



**SUPPORT FOR THE FORMULATION OF NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND
DEVELOPING STATES**

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

SOLOMON ISLANDS

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CONTENTS

	page
ABREVIATIONS	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. INTRODUCTION	8
2. BACKGROUND	8
3. WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?	9
4. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FORMULATION IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS	10
5. SOLOMON ISLANDS COMMITMENTS TO THE FORMULATION OF NSDS	10
6. PRIORITIES AND TARGETS	
6.1 PRIORITIES, GOALS AND TARGETS OF THE NERRDP	11
6.1.1 Overall Goal of the NERRDP 2003 – 2006	11
6.1.2 Immediate Objectives of the NERRDP	12
6.1.3 Key Strategic Areas or priority areas	12
6.1.4 Expected Outcomes	12
6.1.5 Summary of Achievements	12
6.1.6 Formulation of priorities, goals and targets of the NERRDP	13
6.2 OTHER PRIORITIES	
6.2.1 The need for sustainable management of natural resources	14
6.2.2 Prominent Environmental and development concerns	15
6.2.3 Rural Development and empowerment	15
6.2.4 Need for National Sustainable Development Strategy	15
6.3 CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION	
6.3.1 Availability of Financial Resources	15
6.3.2 National capacity	16
6.3.3 Level of Commitment by stakeholders	16
6.3.4 Security Environment	16
6.3.5 Political Stability	16
6.3.6 Good governance	17
6.3.7 Rapid Population Growth	17
6.3.8 Poor Economic growth	17
6.3.9 Donor driven programmes	17
7. STRATEGIES	
7.1 NATIONAL STRATEGIES	18
7.1.1 Education Strategic Plan	18
7.1.2 National Health Policies	19
7.1.3 National Transport Infrastructure Development Plan	19
7.1.4 National Integrated Rural and Provincial Development Programme	20
7.1.5 Forest Policy Statement	20
7.1.6 National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS)	21
7.1.7 National Tuna Management Plan	21
7.1.8 Departmental Corporate plans	21
7.1.9 Solomon Islands Human Development Agenda in the 21 st century	22
7.1.10 Departmental Corporate plans	22
7.1.11 Other National Strategies	22

7.2	REGIONAL STRATEGIES	23
7.3	COHERENCE AMONG STRATEGIES AND RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION	
7.3.1	Horizontal coherence	23
7.3.2	Vertical coherence	25
8.	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	26
9.	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	
9.1	INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS	28
9.2	INTERAGENCY MECHANISMS	28
10.	OUTCOMES AND MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION	
10.1	INDICATORS AND MONITORING	30
10.2	BUDGETING AND AID EFFECTIVENESS	31
11.	CONCLUSION	32
12.	RECCOMENDATION	33

References

List of people consulted

Appendix 1– National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan (NERRDP)

Appendix 2 - Selected key indicators and targets of the NERRDP

Abbreviations

BPOA	Barbados Programme of Action
CBSI	Central Bank of Solomon Islands
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DNPAC	Department of National Planning and Aid Coordination
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DFT	Department of Finance and Treasury
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
MSI	Mauritius Strategy of Implementation
MTDS	Medium Term Development Strategy
NEMS	National Environment and Management Strategy
NERRDP	National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan
NGOs	Non Government Organizations
NIRDP	National Integrated Rural Development Plan
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
NTIDP	National Transport Infrastructure Development Plan
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PMO	Prime Ministers Office
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
RCDF	Rural Constituency Development Fund
SIDAPP	Solomon Islands Development Administration and Participatory Planning Programme
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
TPA	Townsville Peace Agreement
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Solomon Islands experience in development plan formulation had been based on its early fixed five year development plans. These development plans were developed by the government with a top down approach and were done without much consultation with the public and were expected to be implemented by the government alone. Since the onset of the sustainable development agenda, development planning took a slightly different approach and resulted in the formulation of national strategic plans or strategies which involved increase consultation with the public or stakeholders and also enable groups outside of government to be involved in various stages of the strategy development, implementation and monitoring.

Solomon Islands has committed itself to the formulation of national sustainable development strategies through its endorsement of the relevant regional and global sustainable development strategies that have been developed through regional and global consensus. Solomon Islands had also committed itself to those regional and global strategies through its active involvement and committed participation in their development. These regional and global strategies include the Pacific Plan, Agenda 21, Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI).

Whilst the Solomon Islands has yet to develop a national sustainable strategy per se, it has developed its own strategic plans that are similar to a sustainable development strategy in many aspects. These include the current strategic plan, the National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan (NERRDP) 2003-2006, and the former Medium Term Development Strategy 1999 -2001. Both these plans did go through wider consultations with stakeholder groups and do incorporate some essential requirements of a national sustainable development strategy but will need to be improved to be regarded as a national sustainable development strategy or their equivalent.

The overarching goal of the current strategic plan, the NERRDP is to “enhance and improve the quality of life and the living standards of all the people in the Solomon Islands, not just some people or groups but all groups in Solomon Islands” It focuses on five key strategic areas or priority areas: law and order and security; democracy, human rights and good governance; fiscal and financial stability and public sector reform; productive sector and supporting infrastructure; and basic social services and social development. These have been the priority areas of the country during the last four years and within a post conflict period or situation that still continues.

The formulation of the NERRDP is coordinated by the responsible government department, the Department of National Planning and Coordination and involved a number of other key groups. The other key institutional actors are the Prime Ministers Office, and the Department of Finance and Treasury. The whole process of its development involved wide consultation with national ministries and departments, members of parliament, provincial governments, statutory bodies, the private sector, civil society and non-government organizations and development partners. Its implementation has achieved significant results in certain priority areas but there remains a lot of work to be done on other identified priority areas. Apart from the priorities identified in the NERRDP, other priorities identified through the consultation for this report, include the need for the sustainable management of natural resources, prominent environment and development concerns, the need for development of the rural areas and the need to put in place national sustainable development strategies.

The NERRDP itself is based on a number of internal assessment initiatives and existing sectoral policies, plans and strategies. The sectoral policies, plans or strategies include the Education Sector Strategic Plan, Health sector policies, and Forest Policy statement. It has also been influential in the generation of new

sectoral policies, plans and strategies such as the Transport Infrastructure and Development Plan, Departmental Corporate Plans and other new ones that are currently being developed. This has given rise to improved consistency or coherence between the NERRDP and the sectoral strategies, even though the issue of consistency or coherence had been of concern prior to the development of the NERRDP. Horizontal coherence is especially stronger between the NERRDP and those strategies that are developed after the NERRDP. Vertical coherence could not be well determined between the NERRDP, other sectoral strategies and the lower level provincial and community plans. In terms of Civil Society and Non government organizations, and donor activities at the provincial and community levels, however, there seems to be strong coherence with the priorities areas of the NERRDP. Coherence of the NERRDP or national policies, strategies and legislation to international commitments is probably the strongest. This is manifested in the many project and programme activities implemented in country that are linked to many regional and global conventions, programmes, strategies and plans.

As a least developed country within a post conflict situation, the Solomon Islands implementation of the NERRDP and its sectoral strategies and plans has not been without its challenges. These challenges include availability of financial resources, national capacity, commitment by stakeholders, security, political stability, good governance, rapid population growth, poor economic growth and donor driven programmes. In terms of public participation, the NERRDP had involved most possible stakeholder groups during its consultation process for its formulation and development. It had also established other mechanisms that also involved stakeholder groups in its implementation and monitoring. Whilst the mechanisms established to enhance public participation had increased and with some continuing to function, some have also remain dormant or existed as mere paper suggestions. Despite the improvement in public involvement, the CSO and NGO communities are still of the view that current mechanisms are not effective and still need to improve. New initiatives for future strategic plans will therefore need to review any existing processes or mechanisms to further improve CSO and NGO involvement.

In terms of implementing the NERRDP, the annual budget has been the main national mechanism whilst development partners and other stakeholders have their own arrangements. The implementation of the NERRDP had benefited very much from the country's development partners who funded most of the items in the plan through their development assistance programmes. This followed the development partners' substantive involvement in the consultation process for the formulation and development of the plan, and their commitment in rebuilding the country following the ethnic crisis of 1999 to 2002. The use of development assistance, whilst effective in implementing the NERRDP needs to come under some improved national management arrangement. In terms of the monitoring, the NERRDP established some performance verifiable indicators and development outcome indicators. It is recognized that it is easy to collect information relating to the verifiable performance indicators but difficulties remain for the development indicators due to the lack of an effective data collection system. The NERRDP therefore uses other indicators such as the MDGs and other information from other sources such as the CBSI reports for its monitoring.

The NERRDP has been a national strategic plan that has been effective in addressing the priority issues relating to the effects of the ethnic crisis and within a post-conflict situation within the last four years. Its implementation has achieved some good results in some priority areas but a lot still needs to be done. For the long term, the Solomon Islands needs to address other development issues not well catered for in the NERRDP and could achieve this through a national sustainable development strategy or a strategy that can incorporate sustainable developments concepts and principles. After all, the serious problems that the country has experienced so far since independence is symptomatic of a country not traveling a sustainable development pathway. As work is now underway for a successor to NERRDP, it is an opportune time for the government to work towards a NSDS. It is therefore recommended that Solomon Islands be considered for the next phase of this UNDESA project to enable this to happen.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report fulfils phase one of the requirements of the UNDESA project support to Pacific Island countries for the formulation of National Sustainable Development Strategies. This phase one of the project focuses on country specific assessments for those countries interested in formulating, implementing or strengthening their national sustainable development strategies. Depending on the availability of funds, phase two of the project will involve a selection of pilot countries to develop, strengthen or implement their sustainable development strategies.

Using a general assessment framework provided by UNDESA, this national assessment report therefore briefly examines the current status of national sustainable development strategies in the country and looks at related issues such as the processes, issues and challenges involved in formulating, implementing and monitoring of the strategies or plans at the national level. The report also examines the priorities at the national level and briefly looks at the relationship between national plans and other plans and provides some recommendations for follow up, especially in relation to the possibility of Solomon Islands participating in phase two of the UNDESA project.

The report is produced for consideration of the Solomon Islands government and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in relation to the purposes of the project referred to.

