

Constitutional Reform Unit

**OFFICE OF THE PRIME
MINISTER AND CABINET**



SOLOMON ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

**P.O. BOX G1, HONIARA
SOLOMON ISLANDS**

TEL: 21209 FAX: 28649

PRESS RELEASE

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Drafter encourages Plenary to look ahead in constitution-making

Professional drafter Dr. Philip Knight who has assisted the Joint Plenary of Constitutional Congress and Eminent Persons Advisory Council (EPAC) to draft the proposed Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands has encouraged Plenary to look to the future when drafting the constitution.

In his closing remarks to the Joint Plenary on Monday 17th March 2014, he said that a constitution should be constructed not only for present circumstances and needs but such that, future generations will be thankful for.

“I always think that that’s the words I would like to leave with every group of people working on a constitution,” Dr. Knight said.

He likened this encouragement to an example of a century-old building constructed as a provincial legislature in Canada.

“It is an amazing iconic, marvelous structure,” he said, “a century ago when the very small population of that province met as a legislature and they passed a resolution calling for the construction of that building.”

He said the resolution contains clauses that have become somewhat famous for the current generation of that province in Canada.

“I remind myself of it in every one of these projects,” he said, “the direction was that the building that was constructed for the government, should be not such that meets current needs only but such that future generations will thank us for.”

Dr. Knight and Professor Ronald Watts both thanked the Joint Plenary for their contributions that have helped in the audit and drafting process of the first professionally drafted Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands.

In thanking the experts, Chairlady of Congress Jenny Tuhaika thanked them for their hard-work and patience with the discussions that has produced the text of this constitution, which Dr. Knight drafted during this month of Plenary.

A farewell dinner was held for the experts on Friday 14th March, before Professor Yash Ghai and his wife, Dr. Jill Cottrell Ghai who has also assisted the team of experts in legal explanations, left over the weekend.

Both Dr. Knight and Professor Watts left the country today (Tuesday 18th March 2014), however the Joint Plenary will continue to look through the professionally drafted version and provide feedback to the experts later.

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