release in order to start implementation of this project. Apart from that, the central government has allocated $1 million in the 2012 Budget for the development of this project. Work is steadily progressing in the Ministry on this project.

Parasi airfield

Two important components of this project are due to be completed in 2012. These are the security fence and the terminal building. While the airfield is already in use, flights have yet to be included in the airline’s normal schedule because an agent has yet to be appointed and confirmed by the airline.

In late March, some disturbing news was carried in the local media about the closure of the airport. The committee representing the Parasi Land Trustees rebutted those claims. It was noted that this was orchestrated by a certain disgruntled individual who appears to be concerned about his own welfare more than anyone else. The Trustees had issued a formal response and letter to assure the authorities of their commitment, and the whole community of Parasi, to re-opening the airport.

Afo Wharf

Hon R N Hou announced that work on the Nusii wharf will begin later this year. He said this project is important not only to his constituents but also parts of East Are Are constituency. He assured his people of Zones 1 and 2 that he will continue to pursue this project until completion to a permanent wharf this year. He is pleased that the long-awaited wharf is now going to be realized.

Afo/Olusuu Coastal Road

At long last, the old coastal road from Afo to Olusuu is now going to be rehabilitated. This was announced by Hon R N Hou during the Development Committee in March this year. This road – including all bridges – was left unattended to for more than twenty-five years. Sadly, successive governments have ignored this important physical infrastructure. Consequently, over the period, economic activities in the region declined including other services. Late last year, the contract was awarded and work will start this year.

Small Malaita Hydro Scheme

An important component of our long term development plan is to secure reliable power and energy from eco-friendly sustainable sources. Early this year, preliminary work to locate a potential source for power has started. In consultation with the SMC Office, scouting teams were deployed from Auki to make contacts with land owning groups and to identify potential sites for this project. So far land owning groups in Zone 2 – the Highlands – have been contacted. In the coming weeks and months more visits will be arranged hopefully to ascertain sites with strong potentials for a hydro scheme. This project will need a lot of public education and awareness. In the meantime, the advice is that this will be a long term project which could take a number of years to materialize. However, Hon R N Hou is urging his people, and especially landowning groups, to open their land and allow their resources for development purposes.

Bank Agency

In 2011 BSP bank took a policy decision to close its nation-wide agency network. This follows a number of theft cases in other locations resulting in significant amounts of lost cash. In the case of Afo, following interventions by Hon R N Hou, the Bank agreed to our providing security deposit for the agency, which Hon John Mane of West Are Are constituency also contributed considering the important service that the agency provides to our people in the region. Malaita Province has also been requested to assist in this endeavour.

Solar Lighting Project

In line with our policy objective to light up our communities, and as endorsed by the DC, this project is to continue this year. The Office is compiling distribution lists submitted through the Zone Committees. Orders have been placed.

II. Administrative Notice

Zone Committee

The SMC Office advises that Zone committees will be due for election in September 2012. All incumbents are eligible for re-election. Communities will have the opportunity to select their representatives in their respective Zones. The qualifications for membership will be published in our next issue.

Current Zone Committee members are as follows:

Zone 1: Suuroto: (Eliote - Herepae’)
1. Vincent Akohiria – Chairman
2. Peter Karei – D/Chairman
3. Obest Lalahu – Secretary
4. Leonard Maneisia – Treasurer
5. Geoffrey Hou – Member
6. Tony Heize Haikeremi – Member

Zone 2: Rarausu’u: (Hau nosi – Waihurai)
1. Augustine Maneisia – Chairman
2. Loteina Makania – Member
3. Mario Arana – D/ Chairman
4. Basilisa Arana – Member
5. Elvis Pohena – Member
6. Conly Lamaa – Secretary

Zone 3: Aulutalau/Aopasa: (Otepani – Pule)
1. Lesley Waithenu – Chairman
2. Dykes Maesiroma – D/Chairman
3. Gabriel Maesiroma – Secretary
4. Aloysius Niupuru – Member
5. Paul Sukai – Treasurer
6. Matildoo Houenipo – Member

Zone 4: Aaba: (New Veli - Lelenga)
1. Willie Oasana – Chairman
2. Michael Nitoka – D/ Chairman
3. Ben Wate – Member
4. Alexander Iti – Treasurer
5. Jimmyson Pola – Secretary
6. Nixon Wate – Member

Zone 5: Asimeuri: (Elite/Oo – Ro’one)
1. Mapesh Awaranu – Chairman
2. Pr. James Wate – D/Chairman
3. Francis Walani – Secretary
4. Chris Sasmao – Treasurer
5. Philip Ouou – Member
6. Laban Lole – Member

Zone 6: Pueu Esi: (Herani - Saa)
1. Nick Maaramo – Chairman
2. Edwin Wate – D/Chairman
3. Simon Hoenihui – Secretary
4. Chris Hou – Treasurer
5. John Maesiola – Member
6. Francis Pwai – Member

Example of quarterly newsletter on all program activities in the Small Malaita Constituency
Zone 7: Su'upeine (Rota/Tapaetwa - Liwe)
1. Philip Tooike - Chairman
2. Walter Hou - Secretary
3. Toswell Mono - Treasurer
4. Stephen Hulanga - D/Chairman
5. John Laesango - Member
6. Kennedy Mono - Member

Zone 8: Hoasiteimwane (Tereari - Oriore)
1. Edmund Maumeu - Chairman
2. Moses Harreokasango - D/Chairman
3. Rosina Harasiwe - Secretary
4. Thomson Mainao - Treasurer
5. Paul Kainihau - Member
6. Sylvester Puaaha - Member