2. BACKGROUND

The global programme for environment and development, Agenda 21, brought about major policy shifts among nations around the world and especially our views of how we should manage our environment and development, given the many problems that have arisen as a result of human kind's development activities. The global summit commonly known as the Earth Summit which brought us Agenda 21 was a major global achievement in itself. One of its requirements is requesting all nations of the world to put in place National Sustainable Development Strategies¹ which would hopefully incorporate sustainable development principles and concepts into the national planning processes and plans. Following the ten year review of Agenda 21 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) was produced and again called for all nations of the world to put in place National Sustainable Development Strategies, this time, by 2005².

A parallel programme of action for Small Island Developing States referred to as the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Islands Developing States and commonly called the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) was formulated for Small Island Developing States in 1994 in Barbados following the Earth Summit. The BPOA is the small Islands version of Agenda 21. Its ten year review which was held in Mauritius in 2005, came up with a sequential programme now referred to as the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI). This also reiterated the call for the development of National Sustainable Development Strategies in all Small Island Developing States³.

¹ Agenda 21, The United Nations Programme of Action from Rio, Chapter 8, para 8.7

² JPOI, Chapter XI, para 162(b)

³ Mauritius Strategy of Implementation, para 74

Whilst many countries have put in place their NSDSs as called for in the various global programmes referred to, many others have been slow to respond. This is especially true for many Small Islands states in the Pacific, probably due to their many inherent national shortcomings. Solomon Islands as a least developed country has been no exception. The slow response from SIDS including Solomon Islands is probably due to the lack of awareness at the national level on the need for NSDSs and lack of human and financial resources. To some extent in the Solomon Islands, there has been no political will and the influence of donors has not promoted the need for such a strategic plan at the national level. Furthermore at the national level, the increasing number of global programmes and thereby national commitments are starting to overwhelm governments and their domestic systems to allow for effective implementation of those global programmes. One of the main problems that has been seen so far and needs to be addressed in terms of the implementation of the global programmes at the national level is the lack of an effective national mechanism or framework through which effective implementation of the global programmes can be coordinated thoroughly.

It is hoped that this national assessment will reinvigorate the need for national sustainable development strategies at the national level and provide the government with the minimum essential background information to enable them to figure out what is the best way forward for Solomon Islands in terms of its sustainable development strategy.

3. WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Since this report is all about sustainable development, some explanations on the term is probably warranted. This would help in focusing ones thought on the meaning of the term and in going through this report. The common definition in use is the one that came out of the Bruntland Commission report and states: *‘sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the needs of future generations’*.

In the Solomon Islands an effort has been made to define sustainable development in terms of the Environment Act 1998. It defines sustainable development as *‘the management or the human use, development, conservation, protection, maintenance and enhancement of the natural, physical and cultural resources of Solomon Islands in a way or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being and for their health and safety while –*

- *sustaining the potential of natural resources and physical resources to meet the needs of future generations;*
- *using, developing or protecting renewable natural and physical resources so that their ability to yield long term benefits is not endangered;*
- *using, developing or protecting non-renewable natural resources so as to lead to an orderly and practical transition to adequate substitutes including renewable resources;*
- *safeguarding the life-supporting capacity air, water, soil and ecosystem; and*
- *avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects of development on the environment’*

Following the Earth Summit in 1992 a more simple, relevant and integral explanation began to emerge and refers to the pillars of sustainable development which are: environment, economic and social pillars. In simple terms therefore, development needs to integrate those three areas if it is to be sustainable.

4. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FORMULATION IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

As with many countries of the Pacific and the developing world, Solomon Islands development plans prior to and in the early years of independence was in the form of the traditional fixed five year term plans, with the government having the sole responsibility of setting the targets (especially for economic production) and the priorities within it. The government would also have the full responsibility of implementing the plans. Since the onset of the sustainable development agenda, this traditional approach to strategic planning faded away or was abandoned and is slowly being replaced with strategies that seek to incorporate sustainable development concepts and principles.

In the Solomon Islands the efforts to incorporate and introduce sustainable development concepts and principles into the national development plans was not an easy task and took the country through different routes. Even today it is still to reach and fulfill its commitment of developing a real national sustainable development strategy. Since the adoption of new approaches to the development of national development plans, the Solomon Islands has tried a number of plans that are equivalent to or are similar to NSDSs. These include the latest and the most appropriate national strategic and action framework document now currently referred to as the National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan 2003 – 2006 (NERRDP) formulated by the last Kemakeza government. Prior to the NERRDP, there was the Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS). Both of these national development plans have characteristics equivalent to NSDSs and can be regarded as NSDS in their own right but may not incorporate all essential sustainable development concepts and principles to be fully regarded as NSDSs.

Most of the efforts to adopt and formulate plans similar to any NSDSs however are probably done at the sectoral level. The sectoral strategies that were formulated at the sectoral level are quite numerous and incorporate more elements of national sustainable development strategies within their specific focal area than the national strategic plans. It is these sectoral strategies that seem to provide the most appropriate base for more work to be undertaken at the national level to formulate any future NSDS.

5. SOLOMON ISLANDS COMMITMENTS TO THE FORMULATION OF NSDSs

Solomon Islands has been part of the regional and international effort to address environment and development issues that have become of great concern to humankind. It has attended and made commitments to all the global and regional initiatives relating to the environment and sustainable development agenda. Solomon Islands had attended all the meetings referred to below, most of which call for the adoption of NSDSs.

Solomon Islands attended the Earth Summit in Rio, Brasil in 1992 and made commitments to the global agenda for environment and development - Agenda 21, which came out of the summit. The Solomon Islands delegation at the summit was led by the late Prime Minister himself, Honorable Solomon Mamaloni. It also attended the Barbados Conference that produced the BPOA. Solomon Islands attended the five year review meetings of Agenda 21, and the BPOA and also made commitment to the follow up programmes that came out of those review meetings. It also took part in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 (which was the ten year review of the Agenda) and also made commitments to its follow up programme - the

Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). In 2005, Solomon Islands attended the ten year review of the BPOA and made commitments to its follow up programme – the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation. Its delegation to the Mauritius meeting was led by the former Prime Minister, Honorable Allan Kemakeza.

At the regional level, Solomon Islands became part of the regional effort to produce the latest regional strategy, the Pacific Plan. The Pacific Plan which is an overarching plan is the most integrated plan to emerge from the Pacific and also calls for all countries in the region to put in place sustainable development strategies⁴. Solomon Islands commitment to this regional plan is probably stronger than its global commitments. By committing itself to all the relevant global and the regional strategies, Solomon Islands has committed itself to the development and adoption of sustainable development strategies.

6. PRIORITIES AND TARGETS

6.1 PRIORITIES, GOALS AND TARGETS OF THE NERRDP

Due to the problems arising from the ethnic tension, the development of strategic plans in the Solomon Islands has been focusing on rebuilding the nation, especially on the restoration of law and order and on economic recovery. The strategic plan that caters for this focus and on rebuilding the nation is as mentioned earlier, the National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan (NERRDP) 2003 – 2006⁵. The NERRDP has the government's priorities and goals for the period indicated. This year is the final year of the NERRDPs' implementation and it is expected that a new strategic plan will be formulated as its successor. Until that is done, which is dependent on the new Soqavare government that has now come into power, following the national general elections in April this year, the NERRDP is still the national strategic plan that is in many ways equivalent to a NSDS for the Solomon Islands.

The NERRDP was formulated some two years after the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA)⁶ which formally ended the ethnic crisis that crippled the country to its knees from 1998 – 2000. Despite the signing of the TPA, instability and active militancy continued after the signing until the arrival of RAMSI⁷ in 2003. The formulation of the NERRDP therefore occurred during that unstable period and has much to do with the continuing security situation in the country and the long terms effects of the ethnic crisis as a whole.

6.1.1 Overall Goal of the NERRDP 2003 – 2006

The overarching goal of the NERRDP is to **“enhance and improve the quality of life and the living standards of all the people in the Solomon Islands, not just some people or groups but all groups in Solomon Islands”**. In the midst of the security situation prevalent at the time of its formulation and the general consciousness of the long term effects of the ethnic crisis, the NERRDP also recognizes that the above goal can be achieved under the following essential conditions: that there is peace and personal safety among the people; that there are increasing

⁴ Pacific Plan, Initiative 5.1

⁵ The NERRDP has the governments' priorities an goals for the given period.

⁶ The TPA was signed between the two major factions of the ethnic crisis, the Isiatabu Freedom Fighters of Guadalcanal Province and the Malaita Eagle Force of Malaita Province, the National government and provincial representatives from the two above provinces.

⁷ The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) came to Solomon Islands in 2003 under an Act of Parliament to restore law and order following the ethnic tension of 1999 – 2002.

incomes and their equitable distribution; and increasing the availability of improved access to social services for all the people of Solomon Islands. The NERRDP further iterated that this means that there is equitable distribution of development between all provinces and people in each province, between men and women. It also means giving preferential attention to the disadvantaged and marginalized groups as well as areas in the country. It also stated that this means facilitating and providing assistance directly at the community level and encouraging and supporting community initiatives.

6.1.2 Immediate Objectives of the NERRDP

The overarching goal of the NERRDP is translated into the following immediate and major objectives:

1. to improve the security environment in restoring law and order and fostering peace;
2. to strengthen and improve governance institutions and good governance;
3. to bring about macroeconomic stability and income growth;
4. to restore basic social services in health and education; and
5. to re-establish the foundations for sustained economic growth and human development.

6.1.3 Key Strategic Areas or priority areas of the NERRDP

To target priority actions at all levels, the NERRDP focuses on what it refers to as Key Strategic Areas. The Key Strategic Areas are actually the priority areas of the NERRDP and are as follows:

- a. Normalising law and order and security situation.
- b. Strengthening democracy, human rights and good governance
- c. Restoring fiscal and financial stability and reforming the public sector.
- d. Revitalizing the productive sector and rebuilding supporting infrastructure
- e. Restoring basic social services and fostering social development.

6.1.4 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes from these key strategic areas as outlined in the NERRDP are as follows:

1. The law and order and security situation normalised
2. Democracy deepened, human rights protected and good governance improved.
3. Fiscal and financial stability restored and substantial progress made in public sector reform.
4. The productive sector revitalized and supporting infrastructure rebuilt.
5. Basic social services restored and social development fostered.

