

Temotu holds final Convention



Participants of the final Provincial Convention of Temotu Province held from 10-18 September 2012. *Photo: Chris Leua/GCU*

By Chris Leua

Government Communications Unit
- reporting for CRU

Temotu Provincial Convention held on Monday 10th September 2012 in Lata, Temotu Province marked the final Provincial consultations on the 2011 Draft Federal Constitution.

Around 50 participants attended, which included Members of the Provincial

Assembly (MPAs), chiefs, elders, church leaders, women and youth representatives.

During the convention's opening, team leader of the Temotu Provincial Nominees to Congress Mr. Johnson Levela urged participants to offer constructive feedbacks on the Draft and suggest ways in which the Draft can be improved.

"As this is the final round of

consultation, I encourage you as representatives of the communities in Temotu that your input in this convention is imperative as Temotu's contribution to the Federal Constitution," he said, "It will also be the final opportunity for you to do so."

He said the progress of the convention was slightly behind schedule, however he was optimistic that they would complete it accord-

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Participants of the final Provincial Convention of Temotu Province representing Anuta Island: From left, Casper Marae, 26, Donald Raga, 24 and Moffat Faitoka, 28 on board the *Lapita Anuta* as it anchors on the Lata Wharf.

Story of Anutan's journey to Lata on Page 5. *Photo by Chris Leua/GCU*



CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM UNIT

REFORM NEWS



GUADALCANAL PLANS FOR FACT-FINDING TASKFORCE



Guadalcanal Premier Anthony Veke contributes to discussions during the Guadalcanal Convention in May 2012.

economic and fiscal aspects to prepare the province in its State Constitution-making, which begins when the Federal Constitution comes into effect.

Premier Veke encouraged leaders of Guadalcanal, be they political and community leaders, to work together to support the task of drawing up Guadalcanal's State Constitution.

In light of following through with the Federal Constitution's implementation, the Convention also drew up the *Binu Communiqué*, which resolved that the province will work together on the ongoing process of redrawing the Solomon Islands National Constitution.

The Convention lasted from April 30 to May 11, which reviewed the whole 2011 Draft Federal Constitution. 

Guadalcanal Province will be setting up a fact-finding taskforce to gather information about the province in the process of implementing the Federal Constitution.

Premier Anthony Veke made this point during Guadalcanal Convention's closing ceremony.

It is understood that the taskforce will take stock of Guadalcanal's various

India likely to provide Legal Experts

By Chris Leua/GCU & CRU

The Constitutional Reform Unit has received indication that the Indian Government is considering its proposal to provide legal assistance in the auditing and drafting of the proposed Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands.

Director of CRU Mr. Philip Houlia said that the Solomon Islands High Commissioner (Acting) to Papua New Guinea Mr. William Soaki has indicated to him that the proposal is now before the government in Delhi.

Mr. Houlia said a formal submission was made in September 2012 to the Indian High Commission in Papua New Guinea, through the Solomon Islands High Commission in Port Moresby, following a successful meeting in July 2012.

The meeting occurred during a trip

to Papua New Guinea in July to consult with tertiary students on the 2011 Draft Federal Constitution.

Both Mr. Houlia and CRU's Consultant Lawyer Mr. Reginald Teutao met with the High Commissioners of India, Malaysia and the State Solicitor of Papua New Guinea to seek possibilities of assistance in drawing up the final text of the draft Federal Constitution before it goes to Parliament in 2013.

Mr. Houlia said both Indian and Malaysian High Commissions were approached because the two countries also have a Federal system of government.

He said that after evaluating the feedback from both countries, the Indian Government was chosen, as it was keen to provide experts on a cost-sharing arrangement in which they would meet the salaries of the

experts while the Solomon Islands Government met the logistics and accommodation costs.

This came as a positive turn of events after a lengthy wait for securing experts proved futile late 2011 when the Commonwealth Secretariat formally turned down the request to assist twice.

The search for technical assistance started in 2010 when CRU, with the blessing of the Joint Executive of Constitutional Congress and the Eminent Persons Advisory Council (EPAC), had aggressively pursued securing legal experts from the Commonwealth Secretariat and funding for this very crucial activity.

The direction to look for legal experts elsewhere came after a meeting the Joint CC & EPAC Executive and CRU, had with the Prime Minister in early 2012. 

