

Constitutional Reform Unit

**OFFICE OF THE PRIME
MINISTER AND CABINET**



SOLOMON ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

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Constitutional Reform Unit briefs joint Parliament committees

Officials of the Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU) briefed Parliament's Constitutional Review Committee and, the Bills and Legislation Committee on the progress of the Constitutional Reform Program during a joint meeting held at the National Parliament conference room on Thursday 5 April.

The joint meeting, which Chairman of the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) Hon. Stanley Sofu chaired, was informed on the Reform's progress and received a presentation on the 2011 Draft Federal Constitution, which has been the guiding document in the reform exercise.

In the presentation, CRU Consultant Lawyer Mr. Reginald Teutao briefed both committees on the progress of activities, mainly the Provincial Conventions, which has already commenced with Choiseul, Rennell Bellona and Honiara City completing their conventions early this year.

He said that other provinces will do their conventions after the Easter break and that he will be attending five, namely Isabel, Guadalcanal, Central Islands, Malaita and Temotu. Provinces such as Makira Ulawa and Western province have legal experts who are also Constitutional Congress members to guide them through discussions on the 2011 Draft Federal Constitution.

He said that if funding permits, the draft will go through a Congress and Eminent Persons Advisory Council (EPAC) third Joint Plenary that will consider reviews from the Provincial conventions and the public, to compile the 2012 Draft Federal Constitution. It is anticipated that a National Convention will be held after the 2012 Draft is published.

"The national convention will be a time for [members of the] National government, provincial governments and various stakeholders to come and bargain the new political order of this country," Mr. Teutao said.

After this, Congress and EPAC will have a final meeting to put the Constitution together according to views from the National Convention, before the Constitution undergoes professional drafting by a Professional Legal Draftsman. This final version of the Federal Constitution will then go through the process of Cabinet right through to Parliament to endorse as the Solomon Islands Federal Constitution.

Chairman CRC Hon. Sofu thanked CRU and working groups for the effort put into coming up with the latest draft, and reiterated that such a work couldn't have been accomplished without the dedication and commitment of these working groups.

Those who attended the joint committee meeting were Hon. Stanley Sofu (Chairman CRC), Hon. Manasseh Sogavare (Chairman Bills and Legislation Committee); Committee members, Hon. Milner Tozaka, Hon. John Maneniaru, and Hon. James Tora; CRU officials Mr. Reginald Teutao (Consultant Lawyer) and Mr. Ronald Unusi (PS Special Duties); parliament and CRU officers.

It is understood that both committees will be holding a second meeting with CRU on a later date.

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