6.1.5 Summary of Achievements

The government through its lead agency in strategic planning, the Department of National Planning and Aid Coordination, has carried out a review of the implementation of the NERRDP in September 2005 to ascertain what it has achieved in terms of its goals, objectives, key strategic areas and the expected outcomes. The implementation report⁸ compiled, concluded in general that the NERRDP made good progress in a number of the key strategic areas it focused on. These are the areas of the restoration of law and order and normalizing of the security situation, and in restoring control and stability in government finances. Both areas however require further efforts to strengthen what has already been achieved.

⁸ Solomon Islands Government, National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan 2003-2006. Implementation Report, September 2005, Honiara, Solomon Islands

In the areas of good governance, the report made mention of the progress that have been made especially in enforcement and maintenance of the rule of law and management of public finances. Some progress were also made in improving transparency and accountability in the public sector but it noted that more needs to be done for the agencies ensuring transparency and accountability in government. In the area of public sector reform, it was noted that actions have been started and progress has been made with some state own enterprises but not much progress was made in this sector which requires more urgent attention.

In the areas of revitalizing the productive sector, the review report of the NERRDP made mention of the focus of efforts in reviving the large scale commercial enterprises that had ceased operation during the ethnic crisis. The main concern in the sector is the unsustainable harvesting of natural forest resources which has gone unabated for the last decade. The lack of political will in the last government to introduce new legislation in the forestry sector has been the major public concern. The focus on revitalizing the small scale and rural production sector has not received much attention at all and needs further urgent improvement as it serves most of the Solomon Islands rural population.

In terms of infrastructural development, actions have been taken to revitalize the essential facilities and services. In the supporting services, a number of significant interventions have been initiated. Of particular note is the introduction of the new Foreign Investment Bill to parliament last year but which is still to be enacted. The lack of credit facilities for small scale and medium scale operations in the rural areas has been an issue for a long time. In the social services sector, most essential services had been restored to the pre-tension level. New policies and strategies were formulated for the education and health sector.

6.1.6 Formulation of priorities, goals and targets of the NERRDP

The formulation of the Solomon Islands national strategic plan, the NERRDP whilst a normal national planning requirement, has also been driven by the ethnic crisis of 1999 to 2002. The priorities, goals and targets are clearly addressing the issues directly related to the ethnic crisis.

The NERRDP was clearly one of the first of its kind in a number of aspects. One of the notable facts about it is the involvement of a wide spectrum of possible stakeholders not only in its formulation or development but also in terms of its implementation. It is one of the most relevant and realistic of the development plans that have been formulated within the last decade and a half in the country.

The formulation of the NERRDP or any national strategic plan for that matter is the national responsibility of the Department of National Planning and Aid Coordination (DNPAC). Through the DNPAC, a working group was established to coordinate all activities required for the development of the NERRDP. A Reference group comprising Permanent Secretaries was also formed to look at the focus of the plan, cross-cutting issues and implementation. The whole process of development involved a wide consultation with national ministries and departments, members of parliament, provincial governments, statutory bodies, the private sector, civil society and non-government organisations, and development partners. Information from these groups was solicited through written submissions, individual consultations, consultative workshops and public forums. The whole process is summarized in the figure 1 below.

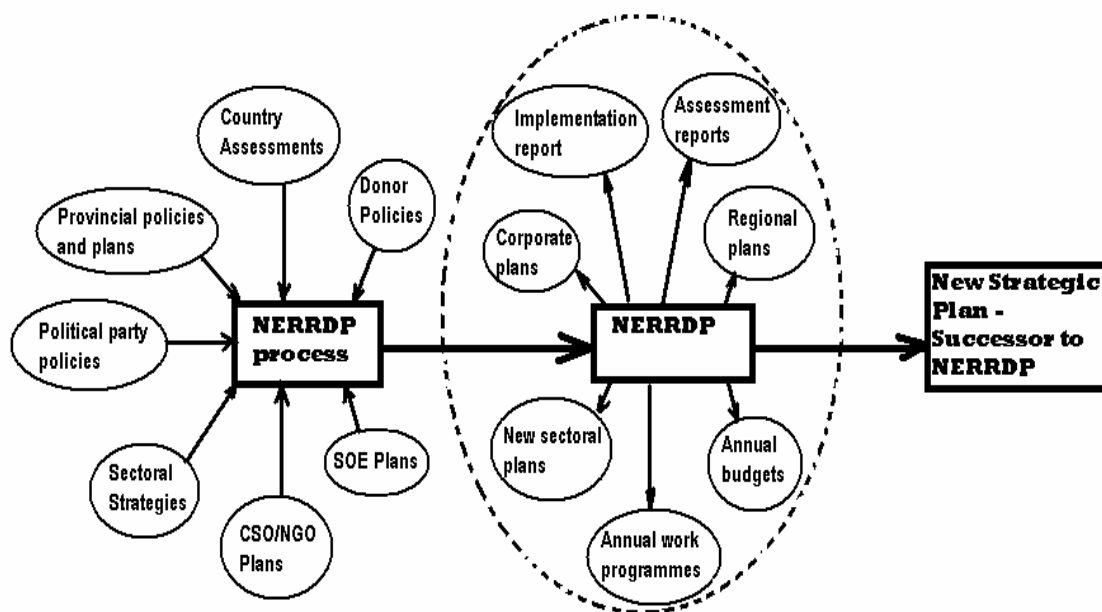


Figure 1 – A general diagram to show the NERRDP process, what existing policies and plans are used for its development, what plans and strategies it has generated and which are most likely to feed on to its successor.

6.2 OTHER PRIORITIES

Whilst the NERRDP identified the key strategic areas that has indicated the broad priorities of the Solomon Islands government, many of the sectoral plans and policies, departmental corporate plans and regional plans consulted for this assessment work have also indicated other priorities not well catered for under the NERRDP but for which programmes and activities have been ongoing and are being developed at the community, national and regional level. A number of the government agencies and Civil Society and Non Government Organizations have also indicated other priorities not well catered for under the NERRDP. These priorities are briefly discussed below.

6.2.1 The need for sustainable management of natural resources

Many organizations and individuals consulted for this work are generally concerned about the issue of managing the country's resources which seems to have not been up to expectation. (In certain sectors, there is a general view that the country is taking a suicidal path). Even many of the sectoral and corporate plans and policies examined basically reveal that there is a need to seriously look at this issue especially in relation to the commercial harvesting of timber and all its related issues in the forestry sector, coastal fisheries resources in fisheries sector and water resources management in urban areas. The general issue of sustainable resources management had been a long term issue and is also part of the regional Pacific plan and needs to be addressed more vigorously as it is such natural resources that the country wholly depends on for its economic well being to a major extent.

6.2.2 Prominent Environmental and development concerns

Many recent but prominent and urgent environmental and development concerns have been raised by a number of sectors and groups and are part of a number of regional and global programmes and need to be addressed more at the national level. These include the loss of biological resources and ecosystems, climate change and sea level rise, biological security and safety, waste management, HIV/Aids and Malaria. A number of these issues are well catered for in the Pacific Plan and need to be dealt with at the national level appropriately.

6.2.3 Rural Development and empowerment

More than 85% of the Solomon Islands population are rural based and live their lives using resources from their land and sea in the rural areas. One of the general views that came out of this work is the need to focus more on the rural areas where life is increasingly becoming a daily struggle in recent years. This may be achieved by directing relevant and appropriate resources to the rural areas and empowering them not only to make decisions for themselves but to also enable them to develop their own resources through appropriate skills training, establishment of innovative financial mechanisms through which financial resources can be accessed and the provision of essential and development enabling social services.

6.2.4 Need for a National Sustainable Development Strategy

As mentioned earlier, even though the NERRDP is similar to a NSDS in certain aspects, it still lacks some basic elements of a national sustainable development strategy that are essential for pursuing sustainable development policies, strategies and programmes at the national, provincial and community levels. It is a general view that the lack of focus on these other essential elements of sustainable development in past and existing strategic plans has contributed to the many myriad of problems that is currently being experienced at all levels of government and society today in the country. This assessment work has shown that there is an urgent need to put in place a national sustainable development strategy, as recognised in the regional and global policies and programmes. This should start and contribute to arresting or averting further national problems in the long term in the country.

6.3 CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

As a least developed country and as a country which is still in a post conflict situation, the Solomon Islands faced and still faces numerous challenges in achieving the goals and objectives it laid down in the NERRDP. These challenges would not have been magnified if the country had not gone through a dark period such as that experienced during the ethnic crisis. Some of the major challenges are briefly explained below.

6.3.1 Availability of Financial Resources

One of the most common challenges faced by the Solomon Islands is in terms of the availability of financial resources to formulate the plan and then implement the strategies therein. As a result of the ethnic crisis, the country had been in a dire situation as many of its revenue earning commercial undertakings closed down. This could have thrown the country further down the hill if assistance has not been forthcoming from development partners and friends within the region. One of the most important decisions that were made in terms of the NERRDP was to actively involve the development partners who would then bring in the necessary funds that would then allow the

formulation of the plan and also, more significantly, to fund most of the activities outlined within the NERRDP. The involvement of the development partners had been most significant in implementing many of the strategies outlined in the plan and enabling key achievements in those areas most pertinent to the post conflict situation in Solomon Islands.

6.3.2 National capacity

Another common challenge is the general lack of appropriate human capacity within the country, especially within the government establishment for the planning, development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the NERRDP. The problem had been an inherent one within the Solomon Islands public service and might be an issue that had affected its general performance. It is also understood that the human resources or experts are there but getting them involved in the relevant tasks and responsibilities is in itself another thing. In the various processes of the NERRDP including the development, and monitoring and evaluation stages, the use of consultants had been significant. The capacity issues not only relates to human capacity but also systemic or institutional issues such as systems and procedures that are either absent, neglected or are out of date and do not serve any more useful purposes.

6.3.3 Level of Commitment by stakeholders

In the various stages of the NERRDP process from planning to monitoring and evaluation, there are many stakeholders who have various roles and responsibilities necessary for the success of the NERRDP. It has been recognized that the level of commitment by all stakeholders in those various stages had been and continues to be significant in the successful implementation of the NERRDP. It is a fact that the level of commitment is usually determined by other factors such as availability of resources and effective coordinating mechanisms between lead agencies and stakeholder organizations and groups. It is recognized that in the development and implementation stages of the NERRDP, commitment of stakeholders had been a concern at various levels and continues to be an issue that needs to be adequately addressed and managed.