GOOD NEWS AND ANTICIPATION

While the Constitutional Reform Program exits the consultation stage in the Provinces with the final Provincial Convention in Temotu Province, one can finally look forward to the auditing and constitutional drafting of the Federal Constitution.

The acceptance of the Indian Government via its High Commission in

PNG, is a breakthrough as Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU) has worked so hard to sought legal experts to carry out the task of auditing and professional/legal drafting of the Draft Constitution since 2010.

This hasn't come easy as efforts became futile, when CRU via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were turned down with the first two submissions

to the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Though this has been the case, the indication from the Indian Government feels like "green-light" to start finalizing the process.

It has been a long time coming, and now CRU and Constitutional Congress can work together towards the Reform's finality. 🗑️

Joint Executive approve Consultation for MOI

The Joint Executive of Constitutional Congress and Eminent Persons Advisory Council (EPAC) has approved the Consultations for Malaita Outer Islands (MOI) as an additional final consultation for 2012.

This came after a long wait since 2011 for two feedback consultations to be held for the outer islands, which includes Temotu's Vattu Islands and Malaita Outer Islands.

Both consultations were part of catch up Provincial Feedbacks, which were supposed to be held in 2011, however did not eventuate due to budgetary limitations.

In September 2011 the Joint Congress and EPAC Plenary endorsed both consultations to be undertaken that same year, however budgetary

short-falls hindered the consultations from going ahead.

The Vattu feedback eventually took place from 16 April to 5 May 2012, after funds were released from the Ministry of Finance to CRU for Temotu's consultation activity.

MOI on the other hand had to await for funds to come available.

CRU's Consultant Lawyer Mr. Reginald Teutao put forward the request to the Joint Executive of CC/EPAC in an Executive meeting held with CRU on September 27, 2012; stating that representatives of MOI wanted urgently the consultation to be done with MOI people on the 2011 Draft Federal Constitution.

The consultations with MOI people is projected to happen late 2012. 🗑️



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TEMOTU HOLDS FINAL CONVENTION

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ingly. Mr. Levela said he was satisfied with the turnout of participants.

Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU) Officials were also in attendance, namely Consultant Lawyer Mr. Reginald Teutao and Director Mr. Philip Houlia.

Mr. Teutao when addressing the participants reiterated that this final round of consultation is the last opportunity for Temotu communities to have their input in the Draft Federal Constitution before the final Joint Congress and EPAC Plenary finalize details in the Draft.

He said after the Joint Plenary, the Draft will then undergo a final audit

by an independent expert with Federal Constitution experience before a National Convention is held.

Mr. Teutao said the final stage will be the Cabinet and Parliament process, where Constitutional Congress will handover, to endorse the final contents to become the Constitutional Order of the Federal State of Solomon Islands. 🗑️

Reform in Pictures

Photos by Marilyn Maeta'a, CRU Media Officer



Lawyer & participant Chris Siale contributing to discussions during Central Islands Provincial Convention in May 2012.



Chief of Russell Islands listens to discussions during Central Islands Provincial Convention in May 2012.



Participants of the Central Islands Provincial Convention during discussions of the Draft's Schedules in May 2012.



Paul Tovua contributing to discussions during Guadalcanal Convention in May 2012.



Two women representatives during Temotu Provincial Convention in September 2012. *Photo by Chris Leua/GCU*



Women representative during Guadalcanal Provincial Convention in May 2012.

They sailed 460km to attend a convention

In the provinces, sometimes making long distance trips are faced with challenges, something that is often taken for granted. *Chris Leua* of Government Communications Unit was in Lata, Temotu's Provincial Capital for the Convention on the Draft Federal Constitution. There he caught up with a young Polynesian chief who travelled 460km for two days at sea to get to the Convention, sailing a boat using nothing more than the wind and some traditional navigation knowledge. This is his story of the boat and his journey.



Moffat checks on his navigational aid, the GPS device before setting sail. *Story and Photos: Chris Leua/GCU*

When MV Arnarvon ship docked on Lata wharf on the morning of Monday 10th September, there anchored some 20metres away near the shore with its sails lowered, a double-hulled boat called the *Lapita Anuta*, a 38ft modern version of an ancient Polynesian sea-going vessel.

From a distance, one can be forgiven for mistaking it for a catamaran. But unlike a catamaran sailboat, it is said that the vessel is steered with a crude piece of wood attached to a detached oar; travels without the aid of a GPS device, and is not powered by an engine.