Zone 9: Asimae (Tetele - Waisusu)
1. Ben Tahuniwala - Chairman
2. Deysel Haree - D/Chairman
3. Laban Laemwane - Secretary
4. John Maepwela - Treasurer
5. Martin Haneisalo - Member
6. Solomon Wala - Member

Zone 10: Highlands (Heraniesi - Kulukulumae)
1. Jude Mwanehunita - Chairman
2. Samuel Uhehi - D/Chairman
3. Rev Apollos Garnett - Secretary
4. Ishmael Hulanga - Treasurer
5. Adiel Aiwe - Member
6. Solomon Seusanau - Member

Development Committee (DC) Meeting
At the DC meeting in March, a number of resolutions were passed including the 2011 annual report, the 2012 Budget of $2.8 Million, new guidelines for assistance, revised guidelines for school fees assistance, and the publication of the Quarterly Newsletter.

The new guidelines for assistance from the SMC are being published through a pamphlet which is also available at the SMC Office. This pamphlet provides information on the budget allocations for each item including approved procedures and guidelines for access to these funds.

Due to budgetary constraints, we have limited copies of the 2011 Annual Report. These can be obtained from the SMC Office in Afio.

III. 2012 Budget Implementation Update
In line with the DC directions, the SMC Office is providing update summary of our budget implementation progress. Due to limitation of space, this is done in a graphical form. As can be seen implementation in some expenditure heads remain under-spent while for some actual expenditure has already overtaken their allocations. Heads affected include School Fees Assistance, Medical Assistance, MP’s Discretion support and Consultation meetings.

IV. Honiara Residents
The SMC Office is inundated with queries from our Honiara residents about applications for Honiara-based projects. We would like to advice again that in line with our development policy guidelines, and as directed by the DC, the SMC Office does not consider project applications for Honiara-based projects. Each Constituency is allocated the same amount of funding which are meant for the development and use in each respective constituency.

Funds for Small Malaita therefore cannot be used in other constituencies.

V. Staff & Office Administration
Mr. Joe Sanau joined the SMC Office staff late in March following his successful interview for the position of Youth Volunteers Coordinator. Mr G Awa, CDO spend part of the quarter in Honiara on seminars and constituency business.

During the quarter, Hon R N Hou had meetings with the Malaita Provincial Premier and the provincial Secretary on separate occasions to discuss progress of the Afio EGC, the Liwe Industrial Park, as well as other development projects in the southern region.
Example of leaflet detailing general guidelines for access to constituency funds

PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

Funding for Community, Family and

Guidelines on Application of

in SMC

unemployed parents/guardians rural-based

To qualify, the following conditions must be satisfied by students and parents:

(i) School Fees Assistance Program

(ii) Solar Lighting Program

This program is to assist parents and guardians in the SMC to complement their

in churches and other public facilities) is done very much like it is with the Rural

program will continue until this policy objective is achieved. This also

to ensure every occupied house in the SMC must have lighting. This

for the following year. The Constituency will not entertain any

on the availability of financial resources allocated in the annual budget for

The actual number of houses to be funded during any one year will depend

completed, the "bulk application" is submitted to the SMC Office for action.

Committee to monitor the progress on the delivery of their list. When

entire term (FOUR YEARS). Each year, it is the duty of the Zone

those households that meet the above criteria in their respective zones. Each Zone will have only one list to be

designed for this purpose (to be distributed with application forms) - for

There are many other SMC activities and programs whose funding needs are

To access funding, the zone committee will submit one "bulk application".

Certain identified projects in the constituency are usually funded from outside the SMC pool of funds. While they ...

its implementation and reporting will still require the close cooperation between the DC, ZC and the SMC Office.

The house is a standard house plan of not more than 3-bedrooms. The

The Office will make payments direct to the schools as funds are made available

The house will be of basic structure from flooring, walls and roofing, including iron roofing. Construction & supply of materials will be done in three stages:

a) timber materials to be on site;
b) construction of structure: floor to roofing; and c) roof covering & finishing. Supply of hardware materials will be provided upon verification of the completion of each stage.

The Office will compile all this information in its data base. Pledge letters will be

fee amounts being pledged. It is the responsibility of students and their parents to collect the pledge letters from the Office and send them to the concerned schools.

The Office will make payments direct to the schools as funds are made available

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Section I: Background

1. Constituency Development Fund:
   - The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is a fund established by the Solomon Islands Government for the development of rural areas.
   - The fund is intended to support the development of rural areas, particularly in the areas of education, health, and infrastructure.

Section II: Guidelines for the Use of Funds

2. The use of funds shall be as follows:
   - **Ministry for Rural Development (SIG-sourced) Funds**: These funds are sourced from the SIG and are used for the development of rural areas.
   - **ROC Rural Community Support Fund**: This fund is aimed to advance health, education, and training needs in the rural areas.

3. Use of and access to these funds depend on the individual constituency development plans and priorities and the annual budget. These funds can be used for administration, logistical support, and other related expenses.

Section III: Guidelines for the Use of Funds

4. The following guidelines have been established to facilitate the application and management of the various funds:
   - **Guidelines for the Use of Funds**: These guidelines are intended to ensure that the funds are used effectively and efficiently.
   - **Guidelines for the Use of Funds**: These guidelines are intended to ensure that the funds are used effectively and efficiently.

Section IV: Conclusion

5. The provision of funds will be determined based on the needs and priorities of the constituency development plans.

Hon. Rick Hou MP
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