6.3.4 Security Environment

It is imperative that a secure safety environment prevails in any country for any national plan to be developed and implemented successfully. With the arrival of the military intervention in 2003 through RAMSI, peace and stability was restored in Solomon Islands. Despite the restoration of law and order in the country through RAMSI however, a number of strategies and programmes under the NERRDP however continue to confront difficulties in implementation due to real and perceived security issues as the country was and is still in a post-conflict situation. Following the election of the new Prime Minister, Snyder Rini, on 18th April, 2006, the security situation in the country has somewhat gone into the red again following the destruction and looting of properties in the capital, Honiara. This shows the fluidity of the security situation in the country. The situation has normalized again following the resignation of Mr. Rini as Prime Minister after eight days in government and the election of Mr. Manasseh Soqavare as Prime Minister.

6.3.5 Political Stability

A stable government is one of the most important pre-requisite for any national strategic plan to be successfully developed and implemented. During the period of the NERRDP in Solomon Islands, the government has been stable and has completed its full four year term. Following the general elections of 5th April, 2006 and the consequential election of Snyder Rini as Prime Minister, this

was seen as a no-change in government leadership and rule, and the public of the capital in Honiara reacted negatively with destruction and looting of properties in the capital. Mr. Rini eventually resigned eight days later following reduced political support and a new government was formed with a grand coalition led by Mr. Manasseh Soqavare.

6.3.6 Good governance

Good governance continued to be a challenge in Solomon Islands, especially when it is one of the factors that most observers and commentators agreed is responsible for poor governance and the alleged corruption that has been said to plague all levels of government, private sector and communities. The programmes under the NERRDP and RAMSI, have instituted a number of measures dealing with this issue but some of the other key strategies in the NERRDP that needed to be urgently attended to will have to address this issue to a new level of action.

6.3.7 Rapid Population Growth

The NERRDP recognizes that one of the essential underlying conditions for the achievement of its goals and objectives is to increase the equitable distribution of national income and increase access to resources and services to all people of the Solomon Islands. The magnitude of this task is a great challenge in itself as the country still has one of the highest population growth rates in the region and the world which is 2.8 percent⁹. Before increased income is equitably distributed amongst all peoples of Solomon Islands, it has to be earned and that is also another major challenge in the present post conflict situation in the country. When there is not even enough income to distribute due to the lack of appropriate commercial activities to generate that income, a bigger and larger problem is to equitably distribute income to an ever increasing population which may even be higher than the rate of economic growth. The fact that the Solomon Islands government has a large debt which is in arrears, and is still busy with servicing those debts, it is difficult to see when the objective of equitably distributing national income to an ever increasing population could be regarded as satisfactory.

6.3.8 Poor Economic growth

Following the closer of most large commercial projects in the country due to the effects of the ethnic tension, economic growth had been severely affected. Efforts to revive some of the large commercial projects are already bearing some good results though. With the improvement in the management of public finance by RAMSI and improvement in the primary production sector, economic performance has slowly recovered. In the last two years, economic growth has shown some positive movements but the latest destruction and looting of commercial properties in the capital Honiara will drive the growth rate into negative territory again and will certainly make the road to full recovery a long one.

6.3.9 Donor driven programmes

Since independence, Solomon Islands had been a country that had been heavily dependent on foreign aid as it had been a country that was coerced into becoming a sovereign state by its former colonial power when the country was probably not to ready economically, to be given such a status. When the ethnic crisis erupted in 1999 most donors have reduced their assistance to

⁹ The 1999 National Population Census report gives this figure of 2.8 percent which is a decrease from 3.5 percent during the previous census of 1986.

Solomon Islands to a minimum but are now back after the return of peace in 2002 and the arrival of RAMSI in 2003. Most of the resources now used in the running of the country are from donors. The NERRDP is basically funded by donors and in many circumstances has to align with donor policies and requirements and could be said to be basically driven by donors. Whilst efforts were directed at ensuring that these resources are targeted at national priorities, it is also a fact that many of these priorities were also heavily influenced by donors and the programmes and projects that were eventually agreed upon are being implemented by donor agencies themselves with little control by the responsible authorities within the government.

7. STRATEGIES

Even prior to the development of the NERRDP, Solomon Islands had developed and has detailed sectoral strategies that deal with specific issues pertaining to specific sectors. As a matter of fact many of these sectoral strategies do provide the guide and the direction for what is to be incorporated into any strategic plan and whatever forms that takes. It has been the usual practice that donor programmes are guided by these sectoral strategies. Solomon Islands national strategic plan is not only guided and directed by sectoral strategies, but is also heavily influenced by many decisions made at the sub-regional and regional level which are usually developed or designed into various strategies themselves. This section will therefore briefly deal with the national strategies as well as some of the main regional strategies as well.

7.1 NATIONAL STRATEGIES

The main national plan, the NERRDP has been discussed under Priorities and Targets above (Section six) and is not covered under this section. See section six for details of the NERRDP. The discussion under this section refers to major sectoral strategies or plans.

7.1.1 Education Strategic Plan

The education sector is one of the largest essential services sector in the Solomon Islands. In the period of the NERRDP implementation, the education sector has formulated the Education Strategic Plan 2004 – 2006, which is in itself, an update of the education sector plan of the previous period. The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) which is formulated under the framework of the Education Act 1978, guides all national activities within the sector for the period specified. As a strategy developed within the post conflict situation in the Solomon Islands, the ESP is mostly driven by the issues relating to the ethnic crisis. The ESP therefore focuses mainly on the restoration and rehabilitation of all education services through out the country.

The vision of the education sector, as stated in the ESP, “*is that Solomon Islanders will develop as individuals and posses knowledge, skills and attitudes to earn a living and to live in harmony with others and their environments. We envisage a united and progressive society in which all can live in peace and harmony with fair and equitable opportunities for a better life. We envision an education and training system responsive to its clients and efficiently managed by its stakeholders and clients*”.

The immediate goal of the ESP 2004-2006 is to maintain the delivery of education services during the post conflict rehabilitation period from 2004 to 2006. Its long term goals which cover a period of 15 years are to provide equitable basic education for all children in the Solomon Islands; provide access to community, technical, vocational and tertiary education that will meet

individual, regional, national needs for knowledgeable, skilled, competent, and complete people; and to manage resources in an efficient, effective and transparent manner.

In terms of the NERRDP, the ESP serves to implement one of the key strategic areas which is on the restoration of basic social services and fostering social development and focusing on education. The NERRDP's focus on education is to restore basic education services fully in areas where they have been made inadequate by the ethnic conflict, improving access to and quality of primary and secondary education, increasing technical and vocational education and training, increasing local capacity in tertiary education and the access to overseas tertiary education institutions.

This year is also the final year of the ESP 2003 – 2006 and the review of the education sector's strategic area of the NERRDP have indicated that significant progress has been made in the restoration of schools, both primary and secondary. Many other strategies incorporated into the NERRDP have been attended to and are being implemented. A number of major policies swifts and interventions have also been made. These included the move towards nine years of free education to cover primary and junior secondary schools and the introduction of a major policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

7.1.2 National Health Policies

The work of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services which is the Ministry responsible for health has been guided by a national health policy.¹⁰ The Ministry's vision is for 'a healthy, happy and productive Solomon Islands people.' Its mission is to 'promote, protect and maintain the good health and well being and hence improve the quality of life of all people in Solomon Islands.' The major areas of the national health policies are:

- improvement of management and supervision of services,
- improved access to quality care,
- management and development of human resources for health care,
- mortality and morbidity reduction,
- maintenance of healthy environments,
- promote healthy living and lifestyles,
- improve reproductive health and family planning, and
- forging partnerships in health development.

In terms of the NERRDP, the health polices and plans relate to the fifth key strategic or priority area of the restoration of basic social services and fostering of social development.

7.1.3 National Transport Infrastructure Development Plan

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Development is currently working on a National Transport and Infrastructure Development Plan¹¹ (NTIDP). The plan is in its final stages of adoption. Transport and infrastructures are essential pre-requisites for all national developmental purposes. In terms of the NERRDP, the role of the transport and infrastructure sector is especially relevant on the fourth and fifth Key Strategic Areas referred to in section six which are on revitalization of the productive sector and rebuilding of supporting infrastructures; and the restoration of basic social services and fostering of social developments.

¹⁰ Referred to in the Ministry's corporate plan 2006 -2008

¹¹ Solomon Islands Government, 2006, National Transport Policy and Infrastructure Development Plan (draft)

The vision of the NTIDP states, “*sustained economic growth and social development in the Solomon Islands supported by effective infrastructure and transport services*”. Its mission states, “*to enhance the prosperity and participation of the community by providing an integrated, efficient and affordable infrastructure and transport system supported by ethical, professional and valued staff*”.

The policies as contained in the plan are as follows:

- to determine clear priorities for investment in, and maintenance of, infrastructure and transport services to meet the economic, social and security needs of the country and all its people,
- to recognize and provide for the special needs of the disabled, of poor communities and HIV/AIDS issues,
- to provide for effective and efficient regulation and private and management of transport infrastructure and services by the public and private sector as most appropriate,
- to establish dependable, adequate and predictable funding mechanisms for transport infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and development
- to establish maintenance of government owned infrastructure and mobile equipment (road vehicles, marine vessels and aircraft) as a routine activity,
- to ensure rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of transport sector infrastructure serves the social, economic and security development needs of the nation
- to provide financial assistance for sustaining essential transport services which cannot be provided on a commercial basis,
- to implement measures to improve the safety, quality and reliability of transport services being provided,
- to ensure that communities in all provinces are provided with transport infrastructure and services on an equitable basis,
- to ensure that transparency and accountability to all the nations people are introduced with respect to investment and maintenance decisions made by SIG.

7.1.4 Agriculture Rural Development Strategy

A major study focusing on small holder rural production has been completed with assistance from the World Bank. Further assessment work is currently ongoing which will hopefully contribute towards the formulation of an agricultural rural development strategy and probably relate to the strategies of the NERRDP or any new plan that might succeed it. In terms of the NERRDP, this will relate to the fourth key strategic or priority area on the revitalization of the productive sector and rebuilding of supporting infrastructure.