As MV Arnarvon's crew unloaded cargo onto the wharf, a young man emerged from the shelter aboard the *Lapita Anuta*. He boarded an outrigger tied to it, the *Lapita Iiti*, and

paddled ashore amidst the curious eyes of passengers on the ship.

He was the skipper of that vessel, 28-year-old Moffat Faitoka - a young chief from Anuta Island, one of the farthest Polynesian outliers in the Eastern Solomon, populated with just over 200 people.

He journeyed with other fellow Anutans to Lata, to attend the Temotu Provincial Convention on the Draft Federal Constitution. Casper Marae and Donald Raga, members of his crew in their early 20s, were also nominated as youth representatives from Anuta, while Moffat represented the tribes of Anuta as a chief.

Soft-spoken but otherwise matured beyond his years, Moffat recollects this trip as his first experience at the

steering oars as captain.

On a cloudless afternoon on Wednesday 5th September, he and eleven men including a filming crew of three South Koreans who were on their way to Honiara, hoisted sail from Rotoafi village, Anuta Island.

They sailed to Lata in just two days, a feat he considered remarkable considering there was very little wind during the entire voyage.

The young father of two got his sailing experience on a few trips previously to Lata, accompanying his uncle Fredrick Tekauariki, the most notable skilled navigator of Anuta.

Because the seas of the Eastern Solomon are vast and islands are remote, the traditional skill of navigation is vital. His uncle Fredrick

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THEY SAILED 460KM TO ATTEND A CONVENTION



Moffat stands on the *Lapita Anuta* as he scans the skies for good weather.

Anutans; and *Lapita Tikopia* to the Tikopians, residing some 135km away from Anuta Island. The boats were an opportunity to revive the traditional navigation skills, which the younger generation of Polynesian sailors are slowly losing.

For Moffat and his crew, their voyages usually mean relying on natural methods to navigate. However their limited knowledge on ancient routes made them opt to use GPS devices, a compass and maps on the voyage, which the scientists also donated.

As the convention came to an end, they couldn't wait to make the homeward trip on their own, as they now felt capable to navigate independently.

"Hopefully there will only be the four of us, so the trip should be a lot faster than the last", said Moffat.

And if the navigational aids don't function along the way, Moffat said they will use their knowledge of the seas.

"I reckon the way back home is much easier to navigate than coming to Lata," he smiled.

As MV Arnavon left port, Moffat scanned the skies for favourable weather and nodded in satisfaction.

"You know, given good ideal wind conditions, we could arrive home before that ship, as it stops on many ports along the way," he said as he checked on the canvacon sails and liros riggings for firmness.

Anuta's skilled sailors and navigators today have harnessed technology to complement their traditional knowledge, giving them the opportunity to make longer voyages around the islands.

For the Anutans, its just another day's work, with or without the compass. 

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was an expert at using traditional knowledge to sail the eastern islands.

However for this trip, Moffat had to sail without the experience and guidance of Fredrick, who fell ill while preparing for the trip.

"I am still a novice," Moffat admitted modestly, "There are still many things I have to learn from my uncle, like the direction of the wind and currents, the stars at night. Learning this craft will take some time. But I know I will master it someday."

When asked if there were hiccups along the journey, Moffat looked at the boat's rudder.

"The rope that held the steering handle to the rudder loosened along the way, but I was able to fix it in time," said the young chief.

The boat was constructed differently from the usual bolts, nails and wood putties, to endure sailing the high seas, as massive waves would likely be encountered.

As such, all joints and parts of the vessel are fastened with ropes of different sizes and knot forms, essential for long voyages as it allows the vessel to move freely without detaching on the high seas.

The Boat's Origins

The *Lapita Anuta* and a second identical boat the *Lapita Tikopia* were designed and built in the Philippines in 2008 following a 9-metre Tikopian outrigger, which an English catamaran specialist James Wharram and his Dutch design partner Hanneke Boon discovered in the Auckland Memorial Museum in 1995.

The 'sacred canoe' was said to be a donation from Chief Taumako of Tikopia when the island adopted the Christian religion in 1916.

A team of English, German and Dutch marine archaeology scientists sailed the boats on a scientific "Lapita Voyage" expedition from Bohol, Philippines to Anuta and Tikopia, arriving in mid-March 2009.

