



Solomon Islands Government

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET
P.O. BOX G1, HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS
TEL: 21209 FAX: 28649
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM UNIT

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PM applauds Bar Association for keen participation on Draft Federal Constitution

Prime Minister Hon. Manasseh Sogavare applauded the Solomon Islands Bar Association for its thorough and complete review of the 2nd 2014 Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands, which ended on Friday 24 June 2016.

In addressing the fifty lawyers who participated in the awareness program of this draft, the Prime Minister said as the head of the executive branch of government, which emanate the vision, the policy direction and action plan of the federal reform, he was pleased to address members of the legal fraternity on it.

The Prime Minister's closing statement was to official close all of CRU's awareness consultations as well address SIBA members on their participation on the consultation process.

"I understand that you have gone through the draft constitution thoroughly by scrutinizing it word by word, line by line, clause by clause, paragraph by paragraph," he said, "I also understand that you have made very constructive observations and contributions to the structure, format and contents of the draft."

Hon. Sogavare said that he understands this is done with the view to make the draft more relevant to existing systems of law, including customary laws and, to be more suitable to the social, cultural, tribal and geo-political diversities of the country.

"This intrinsic diversity is a very important undergirding principle in the architecture of the proposed constitution," he said.

As a reminder to them, the Prime Minister said that in any written contributions the association would like to submit to his office, peculiar provisions that are designed to support a truly home-grown constitution should be kept in there.

These include the federal structure and community governments' autonomy and sovereignty, the revenue sharing provisions and, customary and cultural rights practices.

“My government has the political will to adopt the federal constitution for Solomon Islands,” Hon. Sogavare said, “You as lawyers have a crucial part to play in making sure we make a constitution that emanates from the people, made by the people and destined to belong to the people of Solomon Islands.”

As members of the legal fraternity who are involved in interpreting and executing the law in Solomon Islands, the Prime Minister said it is proper that they become important participants in consultation of the draft constitution.

“As a word of encouragement, keep up the good work in upholding the rule of law,” Hon. Sogavare said in his remarks, “Where people look up to your profession as means of finding justice and fairness.”

He said that the legal society as the judicial arm of government is growing in strength and numbers, and that this is very encouraging for a young nation like Solomon Islands.

Likewise, Vice President of the Bar Association Mrs. Katalaini Ziru said in the response to the Prime Minister's remarks, that the members of the association have seen this as an important consultation, which was reflected in the high turn-out during the past two weeks of consultation.

Mrs. Ziru, said that on behalf of the Bar Association, they have their deepest gratitude for the CRU and the Prime Minister's office, for taking note of the questions, comments, scrutiny, criticisms, the informed opinions and views of the members of the Bar.

“We trust that our input has contributed meaningfully to this,” she said.

Fifty (50) members of the Bar Association were present during the awareness program, which included lawyers practicing from both private and public legal institutions in the country.

The awareness consultation was held at the Monarch IBS Conference room. It officially ended on Friday 24 June 2016.

CRU is a division established within the Prime Minister's Office to oversee the completion of the Solomon Islands' Constitutional Reform program.

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