7.1.5 National Integrated Rural and Provincial Development Programme

The National Integrated Rural and Provincial Development Programme (NIRPDP) was produced in 2001 with funding and technical assistance from UNDP. It is the product of a large national project called the Solomon Islands Development Administration and Participatory Planning Programme (SIDAPP).

Its vision is to “*Work Together to Build Communities in Solomon Islands and its mission is to increase the capabilities of provinces in improving the quality of life in village communities where majority of people live*”. The main goal of NIRPDP is to bring information and services to as

many villages people as possible so that they can participate in overall national development and ultimately share its benefits.

The NIRPDP was produced prior to the NERRDP and may have provided some direction that contributed to its development. The usefulness and worth of this expensive plan is yet to be ascertained as the implementation status of the strategies in it are not known except for the establishment of a rural development association.

7.1.6 Forest Policy Statement

The Solomon Islands forestry sector has become the most significant revenue earner for the country basically through round log exports. The log exports came from the logging of the natural forest which itself has become a great concern. The responsibility for the management of forest rests with the Department of Forests, Environment and Conservation. Due to the concerns on the unsustainable harvesting of country's natural forest, the government then adopted a forest policy statement which it hoped would enable it to exert some control especially on the commercial harvest of the natural forest. The policy statement adopted the following five major policy areas:

- To adopt a long term view of the forestry sector,
- To protect future economic forestry options as a basis for sustainable economic growth,
- To facilitate and promote increased local level participation in forestry administration, harvesting and resource replenishment,
- To promote strong support for the protection of the environment and ecological sustainability, and
- To leave commercial scale plantation development and sawn timber production as decisions for the private sector to make.

In terms of the NERRDP, this policy statement relates to the fourth key strategic or priority area on the revitalization of the productive sector and rebuilding of supporting infrastructure.

7.1.7 National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS)

The Solomon Islands National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS) was produced in 1992 and may already be out of date but remains the only blue print for environmental management in the country in the absence of other relevant national strategy in the environment sector. The NEMS focuses on the following five broad strategies:

- Adopt an integrated approach to environmental policy and planning,
- Submit proposed policies, development programmes and projects to environment impact assessment,
- Introduce a comprehensive framework of national and provincial environmental law, together with the means for its enforcement in a communally acceptable manner,
- Review adequacy of institutional mechanisms and administrative controls and strengthen them as necessary, and
- Institute resource pricing in the national accounts and other economic policy for achieving sustainability.

7.1.8 National Tuna Management Plan

The national responsibility for fisheries matters is under the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources. One of its main focus is on oceanic fisheries which comprises mainly tuna fisheries. Tuna resources are very important to the economy of the Solomon Islands and the government has

put in place a Tuna Management Plan which guides the government in the management of the resources and the industry. The Tuna Management Plan focuses on five main goals: Sustainable stocks, Minimal environmental impacts, Increased domestic participation, Increased foreign reserve, minimal impacts, Administration support, and Accountability. The full implementation of the plan has been affected by lack of resources. The elements of this plan and all other new fisheries policies have been incorporated into the DFMR's corporate plan and relate directly to the fourth key strategic or priority area of the NERRDP which is on the revitalization of the productive sector and rebuilding of supporting infrastructure.

7.1.9 Solomon Islands Human Development Agenda in the 21st century

In its Human Development Report of 2002¹², Solomon Islands also produced what it called a Human Development Agenda in the 21st Century. This agenda is one of the best attempt prior to the development of the NERRDP to put in place a long term programme that would guide the country in its efforts towards sustainable development. It seems that the broad agenda contained within that report is well reflected in the key strategies that are now part of the NERRDP.

The agenda stated that the overall objective of development in Solomon Islands is to achieve sustainable economic growth together with equitable distribution of consequential benefits. It also identified the key issues that create the challenges to the economic, financial and social status and future development of Solomon Islands. These include the immediate need to establish stability in government finances, and social and political stability. In the medium term, it identified the following as key issues: restoration of the country's productive and export potential, repairing and upgrading of the country's public infrastructure, revitalization of the country's social and human development and the need to focus on increased financing of provincial programmes. It further stated that underlying all the above issues is the need to continue with public sector reforms. As earlier mentioned, the key strategies in the NERRDP and the programmes therein mirror very well the contents of this Human development agenda. A lot more still needs to be done though to fully implement the agenda.

7.1.10 Departmental Corporate plans

Since 2004, government ministries and departments have adopted corporate plans which run for around three to four years. These corporate plans are usually based on the national strategic plan, statutory requirements, sectoral plans and regional and international strategies. Each of the corporate plans whilst having the same structure, do have their own priorities and strategies that guide the department or the ministries' work for whatever period is indicated. Most of the current corporate plans have linkages to the NERRDP.

7.1.11 Other National Strategies

There are other national strategies and plans that are not covered in this report but whose status could not be determined. Whilst some have been completed but are yet to be approved by cabinet or other responsible authorities, others are being formulated to take into account issues of the NERRDP, regional strategies such as the Pacific plan and global strategies. These strategies and plans will also cater for regional and global convention requirements.

¹² Government of Solomon Islands, 2002, Human Development Report – Building a Nation. Vol.1 Main Report

7.2 REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Regional cooperation has been one of the most unique characteristics of the Pacific Islands region and has enabled countries of the region to put in place strategies covering different issues. Many of these strategies have direct linkages to national programmes and even policies or strategies at the national level. The latest plan coming out of the region is the Pacific Plan which is an overarching plan covering most sustainable development issues relevant to all countries in the region. It seems that most regional efforts will now focus on the plan.

The vision of the plan is as follows:

“Leaders believe the Pacific region can, should and will be a region of peace, harmony, security and economic prosperity, so that all of its people can lead free and worthwhile lives. We treasure the diversity of the Pacific and seek a future in which its cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honored and developed. We seek a Pacific region that is respected for the quality of its governance, the sustainable management of its resources, the full observance of democratic values and for its defence and promotion of human rights. We seek partnerships with our neighbours and beyond to develop our knowledge, to improve our communications and to ensure a sustainable economic existence for all.”

The main goal of the plan is to: ‘Enhance and stimulate economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security for Pacific countries through regionalism’. Its objectives covered the areas referred to in the objectives: economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security. As a regional strategy, the Pacific Plan has to be based on realistic issues at the national level. The NERRDP has been the main basis of the country’s contribution to the plan and its national priorities or key strategic areas are well reflected in the regional plan.

The Pacific region has many other issue based regional strategies covering such issues as education, health, trade, communications, energy, environment, water resources, agriculture, climate change and so on. These strategies have direct linkages to the national level programmes and also influence the plans and strategies that have been formulated in the country including the NERRDP.

7.3 COHERENCE AMONG STRATEGIES AND RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

7.3.1 Horizontal coherence

The coherence of strategies, policies and legislation especially at the national level had been a concern for some time as there had been weak coordination of all strategy and policy development in the past. Prior to the development of the Medium Term Development Strategy 1991-2001 which was succeeded by the NERRDP 2003-2006, this issue was recognized. One of the areas of concern in relation to the issue was the development of strategies based on unclear, prescriptive and poor political government policies which then make it difficult to implement those strategies that had been drawn up. In a number of circumstances, strategies and policies are not mutually conducive or compatible to each other and hence give rise to conflicting situations at the implementation level where one agency promotes one type of development which is contrary to what another agency is promoting in the same geographical area or the same communities.

In terms of legislation, the issue of coherence had not been of much concern as all legislative developments had been coordinated and had come under the vetting process of the responsible authorities (Attorney General Chambers). It is the political and administrative part of the policy development and strategizing aspects that had been raising some problems that seem to be centered on the lack of proper national coordination.

With the efforts on the development of MTDS and the NERRDP therefore, this issue was recognized and some efforts had gone into ensuring that policies, strategies and legislation do support each other as much as possible or are as coherent to each other as possible. This does not mean that the problem was fully eliminated through the processes of the MTDS and the NERRDP. Even today, a number of agencies have expressed the concern that a number of activities or decisions that they were implementing were not conforming to their own policies and strategies. This they said had been due to political directives.

Currently, many of the policies and strategies that are being implemented at the national level are part of or do form the basis of the current strategic plan, the NERRDP. The sectoral strategies that were developed after the development of the NERRDP are basically based on the NERRDP and seek to implement the strategies stipulated in it. They are therefore directly linked to the NERRDP and have direct and strong coherence with it. Even some of the strategies that were developed prior to the development of the NERRDP are still strongly cohered to the NERRDP as many of them do form the basis of its strategies and programmes therein.

The Education sector strategic plan 2004-2006, the draft Transport and Infrastructure Plan are some examples of the strategic plans that are directly linked to the NERRDP and are priority sectors within it. The current work on a health sector plan and an agricultural sector policy or plans will basically be seeking to implement the aims and objectives of the NERRDP. The essential services sectors are actually priority areas at the national level and are prioritized as well within the NERRDP. These include education and health. The Transport and infrastructure plan even though still to be finalized is a priority area as all other sectors could not do much without any improvement in this sector. Due to the NERRDP being driven by the events of the ethnic crisis, all national implementers are fully cognizant of the purposes of the NERRDP and the linkages with their own sectoral strategies and the need to be fully responsible for the implementation of all relevant strategies. The NERRDP on the other hand also directly reflects the major strategies at the sectoral level as they are based on its own requirements as well forming its own basis.

The interdependence of strategies can also be seen in a number of the sectoral strategies. The most common example is again on the National Transport and Infrastructure plan which all other sectors are dependent on. The education plan for instance is directly dependent on it for the infrastructure components of its own plan. Like wise many other strategies and plans also depend on the education sector plan for their education and awareness components as many do call for integration of their concepts and ideas into the national curriculum and into the formal school system. In terms of coherence therefore, many of the strategies that are formulated after the adoption of the NERRDP are well and strongly cohered to that strategic plan. Some of the strategies and plans that were formulated just before the NERRDP do have strong coherence with the NERRDP as well.

7.3.2 Vertical coherence

In examining vertical coherence, this report will briefly assess the issue in two directions as required. One refers to the consistency of the national strategies and policies to the local or community plans, policies and concerns. The other refers to the extent to which the national priorities and strategies are consistent with and fully address commitments at the regional and international level.