They gave *Lapita Anuta* to the

Information on the Constitutional Congress & EPAC

Constitutional Congress is the central body that works on the actual Constitutional Reform Programme, dealing with substantive matters. It was mandated by the Solomon Islands Government and members were formally appointed in 2007.

According to the 2005 White paper on the Reform of the Solomon Islands Constitution, the Constitutional Congress was to progress the Constitutional Reform Program and "undertake the task of finalizing a draft text of a new constitution of Solomon Islands..."

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference [ToR] for Constitutional Congress was drawn up from Cabinet decision (C [2006] 5). The ToR included the Mandate from the Government; Background and General Overview of the Reform; Membership of Congress; Objectives; Operational Framework and Guidelines; Rules of Operation; and Output and Reporting.

INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

In August 2007, the members joining the Constitutional Congress were introduced to the Constitutional Reform Program via an Induction Workshop.

The Induction Workshop was organized by the newly established *Constitutional Reform Unit* providing Secretariat duties, comprising administrative and technical assistance to the newly appointed members.

The Induction involved:-

1. providing a general overview of the Constitutional Reform Programme and Introduction to Constitutional concepts, including State creation and the Constitution-making Process;



2. Informing members of Congress' Terms of Reference, its organisation and working structure;
3. Instructing Provincial/Honiara City nominees of Congress to familiarize themselves with Provincial and Honiara City interests relevant to the work of the Reform; and
4. Determining the Rules of Congress' operation and preparing for the commencement of duties.

Organization Structure

CONSTITUTIONAL CONGRESS

Regardless of what membership they were involved in, all members hold equal status. For purposes of designing its composition, the members were put into two categories:

Nominated Provincial and Honiara City members, also known as their **Provincial/Honiara City Nominees**. They were nominated by the respective Provincial Executives to represent their provinces & Honiara City in the Congress.

They are responsible to ensuring that a provincial community interest (not just the provincial government interest) is brought to bear on issues that the Congress will consider.

Their function is to represent the overall interests of the Provinces

and Honiara;

1. to provide information to the Congress on their province perspectives and disseminate information to respective provinces;
2. to provide a provincial or city perspective on the issues and decisions that Congress (as a whole) will make; and
3. To represent a balanced and impartial perspective on national issues.

Their task is to stay informed on the work of Congress in order;

1. to provincially monitor the progressive development of the reform programme and advise Congress of provincial issues;
2. to identify the Political Community and to perform tasks as the Congress may request; and
3. To keep provinces informed on Congress' work; liaising between the Secretariat (CRU) & their respective Provincial Executives about Constitutional Reform tasks to be carried out in the provinces.

Nominees from each province were put into teams, currently referred to as CC Provincial teams. The teams usually have a working group of up to 3 nominees maximum.

National Nominees are nominated by the National Government to represent various stakeholders of national interest, which also includes two youths and other persons having special attributes and qualities to undertake this task.

Their task was mainly to ensure voices of stakeholders represented are heard during Congress' meetings. 

To be continued in next Issue 12



Solomon Islands Government

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ABOUT CRU

The Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU) is the body responsible for the management and coordination of Constitutional Reform Project.

It is an established division within the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and it is the Secretariat for the Constitutional Congress.

CRU has staff that carry out administrative, media, legal and financial related undertakings for the Constitutional Reform Programme.

CRU is located at the East Wing (top floor end) of the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, which is situated along Mendana Avenue, Honiara.

Publisher's Information

Publisher:
Constitutional Reform Unit

Editing:
Philip Houlia, Director/CRU
Marilyn Maeta'a, Media Officer/CRU

Contents & Design:
Marilyn Maeta'a, Media Officer/CRU

Article Contributions, Photos:
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REFORM NEWS
Issue 10 (Volume 1)
Apr—Jun 2012

Issue 10: Highlights six Provincial Conventions held early this year.

For more information:
If you would like to know more about these & other documents, contact CRU EPS Ms. Stella Pitiveke on spitiveke@pmc.gov.sb.

This Quarter's Calendar

June 4 Malaita Province commences on its two-week convention in Auki.

June 21 Consultation with SI tertiary students studying in Fiji and Vanuatu till 10 July 2012.

July 21 PNG Tertiary students consultation with CRU Officials Consultant Lawyer Reginald Teutao & Director Philip Houlia till 10 August 2012.

September 10 Temotu Province starts its convention in Lata for two weeks.