



**FORUM MINISTERIAL STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING
ON THE
REGIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION TO SOLOMON ISLANDS (RAMSI)**

17 July 2008

Honiara, Solomon Islands

OUTCOMES STATEMENT

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Australia (Honourable Stephen Smith), Solomon Islands (Honourable William Haomae) and Tonga (Honourable Sonatane Tu'a Taumoepeau Tupou), the Associate Minister for Foreign Affairs of Niue (Honourable Billy Talagi) and the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for Papua New Guinea (Honourable Sali Subam) met in Honiara, Solomon Islands, on 17 July 2008 for the second meeting of the Forum Ministerial Standing Committee (FMSC) on the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Sonatane Tu'a Taumoepeau Tupou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tonga. The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat RAMSI Special Coordinator and the Pacific Islands Forum Representative to Solomon Islands.

Opening Statement by the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands The Honourable Derek Sikua

2. The Honourable Dr Derek Sikua, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, opened the second Forum Ministerial Standing Committee on RAMSI. Dr Sikua told the FMSC that the CNURA Government remains committed to working with RAMSI through dialogue. The Solomon Islands Government attaches a great deal of importance to the Partnership Framework as it reflects the Government's view that RAMSI was now entering a new phase in its activities. Prime Minister Sikua told the Committee that the Solomon Islands Cabinet had endorsed the direction the Partnership Framework was currently taking. Prime Minister Sikua also told the Committee that the Government plans to propose a review of RAMSI to the next sitting of Parliament to be overseen by a Parliamentary Standing Committee. Ministers welcomed Prime Minister Sikua's emphasis on regional cooperation to achieve the core priorities of the CNURA Government. In particular, Ministers noted Prime Minister Sikua's hope that the partnership between the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI could be taken forward to continue strengthening Solomon Islands Sovereignty and the long term sustainability of its institutions.

Progress Reports

3. Ministers received presentations from representatives of the Solomon Islands Government, RAMSI, and participants in the Enhanced Consultation Mechanism (ECM) Meeting. Key issues covered included implementation of the RAMSI Review Task Force

recommendations, welcoming specifically the Solomons Islands Government commitment to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, an update by the Solomon Islands Government on progress toward a Select Committee Review of the RAMSI Review Task Force Report, future directions in policing in Solomon Islands, the Government of Japan's offer of assistance to RAMSI, progress in implementing the Solomon Islands Coalition for National Unity and Rural Advancement (CNURA) Policy and Translation Framework and the new Solomon Islands Government / RAMSI Partnership Framework. The Committee took note and thanked the Solomon Islands Foreign Minister for his report and endorsed its recommendations. Ministers noted that each of these issues were discussed separately throughout the meeting, and took note of the ECM Chair's Report. Ministers also commended the outstanding work of the RAMSI Special Coordinator and his staff.

Solomon Islands Government Review of RAMSI and the RAMSI Review Task Force Report

4. Minister Haomae welcomed the new reporting format between the Solomon Island Government and RAMSI. Minister Haomae also advised the Committee that the Solomon Islands Government had decided to task officials with analysing and providing a report to Cabinet on the RAMSI Review Task Force Report. The Solomon Islands Government anticipated that the report would be completed within the next month to allow an announcement at the Leaders' Meeting in Niue in August. Minister Haomae further advised that the National Parliament of Solomon Islands would be meeting in July to deliberate on mechanisms to review RAMSI and that the Foreign Relations Committee, a Standing Committee of Parliament, would likely review RAMSI to ensure that future RAMSI activities were consistent with the evolving SIG-RAMSI Partnership Framework. Minister Haomae informed the Committee that a new Solomon Islands Government Special Envoy to RAMSI would be appointed in the near future. The Committee thanked the Solomon Islands Foreign Minister for outlining the Solomon Islands Government's positions on these matters. The Committee agreed that consistent with the recommendations of the RAMSI Review Task Force Report, if any changes to the FIA Act were to be made, that this should occur only after extensive consultations with all RAMSI participating countries. Ministers further agreed that any changes to the mandate of RAMSI would require a decision from Leaders.

Australian Government Review of RAMSI future resource requirements

5. Minister Smith advised the Committee that Australia's current contribution to RAMSI is funded until June 2009. The Australian Government is currently considering resource requirements for Australia's future contribution to RAMSI beyond June 2009. Consistent with Australian Government budget rules and procedures, the Australian government is preparing a four year strategy for the period July 2009 to June 2013. Australia expects to have a draft strategy ready in August 2008, at which time Australia will consult with the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI contributing countries. Minister Smith advised that Australia is mindful of Solomon Islands development needs and priorities, and that these will be at the forefront of its considerations. The Committee welcomed and thanked Foreign Minister Smith for his briefing on the proposed Australian Government review of RAMSI.

Solomon Islands Government – RAMSI Partnership Framework

6. Ministers noted the brief provided by the Chair of the ECM on the Partnership Framework drafted by the Solomon Islands Government in consultation with RAMSI, and agreed in principle to endorse the direction being taken in the evolving partnership.

Ministers welcomed the work which had already been put into the framework which reflected the strong commitment by the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI to the partnership framework concept. Ministers agreed that the Partnership Framework was a living document and would evolve over time under the guidance of the FMSC. Ministers further agreed that an officials level working group be established to complete the content of the framework. This would include clarifying which programmes outlined in the framework currently fell within the RAMSI mandate, which programmes would need to be further discussed, and which programmes would need to be either implemented through bilateral arrangements, or through a change to RAMSI's mandate. Ministers reaffirmed that any proposed changes to the mandate of RAMSI would require a decision from Leaders. Ministers agreed that officials should report back to the FMSC through the ECM at its next meeting with an agreed Partnership Framework which addressed the concerns of all stakeholders.

Japanese Cooperation with RAMSI

7. Ministers welcomed Japan's interest in closer cooperation in the Pacific and noted that it had expressed an interest in cooperating with RAMSI by letter of 10 July 2008 to the Acting Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum. Ministers noted that RAMSI is a Pacific Islands Forum initiative and is principally constituted from Pacific Islands Forum personnel. Ministers further agreed that the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum should first consult with member countries second, seek clarification from the Government of Japan on their proposed form of assistance, and third refer the matter back to the FMSC for further deliberation.

Forum/Solomon Islands/RAMSI Partnership

8. Ministers again commended the significant progress made by the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands in partnership with successive Solomon Islands Governments since 2003, and in particular the positive direction in which RAMSI was moving in partnership with the CNURA Government. Ministers noted the important role that the Triumvirate has played and continues to play in this partnership. Ministers noted the importance of ongoing work with the Government and people of Solomon Islands to rebuild Solomon Islands' institutions and establish conditions under which Solomon Islands could achieve social and economic recovery. Ministers encouraged Forum members and the region's development partners to assist in this rebuilding process. Ministers commended and confirmed the continuing support of all Forum members as contributing countries to RAMSI as an outstanding example of regional cooperation. Ministers agreed to reconvene the FMSC in approximately six months.

9. Ministers also expressed appreciation and thanked Mr Greg Urwin for his firm but subtle stewardship of the regional agenda during his time as Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, and in particular his role in providing strategic oversight of RAMSI. Ministers also wished to him a speedy recovery.

Forum Secretariat
Honiara, Solomon Islands
17 July 2008