The current information gathered for this assessment work could not determine to what extent, plans and policies exist at the local and community levels which would enable the assessment to be done on the planning and policy perspectives. It is known that some provincial governments do have plans and policies relating to certain issues. In general however, most do not show much evidences of development plans. Communities do not normally have their written plans but may have their plans incorporated into other plans and policies of other NGOs and civil society groups such as churches and community organizations and tribal groups. One of the major plans at the local level is the Constituency development plans¹³ which were supposed to cover the fifty national constituencies through out the country. These plans were developed prior to the development of the NERRDP and were done within the period when there was still active militancy, despite the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement. The constituency development plans were supposed to guide the members of parliament in using their allocated Rural Constituency Development Fund which is an annual grant of SBD400, 000 per annum. As there has been no evaluation of the RCDF ever since its establishment or the evaluation of the implementation of the constituency development plans, no one knows if there have been any real achievements in the fund or the plans. One fact is well known though, and that is the SIDAPP programme which produced the plans had handed down plans and strategies that have not been implemented.

Some of the local plans and the constituency development plans are consistent with the purposes and policies of the NERRDP. This is especially so with their own emphasis on the social services sector of the known local and community plans. Of particular importance are the local or community plans of the NGOs, many of which have programmes focusing on the environment and natural resources management that are consistent with the NERRDP and do have strong coherence to sustainable development concepts and principles. Some of the common concerns at the local and community levels have also been examined and have shown strong coherence as well with the strategies outlined in the NERRDP especially in the areas of social services infrastructures and economic growth. Sadly though, the concerns at the community levels despite being strong are not manifested in written local or community plans of their own.

In terms of the implementation of the NERRDP at the local level, the main responsible actors have been referred to as the stakeholders and include civil society organisations (CSOs), NGOs, private sector and overseas development partners). The CSOs include Community Based organizations which comprises churches, church based organizations, special interest groups, national branches of international NGOs, womens groups, youth groups etc. It is also important to note that government ministries and departments, statutory bodies and state owned enterprises do have a lot at the local and community levels and are therefore important local actors themselves.

Coherence of NERRDP or national policies, strategies and legislation to international commitments is probably the strongest. A significant amount of effort is on going in-country in

¹³ Formulated under the UNDP funded SIDAPP project

terms of implementing programmes related to international commitments under the global programmes and agendas such as Agenda 21, JPOI, BPOA, MSI, MDGs etc and international conventions and treaties such as the Rio treaty regimes. Many of the implemented programmes and projects in the country have come under specific global and regional projects designed to implement the global agendas. Internally initiated efforts for implementing the global agendas and conventions have either been tagged onto regional and global programmes funded through multilateral assistance or are developed as national projects for funding under multilateral arrangements such as the agreed financial mechanisms of the global agendas or treaties. Most of the treaty related activities or initiatives have been the ‘enabling activities’¹⁴ funded through their own established financial mechanism which for most is the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Many of the activities happening in the country are also directly linked to the implementation of many regional programmes at the regional level. In the Pacific region where regional cooperation has been effective in terms of collective bargaining and actually getting critical development assistance for national projects, regional policies, strategies and treaties have been one of the most important sustainable development tools. It is probably a fact that most of the regional policies and strategies are closely aligned with sustainable development strategies than national strategies themselves. The current main encompassing regional strategy is the Pacific Plan which is probably one of the best plans that can be regarded as a sustainable development plan, thoroughly integrating the three pillars of sustainable development - sustainable economic growth, social development and environmental considerations. Many of the regional strategies are developed and coordinated through the regional organizations of the Pacific which include Pacific Forum, Pacific Community, Forum Fisheries Agency, Pacific Regional Environment Programme, etc. The NERRDP, other sectoral national strategies, programmes, and national corporate plans which have been put in place in the many government ministries and departments seek to implement many of the regional strategies and plans and are therefore consistent with and have strong coherence to regional and international commitments.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public consultations have become standard practice in most government initiatives especially in relation to the development, formulation, implementation and evaluation of national policies, strategies and plans. The level of public consultation however may vary from one initiative to another, depending on the varied factors that may be at play for any particular issue for which the initiative is being undertaken. Usually the major factors at play are human and financial capacities, how well coordinated the consultations are, the level of government commitment to the consultations and if the public is interested at all on the issues that are the subject of consultation.

The development of the NERRDP therefore involved quite extensive consultation as earlier discussed under section six of the report. The process itself involved ministries and departments of national government, provincial governments, statutory bodies, civil society and non-government organizations, private sector and the development partners. In collecting information in the consultation process the government received written submissions, had individual consultations, organized consultative workshops and also had a public forum.

The main department coordinating the whole process of NERRDP development is the Department of National Planning and Aid Coordination (DNPAC) through an internal NERRDP Working

¹⁴ Activities of the Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD) which are funded under the Global Environment Facility to enable countries to implement the conventions at the national level.

group. The working group received and collected all necessary information from stakeholders mentioned above. A reference group comprising Permanent Secretaries was tasked into other related aspects of the plan especially on the focus of the plan, crosscutting issues, strategies and the implementation issues of the plan. The working group organized two workshops, one for provincial governments and a national workshop which involved all stakeholders and allowed all to contribute their views on the NERRDP. An Economic Association was also used to hold a public forum on the NERRDP and allowed high profile members of the public to contribute to the discussion on ideas for national economic recovery and development.

As part of the consultation process, the DNPAC then had consultation meetings with the Donor community to present to them various issues of the NERRDP development. The outcome of this meeting was then fed to further discussion of issues and led to a draft NERRDP which was then circulated to all stakeholders for their comments and reviews as part of the continuing consultation process. Comments received from the stakeholders were used with further information gathered from a workshop for members of parliament and provincial premiers to then finalize the NERRDP.

At the implementation level, the NERRDP also establishes some monitoring and coordination mechanisms which involve some of the major groups already referred to. The main group that was tasked for this purpose is the NERRDP Steering Committee which is interdepartmental. There is an inter-governmental consultative mechanism which is basically between the national and provincial government. A consultative mechanism was also initiated between the government, CSOs and NGOs. A Think Tank group within the Prime Ministers Department also included an NGO representative and was hoped to contribute much to the various tasks of government. The consistent involvement of the CSOs and NGOs in the consultative mechanism and the Think Tank could not be determined though.

The government and the development partners have established various mechanisms for consultation. There is a Government and Development Partners Meeting for policy dialogue. There is also Joint Solomon Islands Government and Donor Coordination meeting, a group referred to as the 4Ms meeting and there is the Annual and periodic consultation meetings between the Solomon Islands Government and individual development partners. The mechanisms for the government and development partners consultation are therefore quite comprehensive.

Even though the above mechanisms have been set up to enhance public consultations the CSO and NGOs community are still of the view that the consultation process for such national plans need to improve for the public at large. They believe that the current mechanisms are still not effective in involving them in the formulation of such plans or in national decision making. It is suspected that such views have been due to the lack of consistent the CSO and NGO involvement in the various stages of the NERRDP from development to implementation. To address such concerns the government is examining other means that have been recommended through some other initiatives to improve the consultation mechanisms with stakeholder groups. This will need to be followed through for the development of the successor to the NERRDP.

In other sustainable development issues that are addressed at the sectoral level, the CSO and NGO community are well represented and are fully involved in the many national task forces and coordinating committees that have been responsible for some ongoing programmes and projects for example in the 'enabling activities' of the conventions and other relevant programmes and projects of the many regional organizations of the Pacific. The involvement of the CSO and the

NGOs in these programmes have been essential and necessary in many circumstances as they provide critical support to the implementation of such programmes.

9. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

9.1 INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS

The government of Solomon Islands is a parliamentary democracy comprising a three tier system - The national government, the provincial government and the Area council. National Planning is basically the role of the national government through established Ministries and or Department. The main national agencies that are currently responsible for the formulation and development of national strategic plans are the Prime Minister's Office, Department of Finance and Treasury, and the Department of National Planning and Aid Coordination. The Prime Ministers department is basically responsible for providing the guidance on political directions based on the ruling government over arching political strategies or policy framework, the Department of Finance and Treasury is of course responsible for financial issues and the annual recurrent budget and the Department of National Planning and Aid Coordination is responsible for putting together the periodical strategic plan which is currently the NERRDP and the annual development budget.

Under the major coordinating departments referred to above, are the sectoral departments, the provincial governments, the statutory bodies and all other stakeholders who are directly involved in the implementation of the strategies and policies of the NERRDP. At the sectoral department level, all implementation matters is coordinated by the Permanent Secretary who is the chief executive officer of the department who is accountable to the responsible Minister and Cabinet on all matters pertaining to the role of that Department and especially on the implementation of the NERRDP and all relevant government policies. At the provincial level, the Provincial Secretaries are the chief executive and are responsible for implementation of their provincial government programmes as well as the national government's strategic plan, the NERRDP.

In the formulation of any national strategy, established practices in national planning are usually followed. This involved contributions from various level of government especially from the sectoral departments and also from the provinces, state-owned enterprises, private sector and NGOs. Amongst the sectoral departments of the government, the sectoral departments were grouped into two major sectors: economic and social services sectors. In the formulation and development of the NERRDP, there were many contributions from the stakeholders as well as contributions from the international community as mentioned earlier. This is especially so following the ethnic crisis. There were also major inputs from some major assessments carried out prior to the formulation of the NERRDP. One of these assessments is the Common Country Assessments carried out by a regional team coordinated by UNDP.

9.2 INTERAGENCY MECHANISMS

Inter agency mechanisms have been established for various purposes under the NERRDP process. These mechanisms are for coordination, monitoring and reporting through the development and implementation stages of the NERRDP. These mechanisms are coordinated mainly by the Department of National Planning and Aid Coordination, the Prime Ministers Office and the Department of Finance and Treasury. At the top national level however, overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the NERRDP rests with the Cabinet. Beyond the Cabinet is of course the Parliament which of course has a number of high level decision making bodies of

which one is the Public Accounts Committee which examines the annual budgets in relation to national laws, government policies and the NERRDP itself.

The mechanisms established as part of the normal consultation process and as part of the NERRDP process are briefly explained below¹⁵.

Permanent Secretaries Seminar – The Permanent Secretaries Seminar is monthly meeting and is chaired by the Secretary to the Prime Minister and Cabinet as all do report to that officer. All Permanent Secretaries of the government Departments are members of the Seminar. Their role is to provide further high level policy guidance to the NERRDP.

Permanent Secretaries Cluster groups - There are four cluster groups that have been established. The first group comprises Finance, Public Administration and National Planning; the second group comprises Law, Justice and National Security; the third group comprises the Social Services sector; and the fourth group is the Productive Sectors. Each cluster group is chaired by anyone Permanent Secretary chosen amongst each group. Their role is to deal with the issues that relate to their cluster areas. This meeting is supposed to be held monthly.

Under Secretary Forum – This Forum is made up of all under secretaries of all departments and is chaired by the Deputy Secretary to the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It holds its meeting monthly.

Monthly Monetary Monitoring Meetings (4Ms) – The 4Ms is made up of the DFT, DNPAC and the CBSI. It is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the DFT. This meeting is held on a monthly basis.

Annual SIG/Development Partners Meetings – This meeting is usually attended by most Ministries and Departments, the Donors and the CBSI. It is chaired by the Minister of the DNPAC. This meeting is held annually.

Periodic Bilateral High Level Consultations – This meeting is mostly attended by the DNPAC, PMO, DFT, DFA, CBSI, the relevant Donor and relevant Ministries and Departments. It is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the DNPAC or the Permanent Secretary of DFT or DFA.

SIG/Donors Quarterly Meeting – This meeting is supposed to be made up DNPAC, PMO, DFT, DFA and CBSI. Other Departments participate when needed. It is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of DNPAC and holds its meeting on a quarterly basis.

Sectoral and Project Coordination Committees – All major sectoral departments have various kinds of coordination committees at the departmental level which include the Heads of Divisions meetings and those which are project based. The Heads of Divisions meetings are chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the concerned department, where as the project based coordination committees may be chaired by a project designated officer.

Despite of all the above existing mechanisms, the implementation report of the NERRDP stated that the coordination, monitoring and progress reporting of the NERRDP were still ‘weak and sporadic’. The general view from the same report is that the mechanisms established between government and the donors have been active for the purposes which they serve, whilst the intra government mechanisms have not been so. The government seems to focus more attention

¹⁵ Most of this information is taken from the government’s report on mechanisms, proposed instruments and operating methods

towards the requirement of donors than its own. This has been evident in a number of the implementation issues including the monitoring and reporting activities of the authorities responsible. At the sectoral and project coordination committee level, however, there has been active response as most of the substantive implementation activities are done at that level.

Outside of the NERRDP process, there have been some efforts to put in place some national mechanisms to start some kind of bodies to address the broader issues of sustainable development. These efforts have yet to show any real outputs in terms of the operation of any established entity or their products.

10. OUTCOMES AND MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

10.1 INDICATORS AND MONITORING

The NERRDP establishes some indicators for its monitoring and describes some kind of monitoring framework. It however does not specify any processes than simply identifying those entities that will be involved in the monitoring at the implementation stage of the NERRDP. The monitoring indicators described in the NERRDP are of two types: those that verify performance as required in the plan and development outcome indicators which are basically social, economic and human development indicators (see appendix 2). Many of the latter indicators are also used in the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals. The NERRDP however recognizes the problem with the development outcome indicators as they require the effective collection and analysis of statistical data over a longer period and may not necessarily show the impact of the plan within a shorter period as covered in the plan. To enable a wider coverage of the monitoring therefore the NERRDP also referred to the use of the reports of the CBSI that come out on a quarterly and annual basis as a means of monitoring some of the development outcome indicators.

The NERRDP itself had also considered a number of the main goals of the MDG in its planning process and justifies some of its monitoring on the use of the MDG. The MDG therefore became useful indicators for a number of the key strategic areas of the NERRDP and which have been used in the first national evaluation report of the MDG. It is quite clear from the implementation report of the NERRDP that the performance verification indicators used in the monitoring became easy to monitor as far as the key strategic or priority areas of the plan are concerned but the development indicators have been difficult to monitor as data has to be collected and analyzed outside of the NERRDP monitoring regime and need to cover a longer period to show realistic impacts of the plan.

In the evaluation of the NERRDP some basic social and economic indicators were appended but these do not show any comparison that would enable any linkage to any impact of the NERRDP's implementation. For the purposes of collecting baseline information, they are useful for future comparative uses. It is not too clear if the authorities responsible for monitoring the implementation of the plan have put in place any established monitoring process and mechanism as described in the plan. It is however a fact that the implementation report of the NERRDP which was done four years after the formulation of the plan and was done with the assistance of an externally funded consultant shows that nothing substantial was done internally prior to that implementation report.

The use of monitoring indicators needs to be considered at the sectoral level plans as well as for other issue specific plans. Many of the sectoral plans that currently exist do not include monitoring

mechanisms or framework and need to do so. Even the many departmental corporate plans that are now adopted by many government departments lack a monitoring framework and probably need to do so to enable them to check their own performance.

In terms of monitoring in general, many government entities used their own indicators for their purposes relevant to their specific responsibilities. Many state owned enterprises also provide good information that are used by the government for planning and decision making purposes. Most of such information would normally come from periodical national censuses as well. In the Solomon Islands, there has not been any effort whatsoever to adopt any set of sustainable development indicators such as those recommended by the UN Commission on Sustainable development. It would certainly help if such indicators are now adopted and become part of a wider data collection system in the country which would then be used for a more comprehensive monitoring and planning requirements. One of the main obstacles to operating such monitoring systems in the Solomon Islands is the difficulties in obtaining relevant data as data collection itself has been a problem for a long time in the country.

10.2 BUDGETING AND AID EFFECTIVENESS

All national strategic plans including the current one (NERRDP) normally form the basis for the formulation of the country's annual budgets and the development assistance the country receives from its development partners. Statutory requirements and other internal planning instruments such as sectoral plans, corporate plans, provincial plans etc are the other sources that also form the basis of the annual budget. Normally the Solomon Islands annual budget is divided into two for simplicity purposes: the recurrent estimates and the development estimates.¹⁶ The recurrent estimates cater for all annual recurrent spending whilst the development estimates caters for all development projects and programmes. Most of the development assistance the country gets target those development projects and programmes in the development estimates. In recent years a number of major bilateral development programmes have bypassed normal procedures and practice and have therefore not been reflected in the annual budgets.

The Solomon Islands budget process is annual and its formulation usually starts early in the year around April. Its passing by parliament happens at the end of the year in December or January of the next year. The Departments responsible for coordinating the formulation of the budget, (i.e. the DNPAC and the DFT), usually provide the budgetary policies including the schedule of the whole process and what products are expected from all departments and agencies. Within the period of the annual budget formulation, a whole lot of processes occur including consultations with stakeholder groups, especially with the development partners.

The implementation of the national strategic plan (NERRDP) is therefore through the annual budgets. The implementation of annual budgets however has its constraints and weaknesses and not all that is budgeted for gets implemented due to a variety of factors, which are mostly linked to financial and human resources. This is especially the case when the plans and the budget are formulated without much consideration on the availability of relevant resources.

The current strategic plan, the NERRDP, has been a successful plan in recent years due to amount of work that had gone into its formulation, especially in relation to those required resources needed for its implementation. The fact that the NERRDP was also a plan influenced by the ethnic crisis, had made it a much more focused and prioritized plan which then assisted all to target

¹⁶ Discussions have started in government on a composite budget but nothing has yet been concluded.

resources in those items that are clear national priorities necessary for the rebuilding of the country and the sustenance of peace within the current post conflict situation.

The use of aid resources or development assistance in the implementation of the NERRDP is probably the most effective to date in country. This is basically due to the effective involvement of the development partners in the formulation of the plan and even in its implementation. This reflects some changes in donor approaches which allowed them to be involved in major national assessments, the formulation of the plan and its eventual implementation where donor partners provide essential and increased support in key areas. In fact in the country's annual budget, the current development estimates are mostly funded under development assistance. Even some items of the current recurrent budget are funded under development assistance. With the funding of most of the development items and some major items of the recurrent budget under development assistance and the direct implementation of some major development programmes by donors themselves which do not appear in the annual budgets, the percentage of ODA in relation to GDP is certainly very high.

The function of aid coordination and the budget process especially in relation to the development budget which most aid targets, are under the responsibility of the DNPAC and are therefore considered together. This means that the development items that can be funded under aid are priority items of the budget. In recent years, due to effect of the tension and the chronic lack of resources, even the whole budget process and the resources required to put together the annual budget are partly funded under aid or external assistance. The government, through DNPAC still needs to strengthen its aid coordination function and allocate appropriate resources so that aid resources are managed and allocated according to its national needs and priorities.

11. CONCLUSION

The chronic problems that have besieged the country and have culminated in the ethnic crisis of 1999 -2000 is indicative of a country not following a sustainable development pathway. National sustainable development strategies allow countries to consider appropriate development that integrates economic, social and environmental considerations and promotes positive long term effects on human development. The Solomon Islands currently has no national sustainable development strategy per se but has a near equivalent in the form of the NERRDP. The NERRDP whilst replacing the former Medium Term Development Plan is heavily influenced by the events of the ethnic tension of 1999 to 2000. It focuses on five key strategic or priority areas: law and order and security; democracy, human rights and good governance; fiscal and financial stability and public sector reform; productive sector and supporting infrastructure; and basic social services and social development.

In its formulation, the NERRDP went through consultations with a good range of stakeholders which ensures its national ownership and promotes stronger commitment not only to its formulation and development but to its implementation and monitoring with stakeholder groups as well. Even though the plan is heavily influenced by the issues relating to the ethnic tension, some major sectoral strategies had also contributed to its development and formulation and do form its basis. The NERRDP is now generating new sectoral strategies and plans as new strategies and plans have been or are being formulated based on its contents.

The formulation of the NERRDP starts to strengthen existing planning practices and processes again as well as creating and exploring new processes that was thought of as having the potential

to improve various development and implementation aspects of the national strategic plan. A number of the processes that were suggested in the plan to be used for various implementation and monitoring aspects were however not maintained or could not be established and could not therefore function. This is most likely due to lack of coordination resources. The implementation of the NERRDP as a national strategic plan has received generous and substantive support from development partners. The achievements in its formulation and implementation have also been due to the substantive assistance inflow from the country's development partners, and especially with the guidance and leadership of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) who came into the country in 2003 under an Act of Parliament.

The implementation of the NERRDP was not at all smooth sailing and encountered the usual challenges for a least developed country made worse by a post conflict situation. Whilst these challenges remain, some significant achievements were made for a number of the priority areas of the NERRDP. Future strategic plans will certainly benefit from the lessons learnt from its development, implementation and monitoring.

12. RECCOMENDATION

With the release of the new Soqavare government's Policy Action Framework and the present efforts to work towards a successor to the NERRDP, it is probably most opportune that the country considers a new strategy that can also be seen as a national sustainable development strategy. As the NERRDP does not incorporate other essential elements of a national sustainable development strategy, it is the right time to work towards a single national strategy document that would include policies of the current government, uncompleted activities and emerging issues after the implementation of the NERRDP, and all essential elements of regional and global strategies that the country has committed itself to.

As efforts continue in the country right now for a successor to NERRDP and, especially in relation to the ongoing review and stock assessment work, new sustainable development issues will definitely emerge which will need to be attended to as early as possible. The products of these new efforts may be best addressed through some form of national sustainable development strategies. Due to that current national effort for a successor to NERRDP, the opportunity now exists to integrate into any future plan all sustainable development issues that has been missing from past and existing strategies and plans and put in place a strategic plan that is substantively a sustainable development strategy.

To allow for that work to proceed, it is important that UNDESA includes Solomon Islands in the next phase of the UNDESA project as that will then allow for efforts to be integrated into the present efforts to work towards a successor to NERRDP. This will enable Solomon Islands to address the issues identified in this report and basically identify essential sustainable development issues that need to be integrated into a future plan and ensure that they are incorporated into the future plan through sustainable development planning processes.

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Appendix 1 – National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan

Appendix 2: Selected Key Indicators and Targets of the NERRDP

Key Strategic Area 1: Normalising Law and Order and Security Situation

Law and Order <ul style="list-style-type: none">Security climate normalised through out Solomon Islands including Honiara, Malaita and Guadalcanal
RSIP (Royal Solomon Islands Police) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Police Services to be re-established in all Provinces in 2004Reform Programme of RSIP and Prison Service completed in 2004 and continue capacity building.Public Confidence in police services built and regained
Legal Affairs <ul style="list-style-type: none">All outstanding cases in 2003 cleared by end of 2004Magistrate's court in Auki, Gizo refurbished and operational by end 2004
DNRUP <ul style="list-style-type: none">3 Counseling Centres established, staff trained and operational by mid 2004

Key Strategic Area 2: Strengthening Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance

Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none">New Federal Constitution with strengthened Bill of rights launched on Independence day, 7th July 2004Public Service General Orders and Financial Instructions republished , distributed to officers and training programme designed and started by end 2004 and implemented by end 2005National Parliamentary timetable adhered to with two sessions in 2004 and two sessions in 2005 and capacity building programme commenced by end 2004Review enforcement agencies of good governance – Public Service, Police, Judiciary and Leadership Code Commissions and the Ombudsman – conducted to improve structure and efficiency by end 2005
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Key Strategic Area 3: Restoring Fiscal and Financial Stability and Reforming the Public Sector

Macro Economic Management <ul style="list-style-type: none">Achieve a positive growth in per capita GDP by end 2005Achieve inflation rate below 5% by 2005 and thereafter maintain below 5%Achieve external reserves level equivalent to 3 months of import cover by end 2004 andInitiate household income and expenditure survey in 2004 and produce survey report
Fiscal and Financial Management <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase government revenue collection and achieve budgeted levels for 2004, 2005 and 2006Control recurrent expenditure within budget commencing 1 October 2003Put a stop to payment of illegal claims by end September 2003Stop and eliminate all ghost workers from public sector payroll(police, teachers, medical and public

service by mid 2004)

- Debt servicing of both domestic and international debts planned and agreed and operational by end 2003
- Agree with all creditors (domestic and external) to a rescheduling of all debts by April 2004, new debt servicing level to be kept current thereafter
- 2004 Budget (both recurrent and development) completed and presented to cabinet by early November 2003
- Government Accounts for 1999-2003 audited by June 2004, all outstanding accounts for government and statutory bodies audited and submitted for parliamentary review by end 2004

Strategic National and Provincial Planning and Aid Coordination

- NERRDP completed and accepted by SIG and Development Partners as credible and realistic
- Produce annual reports on NERRDP implementation with particular focus on impacts and outcomes at the provincial level.
- Obtain agreement to the release in suspension of the STABEX funds by end 2003
- DNRP enhanced role as SIG Aid Coordination unit and national planner defined, resourced and operational by mid 2004

Reform of Public Sector

- Down- sizing of the Public Service – Phase 1 completed by June 2004; Phase 2 by end 2004 (number of redundancies to be determined after payroll cleansing)
- Review and Reform Plan for Public Service completed, costed and agreed by third quarter 2004 for inclusion in 2005 Budget.

Financial Institutions and Development

- New SME development finance facility identified, developed and operational by mid 2005
- Review and prepare strategy for state-owned financial institutions including development of NPF, reform of HFC and decision on future of DBSI by June 2004
- Develop and launch SOE privatization programme with disposal of SML and Government Printers by March 2004

Key Strategic Area 4: Revitalising the Productive Sector and Rebuilding Supporting Infrastructure

Employment Production and Resource Management

- Generate 500 new jobs in private sector by end 2004, rising to 1000 new jobs by end 2005
- Resume annual employment survey to monitor employment trends and produce 2003 report in 2004
- Increase copra production by small holders from 11,000mt (est.2003) to 24,000/17,000 by end 2005; increase cocoa production from 3,500 mt (est.2003) to 5,000 mt by end 2005.
- Comprehensive private sector copra and cocoa buying and support programme including RIPEL and other operators designed and funding secured by June 2004 and operational by end 2004 in at least four provinces.
- New Forest Act passed by Parliament by end 2003
- Continue monitoring all licensed logging sites for compliance with code of logging Practices at least four times per year and inspecting 50% of all log shipments
- At Gold Ridge Mine – Facilitation of Transparent landowner Council elections and reasonable landowner agreement by third quarter 2004, new mine owner finalized by mid 2005.
- Fishing Rights Based Management System in place and Tuna Management Plan (Access Agreements) reviewed by December 2004.

Supporting Infrastructure

- National Transport Strategy with infrastructure opening and investment plan completed by end 2004 speciality addressing inter island shipping, air services, marine and roads
- Seven new wharves completed by 2005
- Rehabilitate and upgrade roads and bridges and other physical infrastructure on North Guadalcanal, Malaita and other locations of major economic activity – 2003-2006
- Rehabilitate and upgrade airfields around the country, and around the country, and increase flights especially in economic routes -2004/2005
- Commence tribal lands pilot project in 2004
- SME Promotion Support and Advisory Services incorporating private companies and NGOs investigated, deigned and operational by mid 2005
- New Investment Promotion Act passed and Foreign Investment Board membership overhauled and procedures streamlined by end 2004
- Encourage commercial banks lending activities – private sector borrowing to grow by 10% in 2004

Key Strategic Area 5: Restoring Basic Social Services and Fostering Social Development

Education

- Achieve universal access to nine years of basic education from standard 1 to Form 3 by 2015, established target enrolment rates for 2006
- 95% of all primary and forms 1 to 3 schools to have text books and a basic set of learning materials for all pupils on 1:1 basis by end 2004
- Teaching service payroll validation completed by end 2004 and full personnel records by 2005.
- 1100 primary teachers to have received training in curriculum materials by 2004 and all primary teachers by 2008
- Establish a comprehensive education management information system (EMIS) by end of 2004

Health

- Reduce Malaria cases from 160/1000 population (2001) to less than 80/1000 by end 2005
- Reduce infant mortalities from 66 per live births (1999) to less than 50/1000 by end 2005
- Reduce maternal mortality rate from 129 in 1999 to less than 80 by end 2005
- Achieve 90% coverage of immunization of children(tuberculosis, diphtheria, OPV, measles, and hepatitis) by end 2004

Women and Gender

- Achieve 100% equality in enrolment of boys and girls in primary education by 2006 (1999 gender gap of 3 %); and reduce gender gap in secondary education to 5 percent (1999 gender gap of 9%); total elimination of gender disparity in basic education by 2015
- Appoint at least one female to each of the boards of directors of public authorities and other state-owned enterprises when board vacancies arise and achieve female representation in all the boards by 2006
- Formulate a national policy on violence against women in 2004 and implement.
- Convene 6 consultative workshops (total 180 women participants) on rural skills training and economic empowerment of women by end 2004
- 24 women graduate as community paralegals in 2004 to advocate for human rights
- Complete CEDAW initial report on Solomon Islands by mid 2004 for submission to UN Committee.

Children and Youth

- Protection of Child Rights Bill enacted in Parliament in 2004 and Child Protection Bill in 2005

- Establish a child protection system in 2004 to link all authorities and partners involved in supporting children
- Adopt UN CRC recommendations and conclusions under the National Childrens Policy and Plan of Action by first quarter 2004
- Formulate and implement a national programme for reintegration and rehabilitation of conflict – affected youth in 2004 and implement
- Establish youth centres for employment, training and micro-credit promotion in Malaita (Auki), Guadalcanal and Honiara 2005
- 24 youth graduate as community paralegals in 2004 to advocate for human rights

Sports development

- Host and/or participate in at least one regional or international sports event each year during 2004-2006
- Successfully bid in 2005 for hosting of 2011 South Pacific games
- Initiate actions to have internationally recognized national stadium and facilities completed by 2010

Community Development

- Increase community projects supported by mechanisms such micro-projects programme. Community Peace Restoration Fund and Grassroots projects Programme (2003 projects as base)
- Agreed Memorandum of Understanding between Government and NGOs in place in 2004
- Programme for funding for non-state actors under the EU?ACP Contonou Convention agreed and begin implementation by end 2004

Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)

- Produce Solomon Islands country report o progress with the Millenium Development Goals in 2004

Provincial Focus of Key Strategic Areas

Development Outcomes at Provincial level

- Produce a comprehensive baseline data on development indicators on province by province by end 2004
- Reporting on Plan outcomes at the provincial levels as part of annual reporting on NERRDP implementation, beginning with 2003 report